



“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The One True God

Truth: People should reverence and serve the one true God.

Text: Exodus 15:11-13; Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; John 14:23-26

“We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God. An infinite, intelligent Spirit, His name is Jehovah. He is the Maker and Supreme Ruler of the universe. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three separate and distinct persons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption” (Cobb's Baptist Church Manual, pages 74, 75).

An effort to comprehend the nature and work of God staggers the mind. God said, *“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For 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 best we can do in these lesson comments is to *“touch the hem of his garment”* and receive virtue thereby (Matthew 9:20-22; 14:36).

No attempt is made in the Bible to prove the existence of God. Inspired Scripture begins with the statement, *“In the beginning God”* (Genesis 1:1). It later affirms, *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”* (Psalms 14:1; 53:1).

The emphasis of the Bible is that the God who is can be known. We can know Him and enter into personal relationship with Him. And that puts us on holy ground!

I. GOD’S SUPREME (Exodus 15:11-13)

Here is a doctrine beyond our understanding. Yet, we can know the nature of God somewhat by descriptions given of Him in Holy Scripture.

A. God is holy. He is so holy that the inspired writer of Scripture said in wonder, *“Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness”* (verse 11).

He is *“the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy”* (Isaiah 57: 15). Angels who minister before Him testify, *“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts”* (Isaiah 6:3). We conclude, *“There is none holy as the LORD”* (I Samuel 2:2). And our greatest challenge is His requirement, *“Be ye holy; for I am holy”* (I Peter 1:16).

To be holy means to be clean, sacred, free from defilement of any kind. Our God is perfect in His holiness.

B. God is praiseworthy. To say He is *“fearful in praises”* means our awe of Him inspires our praise of Him (verse 11). It is impossible to approach Him without being filled with praise (Psalm 67:3). Christian worship (whether in public assembly or in the heart) is to *“offer the sacrifice of praise to God . . . the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name”* (Hebrews 13:15). God has saved us and made us His own special people that we could *“shew forth the praises of him who hath called (us) out of darkness into his marvellous light”* (I Peter 2:9).

C. God is powerful. He is *“doing wonders”* as He works His will among persons and nations (verses 11, 12). He who made the whole universe finds nothing too hard to do (Jeremiah 32:17, 18). It takes no effort for Him to work. He wills, and it is done; therefore, His strength is never exhausted. He never tires or needs to rest. His will is His power and His word His agent. What He wishes is done without effort. What a God is He!

D. God is merciful (verse 13). *Mercy* means to be gentle, kindly, and tenderly affectioned toward one, to have pity and compassion upon anyone in need. God's mercy is His tender pity for His people. We would be terrified before a God of sovereign power if we were not assured of His mercy.

The Bible teaches that God's mercy is eternal: *“everlasting to everlasting”* (Psalm 103:17). His mercy is boundless: *“great above the heavens”* (Psalm 108:4). His mercy is redemptive: *“pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression . . . because he delighteth in mercy”* (Micah 7:18). His mercy is received by the penitent: *“rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful”* (Joel 2:13). His mercy is the basis of our salvation: *“according to his mercy he saved us”* (Titus 3:5).

Stop at this point in your reading and worship before God who is our heavenly Father by faith in Jesus Christ!

II. GOD IS PERSONAL (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5)

He is not an impersonal power or force like the wind or like gravity. His power is not like the uncontrolled tornado. To know Him is not like knowing the force of powers in nature. God is a person who enters personal relationships with us.

A. God has the attributes of a person. He has life as *“the living and true God”* (1 Thessalonians 1:9). He has a mind, thinking thoughts far above our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). His thoughts toward us are *“thoughts of peace”* (Jeremiah 29:11). He has emotions by which He loves people (I John 4:7-11) and hates sin (Proverbs 6:16). He has a will which He exercises *“in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth”* (Daniel 4:35). He has the power of self-determination by which He can plan and execute His plans (Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 4:35). Those attributes indicate that He is a person, not an impersonal force.

B. God has names like a person. He is called *“God”* (Hebrew, *elohim*) some 2,500 times in the Old Testament. He is called the *“most high God”* (Genesis 14:18), the *“living God”* (Joshua 3:10), *“Almighty God”* (Genesis 17:1), *“everlasting God”* (Genesis 21:33), *“LORD God”* (Genesis 2:4, 7, 15); many other names indicate His nature or His work. But best of all, He is called *“Father”* by those who trust Him (Deuteronomy 32:6; Matthew 6:9). *“They that know thy name will put their trust in thee”* (Psalm 9:10). His names testify to His person.

