

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT (TRINITY)

There is only **one** true God, known to humanity in three ways – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This concept is known as the *Trinity* (emphasis added here and in other places), one that has caused frustration for many throughout Church history, because it is challenging to understand. Others simply accept the concept on faith and pray for expanded understanding as they grow spiritually.

Origin of the Trinity

You will not find the word *Trinity* in the New Testament. Judaism, the very basis upon which Christianity was built, declared “**The Lord our God is one Lord**” (**Deuteronomy 6:4**). But having experienced the presence of Jesus, the Son of God, in their midst for 33 years and having received the presence and power of the Holy Spirit of God on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**), the early Church decided to better define God’s presence as it had been revealed to them.

Jesus alluded to the *Trinity* in the Great Commission, “**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**” (**Matthew 28:19**). Paul’s epistle to believers at Corinth alluded to the *Trinity* as well: “**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all**” (**2 Corinthians 13:13**). The New Testament provided the impetus and foundation for what would become the doctrine of the *Trinity* that developed gradually, though debated, over multiple centuries.

Debates about the *Trinity*, among others, included whether Jesus was subordinate to God the Father, whether the Persons of the *Trinity* were all eternal, and about the distinctness, equality, and unity of the three Persons of God that was gaining consensus. In 325, the Council of Nicaea set forth the crucial understanding that Jesus was “of the same substance as the Father,” though not mentioning much about the Holy Spirit. Even with lingering mild disputes to this day, the doctrine of the *Trinity* was fairly settled by the end of the fourth century and has gained widespread acceptance with most believers since.

Persons of the Trinity

There is only one God, revealed to the ancient Hebrew people. The advent of Jesus and the New Covenant, the expansion of God's grace to Gentiles, and the powerful arrival of the Spirit on Pentecost served to increase our understanding about the many-faceted nature of God. God is still one but recognized in three ways:

Spirit

God is first revealed to us in scripture as a *Spirit* – “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” (**Genesis 1:2**). The Spirit of God transcends all and, according to scripture, fills the universe – “Am I not a God nearby,” declares the Lord, “and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the Lord. “Do not I fill heaven and earth,” declares the Lord” (**Jeremiah 23:23-24**).

Jesus made it clear that God is a *Spirit* – “. . . a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **God is spirit**, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (**John 4:23-24**).

Because of the sinfulness of humanity and its failure to obey the Law God had given them under the Old Covenant of the Law, our loving Spirit God chose to intervene in history by coming to the earth, for a season, in the Person of Jesus, God revealed in human flesh.

Son

Jesus came to be with a divine touch. God's Spirit conceived within a virgin by the name of Mary the baby who would become the Savior of the world. This was not a fleshly conception; it was divine. Spirit God touched humanity within Mary, resulting in the birth of Jesus, who is also known as Immanuel (God with us). Born in this way, Jesus was fully man, yet fully divine. He experienced joy, sadness, and other emotions and endured physical human pain, yet possessed all the wisdom, knowledge, and power of God.

A word about the humanity of Jesus: those who were privileged to see him centuries ago knew exactly what Jesus looked like. But there were no cameras back then, nor did any artist in that day capture an authentic image. Today, our image of Jesus, the Son of God, should rest in our faith, not on any image

produced by artists in recent centuries. Jesus said this about ‘seeing’ Him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

Father

Because of the way Jesus was conceived by Spirit God, Jesus called God, *Father*. Mary was his mother; Spirit God was his father, the life-giving Source. Just as Jesus was given life through the *Spirit* of God, we can call God *Father* because we have experienced the true life that comes from the Source, through the one-time sacrifice Jesus made on the Cross of Calvary.

Jesus encouraged us to call God *Father* when he taught his disciples to pray, “Our *Father, who art in heaven . . .*” (Matthew 6:9-13). Jesus used the masculine address for the reasons that have been shared. Please understand, though, **God is neither male nor female**. God is a *Spirit* who was revealed in human flesh in the *Son* and is called *Father* due to the nature of Jesus’ conception.

“God is not a man, that he should lie . . .” (Numbers 23:19). We only use the masculine address of God because Jesus did and asked us to do the same. That is the only reason references to God in the masculine (*Him, His* or *He*) are used in the content of this website and by Christians in general. There is no argument to be made about gender. God is a *Spirit!*

Closing Thoughts

We relate to God and worship God in *Spirit*. We relate to Jesus, the *Son* of God, because he was God, walked among us, and most importantly, went to the Cross to take away our sins. That is truly worthy of our sincere worship. We relate to and address God as *Father* at the command of Jesus and because true life is fathered in us even as it was in Christ Jesus. We can worship our heavenly Father.

This is a short introduction to the *Trinity*. Here are a few other resources you may wish to explore on the subject:

[What does the Bible teach about the Trinity? | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/What-does-the-Bible-teach-about-the-Trinity/)

[The Trinity \(Triunity\) of God | Bible.org](https://www.bible.org/what-is-the-trinity)

[26 Top Bible Verses About the Trinity - Father, Son, Holy Spirit Scriptures \(biblestudytools.com\)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/26-top-bible-verses-about-the-trinity-father-son-holy-spirit-scriptures/)

[Understanding What the Trinity is: Father, Son, Holy Spirit \(christianity.com\)](https://www.christianity.com/understanding-what-the-trinity-is-father-son-holy-spirit/)

[What Is the Doctrine of the Trinity? | Desiring God](https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-doctrine-of-the-trinity)