

# God: The Heavenly Father And The Trinity

"Life Foundations: Christian Faith Essentials", Part 3

Pastor Vince DiPaola

**THE BIG IDEA: GOD IS THE ONE AND ONLY SUPREME BEING WHO EXISTS IN TRINITY WITH JESUS THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

*"I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God..." (Isaiah 45:5a, NASB)*

*"Then God said, 'Let Us...' (Genesis 1:26a, NASB)*

## I) THE EXISTENCE OF GOD: HOW WE CAN "KNOW" HE EXISTS

The four classical arguments for the existence of God (since no one has seen him (John 1:18)):

Argument #1) The COSMOLOGICAL argument:

The effect of the world (the "cosmos") must be explained by an efficient cause (God).

*"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge."*  
(Psalm 19:1-2, NIV)

Argument #2) The TELEOLOGICAL argument:

The world has an observable purpose, order and design that suggests a designer (God).

*"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities— his eternal power and divine nature— have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."*  
(Romans 1:20, NIV)

Argument #3) The ANTHROPOLOGICAL argument:

The unique make-up of mankind with unparalleled personality, moral sensitivities and spiritual capacities that reflect the image of God.

*"...Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law..." (Romans 2:14a, NIV)*

*"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule...'"*  
(Genesis 1:26, NASB)

Argument #4) The ONTOLOGICAL argument:

People have an inner idea or awareness of the existence of a supremely perfect being (God).

*"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"*  
(Psalm 14:1a, NIV)

## II) THE ATTRIBUTES (OR PERFECTIONS) OF GOD: WHAT IS GOD REALLY LIKE?

While no list of attributes can ever convey the nature of God, these are a few key attributes:  
(adapted from C. Ryrie, "Basic Theology", p.36-44)

1) The ETERNITY of God. (Psalm 90:2, Genesis 21:33)

God exists endlessly backward (into eternity past) and forward (into eternity future).

2) The FREEDOM of God. (Isaiah 40:13-14)

God exists independently from His creatures and His creation.

3) The HOLINESS of God. (Lev.11:44, Josh.24:19, Ps.99:3,5,9, Isa.40:25, Hab.1:12, Jn.17:11, 1 Pet.1:15)

God exists in positive purity, distinct and separate from all that is common or unclean.

4) The IMMUTABILITY of God. (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17)

God exists as unchangeable and hence is unchanging.

5) The INFINITY or IMMENSITY of God. (1 Kings 8:27, Acts 17:24-28)

God exists without bounds or limits.

6) The LOVE of God. (1 John 4:8)

God seeks the highest good and glory in extending affection and correction to all.

7) The OMNIPOTENCE of God. (Genesis 17:1, Exodus 6:3, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Revelation 1:8, 19:6)

God is all-powerful and able to do anything consistent with His own nature.

8) The OMINPRESENCE of God. (Psalm 139:7-12)

God is everywhere present with His whole being at all times.

9) The OMNISCIENCE of God. (Acts 15:18, Psalm 147:4, Matthew 11:21, Psalm 139:16) **God knows everything, things actual and possible, effortlessly and equally well.**

10) The RIGHTEOUSNESS of God. (Psalm 11:7, Daniel 9:7, Psalm 19:9, Acts 17:31)

God is completely and exhaustively just in all He does.

11) The SIMPLICITY of God. (John 4:24)

God is Spirit, not a composite or compounded being.

**12) The SOVEREIGNTY of God.** (Acts 15:18, Ephesians 1:11,14, Psalm 135:6, Proverbs 16:4) **God is the principle, chief, supreme Being who has the position, power and right to rule all.**

**13) The TRUTH of God.** (John 17:3, Titus 1:2, Romans 3:4, Hebrews 6:18)  
**God is always faithful, consistent and true to all that He has revealed Himself to be.**

**14) The UNITY of God.** (Deuteronomy 6:4, Ephesians 4:6, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 1 Timothy 2:5) **God is One and Only and is indivisible.**

