



## WHAT IS THE TRINITY?

### THE DEFINITION:

"God eternally exists as three persons —  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Each person is fully God. There is one God."**

#### The challenge:

Three persons. Each fully God. But only one God.

Muslims say this is incoherent. Jews say this is polytheism.

The rest of the world says Christians can't do math.

## GOD'S CHARACTER VS. GOD'S NATURE

When we talk about the Trinity, we're really talking about who God is. And that means grappling with two very different things:

### CHARACTER

(communicable)

Love, justice, mercy, kindness.  
We can understand these  
because we share them.

### NATURE

(incommunicable)

Things that cannot be shared  
with humans, or fully  
understood — God's alone.

□ Nature = incommunicable. The only way to know God's nature is by what He reveals about Himself.

"...no one knows the Father except the Son  
and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

— Matthew 11:27

## THE TENSION

We barely know how to explain our own nature. And now we're trying to wrap our minds around the nature of God?

We have a gender — **God does not**

We have parents — **God does not**

We had a beginning — **God did not**

We were created — **God was not**

**He is categorically OTHER.**

"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;  
to search out a matter is the glory of kings."

— Proverbs 25:2

## WHAT THE BIBLE REVEALS

The Trinity isn't read into the Bible — it emerges from it. From Genesis to Revelation, the clues build until they ignite.

### OLD TESTAMENT

*Partial Revelation*

Elohim = plural noun,  
singular verb (Gen 1:1)

"Let us make man in  
our image" (Gen 1:26)

"Whom shall I send,  
and who will go for us?"  
(Isaiah 6:8)

### NEW TESTAMENT

*Full Revelation*

At baptism: Son in water,  
Spirit descending,  
Father speaking (Matt 3)

"I and the Father  
are One." (John 10:30)

Baptize "in the name of  
Father, Son, Spirit"  
(Matt 28:19)

## THE CREEDS — STATING THE MYSTERY

Every creaturely analogy for the Trinity fails — they commit a categorical error. No created thing can contain the uncreated God. The creeds don't explain the Trinity. They state it.

**All creaturely analogies fail. For instance:**

### CLOVER

Each leaf = of clover.  
But the Father isn't of God.

**Each person is FULLY God.**

### WATER

HO: solid, liquid, vapour.  
But not all three simultaneously.

**The Trinity always co-exists.**

### SUN

Sun, rays, warmth.  
Rays & warmth = derivatives.

**Jesus is not created.**

**A God you could explain in a children's illustration  
wouldn't be worth the ocean of worship He deserves.**

## THE NICENE CREED (325 AD)

A church leader named Arius taught that Jesus was exalted — but ultimately created. His line: "There was a time when the Son was not." The church called a council in modern-day Turkey to settle it — and determined otherwise.

*"...one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
begotten from the Father before all ages,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father."*

**— Nicene Creed, 325 AD**

α Begotten = same nature as the one who begets.

## ONE IOTA THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

The debate came down to one Greek word — and one letter. Arius said Jesus was of similar substance to the Father. Athanasius saw the catastrophic consequences and fought back.

### HOMO[i]OUSIOS

"similar substance"

Arius's position

**Jesus is lesser than God**

### HOMOOUSIOS

"same substance"

Athanasius's position

**Jesus is fully God**

One letter — the iota [ i ]

"It doesn't make one iota of difference."

This phrase comes from this exact moment in history.

**One iota made ALL the difference in the world.**

#### OLD TESTAMENT

Gen	1:1
Exo	1:1
Lev	1:1
Nu	1:1
Deu	1:1
Jos	1:1
Jud	1:1
Rut	1:1
1Sa	1:1
2Sa	1:1
1Ki	1:1
2Ki	1:1
1Ch	1:1
2Ch	1:1
1Pr	1:1
2Pr	1:1

## WHY IT MATTERS: ATHANASIUS'S CASE

Athanasius saw the cascading consequences of a lesser Jesus:

### THE ATONEMENT FAILS

The gap between holy God and sinful humanity is infinite.

