



The Trinity

Introduction

Opening Prayer: Dear God, you are the one eternal God. I cannot know you if you do not reveal yourself to me. Remove all unbelief from within me, and give me a humble faith to contemplate the mystery of your existence as trinity in unity and unity in trinity. Amen.

Over 95% of the world's population believes in a "higher power." Throughout the history of the world, every civilization has had their own gods. But does that mean that they worship the same God we worship? In this lesson we will look at how the Bible describes the one true God. As we do that, we will answer the following question:

Lesson Aim: What is God like?

Part One

Read Matthew 3:13-17.

- 1) When Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist, what did John do at first?
- 2) Why do you think John didn't feel as though he should baptize Jesus?
- 3) John relents and baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River. What happened when the baptism is finished?
- 4) Whose voice is the one from heaven?
- 5) Who descends on Jesus like a dove?
- 6) In v. 17 God the Father calls Jesus his Son. The son of a turtle is a _____. The son of a horse is a _____. The son of a duck is a _____. The son of a man is a _____. And the Son of God is _____.

We describe God with the word "triune." This word comes from the Latin words "tri" for three and "une" for one. When we speak of the Triune God, we are calling him the _____ in _____ God.

Read Genesis 1:1-2 and John 1:1.

We will study God's work of creation in lesson 5. Today we're just going to look at who the Bible says existed before creation.

- 7) Who created the heavens and the earth?
- 8) Who is identified as "hovering over the waters" in Genesis 1:2?
- 9) In John 1:1, Jesus is referred to as "the Word." What does that verse tell us about Jesus in beginning before creation?

God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit are all true God and all existed before the creation of the world.

Read Genesis 1:26 and Isaiah 6:8.

10) What seems grammatically incorrect about those Bible passages?

11) Who is being referred to as "us" in these passages?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4, Romans 3:29-30, and 1 Timothy 2:5.

12) The Bible reveals the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be distinct from each other and also each truly God. Yet, how many Gods does the Bible say there are?

The Bible reveals God to be three separate, distinct "persons," each with equal majesty and authority. Yet, the Bible also reveals that God is not three Gods, but one God. When we say that God is "triune" or when we say that we believe in the "Trinity," we mean that we believe in the only true God who is three-in-one, three Persons yet one God.

KEY POINT 1 - God is three in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What I've learned so far:



Part Two

The doctrine of the Trinity is confusing. No Christian has ever fully understood it. We simply believe it, because that's the way God says it is in the Bible. What you know about someone can often affect how you feel about them. God doesn't want us to just be confused about him. In Part Two, we're going to look up several characteristics of God.

Read Psalm 139:1-12.

1) How is God described in vs. 1-6?

God is omniscient (all-knowing). This is a warning for us in one way: God knows exactly what we think and say and do. This is also a wonderful blessing: God knows us better than our own parents or best friends do. And so God knows every time we need help or comfort, and he knows it even before we know it ourselves.

2) How is God described in vs. 7-12?

God is omnipresent (present everywhere). What a warning this is for us too when we're tempted to try to get away with some sin by hiding it—perhaps stealing, or cheating on a test, or fooling around with a boyfriend or girlfriend. But this truth of God is also a wonderful blessing. God is always with us, watching over us, whether we're at home, at school, or off in some distant place.

Read Genesis 17:1.

3) What adjective is used to describe God in this verse?

God is omnipotent (all-powerful).

Read Deuteronomy 33:27, Leviticus 19:2, Psalm 145:9, Exodus 34:6-7, and 2 Timothy 2:13.

4) How is God described in each of these verses?

Deuteronomy 33:27—

Leviticus 19:2—

Psalm 145:9—

Exodus 34:6-7—

2 Timothy 2:13—

KEY POINT 2 - God has some characteristics which are unique to God (omniscient/present/potent and eternal), and some characteristics which set a good example for us in how to live our lives (without sin, compassionate, gracious, loving, forgiving, and faithful).

What I've learned so far:

Part Three

Study pages 124-129 in the Catechism and answer the following questions in your own words.

- 1) What is a creed?
- 2) Why was the Apostles' Creed developed by the early Christian Church?
- 3) What is meant by the term "Triune God"?
- 4) What God does God reveal about himself in the Bible?

Helpful Passages

Matthew 28:19

When we are baptized, into whose name are we baptized?

2 Corinthians 13:14

When we speak words of blessing to one another, as is done in this verse, whom do we ask to do the blessing?

The Ten Commandments show us what we are and are not to do, but the Creed shows us the one who creates, redeems, and sanctifies us.—Luther

And every time we gather for worship, we acknowledge that we worship the triune God.

Main point — The only true God is the triune God, who is far greater than we are in power and glory.

Final considerations:



Agree or Disagree?

- 1) ___ If there were no people, there would be no God.
- 2) ___ The true God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 3) ___ God did not become triune until Jesus was born.
- 4) ___ The fact that the true God is called the "triune" God means that there are three Gods who work together as though they were one God.
- 5) ___ Only God the Son has a visible body.
- 6) ___ The Father is older than the Son and the Spirit.
- 7) ___ The Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and Son in power and knowledge.
- 8) ___ Only Christians can understand the Trinity.
- 9) ___ We have one God, but sometimes he acts like the Father, sometimes he acts like the Son, and sometimes he acts like the Holy Spirit.
- 10) ___ Creeds are of secondary importance, since what really matters is what a person does or how they live.
- 11) ___ The doctrine of the Trinity is so impossible to understand that no one can be expected to believe it.
- 12) ___ A creed is a statement of what one believes and teaches.
- 13) The three articles of the Apostles' Creed ___ .
 - A. Set forth the chief things about God which are found in all the great religions of the world.
 - B. Compare the things that are taught by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
 - C. Are the common confession of all Christians, and give us a brief statement of the gospel truths as believed and taught by the apostles.
- 14) The fact that God is triune means that there ___ .
 - A. Is only one God, but three distinct persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – in one being.
 - B. Is only one God, but that he is known by three different names in the Bible.
 - C. Are really three distinct Gods – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – all equal in power and majesty, and all working in perfect harmony with each other.

Evaluate:

- 15) Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe that Jesus is true God. Are they Christian churches?
- 16) The Trinity can only be understood by faith.
- 17) When I consider that God is all-knowing, always present, and all-powerful, it gives me the creeps.

Next time you're in church, see how many symbols of the Trinity you can find.

What I've learned about what God is like:

Commit to Memory:

- The Apostles' Creed
- Matthew 28:19-20
- Deuteronomy 6:4
 - Luke 3:22