

The Holy Trinity  
Matthew 28:16-20  
June 11, 2017

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "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."*

Do you know what just happened (a book dropped to the floor)? You just saw gravity in action. You didn't see gravity, but you saw what it does. Do you feel qualified to explain the how and why of gravity? Just because we can't see gravity or explain how it works doesn't mean it doesn't exist. We know gravity exists because we see proof of it all the time.

Today, we're going to talk about something like gravity. Today, we're going to talk about the Trinity. I don't fully understand the Trinity and neither does anyone else. The early church father Augustine said, "Try to deny the Trinity and you lose your soul; try to understand the Trinity and you lose your mind."

I can't see the Trinity and I can't explain the Trinity, so how can I say with certainty that the Trinity exists? I know the Trinity exists because I can find all the proof I need in Scripture. So, today, we're going to use the Bible to learn what we can about the Holy Trinity.

We will start with a working definition of the Trinity: *"There is one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons who are fully and equally God."*

That's quite a mouthful, so let's take it one step at a time.

\$ There is only one God.

\$ This one God has always been and always will be.

\$ This one God is three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

\$ The three persons are equal but distinct.

\$ The three persons are one God.

\$ There is one God and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all that one God.

Now that it's as clear as mud, let's turn to God's Word to learn the truth about the Trinity.

**There is one God.**

**Deuteronomy 4:35** *You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other.*

**Deuteronomy 32:39** *See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me.*

**Psalms 86:10** *You are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.*

**Isaiah 45:5** *I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God.*

**1 Timothy 1:17** *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that there is only one true God. That one true God is the God of Christianity and no other. There are other gods, but all other gods are false gods. The only true God is the God who reveals himself in the Bible.

That settles the first part of our working definition. There is only one true God. I realize I'm being redundant, but this point is so crucial it bears repeating. So, what about the next part of our definition?

*"There is one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons who are fully and equally God."*

How can one God be three different persons? I don't know the answer to that. No one can fully understand how that can be a true statement. I base my belief that three persons are only one God because of what I find in the Bible. Let's look.

### **God the Father is God**

This statement is one that we all should be able to agree on. Even those who deny the existence of the Trinity will agree that God the Father is God. Let's see who else agrees.

Jesus fully believed that God the Father is God: **John 6:37** *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. Only as God could the Father decide the destiny of all people.*

Jesus also prayed to the Father, as God, to forgive his executioners: **Luke 23:34** *Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*

The apostle Paul fully believed that God the Father is God: **1 Corinthians 8:6** *Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live.*

Scripture supports the fact that God the father is true God.

### **God the Son, Jesus, is God**

At this point, some disagreement starts to appear. Not everyone, who believes God the Father is God, is ready to admit that God the Son, Jesus, is also true God. However, the Bible is very clear on this point.

**John 1:1-2** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*

**John 1:14** *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus is the Word of God, and the apostle John, an eyewitness, boldly states the Word was with God – the Word was God – and the Word became human.

Jesus also made it clear that he was fully God. When the Jews questioned Jesus about his seeing Abraham, Jesus to them: **John 8:58** *“I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am!”*

That simple statement infuriated the Jews to the point of wanting to stone Jesus. The reason for their anger comes from the Old Testament: **Exodus 3:14** *God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”* God said his true name is I AM and Jesus claimed that name for himself.

### **Others claimed Jesus as true God.**

Thomas after Jesus’ resurrection: **John 20:28** *Thomas said to [Jesus], “My Lord and my God!”*

Paul to the Roman Christians: **Romans 9:5** *From [the Jews] is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all.*

Paul to Titus: **Titus 2:12-13** *[Scripture] teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

John in his first epistle: **1 John 5:20** *We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.*

We say and believe that Jesus is true God because the Bible clearly states that Jesus is God.

### **God the Holy Spirit is God.**

First, we must understand that the Holy Spirit is a HE, a person, not an it. The Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force. The Holy Spirit possesses the characteristics of a person. Again, let’s support that statement with Scripture.

**Ephesians 4:30** *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. One can only grieve oneself or another person. You cannot grieve some inhuman force. You can’t grieve gravity.*

**Acts 7:51** *You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Here you have Stephen condemning the Jewish leaders for resisting the Holy Spirit; the same as you can resist any other person.*

**Hebrews 10:29** *How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? The author of Hebrews tells us that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of grace, can be insulted. You can insult electricity.*

### **Now we turn to the question, “Is the Holy Spirit God?”**

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Paul tells the Corinthians believers, in no uncertain terms, that the Spirit and the Lord are synonymous. In other words, God is the Spirit and the Spirit is God.

**Acts 5:3-4** *Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."* Peter accuses Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit and later says Ananias lied to God. God is the Spirit and the Spirit is God.

We believe the Holy Spirit is God because the Bible says he is God.

### **Do we ever find all three in the same place at the same time?**

Something the folks in the old Superman series never seemed to figure out is that you never found Superman and Clark Kent together. So do we ever find all three persons of the Trinity together? Yes.

At Creation:

**Genesis 1:1-2** *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

**John 1:1-2** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*

God uses the plural when referring to himself:

**Genesis 1:26** *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." (not the image of angels)*

**Genesis 3:22** *And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil."*

At Jesus' baptism:

**Matthew 3:16-17** *As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

### **Errors from denying the Trinity**

**Polytheism:** the belief in multiple gods. The Mormon church teaches Jesus was an ordinary man who lived an extremely good life and was promoted to being a god.

**Modalism:** the belief that God is one person who appears in different forms at different times. The Father in the Old Testament – Jesus in the New Testament – the Holy Spirit in current times.

**Ayrianism:** the believe that the persons of the Trinity are not equal. Jesus was created a little lower than the Father. Jehovah Witnesses believe this.

**Why is it important to believe in the Trinity?**

The only way to know the one true God, the God clearly described in the Bible, is to accept God the way he describes himself – the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three separate persons, fully and equally God, existing as one eternal God.