

WHAT IS THE TRINITY

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For parents to read with their middle and high school age children

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“Are there more gods than one?
There is only one God.”

In how many persons does this one God exist?
In three persons.

Who are they?
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Truth and Grace Memory Book (Book 1) pgs. 34-35

Preface

A knock came at my door and there stood someone inviting me to their church. What I figured out pretty quickly though was that they worshiped a different God than me. They were Jehovah's Witnesses. They began to explain to me how the Christian church had been deceived very early on in their history and that I and everyone who went to church with me worshipped a false god. They told me that Jesus was not God. They told me that He never claimed to be God. They also told me that the Holy Spirit was just a force. He was not a person, and He definitely was not God either! Many Christians have had this experience in their life, and many were not ready to answer with the truth. Even though the doctrine of God can be somewhat tongue tying, it is important for us to know and tell others what we believe about God with confidence. Once you spend some time studying the subject, it really becomes a lot easier to understand the basics and talk about to others. My hope is that this booklet will give you and your family more insight into who God has revealed Himself to be in the scriptures.

For a human to explain to you exactly how the nature of God works is like having your pet dog or cat explain to you how the engine in your car works. It's not going to happen! Fortunately, Christians have the scriptures to lean on when it comes to knowing more about the Lord. God has revealed Himself to be the only God in the universe. He is the only one that is and ever will be. In Isaiah 43:10 God says, "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "and My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me." Yet we also see that God's nature is plural. How can God be one and three at the same time you say? We don't exactly know. All that we can do is see that this is what the scripture clearly teaches and believe it. In this short booklet, you will learn what the scriptures teach and some of the background debates that took place in the early church. The early church didn't invent the trinity. The trinity is a word that is used to explain what we see in the scriptures. This booklet is broken up into small chapters that are geared toward helping families understand together who the God of the bible has revealed Himself to be. I recommend for parents to read through just one chapter a night with their kids and talk through the "questions to consider," and "things to remember."

1

What is the Trinity?

Memory Verse:

“Hear oh Israel, the Lord your God, *the Lord is one.*”

Deuteronomy 6:4

trinity

The word “trinity” comes from two words. The first is “tria” meaning “three” and the second word is “unity” meaning “together” or “unified.” When we speak of the trinity, we are speaking of the three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that make up the one eternal God we worship as Christians. An early church father named Tertullian was the first to use the word trinity when explaining the nature of God. The word “trinity” is not in the bible, but rather is a word used to explain what we observe by reading the bible.

Romans chapter 11:33 reminds us of the majesty of the great God of the universe. It says of God, “How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” For us to think that we can understand everything about the amazing infinite God would be arrogant of us sinful, weak creatures. However, what we can do is look at what He has revealed about Himself and accept it as true, even if we don’t understand everything about what He has revealed. God is triune. God is three distinct persons, yet there is only one God. To say He is three and He is one may seem like double-speak, or confusing language, nevertheless it is the clear teaching of the Old and New Testaments. James R. White says that a discussion of the trinity needs to start with a short succinct definition of what we mean by trinity. He says:

**“Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally
Three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the
Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”**

“One Being that is God”

White begins by saying there is “one Being that is God.” Deuteronomy 6:4 clearly sets forth this distinct truth about the Hebrew God. This passage is called the “Shema” and was recited each day by the Hebrew people. It says, “Hear Oh Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is One.” When we get to the New Testament we find this same truth repeated several times. When Jesus is approached with the question of what is the greatest commandment in Mark chapter 12:29 He quickly answers by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is One Lord....’” The Apostle Paul affirms this important teaching in I Timothy 2: 5 when he says, “there is one God....” Numerous other passages could be cited to demonstrate that there is only one God according to the scriptures. But, it is also very important to realize that each of the three persons that make up the one God are equal, yet distinct.

“coequal and coeternal”

On the other hand, we begin seeing the coequal and coeternal plurality that exists within God. Coequal means that each person is equal to each other. Coeternal means that none of the persons of the trinity ever had a beginning. They are all three persons eternal. In Genesis 1:1 that the word for “God,” “Elohim” is in a plural form. The grammar forces a singular translation of the word “God” yet in form the word is plural. When God creates, He goes on to say, “Let **us** make man in **our** image.” If God refers to Himself as “us,” it is clearly implied that the three persons are equal. We also realize that God refers to Himself in the plural from the very beginning. A close reading of the bible demonstrates that all three persons are clearly seen in the creation account. The Father speaks, and by His spoken Word, the world

was made. John 1:1 tells us that “in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word.” Verse fourteen identifies the Word as none other than Jesus Himself. Jesus is the Word of God that creates in Genesis 1. We also see in Genesis 1:2 that “the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.” All three persons can be seen in the creation account (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit). That the Spirit and Son must be God is clear when God speaks in Isaiah and says, “I, the Lord, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by **Myself** and spreading out the earth **all alone**.” (Is. 44:24). If God claims to be all alone in the creation, yet the Spirit and the Son are clearly seen creating, then the logical conclusion is that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all the one true God making them not only coequal, but also coeternal as well.

