Section: Doctrine of God

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q3. God exists eternally as how many persons?**

God exists eternally as one God, three Persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.

Good evening family I am really excited to dig into question 3 tonight in greater detail. The triune nature of God is definitely a concept that’s difficult to grasp although it is very clearly laid out in scripture. A couple of quick reminders to help with our time tonight. “Personhood” and “being” are different. People have being and personhood--water bottles have being but not personhood. The Godhead is one *being*, three *persons*. These three persons exist without division--they are the one true God. There are distinctions, but not division. Hopefully these reminders will allow you to move forward and really begin to wrap your mind around the complex and beautiful truth of the triune God! Also, it is helpful to remember when you struggle to understand a deep truth about God it usually has something to do with how you are trying to think of Him in relatable terms or ideas. God is wholly other than we are and the triune nature (like the hypostatic union) are deep truths that apply to God and not man. You need to make a new mental category for these truths because you will not be able to compare God to nature or created things that you have experienced. Remember we are made in God’s image designed to reflect His characteristics and attributes to the world around us BUT God is not made in our image, there will be truths about God that we cannot relate to Gods creation or the created order. So it’s very helpful to have a new mental category. When you see a few truths in God’s word that cannot relate to things you understand, you can file it in the category of Theology Proper (the study of God from Scripture). This practice will allow you to say these things of God are truths, though not fully comprehendible by mankind….. Instead of saying the truth must not be true because you cannot comprehend it.

Let’s pray!

**Q3. God exists eternally as how many persons?**

**God exists eternally as one God, three Persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.**

Last week we clearly unpacked that there is only one God. We also began to dive into the trinity touching the surface of Jesus’s deity and we talked through some helpful terms and understanding in regards to being and person. We also talked briefly about poor views of the trinity and poor ways we try to make it understandable. Since we have established well that there is only ONE GOD, I want to show with good clarity the deity of the Father, the deity of the Son, and the deity of the Holy Spirit tonight. I also want to show the personhood of the Spirit and the clear fact that all three persons throughout scripture are called (named) YAHWEH. If the scriptures clearly teach that there is only one God (and they do!) and that each person Father, Son, and Spirit are God, then we will see clearly that the triune understanding of God is the only proper understanding with what scripture reveals to us about God.

Let’s start with our WOT catechism definition of the trinity.

**Trinity:** One God, three Persons. There is but one eternal Godhead that exists in three co-equal, co-eternal Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each Person is fully and completely God; each has the same essence and is described in Scripture as possessing the attributes of God.

Now let’s also reference the Historic Confession of Faith: “The Lord our God is one, the only living and true God. ... This divine and infinite Being consists of three real persons, the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three have the same substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence without this essence being divided.”

**Deity of the Father:**

The deity of the Father is an area that’s never really contested. Is the Father God?

1 Corinthians 8:6 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

We see quite clearly here that the Father is called God. Again this really is not an area that’s contested against so I want to spend more time focusing on the Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit. But the trinity does hinge on the truth that the Father is God AND the Son is God AND the Spirit is God so it’s worth laying out here clearly that scripture calls the Father God.

**Deity of the Son-Jesus Christ:**

One key way to see the deity of Jesus is to see what scripture says about what He does and to ask if those things that Jesus does could be true of a lesser being even an angel. Scripture is filled with clear proclamations of Jesus as the creator of all things. Everything that exists came into existence through Him. Therefore He must be eternal and He must be sovereign. The scriptures never credit angels with this ability or power.

Gen. 1:1 1In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Col. 1:16 16For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Hebrews 1:2-3 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.3He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

John 1:3 3All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1 Corinthians 8:6 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

So clearly is Jesus credited with creating all things that it is hardly a truth to be contested. Even the false religions have had to add to their own scripture in these sections in order to cover up the truth that Jesus has always existed (he was not created) and that all created things (not all “other” things) have been made through him. Essentially what we can see here is that unless a thing was eternal then it came into existence through Jesus therefor Jesus must have been eternal this is an attribute only given to God.

The 1689 Confession of faith says these things this way, “The Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, is truly and eternally God. He is the brightness of the Father’s glory, the same in substance and equal with him. He made the world and sustains and governs everything he has made.”