**Possible ways to categorize the perfections or attributes of God:**

- a) His natural vs. moral attributes
- b) His absolute vs. relative attributes
- c) His incommunicable vs. communicable attributes

### **III) THE NAMES OF GOD: WHAT WE CALL HIM (THE MOST COMMON NAMES)**

*(adapted from C. Ryrie, "Basic Theology", p.45-50)*

**1) ELOHIM: Supreme Deity** (Gen. 1:1, Isa. 45:18, 54:5, Jer. 32:7, Neh. 2:4, Deut.10:17, Ps. 50:6, 58:11)

**2) YAHWEH: Lord or Active, Self-existent One** (Gen.4:1, Exod.3:14, 6:3)

**3) ADONAI: Lord, Master, Owner** (Genesis 19:2, 40:1, 1 Samuel 1:15, Joshua 5:14, Isaiah 6:8-11)

**4) "THEOS": God (sometimes "god")** (Romans 9:5, John 1:1,18, 20:28, Titus 2:13)

**5) "KURIOS": Lord with authority and supremacy** (Matt.8:6, John 20:28, Acts 2:36, Phil. 2:11)

**6) "DESPOTES": Master by ownership** (Luke 2:29, Acts 4:24, Revelation 6:10, 2 Peter 2:1, Jude 4)

**7) FATHER: Father of individuals** (Eph. 1:2, 2:18, 1 Thes. 1:1, 3:11, James 1:17, 2 John 4)

## IV) THE TRINITY (OR TRIUNITY) OF GOD: ONE GOD, THREE PERSONS

(see appendix at end of this section "Theology of the Trinity" from T. Holladay & K. Warren, "Foundations: 11 Core Truths To Build Your Life On", p.48-49)

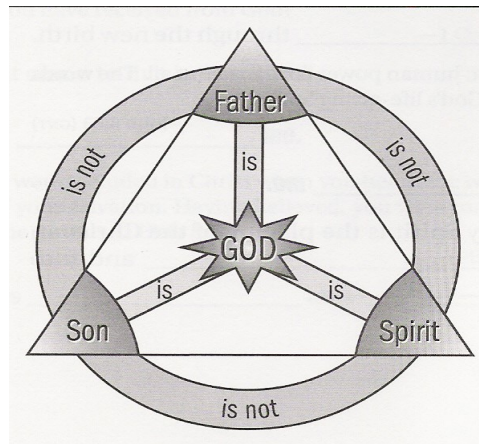
### 1) Defining "The Trinity":

The one, true God exists in the unity of the God-head as three co-eternal and co-equal PERSONS (Father, Son, Spirit) who are of the same SUBSTANCE yet are distinct.

### 2) Illustrating "The Trinity":

a) The "triple point" of water.

b) A helpful diagram:



### 3) Biblical proof for "The Trinity":

a) God is ONE. (Exod. 20:3, Deut. 4:35, 32:29, Isa. 45:14, 46:9, 1 Cor. 8:4-6, Eph. 4:3-6, Jas. 2:19)  
"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4, NIV)

b) The Father is GOD. (John 6:27, Romans 1:7, many introductory sections of the NT epistles)  
"...God the Father..." (1 Peter 1:2, NIV)

c) Jesus the Son is GOD. (Matt. 9:4, 28:18, 20, Mark 2:1-12, Col. 1:17, John 1:3, 5:27, 12:9, 20:28)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God... and the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:1, 14a, NIV)

"While we wait for the blessed hope— the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13, NIV)

"Thomas said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:28, NIV)

**d) The Holy Spirit is GOD.** (Acts 5:3-4, 1 Cor.2:10, 6:19, John 3:5-6,8, 14:16-17)

*"... you have lied to the Holy Spirit... you have not lied to men but to God."* (Acts 5:3-4, NIV)

**e) The Trinity is taught or seen.** (Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7, Isaiah 6:8, Matthew 28:18-20)

*"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."* (Genesis 1:26a, NASB)

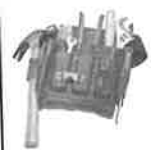
*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*  
(Matthew 28:19, NIV)

