

## GF 101: Understanding the Trinity

### Lesson 1.6 (article, “What is the Doctrine of the Trinity?”)

1. How do you know the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three separate Persons? What is the biblical evidence to support your answer?

*The Bible speaks of the Father as God (Philippians 1:2), Jesus as God (Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit as God (Acts 5:3–4). The Bible also says that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons. For example, since the Father sent the Son into the world (John 3:16), he cannot be the same person as the Son. Likewise, after the Son returned to the Father (John 16:10), the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world (John 14:26; Acts 2:33). Therefore, the Holy Spirit must be distinct from the Father and the Son.*

2. Is each Person (Father, Son, Spirit) 1/3 God?

*The doctrine of the Trinity does not divide God into three parts. The Bible is clear that all three Persons are each one-hundred-percent God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully God. For example, Colossians 2:9 says of Christ, “in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.” We should not think of God as a “pie” cut into three pieces, each piece representing a Person. This would make each Person less than fully God and thus not God at all. Rather, “the being of each Person is equal to the whole being of God” (Grudem, Systematic Theology, 1994, page 255).*

3. Matthew 28:19 (“Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”) helps us to understand the doctrine of the Trinity in three ways. What are they?

- (1) Notice that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinguished as distinct Persons. We baptize into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- (2) Notice that each Person must be deity because they are all placed on the same level. Jesus would never have us baptized in the name of a mere creature. Each of the Persons into whose name we are to be baptized must be deity.
- (3) Notice that although the three divine Persons are distinct, we are baptized into their name (singular), not names (plural). The three Persons are distinct, yet only constitute one name. This can only be if they share one essence.

4. What is the law of non-contradiction and provide the example the author used to explain this law?

*This law states that A cannot be both A (what it is) and non-A (what it is not) at the same time and in the same relationship. In other words, you have contradicted yourself if you affirm and deny the same statement. For example, if I say that the moon is made entirely of cheese but then also say that the moon is not made entirely of cheese, I have contradicted myself.*

5. Does the doctrine of the Trinity violate the law of non-contradiction by saying God is 3 in 1?

*He is three in Person. Essence (or "Being") and person are not the same thing. God is one in a certain way (essence) and three in a different way (person). Since God is one in a different way than he is three, the Trinity is not a contradiction. There would only be a contradiction if we said that God is three in the same way that he is one.*