C. God enters into personal relationships with other persons. Notice the personal pronouns in Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. He is *“OUR God”* and *“THY God.”* That indicates personal relationship. He has promised He *“will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters”* (II Corinthians 6:18). Jesus *“gave himself for us”* that He might *“purify unto himself a peculiar people”* (Titus 2:14). He died *“for”* us to redeem us *“unto himself.”* *“Those who ‘in time past were not a people’ are now ‘the people of God’ in Jesus (I Peter 2:10). God promises of those who trust Jesus, ‘I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people’ (Hebrews 8:10). To be saved means to enter a personal relationship with God.*

D. God welcomes our response to His person. He calls us to trust Him (I Timothy 4:10), to love Him (Mark 12:30), to speak with Him (John 14:13, 14; 16:23, 24), to obey Him (Joshua 1:8; Deuteronomy 26:16), and to become more and more like Him in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; II Corinthians 3:18).

When you come to God in Jesus Christ, you come to a divine person.

You approach Him personally and He enters into a personal relationship with you. To be a Christian means more than to believe a doctrine; it is to know a Person.

III. GOD IS A TRINITY (John 14:23-26)

The doctrine of the trinity of God is one of the most difficult to understand of all the Christian principles. It is the belief that “in the unity of the Godhead, there are three separate and distinct persons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption” (J. E. Cobb). The mystery is how they can be three and yet one.

A. The Bible recognizes three persons, each of whom is called “God.”

1. The Father is called God. Peter addresses Him as “*God the Father*” (1 Peter 1:2); so does Paul (Romans 1:7). It is usually the Father to whom we refer when we say “God.”

2. The Son (Jesus Christ) is called God in the Bible (“*the Word was God*,” John 1:1) and by the disciples who knew Him best (“*my Lord and my God*,” John 20:28). Even God the Father called the Son by the title “God,” saying, “*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*” (Hebrews 1:8).

3. The Holy Spirit is called God. To lie to the Spirit is to lie to God (Acts 5:3, 4). His dwelling within your physical body makes your body “*the temple of God*” (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). He is “*the holy Spirit of God*” (Ephesians 4:30).

There are three persons — Father, Son, Spirit — each of whom is called “God.” Yet the Bible does not teach that there are three Gods, but one: “*There is one God; and there is none other but he*” (Mark 12:32). The three must be one, whether we understand it clearly or not.

B. The Old Testament suggests the idea of tri-unity. While the doctrine of trinity is not clearly set forth there, it is intimated. (1) The most common name for God (Hebrew, *elohim*) is plural and could be translated “Gods.” Yet, there is no indication that there are plural Gods. We understand it to be an intimation of three-in-one. (2) Plural pronouns are used with singular nouns and pronouns in reference to God. “*God said, Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness. . . . So God created man in HIS own image, in the image of God created HE him, male and female created HE them*” (Genesis 1:26, 27). God is referred to by both plural and singular pronouns — a violation of all rules of grammar unless somehow the three are one.

C. The New Testament recognizes the trinity of God.

1. The Trinity appeared at Jesus' baptism in water. The Father spoke from heaven, the Son was coming up out of the water, and the Spirit descended from heaven in the form of a dove and lit upon Him (Matthew 3:16, 17). Jesus manifested the Trinity in His promise that the Father would send the Spirit at the request of the Son (John 14:16, 17, 26). And Jesus further manifested the Trinity in the baptismal formula, commanding us to baptize converts "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

2. The apostle Paul, the greatest expositor of Christian doctrine who ever lived, taught the Trinity. He wrote of how the Spirit, the Son, and the Father were involved in the exercise of spiritual gifts in the lives of Christians (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). He wrote of the Thessalonian believers' hope in Jesus, before God the Father, by the Holy Spirit (I Thessalonians 1:3-5). He wrote of God the Father choosing them to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit to obtain glory by the Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 2:13, 14). He wrote of the love of the Father and the renewing of the Holy Spirit which comes to us through Jesus Christ (Titus 3:4-6).

The most beautiful expression of the persons and work of the Trinity in the life of the Christian is set out in II Corinthians 13:14: "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*"

Every reference to three persons of the Trinity together is set in a context of grace. Every time God the Father, Son, and Spirit appear together it is to redeem sinners and bless saints. Thank God for the doctrine of the trinity of God.

The doctrine of God cannot be expressed in one study. Volumes have been written on the subject. The three passages of the text have only introduced the subject to us.

Let us draw some conclusions based on our study. (1) There is but one living and true God. (2) He is sovereign over all persons and things. (3) We should submit, trust, love, and serve Him. (4) God cares for us like a faithful Father cares for His children. (5) There is a grave danger in rejecting the person of God. (6) God is concerned about you.

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of his pasture" (Psalm 95:6, 7).

1. Who is God?

2. What do we mean by the statement, "God is supreme"?
3. How does the Bible describe the mercy of God?
4. What do we mean by the statement, "God is personal"?
5. What do we mean by the statement, "God is a trinity"?
6. How is His tri-unity reflected in the Old Testament?
7. How did Jesus show the trinity of God?