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

Notice in the picture above. God is “one” in the middle. Branching out from the middle in three different directions is the word “is.” He is Father, He is Son and He is the Holy Spirit. The lines that connect the three persons on the outside all say “is not.” The Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit. Each person is distinct. At Jesus baptism we can clearly see that the persons of the trinity are distinct from one another. Mark’s gospel chapter 1 says, “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him;¹¹ and a voice came out of the heavens: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.” Notice that the Spirit descended like a dove as Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism. Then the voice of the Father called Jesus His Son. Clearly each person is distinct! Jesus also on many occasions prays to His Father in the New Testament (Mt. 14:23; Lk. 5:16; Jn. 17). Jesus also talks about when the Holy Spirit will be sent to the church that the “the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name” will come (Jn. 14:26). Jesus and the Father weren’t sending themselves, they were sending another, namely the Holy Spirit. Yet, don’t forget that each person is fully God, yet there is only one God. Don’t think of God like this, $1+1+1=3$. Think of God according to higher Math: $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$

God is not like me..... (a son, a brother and a father)

Sometimes you will hear people try to quickly solve the issue of the trinity with illustrations. I have heard people say before that “God is like me. I am a son, a brother and a father all at one time, yet I am just one guy.” The problem with this is that God is simultaneously three distinct persons at once as we see in Christ’s baptism. God is not like one man playing three different roles at the same time. In Christ’s baptism we see the Son coming up out of the water, the Spirit descending like a dove and the voice of the Father from heaven. God is three persons!

Questions to consider:

1. What does the word “trinity” mean?
2. Are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit the same person?
3. How many God’s are there? Who are they?
4. What if someone said to you $1+1+1=3$... The math doesn’t add up?

Things to remember:

1. God is not like me! He is not one person who plays three different roles.
2. There is only one God. He is three persons and we can see these three persons distinctly at the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-12).
3. Each person of the trinity are co-equal and co-eternal.

2

God is One, God is Three

Memory Verse:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,”

Matthew 28:19

Notice that the scripture passage above says that we are to baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Isn't it interesting how the word "name" is in the singular? Wouldn't proper grammar say, the "names" of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit? Since there is only one God the word "name" remains singular, and since God is at the same time three persons each person, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all mentioned. We can see that in this baptismal formula that Jesus gave a perfect reflection of the nature of God. One God in three persons! The early church struggled with how to understand God being three persons and at the same time there only being one God.

Jesus is God: The Council of Nicea

In the fourth century an intense debate began within the Roman Empire over the question of whether or not Jesus was a created being. The true Christian tradition held that Jesus was just as fully God as God the Father. It also taught that the Holy Spirit was fully God as well, yet there was only one God. Arius was a preacher from Alexandria Egypt and he taught that to believe Jesus was God was a false idea. On the other side of the argument, the scriptural position clearly declared that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all three persons the One True God. This debate grew very intense within the church and finally the Emperor, Constantine called for a council to meet in the city of Nicea to resolve the issue. Around 300 bishops from different parts of the Empire came to Nicea to resolve this important question over the nature of God. Was Arius right and Jesus was less than God, or the Trinitarians who claimed that God is three persons? One of the bishops who came to these debates in Nicea was the bishop of Myra. His name was Nicholas. Nicholas was a kind and loving bishop who we know today as St. Nick. The modern tradition of Santa Claus is built upon the shoulders of this generous man. Nicholas was a Trinitarian and believed that Arius was teaching false ideas and hurting the church. At one point during the debate Nicholas punched Arius for his false teaching. The real "Santa Claus" was a defender of the truth about Jesus Christ! Below is the creed of Nicea. "Creed" or "credo" is the first Latin word in this statement and means "I believe." The bishops of Nicea signed their names to this document declaring that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all Fully God, yet there was one God. It is important to note when we approach the difficult subject of God that each person shares completely and fully in the being that is God. James R. White says, "the Father is not 1/3 of God, the Son 1/3 of God, the Spirit 1/3 of God. Each is fully God, coequal with the others, and that eternally. There never was a time when the Father was not the Father; never a time when the Son was not the Son; never a time when the Spirit was not the Spirit.." (The Forgotten Trinity page 28). The following is the Nicene Creed that was developed by the bishops at the council of Nicea. The word "creed" means "belief." So, this creed is a statement of belief by the early church on what they believe the scriptures teach about the nature of God.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. **and in one Lord Jesus Christ**, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all

worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

and **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life**; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

and I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

I highlighted in the creed that the belief of the early church bishops was “One God,” who is “the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” “One Lord Jesus Christ,” and the creed says of Him that He is “God of God.” The Holy Spirit is then called “the Lord and Giver of Life.” The Bishops based all of these statements on the clear teaching that is found in the scripture. I will elaborate more on this in the chapters that follow.

Who raised Jesus from the dead?

One clear way to see that God is one and God is three is by answering the simple question, “who raised Jesus from the dead?” The book of Acts tells the history of the early church and how churches began to be planted as the gospel spread. The main thrust of the teaching of the early church was that God raised Jesus. In Acts 2:32 Peter says, “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses...” Later in the book of Acts (10:40) Peter while preaching to a man named Cornelius says, “God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible...” Later on in Acts (17:30-31) the Apostle Paul says, “God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” These passages make it clear that the teaching of the early church was that God alone is the one who raised Jesus. The scripture goes on to indicate that each person of the trinity was active in this raising of Jesus. Galatians 1:1 makes it clear that the Father raised Jesus. This passage says, “Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.” Yet Jesus predicts raising himself from the dead in John’s gospel. “Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His body.” (Jn. 2:19-21) Paul tells us in Romans that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:11). These passages of scripture when taken together show us that God is one God in three persons.

Questions to consider:

1. Why is it significant that Jesus says to baptize in the singular “name” of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
2. What famous person was at the council of Nicea? What happened between him and Arius?
3. What does the word “creed” mean

Things to remember:

1. The three persons aren’t each 1/3rd God. Each are fully God, yet God is one.
2. The early church statement at Nicea helped guide the church on the nature of God.
3. The early preaching of the church was that God raised Jesus from the dead. We also see clearly in the New Testament that each person is said to have raised Jesus.

3

God is Father

Memory Verse:

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”

Ephesians 4:4-6

God is our heavenly Father

Each child has physical needs that parents must provide for in order that the child make it in this world. Parents must take care of their children for them to be healthy. They feed them, care for them and nurture them as they grow. Our heavenly Father provides for us every moment of every day. The air we breathe, the sun that keeps us warm, the rain that waters the flowers are all because God is as a father to us. Psalm 19:1-4 illustrates how our heavenly father takes care of us and speaks to us.

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world.” God the Father has spoken to us through caring for us and speaking to us in His created universe. God’s loving acts of taking care of our daily needs through sustaining the universe demonstrates His fatherly care for us. God’s kindness as Father can also be seen in His attitude toward and care for those who are vulnerable and needy. Psalm 68:5 says, “A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, is God in His holy habitation.” God cares for the widow and the orphan! He is truly a kind Father. In the gospels Jesus refers to God the Father 165 times!

What do we mean by 1st, 2nd and 3rd person’s of the trinity?

If you were competing in a race and when you crossed the finish line you came in 2nd or 3rd, you might be disappointed that you didn’t win 1st place. It may seem like calling Jesus “the second person of the trinity” or the Holy Spirit “the third person of the trinity that we are making them out to be less than God the Father, who is the 1st person of the trinity, but this isn’t true at all! What we are referring to by 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons are the order in which God revealed His personhood clearly to us. Even though we can see hints of God’s triune nature in Genesis 1:26 when he says, “let *us* make man in our own image...” we don’t clearly see God the 2nd person of the trinity until the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. We find out from the gospel of John that this baby born in Bethlehem was also Creator of the world (Jn. 1:1-3;14). God the Father sent God the Son. The Son was the 2nd person to be revealed to us in the trinity. We also see hints of the Holy Spirit’s work in creation “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the *Spirit of God* was moving over the surface of the water.” However, it’s not until Jesus tell us more about the Spirit’s work (Jn. 14-16) and He reveals Himself to the church in Acts 2 that we actually see the Holy Spirit manifested to us in the fullness as we have him today. He (The Spirit) is the 3rd person revealed to us in the trinity.

