

DISTINGUISHING PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD

THERE ARE THREE... AND THESE THREE ARE ONE

*"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

1. The Triune God

- a. The Godhead (God as personal/supernatural) can be clearly seen – Rom 1:20
- b. Further descriptions of God require the Biblical revelation (God says what he means)
 - i. 1) There is one God; 2) three are equally God; 3) three are distinct in person.
 - ii. Conclusion: God is three in one (tri-une): Father, Son, Holy Ghost are one God.
- c. #2 in what way they are same: what - power, glory, authority, eternal, fully God
- d. #3 in what way they are distinct: who - what can be said of one, but not the other.

2. Understanding the Three

- a. $3 \neq 1$. ← True. This causes unnecessary confusion about the three in one God.
- b. In God, the 'three' and 'one' are not speaking of the same thing. (3 hats on one head)
- c. In the Godhead, the three are not hats (or roles). God is three in another way.
- d. Analogies break down because nothing is like God. (egg, water, tree, sun, fountain).
- e. The three are not parts of the whole, separate individual gods, three forms of one God.
- f. One person cannot exist without the other two: the three (persons) are one (God).

3. Recognizing a Person

- a. You and I are not the same. We are distinct persons and different existing individuals.
- b. It is natural to think of that one God as a single person. (Zeus, Jupiter, Dagon, etc.)
- c. The God of the Bible is tri-personal: He exists as one God in three ... persons. *Why?*
- d. The distinct property is personal: named, witness, begetting, speech, interaction.
- e. It is this way the Bible expresses distinction in the Godhead.

4. Bible Examples of Personal Distinction

- a. John 1:1 – The Word - beginning (eternal), with God (Father), was God (one)
- b. John 5:31-37 - Witness requires distinct person, the same person cannot give 2 witness
- c. 1 John 5:6-8 - 'there are three', three what? 'that bear record' three heavenly witnesses
- d. Heb 1:1-3 – Father and Son distinct in person, "who being", "his glory", "image of his"
 - i. The Father and Son existing eternally as God - Heb 1:5-12
 - ii. This word 'person' is where the hypostatic union doctrine comes from.
- e. John 1:18 – The Son is the "only begotten" John 3:16 – Father nor Spirit is begotten
- f. John 14:26 – Holy Ghost/Father not the name of Jesus, "he shall teach" ← personal act
- g. John 15:26 – The Spirit of truth proceeds from the Father, "he" and "me"
- h. John 16:7-11, 13-14 – He shall glorify me... for he shall receive of me... (interaction)
- i. John 17:5 – "with thine own self", "glory which I had with thee", (a distinct person)
- j. 1 John 2:1 – There is interaction in the Godhead in the propitiation
- k. Phi 2:6 – Jesus was equal with God before his incarnation (eternally)
- l. Rom 8:27 – There is intercession for believers by the Holy Ghost
- m. 1 Cor 8:4-6 – references Deu 6:4, three persons in one Lord God - 2 Cor 3:17
- n. Next week, more on the three in the one. What happens if we get this wrong?