

The Purple Pulpit

Installment #4

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A Christocentric Consideration of the Doctrine of the Trinity

We who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ refer to Him simultaneously as both “God” and “Son of God” without so much as a mental double-take. It is because of our belief in the teaching of the Trinity. I like to explain the doctrine of the Trinity of God by saying that if we were to take everything that the Scriptures say about God, and believe it all, that we would be forced to come to the conclusion that there is only one God, but that this God has eternally existed in three “Persons” (for lack of a better term). From the earliest time since the appearance of the Son of God in flesh, crucified and resurrected, the church of Christ Jesus has held to this understanding. The most impacting result of an understanding of the Trinity (as seen in its everlasting effect upon the one who will believe it – John 8:24) is the recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ as full and absolute Deity. Let’s explain and document the Scriptural evidence for this terribly important doctrine, and do so in a coherent order that will yield a real faith-comprehension (Hebrews 11:1).

First, the Scriptures are clear that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 43:10 and 44:6; John 17:3; 1 Timothy 2:5 [Hundreds of other verses and passages could be supplied.]). The Scriptures call this God “the Father” (James 1:27; 2 Peter 1:17) and “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3). But the Scriptures just as clearly refer to Christ as God (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1 ff.; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20; Jude 4). Then the Holy Spirit is likewise referenced as God (Acts 5:3,4). We then see these three referred to together, and as sharing the same name (2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19). That these three Persons exist simultaneously (not as one person acting in three modes or roles) is unmistakably seen in their distinct identities at the same moment at the immersion of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:10, 11; Luke 3:22). Further underscoring this is the subject/object relationship seen in their inter-Trinitarian interactions (John 14:16; Acts 2:33; 1 Peter 1:2, and scores of others). Finally, there is the witness to what may be called the “mutual co-inherence of Deity” wherein each member of the tri-unity shares the same Deity, while each personally possesses its fullness (John 10:37, 38; John 14:9,10; Colossians 2:9).

We may therefore summarize the teaching of the Trinity as the truth that the one true and living God has always existed, with a unity of essence and plurality of Persons, in the three personal and theologically-distinguishable designations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each fully God, none preceding the others in time or eternity. As relates to our subject matter in these papers, this theology establishes the full, true, essential, and undiminished eternal Deity of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ!