**THE TRINITY**

**GOD EXISTS**

Belief in God - Australia

* In 1949, there was little disagreement: a Gallup Poll reported that 95 per cent of Australians believed in God.
* The 2009 Survey of Australian Attitudes conducted by the Australian National University among 1718 adult Australians found that just under half the population (47%) believed in God. (Christian Research Association).

Figure 1: Belief in God in the Australian community in 2009



HEBREWS 11:16

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. NIV

General beliefs of people are summed up in four groups:

MONOTHESTIC BELIEFS – A belief in *………. God*. Religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Baha’i (And variations of these)

PANOTHEISTIC BELIEFS – A belief in ………………..or that ……………..is god – e.g. trees etc. Religions: Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Unitarianism, New Age (Wicca)

AGNOSTIC BELIEFS – A belief that God ………………………………...

ATHIESTIC BELIEFS – God ……………exist – religions Buddhism, (Marxism)

**WHAT DO WE LEARN OF GOD FROM THE BIBLE?**

We learn of his nature, his attributes and we learn how he is three people in one trinity. We learn his name. All of the accounts in the Bible are to reveal God.

Doctrine of God is the heart of all of our belief. This is the very meaning of ‘Theology’ – knowing about God – knowledge of God.

THE TRINITY

We are going to explore:

* Where is it in the Bible?
* What is the trinity?
* How does it work?
* How does it make sense?
* How can you explain it to someone who doesn’t know about the Bible?

The trinity is three in one – separate but one – we refer to God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit as ‘the trinity’.

SO – WHERE IS IT IN THE BIBLE?

This is not a term seen in the Bible, but is the term used to describe the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“The Bible clearly speaks of: God the Son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit. But emphasizes that there is only ONE God.

God the Son (Jesus) is fully, completely God. God the Father is fully, completely God. And God the Holy Spirit is fully, completely God. Yet there is only one God. In our world, with our limited human experience, it's tough to understand the Trinity. But from the beginning we see God this way in Scripture.

FIRST MENTION PRINCIPLE

* The first time something is mentioned in the Bible also includes it’s full meaning.
* Also called the law of first mention
* So let’s look up the first time God is mentioned...

Notice the plural pronouns "us" and "our" in Genesis 1:26 -- Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness............"

[*http://www.everystudent.com/forum/trinity.html*](http://www.everystudent.com/forum/trinity.html)

These are some other Scripture that shows God is one, in three persons:

* "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" (Deut. 6:4)
* "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19)
* Jesus said: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)
* "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)
* [Jesus speaking to His disciples] "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you." ... "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him." (John 14:16-17, 23)
* May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all ([2 Corinthians 13:14](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Corinthians%2013.14)).
* To God’s elect. . .who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood (1 Peter 1:1-2)
* There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:4-6)

Other scriptures to examine – Rom 1[4:1](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ephesians%203.14-19)7-18; 15:16:1; [Col 1:6-8](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Colossians%201.6-8); [1Thess 1:3-5](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/1Thessalonians%201.3-5); [2 Thess 2:13-14](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/2%20Thessalonians%202.13-14); [Titus 3:4-6](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Titus%203.4-6); 1 Cor 2:2-5, 6:11, 12:4-6; 2 Cor 1:21-22, Gal 4:6, Eph 2:18-22,3:14-19

Many explain this trinity by likening the three expressions of God’s personality, to:

The sun

Water, ice and steam

An egg

An apple

Our body

A triangle

Examples that do not help as they do not describe our one God in essence or existence.

The sun remains, and heat and light go out from it

An egg – shell, white and yolk – or an apple – skin, flesh and seed - but they can’t exist apart from being in the one form

Water – liquid, ice and steam… closer – but they can’t exist all at the same time in one form.

Our body is a unified earth suit that carries our soul and spirit. But we are not three separate beings

HOW DOES THE TRINITY WORK?

God names himself – “I AM”

### [Exodus 3:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A14&version=ESV) ESV God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

Jesus equals himself to God and states [John 8:58](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+8%3A58&version=ESV) ESV “Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.””

Jesus is called the creator in Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:10-12

When the Word came in the flesh, though he was fully divine, he voluntarily set aside the position of divinity. Jesus, "who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!" ([Philippians 2:6-8](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Philippians%202.6-8)).

The Holy Spirit is equal to God

### [1 Corinthians 2:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+2%3A11&version=ESV) ESV “For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God”

[Acts 5:3-4](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Acts%205.3-4) calls the Holy Spirit God: "Then Peter said, `Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.' "

REVELATION OF GOD AND HIS NATURE

Personality of God revealed in three people

WEEK TWO - THE TRINITY

False doctrine regarding the trinity

The three persons of the trinity are agreed to be coequal and consubstantial – this word means – ‘of the same substance or essence’. This can lead us to think of the three being three separate divine beings. But this is not the revelation of the Bible. There is just one God, not three. This is a mystery and it is doubtful that we can fully understand this until we live in his presence for evermore.

Because of this over the centuries some thinkers have given rise to heresies that have led to further straying from good doctrine.

UNITARIANISM

Accepts the existence of one God but denies three entities. They maintain that Jesus is ‘the son’ of God but not God himself. They see him as being an inspired man, and human, rather than divine. This belief began in the 16th century. It holds that God exists in one person only. It denies the divinity of Jesus.

Groups that hold to this are: The Jehovah’s witnesses, Christadelphians and some liberal theological people who can be found in some mainline churches.

Many Unitarians are also Universalists, believing that God will save everyone, and that no one will go to hell. Most Unitarians would be described as being ‘liberal’ in their theology.

