

## Getting to Know Your Bible

### *How is Jesus God?*

As we read the New Testament, it is clear that Jesus is different from God the Father (e.g.- John 14:28), and yet it is clear that Jesus has characteristics only God has (cp. Isaiah 48:11, John 17:5). Furthermore, the person known as the Holy Spirit is also God (e.g.- Acts 5:3-4). But the Bible says that there is only one God (cf. Deut. 6:4-5, Isa. 45:5-6)! How should this be understood? The word "Trinity" was coined by early theologians to label this phenomenon.

#### **The Trinity: what it is not**

It is not one God who appears as the Father, becoming Jesus and then the Holy Spirit when Jesus leaves (i.e.- like water which changes from vapor to water to ice). That is an incorrect view known as *modalism*.

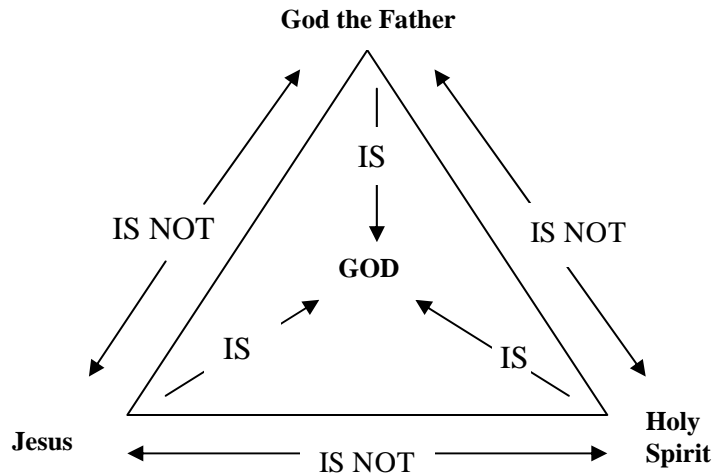
It is not one God being divided into three parts.

It is not 3 different ways of looking at God.

It is not illogical, like saying  $1+1+1=1$  or saying "God is 3 persons and 1 person."

#### **The Trinity: what it is**

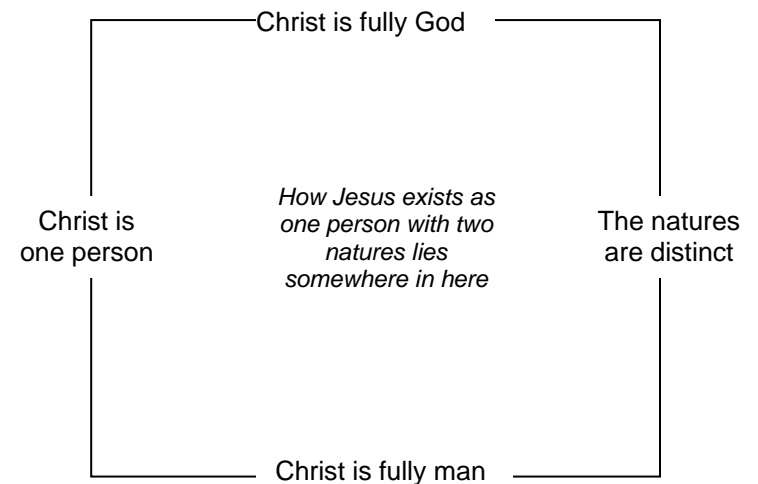
To the best of our understanding, God is best described as one *being* existing in three *persons*, with *each of the three persons each equal to the whole being of God*. The distinctions between the persons are more relational (e.g.- Father and Son) and functional (e.g.- Jesus' work vs. the Holy Spirit's work). *Ultimately God's triune nature is beyond our comprehension*. A helpful diagram to help us visualize some of these truths is known as the "Trinitarian Triangle."



#### **How is Jesus both God and Human?**

Another related question to how Jesus is God is how Jesus is both God and human, how Jesus has these 2 "natures." Throughout history, many ideas have been proposed, including: 1) the idea that perhaps Jesus had the body of a human but the spirit or soul of God, and 2) Jesus had the body of a human and soul of a human, but was filled with God's Spirit in such a way that the divine nature overpowered the human nature. Both of these examples, however, are inadequate because they lessen Jesus' humanity. Others have thought that Jesus was really 2 persons; there were two "people" existing within the body of Jesus. This is inadequate because nowhere in the Bible do we see this sort of division in Jesus. Jesus is one person with two natures.

The best way to describe Jesus' dual nature (not dual personhood) is to describe it as what it is *not*; we can't point to a specific "dot" and say this is exactly what it is or how it works, but we can draw some boundaries and say that how it exactly works out is a mystery but is confined to this "space." A diagram known as the "Chalcedonian Box" utilizes this way of defining:



[The above is an extremely abbreviated, simple, but accurate description of a very complex issue that has spanned the writings of 2000 years. For further reading, please talk to Yucan.]