

## Session 3: Creation and Salvation

*What does the Trinity achieve? And what can we learn from looking at the activity of God in the world? This session considers the role of the Trinity in creation and salvation, and the difference it makes knowing we are made and saved by a Triune God.*

## The Trinity and Creation

How is the Trinity involved in creation?

Q - What do these verses teach about the activity of the Trinity in creation?

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters... Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness... So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'" (Gen 1:1-2, 26, 27)

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' (John 1:1-3)

'In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.' (Hebrews 1:2)

'By the word of the LORD were the Heavens made, their starry host by the breath [Spirit] of his mouth.' (Psalm 33:6)

## The Trinity and Creation

How is the Trinity involved in creation, and what difference does it make?

Triadic Patterns in Creation	
God Speaks	He issues direct fiats: "Let there be..."
God Works	He separates light and dark, the waters, etc. He creates animals and humans
God Creates	He uses the activity of His creatures: the earth produces vegetation, the lights govern the sky,

'This God who created the universe does not work in a monolithic way. His order is varied - it is threefold, but one. His work shows diversity in unity, and unity in its diversity. This God loves order and variety together. This reflects the chapter's record of God himself. The triadic manner of the earth's formation reflects the nature of its Creator. He is a relational being. This is implicit from the very start. Notice the distinction between the God who creates the heavens and the earth (v1), the Spirit of God who hovers over the face of the waters (v2), and the speech or word of God who issues the fiat "Let there be light" (v3). Of course, it is unlikely that the author and original readers would have understood the Spirit of God in a personalised way, due to the heavy stress in the OT on the uniqueness of the one God. The Hebrew word *ruach* can mean spirit, wind, or breath. Many commentators understand it to refer to the energy of God.' (Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, p19)



Marduk created mankind as slaves for the gods. (*Enuma Elish*)

In most religions life precedes love. In Christianity love precedes life.

Q - What difference does it make to know we are created by a Triune God?

## The Trinity and Salvation

### How is the Trinity involved in salvation?

Q - What do these verses teach about the activity of the Trinity in salvation?

'Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand... And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.' (Rom 5:1-2, 5)

'What the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit... And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.' (Rom 8:3-4, 11)

'When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.' (Gal 4:4-7)

'How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!' (Heb 9:14)

## The Trinity and Salvation

How is the Trinity involved in salvation? And what difference does it make?

'Say a family is trapped in a forest fire, so a helicopter team undertakes a rescue. One fireman flies the helicopter over the smoky blaze to coordinate the operation and see the big picture. A second fireman descends on a rope into the billowing smoke below to track down the family and stand with them. Once he locates the family, he wraps the rope around them, attaching them to himself, and they are lifted up together from the blaze into safety.

In this rescue operation the first fireman looks like the Father, who can see the whole field unclouded from above to sovereignly orchestrate the plan. The second fireman looks like the Son, who descends into our world ablaze to find us, the human family, and identify with us most deeply in the darkness of the grave. The Spirit is like the rope, who mediates the presence of the Father to Jesus, even in his distance, and raises Jesus—and the human family with him—from sin, death, and the grave, into the presence of the Father.

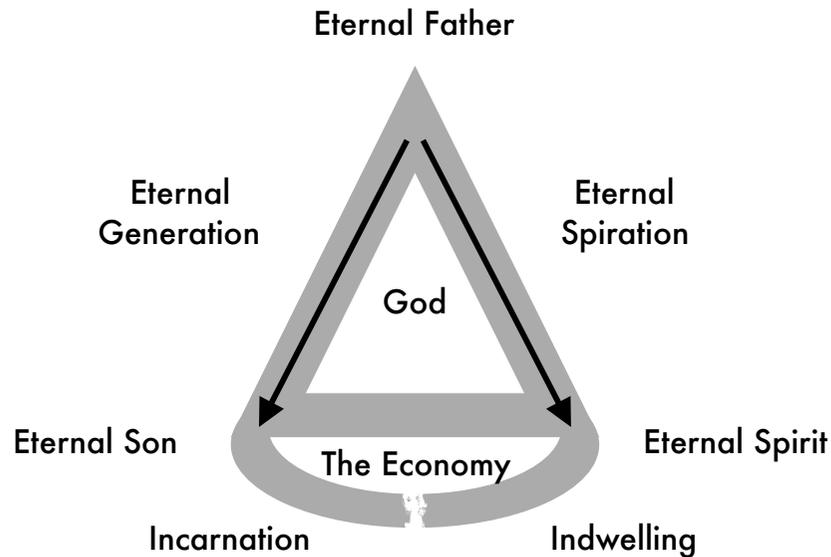
Of course, like all analogies, this one falls short. The Spirit is a person, not a thing (like the rope). And the Father, Son, and Spirit are not separate individuals but the one God, sharing a divine nature and essence as one being. Yet the point of the analogy is this: the rescue mission requires the interdependent action of all three persons. Each has a distinct and necessary role. And yet, zooming out, they are undertaking one united, joint action: the rescue of the human family. We miss what is happening if we put Jesus against God, or God against Jesus. The Father, Son, and Spirit are working together at the cross, of one will and nature, in a united, joint action for the redemption of the world.'

*(The Pursuing God - Joshua Ryan Butler)*

Q - What difference does it make to know we are saved by a Triune God?

# The Trinity and Salvation

How is salvation accomplished and applied?



The Work of the Son	The Work of the Spirit
God with us, as one of us	God with us, dwelling among us
Incarnation	Indwelling
Hypostatic union	Communion
Assumes a human nature	Enlivens human persons
Substitutes for you	Regenerates you
Takes your place	Puts you in your place
Completes work all at once	Continues work constantly
Becomes a pattern for imitation	Forms us to fit hat pattern
Is the one mediator	Unites us to the mediator
Accomplishes redemption	Applies redemption

From Sanders, *The Deep Things of God*, p141

'When God designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man, and the saving of sinners, to the praise of the glory of his grace, he appointed, in his infinite wisdom, two great means thereof: The one was the giving his Son for them, and the other was the giving his Spirit to them. And hereby was way made for the manifestation of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity; which is the utmost end of all the works of God.' (John Owen)