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Bible Study #2: *Who is God?*

Introduction and Review

Dear friend,

We are so glad that we are able to help you in your continuing study of the Bible. As a reminder, in study #1 we learned, first of all, a few basic things about the content of the Bible, and how to look up verse references. We then looked at the inspiration of Scripture, and we saw that each and every Word of the Bible was God's Word, as much as if one heard Him speak audibly, so that the from cover to cover it is the error-free, perfect Word of God. We then looked at the preservation of the Bible, and saw that God has not allowed any of His inspired Word to be lost, but that it is available today, perfectly preserved and accurately translated into English in our King James Version, the standard English Bible. We ended the study where we are going to begin today—with the nature of God. We are going to see what God has told us about Himself in His Word.

With study #2 you have also received your completed version of study #1, which has been checked and graded. Please look over that study for corrections by your Bible teacher, especially on the quiz questions, and for comments, especially at the very end of the study. Also, please keep your study available so that you can look back at it later. Remember that at the end of each study you have some questions to answer so that we can see that you have understood the Biblical teaching, and some blank space upon which you can write down any questions that you have. Also, please use this space to provide us with the names and addresses of any friends or acquaintances of yours who would also be interested in studying the Bible, so that we can send this free correspondence study to them as well. Finally, let us mention again that this Bible course is provided to you courtesy of Bethel Baptist Church, 4905 Appian Way, El Sobrante, CA

94803, (510) 223-8721/ (510) 223-9550, www.pillarandground.org, betbapt@flash.net. Please let us know if you would like a personal visit for Bible study, and feel free to visit us for Sunday school at 9:45 a.m., morning worship at 11:00 a.m., Sunday evening worship at 6:00 p.m., and Wednesday prayer and Bible study at 7:00 p.m. Once again, we are overjoyed that we can assist you in studying the Bible.

Who is God?

The Importance of the Question

Why does it matter who God is? Why do we need to make sure that we have the right ideas about Him? There are many, many reasons why we should learn about the nature of God. As we shall see later in this study, He created us, and gives us everything that we have; who would not want to find out about One who has done so much for us? He is the only all-powerful Being; who would not wish to know what He is like? He is going to be our Judge, and determine if we will receive endless happiness or punishment—we ought to find out what He is like! Indeed, knowing who God is and what He wants of us is the most important matter we can ever consider. Revelation 4:11 says, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created __ __ __ things, and for thy __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ they are and were created." From this verse, we can see that we were created for His "pleasure"—we exist to fulfill His will, to be and do what is pleasing to Him. This is the meaning of life—but we cannot put it into practice without knowing who God is and what He wants. Furthermore, from Hebrews 11:6, we see that God "is a __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ of them that diligently seek him," so those who truly know God can look for His superabounding and everlasting blessing. Indeed, in John 17:3, Jesus Christ said that "[T]his is life eternal, that they might __ __ __ __ __ thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Knowing God is essential if we hope to have eternal life; indeed, if we do not know Him, we have no spiritual life now or eternity with Him later. The Bible repeatedly speaks of salvation as knowing God (Titus 1:16) or knowing the LORD (Jeremiah 31:34). This is so important that the phrase "Know that I am the LORD" is found 72 times in the Bible, while related phrases and commands everywhere abound. Furthermore, Jesus said the greatest commandment of all was "Thou shalt __ __ __ __ the Lord thy God with all thy __ __ __ __ __, and with all thy __ __ __ __, and with all thy __ __ __ __" (Matthew 22:37). We cannot love Him if we do not know who He is; our hearts cannot appreciate Him, our souls cannot desire Him, and our minds cannot understand or submit to Him without this knowledge. We have seen that knowing God is foundational to the purpose of our lives on earth, essential to the acquisition of eternal life, and required for obedience to the greatest commandment. Let us, then, proceed with this all-important study!

