

THE TRINITY

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 3 | 9.12.2021

[Teaching today: Pastor Lee Wiggins]

Good morning, church! [ROBUST REPOSE FROM AUDIENCE] That's awesome. I'm so happy to see you today. We're having a wonderful day at church this morning, and coffee and bagels and all of you talking and just, it's been fun. And those of you online all over the world, I mean, it's so cool to be able to be with you. [TO THE AUDIENCE] Is it cool to be with them? Like, say hello to them, say hello to the people online. [AUDIENCE CHEERS AND CLAPS] So thank you for jumping on with us and being out there. I hope that you're well today, I hope that you're blessed today.

By the way, those of you who came prepared to give your gifts and your offerings, as you leave today there are boxes on the posts right outside these doors, you can put your gifts in those boxes, or you can jump online and do it. One of the things we love to say around here is those things that you automate get done, so just automate it and get it done, but beyond that it's more than getting it done. Thank you for giving. Thank you for just knowing that what you're doing in your giving of your tithes and your offerings matter and make a difference for all of eternity.



Hey, today we're here to talk about God. That's why we come to Calvary. It's the thing that we put as our focus here, it's who we worship, and it's just the most important thing that we're doing. We're in the middle of a series called DOCTRINE. The first two weeks of this we talked about The Bible to decide hey, is this Book something that I want to trust as my source for truth? If so, then we can move on. And so I'm trusting today that you have said yes, this is my source for truth and I'm going to learn about God through this Book.

There is a longing in each one of us that can't be satisfied outside of God, and those of us who have been on any kind of a chase, chasing down any path we get it, we know it, we're just like longing. And there's all sorts of substitutes, all sorts of things that try to fill that hole that only God should be filling. But at the end it's just sort of... it just doesn't do it; it doesn't get the job done. We're looking for someone to find... we want to find God, we've chased that down, we want to know Him, we want to know who He is, and when we do we want to follow Him. And that is our goal, that is our ambition. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians Chapter 3 – that I might know Him¹ – and so that's what we're doing. And in the midst of all of this one of the big questions that anyone asks in the course of their life at some point is, "Who is my God?" and they figure that out, and when they do there is incredible freedom in that.

To answer that question today we're going to talk to you about our God being a triune God, one God who exists in three distinct and equal persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, The Trinity. When you think about the fact that the God of the universe sent His Son to this earth, the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, and through Mary God's Son came into the world, Jesus was born into this world. And when Jesus, God's Son, came into the world He revealed to all of us the Father, the One who had never been seen. He said if you want to see the Father, you can see Me, but sinful mankind hung Jesus on the cross, One who had never sinned, One who was fully God, hung Jesus on the cross where He suffered and He died. And when He gave up His last He said, "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**"² And He laid in a tomb for three days when His Father raised Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. When He rose He ascended into Heaven where He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God interceding on our behalf. Before He left this earth He says when I go I am going to send yet

¹ See Philippians 3:8-11

² Luke 23:34 (ESV)

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another comforter³ to each one of us who believe the Good News to help us through the course of this life. And someday when we die 2nd Corinthians⁴ told us to be away from the body will be to be present with the Lord. What we believe about God matters.

You get the wrong God – you think your stuff is your god, that can't save you, it can't even help you through times when that stuff goes away. You need to have the right God and what you believe about that right God helps you know how to make it through this day. You can't just make it up in your head and you can't just accept the last thing someone explained to you. And we have to decide, as I've already said, where we're going to get our information about God. Once we've gotten that information about God and we've decided where we're going to get it, we go there and we try to get to know Him more. And when we get to know Him more—and this is the fun thing about what we get to do here, you come here, you know God, you want to know Him, you're searching for Him, you're growing in Him, and as you learn a little bit more, as you come a little bit closer to understanding who He is, we respond after I'm done talking today, after we talk more about who God is, and you go, "Wow, God!" we respond in singing and in praise and lifting up the name of God, which we're looking forward to doing here in a few moments.