The scriptures declare that not only was Jesus the creator but all things exist and continue existing for Him and by Him.

Hebrews 1:3He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

Colossians 1:16-17 16For by him (Jesus) all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Can such things be true of anything other than God? The answer is of course not!

Now this is clearly not the strongest argument for the deity of Jesus, however it is very clear and compelling evidence that Jesus is God. Perhaps you may be asking then, “what evidence can be clearer?” - Jesus was called God, and He Himself claimed to be God.

In the gospel of John that we spent a few years teaching through we see multiple statements from Jesus where He claims (as God did in the old testament) “I am”. The term “I am” in the Greek is this phrase “Egō eimi”. This is the very same term that God used to tell Moses His name. In Exodus chapter 3.

Exodus 3:13-15 13Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” 15God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Now one key note here that is really awesome, God said, “I am who I am… tell them (the people of Israel) I am has sent you”, then God goes on to say tell them (the people of Israel) YHWH (LORD) has sent you. God said, “YHWH is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations”. The name “I am” and “YHWH” (LORD) are used as interchangeable names here. Whenever Jesus uses the term “Ego eimi” or “I am”, He is literally calling himself “YHWH” (LORD). What this means for us is that anytime Jesus called Himself LORD He was calling Himself the official name of God. The most famous of these is found in John chapter 8.

John 8:49-59 49Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. **50Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it**, and he is the judge. 51Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” 52The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ 53Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! **Who do you make yourself out to be?”** 54Jesus answered, “**If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’** 55But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. 56Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”

57So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” 58Jesus said to them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”** 59So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

Jesus not only claims here to be the great “I am” (ego iemi), He also claims that God the Father was seeking His (Jesus’s) glory! Think back to last week’s reading from Isaiah,

Isaiah 42:8I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

Jesus said, “The Father whom you (the Jews) call God is the One who is seeking my glory”. Then we see that the same God, the One who Jesus claimed was seeking Jesus’s glory, said in Isaiah; “I will NOT give my glory to another”. So either Jesus is crazy or Jesus is God, just like the Father is God. **Jesus so clearly proclaimed to be God here to the Jews (and remember they would have certainly known what Jesus was claiming) that they picked up stones to kill him.** We see this same thing (Jews attempting to kill Jesus for claiming to be God) repeat itself later in the gospel of John.

John 10:22-33 22At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. 24So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” 25Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, 26but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. 27My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30I and the Father are one.” 31The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. 32Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” 33The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”

Jesus claimed to be one with the Father, He claimed that He was the giver of eternal life like the Father, and when asked if He was the messiah He replied, *I have told you plainly and the works that I have done prove it plainly*. Jesus claimed to be God and to be the awaited for Messiah. If Jesus saying “I have told you plainly” seems vague then notice that Jesus said “the works that I do prove what I have told you, but you do not believe because you are not one of my sheep.” You see Jesus told them plainly that He was the Messiah and Jesus said that His claim was proven by the works He did.

Think about this, if Jesus claimed He wasn’t the messiah then why would he appeal to the miracles He’s done to prove he wasn’t something? It really is clear that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah and that He did what only God could do to prove it, however the Jews did not believe because they were not Christ’s sheep.

There is an interesting part of this passage in verse 30 where Jesus says, “I and the Father are one.” This tends to be a hang up for some people and has certainly led a large group of false teachers to claim “Oneness” theology. “Oneness” theology is basically modalism. They believe that the Father, and the Son, are the same person just different modes. It isn’t hard to see how some people could be confused here if you use this passage apart from the rest of Scripture’s clarity. Remember the Father and the Son are one in the sense of the one being of God. They are always in complete unity, they are never divided. We also see that Jesus is most definitely speaking of two persons in this passage. Jesus even speaks of the different roles--the “distinctions”—that they have. In reality the most literal translation of verse 30 reads, “I and the Father **we** are one.” Again these passages so clearly point not only to Jesus’s deity, but also to the triune nature of the one true God. Jesus is God and the Father is God, but Jesus and the Father are two distinct persons.

