



Colossians 1: 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by[f] him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Week 8 - “The Trinity”

The Bible does not explicitly teach the Trinitarian view of God, but the teachings that God is one and that three persons are God clearly imply this view.

Numerous attempts have been made to understand this doctrine, some of which have led to distortions of this profound truth. While we may never fully comprehend this difficult doctrine, there are analogies that can help us to understand it more fully.

Christianity

Among the religions of the world, the Christian faith is unique in making the claim that God is one and yet there are three who are God.

This seems to present what seems on the surface to be a self-contradictory doctrine.

Furthermore, this doctrine is not overtly or explicitly stated in Scripture. Nevertheless, devout minds have been led to it as they sought to do justice to the witness of Scripture.

The doctrine of the Trinity is crucial for Christianity.

It is concerned with who God is, what he is like, how he works, and how he is to be approached. Moreover, **the question of the deity of Jesus Christ**, which has historically been a point of great tension, is very much wrapped up with one's understanding of the Trinity.

The position we take on the Trinity will have profound bearing on our Christology. The position we take on the Trinity will also answer several questions of a practical nature.

- Whom are we to worship— Father only, Son, Holy Spirit, or the Triune God?
- To whom are we to pray?
- Is the work of each to be considered in isolation from the work of the others, or may we think of the atoning death of Jesus as somehow the work of the Father as well?
- Should the Son be thought of as the Father's equal in essence, or should he be relegated to a somewhat lesser status?

The Oneness of God

The Father is God

The religion of the ancient Hebrews was a rigorously monotheistic faith, as indeed the Jewish religion is to this day

Exodus 20:2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

The rejection of polytheism runs throughout the Old Testament. God repeatedly demonstrates his superiority to other claimants to deity.

A clearer indication of the oneness of God is the Shema of:

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

They were to meditate upon these teachings (" these words . . . shall be upon your heart," v. 6). They were to talk about them— at home and on the road, when lying down and when arising (v. 7). They were to use visual aids to call attention to them— wearing them on their hands and foreheads, and writing them on the doorframes of their houses and on their gates.

And what are these great truths that were to be emphasized so?

- “The LORD our God is one LORD”

- “Love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might”

The teaching regarding the oneness of God is not restricted to the Old Testament.

James 2:19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

Paul writes as he discusses the eating of meat which had been offered to idols:

1 Corinthians 8: 4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.”

6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

All this evidence, if taken by itself, would no doubt lead us to a basically monotheistic belief.

What, then, moved the church beyond this evidence?

It was the additional biblical witness to the effect that three persons are God.

The deity of the Father is scarcely in dispute.

We see the cases where Jesus refers to the Father as God.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

It is apparent that, for Jesus, “God” and “your heavenly Father” are interchangeable expressions.

And in numerous other references to God, Jesus obviously has the Father in mind (e.g., Matt. 19: 23– 26; 27: 46; Mark 12: 17, 24– 27).

Jesus is God

Somewhat more problematic is the status of Jesus as deity.

Scripture also identifies him as God.

Philippians 2:5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The word here translated “form” is *morphē*.

This term in classical Greek as well as in biblical Greek means:

“the set of characteristics which constitutes a thing what it is.”

denoting the genuine nature of a thing

The use of *morphē* in this passage, which reflects the faith of the early church, suggests a deep commitment to the full deity of Christ.

The author makes several statements which strongly imply the full deity of the Son.

Hebrews 1: 1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. 5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? 6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.” 7 Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” 8 But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” 10 And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, 12 like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”

In the opening verses the writer argues that the Son is superior to the angels, and notes that God has spoken through the Son, appointed him heir of all things, and made the universe through him (v. 2).

The author then describes the Son as the “radiance of the glory of God” and the “exact imprint of his nature.”

While it could perhaps be maintained that this affirms only that God revealed himself through the Son, rather than that the Son is God, the context suggests otherwise.

In addition to identifying himself as the Father of the one whom he here calls Son (v. 5), God is quoted in verse 8 (from Ps. 45: 6) as addressing the Son as “God” and in verse 10 as “Lord” (from Ps. 102: 25).

The writer concludes by noting that God said to the Son, “Sit at my right hand” (from Ps. 110: 1).

It is significant that the Scripture writer addresses Hebrew Christians, who certainly would be steeped in monotheism, in ways which undeniably affirm the deity of Jesus and his equality with the Father.

