

- Q6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?
A6. **There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.**

Scripture References: Genesis 1:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 8:4-6; 1 John 5:7; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 3:16-17, 12:31, 28:19; John 1:1, 18, 4:18, 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; Hebrews 1:3

- DQ1: How many persons are there in the Godhead?
- DQ2: What does "Godhead" mean?
- DQ3: Who is God the Father?
- DQ4: Who is God the Son?
- DQ5: Who is God the Holy Spirit?
- DQ6: Are there three different Gods or one God?
- DQ7: How do the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit compare in their substance, power and glory?
- DQ8: Are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit distinct? And, how are they distinct?
- DQ9: God is one. What is the theological term used to describe one God who exists in three distinct persons?
- DQ10: Is the term "Trinity" found in the Scripture?
- DQ11: Do the Scriptures teach the Trinity?
- DQ12: Does the Old Testament teach the Trinity?
- DQ13: Does the New Testament teach the Trinity?
- DQ14: Do you understand the Trinity? Explain.
- DQ15: If you do not understand the Trinity, how would you believe and accept it?

Notes:

QA6 teaches a theology known as the doctrine of trinity. A proper description of the Trinity requires the following essential component truths: (1) there is but one God; (2) the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are God and (3) while they are equal in their substance, power and glory, these three are distinct persons.

This description of the Trinity can be also properly expressed as follows: (1) God exists in three persons; (2) each person is fully God and (3) there is but one God. Our ability to know and

explain the Trinity in this way is critical to our understanding of the Scriptures. Lack of understanding of the above descriptions can lead to unwarranted understanding and conclusions regarding God and the Scriptures.

In QA5, we learned that Jehovah is God and that there is no other God besides Him. The Trinity adds to the knowledge of God in that it teaches that God, who is one, exists and executes His plans and desires as the triune God. A good summary is as follows: “The God of the Scriptures exists and ministers as the Triune God.” Any teaching that takes away from the Trinity is false and not to be followed.

The Bible does not use the term “Trinity.” The term encompasses all of the essential meanings that have been expressed above regarding the Trinity. The term describes and identifies the God of the Scriptures, as there is no other God like Him. The fact that the exact term, the Trinity, is not used in the Scriptures is immaterial. Existence or non-existence of the actual term in the Scriptures does not add or distract from understanding the Scriptures or the God of the Scriptures. What is significant is that the triune God is very clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

The Trinity is not fully explainable or comprehensible by human mind and has caused many people to stumble. So then, how is it that we must acknowledge and accept the Trinity?

The reason is rather simple. The Bible does not permit any teaching other than the Trinity. Undoubtedly, the Scriptures reveal and evidence the God who is three persons in one. The reason why we must acknowledge and accept the Trinity is because it is what the Bible teaches regardless of how we may feel or understand about it.

How important is the doctrine of the Trinity? Without the doctrine, the Scriptures could not be the Word of God. Furthermore, our faith would become all together worthless and negated if the Trinity is untrue because (1) the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ would be all but empty in that Jesus Christ could not be the acceptable propitiation or sacrifice; (2) salvation by faith (and by grace) would not have a leg to stand on in that sinners still would depend upon their imperfect works to attain to God’s perfection; (3) if Jesus was a mere man, we would be worshiping an idol, not a true God and (4) the Old and New Testaments would not make sense and should be declared a lie. However, we have nothing to fear. For over 2,000 years, the Trinitarian doctrine has withstood a countless number of attacks by philosophers, scholars, heretical sects and other religions. It remains one of the most unshakable and enduring truths of the Scriptures even while it remains mysterious. How is this possible? There is no evidence or argument which is able to sufficiently counter the weight of the evidence of the Scriptures regarding the doctrine of the Trinity.

Some might argue that it does not make much sense for anyone to believe in something that cannot be fully explained. What is critical is not whether one can or cannot fully explain the Trinity. For sure, the Scriptures speak to and reveal the Trinity. That is a sufficient explanation. When people say that the Trinity cannot be believed because it cannot be explained, what they are really saying is that they do not fully comprehend it in their own minds. The problem isn’t with the Trinity but is with them. There is no problem with the Trinity. The problem is that they do not recognize, acknowledge and accept the Bible as the Word of God. If they did, they would believe and accept the very clear and convincing evidence and declaration of the Trinity in the Bible. If they cannot believe or accept other truths of the Bible, it also means that they do not

accept the Bible to be the Word of God. If the Bible is believed and accepted as the Word of God, then there would be no issue of credibility. This is one of the reasons why QA2 and QA3 are critical doctrinal teachings. We need a solid understanding about the Bible.