A lesser being couldn't bridge it. A created Jesus would need saving too.

### WORSHIP = IDOLATRY

If Jesus isn't fully God, then worshipping Him is idolatry.

Worship in the Jewish world was reserved for God alone.

### JESUS IS A LIAR

Jesus claimed to be God. If He isn't,

He is a liar — and a lying, non-divine Jesus saves no one.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God."*

— John 1:1

### WHY DOES ANY OF THIS MATTER?

So what if God exists in three persons? How does this affect my Monday morning?

"...God is love."

— 1 John 4:8

- Not "God loves" (though He does).  
God IS love. It's a nature statement.

#### THE PROBLEM WITH "GOD IS LOVE"

Love needs someone to love.  
If God was alone before creation —  
who did He love? Was He not love until He created?

↓  
**The Trinity is the answer.**

#### AUGUSTINE'S INSIGHT:

The Holy Spirit is the bond of love between Father and Son.  
The way the Father loves the Son is through the Holy Spirit.

GOD TESTAMENT

Father	Abba
Son	Jesus
Holy Spirit	Paraclete
John	John
Paul	Paul
Hebrews	Hebrews
James	James
Peter	Peter
Revelation	Revelation
1 John	1 John
2 John	2 John
3 John	3 John
1 Peter	1 Peter
2 Peter	2 Peter
1 Timothy	1 Timothy
2 Timothy	2 Timothy
Titus	Titus
Philemon	Philemon
Colossians	Colossians
1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians
Galatians	Galatians
1 Timothy	1 Timothy
2 Timothy	2 Timothy
Titus	Titus
Philemon	Philemon
Colossians	Colossians
1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
1 Peter	1 Peter
2 Peter	2 Peter
1 John	1 John
2 John	2 John
3 John	3 John
Revelation	Revelation

### THE INVITATION

And here's where it gets personal. The same Spirit that bonded Father and Son for all eternity — is poured into you.

"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

— Romans 5:5

- By this same Spirit we cry "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15) — the intimate word for "dad" that Jesus used with the Father. You are caught up into that eternal fellowship of love.

The Father's way of saying to you:

**"I LOVE you!!!"**

Through faith in Jesus, the Spirit lets you yell back:

**"I LOVE you, too!!!"**

# THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

## Foundations of the Christian Faith

EPISODE 02: THE TRINITY

### COMING UP IN THIS SERIES:

**EP 03** Salvation Through Christ

**EP 04** The Church

**EP 05** The Final Judgement

**EP 06** More to Come...

#### OLD TESTAMENT

Gen. 1:1-2:3

Exo. 1:1-12:26

Lev. 1:1-27:34

Num. 1:1-36:13

Deut. 1:1-34:12

Jos. 1:1-24:31

Judg. 1:1-21:25

Ruth 1:1-4:18

1 Sam. 1:1-31:13

2 Sam. 1:1-21:9

1 Kgs. 1:1-22:53

2 Kgs. 1:1-25:22

1 Chr. 1:1-9:1

2 Chr. 1:1-35:26

Ezra 1:1-10:44

Neh. 1:1-13:22

Est. 1:1-10:3

Lam. 1:1-5:19

Jer. 1:1-52:34

Ezek. 1:1-48:35

Dan. 1:1-12:7

Hos. 1:1-14:10

Amos 1:1-9:15

Jonah 1:1-4:11

Mic. 1:1-7:10

Nah. 1:1-3:17

Hab. 1:1-3:19

Zeph. 1:1-3:20

Haggai 1:1-2:23

Zech. 1:1-14:21

Mal. 1:1-4:4

Ps. 1-150

Prt. 1:1-10:44

Prov. 1:1-31:9

Ecc. 1:1-12:14

Song 1:1-8:14

Isa. 1:1-66:24

Jer. 1:1-52:34

Ezek. 1:1-48:35

Dan. 1:1-12:7

Hos. 1:1-14:10

Amos 1:1-9:15

Jonah 1:1-4:11

### GO DEEPER:

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