

How Well Do You Understand the Trinity? This Quiz Might Surprise You

How well do you understand God?

Whether you're a brand-new believer or a seasoned student of Scripture, the answer is that we cannot ever fully wrap our minds around the God we serve. As He says in Isaiah 40:25, "To whom will you compare me?" (NIV).

But for many Christians, is the incomprehensibility of God's nature an *excuse* to be lazy in understanding what He has *revealed about Himself*?

Dr. James White, a reformed Christian apologist and theologian, has mused in *The Forgotten Trinity* that Christians are passionate about all sorts of doctrines—eternal security, the gifts of the Spirit, salvation through Christ alone, the second coming of Christ—but how often do you hear someone say they are passionate about the *Trinity*?

That's because, for many of us, the Trinity is the awkward stepchild in the family of Christian doctrine. We know it, we believe it, but we're confused by it and we sometimes wish it wasn't there.

But if you've ever had a conversation about the nature of God with a Jehovah's Witness, a Mormon, a Muslim, or a Oneness Pentecostal, you may have discovered that understanding the Trinity is about more than having all your theological ducks in a row; it's about the core nature of God revealed in Scripture.

For most of us, we're content in understanding that the Father, Son and Spirit are all God. But Heaven forbid, what if

an ardent nonbeliever were to confront you with John 14:28 (“the Father is greater than I”) Mark 10:18 (“Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone”) while you’re trying to share the Gospel with him? Do these verses fit comfortably in your understanding of the Trinity, or would they cause you to backpedal in conversation?

The Test

If you consider yourself a Bible-believing Christian, ask: *do I really understand—and have a passion for—the way God reveals Himself in Scripture through the doctrine of the Trinity?*

Test yourself here. It’s simple; only 10 questions, mostly true/false.

The Answers

How did you do? If you took the survey, click to the next page to see the answers and their explanations. And by no means take our word for it—study the Word yourself!

1. Which of the following is/are God?

Answer: The Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are all God.

In our everyday language, we usually use the word “God” to refer to God the Father (as does the Bible, very often). But while the Father is indeed God, God is not *just* the Father. God is one, yet consists of three distinct Persons.

2. How many Gods are there?

Answer: One.

The foundational teaching of Judaism and Christianity has always been monotheism, expressed in the *shema* (“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one” [Deuteronomy 6:4]). The Trinity is *not* the belief in three Gods, but that the

three divine Persons are *together* one God (*tri-unity*). No true Christian has ever believed in three Gods; to do so would make him a polytheist.

3. How many Persons of God are there?

Answer: Three.

This is the heart of the doctrine of the Trinity; that there are three divine Persons in the Godhead (Father, Son, and Spirit).

4. Jesus is God.

Answer: True.

Jesus, as the human incarnation of God the Son, is full God and fully man. More accurately, Jesus is *God the Son*; Jesus not, however, the physical incarnation of entire Godhead. Yet Jesus, as the second Person of the Trinity, shares in all the divine attributes of God. See John 1:1-18.

5. Jesus is the Father.

Answer: False.

Jesus (the Son) and the Father are two distinct Persons of the Trinity. While they are both party to the one being of God, they are not the same Person as one another. To claim that Jesus is the Father would be Unitarianism, which makes no distinction between any divine Persons. When Jesus said "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), He was referring to the unity of Himself with the Father in divine nature and purpose. He was not denying that there is still a distinction between the Father and the Son.

6. The Holy Spirit is God.

Answer: True.

This is a basic tenet of the Christian faith. When Jesus said

that the Father would send “another Helper” after Him (John 14:16), the Greek term used refers to *one of the same nature*—that is, the same divine nature.

7. The Holy Spirit is the same Person as the Father.

Answer: False.

To fail to distinguish between the individual Persons of the Trinity is to commit heresy.

8. Fill in the blank: God is ____.

Answer: One.

This is a basic restatement of Deuteronomy 6:4. God is one being consisting of three Persons.

9. Jesus is Yahweh.

Answer: True.

The Hebrew tetragrammaton (יהוה, YHWH, or Yahweh) is the powerful name of God most often interpreted as a reference to His eternal self-existence (“I Am that I Am,” Exodus 3:14). This self-existence is a trait belonging not only to the Father, but to the Son and Spirit as well. It seems accurate to say that the entire Trinity is Yahweh God.

John 12:41 and Hebrews 1 are just two of the *many* passages in the New Testament identifying Christ with the God Yahweh of the Old Testament. These passages do *not* claim that Jesus and the Father are the same Person. Interestingly, the word “Lord” in small capital letters, the term used in most English Bibles to replace the Hebrew יהוה, is the same word in Greek most often ascribed to the “Lord” Jesus Christ (κύριος). Thus, to say “Jesus is Lord” is not only to say that He is Master, but also that He is God and in fact that He is the Yahweh of the Old Testament.

10. God is one Person manifested in three forms.

Answer: False.

It is tempting to answer “yes” here, because that would certainly simplify the doctrine in our minds while maintaining the whole three-in-one underpinning of the Trinity. The above statement is false, however, because it expresses the position of *modalism* (which characterizes Oneness Pentecostalism). Modalism teaches that God is one Person who has manifested Himself in various *manifestations* (or forms, modes) throughout time and space; initially as God the Father, during the first century as Jesus Christ, and presently as the Holy Spirit.

It’s convenient, but completely unbiblical and heretical. Modalism also makes tremendous light out of deep spiritual truths such as Christ’s intercession for us before the Father, the Son’s total submission to the Father, and so forth—truths which do not make sense unless one grants that the three Persons of the Trinity eternally co-exist.

For more information, see this excellent article from Matt Perman of Desiring God. You may also find this humorous video on St. Patrick’s attempts to explain the Trinity to be enlightening.

Alex Kocman is a recent media graduate with a background in biblical studies. A writer and editor for Christian Life News and Charisma News, he resides in Virginia with his wife. You can follow him on Twitter via @ajkocman.