

- I. Session 15: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are Distinct
- a. Purpose: In this lesson we will see that the Person of Christ is distinct from the Person of the Father and the Son.
 - b. There is a false teaching called Modalism.
 - i. Definition of Modalism: “Modalism is the theological error that deals with the number and form of the person(s) in the Godhead. It states that there is only one person in the Godhead who manifests Himself in three forms or manners: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”¹
 - ii. Modalism believes there is no distinction between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This belief would be comfortable with saying that the Father is Jesus, Jesus is the Holy Spirit, etc.
 - iii. Illustration: “When an actor puts on different masks or disguise in order to pretend to be several different characters during a play, he does not become more than one person. He is still one and the same person behind those masks. In the same way, according to Modalism the ‘Father,’ ‘Son,’ and ‘Holy Spirit’ are only three different masks or disguises which God puts on in the theater of history.”²
 - iv. Instead of Modalism the Bible teaches the idea that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons who are eternally co-existing.
 - c. Recall the Old Testament passages that show a plurality of persons within God in session three. This goes against the idea of Modalism that there is one person but three different “masks” of God since there cannot be “we,” and “us” if there is only one.
 - d. **Isaiah 48:16**= “*Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit.*”
 - i. This person who speaks is sent by the “*Lord God*” and not Himself.
 - ii. The “*Lord God*” has also sent “*His Spirit*.” Thus the Spirit is also distinct from the One who is speaking and the Lord God who is sending them.
 - iii. This Person Speaking is also God Himself
 1. In the context this person speaking is “*the first, I am also the last*” (v.12)
 - a. This title is a title for God.
 - b. A title that is used in the New Testament for Jesus if you remember the last lesson (session 10).
 2. **Verse 13** indicates the Speaker is a Creator and Sustainer of Creation: “*Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together.*”
 3. Therefore this Speaker and One who is sent by the Lord God is also God.

¹ Source: <https://carm.org/dictionary-modalism>

² Robert Morey, *The Trinity: Evidences and Issues* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1996), 507.

- iv. If the Sender is the Father and the Holy Spirit is the other One who is sent, then the remaining possibility of the Divine Speaker is none other than the Son Jesus.
- v. Here we see all three members of the Trinity being distinct persons.
- e. Jesus' Baptism= *"Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." (Luke 3:21-22)*
 - i. Here we see the mention of all three members of the Trinity.
 - ii. In the Greek, the passage here contains contemporaneous temporal clause: that is, it is showing these events happened simultaneously.
 - 1. We see here that the Son *"was praying"* (v.21b)
 - 2. While simultaneously: *"the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove"*
 - 3. While at the same time: *"a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son"*
 This is the Father in light of what the Voice said.
- f. Jesus' prayers to His Father which shows a distinction between the Father and Jesus:
 - i. *"saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." (Luke 22:42)*
 - ii. *"And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last." (Luke 23:46)*
- g. **John 14:16**= *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;"*
 - i. Jesus says this to His disciples the last night before He was to be crucified.
 - ii. Notice Jesus is not the Father because Jesus said *"I will ask the Father,"*
 - iii. Notice the Father is giving *"another Helper"* that is different than Jesus.
 - iv. This other helper is identified in **verse 17** as the Spirit; thus Jesus is distinct from the Holy Spirit.
 - v. Notice the Spirit will *"be with you forever;"* thus showing He eternally exists as the Spirit.
- h. **Can you guys think of other verses that demonstrate the distinction between the members of the Trinity?**