We should note that Jesus never directly asserted his deity. He never said simply, “I am God.”

Yet several threads of evidence suggest that this is indeed how he understood himself.

- He claimed to possess what properly belongs only to God.
- He spoke of the angels of God (Luke 12: 8– 9; 15: 10) as his angels (Matt. 13: 41).
- He regarded the kingdom of God (Matt. 12: 28; 19: 14, 24; 21: 31, 43)
- and the elect of God (Mark 13: 20) as his own.
- He claimed to forgive sins (Mark 2: 8– 10). The Jews recognized that only God can forgive sins, and they consequently accused Jesus of blasphemy.
- He also claimed the power to judge the world (Matt. 25: 31)
- and to reign over it (Matt. 24: 30; Mark 14: 62).

The Holy Spirit is God

There also are biblical references which identify the Holy Spirit as God.

Here we may note that there are passages where references to the Holy Spirit occur interchangeably with references to God.

Acts 5: 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."

Lying to the Holy Spirit (v. 3) is equated with lying to God (v. 4).

The Holy Spirit is also described as having the qualities and performing the works of God.

- It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16: 8– 11).
- He regenerates or gives new life (John 3: 8).
- The Spirit conveys gifts to the church, and who exercises sovereignty over who receives those gifts. (1 Corinthians 12: 4– 11)
- He receives the honor and glory reserved for God. (1 Corinthians 3: 16– 17)
Paul reminds believers that they are God's temple and that his Spirit dwells within them. In chapter 6, he says that their bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit within them (vv. 19– 20). "God" and "Holy Spirit" seem to be interchangeable expressions.

Also there are several places where the Holy Spirit is put on an equal footing with God.

- Baptismal formula of Matthew 28: 19
- the Pauline benediction in 2 Corinthians 13: 14 finally, there is 1 Peter 1: 2,
- Where Peter addresses his readers as "chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood."
(1 Peter 1: 2)

Three-in-Oneness

On the surface, these two lines of evidence— God's oneness and threeness— seem contradictory.

As the church began to reflect upon doctrinal issues, it concluded that God must be understood as three-in-one or, in other words, triune. At this point we must pose the question:

Is this doctrine explicitly taught in the Bible, or just suggested by the Scripture, or is it merely an inference drawn from other teachings of the Bible.

The plural form of the noun for the God of Israel, 'ēlōhîm, is sometimes regarded as an intimation of a Trinitarian view.

This is a generic name used to refer to other gods as well. When used with reference to Israel's God, it is generally, but not always, found in the plural.

Some would argue that here is a hint of the plural nature of God. There are other plural forms as well.

In Genesis 1: 26, God says, "*Let us make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness.*"

Here the plural appears both in the verb "let us make" and in the possessive suffix "our."

When Isaiah was called, he heard the Lord saying:

Isaiah 6:8 ... "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

What is significant, from the standpoint of logical analysis, is the shift from singular to plural.

Genesis 1: 26 actually says, "Then God said [singular], 'Let us make [plural] man in our [plural] image.' " God is quoted as using a plural verb with reference to himself.

Similarly Isaiah 6: 8 reads: "Whom shall I send [singular], and who will go for us [plural]?"

The teaching regarding the image of God in humankind has also been viewed as an intimation of the Trinity.

Genesis 1: 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Some would argue that what we have here is a parallelism not merely in the first two, but in all three lines.

Thus, "male and female he created them" is equivalent to "So God created man in his own image" and to "in the image of God he created him." On this basis, the image of God in man (generic) is to be found in the fact that man has been created male and female (i.e., plural).

This means that the image of God must consist in a unity in plurality, a characteristic of both the "Copy" (Man/Woman) and the "Original" (Triune God).

According to Genesis 2: 24, man and woman are to become one (' echād); a union of two separate entities is entailed.

It is significant that the same word is used of God in the Shema: "The LORD our God is one ['echād] LORD" (Deut. 6: 4).

It seems that something is being affirmed here about the nature of God— he is an organism, that is, a unity of distinct parts.

In several places in Scripture the three persons are linked together in unity and apparent equality. One of these is the baptismal formula as prescribed in the Great Commission.

Matt. 28: 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Note that “name” is singular although there are three persons included.

2 Corinthians 13: 14 “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Here again is a linkage of the three names in unity and apparent equality.

