

1. THE IS ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS

INTRODUCTION

- **Our aim**

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah, "**Behold your God!**" (*Isaiah 40:9*)

- **The Trinity is: "not essential... nonsense... offensive."**

- **The Trinity defined**

"The Father is God, The Son is God, The HS is God; And yet there are not three Gods, but one God." (Athanasius)

A key bible text: Matthew 28:18-19

"And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

1. THERE IS ONE GOD

- (a) **there is only ONE true God.**

Matthew 28:19 "the name..."

Deuteronomy 6:4, 4:39

1 Corinthians 8:4 - "... there is no God but one".

(Also Deut. 4:35, Zech. 14:9b, Mark 12:29, Romans 3:30, 1 Tim. 2:5, James 2:19)

(b) there ARE other “gods”

- **supernatural beings**
(Satan and demons – Job 1:6ff, Zech 3:2, Deut 32:17, Ps 106:37)
(Angels – Daniel 3:25-28)
(Also Ex 15:11, Ps 89:5-9, Ps 138:1, Jn 10:34-36).
- **idols, false gods** (“so-called gods”, 1 Cor 8:5)

(c) there is one INCOMPARABLE God in the midst of all these other powers

- **Yahweh is the sole uncreated creator**
Nehemiah 9:6, "You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.
- **Yahweh alone knows and declares the future**
Isaiah 42:8-9, I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."
- **Yahweh is the unique revealer and rescuer**
Deuteronomy 4:32-34

(d) Implication: there is one true God - there are not many gods

NOT polytheism (= many gods)

Polytheism is

- (a) a lie – which dishonours God
- (b) a lie – which enslaves people

2. IN THREE PERSONS: FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

(a) NOT modalism = one God with three masks

(b) Three distinct persons

Matthew 3:16-17, "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"."

(c) Implication: God is a God of relationship

3. EACH PERSON IS FULLY GOD

(a) The Father is God:

1 Corinthians 8:6 – "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist..."

(b) The Son is God:

John 1:1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:18, No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Hebrews 1:3, He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...

Hebrews 1:8, But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

(c) The Spirit is God:

He is the Spirit of God: Rom 8:9-11, 2 Cor 3:3, 1 Jn 4:2

... and He is the Spirit of Jesus: Acts 16:7, Romans 8:9, Gal 4:5, Phil 1:19,

To lie to the Spirit is to lie to God, Acts 5:3-4

He is Yahweh, the God of the OT (e.g. the words of the Lord in Ps 95:7-11 are said to be the Spirit's words when cited in Hebrews 3:7-9)

He does divine works: creating (Gen 1:2), resurrecting (Ezek 37), inspiring the Scriptures such that they are God's words (2 Pet 1:20-21), convicting of sin (Jn 16:8-11) etc.

(d) Implication: everyone must worship Jesus

- Arianism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Islam, Judaism etc.
- Mark 12:29-36 – Issue: Who is the Lord? How should we treat him?
Hebrews 1:6 – “let all God's angels worship him.”
John 20:28 – “my Lord and my God.”
- All religions are NOT the same

John 5:23, “... that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.
Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.”

BIG IMPLICATION: THE TRINITY IS WHO GOD IS

Caution: avoid Trinity illustrations – they aren't true!

Unless we grasp that God is one God in three persons “... only the bare and empty name of God flits about in our brain to the exclusion of the true God.” (John Calvin)

"It is the existence of this God alone that I confess. With reference to the claimed existence of any other god as the true God, I am not simply agnostic, I am a convinced atheist. I deny that any other gods exist save as idolatrous creations in the minds of sinful men." (Robert Reymond)

TO DISCUSS:

Re-read John 5:23. How does this verse fit into what we've thought about today? Why is honouring Jesus so important? How does it answer someone who says “We all believe in the same God”? Pray for non-Christian friends and family in the light of this verse.

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9

- What is commanded here? (look carefully...). Put the command in verses 6-9 in your own words. How can we help each other do this?
- There is one God – and so we're to have an undivided love of him. Consider and confess any ways in which your love for God may be divided.