

What's the deal with the Trinity? I don't understand.

Understanding that God is Three, but just One God is a mind-bender. I liken it to explaining the concept of “*having a bad hair day to my dog.*” She’s looking at me...may tilt her head as if to say, “Interesting,” but it’s really beyond her ability to fully comprehend. So it is when humans try to understand a 3 in 1 God.

First, the idea that something can have three different forms but still be *one thing* is H₂O. It can be liquid, steam or ice, but it’s still water.

God is three forms: God the Father, Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit.

A common misunderstanding is that Jesus and the Holy Spirit didn’t come into being until the New Testament. The truth is, from the beginning we had ONE God in three forms in a loving community within Himself.

Let’s see if we can biblically place all 3 at the “scene of the crime?”

Genesis 1:1 says “*In the beginning, God (the Father) created the heavens and the earth.*”

God the Father, there at the begining? Check!

Colossians 1:15-17 is a great comprehensive image of Jesus & also places Him at the beginning:

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him. He existed before anything else, and He holds all creation together.”

Jesus? Check!

Genesis 1:2 “*The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface.*”

Holy Spirit? Check! So—we’ve placed all three parts of God at the beginning of it all. Father, Son, Holy Spirit—the TRINITY—three persons, yet ONE God.

But every once in a while some *wisenheimer* will say, “The word ‘trinity’ is not in the Bible.”

That’s correct. Also just for the record, the word “Bible” isn’t in the Bible. Neither are the words: *atheist*, *rapture*, and *divinity*—but they are all clearly evidenced in Scripture.

In the New Testament, we really see Scriptures where the three parts of God come together in one biblical thought:

2 Cor. 13:14 ***May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.***

Jude 1:20-21 *But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love.*

I want to read, what I think (actually what the Church Fathers & theologians think!) is the best definition of the Trinity which is ***The Athanasian Creed***.

It was written around 500 AD and it was the first creed written by our ancient Church fathers to define the Trinity---to declare the 3 in 1 truth about God. This creed is the bedrock for the majority of Western Christianity in the last 1,500 years.

"Creeds" came about when people started taking the Bible out of context—focusing on some parts while ignoring others. Creeds declared Truth about God and the faith based on the WHOLE of God's Word, rather than isolated passages.

The Athanasian Creed (not in its entirety)

"We worshiping one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity; we distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide the substance. (in other words) [Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct persons still they] have *one* divinity, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty.

What the Father is, the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is. [Each, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is uncreated, has immensity, is eternal, is omnipotent (all-powerful), is God, is Lord, yet there is] but *one eternal being*...one God...one Lord...

The Father is not made by anyone, nor created by anyone, nor generated by anyone. The Son is not made nor created, but He is generated from the Father alone. The Holy Spirit is not made nor created, nor generated, but proceeds from the Father and the Son...

In this Trinity...there is nothing *greater*, nothing *less* than anything else. But the entire three persons are co-eternal and co-equal_with one another...

We believe and profess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man. As God He was begotten of the substance of the Father before time;

as man He was born in time of the substance of His mother. He is perfect God and He is perfect man, with a rational soul and human flesh. He is equal to the Father in His divinity but is inferior to the Father in His humanity. Although He is God and man, He is not two but one Christ...because he is one person."

And just want to wrap this with 2 quick things:

1.) The Trinity—the idea that all three are God, yet there is ONE--- is what separates Christianity from other religions. A lot of people say all religions are the same—and at a glance they appear that way...

e.g. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Muslims ALL have Jesus Christ in them. But only Christianity believes Jesus was the sinless Son of God, both divine and holy. And this is HUGE, because if He was just a man, how could any man pay for the sins of all mankind? The Trinity is a BIG deal. It is the cornerstone—the bedrock of our faith!

2.) If you would like to have a better understanding of how to relate with our God that is three, but One. Pick up the book, *The Shack*. <http://theshackbook.com/>

Which is more important to God? The time I spend serving Him, or personal time with Him?

The quick answer is, “YES” ;-). Let’s look at Jesus’ life to get an answer:

Luke 5:16 says, “***But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.***”

So quiet time alone with the Father was very important to Jesus.

And then **Matthew 20:28** says, “***For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.***”

So in that passage and all through the Gospels we see in the way that Jesus lived, serving was very important to Him.

And I will say based on Scripture and personal experience that **we cannot separate these two biblical values; being w/God *and* serving.**

[1 Corinthians 13:1-3](#) says (paraphrase) “Hey, I don’t care how gifted, talented and amazing you are—if you are bringing your mind-blowing abilities to serve people---but you aren’t doing it with the aroma of love—it’s worthless—and it’s sin!”

So in serving, LOVE is the deal. Love makes or breaks our serving.

And where do we get the ability to love? From God.

The Bible tells us that as we hangout with God and His Word, the Holy Spirit generates the [fruit of the spirit](#) in us—which is LOVE (joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.)

