



TOP FIVE QUESTIONS

1. Jesus was a Jew. Judaism at the time of Jesus (and to this day) confessed belief in only one individual, who is God—the one called Yahweh (or Jehovah)—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If Jesus was a Jew, then, he too must have held this belief, right? Well, we don't have to guess, because Mark 12.28-34 actually records a conversation in which Jesus explicitly agreed with a non-Trinitarian Jewish scribe on his Jewish definition of God. So, if Jesus believed in the Trinity then he should have disagreed with this Jew. But, in fact, Jesus not only agreed with him about who God was, but even complemented him saying, "you are not far from the kingdom of God." Doesn't this mean that first generation Christians, like Jesus, held the same view of God as the non-Trinitarian Jews?

2. Where is the paragraph, chapter, or book of Scripture that simply explains the Trinity? If this doctrine is so important, then shouldn't it be explained all over the place like other doctrines are, such as Jesus' death for our sins, or his resurrection from the dead? Of course, the Bible can be used to "support" the Trinity, but it can also be used to support slavery, anti-Semitism, and all sorts of things. One can go through the arduous chore of cobbling together a verse here and a verse there to erect an impressive façade, but such an edifice would obscure rather than explain Scripture. The Trinity must be read **into** Scripture not **out** from it. In fact, I don't think anyone can arrive at the Trinity from only reading the Bible. It has to be taught alongside of Scripture, and even then most people don't understand it.



TOP FIVE QUESTIONS

3. In the New Testament, a number of historical controversies are described, from overzealous speaking in tongues in Corinth to the Jerusalem council which decided whether or not new Gentile converts needed to keep the Law of Moses. However, what is strikingly absent from the first century is a controversy over a new definition of God. Imagine that a unitarian missionary came to your church and started preaching that God is only the Father (not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Wouldn't that cause controversy? Of course it would. People who believe one thing about God don't just change the moment they hear a new idea. So, what about in the first century? You've got all of these Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean world who are strictly monotheistic, and these Christians come to town preaching a message about the Trinity. Wouldn't that cause problems? Of course it would. But, where is the evidence of this? In the entire New Testament we find **no controversy** over the Trinity, to such a degree that it is never even spelled out clearly. Isn't the simplest explanation that this doctrine just wasn't around yet?

4. Our fourth question focuses on what language the Bible uses to talk about God. Pronouns can either be singular or plural. If we read a singular pronoun like "I" or "she" we know that a single person is in mind but when we read a plural pronoun like "we" or "they" we know that a group of persons are being referenced. So, what about God? If God is comprised of multiple persons then, of course, we should find **plural** pronouns when God is spoken of. But, if God is a single



TOP FIVE QUESTIONS

individual then we should find singular pronouns instead. Think back to texts you've read about God. Which kind of pronouns are used? One of the most quoted verses in the Bible is Jeremiah 29.11, which begins with, "For **I** know the plans that **I** have for you." If God were a Trinity it should read, "For **we** know the plans that **we** have for you", right? But it doesn't. In both the Old and New Testaments, tens of thousands of times, when God speaks or when people speak about God they use singular pronouns instead of plural ones. Isn't this grammatical phenomenon evidence that God is one individual rather than three?

5. Of course there are plenty of other questions that we could ask about the Trinity, but we will only look at one more right now. This one is about Jesus' knowledge. If Jesus is **fully** God then he must have **full** knowledge, right? But, what about the time when Jesus said, "of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Mark 13.32)? Was Jesus lying? I mean, if Jesus is God then, of course, he knew when he planned to return, right? Was Jesus schizophrenic, knowing in his divine nature but not knowing in his human nature like two persons united in one body? Even standard Trinitarianism rejects this notion (see the creed of Chalcedon). No, Jesus was telling the truth! He really didn't know when he was to return! Are we going to believe Jesus' own words or should we cling to our tradition regardless of what the Scriptures say? Jesus was not omniscient.