

# What We Believe about the Nature of God:

## The Father, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit

There is only one God. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one LORD" (Dt. 6:4).

### **The Bible use of the word, "one"**

You do not have to read far in the Bible to see that the word "one" may include more than one individual. In Gen. 2:24 God said a man should cleave to his wife, "and they shall be one flesh." Jesus repeated this terminology, "They twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh" (Mt. 19:5,6).

This oneness is not just a unity of purpose; it is "one flesh." Husbands and wives don't always get along perfectly, but they are still one flesh. Even a man committing adultery with a prostitute is one flesh with her. "What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh" (1Cor. 6:16.) So these two individuals are in a sense one, one flesh, one body.

The very next verse gives another example that the word "one" can include more than one individual. "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17).

The Apostle Paul said that he planted and that Apollos watered (1 Cor. 3:16). He also said, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one" (1 Cor. 3:8). So these two men made up one gardening operation. They were a team. They were one.

Still other examples of the term "one" including more than one individual are found in Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17. Several times Jesus prays "that they may be one." It is clear that there are a number of individuals who become one. The disciples that Jesus prayed for certainly did not all lose their identities and merge into one individual, into one person. But they did become one, one body, so that different members with different gifts could help the others and be

helped by the other members. They all needed each other. They all fit together to form one body, one team.

### **Plurality in the term "God"**

Also, you don't have to read far in the Bible to get a hint that there is a plurality in the term "God." In the very first chapter, "God said, 'Let **us** make man in **our** image...'" (Gen. 1:26).

There are *many* examples especially in John. I counted over 120 verses in John that showed a distinction in the Godhead. Jesus said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). They are one, not one and the same. He did not say I am also a father. He said I **and** My Father **are** one.

It is true that one person can have several functions or offices or relationships. I am a son and a father, but I am not my own son. And when the Bible talks about the Father and Jesus His Son, it is clear that there are two individuals. Many verses demonstrate this fact. Here are a few.

The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise... The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son (John 5:19,21).

...That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him (John 5:23).

My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me (John 7:16).

Ye believe in God, believe **also** in Me (John 14:1).

...They have not known the Father **nor** Me (John 16:3).

I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me (John 8:16).

Many times Jesus said the Father sent Him. The word "sent" implies another person sending Him. It would not be right for me to say I sent myself. I should just say I went. If I was sent, that means someone else caused me to go.

Many verses have Jesus praying to the Father. Praying is not talking to yourself.

Here is a verse that teaches what people call the Trinity in three ways, all in one verse: Jesus prays, "...that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22).

- Jesus says "we", referring to Himself and the Father. He did not say, "as I am one" but "as we are one."
- He says, "That they may be one, even **as** we are one." He is praying that the disciples will become one in the same sense as the Son and the Father are one. All the disciples did not all become just one individual. They became one unified team, just as the Father and Son are one team.
- In this verse Jesus is praying to the Father. Praying assumes two individuals, the one praying and the one being prayed to.

### **Places where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are mentioned together**

There are several places where the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all mentioned in one verse and shown to be distinct. Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me (John 15:26).

All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He [referring to the Holy Spirit] shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you (John 15:26).

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased (Luke 3:22).

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen (2 Cor. 13:14).

## **Was the distinction between the Father and the Son just temporary, during His incarnation, or is it eternal?**

It is eternal.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

Jesus prayed, "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

Back at the time of Creation God said, "Let us make man in our image..." (Gen. 1:26).

Mica 5:2 prophesied about Jesus' birth at Bethlehem, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Philippians 2 speaks of the preexistence of Christ: "Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6,7 NAS). Then in the future every knee will bow to Jesus and confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 10,11 NAS).

Jesus is at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3).

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father **also** (1 John 2:23 NAS).

Likewise, the Holy Spirit is eternal, not just a temporary manifestation of the Father. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you **forever**" (John 14:16).

## **Influence of a gifted individual**

I have seen how people are sometimes strongly influenced to believe certain doctrines, not because those teachings are clearly taught in Scripture, but they were taught by a very gifted person. It is important to remember the fact that working

miracles does not mean the miracle worker is gifted at teaching. Teaching and working miracles are two different gifts. In fact, working many miracles in Jesus' name does not even prove the miracle worker is even saved.

Jesus said, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Mt. 7:22,23).

### **How important is this doctrine?**

The Gospel of John was written that "ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31). So you get eternal life by believing that Jesus is the Son of God. Believing that Jesus is the Father, is not the same as believing that He is the Son of God.

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting. For the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11 NAS).

This passage teaches some sobering facts:

- There is a distinction between the Father and the Son. Those who stay in the teaching of Christ have *both* the Father *and* the Son.
- A false teaching about Jesus can show that one does not even have the Father or the Son.
- A false teaching about Jesus is so serious that if someone does not bring the true teaching, others should not receive him into their house or even give him a greeting, because in giving him a greeting one would participate in his evil deeds.