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## **Theology Bites–The Trinity Selected Passages**

**PowerPoint Presentation: None**

**Keywords: Orthodoxy, Sound Doctrine, Trinity, Deity of Christ, Deity of Holy Spirit**

**SermonAudio blurb:**

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We continue in this series on small bites of key theology.
  - 1. We have considered the person of God.
  - 2. Then we moved on to the doctrine of the bible.
  - 3. Today we will consider the nature of the Trinity and then the deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. (**Show slides**)
  
- B. One point I have made throughout this series is the presuppositions that every person brings to the discussion of the Christian faith.
  - 1. It bears mentioning again how much power and influence is brought to bear on almost any point of orthodox doctrine because of evolution.
  - 2. It is assumed by so many in a multitude of ways and formations.
  - 3. And the idea of God and the idea of one God in three persons is one area that is often attacked as simply untrue because of evolution.
  - 4. Evolution is not a science no matter how much one attempts to say otherwise. There is biologic evolutionary thought, social evolution (progress of civilization), and even religious evolution.
    - a. All forms of religion started from a basic form of animism, which seeks to assign to inanimate objects spirits. Think totem poles.
    - b. Why? Because if you go to what is termed “a primitive” culture today they tend to be animistic.
    - c. From that assumption comes polytheism.
    - d. Then henotheism which has many gods but only one is supreme in each culture.
    - e. And only after a long evolutionary development does monotheism come into existence.

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- f. Conclusions therefore: the bible can't be true about the person of God because it contradicts evolutionary thought.
  - g. The problem: at the very beginning of the bible is monotheism in its fullest sense of the world. "In the beginning . . . ."
- C. It is not shocking that there is a rebellion or rejection of God by humanity. It has been that way from the time sin entered into our existence.
- 1. But it is very sad and shocking to see the way the church today in America is shedding sound doctrine for vague, man-centered, moralistic therapeutic religion in the name of Christianity.
  - 2. There is something very wrong when 67% of those polled are not sure if the Holy Spirit is God.
  - 3. When we ignore the biblical self-revelation of God we become idolaters for we worship a god who does not exist.
  - 4. The grand sin according to Romans 1 is that though the world does not give thanks to God nor honor Him as God it is not through ignorance, for He has made Himself known.

Listen to the words of the prophet Malachi 1:6-14, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, **where is My honor?** And if I am a master, **where is My respect?**" says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, 'How have we despised Thy name?' "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled Thee?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.' "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. "But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you. **For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations,**" says the LORD of hosts. "But you are profaning it, in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.' You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the LORD of hosts, "and you bring what was taken by robbery, and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the LORD. "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock, and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished

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animal to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

- D. Note the way God has so strongly expressed His offended heart. He alone is God and yet the very people He has shown so much grace to has become very careless with their worship of Him.

One man had this to say regarding the passage I just read to you, "The first thing Malachi does to help us feel the Majesty of our Father in this text is to use a special name for him again and again. Seven times in these nine verses (24 times in the whole book) God is called "the LORD of hosts."

Verse 6, "And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of hosts"

Verse 8, "Would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts"

Verse 9, "Will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts."

Verse 10, "I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts"

Verse 11, "My name will be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts."

Verse 13, "You disdainfully sniff at it," says the LORD of hosts,"

Verse 14, "I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts"

"Hosts" means great numbers of armies or angels or stars. So what Malachi wants us to see and feel is that our Father in heaven has infinite authority in the universe. He can wield any and all armies on the earth to accomplish his purposes among the nations whether they know it or not. He has myriads of unstoppable angels who do his bidding flawlessly and never fail in their errands. And he has appointed every star in the universe its position. He holds them in place -- all trillion, trillion of them -- and calls them all by name.

And on the altar of this Father the priests are offering animals with mange and broken legs!!"

(<http://www.soundofgrace.com/piper87/jp870039.htm>)

1. Worship is defined as honor and respect.
2. And that is our call today. We are commanded to worship God in Spirit and in Truth.
3. When we lift up in praise the name of Jesus Christ we are not singing thanksgiving to someone lower or less than God.
4. When we seek to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and when we seek conviction and wisdom from the Holy Spirit it is not to some power or force.

