

## Why Christians Believe God is Triune

There are two traditional responses in Christian worship that demonstrate the Christian belief that the one God is triune - God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These two musical expressions are a doxology, that is, in praise of the triune God:

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above you heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Spirit)*

A newer version in our **Praise! Hymnal** reads:

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
in heaven above and earth below;  
one God, three Persons, we adore —  
to him be praise for evermore!*

Perhaps you have heard more frequently the Gloria Patra:

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen, amen.*

The Scripture verses that seem to be expressing this truth most concisely are:  
the Commission of Christ Jesus to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20:

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

And the Apostolic benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14 reads:

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

These verses do require a belief that God is Three in One and One in Three. They can really be understood in no other way.

But it may come as a new thought to you that the primary reason Christians believe in the Trinity is because of some statements Jesus made in the Upper Room discourse, which he gave to his apostles before his crucifixion.

By the term "Trinity" we mean that the One eternal living God exists in a fellowship, a communion of interpersonal centers of awareness. Jesus expresses these facts in his own words about how he and the Father and the Spirit relate to one another and to us. A central truth in these words can also be found in Jesus' words recorded in Matthew 11:27,

*All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him.*

### **Let's listen to Jesus words spoken in the Upper Room.**

From these words we come to understand this central truth of the triune nature of almighty God. To know God is to have eternal life and to know him we must know him in the Son by the Holy Spirit.

### **John 14:5-15, 18-24, 26**

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How are we able to know the way?" <sup>6</sup> ***Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you know him and have seen him."***

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Am I with you so long a time and you have not known me, Philip? ***The one who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' <sup>10</sup> Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from myself, but the Father residing in me does his works. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;*** but if not, believe because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in me, the works that I am doing he will do also, and he will do greater works than these because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And *whatever* you ask in my name, I will do this, in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name, I will do *it*."

<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> ***And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, in order that he may be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth, whom the world is not able to receive, because it does not see him or know him. You know him, because he resides with you and will be in you.***

Notice here that Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "another Advocate." The word in the original Greek language is "paraclete" which means, according to the Greek Analytical Lexicon (p. 303), "one called or sent to assist another, an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another... Generally it means "one present to render various beneficial service, and thus "Paraclete," whose influence and operation were to compensate for the departure of Christ himself." This word is also variously translated as Comforter, Helper, Friend, Counselor, Intercessor.

Jesus continues in John 14:18ff:

<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little *time* and the world will see me no longer, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> ***On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> The one who has my commandments and keeps them—that one is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him.***"

<sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, why is it that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “***If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will take up residence with him.*** <sup>24</sup> ***The one who does not love me does not keep my words, and the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father’s who sent me.***

John 14:<sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name—that one will teach you all *things*, and will remind you of everything that I said to you.

### **John 15:26**

<sup>26</sup> “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father—that one will testify about me.

### **John 16:7-15, 26**

<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: <sup>9</sup> About sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; <sup>11</sup> and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

<sup>12</sup> “I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you.

<sup>26</sup> On that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf. <sup>27</sup> For the Father himself loves you, because ***you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.*** <sup>28</sup> ***I have gone out from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father.***”

### **John 17:1-5, 24**

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said these *things*, and lifting up his eyes to heaven he said, “Father, the hour has come! Glorify your Son, in order that your Son may glorify you— <sup>2</sup> just as you have given him authority over all flesh, in order that he would give eternal life to them—everyone whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup> Now ***this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*** <sup>4</sup> I have glorified you on earth *by* completing the work that you have given me *to do*. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, you glorify me *at your side* with the glory that I had *at your side* before the world existed.

<sup>24</sup> “Father, *those* whom you have given to me—I want that those also may be with me where I am, in order that they may see my glory that you have given me because ***you loved me before the foundation of the world.***

I have read you some rather extensive portions from chapters 14-17 in John's Gospel but I hope you are beginning to grasp something of the mutual work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in accomplishing the saving work of God among his people

Let me give you some Observations, some summary statements, based on some of these words of Jesus to his disciples:

1<sup>st</sup>, The Father and the Son have a **shared and mutual love** for one another from eternity:

John 17:24 - *"Father, those whom you have given to me—I want that those also may be with me where I am, in order that they may see my glory that you have given me because **you loved me before the foundation of the world.**"*

And they share a **mutual glory - the Father is glorified in the Son.**

**John 14:13** - *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

2<sup>nd</sup>

**The only access we have to the Father, to God is by, through and in the Son Christ Jesus.**

**John 14:6** - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**3<sup>rd</sup>, There is a mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son.** John 14:11: <sup>11</sup> *"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves."*

Another passage in John that relates this truth is John 1:18 <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time; the one and only, God, the one who is in the bosom of the Father—that one has made *him* known. (Lexham English Bible) <sup>18</sup> *No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.* (ESV)

**4<sup>th</sup>, To see Christ is to see the Father** because Christ is the revelation of the Father and shares the same essence and *attributes as, in fact, do all the three persons of the one God.*

John 14:9 - Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

**5<sup>th</sup>, The only way to know the Father is to know the Son** because by the Holy Spirit Jesus reveals the nature and attributes of the Father to us.

**6<sup>th</sup>, Jesus as the ascended LORD is made known to us by the Holy Spirit.**

**John 16:7** - <sup>7</sup> *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.* <sup>8</sup> *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:* <sup>9</sup> *concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;* <sup>10</sup> *concerning righteousness, because I go to the*

*Father, and you will see me no longer;*<sup>11</sup> *concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

**7<sup>th</sup>, Plural pronouns such as “we,” “us,” and “our” are used of the Father and Son when there is an emphasis on what they mutually do together:**

John 14:23 - <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we** will come to him and make **our** home with him. In addition, the masculine personal pronoun is used of the Holy Spirit.

These are some of the observations that compel us to understand God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hear the words of this hymn that express this glorious truth and bow in worship before Him.

Closing Hymn:

Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit,  
Three we name You,  
While in essence only One,  
Undivided God we claim You,  
And adoring bend the knee,  
While we own the mystery.

Wayne Conrad  
Dallas, TX 75228  
June15, 2022