What God is like:

Basic Characteristics

In many places, the Bible teaches that there is only one God. 1 Corinthians 8:4 declares that "*there is* none other __ __ __ but __ __ __." The Lord says "I *am* the __ __ __ __ __, and I *am* the __ __ __ __; and beside me *there is* __ __ God" (Isaiah 44:6; cf. Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5). John 4:24 tells us further that "God *is* a __ __ __ __ __ __." He is, therefore, not a material being with a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39) like us. Along these lines, Colossians 1:15 tells us that He is "the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ God." He is also a personal Being; He is not just some sort of "force" or "higher power" but One who has self-consciousness and self-determination. He is said to "know" (Exodus 3:7), to "will" (Exodus 3:17), and to feel (Genesis 6:6; 1 Kings 11:9; Romans 5:8). He also is interested in fellowship with mankind; the godly of all the ages have "__ __ __ __ __ __ with God" (Genesis 5:22, 6:9; cf. 17:1, Leviticus 26:12). God promises to His own that He "will forgive their iniquity" and "remember their sin no more" and they will "Know the LORD" (Jeremiah 31:34). People that have been brought into a right relationship to God can say "truly our __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). We can know who God is and what He wants from us, and have fellowship with Him.

God also has a number of characteristics that make Him unlike anyone or anything else. With "God __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ are possible" (Matthew 19:26), for He is all-powerful, "the Almighty" (Genesis 17:1; 49:25, etc.). He showed this by creating the universe. Jeremiah 32:17 reads, "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast __ __ __ __ the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is __ __ __ __ __ __ __ too hard for thee." He also shows this by the fact that He sustains the universe. All things "that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers . . . were created by him, and for him" (Colossians 1:16), and He is the One who is "before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17); they consist in Him—He is the sustainer of all things.

1 John 3:20 states that "God . . . __ __ __ __ __ __ __ all things." He knows from eternity past what will be in eternity future (Isaiah 46:9-10; Acts 15:18), knows all about His creation (Hebrews 4:13), knows every action of man (Psalm 139:2), every word ever spoken (Psalm 139:4), and every thought (1 Chronicles 28:9).

God is also present everywhere. Psalm 139:7-10 read, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __? If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* __ __ __ __ __: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. *If* I take the wings of

the morning, *and* dwell in the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ parts of the sea; __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." In Jeremiah 23:24, God asks,"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I __ __ __ __ heaven and earth? saith the LORD." While God is everywhere-present, this does not mean that He is everywhere in exactly the same sense; God the Father is, for example, especially present in heaven (Matthew 6:1).

God also is eternal; as Psalm 90:2 says, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ to __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, thou *art* God." There has never been a time when God has not existed, nor will there be a time when He will no longer be around. He is the first cause of all that there is, and is self-existent. In Exodus 3:14 "God said unto Moses, __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, __ __ __ hath sent me unto you." God gives Himself this amazing title, the I AM, as the eternal, self-existing God!

God is also, since He is completely and fully perfect in all His being and attributes, unchangeable; He says in Malachi 3:6, "For I *am* the LORD, I __ __ __ __ __ not." James 1:17 reads, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, neither shadow of __ __ __ __ __ __ __."

In all of the characteristics mentioned above, God is absolutely unique. He also has other important attributes, which His creatures can in certain ways share with Him. These include:

- *His holiness.* Psalm 99:9 commands, "Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God *is* __ __ __ __." Before His throne seraphim cry "Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). That God is holy means that He is infinitely set apart from sin and evil, since He is perfectly good and righteous. Because He is holy, He also commands us to be holy. 1 Peter 1:15-16 reads, "But as he which hath called you is __ __ __ __, so be __ __ holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be __ __ holy; for __ am holy." His holy character is the basis of the commandments He has given us to keep; since He is holy, His "law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12). We will look in the next study at what commands God has given us in His law. This is extremely important, since God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). His character of being right or righteous is related to His holiness. Psalm 145:17 reads, "The LORD *is* __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Psalm 11:7 declares that "the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright."

