

This article is part of our series about [what is stated](#) concerning God, Jesus and the holy Spirit, and whether they together comprise a Trinity, in the various books of the New Testament. We will examine the four chapter book of Philippians. Notice the distinctive relationship between God and Jesus throughout this book of Philippians, especially the superior role of God compared to Jesus. What does it say about the holy Spirit? Is the Trinity in Philippians?



“To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi.” (Philippians 1:1) Notice they are God’s, not Christ’s, holy people. God is always the one in control, and is using Christ to gather his people, which shows his superiority over Christ, and eliminates the equality aspect of the Trinity doctrine ([John 14:28](#)).

Is the Trinity found in Philippians? The superior role of God compared to Jesus is evident from the Bible book of Philippians

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:2,8) God and Jesus are presented as separate and distinct, not of the same “being”, “substance”, or “essence”. The holy Spirit, since it is not a person, does not give greetings. Neither does the Trinity, since it doesn’t exist.

“Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:11) Fruitage from God flows through Jesus and brings glory and praise to God. God is presented is someone other than Jesus, and superior to Jesus ([John 14:28](#)), which doesn’t support the Trinity doctrine.

“Participation in the Spirit” (Philippians 2:1 ESV). Since some versions render this as “fellowship of the Spirit”, Trinitarians have claimed this means the holy Spirit is a person. However, the rendering “participation in the Spirit” is more accurate. We can’t participate in a person. But we can “have a share in his Spirit” (1 John 4:13 NJB). All this gives evidence that the holy Spirit isn’t a person. Without the holy Spirit being a person, the Trinity doctrine collapses.

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.” (Philippians 2:6 LSB; NASB).

“Who, although he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness, and found human in appearance”—Philippians 2:6,7 NAB

If Jesus was God, it would make no sense to say that he was in the form of God. Thus, being, “in the *form* of God”, means that Jesus is not God!

“What the man Jesus refused to grasp at to attain divinity . . . Jesus, though . . . in the form of God (Gn 1:26-27) did not reach out for equality with God, in contrast with the first Adam in Gn 3:5-6”—NAB note

*“Ureil ben-Mordechai[1] points out that the Greek negative in this verse (ouk) is not attached to the verb (hegesato) but rather to the **noun** harpagmon. That means the reading of this verse should be “counted not something to be grasped,” instead of “not counted something to be grasped.” Let me make the difference clearer. The standard Christian translation of this Greek phrase suggests that Yeshua did not consider equality something to be grasped. But the actual Greek text reads, “counted equality not something that could be grasped.” In other words, if the negative particle ouk is tied to the noun rather than the verb, the*

implication is the Yeshua saw equality with God as something unattainable. Do you realize what this means? It means that this verse does not say that Yeshua gave up equality with God voluntarily because it did not serve the purposes of the Messiah. It says that Yeshua never aspired to be equal with God because equality with God is not possible.”—Skip Moen, Phd

Since many translations render [Philippians 2:6](#) with Trinitarian bias, let's look at some other accurate translations of [Philippians 2:6](#):

“He was in the form of God, yet he laid no claim to equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the form of a slave. Bearing the human likeness”—Philippians 2:6,7 REB

“who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped”—ESV

“Who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped”—NJB

“Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped”—BSB; BLB

“who, although existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped”—LSB

“who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God”—ERV

“In God's own form existed he, and shared with God equality, deemed nothing needed grasping.”—LSV

“Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped”—MSB

“who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped”—NET

“who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped”—NHB

“who, existing in the form of God, didn’t consider equality with God a thing to be grasped”—WEB

“who, being in the form of God, thought [it] not something to be seized to be equal to God”—LSV

“who, though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be seized”—CPDV

Someone who already has something does not have to ‘grasp’ for it. Jesus would not even think about trying to be equal to God. Christians are to have the same attitude of humility. Obviously, Jesus is separate from, and inferior to, God. [Philippians 2:5,6](#) flatly debunks the equality aspect of the Trinity doctrine.

“He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted him.” ([Philippians 2:8,9 NASB](#)) God is clearly shown to be someone other than Christ. Jesus’ obedience bespeaks of his submission to his Father. His death means he is not God, and not eternal, since he was not in existence while he “was dead” ([Revelation 1:18](#)). The scriptures make clear that “Yahweh . . . God . . . never dies” ([Habakkuk 1:12 NJB](#)). God, the superior one, highly exalted Jesus, not the other way around. Thus, three Trinitarian pillars of Jesus being God, eternal, and equal are

eliminated by these scriptures.

Philippians 2:10,11a - **“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord” (NIV)**. Trinitarians often stop their quote of the scripture at this point, and use this to “prove” that Jesus is God. Here is a typical example of a Trinitarian claim:

“God the Father stated, “To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Isaiah 45:23). The same exact description is also applied to Jesus (Philippians 2:10-11). This means that both the Father and the Son are Yahweh.”

However, when we actually look at the rest of the scripture, we find that it is, **“to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11b NIV)** that ‘every knee shall bend down to Jesus’. By reading the full scripture, we find that the scripture actually proves that Jesus is inferior to God the Father, contradicting the equality claim of the Trinity doctrine. Trinitarians also claim that because Jesus is called “Lord” — that makes him God. But here we see that is not the case. Let’s look at the scripture and see who is called God — “The Father” is the one who is “God”, not “the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“It is we who are in the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3 NRSV).

Christians serve God and worship him, not Christ Jesus (John 4:23). Notice, though, that they do it “in the Spirit of God.” “In **the** Spirit,” and “the Spirit **of** God,” are evidences that the holy Spirit is not a person. **“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3 World English Bible)**. From this translation, we notice even more clearly that “God” is the one to be properly worshipped, not Jesus.

“But that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ — yes, to know the power of his

resurrection . . . becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow attaining to the resurrection from the dead. The prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:9-11,14 NIV). “God” is shown to be someone other than “Christ”. The righteousness from God comes through faith in Christ. God calls Paul heavenward through Jesus. God and Christ are separate individuals, with God the Father as superior, which eliminates the equality aspect of the Trinity doctrine. Also, the text shows that “Christ died” (1 Corinthians 15:3), and “God resurrected this Jesus” (Acts 2:32 HCSB), so Christ can’t be God, because “God . . . will never die” (Habakkuk 1:12 NIV). This eliminates the “eternal” aspect of the Trinity doctrine.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7 NIV) “Then God’s peace, which goes far beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your hearts and minds in union with the Messiah Jesus” (Philippians 4:7 GNB). “My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19) God the Father is superior, and he uses Christ Jesus as his “representative” (John 5:43 Williams) agent to help humans. “My God” is obviously the Father. His gift is “Christ Jesus,” as his “representative” (John 5:43 Williams). Therefore, Jesus cannot be God!

Throughout the book of Philippians, we find the distinctive relationship between God and Jesus. The superior role of God compared to Jesus is evident upon examination of the above verses. The holy Spirit is shown to not be a person. From our analysis, we have discovered that the Trinity is not found in Philippians.

All scriptures quoted from New International Version (NIV) unless noted otherwise.