

OCTOBER WEEK THREE: TRINITY (GREAT COMMISSION)

Monday

Matthew 28:16–20

After Jesus rose from the dead, he spent 40 days appearing to people and speaking with them before he ascended into heaven. On one occasion after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to more than 500 people at once! On Easter, the day of the resurrection, Jesus and the angels had told the disciples to go from Jerusalem back to Galilee and that Jesus would meet them there.

So sometime after Easter morning, the eleven remaining disciples went to Galilee to see Jesus just as he had said. They went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. They were all still confused and caught up in the excitement and news of the day. They didn't understand how Jesus could be alive, and they did not all yet understand what it meant. When they saw Jesus on the mountain where they met him, they all worshipped him. Still, some of the disciples doubted that Jesus had really been dead and was now raised back to life for real.

Jesus spoke with them and explained some things, reminding them of what he had taught them and promised them. He told them that there was still much to be done. And Jesus said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

When Jesus said those words to his disciples, he comforted them with the promise of his presence, and he also gave them the authority to spread the news of what he had done and to announce forgiveness to all people. Jesus told his disciples to go baptize and teach. It's important to remember that Jesus said to do both. Baptize and teach all people, no one is excluded. When Jesus gave this "great commission" to go and do such great and important things, he said to do so in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, Jesus identified the name of the Triune God, or the Trinity. Our one God is three distinct persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our God is three in one, or tri-une. Our devotions the next couple days will talk more about the Trinity.

The comfort and authority that Jesus gave to his disciples that day, is the same comfort and authority that Jesus gives to us, who are his followers today. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

- **What authority did Jesus give his disciples and us?**
- **What comfort did Jesus give his disciples and us?**
- **When Jesus told his disciples to baptize in the name of God, what name did he tell his disciples to use? Why?**

Dear Trinity, forgive me for the times I have missed opportunities to share your Word with others. Remind me that I am your messenger and you are the Creator of faith. I trust you to work through your Word. Amen.



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OCTOBER WEEK THREE: TRINITY

Tuesday

Acts 6–7

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). When Jesus gave those instructions and that great commission, he said to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to baptize in the name of the Triune God, or the Trinity.

Although the word trinity does not appear in the Bible, it is a very important word for us, because Scripture teaches us that God is tri-une, which means three in one. God has three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Still, there remains only one God. The three-in-one aspect of God is a divine mystery. One of the places where the Bible shows us the presence of the all three person of the Trinity is at the death of Stephen.

Stephen was a faithful servant of God. God even empowered Stephen to perform some miracles and do and teach many other great things among the people. But Stephen also had enemies. These were people who did not believe in Jesus, and they hated those who followed him. These enemies told lies about Stephen. They said they had heard Stephen speak against Moses and against God. They stirred up the people and their leaders. Finally, Stephen was brought to trial before the ruling council. Those on the council looked at Stephen and saw that his face was radiant like the face of an angel. They asked Stephen about the charges against him.

Stephen answered with a sermon. Stephen pointed out the people's sin. He told them about Jesus. He told the people that they had killed the Messiah God had sent to save them. Stephen's words made his enemies very angry. But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit; he looked up into heaven and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father.

When Stephen told the enemies about what he was seeing, they took him out of the city and threw stones at him until he was dead. As he was about to die, Stephen fell to his knees and prayed in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” Then he died.

Even though the doctrine and concept of the Trinity is too complicated for us to really be able to fully comprehend, Stephen died trusting in it because he was willing to proclaim it.

Next time you're at church, look around for symbols of the Trinity. You might see a triangle or a design with three circles.

We praise you, holy Trinity, for creating us and for giving us our family, friends, and all we have, for saving us from our sins and for forgiving us and opening heaven to us, and for giving us the power and desire to live for you. Thank you, God. Amen.



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OCTOBER WEEK THREE: TRINITY (BAPTISM)

Wednesday

Matthew 3

John the Baptist conducted his ministry in the desert. He preached, telling people to repent of their sins. John was preparing the way for the coming of the Savior, Jesus. People came to John to be baptized. Jesus also came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized. John, however, resisted, saying, "I need to be baptized by you. Why do you come to be baptized by me?"

Jesus answered, "It is necessary for me to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness," meaning God will never ask anything of us that was not also fulfilled by Jesus. So John baptized Jesus at the Jordan River.

When Jesus came up from the water, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit landed on Jesus in the form of a dove. A voice from heaven announced, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The voice from heaven was that of God the Father.

All three persons of the Trinity, the one true God, can be seen and heard at this story of Jesus' baptism. Jesus is God the Son, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as a dove, and the voice of God the Father was heard from heaven.

