

# THE TRINITY

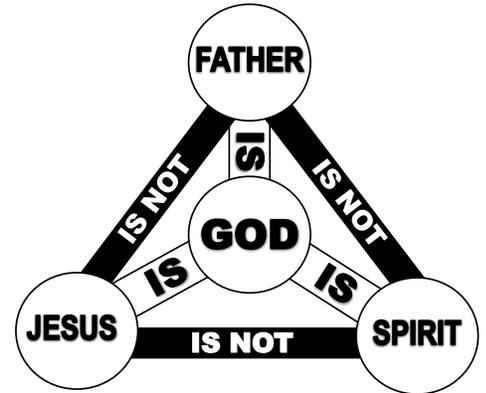
## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

**MISCONCEPTION #1: "The Father, Son and Spirit are different titles for the 3 different ways God revealed Himself."**

*O.T. = Father; Gospels = Jesus; Now = Spirit*

THE THREE INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER.

1. The Father sends the Son (Gal. 4:4)
2. The Father sends the Spirit (John 14:26)
3. The Son speaks on the Father's behalf (John 8:28)
4. The Spirit speaks on Jesus' behalf (John 16:13-15)
5. The Father and Son love each other (John 3:35; 5:20)
6. The Father and the Son count as 2 witnesses (John 5:31-37)
7. The Father and the Son glorify each other (John 17:1-5)
8. The Son is our advocate before the Father (1 John 2:1)
9. Jesus is called the Son OF the Father (2 John 3)



**MISCONCEPTION #2: "The word 'trinity' does not appear in the Bible; It is a belief invented by 4<sup>th</sup> Century Christians."**

The word 'trinity' does not occur in the Bible (nor do the words rapture or incarnation but the concepts are Biblical nonetheless) One word summaries were eventually given to each doctrine. Theophilus (6<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Antioch) is the 1<sup>st</sup> person known to have used the word 'trinity' in his *'Refutation of Autolyclus'* (A.D. 168)

MANY CHRISTIANS DEFENDED THE TRINITY LONG BEFORE THE 4<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

A.D. 96	Clement, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Bishop of Rome	A.D. 177	Athenagoras, theologian
A.D. 90-100	The Didache (Teachings of 12 Apostles)	A.D. 180	Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons
A.D. 90	Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch	A.D. 197	Tertullian, early church leader
A.D. 155	Justin Marty, great Christian writer	A.D. 264	Gregory Thaumaturgus, early church leader
A.D. 168	Theophilus, 6 <sup>th</sup> Bishop of Antioch		

**MISUNDERSTANDING #3: "Christians believe there are 3 Gods."**

THE TRUTH IS: Christians believe in only ONE GOD. Because the Bible teaches that the Father, Son and Spirit are three distinct persons, many call that 3 gods. (GOD IS NOT 1+1+1=3; GOD IS IS 1+1+1=1)

**MISUNDERSTANDING #4: "Jesus is not God and never claimed to be"**

Jesus claimed to forgive sins (*Mark 2:5-12; Luke 5:21*). He accepted worship and claimed to deserve the same honor as the Father (*Matt. 14:33; 28:17-18; John 5:22-23*). He claimed to be the divine Son of God (*John 5:17-18*).

ACTS	GOD	JESUS
CREATED HEAVEN AND EARTH	Gen. 1:1; Psalm 102:25	John 1; Col. 1:16
THE FIRST AND THE LAST	Isaiah 44:6	Rev. 1:17; 22:13
LORD OF LORDS	Deut. 10:17; Psalm 136:3	1 Tim. 6:15; Rev 16:14
UNCHANGING AND ETERNAL	Psalm 94:2; 102:26, 27	John 8:58; Col. 1:17
JUDGE OF ALL PEOPLE	Gen. 18:25; Psalm 94:2	John 5:22; Acts 17:31
ONLY SAVIOR; NO OTHER	Is. 43:11; 45:21; Hos. 13:4	John 4:42; Acts 4:12
REDEEMS PEOPLE FOR HIMSELF	Ex 19:5; Psalm 130:7	Titus 2:14
HEARS AND ANSWERS PRAYER	Psalm 86:5-8; Isaiah 55:6	John 14:14; Rom 10:12-13
ONLY GOD HAS DIVINE GLORY	Isaiah 42:8; 48:11	John 17:5
WORSHIPPED BY ANGELS	Psalm 97:7	Heb. 1:6

