

# God's Story, Our Story

## Lesson 26: The Trinity

*God is a Communion of Persons  
and a Family whose Life is Love*



*Jn 8:24, 10:30, 20:28  
Jn 1:1, Rom 9:5, 1Tim 3:16,  
Tit 2:13, Heb 1:8, 2 Pet 1:1*

*Mt 10:32, Mt 11:27, Mt  
26:39, Jn 14:16, Rom 1:7, 1  
Tim 2:5*

*Maimonides' 13 Principles of  
Faith*

*CCC 42, 212, 300, 301*

*Dt 6:4, Is 45:5, 46:9*

*Gen 1:5, Gen 2:24, Ez 2:64*

*Gen 1:1, 1:26, 3:22, 11:6-7,  
20:13, Ps 58:12, Ps 110:1,  
Eccl 12:1*

*Isa 44:6, 48:12,16, Zech  
2:10-11*

*Gen 16:7,13, Gen 18, Gen  
32:24,30, Jud 6:12-16, Jud  
13:21-22*

*Ps 2*

*Is 7:14, Is 9:6, Jer 23:6, Jer  
33:16, Zech 12:10, Dan  
7:13-14*

1. Jesus claimed to be divine. He made himself equal to God (see lesson 25). The NT authors claim that Jesus is God.
2. Yet Jesus is distinct from God the Father.
3. An unsolvable puzzle? There is only one God. But Jesus claims to be God. He also claims to be distinct from God the Father. How to reconcile these statements?
4. Two problems:
  - a. How can a man be God?
  - b. If Jesus is God yet distinct from the Father, are there two gods?
5. God is Spirit: transcendent (distinct from creation) and immanent (present in creation).
6. The OT affirms the oneness of God: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (Dt 6:4)
7. One ("echad") does not mean a singular but a composite entity: "A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become **one** flesh." (Gen. 2:24)
8. The plurality of God is hinted at in the OT: "Elohim" is plural. "Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness". (Gen 1:26)
9. The One God reveals himself as three persons: "I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last... From the time that it was, **I (2)** was there. And now the **Lord God (1)** and **His Spirit (3)** have sent **Me (2)**". (Isa. 48:12, 16)
10. The Zohar presents God as having three degrees, heads, or spirits united as one.
11. The "middle spirit" is presented in the Aramaic targums as the "Word of the Lord": "And the **Word of the Lord** created man in His likeness, in the likeness of the presence of the Lord He created him." (Jerusalem Targum of Gen 1:27)
12. The "Angel of the Lord" or "angel of the covenant" in the OT is identified with the Lord himself.
13. The "middle pillar" and angel of God is also called "Metatron." He is described as Son of God, and is identified with the Shekhinah and the Lord Himself.
14. The OT hints that the Messiah will be divine.

<p>Gen 1:2, Ps 51:11, Is 11:1-2, Is 61:1</p> <p>2 Cor 6:18, 2 Pet 1:16, 2 Cor 3:17</p> <p>CCC 202</p> <p>Mt 28:19, Jn 14:26, 1 Cor 12:4-6, Eph 2:18, 3:14-17, Heb 9:14, 1 Pet 1:2, Jude 20-21</p> <p>CCC 253</p> <p>CCC 254</p> <p>CCC 255</p> <p>Col 1:15</p> <p>CCC 257-259</p> <p>CCC 357</p> <p>CCC 257, 260, 1111-12, 1131</p>	<p>15. God's Spirit is spoken of as distinct from God the Father: "Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." (Ps 51:11)</p> <p>16. In the New Testament: there is only one Lord (Eph 4:5). But the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all called "Lord."</p> <p>17. Three divine persons: The Father is God (2 Pet 1:17); the Son is God (Jn 1:1, 20:28); the Spirit is God (Ac 5:3-4, 1 Cor 3:16).</p> <p>18. The mystery of the Trinity: <i>"There is only one true God, eternal, infinite and unchangeable, incomprehensible, almighty and ineffable, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; three persons indeed, but one essence, substance or nature entirely simple."</i></p> <p>19. The Trinity in the New Testament: "The grace of the <b>Lord Jesus Christ (2)</b>, and the love of <b>God (1)</b>, and the communion of the <b>Holy Spirit (3)</b> be with you all." (2 Cor 13:14)</p> <p>20. The Trinity: not three Gods, but one God in three persons. Each divine person is God whole and entire.</p> <p>21. The divine persons are really distinct from one another (not modalities as water, ice &amp; steam).</p> <p>22. The divine persons are relative to one another. The distinction between them is in their relationships between one another.</p> <p>23. God, as person, knows and loves. Because He is infinite, His knowledge and love are infinite. Because He is infinite, His knowledge and love are simply Himself.</p> <p>24. The Second Person: God's knowledge; the Word (thought or idea), the Son (same nature as the Father), the "image of the invisible God" and perfect self-expression of the Father.</p> <p>25. The Third Person: God's love. Between the Father and the Son, there is an infinite, perfect love, which produces an eternal person, the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>26. The work of the Trinity: God's plan of salvation is the work of the three divine persons: Father = Creator, Provider; Son = Savior, Redeemer; Spirit = Sanctifier, Guide, Guarantor.</p> <p>27. This work is seen: In Creation (Gen 1:1-2, Jn 1:3), At Jesus' Baptism (Mt 3:16-17), at the Resurrection (Acts 2:22-24, Jn 2:19, Rom 8:11), in giving divine life (Eph 3:16-19), in the resurrection of the believer (Jn 5:21, 6:40, Rom 8:11).</p> <p>28. Man is made in the image of the Trinity, and so "he is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons."</p> <p>29. God shares his trinitarian life of love with us in the liturgy and sacraments of the Church.</p>
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## Questions for Discussion

1. What is the problem with God being absolutely singular?
2. Why did God not reveal himself as Trinity from the very beginning?
3. Why a *Trinity*? Could God have been more persons than three?
4. What is the relationship between God's knowledge and God's love?
5. What does the Trinity have to do with us humans? What is the role of each person?
6. What should our relation be with each of the persons of the Trinity?

