

“God – The Trinity”

Deuteronomy 6:4/Genesis 1:26

Introduction

- Tonight we continue our series we have entitled “ground work – laying a foundation for faith”
 - The reason we are doing this is it is so important that everyone of us are able to give a reason for the things we believe
 - That is what Peter encourages us to do

“Always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.” – I Peter 3:15

- We are supposed to understand what we believe and as the verse above states, we are to consider, ‘why’ we believe it
 - Why do we hold the convictions that we do

We have begun this study looking at the reasons to believe God exists in the first place

- those are free and online
 - listen at our website or download podcast all of that available at calvaryvista.com
- But we established it is logical there is something out there greater than ourselves that created this order and design in this universe

Then the last few studies we have moved on to consider whether or not this book is a reliable source by which to study God

- if we are going to take the remainder of the year here on Sunday Nights and learn about God, then we need to believe this book is a good source
 - we went over good reasons and again if you missed those studies you can get them online

Tonight we move on to the subject of the trinity

- one of the most misunderstood doctrines in the Bible
 - and it has lead to misunderstanding after misunderstanding, the denying of which ends up in cults like the JW and the Mormons
 - so it is essential that we understand where this doctrine comes from in the Bible
- which remember is a reliable source to learn about God
 - so we are going to look to the Word to understand this difficult subject

And by the way it is okay to admit the Trinity is difficult to understand

- It goes beyond our simple human brains to say God is three but one
 - So we need to see where it comes from in the scripture
 - And like I have been saying with each of these studies, it is not enough to understand where it is in the scriptures, we need to understand why it is important to believe in the Trinity

- Let’s start with the basics

The word “Trinity” appears no where in the Bible

- Of course the word “Bible” doesn’t appear in the Bible either
 - But we believe that this book is real
 - Even though the word trinity does not exist, we see the teaching that there is a trinity from cover to cover

The Bible emphasizes the oneness of God

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” – Deuteronomy 6:4

- Every Jewish child has to memorize this verse and repeat it over and over again

- It stresses the oneness of God

And yet right there in Deuteronomy 6:4, as well as the first verse in the Bible Genesis 1:1, “in the beginning God...”

- the word the Bible chooses for God is so interesting
 - it is the Hebrew word – “Elohim”
 - what is so interesting is...

“Elohim” is a plural word used to speak of the singular God

- and you can see that in the English as you read through your Bible because of the constant use of the term “us” or “our” when God is talking

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;” – Genesis 1:26

- is there a mouse in His pocket, it is like when your boss says “we are going to clean this place up today, and by us, I mean you”
 - what is going on here
 - it’s all over

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.” – Genesis 3:22

“Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” – Genesis 11:7

- but it is not just found in Genesis, but in Isaiah as well

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” – Isaiah 6:8

- the reason for all the we, us and our is again because the Hebrew word used for God Elohim is a plural word, hence the we’s and us’s, but it is being used to describe a single God
 - the other evidence we see in the old testament is how the different parts of God are seen as the same yet different

The Messiah (God the Son) and God (The Father) are described as being the same, yet also different

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” – Isaiah 7:14

- This prophecy says the Messiah was going to be more than just a leader. **Immanuel means “God with us.”**
 - To make it more interesting, two chapters later in Isaiah 9:6, we learn more about this messiah

“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” – Isaiah 9:6

- This Messiah is more than just a leader, and more specifically He is more than just God with us, He is the Mighty God, He is the everlasting Father

So God and Messiah also have the same attributes

- Consider Psalm 90:2,

“Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” – Psalm 90:2

- This teaches that God the Father is eternal
- But cross reference that with Micah 5:2 and you find,

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me. The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.” – Micah 5:2

- This teaches the Messiah is also eternal
 - that led some to believe the Messiah and God are the same - But elsewhere in scripture they are seen as different and distinct

Psalm 2 teaches that Messiah and God are different

“Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."..."I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You...Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry...” – Psalm 2

- We can see in Psalm two, the Messiah and God seem to be different and distinct
 - But we learned from Scripture that they are the same as well
- But Deuteronomy 6:4 - teaches there is only one God.” – there is only one eternal in the heavens
 - There seems to be a Problem
 - To further complicate the problem

The Spirit (God the Holy Spirit) and God (The Father) are described as the same yet different

“But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.” – Isaiah 64:8

- God is seen here, and obviously in Genesis 1:1, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”
 - In these verses God is seen as the creator
 - But if we look at Job 33:4,

