

The Trinity

Understanding God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

The One God

Deuteronomy 6:4

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Isaiah 45:5

I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

1 Corinthians 8:6

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

James 2:19

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Scripture declares with unwavering clarity that there is one God and one alone. 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD'—this foundational confession, known as the Shema, establishes strict monotheism as central to biblical faith.

'I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me,' proclaims Isaiah. There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.

The demons themselves acknowledge this truth, for they believe there is one God and tremble. Christianity is not tri-theism but monotheism—we worship one God, not three gods.

Yet this one God exists eternally in three distinct persons. This mystery transcends human comprehension yet stands firmly revealed in Scripture.

The unity of God's essence does not negate the plurality of persons within the

Godhead. Throughout church history, heresies have arisen from overemphasizing either God's oneness (modalism, which denies distinct persons) or threeness (tritheism, which divides the Godhead).

Orthodox Christianity maintains both truths in tension: God is one in essence, three in persons—a mystery we affirm even when we cannot fully comprehend its depths.

The Father

Matthew 6:9

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

John 17:1-3

[1] These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: [2] As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. [3] And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

1 Corinthians 8:6

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

God the Father stands revealed as the first person of the Trinity, eternally generating the Son and spirating the Holy Spirit. 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,' teaches Jesus in the pattern prayer, establishing the Father's priority in the Godhead's economy.

In His high priestly prayer, Christ addresses the Father: 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him.

The Father is distinguished by His role as source and origin within the Trinity—not in terms of essence (the three persons share equally in the divine nature) but in terms of order and relationship. The Father eternally begets the Son, sends the Son into the world for redemption, and with the Son sends forth the Holy Spirit.

He is the fountain of deity from whom all blessings flow, the architect of redemption who planned salvation in eternity past, and the ultimate object of worship to whom glory ascends through the Son and in the Spirit. Understanding the Father's distinct personhood prevents us from viewing God as an impersonal force while recognizing His loving relationship with His children.

The Son's Deity

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Colossians 2:9

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Hebrews 1:8

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Titus 2:13

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

The deity of Jesus Christ constitutes a non-negotiable article of orthodox Christianity. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'—John's prologue establishes both Christ's eternal existence and His full deity.

In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; He is the complete revelation and embodiment of divine nature. The Father addresses the Son: 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,' applying the divine title directly to Christ.

We await the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus

Christ. The Son is not a created being, not a lesser deity, not an exalted angel, but very God of very God.

He possesses every divine attribute: eternality (John 8:58, 'Before Abraham was, I AM'), omniscience (John 21:17), omnipotence (Matthew 28:18), omnipresence (Matthew 28:20), immutability (Hebrews 13:8), and the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-7). Christ receives worship appropriate to God alone (Hebrews 1:6), bears titles belonging to deity (Alpha and Omega, Revelation 22:13), and performs works only God can accomplish (creation, sustaining all things, final judgment).

Denying Christ's full deity undermines the gospel, for only God could pay sin's infinite penalty and only God could satisfy divine justice. Lesser saviors offer lesser salvation; Christ's deity guarantees salvation's sufficiency.

The Holy Spirit's Deity

Acts 5:3-4

[3] But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? [4] Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

2 Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Hebrews 9:14

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or divine influence but the third person of the Trinity, fully God and equal with Father and Son. When Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, Peter declared, 'Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God'—equating the

Spirit directly with deity.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? The Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. The Spirit possesses divine attributes: omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:10-11, He searches all things, even the deep things of God), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), and omnipotence (Luke 1:35, power to accomplish the virgin conception).

He performs divine works: creation (Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4), inspiration of Scripture (2 Peter 1:21), regeneration (John 3:5-8), sanctification (2 Thessalonians 2:13), and resurrection (Romans 8:11). The Spirit is a person, not a thing—He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), resisted (Acts 7:51), blasphemed (Matthew 12:31-32), and lied to (Acts 5:3).

He teaches, guides, convicts, intercedes, and speaks. The doctrine of the Spirit's deity protects against both viewing Him as impersonal energy and diminishing His equality within the Godhead.

To know God fully requires knowing Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one God in three persons.

Tri-unity

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

2 Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Ephesians 4:4-6

[4] There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; [5] One Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1 Peter 1:2

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

The term 'Trinity' does not appear in Scripture, yet the doctrine pervades biblical revelation—three persons sharing one divine essence. Christ commands baptism 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'—note the singular 'name,' not names, indicating unity, yet three distinct persons.

The apostolic benediction pronounces 'the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost'—three persons, one blessing. Paul affirms 'one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.' Peter writes of those 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' These Trinitarian formulations demonstrate that from Christianity's earliest days, believers understood God as three-in-one.