It is in John’s Gospel that the strongest evidence of a coequal Trinity is to be found. The threefold formula appears again and again: (John 1: 33– 34; John 14: 16, 26; John 16: 13– 15; John 20: 21– 22 [cf. 1 John 4: 2, 13– 14].)

The interdynamics among the three persons comes through repeatedly, as George Hendry has observed

- The Son is sent by the Father (14: 24) and comes forth from him (16: 28).
- The Spirit is given by the Father (14: 16), sent from the Father (14: 26), and proceeds from the Father (15: 26).
- Yet the Son is closely involved in the coming of the Spirit: he prays for his coming (14: 16);
- the Father sends the Spirit in the Son’s name (14: 26);
- the Son will send the Spirit from the Father (15: 26); the Son must go away so that he can send the Spirit (16: 7).
- The Spirit’s ministry is understood as a continuation and elaboration of that of the Son.
- He will bring to remembrance what the Son has said (14: 26); he will bear witness to the Son (15: 26);
- He will declare what he hears from the Son, thus glorifying the Son (16: 13– 14).

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

Here is an indication of the divinity of the Word.

Here also we find the idea that while the Son is distinct from the Father, yet there is fellowship between them, for the preposition pros (“ with”) does not connote merely physical proximity to the Father, but an intimacy of fellowship as well.

Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (10: 30), and “he who has seen me has seen the Father” (14: 9). He prays that his disciples may be one as he and the Father are one (17: 21).

Our conclusion from the data we have just examined: Although the doctrine of the Trinity is not expressly asserted, the Scripture, particularly the New Testament, contains so many suggestions of the deity and unity of the three persons that we can understand why the church formulated the doctrine, and conclude that they were right in so doing.

Historical Constructions

During the first two centuries A.D. there was little conscious attempt to wrestle with the theological and philosophical issues of what we now term the doctrine of the Trinity.

There was little attempt to explore the eternal relations among the three; rather, there was a concentration on the ways in which the Triad were manifested in creation and redemption. While creation and redemption showed the Son and the Spirit to be other than the Father, they were also regarded as inseparably one with him in his eternal being. Like the mental functions of a human being, God’s reason, that is, the Word, was regarded as being immanently and indivisibly with him.

Dynamic Monarchianism

In the late second and third centuries, two attempts were made to come up with a precise definition of the relationship between Christ and God.

Both of these views have been referred to as monarchianism (literally, “sole sovereignty”), since they stress the uniqueness and unity of God, but only the latter claimed the designation for itself.

Dynamic monarchianism maintained that **God was dynamically present in the life of the man Jesus**. There was a working or force of God upon or in or through the man Jesus, but there was no real presence of God within him. The originator of dynamic monarchianism, Theodotus, asserted that prior to baptism Jesus was an ordinary, though completely virtuous man. At the baptism, the Spirit, or Christ, descended upon him, and from that time on he performed miraculous works of God.

These ideas of dynamic monarchianism never became widespread.

Modalistic Monarchianism

By contrast, modalistic monarchianism was a fairly widespread, popular teaching.

Whereas dynamic monarchianism seemed to deny the doctrine of the Trinity, modalism appeared to affirm it. Both varieties of monarchianism desired to preserve the doctrine of the unity of God.

Modalism, however, was also strongly committed to the full deity of Jesus.

Since the term Father was generally regarded as signifying the Godhead itself, any suggestion that the Word or Son was somehow other than the Father upset the modalists.

It seemed to them to be a case of bitheism, belief in two gods.

The essential idea of this school of thought is that there is one Godhead which may be variously designated as Father, Son, or Spirit. The terms do not stand for real distinctions, but are merely names which are appropriate and applicable at different times. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are identical— they are successive revelations of the same person.

The modalistic solution to the paradox of threeness and oneness was, then, not three persons, but one person with three different names, roles, or activities.

It must be acknowledged that in modalistic monarchianism we have a genuinely unique, original, and creative conception, and one which is in some ways a brilliant breakthrough. Both the unity of the Godhead and the deity of all three— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit— are preserved.

Yet the church in assessing this theology deemed it lacking in some significant respects. In particular, the fact that the three occasionally appear simultaneously upon the stage of biblical revelation proved to be a major stumbling block to this view.

