

TEACHING GOAL

To study the biblical concept of the trinity.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

Q. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the Living and True God.

Q. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

S.C. 5-6; L.C. 8-9; W.C. of F. II; Savoy 2; Young 6-8

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Matthew 28:16-20

Support Passages: Acts 2:37-41, 8:14-17; Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7, 18; Ephesians 4:4-6; I Corinthians 12:4-6, 15:27, 28, II Corinthians 13:14

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 3: The baptism of Jesus. The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit are exhibited on this wonderfully significant occasion.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."" (Matthew 28:18-20, ESV)

APPLICATION

We are to make disciples of the Triune God, in the strength of Jesus to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given.

SUMMARY

To this point in our dealings with the doctrine of God we have observed from Scripture some of the attributes and characteristics of the Living and True God. We have noticed His personality, yet His transcendence. He is far above man, yet mankind were created by God with a portion of His attributes, for God said, "Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:26) To this point we have observed that God is a unity, that He is one God who is a real objective being. We have referred to Him as He or God. Now we will examine biblical data that teach a Godhead or a God who consists of three persons. For example the passage just cited makes use of the plural pronouns us and our.

Although the word for God is often Elohim, a plural Hebrew noun. God is not many Gods but one God therefore it is translated God and not Gods. We should note the use of Elohim in Genesis 3:22 where we find YAHWEH Elohim. Here is YAHWEH, a singular proper noun, in apposition to Elohim, a plural noun thus Elohim may properly be translated God. In Genesis 1:26 it would be ridiculous to translate "and Gods said", particularly in view of the fact that the verb said is in the third person singular or "He Said" and not "They said."

However, there are still the plural pronouns to reckon with "us" and "our". "God said, let **us** make man in **our** image." Only three persons in Scripture are said to be God: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All three are identified as YAHWEH, and all three are the same in substance and equal in power and glory. (That Jesus is YAHWEH will be discussed in the next lesson.) Even so there is a subordination with regard to the three persons of the Godhead as is seen in the order of the persons mentioned in the baptismal formula, "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) The Son is begotten by the Father (John 1:18) and the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son (John 14:26, 16:7) which is to say the Father and the Son operate through the Holy Spirit. (That the Holy Spirit is a person will be discussed in a future lesson.)

One realizes immediately that these persons are not separate Gods but one and the same, since the term God applies to them all. They are never "a God" but "God". Jesus, that one with "all authority in heaven and earth", which is true only of YAHWEH, instructs His disciples to "make disciples (of God) of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Thus is God said to be one God, yet three persons all of whom named YAHWEH.

We are not able to adequately prove the doctrine of the Trinity from any single Bible passage. I John 5:7 in the King James Version is used by many to the contrary to prove the Trinity but this verse appears to be spurious and modern translations of the Bible (e.g. NASB, NIV) do not include it. The Bible doctrine of the Trinity, like the definition of God, is only understood by an

exhaustive study of the Word of God. This summary only points to the basic elements of this doctrine.