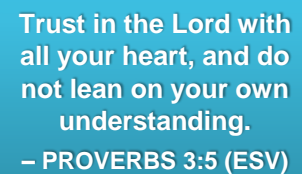
I want you to hear Hebrews Chapter 11, verse 6, I believe this is a really key verse as we begin to study God. Over the next three weeks we're going to understand and talk about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; each week we're going to cover a different person of the Trinity. Today we're going to begin to understand the Trinity, understanding who God is. Listen to what Hebrews 11:6 says, it's sort of as if it's a primer on this subject. It says this:

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

– HEBREWS 11:6 (ESV)

We're going to be a people today who have to step forward in faith, to have to say, "God said it here about Himself. I'm going to dig into this, I'm going to get to know it, and I am going to believe in Him. I'm going to believe that He does exist. And as I seek Him, I am convinced as *you* seek Him, He's going to reward you as you have this richness of knowing who your God is.

Now I believe this subject of The Trinity that we're going to talk about today is absolutely foundational to Christianity. You're going to hear as I share a number of different things with you where people veer away from this and how it leads them to get the wrong god, and if you get the wrong god not knowing the right God, you don't get eternity, you don't get to spend eternity with God. We're going to talk this morning that this subject of The Trinity is absolutely huge. It's both a mystery, it's a difficult subject to wrap our arms around, and yet God has revealed Himself to us and He wants to be known and He wants us to know Him. But we also have to realize He's finite – we're infinite; He's holy, separate, other, beyond us – we're not. And yet He's a God who seeks to come near us and invite us in. What we're going to talk today about is a mystery, but throughout Scripture it is unwound for us *if* we'll just look for it and understand it. What I'm hoping as I lay out this subject of The Trinity this morning is that it's going to give you a bit of a framework so that when you're reading through Scripture you'll be able to get to know God better.



Trust in the Lord with
all your heart, and do
not lean on your own
understanding.
– PROVERBS 3:5 (ESV)

³ John 14:16 & 26; John 15:26; John 16:7

⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:6b-8

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And as you get to know God better, it's like this black-and-white world that we live in will be turned into color and will be turned into high definition, that all of a sudden we're going to start taking our eyes off the things that are discouraging us and we're going to start putting our eyes on God, and you'll see that as we go through this. Our pursuit is to get to know God, to get to know an infinite God, for you to have a great big God that is bigger than you, that is bigger than your problems, that is bigger than what's going on in this world at the present time. A God who knows you intimately, that cares about every aspect of your life. Father God, a true Father, you know, that thing that you are looking for in your own daddy that just never is quite there, that you're going to find *only* when you have a relationship with Father God.

That you'll get to know Jesus Christ, His Son, holy God, who left Heaven, who came here to save us and to forgive us, to take on Himself the punishment that was ours. That you'll get to know the Holy Spirit of God who wants to abide in you, and if you put your trust in Him, He will move in and He will abide in you and He will teach you and He will help you and He will convict you and guide you through life. Something I believe that most of us just totally miss. Understand, if we miss Father God, if we miss the salvation of our Savior Jesus Christ, and if we miss the opportunity to be led by the Holy Spirit, if we miss the beauty of the Trinity – we have missed so much. I want you to get to know God and that's why we're going to delve into this study. So let's just jump right into it.

We're talking about The Trinity today and I'd like to give you a definition of The Trinity, we're going to put that definition up on the screen. By the time we're done I want this to be so emblazoned into your head – if you want to take a picture of it you can, help you understand how to go through this series on doctrine that we're doing.



<https://www.cfdowntown.com/doctrine>

If you go to our website – [cfdowntown.com/doctrine](https://www.cfdowntown.com/doctrine) – you're going to see every week on there every doctrine that we're going through. We've covered the first two weeks on the Bible and there we have outlines, we have notes, we have the transcripts of the messages, we have a podcast, we have a Thursday night Bible Study Hub video that is live every Thursday night at 9, we'd invite you to join onto that. It'll be on all of our social platforms, encourage you to jump on that. What we did this last week we talked about The Trinity and people just asked questions for an hour. I was sort of like just blown over by all the questions but we answered them, we're just taking this deeper.

And then we're encouraging you to jump into a small group, so there's a list of small group questions on there to continue this conversation. I would share this with you, there's no other place that I know of that is easier to get this information right now than to be here on Sunday mornings, to jump on our website, to be on our podcast, to be on Bible Study Hub, and to just jump on there and be part of this with us. Print this stuff out, download it onto your phone, know this. This is stuff that I want you teaching your kids, the stuff I want you to know, and I want this stuff in your mind.

