



Relationships among the Three in the Divine Trinity

Three Gods or One? A Succinct Characterization of the Triune God

In this section we will describe, within the scope that the Bible allows, the infinitely mysterious triune relationship that exists among the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Main

Relationships
Among

As Life

Processed &
Consummated

Heresies

God Is One.
God Is Three.

Deut. 6:4;

Matt. 28:19

The Bible reveals emphatically and repeatedly that God is one. First Corinthians 8:4 proclaims that “there is no God but one.” God Himself declares in Isaiah 45:5, “I am Jehovah, and there is no one else; Besides Me there is no God.” Yet throughout **Scripture** this unique, singular God also attests to His own plurality. He said in Genesis 1:26, “Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness” (italics added). Isaiah 6:8 testifies to the same plurality: “Whom shall I send? Who will go for *Us*?” Though this plural aspect is alluded to in the Old Testament, not until the New Testament is God explicitly revealed in His Trinity. The clearest proclamation appears in Matthew 28:19, where the Lord Jesus charged the eleven apostles to disciple and baptize the nations “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” On one hand, the use of the singular noun “name” in this verse, rather than the plural “names,” denotes that the Three are the one unique God into whom the

discipled nations are baptized. On the other hand, the specific enumeration of all three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—underscores Their mutual distinction.

Without a doubt, the divine Father is God. In Ephesians 1:17 Paul prays to “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,” who is the “one God and Father of all” (Eph. 4:6). The Bible also reveals that the Son is God. Addressing the Son, Hebrews 1:8 states, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” Initially, the Word, who was God, became flesh in the man Jesus (John 1:1,14). Throughout His human living, the man Jesus was the very God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:15-16). After **Christ’s death and resurrection**, Thomas worshipped Him confessing, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Now, as the ascended Christ who is over all, He is “God blessed forever” (Rom. 9:5). Furthermore, the Spirit is God, as indicated in Acts 5:3-4, where Ananias was told that in deceiving the Holy Spirit, he was lying to God. Yet the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, though distinct, are not three separate Gods. In the words of the Athanasian Creed, “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God.”

The Father Is God.
The Son Is God.
The Spirit Is God.

Eph. 1:17;

Heb. 1:8;

Acts 5:3-4

The Father Is Eternal.
The Son Is Eternal.
The Spirit Is Eternal.

Isa. 9:6;

Heb. 7:3;

Heb. 9:14

All Three of the Trinity are eternal. The Father, Son, and Spirit do not exist in three temporary, successive modes or stages. According to Isaiah 9:6, the Father is the eternal Father. Additionally, the Son, as the real Melchisedec in Hebrews 7:3, has “neither beginning of days nor end of life.” He is our High Priest perpetually. He is forever the same, and His years will not fail (Heb. 1:12). Finally, it was through the eternal Spirit

that Christ offered Himself on the cross without blemish to God (Heb. 9:14).

That the Three of the Godhead are eternal implies that They coexist from eternity past through eternity future. Many verses demonstrate the coexistence among the Three of the Triune God. In one of the most graphic, Matthew's account of Christ's baptism, as Jesus the Son went up from the water, the Spirit of God descended upon Him as a dove and the Father testified from the heavens of His beloved Son (3:16-17). This scene clearly portrays the simultaneous existence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Further, in John 14:16-17 the Son promised to ask the Father to send the Spirit of reality as the second Comforter; the Father answered the Son's prayer by sending the Spirit (John 14:26).

The Father,
the Son,
and
the Spirit
Coexist and
Coinhere.

John 14:26;
15:26

The Father and
the Son Are
Inseparable.

John 14:10-11;
8:29; 16:32

Though the Three are distinct in their eternal coexistence, They are by no means three separate Gods. Rather, They coinhere mutually and inseparably; that is, They indwell one another. Throughout the Gospels, the Lord Jesus took many opportunities to reveal to the disciples His mysterious coinherent relationship with the Father. For example, in John 14:11, the Lord responded to Philip's desire to see the Father by assuring him of Their intrinsic oneness: "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me." Thus the Son, while physically on the earth, mystically dwelt in the Father and the Father in the Son. In addition, the Lord declared in John 6:46, "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except Him who is *from* God, He has seen the Father." The Greek preposition *para*, translated "from" in this verse, literally means "from with." Hence, the Son sent *from* God was simultaneously sent *with* God. The Lord testified of this intimate inseparability: "He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone" (John 8:29).

John 14 also witnesses to the same inseparable coinherence between the Son and the Spirit. In verses 16 and 17, the Son asks the Father to send the *Spirit* of reality to abide with and in the disciples. Yet in verse 18, the Son promises that *He Himself* is the

One who will come to the disciples. The Spirit's coming to the disciples after the resurrection of Christ was therefore actually the Son's coming. This is confirmed in verse 26 where the Spirit sent by the Father came in the Son's name. Since the Son's name is equivalent to His person, the Holy Spirit's coming in the Son's name is tantamount to the Son's coming. Hence, when the Holy Spirit comes, the Son comes ([Witness Lee, Truth, 20](#)).

The Son
and the
Spirit Are
Inseparable.

[John 14:16-18](#)

[2 Cor. 3:17](#)

The Father and
the Spirit Are
Inseparable.

[John 15:26;](#)

[Matt. 10:20](#)

John's Gospel goes similarly to show that the Father is inseparable from the Spirit. In 15:26, the same Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, was to be sent to the believers by the Son from the Father. Again, both occurrences of the preposition "from" in this verse derive from the Greek *para*, literally "from with." Hence the Spirit who was sent to us from the Father and proceeds from the Father was also sent *with* the Father and proceeds *with* the Father.

By juxtaposing John 14:26 and 15:26, it becomes apparent that the Spirit was sent by both the Son and the Father; in addition, the Spirit who was sent from the Father came not only in the Son's name but also came with the Father. These verses highlight the inseparability of the Three of the Triune God.

One can't help marveling at the mysterious oneness of the Father, Son, and Spirit, especially as manifested by the Lord Jesus in His human living. Yet the Lord prayed before His impending crucifixion, "That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me" (John 17:21). This prayer clearly conveys the Triune God's desire that man share and enter into the coinhering oneness of the Divine Trinity. Through Christ's death and resurrection, the Triune God now dwells in His believers (Eph. 4:6) to be their oneness with Him and with one another (John 14:20; 17:21). Ultimately, God desires that all His believers be built up into the one Body of Christ as the house of God to express the oneness of the Triune God.

[Main](#) | [Relationships Among](#) | [As Life](#) | [Processed & Consummated](#) | [Heresies](#) | [Quotes](#) | [Links](#)

Copyright ©2000, 2002. [Christian Websites](#). All Rights Reserved.