In John chapter twenty we see the account of doubting Thomas. Thomas clearly calls Jesus his Lord **AND** his God, yet Jesus never rebukes him. If Jesus were not God he would have most certainly rebuked Thomas. Instead Jesus actually goes on to say that those who believe this (that Jesus is Lord and God) are blessed.

John 20:26-29 26Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” 28Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

We see a few clear truths in these few passages. Jesus claimed to be God, Jesus was called God, and Jesus’s enemies wanted to murder Him because He claimed to be God. We truly didn’t even brush the surface of the scriptures that claim this truth. Now we must see that scripture calls both the Father and the Son, “God.” So either we have multiple “Gods”, which we saw clearly last week is NOT what scripture declares, or we have one God (being) who exists as multiple persons. A common error at this point is to say that this triune view of God doesn’t make sense because we do not know of anything in creation that is one being and three persons. One false teaching is that God must simply be taking on different modes.

This is the “oneness” ideology, or modalism, that I was speaking about a second ago. The oneness/modalism view of God is heresy. The problem with modalism is that it removes the distinctions that scripture makes between the persons of the trinity. If you worship a god that is not three distinct persons (Father, Son-Jesus, and Holy Spirit) then the god you worship is a false god and cannot save you. You do not worship the God of the bible.

Remember church, we must be careful not to go beyond what scripture reveals or remove from/change what scripture reveals. Modalism declares that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all different modes or manifestations, which the one true God assumes. They would say the Father is the Son, and the Son and Father are the Spirit. This belief does not draw distinctions of persons. This would make very little sense in light of Christ’s baptism where we see the three persons of the triune God present and active.

Matthew 3:16-17 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Passages like this really yank the rug out from under modalism. **Nowhere in scripture does any passage say that the Father is the Son or the Son is the Spirit.** Multiple times we see all three persons mentioned and or active at the same time. If Christ were the Father how could He speak from heaven while coming up out of the water, if Christ were the Spirit how could He descend upon Himself like a dove while simultaneously rising up from the water after His baptism? None of this would work according to sound doctrine—the teaching of the Bible. When Jesus prays to the Father why would Jesus ask the Father to do something if He were the Father?

We also see this language and understanding in the epistles:

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NASB) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Why would Paul speak specifically of these three if they were truly just one god taking on different modes at different times? It would really be an unintelligible thing to say.

This false belief is really a very unfortunate view brought about because people are trying to relate what they think they see in scripture with what they see in the world. Somehow for the modalist it’s easier to imagine a God who changes into different modes, than a God who has always existed as one being and three persons. Remember we need to make new categories in our minds when it comes to the being of God because, as I said earlier, nothing in the creation is exactly like God.

We must be careful not to add too or subtract from what scripture declares. Scripture declares clearly that there are three persons; Father, Son, and Spirit, and scripture gives each of these persons titles and characteristics only found in persons. Scripture also clearly declares that there is only one true God. Scripture also declares that God is the creator of the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 40:28Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

Again this word in Isaiah for LORD is YHWH, YHWH is the creator of the ends of the earth. Didn’t scripture say that Jesus was the creator of all things? This gets to the fact again that there is but *one God*. You see Jesus is YHWH. When we take this truth and match it with the truth that the Father is also YHWH, we begin to put the pieces together. God’s name is YHWH, He (God) is the great “I AM”! So do we see scripture refer to the Spirit as YHWH?

**The deity of the Holy Spirit:**

One of the clearest passages of scripture that declare the Holy Spirit to be God is found in Acts.

Acts 5:1-4 1But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2and with his wife’s knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet. 3But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”

Peter proclaims that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, then he says very clearly you have not lied to man but to God. Peter believed the Holy Spirit to be God. This could not be clearer than here in this passage however that’s not the only place that scripture refers to the Holy Spirit as God.

1 Cor. 3:16-17 16Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? 17If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 19Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Paul refers to the believer’s body as a temple. He does this because the temple is where God’s presence dwells. There’s no other reason to refer to your body as a temple. When we compare these two passages it is very clear that Paul (and therefore God) proclaims that, for the believer, your body is a temple because God—specifically God the Holy Spirit is in you. You are not your own, your body is not your own, God the Holy Spirit dwells in you, and you would do well to not defame His temple.