So again, we can’t manufacture love---we get it from God. It comes from being with God.

And if we serve without making time for the discipline of withdrawing to be with God. Our serving will sour. Just for example...

Here’s a sign that you’re serving, but not being with God enough:

During or after your serving, you’ll wonder why people didn’t notice *you* more...*appreciate* you more...*applaud* you more. You walk away thinking about you and your part—rather than the people you served and served with.

When I come to serve without being w/God, my focus will eventually become ME.

When I come to serve when I have been w/God, my focus will be YOU and the others I’m serving.

God asks us to ***both***—in essence He says, “Be with Me so you’re in the right frame of mind—have the right heart-- to be with them!”

Last thought: when we serve, we should be serving ***with Him***. (These two things are not mutually exclusive.)

If our serving is something we do on our own, we’ve missed the boat—we’ve compartmentalized God---we’ve left him at the quiet time place instead of asking Him along. God wants to BE with us and work THROUGH us in every part of our lives. Amen?

Why does God allow his children, whom we say he loves, suffer horrible situations?

When people ask, “Why does God allow this bad thing to happen?” (not trying to be condescending...or insensitive...)The question reveals a lack of understanding about our world, us, the evil one, and God.

The world we live in is fallen (imperfect). There is God, free will, sin, and Satan in it. And free will, sin, and evil will account for a lot of unspeakable things. Things like:

The Spanish Inquisition

The Crusades

The Holocaust

Columbine High School Shootings

Flying passenger planes into the Twin Towers

The point-blank shooting of 10 Amish children in their own school

Child abuse...spousal abuse...substance abuse...

In the midst of all the junk---God *is* God. He is loving. All-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere. But on this earth He grants us *free will*, and so in the Garden of Eden, through the lies of the evil one, we (mankind) let loose sin.

And we might say, “*Why doesn’t God just keep bad things from happening? Why doesn’t He just control all that bad stuff?*”

To control all the bad stuff, He’d have to *control all the people*—which would take away free will. And if you take away free will, you take away LOVE. Follow me on this...

God is love. And we all naturally crave love. And the truth about love is it needs free will to work. If we are controlled all the time, it isn’t love anymore; it’s manipulation, control.

Free will is what gives love it’s potency. And sadly free will allows people the freedom to do despicable things—that sometimes affect us.

(new thought)

And sometimes we simply have false expectations about God.

Through our lack of biblical understanding & the urging of the evil one, we can think that God promises to keep all bad things from happening. And He CAN (& in fact we never know what He has kept from happening, because it never happened...).

But when we read the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation: free will, sin, and evil and are smashing against good, often innocent people.

But though it all, God is there. God was with them and God is with us. Through the Bible we see that God promises to be our strength, our hope, our peace, our endurance, our healing, our provider, our shepherd, our salvation, our holiness, and our victory!

Jesus said ***“The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for He has anointed Me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”*** **Luke 4:18-19**

God is bigger, more powerful than any catastrophe. No tragedy can stop our Almighty God from working through it and working in us. The question for us is, will we focus on the tragedy or focus on God?

The evil one will work on us to obsess about the tragedy and make us question why God would let this happen.

The truth is, these things happen—God is not surprised by them---He’s here for us—and waiting for us to turn to Him in them.

Let me illustrate this in a true story I mentioned earlier:

(paraphrase from the Prologue of [The Faith by C. Colson](#)) (great book!)

On October 5, 2006 in Nickel Mines Pennsylvania, Charles Roberts IV, a 32 year old milk man---in a premeditated cold-blooded morning, packed up his 12 gauge shotgun, 9mm handgun, .30-06 rifle, 600 rounds of ammo, a stun gun and two knives.

He headed off to a local one room Amish school house. (pacifists) He barged in and ordered the teacher, male students, a pregnant woman and three mothers with infants, to go outside.

He barricaded himself in and bound the hands and legs of the remaining 10 girls ages 6 to 16.

Long story short is he shot all 10 girls at point blank range. He killed five innocent girls. He killed himself before the police could get to him.

Once again, between free will, sin, and Satan, hell will break loose once in a while, in our lives.

But if we will focus on God—even in this kind of unspeakable event—He will reveal His power, grace, glory and love.

Afterward, the entire Amish community chose God’s grace and forgiveness--they insisted on forgiving the shooter. And because God says to mourn with those who mourn, Amish men and women attended the shooter’s funeral. And they invited the shooter’s widow and children to attend the girls’ funeral.

And as money poured in from people wanting to help with the medical bills of the wounded girls, the Amish leaders insisted that a portion be set aside to take care of the shooters widow and 3 children.

Bad things will happen to us. But if we will focus on Him, He will always shine His glory through it. If not on earth, in heaven. (And our sovereign and just God will judge the shooter.)