

Westminster Larger Catechism: Questions 8-11

8. **Are there more gods than one?** *There is but one only, the living and true God.*
9. **How many persons are there in the Godhead?** *There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.*
10. **What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead?** *It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.*
11. **How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?** *The scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such name, titles, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.*

The Five Points of Trinitarian Orthodoxy Demonstrated from Holy Scripture

I. Scripture reveals but one God, whose nature implies a plurality of persons.

A. ONLY ONE GOD

1. **Deut. 6:4**, *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!* [Cf. Mk. 12:28-34]
2. **James 2:19**, *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble!* [Cf. Isa. 43:10; 45:22; Mk. 12:28-34; James 2:19]

B. IMPLIED PLURALITY

1. **LOVE** *1 Jn. 4:8*, *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.* [Cf. Lk. 10:21-22; 2 Pet. 1:17]
2. **BLESSEDNESS** *Rom. 1:25*, *[They] exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.* [Cf. 2 Cor. 11:31]
3. **SELF-SUFFICIENCY** *Acts 17:24-25*, *God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.*
4. **ELOHIM AND ITS PRONOUNS**¹ *Gen. 1:26*, *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."* *Isa. 6:8*, *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"...* [Cf. Gen. 3:22; 11:7]

II. The Scriptures reveal the Son as God, equal with the Father.²

A. DIVINE NAME/TITLES

1. **JEHOVAH** *Isa. 6:1-10*, *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I*

¹ The Hebrew word for "God" ("Elohim") is technically a plural noun and is sometimes accompanied by plural pronouns.

² All theists generally admit that the Father is God (Jn. 8:54; 14:1; 17:3).

dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.” Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.’” Jn. 12:34, 39-42, The people answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” . . . Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.” These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. [Also: Comp. Joel 2:32 w/ Rom. 10:9-13]

2. **GOD** Ps. 45:6-7, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. Jn. 1:1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. [Cf. Isa. 9:6; Acts 20:28; Rom. 9:3-5; 1 Tim. 3:16]
3. **I AM** Ex. 3:14, And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”” Jn. 8:56-58, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” [Cf. Ex. 3:2]
4. **ADONAI** Ps. 110:1, The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

B. DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

1. **ETERNAL** Isa. 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Mic. 5:2, But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. Rev. 22:12-13, And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. [Cf. Jn. 17:5; Col. 1:17; Rev. 1:8; Compare Prov. 8:22-31 with Prov. 30:4]
2. **OMNIPRESENT** Jn. 3:13, No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.
3. **OMNIPOTENT** Mk. 4:41, And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”
4. **OMNISCIENT** Jn. 1:48-49, Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jn. 21:17,

He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.”

5. **ALL-INCLUSIVE** Col. 2:9, *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

C. DIVINE WORKS

1. **CREATION** Gen. 1:1-3 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. Jn. 1:3, All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. [Cf. Gen. 1:26; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:1-3]*
2. **SALVATION** Isa. 43:11, *I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior. Matt. 1:21, “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” Titus 2:11-13, For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. [Cf. Job 19:23-27; Matt. 1:22-23; Jn. 10:27-33; Compare Jer. 23:6 with I Cor. 1:30-31 and 2 Cor. 5:21]*
3. **RESURRECTION** Rom. 10:9, *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Jn. 10:17-18, Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”*
4. **FORGIVENESS** Mk. 2:5-12, *When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’ – He said to the paralytic, I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”*
5. **MEDIATION** 1 Tim. 2:5-6, *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*
6. **SOVEREIGNTY** Heb. 1:1-3, *God... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*
7. **JUDGMENT** Eccl. 12:14, *For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. Matt. 16:27, For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. [Cf. Gen. 18:25; Ps. 98:8-9; 96:13; Matt. 25:31-32; Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:10; Phil. 2:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jm. 5:9]*

D. DIVINE WORSHIP

1. **EXCLUSIVITY** *Ex. 20:2-3, I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. Matt. 4:10, Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Rev. 22:8-9, Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*³
2. **EXAMPLES** *Matt. 28:9-10, And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.” Jn. 20:28-29, And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

III. The Scriptures reveal the Holy Spirit as God, equal with the Father.

A. DIVINE NAME/TITLES

1. **JEHOVAH** *Acts 28:25-27, So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, ‘Go to this people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.”’ [Cf. Isa. 6:8-10; Compare 2 Cor. 3:5-6, 17-18 with Jer. 31:33 & Heb. 10:15-17]*
2. **GOD** *Acts 5:3-4, But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”*

B. DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

1. **ETERNAL** *Heb. 9:13-14, For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*
2. **OMNISCIENT** *1 Cor. 2:10-11, But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

C. DIVINE WORKS

1. **CREATION** *Gen. 1:1-2, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

³ The Greek word for ‘worship’ in this text is the same word used to describe the apostles’ worship of Jesus in Matt. 28:9, 17.

2. **VIRGIN BIRTH** *Lk. 1:35*, *And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”*
3. **RESURRECTION** *Rom. 1:1-4*, *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God, which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Rom. 8:11*, *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

D. DIVINE WORSHIP

1. **Mt. 28:19**, *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

E. DIVINE PERSONALITY

1. **GRIEF** *Isa. 63:10*, *But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them. [Cf. Gen. 6:3; Acts 5:3; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 10:29]*
2. **SPEECH** *Acts 13:2*, *As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” [Cf. Rom. 8:27; 1 Jn. 5:7; Rev. 22:17]*

IV. The Scriptures reveal the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in essential unity.

- A. **ONE IN ESSENCE** *Mt 28:19*, *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. [Cf. Ex 34:6f; 1 Jn. 5:7; Jn. 10:30; 14:11, 16-18]*

1. **APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE** *2 Jn. 1:9-10*, *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. [Cf. 1 Jn. 2:23-25]*
2. **APOSTOLIC PIETY** *2 Cor. 13:14*, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. [Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21]*

- B. **ONE IN ACTIVITY** *Jn 5:17*, *But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”*

1. **THE CREATION** *Gen. 1:1-3*, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. Jn. 1:1-3*, *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 without Him nothing was made that was made. [Cf. Col. 1:16]*
2. **THE EXODUS** *Isa. 63:9-10*, *In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them. [Cf. vv. 11-16]*
3. **THE RESURRECTION** *Rm. 10:9*, *That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. [Jn 10:17-18; Rm. 8:11]*

V. The Scriptures reveal the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three distinct persons.

- A. THE FATHER BEGETS THE SON.** *John 1:18, No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*
- B. THE SON IS BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER.** *John 3:16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*
- C. THE SPIRIT PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON.** *Jn. 14:26, But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. [15:26] But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. Gal. 4:6, And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” [Cf. Jn. 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9; Tit. 3:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:10-11]*
- 1. DISTINCT AT JESUS’ BAPTISM** (Isa. 61:1; Matt. 3:16-17)
 - 2. DISTINCT AT GETHSEMANE** (Lk. 22:42; Heb. 5:7-8)
 - 3. DISTINCT AT THE CROSS** (Isa. 53:10; Zech. 13:7; Matt. 27:46)

BONUS: *Christ’s pre-incarnate appearances as the Angel of the LORD.*

- A.** Consult Dr. David Murray’s DVD, *Cross Reference: The Angel of the Lord*, available at: <http://headhearhand.org/films/crossreference/>
- B.** Download additional handout, *The Angel of the Lord*, at: reformed.com/angel.

POP QUIZ: How many sound arguments supporting the doctrine of the Trinity can you formulate based upon the words of Matthew 28:16-20?

Matthew 28:16-20 *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’*