

# The Trinity: One God, Three Persons

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*Essential: What Christians Really Believe*

## Introduction

When I was about 16 years old, I took a national exam in Religious Education in England. Everyone had to take it. Most people chose to write about the religion they grew up with. I chose Christianity.

One of the questions in the exam asked, **'Describe the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.'**

The question was only worth 3 marks, and the box for the answer had space for just three sentences. But I couldn't fit everything I wanted to say. I kept writing in the margins, on the back, and even in the spaces that said *'Official Use Only.'* Even after all that, I still didn't explain it fully.

That shows us something important: the Trinity is big and beautiful. It is not just a puzzle. It is about God Himself. And it is one of the most important things Christians believe.

Today, we will learn what the Bible says about the Trinity. The Bible does not give one single verse that explains everything. But all of Scripture shows that God is Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We will see this truth clearly.

## Section I: There Is Only One God

The Bible starts by telling us that there is only one God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says, '*The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*' This was a very important truth for Israel. Other nations believed in many gods. But Israel believed in just one—the true God.

God is not one of many.

He is the Creator of everything. Jesus repeated this truth. Paul and James also said the same thing. Christians believe in one God.

We must also understand that God is one in His **being**. Being describes *what* something is. It's nature, its essence.

That means He has one nature—*He is one 'what.'* Christians stand alongside our Jewish forebears. We are strict **monotheists** and affirm that there is *only one God*. Jesus himself affirmed this. So we do not believe in three gods. There is only one God, eternal and unchanging.

## Section II: God Exists as Three Persons

The Bible also shows that this one God exists in three persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit.

If **being** describes *what* something is, then **person** describes *who* someone is. While God is *one* in being, He is *three* in person. This is confusing and hard for us to imagine, because for us, our experience is of having *one* being existing as *one* person, so we assume everything must be the same. But the being of God is not confined by our small, limited experience.

It is a *divine mystery* in that it doesn't match our assumptions, and we can't fully comprehend it, but that doesn't mean it's unknowable. The Bible gives us lots of examples of this.

A good example is the baptism of Jesus.

In Matthew 3, **Jesus, the Son**, is baptized, **the Holy Spirit** comes down like a dove, and **the Father** speaks from heaven. All three persons are present and active at the same time.

Jesus prayed to the Father. He promised to send the Holy Spirit. At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told His followers to baptize in the **name** (singular) of the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Holy Spirit**. One name. Three persons.

This is not a contradiction, it's a revelation. Jesus is not just another name for God. The Spirit is not just a power or force.

They are real persons. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Spirit is God.

But they are not three gods. They are one God in three persons.

### **Section III: God Revealed This Truth Over Time**

God did not tell everything about Himself all at once. In the Old Testament, there are small hints. In Genesis 1, God says, 'Let *us* make man in our image.' In Isaiah 48, we hear about the Lord, His Spirit, and a divine messenger (which we call a "christophany", a bodily appearance where the Son appears on earth man prior to the incarnation of Jesus).

Although we don't get the full picture in the Old Testament, only whispers, it becomes clearer when Jesus comes. He does what only

God can do—He forgives sins, controls nature, and receives worship. He calls God His Father in a unique and personal way, and promises to send the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus rose from the dead; His followers began to understand. They didn't make up the Trinity. They saw it. They lived it.

They prayed to the Father, followed the Son, and were filled with the Spirit. Paul ends one of his letters saying, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.' He doesn't need to explain it, because he knows they all understand it through their lived experience.

## **Section IV: Why the Trinity Matters**

The Trinity is not just a big idea. It is the heart of our faith. It shows us how we are saved.

The Father sent the Son. The Son gave His life for us. The Spirit opens our hearts and helps us believe. We are saved by the Father, through the Son, and by the work of the Spirit. Salvation is Trinitarian.

The Trinity also shows us what real love and relationships look like. God had existed in perfect relationship with himself for all eternity past. God didn't create us because He was lonely.

*God made us to share in His joy and love.*

So we worship one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is not a puzzle to solve. He is a God to know, love, and worship.