

# Theology Proper

## The Trinity – Lesson 11

- **Lesson overview:** Defining the Trinity, False Teachings concerning the Trinity, Progressive revelation concerning the Trinity, Biblical texts supporting only one True God, Old Testament support of the Trinity, New Testament evidence for the Trinity, Practical ramifications of the Trinity, Illustrations to help understand the complexity of the Trinity.

### I. Defining the Trinity

**A. Correct definition:** There is only \_\_\_\_\_ true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are \_\_\_\_\_ coeternal and coequal \_\_\_\_\_ being the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**B. What it is not:**

1. We do not believe in three \_\_\_\_\_ Gods, which would make us polytheistic, but rather we believe that there is only \_\_\_\_\_ God in three \_\_\_\_\_.
2. We do not believe that the Father is the only eternal being and that He is superior and the creator of the Son and Holy Spirit. We also believe that all three persons of the Godhead, being the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are coequal and coeternal.

### II. False Teachings Concerning the Trinity

**A. \_\_\_\_\_ Pentecostalism** – Also known as the “Jesus only movement”, does not believe in 3 separate persons inside the Godhead, but rather Jesus alone is God and manifests himself in different “modes”, sometimes as the Father, or as the Son, or as the Holy Spirit. This false teaching has been around since the second century in what was known as “modalism”. A modalist views God as one Person instead of three Persons and believes that the Father, Son, and Spirit are simply different modes or forms of the same divine Person. They believe that God simply switches among these three different forms.

**B. Mormons** – State that they believe in God the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, but they do not believe in the trinity. They believe each is a \_\_\_\_\_ God and therefore they worship \_\_\_\_\_ gods.

1. They teach the Father and Son both have flesh and bones as humans.
2. The Spirit, however, does not, but is likened to magnetism or electricity.
3. Believe God was once less than he is now, even once dwelling also on earth as a man and has through understanding and obeying the universal and eternal laws of the gospel has attained His position of exaltation and godhood and can still become greater.
4. When asked why they disagree with the Biblical teaching of the trinity, they state that *Joseph Smith's visions “trump” the trinity teachings of the Bible.*

**C. Jehovah Witnesses** - They refer to Jesus as the “Son of God”, however they believe he was \_\_\_\_\_ by God and is not \_\_\_\_\_, just merely a son of God.

1. They say Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ claimed equality with God.

2. In the November 1995 issue of the Watchtower, they say “The foremost angel, both in power and authority, is the archangel, Jesus Christ, also called Michael.”
3. They have changed the wording of John 1:1 to say, “a god” instead of “God.” This is what occults do to make their teachings work.
4. Concerning the Holy Spirit - They deny the Holy Spirit is a \_\_\_\_\_, but rather just an impersonal, invisible spirit force to bring about God’s will.
5. Concerning the Trinity - They \_\_\_\_\_ the trinity altogether and say that it is a teaching of Satan.

### III. Progressive Revelation and the Trinity

**A. What is “Progressive Revelation”?** God’s message to man was not given at \_\_\_\_ time, but rather was given by many men with different backgrounds over 15 centuries. The truth was given to men in a gradual nature as men were able to receive and comprehend its truths. The Scripture that we now have is completed, it is finished and is not to be added to or taken away from.

#### B. Scriptural Evidence of Progressive Revelation

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – *I have yet many things to say unto you, **but ye cannot bear them now.** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*
2. **John 1:17** – *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*
3. **Hebrews 1:1-2** — *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **2;** Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*
4. **Ephesians 3:1-6** — *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, **2;** If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: **3;** How that by revelation he made known unto me the \_\_\_\_\_; (as I wrote afore in few words, **4;** Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) **5; Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6;** That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*
  - a. Here Paul is disclosing a secret from God. A mystery that was formerly unknown to the minds of men but has now been revealed.
  - b. So much of what we have in the N.T. was unknown even to the greatest of Old Testament saints. **Deuteronomy 29:29** - *“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God:”* There are some things that God knows that are too great, and marvelous or too complex for man to know.
  - c. Old Testament saints knew that Gentiles would be saved. They understood that God had a place for Gentiles in the Kingdom, but they never understood that the Gentiles and Jews would be made into one. That there would be no difference. They never understood what Paul said about the *“Middle wall of partition would be eliminated”*. That they would be equal before God. They understood that the Messiah would come, but they did not understand that God would come in the flesh, the incarnation

was a mystery to them. They understood the temple in the Old Testament, but they did not understand that their very body would become the temple in which God would dwell!

5. Luke 24:27, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Hebrews 5:11-14

**C. Scriptural Evidence that the Revelation from God has been completed and is not to be \_\_\_\_\_ to or t \_\_\_\_\_ away from.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – *“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. 6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*
3. \_\_\_\_\_ – *“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”*

**D. This Principal as applied to the teaching of the Trinity.**

1. The primary truth that was being taught throughout the O.T. was Monotheism which states that God is \_\_\_\_\_ God.
2. The following verse is a foundational verse of the “Shema” or the “Jewish confession of faith”.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ - *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:*
3. Polytheism, which taught that there were \_\_\_\_\_ gods, was a chief heresy with which the Israelites were struggling with. They often fell into the sinful practices of the surrounding nations and worshiped there many false gods.
4. God was taking much care to establish the truth of Monotheism in the O.T., it was not yet feasible to introduce the concept of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Godhead at that time.
5. Until the truth of one \_\_\_\_\_ God was firmly established, the truth that \_\_\_\_\_ persons existing in one God (the Trinity) could not be introduced.

**IV. Biblical texts supporting only one True God.**

- A. Deuteronomy 6:4** – *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:*
- B. Isaiah 44:8** — *Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.*
- C. Isaiah 45:5** – *“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:*
- D. Ephesians 4:6** – *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*
- E.** \_\_\_\_\_ – *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”*
- F. John 17:3** — *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

**G. 1 Corinthians 8:6** — *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

## V. Old Testament support of the Trinity.

### A. Plural form of God's name.

- **One of God's most often used names is \_\_\_\_\_** which is used 2310 times as the name of the true God and is first used in first verse of the Bible. In the Hebrew language "im" on the end of a noun makes it plural. (Ex. Cherub to Cherubim). Here we see in the first verse of the Bible this Hebrew name for God points towards a Trinity.

### B. Plural \_\_\_\_\_ are used of God.

1. **Genesis 1:26** — *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*
2. **Genesis 3:22** — *"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of \_\_\_\_\_, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:"*
3. **Genesis 11:6-7** — *"And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."*
4. **Isaiah 6:8** — *"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for \_\_\_\_\_? Then said I, Here am I; send me."*

### C. God is applied to \_\_\_\_\_ distinct personalities in the same passage.

1. **Isaiah 44:6** — *"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*
2. **Isaiah 48:16c** — *"and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me." (Isaiah 59:21, 63:9-10)*

### D. The proclamation of worship to God points toward a trinity.

1. **Isaiah 6:3** — *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*
2. **Revelation 4:8** — *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

E. \_\_\_\_\_

## VI. New Testament evidence for the Trinity.

### A. Clear \_\_\_\_\_ of the Trinity

#### 1. At Christ's Baptism

- **Matthew 3:16-17** — *And \_\_\_\_\_, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the \_\_\_\_\_ of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: **17**; And lo a \_\_\_\_\_ from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

#### 2. In the Great Commission

- **Matthew 28:18–20** — *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19; Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the \_\_\_\_\_, and of the \_\_\_\_\_, and of the \_\_\_\_\_: 20; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

### 3. In Paul's Benediction

- **2 Corinthians 13:14** — *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

### 4. In Peter's Salutation

- **1 Peter 1:2** — *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

### 5. In Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

- **Ephesians 4:4–6** — *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6; One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

## B. NOTE: The following four truths taken from the New Testament demand the acceptance of the trinity.

### 1. All three beings are recognized as \_\_\_\_\_.

#### a. The Father is recognized as God.

- **John 6:27** — *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

#### b. The Son is recognized as God.

- 1) **John 1:1–3** — *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2; The same was in the beginning with God. 3; All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*
- 2) **John 20:28** — *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*
- 3) **Philippians 2:6** — *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*
- 4) **Hebrews 1:8** — *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

#### c. The Spirit is recognized as God.

- 1) **Acts 5:3–4** — *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4; Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*
- 2) **John 14:15–17**

- **allos vs heteros**

### 2. The three beings are \_\_\_\_\_ from each other.

#### a. Father is distinct from the Son.

##### 1) The Father bears witness of the Son.

- **John 5:36–37** — *36; But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same*

*works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37; And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*

- At the mount of Transfiguration – Luke 9:28-36

**2) The Son was sent by the Father.**

- **Galatians 4:4** – *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,”*

**3) The Son addressed the Father in prayer.**

- **John 17:1** – *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.”*

**4) The Spirit is distinct from the Son and Father.**

- John 14:16-17** – *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”*
- John 15:26** — *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

**b. Each three beings are \_\_\_\_\_** (Eternality is one of the most fundamental concepts of deity).

- 1) Father - Psalm 90:2** – *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*
- 2) Son - John 1:1-2** – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*
- 3) Holy Spirit - Hebrews 9:14** – *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the \_\_\_\_\_ Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

**c. Three beings are one in \_\_\_\_\_.**

- 1) John 10:30** – *I and my Father are one.*
- 2) John 14:16** — *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*
- 3) 1 John 5:7** — *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

## **VII. Practical ramifications of the Trinity.**

**A. All persons of the Godhead are involved in \_\_\_\_\_**

- 1. John 3:6** — *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*
- 2. John 3:16** — *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**B. All are involved in communicating God’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

- 1. The Father - 2 Timothy 3:16** — *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

