

Source night

Topic-
The Godhead

Tonight we study God himself, who is God, what is God like?

“A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word 'darkness' on the walls of his cell.” CS Lewis

The evidence for God There are many things that point to God's existence, some common arguments are;

1. Teleological - Things that are designed have a designer, e.g. Sir William Paley's pocket watch
2. Cosmological - Cannot get something from nothing, there has to be a 'first cause' – Thomas Aquinas
3. Experience - Many have had a direct experience of God e.g. miracle, voice, changed life. John 9 :25
4. Moral purpose - People have always been aware there are thoughts and actions that are right or wrong. People have an innate love of justice. God is the source of all that

The nature of God -The Trinity (Latin: *Trinitas*, lit. 'triad', from *trinus*, "threefold")

One God in three Divine Persons. The three persons are distinct, yet are all one in substance, essence and nature (*homoousios* - same essence). One being, three persons.

We are monotheists (One God) Deuteronomy 4 :35, Psalm 86 :10, 1 Timothy 1 :17, 2:5

Deuteronomy 6 :4 'God is one'. However word in Hebrew is plural e.g. one bunch of grapes.

Important to note God is a person, not 'a force'. Cannot have a relationship with force!

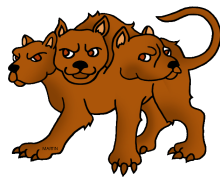
The doctrine of the Trinity was talked about by Ignatius in 100 AD, later formalised in a systematic way by Tertullian in 200 AD. He was the first to use the word 'trinity'. Inc in Church doctrine at Nicaea.

Scripture clearly talks about the persons of the trinity without laying it out as a formal doctrine.

2 Corinthians 13 :14, Matthew 28 :19, Romans 14 :17-18, 1 Peter 1 ;1-2

The three persons are seen working together. Genesis 1:1-2, 26 (plural) Isaiah 61 :1, Matthew 3:16-17

Many analogies, **none** perfect!



Greek word for person is *prosopan* literary meaning 'face'. So the faces of God

There is order within trinity John 14 :28 Eric (Senior Pastor) greater than Trevor, although role different, we have the same value before God. Deference does not mean inferiority John 5 :19,

Major heresies about the Trinity

- Tritheism** There are three 'gods' e.g. Mormons say Jesus was a man who became a god.
- Modalism** ('Jesus only' or Oneness type of Pentecostal) They are not three distinct persons, but God acting in different ways. God acted in Father mode in OT, then in Jesus mode, then in Spirit mode.
- Arianism** Father is God, but Jesus isn't e.g. Jehovah Witnesses God created Jesus. Also Unitarians don't believe in the trinity, and can loosely be called Arians

God, the Father Everyone accepts the Father is God

Acts 17 :28-29, Ephesians 4 :6

God, the Son

Jesus is God John 1 : 1, 14 John 18 :58, Romans 9 :5

Evidence of his divinity - i) Control over nature (wind/sea, water/wine, loaves & fish) ii) Unique moral character iii) Healing the sick iv) Death could not hold him v) Unique birth, 'virgin conceived'

God, the Spirit

The Spirit is God John 15 :26, 2 Corinthians 3 :17

Holy Spirit is a 'he' not an 'it'. Ephesians 4 :30 who can be grieved Hebrews 10 :29 Can be insulted

The attributes of God

1. **Spirit** John 4 :24 Spirit means not confined to a visible body.
2. **Person** meaning;
 - a) Self aware The ability to be aware of yourself Exodus 3 :14
 - b) Intelligent Jeremiah 51 :15
 - c) Self determination, the ability to do whatsoever one pleases Job 23 :13
 - d) Emotion Genesis 6 :6, Psalm 103 :13
 - e) Will John 4 :34
3. **Knowable** Romans 1 :19, Hebrews 8 :11 People crave relationship & communication- God given
4. **Omnipotent** (All powerful) Isaiah 46 :10-11 Matthew 19 :26
All powerful means he is sovereign
5. **Omnipresent** (Everywhere) Psalm 139 :7-10
6. **Omniscient** (All knowing) 1 John 3 :20
7. **Independent** Acts 17 :24-25 God does not need his created things. God depends on no one else.
8. **Unchangeable** James 1 :17 Does God change his mind? Jonah 3 :4,10 Only when situation changed
9. **Infinite** Psalm 90 :2
10. **Holy** Psalm 99 :9 1 Peter 1 :16

The character of God

1. **Loving** 1 John 4 :8, Love within the trinity John 3 :35, 15 :9 and outwards John 3 :16

1. **Just** God hates sin. The idea of God's wrath is not just an OT concept. Romans 1 :18

The names of God

In Biblical times names were very important, there is a strong tie between the name and actual person

A) **EI** (Singular used 250 x) Linked with the idea of strength and might Exodus 20:5

Often used in combination with other words

i) **El Elyon** (God Most High) Genesis 14 :20

ii) **El Olam** (God everlasting) Genesis 21 :33

iii) **El Shaddai** (God Almighty) Genesis 17 :1

B) **Elohim** (plural used 2,000 x) It implies the God of creation Genesis 1:1

C) **Yahweh or YHWH** The holiest name of G-d printed LORD The Jews used instead **Adonai** (My Lord)
Combined vowels of Yahweh and Adonai produced Jehovah (used 7,000x) Other names again combine e.g.

i) **Jehovah-Jirah** (God provides) Genesis 22 :14

ii) **Jehovah-Nissi** (God my banner) Exodus 17 :15-16

iii) **Jehovah-Tsidknu** (Jehovah our righteousness) Jeremiah 23 :6

How we should reflect the Trinity

We're made in the image of God & should seek to have God like qualities in our own lives. For example;

Loving Love between persons of the trinity, within God 1 John 4 :8

Communal We are built for relationships

Humble Seen in Jesus himself Philippians 2 :5-8



Life group Discussion Questions



1. How would explain why you believe in God to a non believer?
2. What flaws are there with the analogies for the trinity? Which is the best one?
3. What different names do we use for God, for the Father, Son & Spirit? Does it matter?
4. How can we reflect the character of God in our lives?