

LESSON 7: TRINITY

INTRODUCTION

The Trinity is an odd thing in that it is in scripture but is not explicitly taught in scripture. The reason it is so critical is because every single cult denies 2/3rds of the Trinity. There are two kinds of cults: main-line groups (Jehovah's Witness, Mormon) that do not really employ brainwashing and extremist groups that do employ brainwashing. The cults get 75% of their converts from main line denominations (Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians).

Cults will never identify God the Father as anything except Jehovah in the Bible, and will always deny that Jesus is God, and that the Holy Spirit is either a Person or God. As a Christian, if I can get others or myself locked down on the truth about the Trinity, then the cults cannot have me. It is important to know what the Bible says concerning this issue.

PROOF OF THE TRINITY

Read Genesis 1:26-27

- ▶ How do these verses tell us of the Trinity's existence?

²⁶ Then **God** said, "Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness..."

Notice that in this passage there are plural pronouns when discussing God. That does not mean there are three Gods. This cannot be explained nor understood in our human minds.

The Bible teaches that I am spiritual in body. I understand the distinction that God created me physically to relate to other people physically. He also created me with a soul so that I can relate to other people emotionally. The Bible says that Jonathan's soul was knit together with David's soul (1 Samuel 18:1).

My emotional binding with the Holy Spirit enables me to connect with the Father through the Holy Spirit. *Godhead* is used to refer to God's essential nature. It is clear that inside the Godhead, the basic idea of the Trinity, that there is one God in three persons in that Godhead. The Bible said "let us make man in our image" and this shows that there is communication within the Godhead and always agreement within the Godhead. There is never a disagreement or division in the Godhead.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

- ▶ Why are you baptized in all three parts of the trinity?

God the Father chose to redeem us; God the Son accomplished the redemption; and God the Spirit applies the redemption. It is never clearly stated in Scripture, but it can be seen throughout Scripture.

Read Ephesians 1:3-14

This one passage deals with God the Father (v.3-6), God the Son (v.7-12) and God the Spirit (v.13-14) and their role in our redemption.

THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

Read Psalm 139:1-6

- ▶ What characteristic of God is shown in these verses? God is omniscient or all knowing.

Read Psalm 139:7-10

- ▶ What characteristic of God is shown in these verses? God is omnipresent or everywhere.

Read Psalm 139:13-16

- ▶ What characteristic of God is shown in these verses? God is omnipotent or all powerful.

We have this God that David says embodies all three characteristics. He knows everything, He is everywhere, and He is all powerful. He can do anything. This defines God. If your God does not have all of these three, then he is not a god. Jesus as a man did not possess all three of these characteristics while He was on Earth. This is where the cults get us.

JESUS

Read Matthew 24:36

- ▶ What characteristic of God is Jesus limited to in this passage?

Jesus is not **omniscient**. This is Christ talking, and He says that the Son does not know of “the day and hour when He will be coming back.” Jesus doesn’t know everything.

Read Mark 6:45-47

- ▶ What characteristic of God is Jesus limited to in this passage?

Jesus is not **omnipresent**. Jesus is alone because He cannot be everywhere. He is not and does not have the ability to be anywhere and everywhere at the same time.

Read John 4:6

- ▶ What characteristic of God is Jesus limited to in this passage?

He is not **omnipotent**. He is not all powerful. He’s tired and exhausted.

This is what Jehovah's Witness use to show that Jesus isn't God. They will get you to agree with them that the description of God in the Bible is that He knows everything, He is everywhere, and He is all powerful. But, this description does not apply to Jesus. He does not know everything, He cannot be everywhere, and He is not all powerful. What do you say to them? How do you answer them? They catch you easily. Most Baptist will say, "Uhh well, I don't know" They will pull you in with the fact that he prayed to the Father, and that he is in subjection to the Father. I Corinthians 15:27 "For He has put all things in subjection under His feet." But when He says, "All things are put in subjection", it is evident that He is exactly who put all things in subjection to Him.

When the Jehovah's Witness pull out these scriptures, this is how they get our children. Most Baptists have no idea how to explain this. The answer is very simple. If these aren't true in Jesus's life, He can't die for you and cannot be your redeemer.

JESUS IS GOD

Read John 14:7-9

- ▶ How does this Scripture define Jesus as God?

Jesus says knowing Him is like knowing God.

Read John 1:1-3

- ▶ How does this Scripture define Jesus as God?

Jesus is defined as the Creator.

Read Colossians 1:13-20

- ▶ How does this Scripture define Jesus as God?

He talks about Jesus being the fullness of God. He is also defined as the Creator.

Read John 8:58

- ▶ How does this Scripture define Jesus as God?

The Jews killed Jesus because they knew He was claiming to be God despite the fact that He did not exhibit the three major characteristics of God. The Jehovah's Witness cult claims that Jesus was just a good man. This cannot be rightly claimed. You must either say that Jesus was God, or He was a liar and a lunatic. You cannot be a good man and run around telling people you are God when you are not.