- *His justice.* This characteristic is also related to His holiness. He calls Himself "a __ __ __ __ God and a Saviour" in Isaiah 45:21. He is the just "Judge of all the earth" according to Genesis 18:25. His justice leads Him to require the punishment of all violations of His law. Psalm 11:6 reads, "Upon the __ __ __ __ __ __ he shall rain snares, __ __ __ __ and __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be* the portion of their cup." He judges in accord with truth, for He is Himself the God of truth (Romans 3:4, Titus 1:2). God's wrath, His holy anger against evil and evildoers, is also related to His justice. Psalm 7:11-13 tell us that ". . . God is __ __ __ __ __ *with the wicked* every day. If he turn not, he will whet his __ __ __ __ __; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of __ __ __ __ __; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." Romans 1:18 tells us that "the __ __ __ __ __ of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."
- *His love.* This is a great and defining characteristic of God; The Bible says, in fact, that "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is __ __ __ __" (1 John 4:16). His mercy is related to His love. Ephesians 2:4 speaks of "God, who is rich in __ __ __ __ __, for his great __ __ __ __ wherewith he loved us." Titus 2:11 also speaks of "the __ __ __ __ __ of God." Mercy and grace are related; the former relates to God's not giving a sinner what he deserves, and the latter to giving him something he does not deserve. The way that God can be perfectly just, but also be merciful to sinful mankind, and so show His love for us, is something we will study later; His ability to do this also shows His wisdom, another one of His characteristics; He is "the only __ __ __ __ God," according to 1 Timothy 1:17.
- *His faithfulness.* This relates to God's unchanging nature. Deuteronomy 7:9-10 reads, "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations: and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." He is both faithful in His kindness to those who are His friends and faithful in His severity against those who are against Him. Another characteristic of God, His goodness, also relates to both His justice and His mercy. Romans 2:4 speaks of "the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ of God." and of "the riches of his __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ and forbearance and longsuffering."
- *His sovereignty or kingship.* 1 Timothy 1:17 reads, "Now unto the __ __ __ __ eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Psalm 93:1 reads, "The LORD __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, he is clothed with majesty." He

is called in Psalm 97:5 "the Lord of the whole earth." He oversees and rules over all that happens; Ephesians 1:11 tells us that He "worketh __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ after the counsel of his own __ __ __ __."

All of these amazing and wonderful characteristics of God should lead us to say, "Let them __ __ __ __ __ __ the name of the LORD: for his name alone is __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __; his __ __ __ __ __ *is* above the earth and heaven" (Psalm 148:13).

What God is like:

Basic Words for Him

God refers to Himself with many different names and titles in the Bible. However, there are three especially common ones with which we should be familiar. The first is simply the word "God." This is the basic term for Him. It appears over 2,500 times in the Old Testament, and translates the Hebrew word *Eloheim*. It appears in the first verse of the Bible, where we see that "In the beginning God [that is, *Eloheim*] created the heaven and the earth." A second very common name is found in Psalm 83:18, which reads, "That *men* may know that thou, whose name alone *is* __ __ __ __ __ __ __, *art* the most high over all the earth." This name, which appears over 6,500 times in the Old Testament, means "I AM THAT I AM" (see Exodus 3:13-15) and emphasizes God's self-existence and His relationship to His people. In the New Testament Jesus Christ and the apostles translated the Hebrew *Jehovah* as "Lord" to show respect for the great Divine name (notice Exodus 20:7). We can see this by comparing Matthew 22:44 and Psalm 110:1. In the New Testament verse, Jesus Christ said "The Lord (Greek *kurios*, "Lord") said unto my Lord" while quoting the Old Testament verse in the book of the Psalms, which reads "The LORD (Hebrew *Jehovah*) said unto my Lord." (Other examples of this include Matthew 23:39+Psalm 118:26 and Acts 2:25+Psalm 16:8). In accordance with this example of Christ and the early church, most of the time our Old Testament translates the Hebrew name *Jehovah* as *LORD* in all capital letters; wherever you see this in your Bible, you can assume this is the word being translated. (Genesis 2:4 is an example; there "the LORD God" is, in Hebrew, *Jehovah Eloheim*.) A third common word for God, *Adonai*, appears over 400 times in the Old Testament, and is translated as *Lord*, with the letters after the first in lowercase instead of in all caps, as with *Jehovah* (*LORD*). In Exodus 15:17, you can see both *Jehovah* and *Adonai* together; the verse reads, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD [*Jehovah*], which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord [*Adonai*], which thy hands have established." The term *Adonai* emphasizes God's rulership or lordship, His position as the Master. When *Adonai* is found in conjunction with *Jehovah* as a compound name, since "Lord LORD" would be strange,

Jehovah is translated as "GOD" in all capital letters; for example, in Genesis 15:2 we see the phrase "Lord GOD," which translates the Hebrew *Adonai Jehovah*. Understanding what is emphasized by these three extremely common Bible words for God will help you as you look up the verses in this Bible study, and as you read the Bible on your own. (A great place to start to read it would be the gospel of John in the New Testament. If you read three chapters of the Bible a day, you can read the whole Book in a year.)