ARIANISM

Began with  [Arius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius) ([c.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circa) AD 250–336) from Egypt. This belief was created because of a translation using the Greek word – ‘homoousios.’ This word translated meant ‘being of the same substance or nature. Arius however, taught that Jesus was subordinate to God the Father.

Arians preferred the word ‘homoiousios’ A word that added just one tiny letter ‘i’ which changed the meaning to ‘similar in nature’. This denied the divinity of Christ. This led to a belief that Jesus was not eternal God, but a created being.

The Council of Nicea (325), attended by some 220 bishops, condemned this heresy and gave us the creed which is now called the Nicene Creed.

Today Arianism is taught by, [Unitarians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarianism), [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) and [Jehovah's Witnesses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses). And also those who are connected to New Age religions often teach this. Jesus is seen to be a good and moral man, nothing more.

SABELLIANISM –

Sabellianism is the belief that God the Father, God the Son and the [Holy Spirit](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Holy_Spirit) are three modes or aspects of God. It can also be known as ‘modalism’. The Father is the mode that created man; the Son is the mode that redeemed man; the Holy Spirit is the mode that sanctified man.

Two of the larger American Pentecostal churches support this thought: Oneness Apostolic Pentecostal and United Pentecostal Church International denominations. Some of these believers in other parts of the world are known as ‘Jesus Only’ as they do not see any need to pray to the Father or baptize in the name of the Father or Holy Spirit, since the fullness of God dwells in Jesus. So, they only concentrate on Jesus.

TRITHEISIM

Tritheism says there are three gods. This is taught by several polytheistic religions who place their triad at the top of their pantheon, such as Hinduism (Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva) and Egyptianism (Osiris, Isis and Horus). But: Scripture says there is only one God.

### **Overview**

1. God is three persons (Mt 3:13-17)
2. Each person is fully God (Phil 2; Acts 5:3-4)
3. There is one God (Mk 12:29)

1. God is three persons (Distinction) Deny this Truth: Modalism

2. Each Person is Fully God (Deity) Deny this Truth: Arianism

3. There is One God (Unity) Deny this Truth: Tritheism

## The Glorious Triune God

The trinity is a mystery that cannot be fully comprehended. The trinity is not a contradiction, but a paradox. God is much bigger and much greater than we can understand. The teaching of the trinity is clearly taught in Scripture and must be preserved as such. Here many of the creeds help us in clearly articulating the trinity.

We worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity, neither blending their persons nor dividing their essence. (Athanasian Creed)

Who then do we pray to?

We can pray to Jesus: **John 14:14 (14)** You **may ask me** for anything in my name, and I will do it.

We don’t pray to humans who are now in heaven – not Mary, not our grandfather or mother. They were human.

However, Jesus is also God:

[1 Timothy 2:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3A5&version=NIV) - For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus. We are can pray and call on the name of Jesus: Jn 14:14; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 5:19; Acts 8:22&24, Rev 22:20, 2 Cor 12:7-9, Acts 7:54-60; Acts 8:241 Jn 5:11-15, Acts 1:24; Heb 7:25

Can we pray directly to the Holy Spirit?

There is no reason why you could not as the Holy Spirit is also God. Nevertheless, we never see an instance in the Bible where anyone prays to the Holy Spirit.  Why is that?  The answer is that the Holy Spirit does not bear witness of Himself.  He bears witness of the Son ([John 15:26](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2015.26)).

However, the Holy Spirit is with us to help us in our prayers to the Father:

And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (NASB) Romans 8:26-27

Jesus taught us to pray to the Father – the Lord’s prayer: [Matthew 6:9-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A9-13&version=NIV)

“This, then, is how you should pray: “‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. ...

THE FATHER

WHAT ABOUT MOTHER? IS GOD FEMALE?

Feminist thinking insists that God is female.

* Genesis 1:26-27 says that God made male and female, in his image – so both man and woman are part of his image.
* El-Shaddai – means nurturer – it is a feminine characteristic. And God is sometimes portrayed with these characteristics:
* Is 42:14 – God understands the travailing woman
* Is 49:15 – here he talks of how a woman cannot forget her suckling child and that God feels the same toward Israel.

But although this is so, God is never referred to by a *…………………* pronoun, nor addressed as ‘mother’. His relationship with mankind is as Father

The cultures of the Old Testament time, often had predominant female goddesses, such as Asherah and later Greek and Roman goddesses such as Aphrodite and Dianna

* Jesus taught us to address, ‘our Father who is in heaven… Matt 6:9
* Jesus related to God as Father so we accept that God reveals himself to us primarily in masculine terms.
* Spoken of in the Old Testament as Father/creator
* Mal 2:10**-** Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?

# Isaiah 64:8 (NIV)  - Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Many Christians find it hard to draw near to God as ‘father’. So often people will hide from God when they fail, rather than running to him.

Revealed in his nature by the son, Jesus who came to live amongst us as a man in full human form.

THE SON

[John 6:46](http://biblehub.com/john/6-46.htm) No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.

[John 8:19](http://biblehub.com/john/8-19.htm) Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

John 14:7 – 9 If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Jesus, himself we can see in the pages of the gospels. We can relate to him as he was fully human and fully God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the tri-unity of God. The work that God does, such as when he created the world, is by the Holy Spirit (Job 33:4, Ps 104:30). The miracles Jesus performed were done by the Spirit. (Matt 12:28) All the works done by the apostles and by Paul were through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom 15:18-19

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is not just a vague ‘force’ He is a divine person, a being with a mind, emotions, and a will. While Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, it is the Holy Spirit that we have with us here and now.

Summary –

There is no reference to ‘the trinity’ in scripture, but scripture shows God to be three distinct, eternally, co-existing persons – equal in sovereignty and authority