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Here's the definition: One God, this is the definition of Trinity:

One God who eternally exists as three distinct and equal persons – Father, Son, and Spirit – who are each fully and equally God.

When we talk about The Trinity—by the way, that word's not in the Bible. Whenever you bring that up it'll be the first thing someone will slap you with, "That word's not in the Bible." Well, just because the word is not in the Bible does not mean that the concept that it's trying to communicate is not there. There are a whole lot of other words that we use to describe God that aren't found in the Bible, so what we want to do right now is try to understand does this exist in the Bible. I'm going to tell you it exists all over the Bible. I'm going to just start you right back in the very first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1 says:

¹ In the beginning,

— [POINTS AT THE AUDIENCE, THEY REPLY "GOD"] so you have the Bible memorized. I just said one verse and you already know what the word is, and that word for God is *Elohim*. In the original language and that word Elohim is in the plural – "In the beginning, God" – that word is in the plural. Let me keep on explaining that to you:

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And

— listen to this next word:

the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

– GENESIS 1:1 (ESV)

Let me go back to our definition: One God who eternally exists in three distinct and equal persons. So in this very first verse we have Elohim, we have God, one God, and yet His word is spelled out in the plural there in the original language. And it says in that second verse, it says "**the Spirit of God was hovering over the earth.**" So in the first verse we have the Father, we have the Spirit, you might say where's the Son in the first verse? In the New Testament of our Bibles in the book of Colossians Chapter 1 it says this:

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God,

— speaking of Jesus. Jesus has come to make God visible to us; God who has never been seen is seen through Jesus to each one. Now listen to these next couple words, it says He is:

the firstborn of all creation.

– COLOSSIANS 1:15 (ESV)

The cults will tell you that that one little phrase, "**the firstborn of all creation**" means that Jesus was born, that He was created. Now if Jesus is born and if Jesus is created then He's not God. To be God you'd have to be eternal and if He was born and He was created then He is just like one of us and maybe somehow elevated, but He's not God. I'm gonna tell you two things here in a moment about this phrase, "**the firstborn of all creation.**"

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One God who eternally exists as three distinct and equal persons.

The word *firstborn* is the word *prōtotokos* and that word means "firstborn."⁵ By the way, last week we told you your translations are awesome. Like, you don't have to know the original language to get the right meaning of the word, so when it says firstborn it means firstborn. But when you dig down on that definition a little bit more it talks about rank, it talks about position, so when it talks about firstborn it's speaking of a rank and a position.

4416 [e]
prōtotokos
πρωτότοκος
[the] firstborn

The word *prōtotokos* is like the word, um, well, it would be the same as saying "first lady," so was the first lady of America or is the first lady of America, the first woman ever born in America. We would never say that, we know that that's a position of honor, that's a place of being lifted up. So this word does not mean that it was the first person born but rather a position of honor. And, in fact, context matters.

Context Matters.

One of the things we're going to share with you as we go through a lot of these texts, and if you were to listen to our Bible Study Hub from this last Thursday night, people would ask questions and they'd say, "Hey, here's a little phrase and a verse, what's that mean? Does this mean that Jesus isn't as great as God and that maybe He's something lesser than God?" And I would tell the people right away, "Hey, let's go to that verse and let's look at it." And as I read the verse before it and the verse after it, the context quickly made it very clear that we had popped something out of the context that sounded like one thing but was a whole other thing.

Listen to the rest of the verse of Colossians Chapter 1:15-18:

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

— What's that mean? Well, we know what the words means, *prōtotokos*, that it means "firstborn," that it means a place of position —

¹⁶ For by him all things were created,

— Wait a minute, "by him" – by Jesus all things were created? He created all things:

in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things,

— He is eternal, we look at this context, it all comes together for us —

and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he

— Jesus —

might be preeminent.

– COLOSSIANS 1:16-18 (ESV)

He is God.

