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**Q.** How many persons are in the one God?

**A.** Three persons are in the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism #6)

*“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”*

(1 John 5:7, NKJV)

Yesterday we saw in our catechism that the clear teaching of the Bible is that there is only one true and living God (*Isaiah 45:5*). All the other “gods” or “goddesses” that are taught in the thousands of world religions that are in existence today are nothing more than lifeless idols invented by the imaginations of sinful human beings. God’s Word makes this abundantly clear when it teaches us that, “*there is no other God but one...*” (1 Corinthians 8:4a). At the same time, the Bible, as God’s revealed Word, teaches us that the Father is God, the Son (*Jesus Christ*) is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God. Yet, each of these three persons (*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*) make up the one true and living God. As Christians we believe in one God who has eternally existed in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is what is known in Christian theology as the doctrine of the Trinity.

Why do we, as Christians, believe in the doctrine of the Trinity (*one God in three persons*)? Because that is what the Bible teaches! In the very first chapters of God’s Word, we get glimpses of the doctrine of the Trinity. In Genesis 1:26 we read, “*Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...’*”. You may have wondered as you read through the creation account, who God was referring to when He declared, “*Let Us make man in Our image...*”. The answer is that God the Father was speaking with the other two persons of the Trinity (*the Son and the Spirit*). There has never been a time when any of the three persons were not in existence. God has always been (*and always will be*) one God in three persons: Father, Son and Spirit. We see the doctrine of the Trinity confirmed in the Great Commission which was given by Jesus to His disciples before His ascension into Heaven. Jesus said, “*make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Matthew 28:19). And in 1 John 5:7 we read the clearest declaration of the doctrine of the Trinity when God’s Word says, “*For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.*”

Throughout church history there have been many false teachings (*heresies*) regarding the doctrine of the Trinity that have been propagated. Some have falsely taught that there are not three persons in the one God, but that God the Father simply changes “*modes*” or transforms into the Son or

the Spirit, depending on a particular situation (*perhaps you were taught the “water illustration” of the Trinity in children’s Sunday school growing up, where God was said to be like water, which can exist in three different forms: ice, liquid & gas*). This is NOT the teaching of the Bible, but is a heresy known as “*Modalism*”. Others have falsely taught that there are three different gods, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are also three different persons. Again, this is not the teaching of the Bible, but is a heresy known as “*Tri-Theism*”. As Christians, we don’t believe in three gods, but in one God who has eternally existed in three persons which are, as our catechism states, “*the same in substance and equal in power and glory*”. Any attempt to try and illustrate the biblical doctrine of the Trinity will always fall short of the truth and ultimately lead us into heresy. The doctrine of the Trinity is best described as a mystery...one that we will never be able to fully comprehend on this side of eternity.

Our belief in the doctrine of the Trinity sets us apart from other false religions in existence today that falsely claim to be Christian (*such as Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Oneness Pentecostalism*). Spend some time today pondering the mystery of the Trinity. Thank God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit for planning, accomplishing and applying salvation to sinners like you and me!

Dig Even Deeper into God’s Word!

2 Corinthians 13:14

1 Peter 1:2

Matthew 3:16-17

John 1:1-3,14