

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)** God is always the one in control, and is using Christ to gather his people.

**“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:2)** God and Jesus are separate and distinct. The holy Spirit, since it is not a person, does not give greetings. Neither does the Trinity, since it doesn’t exist.

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

**“God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:8)** God and Jesus are spoken of as separate and distinct individuals.

**“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.

**“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).**

**“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 2:5-6 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**

***“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***

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**

Being, “in the *form* of God”, means that Jesus is not God! 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.

**“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)** 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. This makes clear that **“Yahweh . . . God . . . never dies” (Habakkuk 1:12 NJB)**. God, the superior one, highly exalted Jesus, not the other way around.

**“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:10,11a NIV).** Trinitarians often stop their quote of the scripture at this point, and use this to “prove” that Jesus is God. 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)**. By reading the full scripture, we find that the scripture actually proves that Jesus is inferior to God, contradicting the equality claim of the Trinity doctrine. Trinitarians claim that because Jesus is called “Lord” that makes him God. But here we see that is not the case. “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. 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.

**“But that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.” (Philippians 3:9)** “God” is shown to be someone other than “Christ”. The righteousness from God comes through faith in Christ. God and Christ are separate individuals, with God the Father as superior.

**“The prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14)** God calls Paul heavenward through Jesus. Same point as above, God the Father is superior to Jesus the Son.

**“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).**

God the Father is superior, and he uses Christ Jesus as his **“representative” (John 5:43 Williams)** and agent to help humans.

**“My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)** “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.*