Only one God exists, and that true God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because we are human, we cannot understand how God can be three in one. But we know it's true because the Bible says so. You might not understand calculus, but that doesn't mean it's not true. The one true God is three persons in one divine being. This truth about God is revealed to us in God's Word, and we believe it, even though it is a mystery we don't understand completely. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Dear God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – thank you for being such a wonderful God. Help me to fear, love, and trust in you above all else. Amen.

OCTOBER WEEK THREE: PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

Thursday

Acts 8:26–40

Philip was one of Jesus' 12 disciples and was quick to obey whatever God wanted him to do. One day, some time after Jesus had ascended into heaven, God sent an angel to Philip to give him a special message. "Go to the road that leads down from Jerusalem to Gaza," the angel told Philip.

Philip immediately started on his way. Along the road, Philip saw a man from Ethiopia. This man was an important official from the queen of Ethiopia. While sitting in his chariot, the Ethiopian man was reading from God's Word in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet who lived about 700 years before Jesus, and the book of Isaiah has a lot of prophecy that predicted how the Savior would one day suffer and die for his people.

The Holy Spirit told Philip exactly what to do. So Philip ran up to the chariot and asked the man, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The man replied, "How could I, unless someone explains it to me?" The man did not understand, but he hoped that Philip could explain what he was reading. So the Ethiopian man invited Philip to come sit in his chariot with him. Philip began with the Scripture that the Ethiopian was reading, explaining that Jesus was the suffering servant written about in Isaiah. Philip told the Ethiopian man the good news that this prophecy had already come true! – that God's Son, Jesus, had come from heaven to suffer and die on the cross, to save people from their sin, and that Jesus had risen from the dead! Philip told the Ethiopian about baptism and explained that Jesus wants people to repent of their sins and put their faith in Jesus.

As the chariot was passing some water (probably just a puddle or maybe a well, because they were in a desert area without many rivers), the Ethiopian said, "Look, here is some water." The Ethiopian asked Philip to baptize him right away. As soon as Philip baptized the new believer, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly carried Philip away to preach to other people. Although the Ethiopian didn't see Philip anymore, he got back in his chariot and went on his way, rejoicing! He was filled with joy because Philip had explained to him the good news about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit helps us to find truth in God's Word too, and he gives us faith to believe in Jesus as our Savior and to share the good news about Jesus with others. Like the Ethiopian man, we go on our way, rejoicing!

- **What part of the Bible was the Ethiopian man reading?**
- **What did Philip explain to him?**
- **How does the Holy Spirit help us when we read the Bible?**

OCTOBER WEEK THREE: SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Friday

Genesis 13:1–14:20

When Abram obeyed God and left his home to follow God's call and command, Abram brought his nephew Lot with him. God had blessed Abram. He was rich in cattle and sheep, in silver, and in gold. His nephew Lot was also blessed with flocks and herds of animals. The land where they lived was not able to provide enough water and grass for all their combined many animals. Soon the servants of Lot and Abram who took care of their animals began to argue with each other.

Abram told Lot that they and their servants should not argue over the land. After all, Abram and Lot were family. Abram said they should separate and that Lot could have first choice of where he would like to go. Lot looked and saw that the land by the Jordan River was good and well-watered. Lot chose that land, and set up his camp near the city of Sodom. Abram lived in the land of Canaan.

God promised Abram that he would give him all the land as far as Abram could see. God promised that so many people would come from Abram that trying to count them would be like trying to count the dust on the earth, or the sand on the beach, or the stars in the sky. In thanks, Abram built a place of worship to make offerings to God.

One day, there was trouble in the place Lot had chosen to live, near the city of Sodom. War broke out between the kings of five cities and the kings of four other cities. The side that Sodom's kind was on lost the battle. The enemy soldiers carried away many of the possessions and people of Sodom. And they took Lot as a prisoner, along with all his servants and possessions.

When Abram heard that Lot had been taken captive, he armed his 318 trained servants and pursued the enemy kings. In the night, Abram divided his forces and attacked the enemy's forces, chasing them a long way away. Abram rescued Lot and the other prisoners with him and too back all that things that belonged to them.

Abram would take no reward from the king of Sodom. Instead, Abram gave a gift of a tenth of all that he had to Melchizedek, a righteous priest of the Lord. This priest blessed Abram and praised God, saying, "Blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hands!"

God helped Abram rescue Lot from his enemies. God has also rescued sinners by sending his Son, Jesus, to defeat sin, death, and the devil. Through Jesus' victory on the cross, he won the forgiveness of sins and the riches of heaven for all who put their trust in him and his promises.

Close with prayer



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