

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Trinity: Basic Truths, Pt. 2-3
Selected Passages

Keywords: Trinity, God, Theology Proper, Plurality

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: This sermon moves the examination of the doctrine of the Trinity from the reality of God's oneness to the other fact that God describes Himself in a plural manner. This is all designed to establish a solid foundation for the examination of each person of the Trinity.

DISMISS

I. Introduction.

- A. Last week we began to get into the basic truths related to the Trinity. Let me quickly point them out so that we can progress onward into some new points.
1. First, a solid belief and understanding of the Trinity is key to the purity of the Gospel itself. A wrong belief about the Trinity is to have a wrong belief about the Gospel.
 2. Second, only when we consider the Trinity do we begin to truly appreciate the glory and beauty of the gospel message.
 3. Third, when talking or teaching on the Trinity there is one key problem that is perceived by many. Deut.6:4-5, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"
 4. Fourth, as a result of this passage we find within church history that there have been attempts to understand that doctrine of the Trinity which have fallen short of biblical truth.
 - a. Monarchianism.
 - (1) Adoptionism.
 - (2) Modalism.
 - b. Arianism
 5. Fifth, we discussed briefly the idea of "progressive revelation."

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- a. In a nutshell, it is the gradual unfolding of God's revelation of Himself, Salvation, and the end of times. What is seen in the book of Genesis about these three points is not as full as what is seen in the epistles of Paul.
 - b. Therefore, when talking about the Trinity, we should not be surprised that there was not a full and complete description of the Triune nature of God in Genesis 1. But we should also not try to develop a full teaching on the person of God out of only Genesis either, or any other book of the bible for that matter.
- B. Having pointed all of this out, I then proceeded to give several passages that clearly affirmed the "oneness" of God.
1. This is so important for us to remember for a common error made by people when discussing the Trinity is to so seek to prove it that they end up denying the oneness of God.
 2. **The idea that God is one is far broader than merely stating a numerical value. It is stating that there is no other God. It speaks, therefore, to His uniqueness and aloneness as well.**
 - a. You may wonder about the value of that truth right now.
 - b. We are going to see how this truth impacts our worship and hope of salvation in just a few moments.
 3. With that in mind, let me give you just a few more passages regarding this truth in the pages of the N.T.
 - a. Mark 12:28-29.
 - (1) Here the *shema* [btw, that word comes out of Deut. 6:4, the 1st word, which means "hear"] is reiterated and note that Jesus does not dispute it; rather, He holds it up as part of the 1st and greatest of commandments. If it were wrong, then He would have corrected that view immediately.
 - (2) Why are we to devote ourselves entirely to God alone? For He is God, **alone!!!**
 - b. Romans 10:11-12.
 - (1) Here we find the doctrine of God's oneness in relationship to salvation.

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- (2) God is not merely the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is not the God of Israel. He is God. He is the creator and sustainer of all that exists in space and time.
 - (3) Therefore, any who desire to be saved from their sins may believe in Him. The promise is that they will not be disappointed; rather the promise is true and full. It is based upon the fact that He is God over all.
- c. 1 Corinthians 8:1-6, esp. verse 4.
- (1) Here Paul enters into a subject that was causing much confusion in the Church at Corinth.
 - (2) Basing his conclusions off of the oneness of God Paul is able to minister a word of direction and encouragement to the believers there.
 - (3) The basic point is that anything sacrificed to idols is not now made “bad.” Why, for there are no other gods in reality.
 - (4) And for those who understood this there was a great freedom to relax. Of course he then brings in the doctrine regarding the love of the brethren to bear on this subject as well, to protect the weaker brother.
- d. James 2:19.
- (1) Here James, who is writing to Jewish believers, points out that doctrinal correctness is not equal to being a Christian. To rightly confess truth is not salvation.
 - (2) But why do the demons tremble at this seemingly basic and seemingly unimportant doctrine?
 - (3) It is because they are enemies of the One True God. There is no other God. There is therefore, no where for them to flee. There is no other God for them to align themselves with. One God and One judge.
 - (4) Oh that men and women would see this truth today. The common phrase, “that is your opinion” is considered by far too many to be a safe haven for unbelief.

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- (5) And in this they fail to understand that there is only one God and they shall stand before Him. What about you? Do you hope in the One True God? Do you see Him as He truly is, One God/Three Persons?
- C. Let us now turn our attention to the biblical data that indicates the plurality of the Godhead.

II. Basic Affirmation of The Trinity.

A. O.T. References to God's Plurality.

1. Genesis 1:1.

- a. (אלהים) *Elohim*, this is a very common term for God. What makes it so important is that it is plural. This is true of Deut. 6:4, "... the Lord your God (*Elohim*) is one."

(1) There is a common argument made against this word being evidence of the plural nature of God that some of you may have heard. It is called the plural of majesty.

(a) The idea behind it is that perhaps kings would use the word "we" instead of "I" such as, "We will grant you your request."

(b) The problem is that there is no proof whatsoever of this concept. And never once in any body of Semitic literature (A major branch of Afro-Asiatic language such as Hebrew and Phoenician, Aramaic, Assyrian, Arabic, Ethiopic) is this use of *Elohim* used.