“The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” – Job 33:4

- This leads many to believe the Spirit and God are the same
 - Yet we also see in scripture that they are distinct

The Spirit is seen as something that comes forth from God in Psalm 104:30

“You send forth Your Spirit; And You renew the face of the earth.” – Psalm 104:30

- God sends forth this Spirit, so they are distinct from each other

So in the Old Testament we are left with this shadow

- the mysterious use of the word “Elohim”
 - a plural word to describe a single God
- We learn of this Messiah
 - Who is called God with us, the everlasting Father – Isaiah 7, 9
 - And yet is different than God the Father – Psalm 2
- We learn of The Spirit
 - Who is responsible for Creation, as is God the Father – Job 33:4
 - But who is also different – Psalm 104:30

You couple that together with Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” – Deuteronomy 6:4

- and you have a problem as we head to the New Testament
 - of course there is no problem at all
 - the solution is the trinity
 - the reason for all these verses is there is One God who exists as three persons

This idea is expanded in the New Testament

- The New Testament as in the Old emphasizes the Oneness of God

“Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.” – I Corinthians 8:4

- We see here that Paul agrees with Deut. 6:4

Even more than that – Scripture teaches the Oneness that exists between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

The New Testament says Jesus is God

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” – John 1:1

- The JW’s try to tell you that this is properly translated “a god” – if you are ever told that I want you to know the person is either misinformed or they are lying. As someone who studied Greek in college, the only possible translation for John 1:1 is “was God”
 - Of course “a god” causes even more problems for the JW, because the reason they are so against the Trinity is they see it as teaching there are three Gods. Which they reject and I do too. But they have a problem if this verse is translated ‘a god’ – that means there is more than one if Jesus is a god too.
 - We see the fact Jesus is God also in Colossians 2:9

“For in Him (Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” – Colossians 2:9

- Paul says Jesus is fully God
 - The Bible clearly testifies to this fact

Jesus even says He is God

“I and My Father are one.” – John 10:30

- It doesn’t get any clearer than that
 - Jesus is uttering this statement from earth, so there has to be some difference, but at the same time “He and the Father are one.”
 -

The New Testament teaches the Spirit is God

“But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” – Acts 5:3-4

- At first Peter says you have lied to the Holy Spirit, but next he says that they have lied to God
 - Showing they are one in the same

Another Biblical proof of the oneness of God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit is seen when the New Testament quotes God from the Old Testament and attributes the words to the Holy Spirit in the New – example...

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” And He said, “Go, and tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand, keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.” – Isaiah 6:8-10

- you compare that with Acts 28:25 that says...

“Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, ‘Go to this people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive;” – Acts 28:25

- you see – in Isaiah it says, the Lord said, in Acts it says, the Holy Spirit said
- you see that again in Hebrews 10:15 with Jeremiah 31:31

The New Testament teaches the Oneness of God (1 Cor.8:4), the Oneness between God, Jesus (John 10:30, John 1:1, Col. 2:9), God and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). But it also recognizes the differences as well

➤ We first encounter it in **Matthew 3:16-17** at the Baptism of Jesus,
“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” – Matthew 3:16-17

- This shows us the Trinity – Jesus is in the water, the Spirit is descending, and God speaking from heaven
 - The Bible teaches they are one, yet shows they are at the same time distinct

Next we see it in Matthew 28:19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” – Matthew 28:19

When Jesus is leaving earth, He commands His disciples to baptize those who are saved in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

- We see from Jesus’ mouth the existence of something more than simply One God
 - We see a God who exists in 3 persons

We see it from the mouth of Paul the apostle in 2 Corinthians 13:13,

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” – II Corinthians 13:13

As Paul ends His letter to the Corinthians, he mentions this three fold personage of God

- Remember this is same author who wrote, “there is no other God but one.”
 - Paul understood that God was “one God that exists in three persons.”