## MISUNDERSTANDING #5: “Jesus is a lesser God than the Father”

- **FALSE:** Jesus was the ‘Firstborn’ and therefore created (Col. 1:15)
  - **TRUE:** Firstborn (*protokos*) can mean ‘heir’ or ‘preeminent’ (Col. 1:16-17)
- **FALSE:** Jesus was ‘begotten’ so He had a beginning (John 3:16)
  - **TRUE:** ‘Only Begotten’ means unique (Heb 11:17 used of Isaac despite Ishmael)
- **FALSE:** Jesus said ‘the Father is greater than I’ (John 14:28)
  - **TRUE:** Temporarily limited Himself then was restored to prior Glory (John 17:5)
- **FALSE:** Jesus was subject to the Father so He was not God (1 Cor. 15:28)
  - **TRUE:** Voluntary subjection while on earth (Phil 2:5-11) while still co-equal
- **FALSE:** Jesus didn’t know when He would return (Mark 13:32). God knows all.
  - **TRUE:** Jesus limited His omniscience (John 16:30) while on earth

## ➤ **THERE ARE THREE PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD: THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT; AND THESE THREE ARE ONE GOD, THE SAME IN ESSENCE, EQUAL IN POWER AND GLORY.**

- A. THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD (Deut. 6:4; Jer. 10:10; Isaiah 44:6,8,45)
- B. The FATHER IS GOD (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:4-6)
- C. JESUS IS GOD (John 1:1-14; 20:28; 10:30-33)
- D. THE SPIRIT IS GOD (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:17)

## ➤ **HISTORICAL CREEDS** support the teaching of the Trinity

- **APOSTLE’S CREED:** “I BELIEVE in God the Father almighty; And in Christ Jesus, His only Son, our Lord; Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary; Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried; And the third day rose from the dead; Who ascended into heaven; And sitteth on the right hand of the Father; Whence He cometh to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit - The holy church; The remission of sins - The resurrection of the flesh; The life everlasting.”
- **NICENE CREED** (325 A.D.): “We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.”
- **ATHANASIAN CREED** (400 A.D.): “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic (*Universal Christian*) Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance [Essence]. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be both God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, There be [are] three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another [there is nothing before, or after: nothing greater or less]; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must [let him] thus think of the Trinity...”

<b>ILLUSTRATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>NOTE:</b>
<b>WATER, ICE &amp; STEAM</b>	The chemical makeup of all 3 is H <sub>2</sub> O. They take different forms.	Weakness: They cannot be all three at the same time
<b>THE EGG (OR APPLE)</b>	Three parts make up the whole	Weakness: There is no whole without all 3.
<b>THE 3 LEAF CLOVER</b>	3 leaves with one stem. Used by St. Patrick	Additional: Heart shaped leaves allows for a secondary lesson in God's love.
<b>THE BOX</b>	Height, Depth, Width. All 3 different. All 3 needed to make the whole.	If only one of the three is missing, the others disappear as well.

### **TEACHING OTHERS (INCLUDING CHILDREN) ABOUT THE TRINITY**

1. Read the Bible with your children: Expose children to the Bible and let the truth of the Triune God soak into them via the Bible's stories, letters, songs, and dialogues, they will gradually absorb the truth that God is one, but exists in three persons.
2. Encourage your children to experience the Trinity: I encourage my children to speak to each of the three persons of the Trinity and to build a relationship with each of them together.
3. Focus your children on Christ: Jesus is God's image and the one who communicates God (John 1:18). As He is the only way to God, the more we know Christ, the more we will know His Father and His Spirit. In John's Gospel Jesus speaks of His relationship to His Father and His Spirit in the most simple yet profound words.
4. Pray for your children: Without the illumination of the Holy Spirit they will never understand God. They need their eyes opened, their minds renewed, and their hearts changed. No amount of our instruction can substitute for that. And while you're at it, pray for faith to believe that God can teach our children the most complex truths far more effectively than we can.
5. Excite our children: By the way you talk about God, worship God, and serve God, communicate to your children just how wonderful God is and how much you enjoy knowing Him and loving Him. If we are passionate and enthusiastic about knowing God, our children will catch that from us and be motivated to seek Him for themselves.

➤ Note: More than **60 passages** mention the 3 together (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)