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5. When we speak to a Jew or we speak to a Muslim we do not fall into the trap of thinking that we all worship the same, one God.
- E. Today I want to lay out the issues and then next Sunday I plan to show the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

## **II. The Bible and God.**

- A. From the beginning God is portrayed as one.
  1. Genesis 1:1 — this establishes the biblical witness that nothing and no entity exists apart from God’s creative work.
  2. When Israel is brought out of Egypt they are taught to recite what is known as the Shema. Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God. The Lord is one!”
  3. There was no allowance for other gods. There was the acknowledgment that people worshiped other gods but that is not the same thing.
  4. The bible repeatedly mocks the existence of other gods.
    - a. Isaiah 40:18-29.
    - b. Jeremiah 10:1-15.
  5. In the New Testament the idea of God as being one and alone is affirmed yet again.
    - a. Paul makes this point very clear in Acts 17 with the religious leaders of Athens.
    - b. In Romans 1 Paul states that though humanity know that there is one true God they reject it and suppress it. The result is that they create false gods rather than honor and worship the true God.
    - c. 1 Corinthians 8 is a good passage to begin to make my transition to the next point.
      - (1) vs 1-6.
      - (2) Affirms the truth of one God.
      - (3) But introduces the person of Jesus Christ as well. In vs 6 he states the oneness of God and then without pausing makes a partial triune statement, the Father and Jesus Christ in co-equal terms.

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6. This leads us to the important point that though the bible strongly affirms the oneness of God it also shows the plurality in the Godhead.

B. Plurality in the bible.

1. Genesis 1:1.

- a. (אֱלֹהִים) *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) It is a use that is unique to the Old Testament to use this plural term.
  - (2) What makes it even more important for us to note is that it is used in conjunction with singular verbs when speaking of God. 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)."
- 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.)

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- (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 began 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. 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.
6. 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.

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7. Isaiah 61.1-6.
8. Zechariah 10:6-12.
  - 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

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miracle of salvation that at some point the nation shall believe.

- (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.”

9. 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) It centers around the deadness of their hearts. The same condition that is true of all mankind.
- (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

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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."

## C. New Testament References to God's Plurality.

### 1. Matthew 3:16-17.

- a. It is here, having been baptized that we see the one of the clearest examples of the trinity.
  - (1) We have Jesus, the Spirit of God, and the voice from heaven who could only be the Father since He calls Jesus His Son.
  - (2) For the Jew, this would be very powerful. In Psalm 2 which speaks of the promised Messiah, God says, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee."
- b. This passage is so clear and so important that a saying was created, "Go to the Jordan and you will see the Trinity." (Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 1:263)

### 2. Matthew 28:19.

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- a. This is such a well known passage that for some the theological significance can be missed. Again we have the Trinity given. This passage is even more powerful due to the grammatical construction of the text
  - (1) There is only one verb in the command found in verses 19-20 — “make disciples.”
    - (a) It is done by going, baptizing, and teaching.
    - (b) Mark 16 tells us that the “going” speaks of preaching the gospel itself.
  - (2) In a nutshell, this is what defines a disciple. All three are to be present. We have no freedom to remove any one of these points out of the formula.
- b. But in this passage we also have a very powerful statement regarding the Trinity.
  - (1) Note the phrase, “. . . in the name of . . .” This is in the singular. There is only one name. But then He gives us three names.
  - (2) In the Greek Jesus has attached the definite article to each name. That repetition is not just words, but a way of emphasis on co-equality.
  - (3) This is very similar to the passages in Genesis and Isaiah, where we have the word, “Us” linked with singular words, like “image” or “likeness.”
  - (4) Here, therefore, we have both the unity and plurality expressed without embarrassment or explanation. Jesus is very comfortable with this concept.
  - (5) Makes all three person equal in authority and essence/nature.
- c. 1 Corinthians 6:11.
- d. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.
- e. 2 Corinthians 13:14.
  - (1) Here Paul gives us a benediction.
  - (2) Similar to the great commission. Paul is giving each one of them distinction and yet also equality.

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- f. Ephesians 1:3-14.
  - (1) This passage is triune in its construction. By the way, this triune style of constructing passages is actually rather common.
  - (2) Verses 3-6 speaks of the Father's work.
  - (3) Verses 7-12 speaks of Christ's works.
  - (4) Verses 13-14 is the work of the Spirit.
- g. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.
- h. 1 Peter 1:2.

### III. Conclusion.

- A. The bible is not vague about this central Christian doctrine. It clearly develops it throughout the bible and it is something that is part of sound doctrine.
- B. We have seen that the bible affirms that there is only one God.
- C. We have also see that the bible gives clear indications and statements about a plurality within what is called the Godhead.
- D. Next week we will simply look at the biblical witness regarding Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to see if it affirms and declares them to be God.

### Community Group Questions

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- **Review the passages that Pastor did not look up with the congregation. Follow the points as a group.**
- **Why does this really matter? Why is it not enough to just believe in God? Why the need to be so precise?**
- **If God is triune then how might that affect how you pray, sing songs to God, or simply live? In other words, is the trinity something that is simply a Christian doctrine but not really practical? And if it is then explain how and why?**