So when we read in the first verse of the Bible that God created the world, Elohim, He is in the plural. We go further to see that the Holy Spirit was there at creation in verse 2, and we go to Colossians 1 to find out that Jesus was there and He created and He was part of that creation. If you just keep on moving through the book of Genesis – I'm just going to quickly throw a few things out, you'll see it if

⁵ Source: BibleHub.com at <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/colossians/1.htm>
Prōtotokos Word Study: <https://biblehub.com/greek/4416.htm>

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you want to trace this down, Genesis Chapter 1, verse 26, so we're still in the first chapter of Genesis, God says:

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

– GENESIS 1:26 (ESV)

Plural, the Trinity, you see in this that God is speaking of Himself as "us" and "our." Genesis 3:22:

22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.

– GENESIS 3:22 (ESV)

In Judaism's basic confession of faith found in Deuteronomy 6:4 it says:

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

– DEUTERONOMY 6:4 (ESV)

That word *one* in that verse is the word *echad*,⁶ it's a Hebrew word, and that word *one* oftentimes you want to try to understand what that means is "one" God. You look at other verses where that word is used, like the word *echad*. Another place that word is used is in Genesis 1:5.

Genesis 1:5

HEB: בִּקְרָא יוֹם אֶחָד : פ

NAS: and there was morning, *one* day.

KJV: and the morning *were the first* day.

INT: morning day *one*

Genesis 1:5 says night and day will become *echad* day, night and day will become *one* day—two things become one but still a day.

So you have night and day, two things – one day.

There's a passage later on in the Bible in Numbers Chapter 13 where the word *echad* is spoken of as one and it speaks of a cluster of grapes.⁷ So you have a cluster of grapes with all those grapes all over it. I almost brought that in to show you but, I mean, I think you can picture that, one cluster with a whole bunch of grapes on it. One cluster – lots of grapes – on one. So when we talk about this confession of faith, "**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God . . . is one,**" *echad*, we're talking about one God. And we're gonna keep on telling you in our definition of Trinity – one God and in three persons. We're talking about tri-unity, three in one.

So let's take you back to the definition a minute because I want you to just get this in your head, and once you get this in your head it's gonna be powerful. So the definition of the Trinity is this:

One God who eternally exists as three distinct and equal persons – Father, Son, and Spirit – who are each fully and equally God.

So we're going to keep on saying this till we get it. One what? [WAITS FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSE] Yeah, I know, you're scared to get it wrong. One [AUDIENCE: "GOD"]. Three who's? Persons. One God, three persons. One what? One God. Three who's? Three persons. That's going to be the template for understanding The Trinity. If you can get

echad: one
Original Word: אֶחָד
Part of Speech: Adjective
Transliteration: echad
Phonetic Spelling: (ekh-awd')
Definition: one



And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them;

– NUMBERS 13:23a

⁶ Echad screenshots source: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/259.htm>

⁷ Numbers 13:23

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that drilled into your head, you will always understand The Trinity. Now, understand it? We've talked about that already. This is a big subject. This is a mystery. Hard to wrap our brains around, but the best we can with what God has described to us we're going to understand it. One God.

When we're defining The Trinity, we're just going to grab onto this word right here for a moment—one God—we're talking about Christianity, the God of the Bible, the Bible speaks of *monotheism*. We do not believe that we have many gods. We do not believe that we have more than one God. We do not have three gods, we have one God in three persons. One God, three persons. *Tritheism*, and some people believe that, it's a false view, believe that we have three Gods—we do not believe that.

Tritheism is the teaching that the Godhead is really three separate beings forming three separate gods. This erring view is often misplaced by the cults for the doctrine of the Trinity which states that there is but one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the trinity is, by definition, monotheistic. That is, it is a doctrine that affirms that there is only one God in all the universe.

We have one God in three persons. We have one "big G" God. He is holy God. He is Elohim, that fourth word in the Old Testament in the plural. When we say we have one God we're monotheistic, that is extremely exclusive. We'll talk about that in a moment. When we talk about the exclusivity of Jesus being the only One who can save us, we'll talk about that in two weeks when we talk about Jesus.

for I am God, and there is
no other; I am God, and
there is none like me.
—ISAIAH 46:9b (ESV)

People, whenever they hear "exclusivity," freak out, but if it is true that there is only one God there would be no situation in which we would ever be okay with saying anything else. There is one "big G" God. So what about all the "little g" gods that you hear about? Well, first of all, anything that is not the true God replaces the true God in our life and the Bible describes that as an idol.

