

THE TRINITY

This topic was briefly discussed in Chapter 7 of the Follow class. Trinity is a theological term used to define God as an undivided unity expressed in the threefold nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Some people prefer the term “triunity” to describe the same phenomena.

As a distinctive Christian doctrine, the Trinity is considered as a divine mystery beyond human comprehension to be reflected upon only through scriptural revelation. While the term trinity does not appear in Scripture, the trinitarian structure appears throughout the New Testament to affirm that God Himself is manifested through Jesus Christ by means of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine is to be accepted by faith in the divine revelation; and although it is above reason and cannot be comprehended in its depth and fullness, it does not follow that it is opposed to reason.

The following four statements may help to clarify the concept of the Trinity:

- 1. God is One.** The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. His offer of salvation in the Old Testament receives a fuller revelation in the New Testament in a way that is not different, but more complete. The doctrine of the Trinity does not abandon the monotheistic faith of Israel.
- 2. God has three distinct ways of being in the redemptive event, yet He remains an undivided unity.** That God the Father imparts Himself to mankind through Son and Spirit without ceasing to be Himself is at the very heart of the Christian faith. A compromise in either the absolute sameness of the Godhead or the true diversity reduces the reality of salvation.
- 3. The primary way of grasping the concept of the Trinity is through the threefold participation in salvation.** The approach of the New Testament is not to discuss the essence of the Godhead, but the particular aspects of the revelatory event that includes the definitive presence of the Father in the person of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.
- 4. The doctrine of the Trinity is an absolute mystery.** It is primarily known, not through speculation, but through experiencing the act of grace through personal faith.

DISCUSSION

That God the Father imparts Himself to mankind through the Son and Spirit without ceasing to be Himself is at the very heart of the Christian faith.

One God

- Deuteronomy 6:4
- Mark 12:29
- 1 Corinthians 8:6a
- Exodus 20:3
- 1 Corinthians 8:5-6
- Psalm 110:1

The Father Is God

- Matthew 6:9, 32
- Hebrews 12:9
- John 4:23
- Romans 1:7
- 2 Corinthians 1:3
- Romans 15:6

The Son Is God

- John 8:58 (see Exodus 3:14 for the import of the "I am")
- Revelation 2:8
- John 17:5
- John 20:28
- Colossians 2:9
- Titus 2:13
- Hebrews 1:8
- John 1:1

The Holy Spirit Is God

- Acts 5:3-4
- Psalm 139:7-12
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-11
- Genesis 1:2
- John 3:5-6
- Romans 8:9-17
- Titus 3:5-7
- Matthew 3:15-17

CONCLUSION

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the great mysteries of the Christian Faith. That is, it transcends reason without being contrary to reason. God is one in essence but three in persons. He is a plurality within unity. God is a triunity, not a rigid singularity.

Once those concepts are understood, many of the barriers that separate even such radical monotheists as Orthodox Jews and Muslims fall.

DISCUSSION

How is God like/unlike our earthly fathers? What does that mean to you?

What is God's main role as the Son?

In which ways does God as the Holy Spirit influence your everyday life?

As humans, we all play different roles in life at the same time—we can also be a father, a son and a counselor at the same time.

How is this similar to or different from the Trinity?

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Like the Trinity, this topic was briefly discussed in Chapter 7 of the Follow Class. In that session, we looked at five attributes of God:

1. **GOD IS ETERNAL.** God was not created. He exists outside of time and space. There has never been a time when God did not exist.
2. **GOD IS OMNISCIENT.** God is all-knowing. He doesn't have to learn anything new or have anything explained. He knows everything that has happened, is happening now, and will happen in the future.
3. **GOD IS OMNIPRESENT.** God is ever-present. He is everywhere all at the same time. He is not limited by space as we know it.
4. **GOD IS OMNIPOTENT.** God is all-powerful. He can do anything that does not contradict His nature. There is no challenge too difficult for Him, no circumstance out of His control, and no problem beyond His ability to solve.
5. **GOD IS IMMUTABLE.** God does not change in character or in His promises. Because He is perfect in all His ways and faithful to His Word, His dealings with us are righteous and just.

To these five attributes, we can add two more:

6. **GOD IS INFINITE.** God is above our standards. He not only is wise and gracious; no one is wiser or more gracious than He is. It also means that He has no limits because He is beyond limits (See Job 42:2; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 145:3).
7. **GOD IS PERFECTION OR PERFECT.** He alone is complete and lacking nothing. His perfection is eternal and without defect.

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

These seven attributes are known as incommunicable. That is they belong only to God. He doesn't share these with us, except in a very limited fashion. For example:

- We were created, but as believers, we will live with Him forever.
- While some may be members of Mensa, none of us know everything.
- We can only be in one space at a time, no matter how hard we try.
- We can develop amazing strength, but it's not unlimited.
- We are actually called by God to change our sinful ways.
- We all are subject to certain Godly or man-made rules and regulations. No one is above the law.
- While Jesus commands us to be perfect (see Matthew 5:48), the moment we are we will be called home to heaven.

DISCUSSION

If we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, aren't we going to experience eternal life? Does that mean we are eternal as well?

It's pretty easy to understand that we can't be in more than one place at a time. How can God be everywhere at once?

What can't God do?

Sometimes, we can be really stubborn and refuse to change our minds. Does that mean we are also immutable?

If we are commanded by Jesus to be perfect (see Matthew 5:48), then how come God's perfection is considered an incommunicable attribute?

DIGGING DEEPER

Review again the verses we discussed on The Trinity and the Incommunicable Attributes of God. Underline, circle or mark in the margins of your Bible any words or thoughts that stand out to you.

In your own words, how might you explain the concept of the Trinity to a non-believer:

Which attribute of God creates the most awe and wonder in your mind? Why?

What questions do you still have that you would like to discuss further next time?

DAILY LIFE

Memorize this week:

Isaiah 55:8-9

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts."