

One God, Three Persons

What the Scriptures Say

God is one. But three persons are called God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each has different work. They are never divided.

1. God Is One

- **Deuteronomy 6:4** — *"The LORD our God is one LORD."*

An important language detail: the Hebrew word for "one" here is *Echad*. *Echad* frequently denotes a composite unity — a single entity made up of more than one part. In Genesis 2:24, a husband and wife become *"one (echad) flesh,"* and in Ezra 3:1, the assembly gathered together *"as one (echad) man."* This differs from the Hebrew word *Yachid*, which means an absolute, singular mathematical one. The oneness of Deuteronomy 6:4 is not the oneness that rules out plurality within God — it is the oneness Scripture uses elsewhere for a unity that holds more than one within it.

- **Isaiah 44:6** — *"I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."*
- **Isaiah 45:5** — *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me."*
- **Mark 12:29** — *"The Lord our God is one Lord."*
- **1 Corinthians 8:6** — *"One God, the Father... one Lord Jesus Christ."*
- **James 2:19** — *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well."*

Already Plural, Before the New Testament Begins

Long before the New Testament names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God revealed a plurality within His single existence.

- **Genesis 1:26** — *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...'"*
- **Genesis 11:7** — *"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language..."*
- **Isaiah 6:8** — *"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'"*

The oneness of Section 1 and the plurality here are not in tension. The rest of Scripture names who this plurality is.

2. Three Are Called God

Father

- **Galatians 1:1** — *"God the Father, who raised him from the dead."*
- **Philippians 1:2** — *"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father."*

- John 6:27 — *"Him hath God the Father sealed."*

Son

- John 1:1 — *"The Word was with God, and the Word was God."*
- John 20:28 — *"My Lord and my God."*
- Titus 2:13 — *"The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."*
- Hebrews 1:8 — *"Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."*
- Colossians 2:9 — *"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

Holy Spirit

- Acts 5:3-4 — *"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."*
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 — *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"*

3. Three Persons, Together, at Once

- Matthew 3:16-17 — *"The Spirit of God descending like a dove... a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son."*

Son in the water. Spirit descending. Father speaking from heaven. Same moment.

- 2 Corinthians 13:14 — *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."*
- Ephesians 4:4-6 — *"One body, and one Spirit... One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all."*

4. One Name, Three Persons

- Matthew 28:19 — *"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*

One name — not three. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share it.

5. Different Work, Perfect Unity

- John 3:16 — *"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."*
- Philippians 2:8 — *"He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death."*
- John 16:13 — *"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."*
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 — *"Diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... differences of administrations, but the same Lord... diversities of operations, but it is the same God."*
- John 17:21 — *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."*

Father sends. Son obeys. Spirit teaches. The same unity Jesus prays for us.

6. One God, Three Persons — How?

This is where people get lost. Here it is, plain.

God is one in being. Three in person. Not three Gods. Not one God wearing three different masks at three different times. Three real, distinct persons, sharing one undivided divine being.

The Bible has a word for this. Godhead.

- **Colossians 2:9** — *"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*
- **Acts 17:29** — *"We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone."*
- **Romans 1:20** — *"His eternal power and Godhead."*

One Godhead. Three persons within it. Hold both. Drop neither.

The persons are distinct

- **John 14:16** — *"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter."*

The Greek word behind *"another"* here is *allos* — *another of the exact same kind* (not *heteros*, another of a different kind). Jesus, one divine Helper, promises *another* divine Helper, distinct from Himself but of the same kind. The word itself carries both truths this section is making: distinct, and fully God.

The Son prays to the Father. The Father sends the Spirit. One does not pray to himself. One does not send himself. Three persons act toward one another.

Yet each is fully God

Go back to Section 2. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each called God in the plain text of Scripture. Not part God. Not less God. Fully God, each one.

Common illustrations fall short

Water as ice, liquid, and steam. An egg as shell, white, and yolk. A three-leaf clover. These are common, and they are wrong. They picture one thing taking three forms, one after another. But Matthew 3:16-17 shows Father, Son, and Spirit present at the same moment, not taking turns. Throw the illustrations out. Trust the text.

The Bible does not diagram how one being holds three persons. It simply shows us, again and again, that it does. We teach what is written and stop where it stops (see Section 7 below).

7. Three Persons, Each Called He

Scripture does not leave the persons of the Godhead genderless or impersonal. Each is addressed with the masculine pronoun, He, not It. This matters. He is personal. It is a force.

The Father is He

- **Matthew 6:9** — *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."*
- **John 4:23** — *"The Father seeketh such to worship him."*

The Son is He

The Son is not only addressed as He. He entered the world as a man.

- **Luke 1:31** — *"Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS."*
- **Galatians 4:4** — *"God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."*
- **1 Timothy 2:5** — *"One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*

The Holy Spirit is He

This one surprises people. In Greek, the word for spirit, pneuma, is grammatically neuter. Grammar alone would call for it. Scripture breaks that pattern on purpose.

- **John 14:26** — *"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost... he shall teach you all things."*
- **John 15:26** — *"The Comforter is come... he shall testify of me."*
- **John 16:13-14** — *"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth... he shall glorify me."*

Four times in a row, John reaches past ordinary grammar to call the Spirit He. That is not an accident of translation. It is the text insisting that the Spirit is a person to be known, not a power to be used.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three persons. Each one He. Not roles. Not titles borrowed for convenience. This is how God has revealed himself, and we receive it as revealed, not as explained.

What We Don't Say

The Bible never explains exactly how. We teach what's written. Where it's silent, we stay silent.

- **Deuteronomy 29:29** — *"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us."*