Many people live with a seriously mistaken belief that they, on their own, should have the capacity and/or are capable of fully understanding God and His ways. This is a serious stumbling block for them. This kind of mistaken view does not make either logical or Biblical sense. A God one can fully understand would not and could not be God at all. Why would you worship a God who is fully understood by your own search and knowledge? How could people, who do not fully understand even other people and the workings of the universe, claim that the test of true God is for them to fully understand God? To claim that one will not believe or accept because one does not fully understand God is absolutely a non-sense and a display of complete ignorance of the Scriptures. We believe in God because He is God, more than man. God is above and beyond man. Man can never understand God fully. For that to be possible, we would have to be Gods. The Bible explains it as follows: “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The Trinity is clearly and unmistakably revealed in the Old and New Testaments. God exists eternally as a Trinity. The ways in which the Trinity is revealed throughout the Bible vary, however. Whether during the Old Testament times or the New Testament times, God exists and ministers always as the God of the Trinity. Yet the different persons of the Godhead are revealed to us more prominently during different periods of time than others. For example, the revelation of the Father is most prominent during the Old Testament times. While His coming was prophesied in the Old Testament times, the revelation of the Son was the most prominent during the time periods when He was on this earth in the body. Upon Jesus Christ’s ascension, the revelation of the Holy Spirit becomes most prominent. The fact that each person of the Godhead is revealed more prominently in a particular time period does not suggest that each time period belongs to one person of the Godhead. It merely means that that is how God revealed Himself to us. The reality is that God truly exists as the Triune God at all times. It was the triune God that created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. It is the triune God who will receive us when we enter heaven. God eternally exists as the Trinity. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Amen.

We will now focus on some of the Old Testament passages that teach the Trinity. These passages are not exhaustive but representative of how the Old Testament reveals and evidences the Trinity.

- Psalm 45:6-7; 11:7 reveals the Trinity by the use of “us” in referencing God. How could one God use such a pluralistic description of Himself, except to reveal different persons of the Godhead! These passages speak directly to the Trinity.
- Psalm 45:6-7 is a passage that calls two separate persons as God. Wayne Grudem explains it this way: “In Psalm 45:6-7...the psalmist says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever...You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.’ Here the psalm passes beyond describing anything that could be true of an earthly king and calls the king ‘God’ (v 6), whose throne will last ‘forever and ever.’ But then, still speaking to the person called ‘God,’ the

author says that 'God', your God has set you above your companions' (v 7). So two separate persons are called 'God' (Heb. 'Elohim). In the New Testament, the author of Hebrews quotes this passage and applies it to Christ: 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' (Heb. 2"8)."

- Psalm 110:1 reveals the Trinity. Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1 and explained that the psalm passage is speaking of Him.
- Isaiah 63:10 and 48:16 reveal the Holy Spirit.
- Malachi 3:1 - "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty." The underlined speak to two different persons of the Trinity.

It is true that the New Testament more explicitly reveals the Trinity than the Old Testament. The important thing is that the Bible, as a whole unquestionably reveals the Trinity.

Inevitably, heretical teachings and the cults stem from some form of denial of the doctrine of the Trinity. Take Jehovah's Witness, for example. They only believe and accept the Father as God. They believe and accept the humanity of Jesus Christ but not His deity. To them, Jesus is a creature like any human being. The Mormons also have a distorted view of the Trinity. They do not view Jesus Christ as the Son of God or believe in the Trinity.

To repeat, at the heart of the most common heretical teachings and cults is the wrong, twisted, conjured up, and/or mistaken belief about the Trinity. Therefore, an accurate Biblical knowledge of the Trinity is most important. The fact that the Trinity is not fully understood by man is certainly not a weakness of the doctrine of the Trinity. In many ways, the Trinity is a mystery in the sense that man will not ever fully understand it. God has to be mysterious to man or else God would not be God at all. Listen to the Word of God in Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law." Some things shall remain secretive or mysterious until God reveals them to us. And some things may never be revealed to us or may be beyond our ability to comprehend.

Let's take a look at one more passage that will speak quite clearly to the Trinity. It is the Great Commission passage found in the Gospel According to Matthew. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name (singular) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." The passage states "in the name," instead of "in the names" because there is but one God although He exists as three persons. (Matthew 28:19-20) It is not a mistake that Matthews speaks of "in the name" as in "in one name."

Does the doctrine of the Trinity bother you? Does your inability to understand and explain distract you from believing it? If so, please do not focus on trying to understand but on accepting and believing the very clear teaching of the Scriptures.

In conclusion, what is important is that we all believe and accept what the Bible teaches. Even if we do not understand the Trinity, we do know that the Bible claims the Trinity and cannot deny it. Redemption in and through Jesus Christ is possible even when we do not fully understand the Bible. Redemption, however, is not possible when one denies the Word of God or the Son, a person of the Trinity. Without the Holy Spirit, we could not be drawn to God.

Remember the warning of the Bible found in Revelation 22:18-19. No one is to add or subtract from the Word of God. To deny the doctrine of trinity is both to subtract from and to add to the Word of God. To deny the doctrine of trinity is to deny Jesus Christ as God. There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ who is both fully God and fully man. Do not allow anyone or any teaching to distract you from faithful testimonies of the Scripture regarding the Trinity. Amen!

Westminster Confession of Faith
CHAPTER II
Of God, and of the Holy Trinity

3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost:[o] the Father is of none, neither begotten, not proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father;[p] the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.[q]

[o]. Matt. 3:16-17; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; see Eph. 2:18

[p]. John 1:14, 18; see Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:15

[q]. John 15:26; Gal. 4:6
