

Answers & Explanations

1. There is one God.

True. The consistent testimony of the Bible and Christian creeds is that there is one God. See the Athanasian creed which begins, “Now the catholic faith is that we worship One God...”

2. God is one person.

False. See statement 4 of the Athanasian Creed: “For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit.”

3. God is three beings.

False. See James White’s definition of the Trinity: “Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

4. There are three persons in the Godhead.

True. See statement 4 of the Athanasian creed: “For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit.”

5. The three persons in the Godhead have always related to one another as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

True. See statement 5 of John Frame’s assertions: “(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

6. Each of the three persons of the Godhead is one-third of God.

False. Each person is fully God; the Trinity is indivisible. See the Athanasian creed: “Now the catholic faith is that we worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance.”

7. The Father is fully God.

True. See the Athanasian creed: “So the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God.”

8. The Father has the whole fullness of God’s being in himself.

True. See statement 3 of John Frame’s assertions: “(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

9. The Father is eternal.

True. See James White’s definition of the Trinity: “Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

10. The Father is not the Son.

True. See statement 4 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

11. The Father is the Holy Spirit.

False. See statement 4 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

12. The Son is half human and half divine.

False. See statement 3 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

13. In his humanity, the Son is subordinate to the Father.

True. Though the Son is co-eternal and co-equal to the Father, he also joyfully subordinates himself to the Father. See, for example, John 5:36.

14. The Son has the whole fullness of God's being in himself.

True. See statement 3 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

15. The Son came into being at the time of his incarnation.

False. The Son was active in creation and was not a created being. See the Athanasian creed: "...the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated; ... the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal."

16. The Son was brought into being in eternity past.

False. That Christ was created by the Father before the rest of creation is one of the doctrines of Arianism, a heresy denounced by both the Council of Nicea and the Council of Constantinople, but which nonetheless still exists today, for instance, in the teaching of the Jehovah's witnesses. See the Athanasian creed: "...the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated; ... the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal."

17. The Son is eternal.

True. See James White's definition of the Trinity: "Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

18. The Son is not the Father.

True. See statement 4 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

19. The Son is the Holy Spirit.

False. See statement 4 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

20. The Holy Spirit is fully God.

True. See statement 3 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

21. The Holy Spirit has the whole fullness of God's being in himself.

True. See statement 3 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

22. The Holy Spirit is a force.

False. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force. See James White's definition of the Trinity: "Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

23. The Holy Spirit is not the Father.

True. See statement 4 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

24. The Holy Spirit is not the Son.

True. See statement 4 of John Frame's assertions: "(1) God is one; (2) God is three; (3) the three persons are each fully God; (4) each of the persons is distinct from the others; and (5) the three persons are eternally related as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

25. In their nature, the Son and the Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal with the Father.

True. The Athanasian creed says: "...but the whole three Persons are coeternal together and coequal."

26. The Son and the Spirit are subordinate to the Father in their essence or nature.

False. See the Athanasian creed: "But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is One, the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal."

27. God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in different eras or for different purposes, but never at the same time.

False. See the Athanasian creed: "But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is One, the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal." Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are eternal, not temporary states of being.

28. The persons of the Trinity have distinct roles.

True. Although all three persons are involved in all of God's work, there are distinctions in their focus. We might summarize their roles in redemption, for instance, like this: the Father planned, the Son accomplished, the Spirit applies.

29. "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" are three different names for the one person of God as he displays his work in three distinct roles.

False. Since the Trinity consists of three persons (not one) who exist co-eternally, God cannot be one person manifesting himself in different roles. This false statement is known as modalism (or Sabellianism). Though it has always been regarded as a heresy, it continues to exist. The United Pentecostal Church (Jesus-onlyism), for example, affirms a form of modalism.

30. A right understanding of the Trinity is vital to right worship of God.

True. An accurate view of God as Trinity is the foundation upon which we can worship each of the three persons of the Godhead. For instance, if the Son is a created being subordinate to the Father, we have no justification for worshipping him.

31. A right understanding of the Trinity is vital to a right understanding of redemption.

True. Redemption is illogical and impossible without Trinitarian distinctions. For example, in order for the Father to pour out his wrath on his Son and for the Father to accept Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, the persons must be distinct. That the Son is infinite God also explains how his death can be infinitely valuable and thus able to pay the just penalty of eternity in hell for all those he redeems.

32. Any analogy used to explain the Trinity will fail to represent it with complete accuracy.

True. Nothing else is like the Trinity, so no analogy can explain it. In fact, most analogies are more useful for explaining a heretical view of God than the orthodox, Trinitarian one.

33. We cannot confidently derive the doctrine of the Trinity from the Biblical text.

False. Though the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible, the doctrine of the Trinity is derived from the Bible's many statements about God and the persons of the Godhead.