It’s really very clear that the Holy Spirit is God. Thinking back to our definition of the trinity we said God exists as One God in three Persons. A common argument is that the Spirit is not a person, rather it is an impersonal force, therefore your Trinitarian understanding of God is not biblical. Well what this really comes down to is a definitional misunderstanding of personhood. Let’s see what scripture says about the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

**Personhood of the Holy Spirit:**

The clear problem with the claim that the Holy Spirit is just an impersonal force is that the bible attributes certain characteristics and attributes that could only be given to a person. For example, the bible calls the Spirit a He, it also claims, anthropopathicly, that you can grieve the Spirit. These are things that would not be true of an impersonal force. A force cannot know the mind of God, in fact anything other than God cannot know the mind of God. However this truth is proclaimed in 1st Corinthians chapter 2:

1 Cor. 2:10-12 10these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. (Impersonal forces cannot search the depths of God) 11For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? (An impersonal force cannot “know” anything much less the thoughts of another) So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (An impersonal force does not “comprehend” anything) 12Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

Here the bible clearly declares that the Spirit has the ability to know the mind of God. This reveals that the Spirit Himself is God, for no one can know the mind of God except God, and this reveals that the Spirit is not an impersonal force, for a force does not know and understand the depths of anything, much less God. Knowing, understanding, and searching the thoughts of someone, are not attributes of an impersonal force.

Romans 8:27And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

So God the Father knows the mind of the Spirit, just like the Spirit knows the mind of God the Father. The Spirit also always does the will of God (Father). This is really amazing guys the Holy Spirit has His own mind, and God the Father has His own mind, but they always work and act in complete unity—in this way they, speaking figuratively now, they are of the “same mind,” meaning they don’t differ or contradict in knowledge and will. If the Spirit were simply a force, a spiritual power so to speak, He would not have a mind. Forces don’t have these attributes, only persons do.

In regards to the unity of the persons (Father, Son, Spirit) we see Jesus say this over and over again in the book of John. I only do what the Father tells me. The Spirit likewise only does what the Father tells Him.

John 5:19-24 19So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. 20For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. 21For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. 22For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

So clear is the unity between the Father and Son here in these verses ***and*** it is also so clear that there is a distinction between the Father and Son in these verses. The father sends the Son (distinction), the Son only does what the Father is doing (unity). The Father hands judgment over to the Son (distinction). All are to honor the Father and the Son (unity).

This is really such a cool passage in the way that it shows unity and distinction. Or as we have said earlier, distinction without division. In regards to the Holy Spirit, where do we see this unity and distinction in scripture?

John 16:12-15 12“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

We not only see the personhood of the Spirit in this passage but we also again see the unity and distinction of the persons of God. God had sent the Son in our previous passage and now the Son and the Father send the Spirit in this passage.

Jesus does and says what the Father gives Him to do and say, and now here in this passage, the Spirit speaks what He hears from Jesus. They are in complete unity and yet it is very clear, there are distinctions and different roles that each person plays out. Jesus said it is better for us that He goes away so He can send the Spirit. Jesus did not say it is better that I change modes and become the Spirit to you. You see, even though the Spirit speaks the same things Christ spoke, the Spirit functions in a different way and it is better for us. There are distinctions without division.

When we take Tota Scriptura, all of scripture, even though the term trinity never comes up, the concept of the Trinity is so very clear. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit, but the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, are clearly God!

**All three members of the Godhead are called YHWH the covenantal name of God:**

Lastly let’s look at the texts to see that the Holy Spirit is called Yahweh (YHWH).

2 Peter 1:21 21For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter says that the prophets of old were carried along by the Holy Spirit that they prophesied by the Holy Spirit. Well Hosea 1:1 and 2 says that YHWY is the one who spoke through Hosea. This means that the Spirit who carried these prophets along is the LORD who spoke through them.

Hosea 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea…2When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea,

In case you were wondering that is a capitol LORD meaning that the word that came to Hosea came from the covenant name of God, YHWH, and Peter said that the Holy Spirit is the one by whom these prophets spoke.

