

The Trinity; Part one of two

Definition: *Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*

Progressive Revelation of the Trinity

In the Old Testament

Then God said, “Let **us** make man in our image, after **our** likeness...”
(Genesis 1:26)

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for **us**?” (Isaiah 6:8)

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions; (Psalm 45:6-7, cf Hebrews 1:8)

In the New Testament

But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. (Hebrews 1:8)

And when **Jesus** was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a **voice from heaven** said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-17)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same **Spirit**; and there are varieties of service, but the same **Lord**; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same **God** who empowers them all in everyone. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

There is one body and one **Spirit**—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one **Lord**, one faith, one baptism, one God and **Father** of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

1. God is three persons

- The Son is not the Father (Hebrews 7:25)
- The Father is not the Spirit (John 14:26)
- The Son is not the Spirit (John 16:7)

2. Each person is fully God

- The Father is God
- The Son is God (Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-4, 2 Peter 1:1)
- The Spirit is God (Psalm 139:7, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 3:16)

3. There is one God

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, (1 Timothy 2:5)

One in Essence; Three in Person

Essence (consubstantiality) – All three persons are of the same essence/substance.

Three Persons – All are co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal. Yet they are distinct from each other and relate to each other.

Ontological equality – There is no difference in the nature of the persons.

Economic (relational) subordination – The persons voluntarily submit to each other in respect to their roles. The Father is not begotten, but the Son is (John 3:16). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John 15:26). The Father sent the Son (1 John 4:10). The Son and the Father send the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26). The Father creates (Isaiah 44:24), the Son redeems (Galatians 3:13), and the Holy Spirit sanctifies (Romans 15:16).

Shaping the Doctrine

Term first coined by Tertullian in the early 3rd century.

Foundational Truths of the Doctrine

Heresies

Modalism – God assumes different modes in different situations.

Arianism - God is self-existent; Jesus is a created being.

Council of Nicea (AD 325) – Response to Arius. *homoiousios* vs *homoousios*

Council of Constantinople (AD 381) – Confirmation of the Nicene Creed. Re-affirmed the Holy Spirit as part of the Godhead.

Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) – Focused on the relationship of Christ's divinity to his humanity; the hypostatic union.

God Necessarily Exists as the Trinity

What was God doing before creation?

Father... you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24)

God's primary identity is that of Father

For you are our Father... you, O LORD, are our Father...(Isaiah 63:16)

To believe in Jesus is to believe the Trinity.

These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)

God has always been love, and his love is not a selfish love

When Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove

and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. (1 John 4:7-9)

The Trinity in Creation

God did not create out of deficiency.

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (Acts 17:24-25)

God is exuberant

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:3)

Creation exists so the love of the Father for the Son would be shared

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:24-26)