What God is like:

Tri-unity or Trinitarianism

Up to this point we have not dealt with an extremely important characteristic of the true God, who gave us the Bible to enable us to know who He is. This characteristic distinguishes Him from all the gods which men have invented in all false religions. It is essential that we understand this aspect of who God is, for, as we mentioned earlier, we do not have eternal life unless we know the *true* God (John 17:3), not a counterfeit version of Him. In the Bible, while God has clearly revealed that He is only one in essence, He has also shown us clearly that He exists eternally in three distinct Personalities or Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Believers through essentially the whole church age have called this fact of three Persons in the one God the doctrine of the Trinity. We can see all three of the Persons of God (or of the "Godhead," Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9) in Matthew 28:19. There baptism is commanded "in the name of the __ __ __ __ __ __, and of the __ __ __, and of the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __" ("Holy Ghost" is the same thing as "Holy Spirit."). Also, in 1 John 5:7, we read, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the __ __ __ __ __ __, the __ __ __ __, and the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __: and these three are one." Here "Word" is a title for God the Son, as we can see in John 1:1-18, which we will examine below. We can also see many references to the multiple Persons of the one God in the Old Testament; for example, in Isaiah 48 Jehovah (the LORD) is speaking, and in 48:16 He says "Come ye near unto __ __, hear ye this; _ have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am _: and now the __ __ __ __ __ __ __, and his __ __ __ __ __ __, hath sent __ __." Jehovah is speaking, and yet the Lord Jehovah, and His Spirit, are going to send Him! We see all three Persons of the Godhead clearly in this verse; the speaker is "the LORD, thy Redeemer" (48:17), God the Son; the "Lord GOD" who sent Him is God the Father, and "his Spirit" is God the Holy Spirit. Let us look specifically at all three Persons of the Trinity, and show that the Bible identifies each one as God.

God the Father is said to be God in many verses in the Bible. For example, Ephesians 1:2 shows us grace and peace come "from God our __ __ __ __ __ __, and *from* the Lord Jesus

Christ." Titus 1:4 refers to "Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the __ __ __ __ __ __ and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." The Father is clearly God. Ephesians 4:6 speaks of "One __ __ __ and __ __ __ __ __ __ of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."

God the Son is also said to be God in many places in the Bible. For example, Hebrews 1:8 reads, "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O __ __ __, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom." God the Father is the One speaking in verse eight (notice Hebrews 1:1-7), and here He calls His Son God. In John 20:28 the apostle Thomas "answered and said unto him [Jesus], My __ __ __ __ and my __ __ __." Jesus then said Thomas had spoken well, that he had correctly "believed" (v. 29). Indeed, the disciples knew that when Jesus said He was the Son of God, He was telling them that He had the very same nature as His heavenly Father, and so was Himself God. In Matthew 14:33, the disciples "came and __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ him [Jesus], saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Jesus had taught very clearly that nobody except God was to be worshipped (Matthew 4:4), yet He accepted the worship of His disciples as the Son of God. Both the Father and the Son are referred to together as God in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 50:1-6, Jehovah is speaking in verses 1-3 ("Thus saith the LORD"), but then Jehovah says that the Lord GOD (*Adonai Jehovah*) has done a variety of things for Him in verses 4-5, and in verse six, Jehovah, who is still speaking, says "I gave my __ __ __ to the smiters, and my __ __ __ __ __ __ to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my __ __ __ __ from shame and spitting." How can Jehovah say that the Lord Jehovah has given Him different things, and then say that He would be beaten and spat upon? This is possible because God the Son is the speaker, and He fulfilled Isaiah 50:6 during His trial before His crucifixion (Matthew 26:67). The "Lord GOD" of Isaiah 50:4-5 is the Father.

John 1:1-18 gives us many details about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son:

> "1 In the beginning was the __ __ __ __, and the Word was __ __ __ __ God, and the Word __ __ __ God. 2 The same was in the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ with God. 3 __ __ __ things were made by __ __ __; and without him was not __ __ __ thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . 9 *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the __ __ __ __ __ was __ __ __ __ by __ __ __, and the world knew him not . . . 14 And the __ __ __ __ was made __ __ __ __ __, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth . . . 17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath __ __ __ __ God at any time; the only begotten __ __ __, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*."

