

OUR GREAT GOD

Discipleship II - Chapter 9

OUR GREAT GOD

Everyone enjoys a mystery. Solving a mystery is a great thrill, but some mysteries seem unsolvable. Such is the case with the great mystery of one God in three Persons. The Trinity of God will not be fully explained until the day when we will meet our Lord in glory.

Many futile attempts have been made to explain the Trinity. The Trinity has been compared to three forms of water. (It is liquid, ice and steam, yet still water.) The Trinity has been compared to the three parts of the egg. (It is white, yolk, and shell, yet one egg.) Saint Patrick is supposed to have used the three distinct sections of the single shamrock leaf to illustrate the Trinity. All of these illustrations fall short of explaining the uniqueness of the Trinity because man's finite mind cannot explain the infinite God.

Though the Bible never uses the word Trinity, the concept of the Trinity of God is clearly taught. The Bible gives us no option whether or not we should believe in the Trinity. We must believe it!

Do not be troubled if you cannot fully understand this complex mystery. Woodbridge has well said, "He who would try to understand the Trinity fully will lose his mind, but he who will deny the Trinity will lose his soul."

GOD IS ONE

The burden of the Old Testament as it relates to the God head is the message of the singular nature of God. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one is Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This statement would truly startle the world in Old Testament times because polytheism (belief in many gods) was the norm. Monotheism (belief in one God) stood in opposition to the worship of the sun god, the moon god, the fertility god, and every other god that man could invent.

The belief in one God is reiterated by the New Testament. I Corinthians 8:6 states, "But to us there is but one God." For the Romans and Greeks of New Testament times, the concept of one God was a novelty. In fact, the Greeks in Athens worshiped so many gods that they even included a monument to the unknown god just in case they missed one (Acts 17:23).

Our God is one God and indivisible; yet, the whole essence of God is to be found equally within each member of the Godhead (John 10:30,33). What a wonderful, indescribable God!

GOD IS THREE IN ONE

God is not only one, He s three. The Trinity is one of the great doctrines of the scriptures. Without the Trinity we could not have God the Son in human form paying the penalty for sin on the cross, nor could we have the Holy Spirit of God indwelling the believer. God is three distinct Persons in one eternal essence.

OLD TESTAMENT IMPLICATIONS

Through the Old Testament never directly pictures the doctrine of the Trinity, there are references which imply the eternal concept. For instance:

1. When God is spoken of as creating in Genesis 1:1, the word God is a plural noun.
2. In Genesis 1:2 the Spirit of God is seen as it moves “upon the face of the water.”
3. In Genesis 1:26 God says, “Let us make man in our image.”

In other words, the Old Testament cannot be used as the source book for proving the Trinity, but it can certainly be used as supporting the concept through implication.

NEW TESTAMENT INSTRUCTIONS

There are three Key New Testament passages which clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity.

1. **The Baptism of Christ** (Matt. 3:16-17). As Jesus Christ came up out of the water, the Spirit of God descended visibly from heaven as a dove and the Father spoke from heaven. Thus, all three members of the Godhead are seen in one passage.
2. **The Baptismal Formula** (Matt. 28:19). Jesus instructs the disciples to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Note that all three names are listed equally. You could not place any other name in this formula. It would not be right to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Apostle Paul. No other name is equal to the three members of the one God.
3. **The Apostolic Benediction** (II Cor. 13:14). Paul concluded II Corinthians by writing. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” Again three members of one Godhead are equally listed.

GOD IS ORDERLY

A long look at God's creation should cause us to stand in awe of God's order. The seasons, the stars, the universal order of God's creation are wonderful, but a long look at God's Word will cause us to be even more overwhelmed with the greatness of our Creator.

God chooses to reveal Himself in His Word. As He does so, He reveals the orderly workings of the Godhead. In their work, the Father is First, the Son is Second, and the Spirit is Third, yet all remain equal.

The Father sends the Son (I John 4:10), the Father sends the Spirit (John 14:26), and the Son sends the Spirit (John 15:26). When the Scriptures use such terminology, the terms speak only of what the members of the Godhead do, not of what they are. They each remain equally God.

CONCLUSION

What What a wonderful mystery! what an important concept! God is three, yet one. Why is this material so important?

Modern times have brought an ever increasing number of cults into our world. great numbers of Americans have been swept away by these cults. How could this have been avoided?

