Introduction

From the very first chapter of Genesis, God refers to himself as "us". "Let us make man in our image" He said. Three distinct persons are revealed in the scriptures. Each has specific responsibilities and each has a specific task. This study will explore the three-fold nature of God.

The Trinity

The word "Trinity" is not found in the scriptures. But reference to the three-fold nature of God is clear.

The Unity of God

God revealed Himself to the Jews in the wilderness as one being. Consider the following reference.

> *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*
>
> **Deuteronomy 6:4**

- Circle the word that describes God's unity.
- *It is possible for God to manifest himself in multiple persons while still having unity of identity, purpose and intention. To say that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one is both rational and appropriate.*

Matt 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

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.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

The Father

The manner of fatherhood among men is fashioned after the model of fatherhood in God. God exemplifies all that a Father should be. Some of the Father's characteristics include His authority, His plan, His sustenance and His control.

The Father's Authority

It is clear that Jesus the Son considered God the Father to have authority over Him. Consider:

> *"But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me."*
>
> **John 5:36 (NASV)**

- Circle the phrase describing whom it was who gave Jesus work to do.
- *When one is sent on a mission, the one doing the sending is normally the one with authority. Underline the name of the one who sent Jesus.*

There is always a reason for going when one is sent on a mission.

Jesus continually describes His relationship with the Father as one where God gave direction and He obeyed.

- **John 5:27**
- **John 6:38**
- **John 8:26-29**
- **John 10:18**
- **John 12:49**

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The Father's Plan

The fact that the Father has a plan is clearly evident. Every action and decree has a specific purpose. He makes it clear that His plan was in place before the world was made.

> [9]*Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.* [10] *I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.*
>
> **Isaiah 46:9-10**

- Circle the phrase that indicates the part of God's plan that He declared from the beginning.
- Underline the word that describes what will be established.
- *The image that this verse presents is of a God who plans the details from the very beginning and then works to insure that his very purpose is carried out in a way that is pleasing to Him.*

For more insight into the Father's Plan, spend time studying **God's Plan** in this *Knowing God* series of studies.

The Father Sustains

Consider the following verses.

> [14] *The LORD sustains all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down.*
> [15] *The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due time.*
> [16] *You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.*
>
> **Psalms 145:14-16 (NASV)**

- Underline the one who sustains.
- Circle the various ways that God sustains.
- *To sustain means to nourish or care for, to strengthen or replenish. God sustains not only mankind but every one of His created things.*

David attributed riches and honor, power, might and strength as coming from the Lord in 1 Chronicles 29:12. He is the source of satisfaction for every human need.

The Father Controls

Consider Psalms 121. Circle every phrase indicating or implying that God is in control.

> [2] *My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*
> [3] *He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.*
> [4] *Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*
> [5] *The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.*
> [6] *The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night.*
> [7] *The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul.*
> [8] *The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.*
>
> **Psalms 121:2-8**

Skeptics would say that if God created the universe, He has vacated his place of control. They see the world as something God started long ago and then walked away.

Scripture makes it clear that God is intimately involved in the on-going affairs of each one of his creatures. Consider what Jesus said…

- **Matthew 6:26**
- **Matthew 10:29-31**

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The Son

Jesus the Son came for a specific purpose, according to God's plan. He is fully man. That is, he was born, grew from a child to a man, ate food, walked, slept, wept, loved, argued, suffered, bled and died. At the same time He is fully God, totally pure, having no sin.

As God's Son, Jesus has special characteristics that distinguish Him from the Father.

The Son Obeys the Father

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic is that He was completely obedient to the Father.

> *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*
>
> **John 6:38**

- Circle the one whose will Jesus followed.
- *It is perfectly clear that God the Father is the one doing the sending and Jesus is the one doing the obeying.*

Obeying was no easier for Jesus than for you or me. Hebrews 5:8 indicates that obedience was something Jesus ***learned.***

> *"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*
>
> **John 5:30**

- Circle that which Jesus did on His own initiative.
- Underline the reason Jesus' judgment was just.