The Orthodox Formulation

The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was formulated in a series of debates and councils which were in large part prompted by the controversies sparked by such movements as monarchianism and Arianism.

It was at the Council of Constantinople (381) that there emerged a definitive statement in which the church stated its beliefs.

The view which prevailed was basically that of Athanasius (293– 373), as it was elaborated and refined by the Cappadocian theologians— Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa.

The formula from Constantinople was:

“one ousia [substance] in three hypostases [persons].”

The emphasis often seems to be more on the latter part of the formula, that is, on the separate existence of the three persons rather than on the one indivisible Godhead.

The one Godhead exists simultaneously in three modes of being.

The Godhead exists “undivided in divided persons.”

There is an “identity of nature” in the three persons.

The Cappadocians attempted to expound the concepts of common substance and multiple separate persons by the analogy of a universal and its particulars—the individual persons of the Trinity are related to the divine substance in the same fashion as individual humans are related to the universal human (or humanity).

It is clear that the orthodox formula protects the doctrine of the Trinity against the danger of modalism. Has it done so, however, at the expense of falling into the opposite error— tritheism?

On the surface, the danger seems considerable.

Two points were made, however, to safeguard the doctrine of the Trinity against tritheism.

- First, it was noted that if we can find a single activity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which is in no way different in any of the three persons, we must conclude that there is but one identical substance involved. And such unity was found in the divine activity of revelation.

Revelation originates in the Father, proceeds through the Son, and is completed in the Spirit. It is not three actions, but one action in which all three are involved.

- Second, there was an insistence upon the concreteness and indivisibility of the divine substance.

Much of the criticism of the Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity focused on the analogy of a universal manifesting itself in particulars. To avoid the conclusion that there is a multiplicity of Gods within the Godhead just as there is a multiplicity of humans within humanity,

Gregory of Nyssa suggested that, strictly speaking, we ought not to talk about a multiplicity of humans, but a multiplicity of the one universal human.

Thus the Cappadocians continued to emphasize that, while the three members of the Trinity can be distinguished numerically as persons, they are indistinguishable in their essence or substance.

They are distinguishable as persons, but one and inseparable in their being.

Further, this divine essence is simple and indivisible.

Thus, while each of the persons is one, they cannot be added together to make three entities.

Essential Elements of a Doctrine of the Trinity

It is important to pause here to note the conspicuous elements which must be included in any doctrine of the Trinity.

1. We begin with the unity of God. God is one, not several. The unity of God may be compared to the unity of husband and wife, but we must keep in mind that we are dealing with one God, not a joining of separate entities.

2. The deity of each of the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, must be affirmed. Each is qualitatively the same. The Son is divine in the same way and to the same extent as is the Father, and this is true of the Holy Spirit as well.

3. The threeness and the oneness of God are not in the same respect. Although the orthodox interpretation of the Trinity seems contradictory (God is one and yet three), the contradiction is not real, but only apparent. A contradiction exists if something is A and not A at the same time and in the same respect. Modalism attempted to deal with the apparent contradiction by stating that the three modes or manifestations of God are not simultaneous; at any given time, only one is being revealed. Orthodoxy, however, insists that God is three persons at every moment of time. Maintaining his unity as well, orthodoxy deals with the problem by suggesting that the way in which God is three is in some respect different from the way in which he is one. The fourth-century thinkers spoke of one ousia and three hypostases. Now comes the problem of determining what these two terms mean, or more broadly, what the difference is between the nature of God's oneness and that of his threeness.

4. The Trinity is eternal. There have always been three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all of them have always been divine. One or more of them did not come into being at some point in time, or at some point become divine. The Triune God is and will be what he always has been.

5. The function of one member of the Trinity may for a time be subordinate to one or both of the other members, but that does not mean he is in any way inferior in essence. Each of the three persons of the Trinity has had, for a period of time, a particular function unique to himself. This is to be understood as a temporary role for the purpose of accomplishing a given end, not a change in his status or essence. In human experience, there is functional subordination as well. Several equals in a business or enterprise may choose one of their number to serve as the captain of a task force or the chairperson of a committee for a given time, but without any change in rank. In like fashion, the Son did not during his earthly incarnation become less than the Father, but he did subordinate himself functionally to the Father's will. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is now subordinated to the ministry of the Son (see John 14– 16) as well as to the will of the Father, but this does not imply that he is less than they are.

