

# Discipleship Training Course

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- The Old Testament tetragrammaton name of God (derived from the four Hebrew letters translated into English as YHWH) has been rendered LORD unless translated Jehovah or Yahweh
- Pronouns referring to the Trinity and some specific terms relating to the Trinity (such as Name and Word) have been capitalized
- Speech marks around entire quotes and at the beginning of new paragraphs have been omitted
- Anglicised spellings have been used
- All quotes begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop
- Some weights, measures and times have been replaced with easier to understand terms given in the footnotes using square brackets
- All verse numbers, footnote numbers and symbols have been removed
- Poetry has been indented and only new sentences start with a capital letter

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## Chapter 22. The Trinity

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### 1. Introduction

The doctrine of the Trinity includes the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit but also the unique identity of God the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly taught in Scripture but it is widely acknowledged and accepted by the Church. However, it was not fully established until the end of the fourth Century AD. The deity of Christ was accepted first and later the deity of the Holy Spirit. Other heresies to do with the non-uniqueness of the three members of the Trinity were also refuted by this date.

### 2. The Deity of Christ

John described Jesus as the Word and equated Him with God the Father:

***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made that has been made.***

John 1:1-3 (NHEB)

He also recounted Jesus' claim of His deity:

*The Jews answered Him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honour My Father, and you dishonour Me. Yet I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks it, and He is the Judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My Word, he will never see death." The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' But you have not known Him. I know Him. If I were to say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know Him and I keep His Word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad." So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."** So they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.*

John 8:48-59 (ESVUK)

According to 1 Corinthians, Jesus has been delegated authority by the Father until the whole universe has been made subject to Him at which time He will hand authority back to the Father:

*And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. For the Scriptures say, “**God has put all things under His authority.**” (Of course, when it says “all things are under His authority,” that does not include God Himself, who gave Christ His authority.) Then, when all things are under His authority, the Son will put Himself under God’s authority, so that **God, who gave His Son authority over all things**, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.*

1 Corinthians 15:26-28 (NLT)

Jesus is described as the image of God in 2 Corinthians and Colossians:

*For the god of this world has blinded the unbelievers’ minds [that they should not discern the truth], preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ (the Messiah), **Who is the Image and Likeness of God.***

2 Corinthians 4:4 (AMPC)

***The Son is the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over all creation. For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that **in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.*

Colossians 1:15-20 (NIVUK)

Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians contain many references to the joint operation of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

*This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy.*

*We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to **God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

*May God give you grace and peace.*

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (NLT)

*Now may **our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus** clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of **our God and Father when our Lord Jesus** comes with all His holy ones.*

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (NIVUK)

*Paul, Silas and Timothy,*

*To the church of the Thessalonians in **God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:***

*Grace and peace to you from **God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

...

*He will punish those **who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.***

...

*With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to **the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2, 8, 11-12 (NIVUK)

Now may **our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father**, who has loved us and given us everlasting comfort and encouragement and the good [well-founded] hope [of salvation] by His grace, comfort and encourage and strengthen your hearts [keeping them steadfast and on course] in every good work and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (AMP)

**May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love, and into the perseverance of Christ.**

2 Thessalonians 3:5 (WEBPB)

Finally, in the letter to the Hebrews, the deity and supremacy of Christ is stated:

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.** After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So He became as much superior to the angels as the Name He has inherited is superior to theirs.*

Hebrews 1:1-4 (NIVUK)

### 3. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His disciples to replace His physical presence after He ascended back to heaven. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “another Counsellor” (Greek: “allos Parakletos”), meaning **one of the same kind who comes along side to help**, like an identical twin brother:

*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. I will pray to the Father, **and He will give you another Counsellor, that He may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive; because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, **for He lives with you, and will be in you.** I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more; but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will reveal Myself to him.*

John 14:15-21 (NHEB)

***But when the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor – Counsellor, Strengtheners, Standby) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of Truth who comes from the Father, He will testify and bear witness about Me.** But you will testify also and be My witnesses, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

John 15:26-27 (AMP)

*I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. **However when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak from Himself; but whatever He hears, He will speak. He will declare to you things that are coming. He will glorify Me, for He will take from what is Mine, and will declare it to you.** All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will declare it to you.*

John 16:12-15 (WEBPB)

### 4. Unity of operation of the Godhead

The unity of the Godhead is seen in their joint action in creation, the baptism of Jesus and through the Church.

