



The First Article of the Apostle's Creed

Another aspect about God's existence that we cannot learn from nature or from our conscience is that he is a "Triune God." The next question we would like to consider is...

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY WE HAVE A "TRIUNE GOD"?

It should be made clear that the term "triune" does not appear in the pages of the Scriptures. It is an "ecclesiastical term" — a word the church uses to conveniently describe a truth about our God that is recorded in Scriptures. We will look at that truth in this section of our Bible study. Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Romans 3:29,30 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God.

9) How many true Gods are there?

But the Bible describes God in an amazing and marvelous way. Consider the following passages.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man..."

Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

10) What seems grammatically incorrect about those Bible passages?

Numbers 6:24-26 "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God [i.e.- God the Father], and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

11) Who are the three persons of the Trinity?



THE CONCEPT OF A "THREE-IN-ONE" GOD IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR OUR MINDS TO GRASP, YET WE BELIEVE IT BECAUSE IT'S WHAT GOD'S WORD TEACHES. WE USE THE WORD "TRIUNE" SINCE IT CONVENIENTLY EXPRESSES THIS INCOMPREHENSIBLE TRUTH. "TRI" MEANS THREE. AND "UNE" MEANS ONE.

The following diagram is a way of picturing our Triune God. It illustrates how each person of the Trinity is named in Scripture, has divine characteristics, and does things only God could do. It shows that each person of the Trinity is distinct from one another, yet all our God — the one true God. This diagram can serve as the answer to our question, "WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY WE HAVE A 'TRIUNE GOD'?"

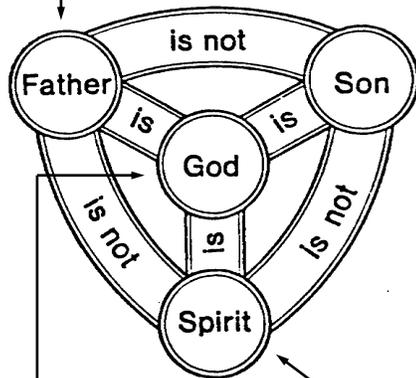
(see next page)

The reason that the pronouns in those verses don't seem to match up is that they are trying to describe the indescribable, our God. For while we have one God, in his Word God reveals himself as three persons. Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.



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Need To Know!



THE FATHER

- Divine Names - John 20:17 – I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and *your God*.
- Divine Characteristics – John 1:14 – We have seen his *glory*, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of *grace and truth*.
- Divine Actions – Matthew 7:11 - How much more will your Father in heaven *give good gifts to those who ask him!*

THE SON

- Divine Names - 1 John 5:20 – We are in him who is true, even in his Son *Jesus Christ*. He is the *true God* and eternal life.
- Divine Characteristics – John 21:17 – (Spoken to Jesus) Lord, *you know all things*.
- Divine Actions – John 5:22 – The Father judges no one, but *has entrusted all judgement to the Son*.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Divine Names – 1 Corinthians 12:6,11 – The same *God* works all of them in all men. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit.
- Divine Characteristics – Psalm 51:11 – Do not cast me from your presence or take your *Holy Spirit* from me.
- Divine Actions – Titus 3:5 – He saved us through the *washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit*.

ONE GOD

- Deuteronomy 6:4 – Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, *the LORD is one!*

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Job 36:26 *How great is God—beyond our understanding!*

Romans 11:33 *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*

12) According to the underlined portions of those passages, what is the only way that we are able to believe in a Triune God?

13) We should not be alarmed by the fact that we cannot understand God's existence. According to the italicized portions of those passages, what comfort do we have in knowing that God's existence is beyond our comprehension?



John 5:23 He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

Psalm 96:5 For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

14) According to John 5:23 and Psalm 96:5 is it possible to deny the Trinity and still believe in the one true God?



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TAKING IT DEEPER

- A) Agree or Disagree — People could come to saving faith if they would only look closely at nature and listen to their conscience.
- B) Agree or Disagree — 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
- C) Agree or Disagree — Essentially all people believe in the same God. They only call him different names and worship him in different ways.
- D) Question: We said that there are three persons in the Trinity and that they all do divine things. Can we distinguish between the work of the Father, the work of the Son, and the work of the Holy Spirit?
- E) Question: Would it be proper to address a prayer to only one member of the Trinity?

Study the passages below and your catechism and answer: What does the Bible teach about those who do not believe in the triune God?

1 John 2:23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Romans 8:9 If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Matthew 10:33 Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

With the family:

The Catechism has a section called, “Prayers for Daily Use.” It says, “In the morning, when you rise, and in the evening, when you go to bed, you shall make the sign of the holy cross and you shall say: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” What would be the purpose of this, and why could it be a good practice?



For Next Time:

Complete this review guide

Memorize:

Memorize Hymn CW 270 printed on next page.



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CW 270—We All Believe in One True God

We all believe in one true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
Ever present help in need, praised by all the heav'nly host.
By whose mighty pow'r alone all is made and wrought and done.

We all believe in Jesus Christ Son of God and Mary's Son.
Who descended from his throne and for us salvation won,
By whose cross and death are we, rescued from all misery.

We all confess the Holy Ghost, who from both for e'er proceeds,
Who upholds and comforts us in all trials, fears and needs,
Blessed holy Trinity, hear our praise eternally!