The Scriptures are clear—don't have idols before you—those things that take the place of the one true "big G" God. Furthermore, and I would encourage you to do a quick

They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.
— DEUTERONOMY 32:17 (ESV)

research project on this, it'll only take you a minute to Google it, but the Scripture over and over says that if there is a "little g" god it is not a god but is actually a demon. Drill down on that a little bit and ponder that a little bit and realize that

anything that is not this one true God is demonic, and we should be scared of that. So even that idol is demonic. That thing that takes the place of God in your life is demonic. What are the things taking the place of God in your life that have become "little g" gods for you? *Well, let's... I don't know if I want to put it there.* Okay, call it an idol, call it for what it is – they're demonic. One God.

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.
— 1 CORINTHIANS 10:19-20 (ESV)

Listen to just a couple verses, Deuteronomy 4:35:

To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him.

— DEUTERONOMY 4:35 (ESV)

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That's what Deuteronomy 4:35 says. Let me take you to Isaiah 43:10-11. By the way, if you want to take some time this week and just have a little special time with God, go to Isaiah 43-44-45-46, right in there, I have been... I almost wanted to just take this and put it all aside and just teach you on Isaiah 43-46 this week. If you're dealing with fear in your life, if you're having some weighty stuff, if you have something coming at you that you're not sure what to do with, go dig into these passages. You're just going to see the God of the universe really in that passage there, in those chapters, talking about how He's there for you, how He's going to fight for you, how He's going to step in in the middle of these difficult, tense situations. Powerful section of Scripture. But listen to Isaiah 43:10-11, he says:

The Father is God
Isaiah 43:10, Isaiah 44:6, Isaiah 45:21-22

¹⁰ "You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. ¹¹ I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.

– ISAIAH 43:10-11 (ESV)

All right. I'm gonna—one God—I'm gonna take you back to our definition. So The Trinity: One God, three persons. We're going to go back to one God, monotheism, there is only one God, anything else is a demon. Here's our definition again:

One God who eternally exists as three distinct and equal persons – Father, Son, and Spirit – who are each fully and equally God.

So one God, three persons. One what? [AUDIENCE: "GOD"] Three who? [AUDIENCE: "PERSONS"] Persons. Father [AUDIENCE: "SON AND HOLY SPIRIT"]. I could stop but my time's not up, so we'll just keep going for a few moments.

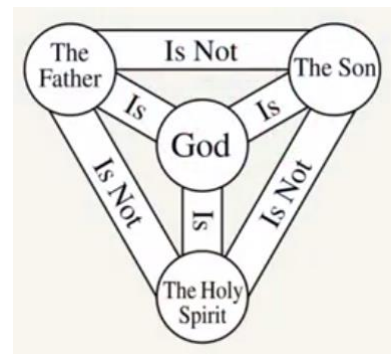
By the way, there's a false teaching in this area—three persons—there is a false teaching called

Modalism is probably the most common theological error concerning the nature of God. It is a denial of the Trinity. Modalism states that God is a single person who, throughout biblical history, has revealed Himself in three modes or forms.

modalism, and modalism is a false view that says the Father, Son, and Spirit are in different modes or forms of the same divine person. So God sometimes is the Holy Spirit, God sometimes is the Son, is sometimes

the Father, and He just goes back and forth. No. We believe, and that's why our definition is important, that God eternally exists as three distinct and equal persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

So let me clarify this a little bit. I'm gonna put a diagram up on the screen and I want you to just take a peek at this because hopefully this will in pictorial form for those of you are picture learners, help you understand it. So going back to modalism that would say God is all of these things, the Father is not the Son, three distinct and equal persons; the Son is not the Holy Spirit, three distinct and equal persons, the Holy Spirit is not the Father, three distinct and equal persons. But what we're going to say right now, and I'm going to walk you through just for a couple minutes, the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. So that's where I'm going to take you now for just the next



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couple minutes. The Father is God, we're talking about the three persons, one God, three persons, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

So we're going to start with the Father is God – rarely questioned. So when you talk about God it is even rarely pushed back on. You say, "Yeah, I believe in a God." Well, most people are okay with that because who knows what you're talking about, you could be talking about any god. Now if you said, "I believe in the triune God of the Bible" – wow, whoa-whoa-whoa, freak people out. But just God, God is sort of this nebulous word that's thrown out in all sorts of discourse. We believe in one God, the triune God.

