

## Lesson 7 – The Trinity

To the unbeliever and the uninformed, the thought that there could be one God existing in 3 distinct but equal Persons is folly. Over the centuries, multitudes of people – both religious and irreligious – have rejected the Trinity as illogical, and therefore false.

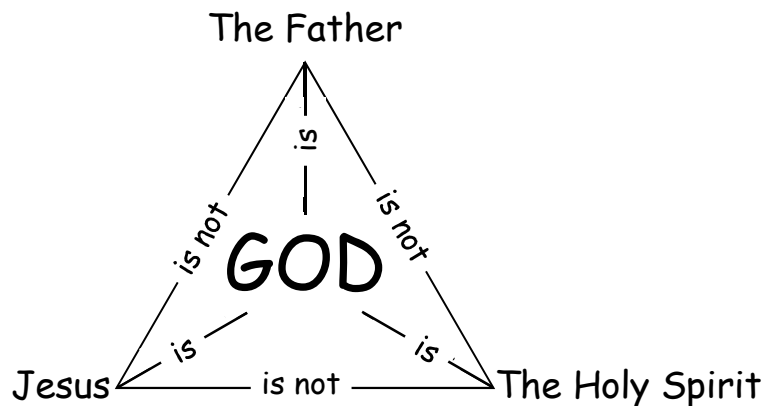
Belief in the Trinity is not illogical. We are just admitting that we don't have perfect knowledge or understanding of things eternal while in this world (1 Cor. 13:9-12).

A few generations ago, the thought that

### 1. Definitions

#### a. *Trinity*

- i. The Doctrine of the Trinity is the Biblical teaching that there is one God, who exists in three distinct Persons. One God. Three Persons. Each Person is God.



#### b. *Godhead*

- i. The essential being, or nature of God.
- ii. The English word, *Godhead*, is a derivation of the Middle English word, *Godhood*. Just as *childhood* is that which makes a child a child, or *womanhood* is that which makes a woman a woman, *Godhood* is that which makes God God.

### 2. What it is

- a. It is Monotheistic – There is one God. No more. No less. – Deut. 6:4
- b. It is the one true God. He exists in three distinct Persons.
  - i. God the Father
  - ii. God the Son
  - iii. God the Holy Spirit
- c. What the Trinity is not
  - i. It is not 3 Gods, or *tritheism*
  - ii. It is not one God with 2 lesser gods.
  - iii. It is not 3 modes of one God, or *Sabellianism* the heretical teaching of Sabellius in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century A.D.

### 3. Why We Know God is a Trinity

- a. All 3 Persons of the Godhead are equally God
  - i. They are all called God in the Scriptures
    1. The Father – Gal. 4:4-7
    2. Jesus – John 1:1; 8:24; 20:28; Heb. 1:8
    3. The Holy Spirit – Acts 5:3-4

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### ii. They share the attributes of God

	<b>God the Father</b>	<b>God the Son</b>	<b>God the Holy Spirit</b>
<b>Eternal</b>	Ps. 90:2	Rev. 1:8, 17	Heb. 9:14
<b>Omnipotent</b>	1 Pet. 1:5	2 Cor. 12:9	Rom. 15:19
<b>Omniscient</b>	Jer. 17:10	Rev. 2:23	1 Cor. 2:11
<b>Omnipresent</b>	Jer. 23:24	Matt. 18:20	Ps. 139:7
<b>Holiness</b>	Rev. 15:4	Acts 3:14	Luke 1:15
<b>Truth</b>	John 7:28	Rev. 3:7	1 John 5:6
<b>Benevolent</b>	Rom. 2:4	Eph. 5:25	Neh. 9:29
<b>Communion</b>	1 John 1:3	1 John 1:3	2 Cor. 13:14

Chart taken from *100 Bible Lessons*, by Alban Douglas

- b. Although all 3 Persons are recognized as *God*, the Bible unequivocally states that there is one God and no other.
  4. Where we see the Trinity in the New Testament
    - a. The baptism of Jesus – Matt. 3:16-17
    - b. The command for baptism – Matt. 28:19
    - c. The apostolic benediction – 2 Cor. 13:14
  5. The Trinity in the Old Testament
    - a. *Elohim*
    - b. Creation – Genesis 1:26
    - c. The *Shema* (means “to hear”) – Deut. 6:4
      - i. “The *Shema* is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one God.” – Jewish Virtual Library
      - ii. It is a Jewish prayer that each Jew is supposed to recite aloud twice a day. They are supposed to hear what they are praying and to concentrate on each word as they say it.
      - iii. The text of the Shema – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD (*Yahweh* – singular) our God (*Elohim* – Plural) *is* one LORD (*Yahweh* – singular)
      - iv. This, of all the passages of the Old Testament, shows the COMPOUND UNITY of God.
    - d. Isaiah – Isa. 6:8
  6. Illustrations of the Trinity (none of them are very good, because the Trinity is a concept that is beyond what our finite minds can grasp).
    - a. Patrick of Ireland used a shamrock to try to illustrate that God exists as one God in three distinct Persons.
    - b. H<sub>2</sub>O exists as water, steam and ice. However, H<sub>2</sub>O exists in only one form at a time. God is 3 Persons eternally.
    - c. A man can be a husband, a father and a pastor at the same time. This explanation is inadequate because it describes three roles of one person – not three persons of one Being.
    - d. Light has yellow rays, red rays and blue rays together. However, the three kinds of rays are only elements that make up normal light.
    - e. Space – probably the best illustration, but still imperfect. Look at the space in this room.
      - i. It has three dimensions



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1. Height
2. Length
3. Breadth
- ii. Each of these dimensions takes up the entire space (cubic footage) of the room,
  1. There are three dimensions, but there is one space
  2. Take away any of the dimensions and you have no space.
7. Objections to the Trinity
  - a. It is not logical (by human logic)
  - b. The word *Trinity* does not appear in the Bible
    - i. The Trinity is taught, even though the word is not there
    - ii. Early Christian literature shows that early Christians believed in the Trinity and taught it.
8. Who doesn't believe in the Trinity
  - a. Jews
  - b. Unitarians –
    - i. They deny all the supernatural elements of the Bible.
    - ii. They have a tendency to deny anything theological that they cannot understand.
  - c. Jehovah's Witnesses – They believe Jehovah is God and Jesus was created by God.
  - d. Some liberal Protestants
  - e. United Pentecostals and most so-called "Apostolic" churches – *Jesus Only*
    - i. These make up a minority of tongues talkers. Most other tongues talkers look up on them as a false religion.
    - ii. They believe that Jesus is the Father Son and Holy Ghost
    - iii. They baptize n the name of Jesus (only)
    - iv. They believe that, in order to be saved, you must speak in tongues and be baptized in the name of Jesus.
    - v. They believe that baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Sprit is unscriptural. According to them, if you are not baptized in the name of Jesus, you will go to Hell.
9. Is it necessary to believe in the Trinity?
  - a. The Trinity is WHO GOD IS.
  - b. If you don't believe in the Trinity, you may believe in a god, but you do not believe in God for WHO HE IS.
  - c. Everybody believes in things they don't understand. Electricity, internal combustion engines, computers, space travel, for example.
  - d. As believers, we believe God. We believe what He revealed, even if we don't understand everything.
  - e. Our knowledge and understanding here on earth is imperfect and incomplete. When we get to Heaven, God is going to show us a lot more. 1 Cor 13:9-12

*That in the ages to come he might show  
the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness  
toward us through Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7)*