

Building the *CORE* Series
The Trinity: A *CORE* Mystery
Selected Verses
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Our physical bodies are made up of several core muscles which keep our bodies functioning properly if we keep them exercised and in shape. Our spiritual walk also has several *CORE* beliefs we need to exercise in order to glorify God. During this sermon series, the *CORE* beliefs we will focus on are the Word of God, the existence of God, how we are saved, set apart and glorified, the Trinity, and Jesus Christ as prophet, priest and king. It is our hope that God will use this series to strengthen us individually and as a church. Today, we will look at the mystery of the Trinity.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Trinity – the doctrine that God eternally exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit –and each person is fully God, and there is one God.

It appears that Tertullian was right in affirming that the doctrine of the Trinity must be divinely revealed, not humanly constructed. It is so absurd from a human standpoint that no one would have invented it. We do not hold to the doctrine of the Trinity because it is self evident or logically cogent. We hold to it because God has revealed that this is what He is like. As someone has said of this doctrine: *“Try to explain it, and you’ll lose your mind but try to deny it, and you’ll lose your soul.”* (Erickson, Systematic Theology, p.342)

What’s the big deal about the Trinity?

I. If Jesus is not God, then this creates many _____.

Atonement for our sins – If Jesus is merely a created being, and not fully God, then it is hard to see how he, a creature, could bear the full wrath of God against all of our sins.

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

Justification by faith – If Jesus is not fully God then we would rightly doubt whether or not He can save us completely. Could we really depend on any creature/created being for our salvation?

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

Worship of Jesus – If Jesus is not fully God then why should we pray or worship Him. If He is a created being it would be idolatrous to worship Him. (Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 5:12-14).

Philippians 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

II. The _____ is affirmed as fully God.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Acts 5:3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

Psalms 139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

III. _____ is affirmed as fully God.

John 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

When the universe was created God the Father spoke the powerful creative words that brought it into being, God the Son was the divine agent who carried out these words (John 1:3; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:3), and God the Holy Spirit was active "moving over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2).

So it is as we would expect; if all three members of the Trinity are equally and fully divine, then they have all three existed for all eternity, and God has eternally existed as a Trinity. (John 17:5, 24).

A. Jesus' _____ testify that He is God.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

B. Jesus' enemies _____ Him because He is God.

John 10:30 "I and the Father are one." 31 Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him,

John 10:33 "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

IV. The Trinity models how to attain true _____unity.

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.

A. Same _____: Glorify God (John 16:14, 17:1, 17:5)

B. Same _____: Reconcile lost mankind to God

C. Same _____: Personal relationship with God and dependence upon God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to glorify God in our lives.

Read page 247 Importance of the Trinity, (Grudem's Syst. Theol)

Herman Bavinck says that "Athanasius understood better than any of his contemporaries that Christianity stands or falls with the confession of the deity of Christ and of the Trinity." He adds, "In the confession of the Trinity throbs the heart of the Christian religion, every error results from, or upon deeper reflection may be traced to, a wrong view of this doctrine.

"There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the

Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (The Articles of Religion 39 articles from the Church of England 1571).

Trinity and the Scriptural Evidence for it. (For further study)

The creation of man in God's image. Note that the Bible says, "Let us make man in our image. Genesis 1:26

The expulsion from Eden. Note that the Bible says, "The man has become like one of us." Genesis 3:22

The confusion at Babel. Note that the Bible says "Let us go down and confuse their language. Genesis 11:7

The usage of Hebrew word echad, meaning "one" but suggesting more than one person. Genesis 2:24, Deuteronomy 6:4

The teachings of King Agur, which suggests a son of God. Proverbs 30:4.

The plural forms used to refer to God. Eccl. 12:1, Isa. 54:5

The divine conversations in Isaiah, using a plural form of pronoun. Isaiah 6:8; 48:16; 63:9-10

The divine conversations in the Psalms, which also use plurals. Psalm 2:1-9; 45:6-8, 110:1-5

The baptism of Christ, wherein the Father, Son, and Spirit were all present. Matthew 3:16-17

The teachings of Jesus about the Father and Spirit. John 14:16

The Trinitarian baptismal formula. Matthew 28:19-20

The Trinitarian Apostolic benediction. 2 Corinthians 13:14

(¹Willmington, H. L.: Willmington's Book of Bible Lists. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House, 1987)