The relationship of the trinity

Is one of the person’s more powerful than the other? Who is in charge? In John 14:28 Jesus says, “The Father is greater than I.” If Jesus is God, the question might be raised, “then how can someone be greater than God?” The answer to this question is actually quite simple. While Jesus does claim that the Father is greater than Him, He never says the Father is “better” than Him. “Greater” refers to office, while “better” would refer to nature. There are a couple of easy examples of this drawing from everyday life. The president of the United States is greater than any other American. He

holds an office of greatness that supersedes any other office within the U.S. While this is true, it is also true that the president of the United States is not “better” than any other American. He is just a man and shares in the same nature that all men share. He is no better than anyone else. Jesus is merely speaking of His office in relationship to the Father. The second person of the trinity while being the Father’s equal in nature was still the one who humbled himself in the incarnation. He (Jesus) took the role of a servant.

Another example of “greater” not meaning “better” can be seen in the way that God has set up the marriage relationship of men and women. The woman is to be “submissive” to her husband. The man is the head of the house (Eph. 5:23). However, the man is never said to be better than his wife. He simply has a role that is greater than his wife. Within the Godhead we see this same phenomenon of submissiveness. It is perfectly conceivable and logical that Jesus could say “The Father is greater than I.” There is no contradiction in this truth and the truth that Jesus is fully God.

“Our Father who is in heaven....”

Jesus invites his disciples to call God, Father. In Matthew’s gospel chapter 6, Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray. He says, “Pray, then, in this way: our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” “Hallowed” means “holy, set apart,” yet Jesus tells us that we can call on him as Father. I John 3:1 says, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are.” God loves you and invites you to have a relationship with Him. It is amazing that Jesus tells us that we can call God, Father. When you pray, call out to your heavenly Father with your requests. Jesus says in Matthew 7:9-11, “Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” You exist to have a relationship with God. If an earthly father will take care of your needs, how much more will our heavenly Father? “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” (I Cor. 8:6)

Questions to consider:

1. What are some basic ways that God is like a Father shows himself to be like a Father in Creation?
2. What two types of vulnerable people does God take care of according to Psalm 68:5?
3. If God the Father is the 1st person of the trinity, does that mean He is more important than the other two?
4. Is it ok to refer to God as Father in our prayers?

Things to remember:

1. God’s lovingkindness can be seen through his providing for us each day through creation.
2. Jesus refers to God as Father 165 times in the N.T.
3. “Greater” does not mean “better.” When Jesus says that the father is greater than him, he is only speaking about the Father’s position in relation to the Son. Not the Father’s value being more than the Son’s. Just like the President of the U.S. is “greater” than me, but not “better.”

4

God is Son

Memory Verse

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

John 1:1-3

The Deity of Christ

Christian pastor and author A.W. Tozer once said, “What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” We must do our best to understand and teach the truth about God. When we look at the New Testament, the Deity of Christ (the fact that He is God) is very easily seen even at a surface reading. John’s gospel is a very simple place to start when proving Jesus is God in the flesh. Modern day Jehovah’s Witnesses hold the same position that Arius of Alexandria held during the council of Nicea. His view that Jesus was less than God (a created being) was debunked at Nicea and Arius views were rejected by the church. When a Jehovah’s Witness comes to your door, you might start them in John 1:1-3. They claim that John 1:1 should read “the Word (Jesus) was a god” and not the one true God. The context however demonstrates the weakness of their translation. If you just keep reading verses two and three, the context makes it clear that Jesus is the one true Creator. It says that “all things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” If nothing has come to be that He didn’t make, how can Jesus be a created being? He made everything. In the original Greek it says that there is not even “one single” thing that He didn’t make. John 1:1-3 is clearly teaching that Jesus is God because God has said that He was by Himself when He created. Isaiah 44:24 where God says that He was “stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone.” If God did this by Himself, and Jesus created any of God’s creation, it would be clear and logical according to John 1:1-3 that Jesus was God.

Another great passage to show that Jesus is God is John chapter eight verse fifty-eight. In this passage Jesus claims to be the one true God. He tells the Pharisees before Abraham was, I AM. In Exodus chapter three verse fourteen God reveals Himself to Moses as the I AM. When Jesus uses this same phrase to declare it about Himself his audience picks up stones to kill him. Why did they want to kill him for saying this? Because He was making Himself equal with God.

Jesus is worshipped!