(c) **It is a use that is unique to the O.T.**

(2) What makes it even more important for us to note is that it is very commonly used in conjunction with **singular** verbs. Including the verb here in 1:1.

2. Genesis 1:26.

- a. Note the flow between plural and singular here. "Then God (*Elohim*) said, "Let Us (plural) make (singular) man in Our (plural) image (singular), according to Our (plural) likeness (singular)."

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- b. Beloved, there is much just here to think and marvel over. But what you have cannot be angels talking to God. For the image that man was made in was only one image, God's. What we have is a divine conference within the Godhead.
3. Genesis 3:22.
 - a. Here we enter into the divine conference regarding the Fall of man.
 - b. Before there was innocence in the minds and lives of Adam and Eve. Now they are aware of good and evil and sadly evil is the principle that lives within them.
 - c. They know what is right and wrong, and they stand condemned for it. They have done evil, they have a God who alone is good and that reality confronts them at the very core of their being.
4. Genesis 11:5-8.
 - a. Note the "let Us" again. Here we see the reality of Genesis 6:5 coming out again.
 - (1) (Man is depraved.)
 - (2) Though the Flood had left only Noah and his family, it did not rid the world of sin, for they brought it with them. And so once again the hearts of men begin to work out that sinfulness.
 - b. So God speaks again in a plural sense. But notice the verb "scattered" in verse 8. It is a singular verb.
5. Psalm 45:6-7.
 - a. This is a Messianic psalm, speaking of the promised Messiah, who of course, is Jesus Christ.
 - b. Note the flow of words of love, adoration and worship in vss. 1-5.
 - (1) Obviously this is written regarding a king (vs 1). And on one level that is true, it is speaking of king Solomon. But there is also a Messianic aspect to it as well.
 - (2) Something common in the bible. The issues I am trying to teach can be a little hard to follow at times, but they are very important to understanding what is happening in the bible.

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- (3) What I am referring to here is what is known as “sense” and “referent.”
 - (a) Deals with how language works. We all use language but frankly we spend little time thinking about how it actually works.
 - (b) Sense is the dictionary meaning. What does the word mean. You can have many different senses.
 - (c) Referent is concerned about to who it refers to. You can also have several referents.
 - i) If I told you to look at the window, you are going to be compelled to ask what question? (Which window).
 - ii) Now all of you understood the sense of the command, but none of you understood the referent.
 - iii) An biblical example can be the word “Israel.” Several different senses to this word, all of which are legitimate, and none overtaking other senses.
 - (d) In this Psalm we see this in action.
 - i) Yes it is a Psalm to Solomon.
 - ii) But not just Solomon. The word “king” here is easily understood. We see the “sense” of it. But to whom does it refer to?
 - iii) Only Solomon? No, in Heb. 1:8 we find this Psalm used of Jesus Christ, the son of Solomon, the son of God.
 - iv) So though we know the sense of “King” we find that there are two references, one to Solomon and one to Jesus Christ.
- (4) When you come to verse 6 who is “God” here?

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- (a) Surely we are not talking about Solomon anymore are we?
 - (b) There has been a subtle but important transition that has taken place. The king being referred to here is overtly being called God.
 - (c) Now that is no big deal because God is king over all things.
- (5) But then we come to verse 7.
- (a) Now we have a surprise. We have God, *Elohim*, being anointed by God, *Elohim*.
 - (b) Now, who is the first referent of God and who is the second referent of God?
 - (c) The second time God is used here seems to be “God” as we commonly mean it. The God of creation. The God of the bible.
 - (d) It seems best to see the first time God is used here to mean the one who is called God in verse 6.
 - (e) And then we find in Heb. 1:8 that it is referring to Jesus Christ.
 - (f) Therefore we have a situation where God is calling someone else God.
 - i) But how can this be if God also tells His people, Israel, that God is one?
 - ii) Because God is one, but at the same time, there is plurality within that one God.
6. Psalm 110:1.
- a. Here is a fun passage to consider. The reason for this is that the passage has already been exegeted for us by Jesus Christ.
 - b. Matthew 22.41-46.
 - c. Apparently David was aware of the plurality of persons in the one true God.

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7. Isaiah 6:8.
 - a. The words of the Lord are in a Hebrew parallelism. This one is what is called a symmetrical synonymous parallel structure. Both lines say the same thing in a slightly different way.
 - b. That is helpful because we have the Lord asking in the first line, “Whom shall I send.” Note that it is in the singular. God is asking a divine question, “Who will go to my people to speak judgment upon them?”
 - c. What does the second line say, remembering that it is parallel with the first line? “Who will go for Us?” Note now that He asks in the plural rather than the singular.
 - d. This is so powerful for it shows the casualness of God in going from the singular to the plural. There is no contradiction in this according to God, therefore, there ought not be any sense of contradiction in it for us. Rather it ought to drive us to raise our hearts in praise, glory and wonder.
8. Isaiah 48:12-16.
 - a. We must first determine who is doing the talking here.
 - b. V. 12, who called Israel? God did.
 - c. V. 13, Who created the heavens and the earth? God did.
 - d. Go back now to verse 12 real fast, who is the first and the last? (Turn to Isaiah 44:6)
 - e. Therefore, it is only fitting for us to conclude that since it says “I” over and over again. Since the title and works say that He is God, especially “the first and the last” since there can only be one first and one last. Therefore, we conclude that He is who? (God).
 - f. Then, beloved, who is saying sent Him in verse 16?
 - g. Note the triune expression in this passage too.
9. Isaiah 61.1-6.
10. Zechariah 10:6-12.

