

spiritual fruit in Christ's followers, and assists them in prayer.

Personal qualities such as active intelligence, volition, and the capability of being resisted, grieved, blasphemed, lied to, or tempted, are ascribed to Him. Many personal acts are performed by Him. Divine names are given to Him, divine attributes are credited to Him, and divine works are performed by Him. Jesus referred to Him as the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, and the Holy Ghost.

THREE IN ONE

The message is clear: God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to die for all mankind. Jesus suffered to the point of being forsaken by His beloved Father, died, and then rose triumphant over death, Hell, and the grave. Since then, people have been led by the Holy Spirit to pray to God through Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man. Thanks be to God for the Trinity!

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TR25-0223

THE TRINITY

MYSTERY OF THE GODHEAD

Belief in the Divine Trinity is at the core of the Christian faith. The Holy Trinity consists of three Persons in one who are equally and eternally the one true God: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As separate and distinct Persons, each possesses recognizable personalities and qualities. While having individual roles, the three members of the Godhead are in a perfect and complete state of unity as to nature, relationship, cooperation, and authority; there is only one God. No Person in the Godhead either exists or operates separately or independently of the others.

Although it is not possible for the human mind to fully grasp this concept of three completely united in one, faith can firmly lay hold of it as a spiritual truth. This doctrine is clearly presented throughout the Bible.

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Consider the first chapter of Genesis. Verse 26 says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image." The plural forms "us" and "our" indicate that the Godhead consists of more than one individual. The word translated "God" is from the Hebrew word *elohim*, which has a plural form and is translated as "gods" throughout Scripture except when referring to the one true God. In Genesis 1:1, the original language uses

the plural form of "God" and the singular form of "created." These seeming inconsistencies in plural versus singular usage are not mistakes. They harmonize with the rest of Biblical teaching on the Trinity, for they show the plurality of God unified in one action, the creation of the world.

The mysterious reality of the Triune God was illustrated much more completely when Jesus Christ came to earth. The angel announced to Mary that she would bear the "Son of the Highest" and this would come to pass by the Holy Ghost. God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, would send His Son Jesus in the form of a baby. (See Luke 1:26-35.)

At the start of Jesus' public ministry, He went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. Matthew 3:16-17 says, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What a beautiful picture of God in three distinct Persons!

The Trinity was again demonstrated when, before Jesus ascended back to Heaven, He described the Holy Spirit's work to His disciples. "But the Comforter, which is the

Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26; see also John 15:26). Jesus acknowledged the Trinity again when He gave His disciples instructions for water baptism: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Later, Paul the Apostle also mentioned the Trinity when writing to the believers at Corinth, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14). And John the Revelator explicitly stated, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one (1 John 5:7).

GOD THE FATHER

The Bible ascribes attributes and actions to each of the Persons of the Trinity, some of which are shared by all three. God the Father is the Supreme Being, owing His existence to nothing or no one beyond Himself. He is the first Person of the Trinity and is eternal

in existence, as He had no beginning and will never cease to exist. He is omnipotent, or all-powerful; He is omniscient, knowing all things; and He is omnipresent, meaning not limited to any particular geographical place or spatial location, but everywhere at the same time. God declares of Himself, “I am the LORD, I change not” (Malachi 3:6), indicating that He is immutable.

John 4:24 states that “God is a Spirit,” which means He is a living Being who is infinite and free of all limitations, having none of the physical constraints associated with matter. He possesses and exercises the functions of a rational and intelligent nature; and possesses moral attributes such as holiness, righteousness, goodness, grace, mercy, and truth. Love is a central attribute of God, for 1 John 4:8 declares, “God is love.” Many Biblical passages indicate that God is personal in nature. He has self-awareness, a will, and feelings. He makes choices, and relates to other personal beings.

God the Father is the unseen Creator of all things, visible and invisible. While the Triune God was active in all the works relative to creation and redemption, it was the Father who was primary in the institution of the redemptive plan of salvation. He is the One to whom the redeemed are reconciled through the atoning work of Jesus Christ, His Son.

GOD THE SON

The Eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the second Person of the Godhead. His relationship with the Father had no beginning, but existed from eternity. He declares himself to be one with the Father, saying, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

Scripture identifies Jesus Christ as the Word, stating, “the Word was God” (John 1:1) and “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Jesus took man’s nature and was born of a virgin; He who always was truly God, became truly man as well. His purpose in coming to the world was to redeem man from his fallen state through His substitutionary work on the Cross. Jesus knew from before time began the price He would pay for the redemption of all people. He suffered, was crucified, died and was buried, and afterward rose again from the dead, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). After His ascension, He took his rightful place on the right hand of God (see Hebrews 1:3), where He makes intercession for humanity. He will one day return to this earth, where He will rule and reign in righteousness.

Jesus Christ accepted worship while He was on earth, and He will be worshiped by every creature in the universe. As the second Person of the Divine Trinity, He is omniscient,

omnipotent, and omnipresent. He is unchanging in His person, purposes, and nature. His deity is seen in the authority He had while on earth in human form, as well as the part He will take in the events leading up to the final dissolution of the earth and the establishing of the new Heaven and the new earth.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Ghost, also referred to in Scripture as the Holy Spirit, is the third Person in the Trinity. He must be recognized and honored as such, and never referred to as “a force,” “a thing,” or “it.” God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are coequal, and the Holy Spirit possesses the same divine attributes of eternal existence, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence as the other two Persons of the Divine Trinity.

Many roles are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, and perhaps the most well-known summary of His role was given by Jesus in John 16:7-14. He is the agent who leads men to repentance. He proclaims Jesus and glorifies Him; He does not draw attention to or glorify Himself. He ministers to believers. He is the specific agent in the world to lead believers into deeper experiences with God, to call and empower disciples for service, and to lead individuals into all truth. He bestows spiritual gifts, produces