

Basic Doctrines of the Bible

(1) The Trinity

“There are three Persons in God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And these three are one God – the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

Shorter Catechism Q. 6

1. What Does the Bible Teach about the Doctrine of the Trinity

1) There is one God

“One”: Gen 2:24, Gen 41:25, Isa 65:25

2) There are Three Persons: The Father, The Son, The Holy Spirit

THE SPIRIT IS A PERSON

1) Personal designations:

- “Spirit” (*Pneuma*). This is a neuter noun and, even if used of a person, one could still use neuter pronouns (see Rom 8:16, 26), and certainly neuter participles (1 Pet 1:11). But, in John 16:14 (*ekeinos*), Eph 1:14 (*hos*) the masculine pronoun is used with this neuter noun. This is only possible if *Pneuma* refers to a Person.

- “Comforter, Helper” (*Parakletos*). This designation of the Spirit, in John chs 14-16, suggests His is a very personal work, cf 2 Cor 1:3-4.

- “Another Helper” (*allos Parakletos*) - John 14:16. This is “another of the same” (*allos*), not “another, different” (*heteros*). Christ Himself is a personal *Parakletos* (1 John 2:1), and the Holy Spirit is “another of the same.”

2) Personal characteristics: intelligence, John 14:26; 15:26; Rom. 8:16, will, Acts 16:7; 1 Cor. 12:11, affections, Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30.

3) Personal acts: He searches, speaks, testifies, commands, reveals, strives, creates, makes intercession, raises the dead, etc., Gen. 1:2; 6:3; Luke 12:12; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8; Acts 8:29; 13:2; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11. (Berkhof *Systematic Theology*)

4) Parallel personal relationships: His relationship is compared with that of the other members of the Trinity, Matt 28:19, 1 Pet 1:1-2, 2 Cor 13:14

5) He is distinguished from His own power: 1 Thes 1:5

3) The Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God

JESUS IS GOD

- 1) Explicit References: John 1:1, John 20:28, Rom 9:5, Phil 2:6, Tit 2:13, Heb 1:3, 2 Pet 1:1 (*cf v 11*), 1 John 5:20.
- 2) Divine names: eg. Is 9:6
- 3) Divine characteristics: eg. Godhead, Col 2:9 (bodily = substantially, *cf v 17*); Immutability, Heb 13:8; Omniscience, John 16:30 (*cf 1:18*); Omnipotence, Rev 1:11 (*cf v 8*); Omnipresence, Matt 28:20
- 4) Divine works: eg. Temporal, John 1:3, Col 1:16-17, Heb 1-2-3; Spiritual, Mark 2:7-10
- 5) Divine honour: John 5:18,23, 1 John 2:23, Rev 5:12-14 *cf 19:10*

4) The Father is not the Son is not the Spirit

THREE DISTINCT PERSONS

1) The O.T. Speaks of a Plurality in the Godhead:

- a. Plural pronouns, Gen 1:26, 3:22, 11:7
- b. Distinct persons: Psalm 45:6,7 (*cf Heb 1:8*), Psalm 139:7, Isaiah 48:16 (with v 12), Isaiah 61:1

2) The N.T. Clearly Distinguishes These Persons:

- a. Distinct Relationships, “I-You-He”, eg John 16:14, Matt 17:5;
- b. Father loves the Son, John 3:35, The Son abides in the Father’s love, John 15:10.;
- c. Prayer between the Son and the Father, John 17
- d. The Three Persons: Matt 3:16,17, Matt 28:19 (though singular “name”), 1 Cor 12:4-6, 2 Cor 13:14 (*Cf the three-fold blessing in O.T. Num 6:24ff*), 1 Pet 1:2

2. How This Doctrine of the Trinity Is Under Threat Today

- 1) The Denial that the Son is God, and that the Spirit is a Person.
- 2) The Denial of Three Distinct Persons in the Trinity: “Jesus-only”
- 3) The Unhealthy Tendency towards “Jesus-Only” Today
 - Prayer being offered up to “Jesus-only” today.
 - Worship in a church directed to the name of “Jesus-only”
 - Hymns that are written today about “Jesus-only”.

3. Why This Doctrine of the Trinity Is So Important

- 1) Essential for Worship
- 2) Essential for Who God Is
- 3) Essential for Who We Are, Gen 1:26,
- 4) Essential for How We Are Saved, 1 Pet 1:2