The Trinity is not mathematical absurdity ($1+1+1=3$) but ontological mystery ($1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$)—one God subsisting eternally in three persons. Each person is fully God, possessing the complete divine nature; yet there are not three gods but one.

The persons are distinguished by their relationships: the Father unbegotten, the Son eternally begotten of the Father, the Spirit proceeding from Father and Son. This doctrine safeguards against false views: modalism (God merely appearing in three modes), Arianism (Christ as created being), and tri-theism (three separate gods).

The Trinity reveals both God's transcendent mystery and His relational nature.

The Trinity in Creation and Redemption

Genesis 1:1-3

[1] In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. [2] And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the

Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. [3] And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Colossians 1:16

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Ephesians 1:3-14

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: [4] According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: [5] Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, [6] To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. [7] In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; [8] Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; [9] Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: [10] That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: [11] In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: [12] That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. [13] In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, [14] Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

1 Peter 1:18-20

[18] Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; [19] But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: [20] Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

The entire work of creation manifests Trinitarian cooperation. In the beginning God (Elohim, a plural noun) created the heaven and the earth, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God spoke (the Word, John 1:3)—Father, Spirit, and Son active in creation.

By Christ were all things created, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers—all things were created by Him and for Him. Redemption likewise displays Trinitarian harmony: the Father elected us in Christ before the foundation of the world, the Son redeemed us with His precious blood, and the Spirit sanctifies us unto obedience and applies Christ's work to our hearts.

Ephesians 1:3-14 traces salvation's full scope in Trinitarian terms: chosen by the Father, redeemed through the Son's blood, sealed by the Spirit. First Peter describes believers as 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' Every divine work *ad extra* (directed outward toward creation) involves all three persons, though particular aspects may be appropriated to specific persons.

The Father plans, the Son accomplishes, the Spirit applies—yet all three cooperate in each phase. This Trinitarian cooperation reveals God's unified purpose while honoring the distinct roles of each person.

Understanding the Trinity enriches our grasp of how God works, demonstrating divine wisdom and love at every level.

Practical Implications

Romans 8:26-27

[26] Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27] And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

John 14:16-17

[16] And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [17] Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Hebrews 7:25

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Ephesians 2:18

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

The doctrine of the Trinity, far from being abstract theology, profoundly impacts Christian life and worship. When you pray, the entire Godhead engages in your communion with heaven: the Spirit helps your infirmities and makes intercession according to God's will, the Son ever lives to make intercession for you at the Father's right hand, and the Father hears and answers in accordance with His perfect wisdom and love.

Through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father—each person of the Trinity actively involved in bringing you into God's presence. Understanding the Trinity prevents error: you need not fear approaching God as though He were distant or reluctant (the Father loves you), insufficient (the Son's work is complete), or absent (the Spirit indwells you).

The Trinity also models relationships: the mutual love, honor, and deference among Father, Son, and Spirit provide the pattern for human relationships in marriage, church, and society. Unity without uniformity, distinction without division, equality without identity—these Trinitarian realities instruct our own communities.

The Trinity assures believers that God is not solitary but relational, not isolated but communal—and He invites us into fellowship with His triune life. When we are baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are brought into covenant relationship with the one true God in three persons.

This mystery humbles our intellect while exalting our hearts in worship of Him who is beyond full comprehension yet graciously revealed in Scripture.

Worship of the Triune God

Revelation 4:8-11

[8] And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. [9] And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, [10] The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, [11] Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Revelation 5:12-14

[12] Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. [13] And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. [14] And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Matthew 3:16-17

[16] And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: [17] And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John 4:23-24

[23] But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. [24] God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

True Christian worship is inherently Trinitarian. In Revelation's throne room vision, the four living creatures cry 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty'—the threefold 'holy' echoing Isaiah 6 and suggesting Trinitarian worship.

When the Lamb takes the scroll, He receives worship equal to that given the Father: 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and

strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' Every creature in heaven, earth, and under the earth ascribes 'blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' At Christ's baptism, the Trinity manifests distinctly: the Son baptized, the Spirit descending as a dove, the Father's voice declaring, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Jesus teaches that the Father seeks worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth—worship directed to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. Our prayers ascend to the Father, through the Son's mediation, in the Spirit's enabling.

The doxology ('Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost') and countless hymns reflect the church's Trinitarian worship from earliest times. We glorify not three gods but one God in three persons.

When we exalt Christ, we glorify the Father who sent Him; when we honor the Father, we acknowledge the Son through whom He is revealed; when we worship in the Spirit, we commune with Father and Son. The Trinity is not a puzzle to solve but a God to adore, not merely a doctrine to affirm but a reality to experience.

As we grow in grace, we enter more deeply into the mystery and majesty of the triune God.

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