

The Trinity

One Watermelon, Three Pieces — Why “Parts” Misses the Mark

“We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.” — Athanasian Creed

If you’ve spent any time in theological discussions, you’ve probably heard someone stumble over how to describe the Trinity. Some analogies make the doctrine clearer; others, well, lead straight into heresy. One of the most common mistakes is referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as **“parts” of God**.

But here’s the problem: **God is not made of parts**.

And this is where my analogy comes in: The Trinity is best understood as **one watermelon in three pieces**, not **one watermelon with three parts**.

Let’s unpack why this distinction is crucial for understanding **who God is** and how He has revealed Himself in **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**.

What’s Wrong with Saying “Parts”?

At first glance, saying “God is one being in three parts” might seem harmless. After all, we often divide things into parts — pizzas, machines, even ideas. But when we apply this to God, we run into a major theological problem:

✦ **Saying “parts” implies that none of the three persons is fully God on their own.**

If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are **each a “part” of God**, then that means **none of them is fully God**. Instead, they would need to be combined to “make up” the one true God. That’s **not what Scripture teaches**.

Let’s test this idea against **the Bible**:

- ✓ **The Father is fully God** (John 6:27, Romans 1:7).
- ✓ **The Son is fully God** (John 1:1, Colossians 2:9).
- ✓ **The Holy Spirit is fully God** (Acts 5:3–4, 2 Corinthians 3:17).

None of them is **one-third of God**. Each person of the Trinity is **fully divine** — distinct in personhood, yet **one in essence**.

The Problem of “Parts” and Partialism

Calling the Trinity “**three parts**” also leads straight into **Partialism**, a heresy that claims the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit **together makeup** God, rather than each being fully God.

This contradicts **God’s divine simplicity**, the doctrine that says God is not **composed of separate components**. He is one indivisible being.

📖 **Exodus 3:14** — “*I AM WHO I AM.*”

This means God **is not assembled** from different parts — He simply **is**. To say God is **three “parts”** suggests that He is somehow incomplete without all three persons. That’s not just bad theology — it’s a fundamental misunderstanding of God’s nature.

Why “Pieces” Is a Better Analogy

Instead of thinking of the Trinity as **three parts of one thing**, I suggest we think of it as **one thing in three pieces**.

Consider a **watermelon**.

If you slice a watermelon into three distinct pieces, **each piece is still fully watermelon**. The nature of watermelon does not change when you separate it into pieces — it remains **the same in essence**.

Similarly:

- ✓ **The Father is fully God.**
- ✓ **The Son is fully God.**
- ✓ **The Holy Spirit is fully God.**

They are **not pieces of God in the sense of being fragments** but are **distinct persons who fully share the divine essence**.

This analogy is useful because:

- ✦ It maintains the **unity of the Trinity** — there is still only one God.
- ✦ It respects the **distinction of the three persons** — each retains their full divine essence.
- ✦ It avoids **Modalism**, which falsely teaches that God is one person appearing in different modes at different times.

Unlike saying “parts,” which divides God into **incomplete sections**, saying “pieces” acknowledges that each person of the Trinity is **fully divine** while still maintaining distinction.

Historical and Theological Support

This is not just an issue of semantics — **the greatest minds in church history have battled against bad descriptions of the Trinity.**

1. The Athanasian Creed (5th Century)

This creed, one of the most authoritative on Trinitarian theology, makes two critical statements:

- ☐ “We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.”
- ☒ “Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.”

Saying “**parts**” divides the substance of God. Saying “**pieces**” allows for distinction without separation.

2. Thomas Aquinas and Divine Simplicity

Aquinas argued that **God cannot be divided into parts** because He is not **composed** — He is **a necessary, self-existent being**.

“The divine persons are distinguished from each other only by their relations of origin.” — (Summa Theologica, I, Q. 39, A. 1)

This means:

- ✓ The **Father is unbegotten,**
- ✓ The **Son is eternally begotten,**
- ✓ The **Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

But all three persons are still **one essence**. No parts. No division.

Practical Implications for How We Talk About the Trinity

So, why does this matter? Because **bad theology leads to bad worship.**

If we get the Trinity wrong, we distort:

- ✓ **Who God is.**
- ✓ **How salvation works.**
- ✓ **The role of each person in our faith.**

Many well-meaning believers **accidentally slip into heresy** because they haven't thought deeply about how they describe God. But as followers of Christ, we must **worship God as He has revealed Himself.**

How to Talk About the Trinity Correctly

- ❌ **Don't say:** "God is like a pie cut into three slices." (Partialism)
- ❌ **Don't say:** "God is like water — liquid, ice, and vapor." (Modalism)
- ❌ **Don't say:** "God is one being in three parts." (Contradicts divine simplicity)
- ✅ **Do say:** "God is one being in three persons."
- ✅ **Do say:** "The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct, yet fully share the divine essence."
- ✅ **Do say:** "The Trinity is like one watermelon in three pieces — fully retaining its essence in each piece."

Final Thought: The Trinity Is a Mystery, But Not a Contradiction

The Trinity is **not easy to grasp**, but we can describe it **in ways that reflect biblical truth.**

- ✓ **God is one in essence.**
- ✓ **God is three in person.**
- ✓ **Each person is fully God.**

By using **careful language**, we avoid common theological errors and worship God as He truly is — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God forever.

"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:36)

So next time someone asks you about the Trinity, tell them: **"It's like a watermelon — one fruit, three distinct pieces, each fully retaining its essence."**

Because **God is not made of parts — He is the indivisible, eternal, triune Lord of all.**

💬 What analogies have helped you understand the Trinity? Let's discuss!

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