Let’s see this in another passage:

2 Cor. 3:17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

The Lord is the Spirit. We also saw in an earlier passage that Jesus was the Lord. Again and again we see the Deity of the Holy Spirit, and of Jesus, all throughout scripture. If we cannot fully grasp “HOW” it works, we should certainly not deny “THAT” it is clearly truth and proclaimed in God’s word!

When we take these truths, and the clarity from scripture about these truths, you end up with only one option to understanding God, He is triune in nature, one being yet three persons. If you do not acknowledge this you must add or take away from what scripture has revealed about God. There really is no other option. You must either get rid of the distinctions that are so clear and become a modalist, or you must get rid of the deity of Jesus and become any number of other false religions.

The Scriptures simply don’t give you other options. We even see the triune nature of God in creation. All three members of the triune God were present and a part of creation. The Confession says it this way, “In the beginning God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was pleased to create or make the world and all things in it, both visible and invisible”

They created man in their (plural) image (singular). There were multiple persons but one image. “Let us make man in our image”. It really is incredible how clear scripture is on this topic. The word of God calls the Father YHWH, the Son YHWH, and the Spirit YHWH. The word of God also declares that there is only one God. There are not three YHWH’s separated or divided. The Father, Son, and Spirit are the three persons of the triune God completely unified yet distinct. The reality is since we don’t have a category for one being to exist as three persons, we try in our minds to reconcile this and we end up with some false understanding of God.

If scripture says God is one God and three persons, and if scripture shows clear distinctions between the Father, Son, and Spirit, but never ever shows disunity, then we must hold to what has been revealed to us and accept it as truth. God’s word is truth.

Even the great commission that Jesus gave us reveals the unity and distinction of the Godhead.

Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

One of the arguments from the false modalist camp here is that the passage doesn’t say “name’s of” but “name of” so clearly this is one God with three names. That simply would be tossing out all the other clear distinctions that are made throughout scripture, and it would be a poor understanding of the language use here and its meaning. When we baptize believers we do it in the name of our triune God. There is only one God, but there are three persons that exist as that one being of God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (NASB) “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”

I hope these many passages, and the clarity of the two truths of scripture, are helpful for you to understand why orthodox Christians hold to the triune understanding of God. When scripture calls the Father God, and the Son God, and the Spirit God, and scripture declares that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are different persons, and the scripture declares that there is only one God, then we must wrap our heads around these truths. Don’t fall into error trying to make these truths more palatable or understandable. God is not like us in the sense that we should be able to have an exhaustive knowledge of Him. Surely just because we do not have a one being that exists as three persons in our earthly world, does not mean that God cannot exist this way.

So I wanted to show you the clarity from scripture that Father and Jesus and the Spirit are all called God, that they are most certainly not the same persons (distinction) and that they are most certainly never divided. When we rightly understand and see these truths in scripture we will agree then with our Q&A tonight:

**Q3. God exists eternally as how many persons?**

**God exists eternally as one God, three Persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.**

I want to reference the 1689 historic Christian confession one more time, this portion says, “The Father is not derived from anyone, neither begotten nor proceeding. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. All three are infinite and without beginning and are therefore only one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being.

Yet these three are distinguished by several distinctive characteristics and personal relations. This truth of the Trinity is the foundation of all of our fellowship with God and of our comforting dependence on him.”

We’ve seen these things in our lessons last week and this week. There is more study to be had in these vast truths, but let’s close with this beautiful and encouraging statement from the confession, “This truth of the Trinity is the foundation of all of our fellowship with God and of our comforting dependence on him.”

The very reality of God and His triune nature is “the foundation of all of our fellowship with God and of our comforting dependence on him!” This is huge.

Christian, you have union to God through the gospel BECAUSE God is Triune. The relational reality of God, and the comfort we have in Him, is based on Him existing eternally as one God, three Persons!

The Father loving chose you before time, the Son came to do the work needed to redeem you, and the Holy Spirit causes you to be saved and remain in an eternally secure relationship with God. All three Persons of the Trinity are needed for this redemption! All three Persons of the Trinity have you, and you have them, everlasting! The one true God is the way, the comfort, and the prize!

Love the one true God! Trust the on true God! Cast ALL of your hope and dependence upon Him!

Let’s pray.