## 4.1 Unity in creation

The Spirit of God hovered over the waters before the act of creation. Jesus was the agent by which creation took place.

*In the beginning, **God created the heavens and the earth.** The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.***

***And God said, "Let there be light", and there was light.***

Genesis 1:1-3 (ESVUK)

God used the plural to state His intentions to create man. Whilst there are several Scriptures in the Old Testament where God used the plural to refer to His heavenly court this Scripture in particular points towards the Godhead:

*God said, "**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:** and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image. In God's image He created him; male and female He created them.*

Genesis 1:26-27 (NHEB)

Wisdom is personified in Proverbs 8 as the agent by which the world was created:

*Listen as Wisdom calls out!*

*Hear as understanding raises her voice!*

*The LORD formed me from the beginning,  
before he created anything else.*

*I was appointed in ages past,  
at the very first, before the earth began.*

*I was born before the oceans were created,  
before the springs bubbled forth their waters.*

*Before the mountains were formed,  
before the hills, I was born –  
before He had made the earth and fields  
and the first handfuls of soil.*

*I was there when He established the heavens,  
when He drew the horizon on the oceans.*

*I was there when He set the clouds above,  
when He established springs deep in the earth.*

*I was there when He set the limits of the seas,  
so they would not spread beyond their boundaries.*

*And when He marked off the earth's foundations,  
I was the architect at his side.*

*I was His constant delight,  
rejoicing always in His presence.*

*And how happy I was with the world He created;  
how I rejoiced with the human family!*

Proverbs 8:1, 22-31 (NLT)

According to John's gospel, it was through Christ that all things were created:

***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made that has been made.*

John 1:1-3 (NHEB)

Jesus is called the wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians, thus reinforcing the link between Him and the act of creation:

*Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God has chosen what is insignificant and despised in the world – what is viewed as nothing – to bring to nothing what is viewed as something, so that no one can boast in His presence. But it is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became God-given wisdom for us – our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, in order that, as it is written: “The one who boasts must boast in the LORD.”*

1 Corinthians 1:27-31 (HCSB)

The operation of Christ in creation is also declared in Colossians:

***For by Him all things were created in the heavens and on the earth, visible things and invisible things, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things have been created through Him and for Him.***

Colossians 1:16 (WEBPB)

#### 4.2 Unity in the baptism of Jesus

The Father and the Holy Spirit were also both active at the baptism of Christ:

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

Matthew 3:16-17 (NASB1995)

#### 4.3 Unity in the age of the Church

Several Scriptures point towards the joint action of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the age of the Church:

*Now there are [distinctive] varieties of spiritual gifts [special abilities given by the grace and extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit operating in believers], but it is the same Spirit [who grants them and empowers believers]. And there are [distinctive] varieties of ministries and service, but it is the same Lord [who is served]. And there are [distinctive] ways of working [to accomplish things], but it is the same God who produces all things in all believers [inspiring, energizing, and empowering them]*

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (AMP)

*Whenever, though, they turn to face God as Moses did, God removes the veil and there they are – face-to-face! They suddenly recognize that God is a living, personal presence, not a piece of chiselled stone. And **when God is personally present, a living Spirit**, that old, constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We’re free of it! All of us! **Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of His face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah**, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful **as God enters our lives and we become like Him.***

2 Corinthians 3:16-18 (MSG)

***The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.***

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NHEB)

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

*To God’s elect, exiles, scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to **the foreknowledge of God the***

***Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with His blood:***

*Grace and peace be yours in abundance.*

1 Peter 1:1-2 (NIVUK)

## **5. Unity in the Church**

Unity within the Church should reflect the unity within the Godhead.

*I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are One, I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me.*

John 17:20-23 (ESVUK)