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- a. Here we have part of a wonderful and hopeful prophecy concerning the nation of Israel.
- b. After a period of rejection by the Lord for the purposes of discipline He is going to restore them. He is going to do it out of compassion, which is nothing less than grace.
 - (1) But the basis of this saving on a national level is based on what, according to verse 6?
 - (2) So we have here simply another reminder that He is their God. He never stopped being their God and this is still true.
 - (3) They exist as a nation because God has made a covenant with them. He is a covenant keeping God and it is because of that fact that He will save them.
 - (4) And moment in time is yet future. Zechariah is a post-exilic book. And up to now there is nothing that shows a fulfillment of this great event.
- c. Now, what I really want you to note is how what follows in vss 6-10 there is the consistent use of “I” in the prophecy.
- d. But in verse 11 there is a critical change that takes place in the pronoun. And it is a seamless changeover. Now it is “He.”
 - (1) This is speaking of the promise of the Messiah, who would rule and protect His people as King.
 - (2) Remember now, that the person talking is the LORD God (vs. 6). But notice in verse 12 what the LORD God calls this one we only know of as “He” in verse 11.
 - (3) Once again we see a passage speaking of the promised Messiah and we see that He is being called Yahweh. And the One calling Him “Yahweh” is Yahweh.
 - (4) Now when it is this all predicated upon? The saving of Israel. And this all fits. For the only way that you can enter into the blessings of the covenant that He made with Abraham is through faith. And so He shall work such a miracle of salvation that at some point the nation shall believe.

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- (5) Elsewhere in Scripture this is the when the Lord pours out His Spirit upon the nation. Ezekiel 36:26-28 says it most simply, “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.”
11. Jeremiah 23:5-6.
 - a. Here is one of many prophecies of the Branch that would be raised up in Israel. It is a prophecy of the coming Messiah.
 - (1) It is built into the covenant God had made with David, where He promised that David’s throne would be everlasting. In 1 Chronicles 17:11ff we find that there would be One whom God would do this to, that it would be the final establishing of the throne, and the One whom He was referring to was the promised Messiah.
 - (a) Throughout the O.T. you will find this constant reiteration that the throne of David would be forever.
 - (b) And this is what the people of Israel were looking for. Where was this King? Who was this King? And they knew that the promised King was also the promised Messiah.
 - (2) And you can see why they longed for this King as you look at verses 5b-6a.
 - (3) Here are a couple other passages that speak of this Branch of Israel:
 - (a) Isaiah 11:1-2, “Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”

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(b) Isaiah 52:2-5, “For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”

b. Now notice in Jer. 23:5.

- (1) Who is the One who is doing the declaring? (LORD)
- (2) Is the One that He is going to raise up Himself, or does the language of verse 5 and the first part of verse 6 indicate another? (Another)
- (3) And what is the name of this other person in the last part of verse 6? (LORD [Yahweh] our righteousness)
- (4) Beloved, there should never have been amazement by the Jews, especially the teachers and religious leaders, regarding the claims of Christ.
 - (a) The O.T. abounds in these types of passages.
 - (b) The one thing that every Jew studied, listened intently to, and longed for was the coming Messiah. These passages we looked at so often were speaking of that Messiah.
 - (c) Why then, did so many miss it?
- (5) We cannot go into now, but it centers around the deadness of their hearts. The same condition that is true of all mankind.

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- (6) God is a righteous God, who demands that we be righteous to be able to stand before Him.
 - (a) We, of course, fail in this. This is where so many say that God forgives us so we will be ok. But this misses the central point. God cannot be righteous and forgive our sin. There must be payment.
 - (b) Look again and verse 6. It is there that we see how man can be righteous before God.
 - (c) God becomes our righteousness for us.
 - i) There will be a day beloved that Israel will be changed. This is promised repeatedly in the Scripture and it will be a joyful time. Romans 11 is crystal clear on that point
 - ii) There will be a time when God changes their heart, they will see Christ for who He is, God almighty. And they will see and believe that He alone is their righteousness.
 - iii) It is the message that we preach today. Come to Christ, see that He is your righteousness. That you possess no righteousness of your own so don't cling to it.
 - iv) May we all learn to call Jesus Christ, "the LORD our righteousness."

III. Conclusion.

Small Group Questions

- How is this sermon series helping you develop a bigger sense of God? What stands out to you at this point?
- What questions are now raised in your mind? (CGL, please communicate these to Pastor Matt)