6. The Trinity is incomprehensible. We cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. When someday we see God, we shall see him as he is, and understand him better than we do now. Yet even then we will not totally comprehend him.

The Search for Analogies

The problem in constructing a statement of the doctrine of the Trinity is not merely to understand the terminology. That is in itself hard enough; for example, it is difficult to know what “person” means in this context. More difficult yet is to understand the interrelationships among the members of the Trinity.

The human mind occasionally seeks analogies which will help in this effort. On a popular level, analogies drawn from physical nature have often been utilized. A widely used analogy, for example, is the egg: it consists of yolk, white, and shell, all of which together form one whole egg.

Another favorite analogy is water: it can be found in solid, liquid, and vaporous forms. At times other material objects have been used as illustrations. One pastor, in instructing young catechumens, attempted to clarify the threeness yet oneness by posing the question, “Is (or are) trousers singular or plural?” His answer was that trousers is singular at the top, and they are plural at the bottom.

Note that these analogies and illustrations, as well as large numbers of similar analogies drawn from the physical realm, tend to be either tritheistic or modalistic in their implications.

On one hand, the analogies involving the egg and the trousers seem to suggest that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are separate parts of the divine nature. On the other hand, the analogy involving the various forms of water has modalistic overtones, since ice, liquid water, and steam are modes of existence. A given quantity of water does not simultaneously exist in all three states.

Augustine

One of the most creative minds in the history of Christian theology was Augustine. In *De trinitate*, which may be his greatest work, he turned his prodigious intellect to the problem of the nature of the Trinity.

The major contribution of Augustine to the understanding of the Trinity is his analogies drawn from the realm of human personality. He argued that since humankind is made in the image of God, who is triune, it is therefore reasonable to expect to find, through an analysis of human nature, a reflection, however faint, of God’s triunity. With this thought in mind, let us examine two analogies drawn from the realm of human experience. The first analogy is drawn from the realm of individual human psychology.

As a self-conscious person, I may engage in internal dialogue with myself. I may take different positions and interact with myself. I may even engage in a debate with myself.

Furthermore, I am a complex human person with multiple roles and responsibilities in dynamic interplay with one another. As I consider what I should do in a given situation, the husband, the father, the son that together constitute me may mutually inform one another.

One problem with this analogy is that in human experience it is most clearly seen in situations where there is tension or competition, rather than harmony, between the individual's various positions and roles.

But in God, by contrast, there are always perfect harmony, communication, and love.

Another possible example from the world of science is:

Physicists have never finally and perfectly resolved the question of the nature of light.

One theory says that it is waves. The other says it is quanta, little bundles of energy.

Logically it cannot be both. Yet, to account for all the data, one must hold both theories simultaneously.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a crucial ingredient of our faith.

- Each of the three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is to be worshiped, as is the Triune God. And, keeping in mind their distinctive work, it is appropriate to direct prayers of thanks and of petition to each of the members of the Trinity, as well as to all of them collectively.
- And, the perfect love and unity within the Godhead model for us the oneness and affection that should characterize our relationships within the body of Christ.

It appears that Tertullian was right in affirming that the doctrine of the Trinity must be divinely revealed, not humanly constructed. It is so absurd from a human standpoint that no one would have invented it.

We do not hold the doctrine of the Trinity because it is self-evident or logically cogent. We hold it because God has revealed that this is what he is like.

As someone has said of this doctrine:

Try to explain it, and you'll lose your mind;

But try to deny it, and you'll lose your soul.

Things to Mull:

1. Which of the “Models” do you see is the best description of the Trinity? Why?
 - Where does the model of water break down?
 - Where does the model of the egg break down?
 - Where does the model of the trousers* break down? **(You're welcome GAs)*
 - Where does the model of “the man” break down?
2. Read through the “Essential Elements of the Doctrine of the Trinity (p.12) and explain why they are so vital to the Christian faith.
3. Why is the doctrine of the Trinity so important?
In what real life situations does this question come up?
4. Why is the deity of Jesus so important?
5. In one paragraph how would you explain the deity of Jesus?
6. If by the very definition of the Trinity, God the Father/Son/Holy Spirit is indistinguishable in unity, honor, and love. How should we as Christians act toward each other?
(Read John 17:11)
7. Will this explanation of the Trinity change the way you pray and worship?
How? Why?

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