Also in this verse Jesus calls Himself “I Am” which is one word in the Greek and is used in the Old Testament to refer to God. When Jesus says “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” He is calling Himself God.

Read Philippians 2:6 in as many versions as you have available.

Philippians 2:6 (New American Standard)

*... did not regard equality with God **a thing to be grasped***

Philippians 2:6 (New Kings James)

who, being in the form of God, **did not consider it robbery** to be equal with God,

Philippians 2:6 (Holman Christian Standard)

*...did not consider equality with God something to be **used to his own advantage**;*

The Greek word, emphasized in each version above, is difficult to translate. It does not refer to the act of robbery but rather what is actually stolen. If I break into a house, that would be robbery. What I am taking is the plunder, or what I am grasping. The reason that is important is because he says that Jesus did not consider His equality with God as plunder. In other words, if a man goes in a house and steals a gun, the first thing he does is sells it or uses it. Paul is saying that Jesus did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped, grabbed hold of, pulled into His life and used. That is the absolute key point. Instead He goes on and says that *“he emptied Himself taking the form of a bondservant, being made in the likeness of men, and appearances of men, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death- even death on a cross!”*

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTISED?

As is seen in Philippians, Paul believed that Jesus was God, but that he lived life as a man dependent on God.

► But Jesus never sinned, so why was He baptized?

Baptism is not a picture of the washing away of sin, but rather it is a picture of drowning or dying to the old man and being raised to life in the new man. The baptism of Jesus was so critical to His time on earth. Even though John the Baptist did not want to baptize Jesus, Jesus said no, “so it fulfills all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Jesus was drowning to being God to become dependent on God. Jesus never quit being God, but He did quit relying on being God and instead started relying on God Himself.

Read John 12:49

“I speak to what I hear, I do not do anything except what the Father allows me to do.”

Everything Jesus did was based on what God told Him, what God empowered Him to do, and what God led Him to do.

► Why would Jesus give up being God?

He quit relying on being God so that as a man, He could be tempted and could die. The only way for Jesus to be tempted by sin and to die is for Him to give up these Godly attributes, come here and take on flesh, and live for 33 years as a man. How Adam should have lived under God is exactly how Jesus did live, absolutely dependent on God. The reason He did not know when He was coming back is that He **chose** not to know. The reason He was not omnipresent is that He **chose** to take on flesh. The reason He was not omnipotent, is because He **chose** to live in dependence on the Father. He died to who He was and came up in dependence to His Father. That is why He prayed to Him. That is why He surrendered to Him. By doing that, He was able to die with two kinds of righteousness in His life. He died with a righteousness that is innate as God and a righteousness that is earned as the perfect man. He faced every temptation we face and He said "No".

That is why He says *"I fulfill all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15) *not* just that which is innate as God but what I am about to earn as a man in the next few years.

► How would you answer the Jehovah's Witness now based on what we have learned about how Jesus is God?

Tell them that your Jesus is too small to redeem me. I need a bigger Jesus. I want the one in the scripture and not the one you don't have. Christ is God. He does not reflect the qualities of deity because He gave those up. He did not quit being God but he quit relying on those qualities by choice so that He could redeem us.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

Read Matthew 4:1

► How do we know the Holy Spirit is God?

This is the greatest point proving the Holy Spirit is God. Right after the baptism, the Holy Spirit led Jesus. Jesus has chosen to be in submission to the Father. If Jesus allows anything but God to lead Him, He sins. The only reason He can yield to the Spirit is because the Spirit is in fact, God.

Read Matthew 12:26-32

► How does this scripture prove that the Holy Spirit is God?

The only way for the Spirit of God to cast out demons is that He is God Himself.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

Read Ephesians 4:30

- ▶ How does this illustrate that the Holy Spirit is a person?

The Holy Spirit is able to grieve. Therefore, He has some characteristics of a person. One of the reasons you feel bad at times in your walk is because what you are sensing is the grief of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Read Acts 13:2

- ▶ What does this verse tell us about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit speaks and calls people out. This implies that He is both a person and God. The only way He can call people out in the church to a particular agenda that they have to respond to is if He is in fact God. So the facts that he speaks, feels grief, and calls people out, prove that He is in fact God and a person.

PRAYER

- ▶ What is the role of the different parts of the Trinity in prayer?

What you do is pray to the Father, through the access granted to you by the son, Jesus, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The best way to put the Trinity into my prayer life is to pray to God through Jesus with the Holy Spirit directing my prayer life. This takes us right back to 1 John 5 and Matthew 16. For my intercessory prayer to work, I must pray God's will not my will.

SUMMARY

The scriptures teach and exemplify that there is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. All three are God. All are part of the Godhead. So although the Trinity is never explained, it is clearly taught.

The Trinity has an impact in my prayer and an impact in keeping me out of a cult. If you understand those things then you will not have a cult bother you.