Notice that verse 1, the Word (Jesus Christ, verse 14), is said to be both "with" God, referring to the Father, and yet also to be God Himself. Verse two repeats that God the Son was always with God the Father, even in eternity past. Verse three then tells us that God the Son was the Creator; if He made all things, He obviously was not ever created Himself. Verse ten repeats this truth for us. Finally, in verse fourteen, we see that God the Son became Man as Jesus Christ. Nobody has ever seen God the Father, verse eighteen tells us, but the only begotten Son, God in the flesh, reveals the Father to us. Here we see this amazing fact; Jesus Christ is God in the flesh! He is 100% human, having taken upon Himself a human nature just like ours (Hebrews 2:14-17), except without sin (Hebrews 4:15)—1 Timothy 2:5 refers to "the __ __ __ Christ Jesus"—but He is also 100% God! The Son had, from the eternal past, been fully God. When He came into the world, He took to Himself a human nature, so that now, although still one Person, He has two distinct natures; He is fully human, and fully Divine. This union of two natures in the one Person of the Son will continue to all eternity future. God was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, was born, grew up, died for our sins, was buried, rose again from the grave, returned to heaven to His Father, and will eventually come again to judge the earth (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 23). 1 Timothy 3:16 sums it up nicely: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: __ __ __ was manifest in the __ __ __ __ __, justified in the Spirit, __ __ __ __ of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ up into glory." So, just like God the Father is God, God the Son, Jesus Christ, is God.

The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit is God. For example, Hebrews 3:7-12 reads:

> "7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost __ __ __ __ __, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted __ __, proved __ __, and saw __ __ works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was __ __ __ __ __ __ __ with that generation, and __ __ __ __, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I __ __ __ __ __ in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living __ __ __."

Verse seven tells us that the Holy Spirit spoke all the words in the parentheses from "To day" in verse seven to "rest" in verse eleven. He is talking about the nation of Israel in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. He was grieved with the sins of Israel, according to verse ten, and He therefore swore that they would not enter into His rest. This is then made into a warning not to depart from the living God, who, in context, would be the Holy Spirit. Now look back at Psalm 95:6-11. This passage in the Old Testament is clearly the one that is quoted here Hebrews 3:7-11. However, back there, the speaker is said to be "the LORD our maker" (v. 6), who is "our God" (v. 7). If the New Testament says that the Holy Spirit said these words, but the Old

Testament passage said that Jehovah our God said them, the Holy Spirit must be Jehovah God, just as the Father is Jehovah and the Son is Jehovah. Other passages where the New Testament identifies the Holy Spirit as Jehovah in this way are Hebrews 10:15-17 (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34) and Acts 28:25-27 (cf. Isaiah 6:1-10). In 2 Samuel 23:2-3, king David said, "The __ __ __ __ __ __ of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue. 3 The __ __ __ of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God." We see here in the Old Testament that the Spirit of Jehovah, who speaks here, is Himself "the God of Israel." The apostle Peter said that to "lie to the Holy Ghost" is not to lie "unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4). The Scriptures sternly warn against blaspheming the Holy Ghost (Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10), because He is God.

How do we put this all together? Certainly there are not three different Gods; "God is one" (Galatians 3:20). Does this mean that the Father, Son, and Spirit are really the same Person—the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the Father? Are these three only three modes of appearing, or three titles for only one Personage? No—the Bible teaches that all three are distinct Personages. When we looked at John 1:1-18 above, we saw that from all eternity past God the Father was with God the Son; they were both God, yet were always distinct from each other (John 1:1-3). We also saw in 2 Samuel 23:2-3 that God the Spirit is also "the Spirit of the LORD," so He is distinct from the Father and the Son; He is the Spirit of the Father (John 15:26) and the Spirit of the Son (Galatians 4:6), and since He is the "eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14), He is as eternally distinct from the Father and the Son as they are from each other. Look at Matthew 3:13-17. Here we see all three Persons of the Trinity together: God the Son, Jesus Christ, is baptized (v. 16), God the Spirit descends upon Him like a dove (v. 16), and God the Father speaks from heaven (v. 17). Certainly the Father, Son, and Spirit are not the same Person. But all three are fully God, and so have all the Divine attributes. Since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equally Almighty, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present, eternal, and so on, what makes the Divine Three distinguishable?