A true understanding of the equality and diversity of the Godhead protects us from the claims of the cults. jim Jones, sun Yung Moon, and others like the will never stand the true test of the equality of the Godhead.

“God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!”

FROM YOUR READING

1. To what have people compared the Trinity in order to help others understand the concept? _____
_____.
Do these comparisons really explain the Trinity? _____
WHY not? _____

2. What was the great burden of the Old Testament as it related to the Godhead? _____

3. Why is the doctrine of the Trinity so essential? _____

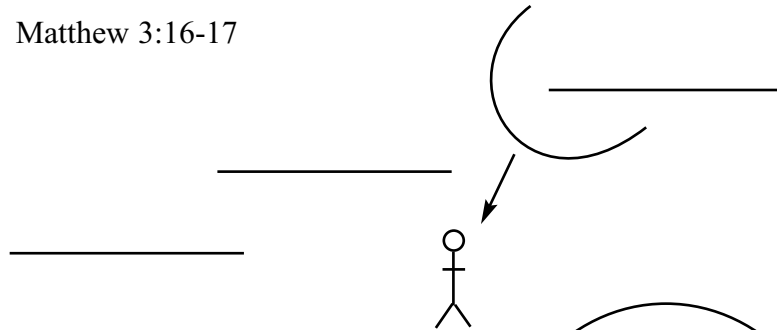
4. How does the Old Testament imply the doctrine of the Trinity?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. What three New Testament passages clearly present the Trinity?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
6. Why is the study of the Trinity important to our day? _____

GROUP TIME

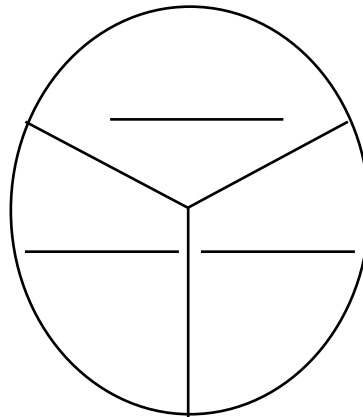
1. What illustrations do people use to explain the Trinity? _____

2. Note the three key passages that demonstrate the truth of the Trinity:

a. Matthew 3:16-17



b. Matthew 28:19-20



c. II Corinthians 13:14 - called the _____

Christ → Father → Holy Ghost

_____ _____ _____

BIBLE STUDY

The following material is given for your personal Bible study and Christian growth. The basic assignments for the course are given and a special “achiever” assignment is suggested for those who desire to go the extra mile. Before you begin, pray that God will allow you to really grow through this endeavor.

SCRIPTURE ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of these questions is to help you gain greater knowledge of the person of God. Pay special attention to the section about Jesus Christ and find the Bible’s answer to the question, “Is Jesus Christ truly God?”

Read Your Bible and Answer the Following:

GOD - THE FATHER

Match the description of God to the correct reference.

_____ Eternal	I John 3:20
_____ All-powerful (Omnipotent)	Malachi 3:6
_____ All-present (Omnipresent)	Psalms 90:2
_____ All-knowing (Omniscient)	Psalms 99:5

GOD - THE SON

Match the description of Christ to the correct reference.

_____ Eternal	John 1:1
_____ Sustainer	Colossians 1:15-17
_____ Creator	Micah 5:2

- How can you see Christ’s claim to the Deity in John 10:30? _____
- What dwelt within the human body of Jesus? (Colossians 2:9) _____

3. How does Christ claim to be God in John 14:8-11? _____

C.S. Lewis said, "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic...or else he would be the Devil of Hell... Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse."

GOD - THE SPIRIT

Match the description of the Holy Spirit to the correct reference.

_____ Eternal	I Corinthians 2:10-11
_____ All-knowing	Job 33:4
_____ Creator	Hebrews 9:14

Achiever Questions

1. GOD - THE FATHER

Match the description of God to the correct reference.

_____ Holy	Psalms 139:7-10
_____ Unchanging (Immutable)	Genesis 17:1
_____ Loving	Titus 3:5
_____ Merciful	I John 4:16

2. What does the Holy Spirit do?

- Acts 1:8 _____
- Romans 8:16 _____
- John 14:26 _____
- I Corinthians 3:16 _____

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Old Testament Books: Learn the names of the five books of poetry this week. (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Songs of Solomon)

Verse: II 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.

Achiever's Verse: Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

On a sheet of paper, briefly write out some reasons to give thanks to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now spend time in prayer thanking God for these wonderful gifts.