

The Trinity

DEFINITIONS

Unity, Equality, Distinction

DISTORTIONS

DELIGHT

NEED TO KNOW

PASSAGE: JOHN 1:1-18

"It has been said that 'the proper study of mankind is man.' I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father." - Charles Spurgeon

DEFINITIONS

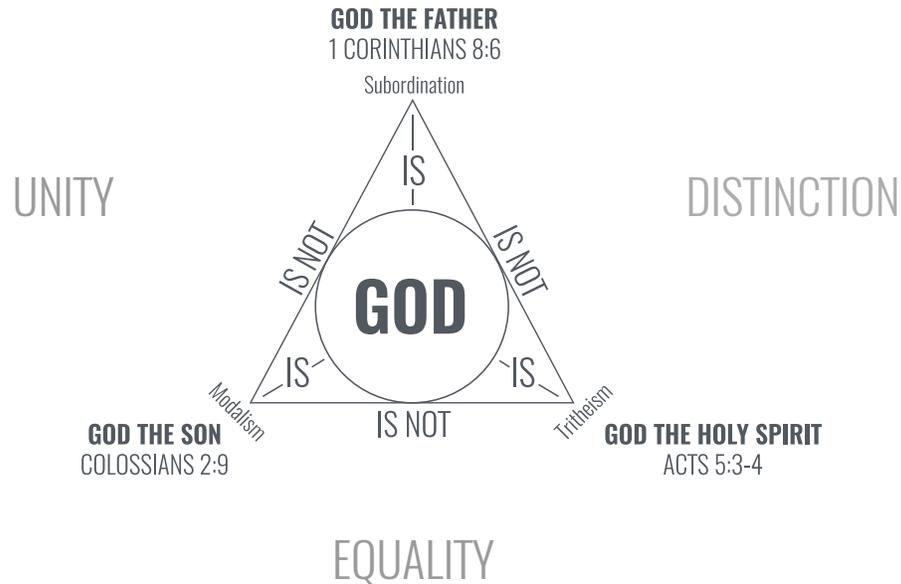
God: The greatest possible being by whom all other beings exist.

Trinity: There are three things you need to rightly define the trinity: Unity, Equality and Distinction. If you take away one, you fall into heresy.

Unity: There is one God existing in the Father, Son, the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Equality: Each person is fully God (Matthew 28:19-20)

Distinction: Each person is not the other person (2 Corinthians 13:14)



Glimpses of Tri-unity

In Marriage

The husband and wife are united in one flesh, equal in dignity, and distinct in roles.

In the Church

The members of the body are united in Christ, equal in dignity, and distinct in roles.

DISTORTIONS

Denial of one, distorts all

God is three persons (Distinction)

Deny this Truth: Modalism - God is equal and unified, but not distinct.

Each Person is Fully God (Equality)

Deny this Truth: Arianism, Jehovah's Witness - God is distinct and unified, but the persons are not equal.

There is One God (Unity)

Deny this Truth: Tritheism, Mormonism - God is distinct and equal, but not United in being/ essence.

Bad Analogies (from Justin Deeter blog)

The Trinity is like an egg.

- The Analogy: In one egg you have the white, the yoke, and the shell composing one full egg.
- This analogy denies the unity of the God-head. The problem with this analogy is that an egg yoke is of a very different substance than a shell. Also, the egg is made up of three distinct and unlike parts. This analogy actually teaches the heresy of tritheism.

The Trinity is like water

- The Analogy: The trinity is like water. Water has three states: solid, liquid, and gas. Although the water changes forms it is still H₂O. Just as water changes forms so too is the trinity.
- This analogy denies the distinction of the God-head. The problem with this analogy is that no one molecule of H₂O can actually exist as solid, liquid, and gas at the same time. As a result the water molecule must change forms. A single molecule cannot simultaneously exist in three different states. This analogy actually teaches the heresy of modalism.

The Trinity is like a three-leaf clover

- The Analogy: The trinity is like a Three-Leaf Clover. There are three different leaves that represent the three different persons of the trinity.
- The problem with this analogy is it denies the unity of the God-head. The analogy breaks down because the three leaves are overly distinct and cannot represent the unity of God. As a result, this analogy can easily lead to tritheism in which there are three different gods which might share some like substance.

The Trinity is like a man who is a father, husband, and son

- The Analogy: The trinity is like a man who is a father, husband, and son. Although he is one he has different roles to different people. The trinity is like this man.
- The problem with this analogy is that it denies the distinction of persons in the God-head. The analogy breaks down because I can simultaneously be a father, husband, and son to any one person. In reality, I change my role depending on who I am interacting with. As a result, this analogy actually teaches modalism.

DELIGHT

God has eternally delighted in Himself, delights in His image bearers, and has made a way for man to find life now and forever by delighting in Him

God in God

"For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand." - John 3:34-35

"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; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." - Matthew 3:16-17

God in Man

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." - 1 John 4:10

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever would believe in him should not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

Man in God: Spiritual and Eternal Life

Spiritual Life: Prayer

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God...Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." - Romans 8:26-27, 34

Spiritual Life: Scripture Inspiration

"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." - 2 Peter 1:21

Spiritual Life: Interpreting Scripture

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." - John 14:26

Spiritual Life: Overcoming Sin

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." - Galatians 5:22-24

Spiritual Life: Every Blessing

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." - Ephesians 1:3

"What I mean is this. An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray,

praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers. The man is being caught up into the higher kinds of life—what I called Zoe or spiritual life: he is being pulled into God, by God, while still remaining himself. “ - C.S. Lewis

Eternal Life: Salvation

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” - Galatians 4:4-7

Eternal Life: Security

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” - Ephesians 1:13-14

Eternal Life: Sanctification

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” - 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Eternal Life: Glory

*“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”
- John 17:1-5*