Listen to Isaiah 43:10, and I shared with you a moment ago, I'm going to give you a couple of these Isaiah passages right here in talking about God. Isaiah 43:10:

¹⁰ "You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

– ISAIAH 43:10 (ESV)

Isaiah 44:6:

⁶ Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:

— just keeps on making it bigger and bigger —

"I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god."

– ISAIAH 44:6 (ESV)

If you want to drill down deeper on that, go to the book of The Revelation, start in Chapter 1 of Revelation where He says I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and you'll find out here that it's Jesus being God. I am the first, I am the last.

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

– REVELATION 1:8 (ESV)

⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

– REVELATION 21:6 (ESV)

¹³ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

– REVELATION 22:13 (ESV)

Isaiah 45:21:

²¹ "Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. ²² Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."

– ISAIAH 45:21 (ESV)



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Salvation is presented in the Old Testament and God continues to tell us to turn away from our sin, to turn away from our wickedness, and turn to God and be saved. When He talks here in this verse in Isaiah 45, what He's saying to us – I am the God of old. Isn't it cool to know that we have a God—not someone that's of the making of ours in our time—One who goes back to eternity past, One who goes to eternity future, who created us, who knows us, who knows everything about everything, so that we know that we can come to Him. Father is God. Let me go to the next one, the Son is God.

The Son is God

John 5:17-18, John 5:23, John 8:58-59, John 10:30-33,
Mark 14:61-62, Mathew 16:15-17, I Corinthians 8:6,
Romans 9:5, Titus 2:13, 1 John 5:20

By the way, this is the one that is pushed back on the hardest because it is in the Son that we are saved. It is in the Son that we are forgiven. And there's huge pushback because without the Son, without the forgiveness of sin, without the shedding of blood,

there is no forgiveness of sin.⁸ Satan would love to make Jesus go away. Satan did everything in his power all along to stop Jesus from ever even coming into this earth. He did not want the sacrifice, he did not want the substitute for our sins, the thing that met the righteous demands and requirements of God for a sinner separated from God, which is what we were at the time that we fell to sin.

It's the Trinity of God in Jesus Christ that sets Christianity apart from major world religions. Jesus come in the flesh to do for us what we could not do for ourselves—grace—nothing that we do. Every other world religion is about you doing to get yourself to God. Christianity is all about God coming to us and reaching out to us and doing for us to draw us back to Himself— that is grace. That is a marvelous message today, and because of the beauty of that message the enemy would like to shut that down and stop it. Other world religions have pushed back on this hard.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

– EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (ESV)

Mormons believe, even though the name Jesus Christ is in most of their titles and on most of their buildings, in effort to lead us astray they believe that Jesus is *a* god, not *the* God, and that even you as humans can become a god like Him. It's not what the Bible teaches. Jehovah Witnesses believe that Jesus is Michael the archangel and they deny that He is God. You see why this stuff's important? Wherever you go you need to find out what that church believes about Jesus.

Now oftentimes the belief about Jesus is just sort of shaded and hidden so you go, "Oh, the name of Jesus is there, it must be okay." New Age spirituality, they have a phrase that they like to use called "a Christ consciousness." Wouldn't that be cool if we have a Christ consciousness? Like, that sounds good. Like somehow maybe I'm aware of Christ, like I have this sense of His presence in my life. And people go, "Oh, yeah, yeah, that's good. Yeah, that's where I'm at." And what they do with that Christ consciousness is they say He wasn't God, Jesus just somehow attained to some level in His life of enlightenment and you can, too. So if Jesus got to this level of enlightenment He wasn't God, you can get to that, and that's sort of a Christ consciousness thing. It's a false view and it'll lead you astray.