We even see it from the mouth of Peter, in his first epistle, chapter one verse 2,

“To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:” – I Peter 1:1-2

- this is not just a Jesus thing, or a Pauline doctrine
 - the idea of the Trinity, of God being One God that exists in three persons is from cover to cover

The New Testament teaches the Oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:4)– yet it shows from Jesus, to Paul to Peter, that this One God exists in 3 persons

- The whole idea of them being one yet three comes from all the verses I have shared with you from the Old and the New Testament
 - Showing that God is one, and yet showing there is something more
 - But the definition, the picture of 3 yet 1, comes from 2 main passages

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever -- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” – John 14:16-18

Jesus is speaking to His disciples about sending them the Holy Spirit which He calls “another helper”

- **This word “another” means another of the same kind**
 - If I was wanting starbursts and you were eating them, and I ate a strawberry, and then you ask me if I wanted another, and I said yes. You hand me another

strawberry, and I say I want another kind. – we use the same word, in Greek it is different

- Jesus says He is sending them a helper of the same kind as Himself, yet different

But even in this passage the Oneness of God is seen

- Jesus says in verse 16 that He is sending another to be with them
 - And then in verse 18, He says He is coming to them
 - Well who is coming! – They are all, yet the Holy Spirit is

You see they are distinct, yet they have the same attributes, the same worth of worship, they same power, they are the same

- One more verse and that is from I John

“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” – I John 5:7

- I don't know how it gets any clearer than that
 - There are 3, yet they are One
- There are some that would say that that verse was added later, but that goes back to the Alexandrian manuscripts – I don't totally trust the manuscripts that came from churches where so much false doctrine began, of course they would want to do away with that verse

But even if we didn't have I John 5:7

- still from Genesis to Revelation the idea that God is one, yet exists in three persons is clearly seen

To help us understand that concept many have tried to pose so many illustrations for the Trinity, and none are perfect because we are trying to use nature to describe a Holy God – it just doesn't fit – but maybe it will help you

Trinity illustrations

#1 – The Egg

- you have shell, white, and yoke
 - and they are all still egg
 - That is God, God is three yet one – but not perfect because the shell is of a different element than the white or the yoke
 - All three Members of the Trinity are the same in attribute and power

#2 – 3 Leaf Clover

- One Clover, yet one leaf is not the other, though it is made from the same materials
 - Good, God is One
 - But the three Members of the Trinity are distinct from each other
 - The Son is God, but not God the Father
 - The Father is God, but He is not the Son or the Spirit
 - The Spirit is God, but He is not the Father, nor the Son
 - And with the clover you have One clover, just one

#3 – The Sun

- you have the elements that make up the sun, but you also have its light, and its power
 - they are all different, yet they are all the sun
 - I guess that is good – but my favorite

#4 – The states of Water

- Water can be a solid, a liquid, and a gas
 - And there is even a scientific state of temperature and pressure called “a triple point” with water where all 3 coexists in equilibrium, and yet are different
 - All three are water – but the vapor isn't ice, and the liquid isn't a vapor, and so on

So whatever illustration works for you – Wonderful but here is the point

- If you were trying to describe a cube to someone who lived in a two dimensional world what would you say?
 - If you could show them a multicolored cube, then all they would see would be a changing of the colored square – because the concept of three dimensions is beyond them
- God is not like us
 - In fact I believe the Trinity shows that the God of the Bible is not made up by man
 - Everything man makes us is like man, but a little more powerful
- Yet it is only Christianity that describes God as one, yet existing in three persons, making Him so amazing, and beyond our finding out – and isn't that exactly what we are told about God in the Word?

Now very quickly why is it important to believe in the Trinity?

- beyond the truth that it is the trinity that makes God beyond finding out, beyond something man would come up with to worship
 - believing in the trinity also explains many things in the scriptures

One is a question I get all the time from people reading through the Old Testament

Why does it say in Exodus 33:20

“You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” – Exodus 33:20

- and yet Jacob wrestles with God, Moses talks with him face to face, how are those two things possible
 - because of the Trinity

God the Father is the part of God that dwells in inappreciable light. It is the part of God that if we were to see His face, we in these bodies would die

- but God the Holy Spirit is that part of God that dwells in man
 - and God the Son is the part of God that walks and talks with mankind
 - He is called Jesus and takes on flesh in the New Testament, but God the Son didn't just come into existence in Matthew chapter 1
- God the Son, Jesus has always been and He is seen in the Old Testament talking with Moses face to face, wrestling with Jacob, interacting with God's people
 - It only makes sense with the trinity

Another important reason to believe in the Trinity is concerning the cross

- I have heard the cross described as child abuse because God the Father was pouring out His wrath upon His son
 - But again when you understand the trinity, it is not three God
 - Jesus was not the child god that was being abused

God is one, and God declared that sin, my sin and yours must be punished

- and so on the cross it was God, yes in the form of God the Son, but it was not child abuse, it was God taking on the punishment He declared must happen
 - making Him totally just – the righteous requirement was fulfilled
 - but also making Him love – for He bore our sin