

# Salvation in the Trinity

John 3:1—17

## Introduction

The **Athanasian Creed** begins: *Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.* In other words, a person cannot be saved unless he or she believes in the doctrine of the Trinity. Someone may say, “But I thought I only had to believe that Jesus is God’s Son and that He died for me. After all, Paul told the Philippian Jailer, ‘*Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved*’ (**Acts 16:31**). John says in his Gospel: *these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing have life in His name* (**John 20:31**). Peter told the Jewish leaders, ‘*There is no other name under heaven given among men by which you may be saved*’ (**Acts 4:12**). What about all these Bible references?” And I would answer, “Let’s take a closer look.”

## The Trinity at Creation

Though the word “Trinity” never appears in Scripture, the whole Bible teaches the doctrine. The first appearance of the Trinity is found in the creation account of **Genesis 1**. Most people think of the Father as Creator. Yet **Genesis 1:2** tells us that *the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters*. Eight times we read the phrase, “*God said*” (**Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26**). Compare that with what John says (read **John 1:1—3**).

## The Trinity at Jesus’ Baptism

Another time we see the Trinity is at Jesus’ Baptism. Jesus, the Son is being baptized. Mark tells us that *He saw ... the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased”* (**Mark 1:10—11**).

## The Trinity at the Transfiguration

At the Transfiguration, we have Jesus, the Spirit in the form of a cloud, and the Father’s voice, saying, “*This is My beloved Son; listen to Him*” (**Mark 9:7**).

## The Trinity in the Teachings of Jesus

Jesus taught about the Trinity. He said, “*I and the Father are one*” (**John 10:30**). He also said, “*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth*” (**John 14:16—17**). Another time, when talking about

the Spirit, He said, *“whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me”* (**John 15:26**).

### The Trinity in the Great Commission

But how are these three one? When giving the Great Commission, Jesus said, *“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”* (**Matthew 28:19**). Notice the singular “name.” He doesn’t say, “in the names.” The Three are One, Three Persons united in One Godhead. So, believing in the name of Jesus is to believe in the name of the Father and the Spirit also.

### The Trinity in Salvation

Here’s how we see the Trinity in Salvation. In our Gospel lesson, Jesus says, *“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (**John 3:5**). That’s because the Spirit is the One who reveals Jesus to us and gives us faith. Later, in that most familiar of verses, He says, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (**John 3:16**). So, the Father gave His Son, who died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins and was raised to new life that we may have life. The Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit to reveal the Son to us and work faith in us to believe and receive salvation. That’s **SALVATION IN THE TRINITY**.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which surpasses all understanding,  
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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