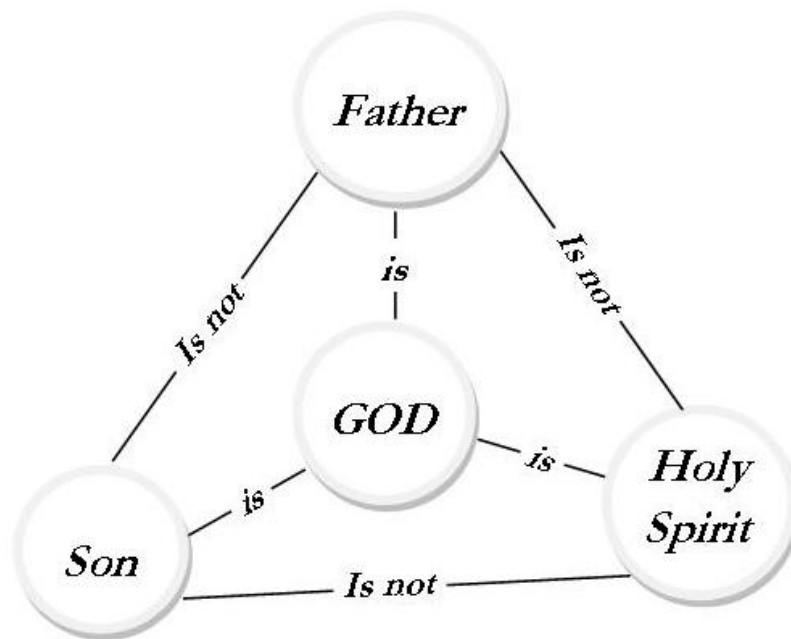
2. **The Son - John 1:18** — *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*
  3. **The Holy Spirit - John 16:13** — *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.* **2 Peter 1:21** — *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*
- C. In prayer, you may address any person of the Trinity; but ordinarily, according to the Biblical patter we address the Father in the name of Christ as the Spirit directs us.

## VIII. Illustrations to help understand the complexity of the Trinity.

- A. **Water** - may serve as a “three-in-one” illustration since it retains its chemical activity whether in \_\_\_\_\_ (ice), \_\_\_\_\_ (steam), and \_\_\_\_\_. All are water, yet they are distinct from each other.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
1. **1 John 1:5** — *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*
  2. In his book, *The Chemistry of the Blood*, M. R. DeHaan, founder of the Radio Bible Class, notes that in saying “God is light,” the biblical authors are telling us something about the Trinity. A scientific analysis of sunlight reveals that it consists of three kinds of rays:
    - a. Chemical rays or actinic. These rays are invisible and can neither be seen or felt.
    - b. Light rays. These rays can be seen but never felt.
    - c. Heat rays. These rays are felt but never seen.
    - d. DeHaan writes, “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. We know the Godhead consists of Three Persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father corresponds to the chemical rays of sunlight; No man hath seen God at any time. The Son, who is the light of the world, corresponds to the light rays, the One whom we can see but not feel. The Holy Spirit corresponds to the heat rays, since He is felt in the lives of believers but never seen.” The Sun, its light, and its power can help illustrate the Trinity. No one on earth with only their natural eyes has actually seen the sun, but only the suns’ rays, just as no one has seen the Father, but we have seen the radiance and glory of the Father in the Son (Hebrews 1:3). The power of the sun is what brings forth life on the earth, just as the Holy Spirit is like the power of the sun. (M. R. DeHaan, *The Chemistry of the Blood* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1943), 66.)
  3. J.I. Packer - The two greatest mysteries of Christianity are: (1) The Trinity of God; and, (2) The Duality of Christ. How can God be three Persons, yet one God? How can Jesus Christ be two Natures, yet one Man? Here are two mysteries for the price of one—the plurality of persons within the unity of God, and the union of Godhead and manhood in the person of Jesus. On these two mysteries, all else hangs. (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 46.)
  4. W. A. Criswell, in a sermon on the Trinity, said, “In reading the life of Augustine, I note that one day, when he was walking along the seashore, he saw a little boy digging a trench in the sand. He walked over to the lad and

asked him what he was doing. The little fellow replied, 'Sir, I am making a trench.' 'Why are you doing it?' asked Augustine. The little lad replied, 'I am going to empty the sea into my trench.' The great thinker, the greatest of the Latin Fathers, continued his walk and mused: 'So the lad thinks that he is going to empty the sea into the little trench he has made in the sand. Sometimes we are like that. We propose to encompass the infinitude of God in the small limits of our mind.' " (W. A. Criswell, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 69.)

***Picture of the Trinity from Charles Ryrie – Basic Theology***



- **Weekly Assignments**

- Study for test over lesson 11
- Read: "Biblical Doctrine" (MacArthur/Mayhue) pages 226-229
- Be ready to present your lesson. You will need two teacher copies and 15 student copies for the class.