

The Doctrine of the Trinity

TERMS. “Godhead”, “Triune God”, or “Trinity” refer to God, expressed in three, co-eternal beings. This may sound contradictory, but think of Genesis 2:24, “and they shall become one flesh.” Were Adam and Eve two couples/families or one? They were only one, yet two persons and *both* created in God’s image. The terms above point to one God “family”, yet three persons. (Think of 1 John 4:8. How can God be love if there is only one being? From eternity past, love, by its very nature, can only exist with plurality, not solitude.)

HISTORY. It is complex, but the main concern of early Christian leaders (“fathers” from the first three centuries) was how the one eternal God could create and sustain our world and yet be so involved in humanity. Does a relationship to many things demand a complex God? And to what extent is God present in the historic Jesus? Is it a part, an aspect, or a power of God that is present in Him? These questions may sound like frivolous technicalities to the modern Christian, but those early thinkers wrestled with these issues. Men like Philo of Alexandria, Athanasius of Alexandria, Ignatius of Antioch, Shepherd of Hermas, Justin Martyr, and Arius of Alexandria. It was Arius that proposed that Jesus the Son was created, finite, and not eternal as the Father (when many others concluded the opposite) resulting in a divided church. Athanasius and friends insisted that the Son was as truly God as the Father. There were also many in the middle who were uncomfortable with both extremes: they wanted to hold on to the difference between the Father and Son, without making the Son a mere creature. Roman Emperor Constantine I was upset by this division because it threatened the stability of his empire. He summoned a conference of church leaders to meet in Nicea of Asia Minor (modern İznik, Turkey) in 325 A.D., May to August. This church council was the first effort to attain consensus in the church. It agreed that Jesus is truly God, and published a creed stating the Christian faith in a way that condemned Arius’s teachings (Arianism).

Sermon series and study guides by pastor Ray A. Navarro
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Scripture quotes taken from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated

WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT & WITH FIRE S E R M O N S E R I E S

STUDY GUIDE 1

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

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Although no one can fully comprehend the nature of the Holy Spirit, the Bible gives us enough information to understand at least 2 points:

1. The Holy Spirit is a Person.
2. The Holy Spirit is Deity, equal in divinity with the Father and the Son.

I. The Holy Spirit is a Person

Intellect: Neh. 9:20; Luke 12:12; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:11-13

Emotions: Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30

Will: 1 Cor. 12:11; Acts 15:28; 16:6, 7

Activities indicate personality: Hears (John 16:13); speaks (Mat. 10:20; Acts 13:2; 1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 14:13); convicts (John 16:8; Gen. 6:3; 1 Chr. 12:18; Zec. 12:10; Rev. 22:17); imparts love (Rom. 5:5); imparts skills (Exo. 31:3; 35:31; Jud. 13:25; 14:6, 19); encourages (Acts 9:31); transforms (2 Cor. 3:18); leads (Eze. 1:12, 20, 21; 3:12, 14; Mat. 4:1; Luke 2:27; Acts 8:29,39; 10:19, 20; 13:2, 4; Rom. 8:14).



We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.

Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 616



II. The Holy Spirit is Deity

Eternal: Heb. 9:14

Omnipotent: as creator (Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Psa. 104:30; Mat. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35); empowered Christ's ministry (Acts 10:38; Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:18); raised Jesus to life (Rom. 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18); performs miracles (Rom. 15:19); gives eternal life (Gal. 6:8); gives spiritual power to God's servants (Mic. 3:8; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:13; 1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Thes. 1:5)

Omniscient: shares the Father's thoughts (1 Cor. 2:10, 11); teaches all things (John 14:26); gives messages to the prophets (1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:21; Zec. 7:12; 1 Cor. 2:4; Eph. 3:5)

Omnipresent: Psa. 139:7-12



The prefix "omni" means All or Universal.

Identified with Yahweh of the Old Testament: 2 Sam. 23:2, 3; Eze. 8:1, 3; 2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16

The presence of the Father and Son is through the Spirit: Psa. 51:11; John 14:18, 23

Identified with the God of the New Testament: 2 Cor. 3:18; Acts 5:3, 4



The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.

Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 615



III. Only One God

The Bible writers were Monotheists; they believed in only one God.

Deuteronomy 4:35: "The Lord, He is God; there is No Other besides Him." (see also Deut. 6:4; Psa. 83:18; Isa. 43:10; Mal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:4; Eph. 4:5, 6)

Q: How can there be only one God, and yet a "Father", a "Son", and a "Holy Spirit?"

For a brief history of how this developed in Christendom, see back.