

OUR GOD

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Once upon a time there was a little village in the desert. All inhabitants of this village were blind. One day a great king with his army passed by. He was riding a huge elephant. The blind had heard many stories about elephants and desired to approach the king and touch and investigate his elephant in order to get an idea of what elephants are like. Some of them stepped forward, bowed before the king and asked for permission to touch his elephant. The first blind man grasped his trunk, another one his leg and foot, and a third his flank. One man seized his ear, and still another was allowed to ride on the back of the elephant. Delighted with their discoveries the blind men returned to their village. The people encircled them and asked eagerly what kind of being the monstrous animal elephant was. The first one said: "It is an immense hose, and woe to him who will be grabbed by it." The second one responded: "It is a pillar clothed with skin and hair." The third said: "It is like a rampart having also skin and hair." The man, who had seized the ear, replied: "It is not a wall at all but a very thick carpet which moves as soon as one touches it." And the last one declared: "This is all nonsense. It is a huge mountain which moves."

Similarly, we are like these blind men in our efforts to describe God. He surpasses us so much, He is so highly exalted and lives in a sphere significantly different from ours that He is not totally accessible to us. What we know about Him is what He has revealed to us. Therefore, we have only parts of all that can be known about God. However, these parts are true and allow us to relate to God and be saved.

I. God's Nature

God is light	1 John 1:5
God is spirit	John 4:24
God is love	1 John 4:16

II. God's Characteristics

Everlasting existence	Ps. 90:2
Omnipotence	Ps. 115:3
Omniscience	Ps. 139:4
Omnipresence	Ps. 139:5-8
Compassion, grace, patience, truth	Exod. 34:6
Goodness and righteousness	Ps. 145:7
Holiness	Lev. 19:2

III. The Trinity

1. One God and Three Persons

There is only *one* God (Deut. 6:4), however, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all called God (Matt. 27:46; John 20:28; Acts 5:3-4). Consequently, we do not worship three Gods, but one God who reveals Himself in and consists of three "persons." The three persons share one indivisible nature. Each person of the Godhead is by nature and essence God, and the fullness of the deity dwells in each of them. On the other hand, each person of the Godhead is inseparably connected to the other two. This concept of God surpasses our experiences and our intellect.

2. Hints for the Existence of a Triune God in the Old Testament

Gen. 1:26 "Let us make man . . ."
 Exod. 3:2-4 The angel of the Lord is a person of the deity.
 Ps. 45:7-8 God is anointed by God.

3. *Trinitarian Formulas in the NT*

1 Cor. 12:4-6
 Jude 20-21
 1 Pet. 1:2
 2 Cor. 13:14

4. *The Baptismal Formula*

Mt. 28:19 Baptism does not take place in the names but in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Calvin comments: "Therefore it is evident that in God's substance there are three persons, in which the one God is recognized."

5. *Attributes of the Persons of the Godhead*

	<i>Father</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Holy Spirit</i>
Eternal	Ps. 90:2	Rev. 1:18	Heb. 9:14
Creator	Isa. 45:18	Col. 1:16	Gen. 1:2
Almighty	Rev. 1:8	Matt. 28:18	Rom. 8:11
Omniscient	Ps. 139:4	John 2:24-25	1 Cor. 2:10
Omnipresent	Jer 23:24	Matt. 28:20	Ps. 139:7-8
Love	1 John 4:8	John 15:9	Gal. 5:22
To be worshiped	Rev. 14:7	1 Cor. 1:1-2	John 4:24

Various images have been used to help explain and understand the Trinity. None of them does complete justice to the nature of God:

- (1) The family Problem: The persons are too separate from each other and do not share one nature.
- (2) The roles a person plays such as spouse, parent, child Problem: There is just one person instead of three.
- (3) A triangle (musical instrument) Problem: Striking one side causes the other two sides to sound as well. Again the distinctiveness of the three persons is not well expressed.

IV. *Results*

We do not believe in three Gods but one God in three persons. These three personalities participate in one substance. In the divine unity there are three coeternal and coequal persons, who, though distinct, are the one undivided God.

This doctrine of God is a biblical doctrine. However, it surpasses our understanding. We accept it, because it is taught by God's Word and because we have to expect that God is not just a superman. He is and remains God and surpasses our feelings, our will, and our intellectual capacities.

The doctrine of the Trinity allows us to understand the plan of salvation and other biblical doctrines. We worship this almighty and holy God of love. We seek Him, meet Him, and love Him.

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