Christ consciousness
a doctrine of demons

If you ever get to talking about The Trinity, after they're done telling you that the word *trinity* is not in the Bible and you go, "That's fine, there's a lot of words not in the Bible, we just use Trinity – tri-unity – to describe what we learn about God

⁸ See Hebrews 9:22, ". . . without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

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throughout the Bible." Once they're done asking you that question they're going to quickly tell you that Jesus never claimed to be God, and this is a statement that causes a lot of Christians to be thrown back in their seat and go, "Whoa! I don't know what to do with that." Let me just tell you this right now—it's not true. It's not true. Over and over Jesus claims to be God.

That's why I oftentimes tell those who are trying to figure out how to jump into the Bible, it's what we talked about last couple weeks, I had a lot of people ask me over the last couple weeks, "Where do I start in the Bible?" And I almost always say start with the book of John because in the book of John what you learn in the book of John is that Jesus is God. And so over and over that's going to be the message that's going to be thrown out in the book of John. And if you just trace through the book of John looking for every place that Jesus said He was God, you can quickly find it by finding out when the people around Him pick up stones to throw at Him; because whatever He just said, in their current modern mind of that time, they realized He's claiming to be God and in that time they understood that to be blasphemy which would be dealt with by stoning. You just can't claim to be God. And it says over and over – *and they picked up stones to throw at Him.*

If you're not God at that point you go, "Uh, I think I need to back off from that statement because I do that it's all over." And over and over through the book of John you see this explanation. Let me just start in John 5:17.

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, **"My Father is working until now, and I am working."**

¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

– JOHN 5:17-18 (ESV)

John 5:23:

²³ **"that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."**

– JOHN 5:23 (ESV)

John 8:58-59:

⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."** ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

– JOHN 8:58-59 (ESV)



Any one of the people listening on to Jesus at that point would totally connect with Exodus 3:14 at the burning bush where God is speaking to Moses and Moses is saying if I do this, if I go out and speak on your behalf and they ask me who sent me, who should I tell them sent me? And God says tell them that I AM that I AM sent you.

¹³ Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

– EXODUS 3:13-14 (ESV)

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When Jesus says I AM He couldn't be more clear with the people that He is God.

John 10:30-33, Jesus says:

³⁰ "I and the Father are one."

³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. ³² Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" ³³ The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

– JOHN 10:30-33 (ESV)

Yes, He claimed to be God.

Thomas, one of His disciples, he saw Him after He had risen from the dead, he looks at Jesus in John 20:8 and he says:

²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

– JOHN 20:8 (ESV)

Matthew 16, verses 15 and following:

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

— by the way, that's the question we need to answer, who do you say that I am? —

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

– MATTHEW 16:15-17 (ESV)

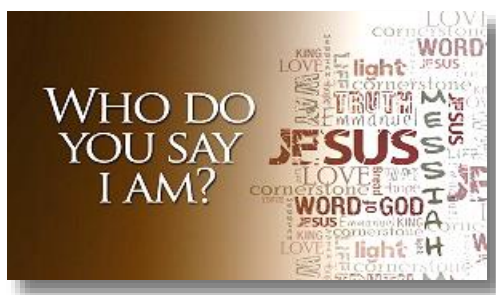
We could go on. Let me read what Jesus' closest disciple to Him said, 1st John 5:20:

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ.

– and then John said this:

He is the true God and eternal life.

– 1 JOHN 5:20 (ESV)



Father is God. The Son is God.

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One more, the Holy Spirit is God. I'm gonna take you to Acts Chapter 5, verses 3 & 4, and Peter says:

³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit

— now you're going to find out in this verse that the Holy Spirit is God —

and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart?

— and then Peter says this:

You have not lied to man but to God."

– ACTS 5:3-4 (ESV)

Just take you back, "**why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?**" You have not lied to man, you have lied to God, the Holy Spirit is God. Let's go back to our definition of The Trinity:

One God who eternally exists as three distinct and equal persons – Father, Son, and Spirit – who are each fully and equally God.

One God, three persons, all God. So why does that matter? You see, The Trinity reminds us that the Father is God, that the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, that they are equally God even though they're distinct as persons. Thus, they all have every attribute of God. Next week we're going to begin to talk about the attributes of God, so like all knowing, or love, things like that, all three members of The Trinity have.