Another great way to prove the scriptures teach that Jesus is God is by examining who alone can be worshipped according to the scriptures. When Jesus is tempted by the devil in Matthew chapter four, the devil says to Jesus, “‘all these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only!’” By Jesus own mouth, he declares that worship is reserved for God. Does Jesus statement imply in any way that He is not God? Hardly.... In fact when we look at the rest of the New Testament we see clearly that Jesus is worshipped by His disciples. Jehovah’s Witnesses says that Jesus is the archangel Michael, yet Hebrews chapter one verse five asks an important question, “For to which of the angels did He ever say, You are My Son, Today I have begotten you?” The implication is that God has said this to none of His angels. Verse six goes on to say, “And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, and let all the angels of God worship Him.” Remember Matthew 4:10? It says that worship is only for God, yet the Father has the son worshipped by His angels in this passage. Hebrews 1:5-8 disproves both that Jesus was an angel and that Jesus isn’t worshipped as God. The very last verse of Revelation chapter five has every created thing falling down before the lamb (Jesus) and worshipping. Another

good passage to prove this important point comes after the resurrection of Jesus when He visits His disciples. Matthew 28:9 is Jesus clearly receiving worship, with His disciples holding His feet. Verse seventeen demonstrates the same phenomenon. Jesus never rebukes His disciples for worshipping Him. If He were merely a created angel, He would have rebuked them like an angel did John in Revelation 19:10 when John tried to worship Him. Jesus is not an angel. He is the Creator of angels and everything else in the universe. We must worship and adore Him as our Creator God! (Phil. 2:11) Charles Wesley wrote a beautiful song called Hark the Herald Angels Sing. In verse two the following is sung, "Christ, by highest Heav'n adored; Christ the everlasting Lord; Late in time, behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th'incarnate Deity, Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel."

Jesus is one of a kind

Another early church council was convened to sort out what the scriptural teaching was regarding Christ being both God and man at the same time. This council was held in the city of Chalcedon. This council determined that the scriptural teaching about Christ included that Christ is totally God. Christ is also totally human. Even though Christ has a human nature and divine nature, Christ is one person, not two. Somehow when God became a man in the person of Jesus, He remained what He was (God), and became what He was not (human). He is the God-Man. Truly unique, there is no one like Jesus. The scriptures teach that both natures of humanity and deity could be clearly seen during the life of Jesus. Jesus said, "I thirst." (Jn. 19:28). He also ate with his disciples (Mt. 14:12-25). Does God get hungry or thirsty? No! The man Jesus did get hungry and thirsty. The scriptures also tell us that Jesus is the Creator of everything Jn. 1:1-3 and raised Himself from the dead Jn. 2:19-21. Could man create the universe or raise himself from the dead? No! Jesus is truly one of a kind. There is no one quite like Him. Because of His unique status of being both God and man, he became the perfect sacrifice for mankind. Only God is truly pure, holy and good. A qualification that Jesus meets. The bible also tells us that "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins." (Heb. 9:22). Again, Jesus being a perfect human was able to die for the sins of the world (Heb. 10:12; I Jn. 2:2). In the book of Acts, Luke tells us, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Who does Luke say purchased the church with His own blood? God.

Questions to consider:

1. How do we know using John 1:3 that John 1:1-2 is teaching that Jesus is God?
2. How are John 8:58 and Exodus 3:14 similar passages of scripture? What is Jesus saying about Himself by quoting Exodus 3:14?
3. What does Matthew 4:10 say? Why is that scripture important in light of Matthew 28:9?
4. Since Jesus is totally God and totally man, does this make him two persons instead of one?

Things to remember:

1. Christ is clearly the Creator in John 1:1-3. Verse 14 says, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Jesus is the Word who was in the beginning.
2. Jesus is worshipped on several occasions in the N.T. yet by Jesus own admission only God is to be worshipped (Mt. 4:10).
3. In every passage of scripture where Jesus is worshipped, He never refuses it.
4. Jesus is unique in that He is truly God and truly man simultaneously.

5

God is Holy Spirit

Memory Verse

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.”

II Corinthians 3:17

Holy Spirit is God

James White says “There is a reason why the Holy Spirit does not receive the same level and kind of attention that is focused upon the Father and the Son: it is not His purpose to attract that kind of attention to himself.” (139). White is correct, in fact Jesus Himself said, “He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.” (Jn. 16:14). The Holy Spirit was sent from the Father to “convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” (16:8). The Spirit leads people to Christ! Christ is the one who died for the sins of the world. Christ is the one who we must express faith in, in order to have a relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is the one who nudges our hearts when we hear the Word of God. He is the one who brings upon us conviction that leads to belief in the gospel. Holy Spirit nudges us toward Jesus.