**SUMMARY THOUGHT: ACKNOWLEDGING THE PERSON OF GOD AND THE TRINITY FOR WHO THEY ARE GIVES US A GOD WE CAN TRULY LOVE!**

## **V) QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS OR FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- 1) At the beginning of this study, four arguments were given that point toward the existence of God. Which one of the four do you think is the strongest argument? Which do you think is the least Gripping argument? Reflect on or share your reasons why.
- 2) Review the attributes of God provided above. Which were new to you? Which were familiar to you. What ones have you found particularly comforting in your life these days? Why?
- 3) After reviewing the Scriptures related to the Trinity of God, what passages did you find particularly helpful? Why do you think that Matthew 28:19 is such an important verse on the Trinity?
- 4) What are some ways you can worship or express your love to God based on what you know of Him now life? Find two or three ways in which you can apply this session to your life.





# Appendix

## Theology of the Trinity

Introduction	The word <i>Trinity</i> is never used, nor is the doctrine of Trinitarianism ever explicitly taught, in the Scriptures, but Trinitarianism is the best explication [detailed explanation] of the biblical evidence. It is a crucial doctrine for Christianity because it focuses on who God is, and particularly on the deity of Jesus Christ. Because Trinitarianism is not taught explicitly in the Scriptures, the study of the doctrine is an exercise in putting together biblical themes and data through a systematic theological study and through looking at the historical development of the present orthodox view of what the biblical presentation of the Trinity is.	
Essential Elements of the Trinity	God is One. Each of the persons within the Godhead is Deity. The oneness of God and threeness of God are not contradictory. The Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is eternal. Each of the persons of God is of the same essence and is not inferior or superior to the others in essence. The Trinity is a mystery which we will never be able to understand fully.	
Biblical Teaching	Old Testament	New Testament
God Is One	"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4; cf. 20:2-4; 3:13-15).	"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1:17; cf. 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; James 2:19).
Three Distinct Persons as Deity	The Father: "He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father'" (Ps. 2:7).	"... who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter 1:2; cf. John 1:17; 1 Cor. 8:6; Phil. 2:11).
	The Son: "He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father'" (Ps. 2:7; cf. Heb. 1:1-13; Ps. 68:18; Isa. 6:1-3; 9:6).	"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'" (Matt. 3:16-17).
	The Holy Spirit: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . . and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2; cf. Ex. 31:3; Judg. 15:14; Isa. 11:2).	"Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit . . . ? You have not lied to men but to God'" (Acts 5:3-4; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17).
Plurality of Persons in the Godhead	The use of plural pronouns points to, or at least suggests, the plurality of persons within the Godhead in the Old Testament.  "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness . . .'" (Gen. 1:26).	The use of the singular word "name" when referring to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit indicates a unity within the threeness of God.  "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" (Matt. 28:19).

**Appendix cont.**

	Attribute	Father	Son	Holy Spirit
Persons of the Same Essence: Attributes Applied to Each Person	Eternality	Ps. 90:2	John 1:2; Rev. 1:8, 17	Heb. 9:14
	Power	1 Peter 1:5	2 Cor. 12:9	Rom. 15:19
	Omniscience	Jer. 17:10	Rev. 2:23	1 Cor. 2:11
	Omnipresence	Jer. 23:24	Matt. 18:20	Ps. 139:7
	Holiness	Rev. 15:4	Acts 3:14	Acts 1:8
	Truth	John 7:28	Rev. 3:7	1 John 5:6
	Benevolence	Rom. 2:4	Eph. 5:25	Neh. 9:20
Equality with Different Roles: Activities Involving	Creation of the World	Ps. 102:25	Col. 1:16	Job 33:4
	Creation of Man	Gen. 2:7	Col. 1:16	Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13
	Baptism of Christ	Matt. 3:17	Matt. 3:16-17	Matt. 3:16
	Death of Christ	Heb. 9:14	Heb. 9:14	Heb. 9:14

Source: Taken from *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* by H. Wayne House. Copyright " 1992 by H. Wayne House.  
Used by permission of Zondervan.