God the Father is neither begotten nor proceeding from any, God the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and God the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. John 3:16 tells us that "God [the Father] so loved the world, that he gave his only __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." See also John 3:18; Hebrews 1:5; 1 John 4:9. This being begotten is an eternal process; the Son's "goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). The Holy Spirit is not begotten, but He eternally "proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26) and the Son (Revelation 5:6; John 16:7; 20:22; 16:15). It is not possible for us to understand exactly what the Son's being begotten and the Spirit's procession means; there is a great mystery here (cf. 1 Timothy 3:16). However, God has revealed it, so we should believe it. These differences are what makes

the Father the Father, the Son the Son, and the Spirit the Spirit, within the unity of the one and only God.

It may be hard for us to understand, but God has shown us in the Bible that He is in essence one and only one, yet eternally existent in three distinct and eternal Persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father eternally begets the Son, and the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. Isaiah 55:8-9 reads, "For my __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ are not your thoughts, neither are __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways__ __ __ __ __ __ than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." God's thoughts and ways are infinitely above all that we can comprehend; God has revealed Himself to be a Tri-unity, so it is our responsibility simply to accept this as true.[1]

The Conclusion:

Let's know and serve this glorious God!

We began this study by learning that it is extremely important to know who God is, for without this knowledge we miss the meaning of life on earth and are lost for all eternity. We then saw that there is only one God, who is a Spirit, the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe, and a personal Being with whom we can have fellowship. We learned that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present, eternal, self-existent, and unchangeable. He is also holy, just, loving, good, faithful, and sovereign, among other characteristics. We saw that the Hebrew word *Eloheim* is the most common and basic Old Testament word for God. We saw that *Jehovah* is the name of God that emphasizes His self-existence and His relationship to His people. We also saw that *Adonai* is a title for God that stresses His lordship. We then studied the truth that the one God has always existed in three distinct Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father eternally begets the Son, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. These are all marvelous truths about God, and they are extremely important for us to understand. Now that we have studied these things about who God is, we can go on to discover what God wants us to do, and what obedience

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[1] Some people claim that the Bible does not really teach the doctrine of the Trinity, and they use a variety of arguments to support their view. For a more detailed presentation of the truth of the Triune God, and a refutation of arguments against this essential Biblical teaching, please ask for our free pamphlet *The Triune God of the Bible.* A specific organization that strongly opposes the Trinity is the Watchtower society, commonly called "Jehovah's Witnesses." If you have questions about them and their teachings, please ask for our free pamphlet *Are You Worshipping Jehovah?*

or disobedience to His Law brings us. We will look at these matters in Bible study #3: *What does God want from me?*

Review Quiz For Bible Study #2

1.) It is not important to know exactly who God is, as long as you try to live your life in a good way. True False

2.) God is so separate from us that we cannot really know or say anything about Him. True False

3.) The English phrase LORD God in the Bible represents the Hebrew *Jehovah Eloheim*. True False

4.) The name *Adonai* emphasizes God's self-existence and relationship to His people. True False

5.) Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but not God Himself. True False

6.) The Holy Spirit is Jehovah. True False

7.) The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all the same Person; the Father is the Son, the Son is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the Father. True False

8.) The Holy Spirit is eternally begotten by God the Son. True False

9.) God the Father eternally proceeds from God the Son. True False

Materials Mentioned in Study #2 and a Request for Study #3

___ I have returned the second Bible study to you with the answer blanks filled in and answered the review quiz questions. Please send me the next Bible study, *What does God want from me?*

___ I have questions about the doctrine of the Trinity. Please send me the booklet *The Triune God of the Bible.*

___ I have questions about the Watchtower Society (the Jehovah's Witness organization) and their rejection of the Trinity. Please send me the free booklet, *Are You Worshipping Jehovah?*

___ I would like to meet with or talk to someone in person. I have put information in the spaces below (phone number, times available, etc.) to contact me.

Please use the spaces below to write down any other questions that you have. You can also write down any changes of address. Please also put down the names and addresses of people you know who might also like to do this Bible study.

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