But, what passages of scripture support the Holy Spirit as being God? We see that from the beginning the Spirit was involved in the creation of the world (Gen. 1:2). We also see that Job believed that the Holy Spirit created Him as well. Job says, “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” He is also omnipresent (everywhere at once) Psalm 139:7 says, “Where can I go from thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from thy presence? The answer to this is obviously “nowhere!” The Spirit is also all-knowing. I Cor. 2:10-11 says, “For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.” Other old Testament passages clearly indicate that when the Holy Spirit speaks, He is speaking the words of God (I Sam. 10:10, Zech. 7:12).

Holy Spirit is not a force

The Holy Spirit is not a force like some make Him out to be. Holy Spirit is a personal being and we should talk about Him as if He is a real person. A force cannot speak or send someone to do something like we see the Holy Spirit doing in Acts 13. This passage says, “the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” The passage goes on to say, “So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia.” The Holy Spirit both speaks and sends out in this passage. In Hebrews 10:15-17 we see again that the Holy Spirit speaks “And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, “THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,” *He then says*, “AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.” A force cannot speak, yet we see speech from Holy Spirit. He must be a person. Holy Spirit also speaks for us, when we don’t know what to say in our prayers. Romans 8:26 says, “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words..” Isn’t it amazing to know that if you are too sad to pray, that God’s Spirit could know your heart and hear your prayer?

Another passage of scripture that clearly indicates that the Holy Spirit is God In Acts chapter 5 we see the sad story of Ananias and Sapphira. They tried to deceive the disciples of Jesus by stealing. Peters said to them, “Ananias, **why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? **You**

have not lied to men but to God.” Peter makes lying to the Holy Spirit the equivalent of lying to God Himself. By the way, you can’t lie to a force! You can only lie to a person. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is a reminder that we should be honest with others. Nothing escapes the oversight of God. Hebrews 4:13 says, “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

Holy Spirit is a person

Speaking of person, Jesus uses male personal pronouns when He speaks of sending to believers the Holy Spirit of promise. He never calls the Spirit an “it” but a “he.” Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that **He** may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see **Him** or know **Him**, but you know **Him** because **He** abide with you and will be in you.” (Jn. 14:17). When Jesus says that He will send “another” He uses the Greek word “allos” that means “another of the same kind.” Jesus could have easily used the Greek word “eteros” that means “another of a different kind” but He did not. The Holy Spirit is God “another of the same kind” He will *indwell* believers as Jesus had *dwelt* with believers in His public ministry. These passages are amazing in that they promise that the Holy Spirit will be with us forever and will abide in us! In Acts chapter two at the Pentecost celebration we see that the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the church. Believers are filled with God’s Spirit and we see that 3,000 people came into a relationship with Christ in one day (Acts 2:41). Does God the Holy Spirit live in you? Have you believed that you are a sinner in need of a Savior? Have you believed that your only hope in having a relationship with God is through trusting that Jesus took the punishment you deserved by dying in your place on the cross? Have you believed that Christ not only died, but rose again on the third day? This raising of Jesus was proof positive that everything He said was true. If you have, then the Holy Spirit lives in you believer. Make a practice out of growing sensitive to His guidance in your life. Paul says, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” To walk by the Spirit is to obey God’s Word and the counsel of the Spirit who convicts of you sin. When you walk in the Spirit, you will walk in lockstep with the will of God.

Questions to consider:

1. Does the Holy Spirit try to attract people to Himself or someone else?
2. What are some differences between a force and a person?
3. How do we know that the Holy Spirit is not a force?
4. Does Jesus call Holy Spirit an “it” or “he?”

Things to remember:

1. The Holy Spirit always brings attention to Jesus. He draws our hearts to the sacrifice of Christ and to the truth of the gospel.
2. Many times in the book of Acts the Holy Spirit speaks. This shows His personhood is clear in the bible.
3. Jesus tells us that when He sends the Holy Spirit, He is sending us another of the same kind. The Holy Spirit is God!
4. When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, they didn’t lie to men, but to God.
5. You can be filled with the Holy Spirit. When you become a believer God takes up permanent residence in your life. (Jn. 14:23)

Memory Verses

1. What is the Trinity?

“Hear oh Israel, the Lord your God, *the Lord is one.*”

Deuteronomy 6:4

2. God is one, God is three

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,”

Matthew 28: 19

3. God is Father

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”

Ephesians 4:4-6

4. God is Son

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

John 1:1-3

5. God is Holy Spirit

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there is liberty.*”

II Corinthians 3:17