Fullness of the Son's Deity

The men who listened to Jesus clearly understood that He claimed to be God.

> *[31]The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. [32]Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" [33]The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."*
>
> **John 10:31-33**

- Circle the phrase indicating why the Jews wanted to stone Jesus.
- *The penalty for blasphemy was death. If Jesus' claim was false, he deserved to die. If it were true, death would have no grip on Him.*

Circle the phrase in the following verse that describes Paul's view of the Deity of Jesus.

> *[9]For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, [10]and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;*
>
> **Col 2:9-10**

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Authority of the Son

Even though Jesus is an obedient Son, the Father has granted Him far-reaching authority.

> *[26]"For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; [27]and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.*
>
> **John 5:26-27**

- Circle the phrase describing the authority that the Father has given to Jesus.
- *The position of Judge is perhaps the most powerful position one can attain. It is the judge who determines whether another enjoys freedom or bondage, life or death. Jesus has such authority.*

> *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*
>
> **Matthew 28:18**

To claim all authority in heaven and earth is astounding in its implications. He can do whatever he wants whenever He wants.

- Circle the phrase describing the extent of Jesus' authority.
- Underline the realm in which his authority is exercised.
- *If He has total authority, then everything is subject to Him.*

The Holy Spirit

Like the Son, the Holy Spirit has specific responsibilities. He is a person, having an emotion and will. He is different from the Son in that He has no body. But like the Son, He obeys the Father's direction, seeking to Implement His plan.

The Spirit's Mission

One of the primary purposes of the Holy Spirit has to do with truth. In the following passage, Jesus explains one of the Holy Spirit's purposes.

> *[13]But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. [14]He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.*
>
> **John 16:13-14**

The Holy Spirit is said to indwell every one who puts their trust in the Lord Jesus. It is this presence of God in one's life that enables one to hear the things the Spirit teaches.

- Circle the Title of the one who guides believers into the truth.
- *Notice that He, like the Son, speaks only what He hears. The Father is the one speaking to the Spirit. The Spirit simply repeats what He hears.*
- Underline that which the Spirit will tell you.
- Circle the phrase describing how the Spirit will bring glory to Jesus.

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Ephesians 4 talks about the Holy Spirit's purpose. After making the case for unity, Paul goes on to describe the work done by the Spirit of Jesus in the following way:

> *11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*
>
> **Ephesians 4:11-13**

- Circle the activity for which God's people are being prepared.
- Underline the result that the Spirit is bringing about in the Body of Christ.
- Draw a box around the number of believers the Spirit is bringing to unity.
- Circle the amount of the fullness of Christ the Spirit is seeking to impart.

Every believer is gifted. That is, the Spirit gives Spiritual gifts to everyone he indwells. Gifts of the Spirit are discussed in the following passages

- **Romans 12:6-8**
- **1 Corinthians 12**
- **Ephesians 4:11-12**
- **1 Peter 4:10-11**

The Holy Spirit is God

Over and over in both the New Testament and the Old, the Spirit is described as *God's* Spirit. Some times He is called the *Spirit of the Lord*. Sometimes He is just called *the Spirit*. Paul makes the Deity of the Spirit quite clear in his second letter to the Corinthians.

> *17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
>
> **2 Corinthians 3:17-18**

- Underline the identity of the Spirit.
- Circle the person from whom the ever-increasing glory comes.
- *It seems clear that Paul considered the Lord and the Spirit to be one and the same.*

The very first verses of Genesis introduce God as a Spirit:

> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and ***the Spirit of God*** was hovering over the waters.
>
> Genesis 1:2

Three in One

God has uniquely revealed Himself to man. As the Father, he planned the activities and events of His creation. He directs the Son and the Spirit in the details of their ministry to men. He exercises control and has all authority.

The Son is God in the flesh. He is obedient to the Father in every detail. The Father has granted Him all authority in Heaven and on Earth.

The Spirit interacts with every believer. He is completely obedient to the Father in every detail. He communicates truth to those who have placed their faith in the Son.

All three are God. They share the same goals, methods and purpose. They differ only in the means by which they relate to men.

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