The Trinity has lived in relationship in such a way that we didn't need to be created to create a relationship, but because of The Trinity we can have relationship with God. And He invites us into relationship, into a caring relationship with Him, where we can find true love, a love that stretches back before time into all eternity. You see, God's a personal God, He cares about us, He loves us and He knows us. He comes to save us from our sins, to forgive us. He sends us His Holy Spirit when we put our trust in Him to help us live our lives. The Holy Spirit teaches us, speaks through us, He prays on our behalf, He convicts us.

A couple weeks from now we're going to talk about the Holy Spirit, it's one of those things we don't talk about enough because when we put our trust in Jesus He takes up residence in us and the Holy Spirit empowers us and lives through us. We can have the very presence of God with us every hour of every day helping us to know His Word, know what to say, and to move forward in our lives. Jesus Himself, the Scripture tells us, because He lived on this earth He understands us, He understands our suffering, He understands our pain, He understands the weight and the burden of the life that we live in.

So we ask ourselves why does The Trinity matter? Let me ask you a couple questions here for a moment to get you thinking:

- Where are you at with your general feelings about life right now?
- What's weighing you down, what's hurting you, what's the burden that you carry in here this morning?
- Are you in that spot where you're afraid of getting COVID? Are you afraid of dying? Are you afraid of getting vaccinated? Are you afraid of the vaccinated? Are you afraid of losing your job because you're not vaccinated, or you lost your card or whatever the deal is?

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- Are you lonely in here today? I mean, there's all sorts of people sitting around and you feel incredibly lonely. Or maybe you're sitting alone, you feel lonely because that person who should be sitting next to you didn't come. Or you're single and it's just like no one sees me and everyone's, like, afraid of me, and it's like where are those people that I should be connected with and isn't this the place where I should be meeting them?
- Maybe there's something going on in a relationship, you're struggling, you're struggling with your spouse. Maybe it's your kids, you can't control them when they're little. Or maybe they're big now and maybe they're teenagers right now and usually you know what to do with them, and they're going down paths that just make no sense and you're not sure what to say. Maybe they're adults now and you're not even sure what to do with that and you're just praying for them and you're scared.
- Maybe for you work is... I don't know, you fill in the blank, and you just wish so bad you could just march in there tomorrow and quit like that person did last week, and yet you're not sure you should or could or are being wise.

How do you get through these things? And I'm just trying to get you thinking, that's all I'm trying to do, I haven't been complete in that list. How do we figure out tomorrow? How do we figure out today? How do you know what to do next? One God—who is a personal God, who invites us to turn to Him, who has forgiven you, who loves you, who gives you His Holy Spirit to help you through today and to help you through life, to depend on, who you can pray to—to God Himself in the name of Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

And I want to as we end here today, I want to pray a prayer drawn from two verses in Scripture, Romans 15 and 2nd Corinthians Chapter 13. I want to pray a prayer that calls upon the Trinity, God in His fullness, God in all of who He is, and I want pray it over you. Maybe no one's ever prayed that kind of prayer blessing over you, and I just want to pray that over you today. And then our team is just going to lead us in worship. Remember, *theology* – the study of who God is, leads to *doxology* – which means praise. Oh, the glorious power and might and wonder of our God and Savior, and we want you to lift that up. We want you to praise Him, but before we do that, if you've come in with this burden, you shouldn't leave here with this burden. I want to pray the power of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit upon you in the very words that the Apostle Paul prayed over us.

I'm going to ask you to stand up right now. I'm going to invite you even as we begin to sing if you want to just take time to come up here and kneel at the front, this is what we do as a church as we respond to God, you can come and go. If someone comes up here, would you come up and lay your hand on their shoulder and pray with them? We should not be alone in this place; this should not be a lonely place. And yes, God's going to meet you in this place, but we want to meet you, too, so just feel free to come to the front and kneel down. Would you bow your heads right now, I'm just going to pray right from Scripture, these are God's words to you:



May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Jesus Christ, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ROMANS 15:5 (ESV)]

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. [ROMANS 15:13 (ESV)]

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The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. [2 CORINTHIANS 13:14 (ESV)]

Amen.

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Keywords: Trinity, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, believe

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