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COURSE: KNOWING GOD
T1_CC_L3: THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRINITY

INTRODUCTION

What makes a successful student? The Lord answers, “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it” (Joshua 1:8). Divided into two sections, this lesson contains assignments that you are encouraged to finish before continuing to the next lesson.

LESSON 3, SECTION 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- A. Understand God’s personal, intimate interaction with your own life.
- B. Grasp the scriptural basis for the existence of only one God.

SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 3:16-17

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

So far in this course, we have explored some difficult concepts about the nature of God. We have seen that God exists in a Trinity, comprised of three distinct Persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Also, we have seen that while each of these three are individual personalities, they are each fully God, having all of the divine attributes previously discussed. Now, in this third and final lesson on the Trinity, we must round out our study with one last point: there is only one God.

We reviewed this point briefly in Lesson 1 of this course, but it is certainly important enough to warrant a more thorough examination. It is absolutely vital for all believers to understand that the concept of the Trinity does not imply the existence of three separate gods. Scripture clearly teaches—throughout both the Old and New Testaments—that there is only one God. Now, let’s explore some of these passages.

First, take a moment to read Exodus 20:1-7. In this passage, God has just led the Israelites out of Egypt, where they had been slaves. The Israelites had been in Egypt for so long that they had been submerged in the Egyptian culture. One thing with which they would certainly have been familiar is the multitude of gods that the ancient Egyptians worshipped. To counter any ideas of multiple gods or idol worship, God clearly establishes Himself as the one true God. He declares in Exodus 20:3-5a, “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.” Obviously, then, God left no room for any other deities beside Himself.

God knew the Israelites intimately. That is how He knew that they were worshiping idols. Therefore, He made it clear to them (using terms they would understand because of their familiarity with Egyptian practices) that He alone was God.

Likewise, the one true God knows you personally; He knows what experiences you've been through, what

struggles you've had, what passages of Scripture mean the most to you, and what your desires are. Thus, He speaks to you in ways that He knows you will understand.

J1: Write about an experience when God revealed Himself to you in such a way that you knew He was very intimately aware of your life and your needs?

Deuteronomy 4:35 leaves little room for question or doubt as to God's uniqueness, "To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him."

One of the most well-known passages on the topic of God's uniqueness is Deuteronomy 6:4, which became a regularly-spoken confession of faith in early Judaism. This important verse reads, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"

Finally, Isaiah 45:5 depicts God speaking to an unbelieving king, "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God." These are just a few of the many, many passages in the Old Testament that depict God's divinity.

This emphasis is also present throughout the New Testament. For example, in 1 Timothy 2:3-5, Paul encourages, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." This is a great passage that not only testifies to the uniqueness of God, but also to the perfect union between the Father and the Son.

Q1: Choose the best word to complete this sentence: The unity of the Father and Son reveals God's distinctiveness and His _____.

- A. Distance
- B. Jealousy
- C. Oneness
- D. Abstractness

LESSON 3, SECTION 2

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- A. Understand Matthew 3:17 in terms of God's amazing love.
- B. See God as close, involved, and personal, rather than existing in some far off place called "heaven."

The early church may not have understood the awesome concept of the Trinity much better than we do today, but history and Scripture reveal that they did, in fact, believe it. Not only did they believe it in their personal lives, but they taught it to others and saw the necessity of understanding the Trinity as part of a healthy, developing walk of faith.

What difference does it make in our lives, here and now? It makes a world of difference. You see, most people see God as being quite distant from this world, far removed from the problems and challenges that you and I face everyday. One of the biggest of these problems for people is the question, "How do I call God out of that place called heaven and get Him down here, involved in my problem, my heartache, my burden, my sorrow, my loss?"

You should understand that when I say this, I am not only talking about unbelievers. I am also thinking about Christians who have not grown to understand God very well at all. They may say, "Well, I go to church sometimes, I read the Bible occasionally, I pray every now and then, but nothing seems to be happening." My friend, if this describes you, then your concept of God is far too small!

God is bigger than you or I could ever imagine. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable,

and eternal. There is nothing too big or too small for His attention. And, He exists in three Persons. He is our divine Father, our saving Christ, and our indwelling Holy Spirit. We see through the sacrifice of His Son that He loves us completely, and we see through the giving of the Holy Spirit that He knows us intimately and personally.

J2: Consider Matthew 3:17:

“. . . and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.’”

As you examine this verse, how is your perspective of God's unconditional love broadened?

Although we can never fully understand each aspect of the Trinity, I hope it is clear to you that some understanding of our triune Godhead is vital to our relationship with God. With this now established, we will spend some time in the next several lessons examining each Person of the Trinity in greater detail. We will begin in the next lesson with the study entitled, Our Heavenly Father.

PRAYER

Father God, I praise You for the way You have revealed Yourself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thank You for loving me as God the Father; for saving me as God the Son, and for walking with me through each day as God the Holy Spirit. Help me as I grow in my understanding of who You are, so that I may know You better and tell others about You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

HOMEWORK

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

John 5:19

Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”