

## Basic Christianity

### Part 9 – The Trinity – Pt 2

John 1:1,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (14) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

We're looking at the Trinity in the New Testament, and focusing on the deity of Christ.

People have no trouble accepting that Jesus was a great man, probably the world's best spiritual teacher, even a prophet.

But God? That's a different matter.

So today we're going to look at: Who is Jesus?

### The New Testament Interprets the Old Testament

Ps 102:25-27 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. (26) They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. (27) But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.

Who is it talking about who did all this?

The beginning of this psalm tells us that it is addressed to Yahweh.

Heb 1:8-12 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your Kingdom. (9) You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." (10) And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. (11) They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; (12) Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail."

Same psalm – but this time it's talking about the Son – Jesus.

Is 48:12-13 Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, My called: I am He, **I am the First, I am also the Last.** (13) Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together.

Rev 1:17-18 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; **I am the First and the Last.** (18) I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

In Isaiah, Yahweh is speaking, but in Revelation the same description is applied to Jesus.

### The Trinity In The New Testament

John 8:56-59 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad. (57) Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" (58) Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." (59) Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Why did the Jews want to stone Jesus?

Notice that Jesus didn't say, "Before Abraham was, I was"?

He said, "I AM".

He was referring back to Ex 3:13-15 where I AM is the exact name whereby God revealed Himself to Moses.

Clearly Jesus thought that He was around a long time before He was born – even before the creation of the world.

I AM was the name of God – and Jesus was claiming it for Himself.

And the penalty for blasphemy was stoning (Lev 24:16)

John 10:30-33 – The Jews want to stone Jesus for claiming oneness with God.

John 14:6-9 – When Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, Jesus claimed that if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father.

Phil 2:5-7 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (6) who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, (7) but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Paul writes that Jesus is equal with God.

John 20:25-29 – Thomas worshipped Jesus.

If men or angels were worshiped as God, they would not accept it, but instead of rebuking him, Jesus said, “Because you have believed ...”

Jesus even believed that He pre-existed His incarnation.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

The Great Commission is well known, but have you ever considered its implications?

Mat 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you (plural) always, even to the end of the age.

Who would dare say something like that if they didn't believe they were God?

Using that formula, Jesus linked Himself equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Matt 19:16-17 is often misunderstood.

Jesus asks the question: Why do you call Me good?

This is taken to prove that Jesus didn't think He was God, yet in the following verse He claims to be good.

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

In Matt 19, Jesus wasn't denying that He was God; just the opposite – He was checking this guy out.

In effect, He was asking: Do you really understand who I am?

Matt 17:1-2 This is the account of the transfiguration.

What happened? There is a clue in the meaning of transfigured.

In Greek, it is made up of two words, “one referring to the outward expression one gives to his inmost true nature, the other, signifying a change of activity.<sup>1</sup>”

A change of activity which gave outward expression to His true nature.

In other words, there was a change whereby Jesus gave expression to His true inward nature – His deity.

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead (divine nature) bodily

### **What Difference Does It Really Make?**

Why is it important? Who really cares? What difference does it make?

#### **1. You cannot claim to know God without knowing who He is.**

There is a difference between knowing someone and knowing about someone.

For a person to receive salvation, they have to know God, not just know about Him.

To know God is to know that He is triune (three in one).

## **2. Jesus could not redeem you unless He were fully man and fully God.**

If a group of people were being held hostage and were to be executed, one might offer to give his life in exchange for someone else.

But the abductors might easily say, “You can choose one of these people to die for, but you can’t swap your life for all of them.”

### **Value for value.**

If Jesus were **just** a human, He would be in the same position. He would have to choose which human He would give His life for. One life for one life – value for value.

But because He is fully human **and** fully divine, and His value is infinitely more than a human being, He could die for everybody.

## **3. Knowing God in three ways enables us to serve Him effectively.**

In our next study, we’ll look at how each member of the Godhead gives us a unique understanding of what God is like.

This in turn allows us to serve Him more effectively.

## **4. The Trinity explains God’s understanding of community and why He sees it as so important.**

Why does God want us to get along with each other?

Why is unity so important that there’s a special blessing for it?

Why has God made us interdependent and composed the church as a body?

Why does the NT give far more emphasis to the community of the church than to the individual?

Why is the church so important in God’s sight?

You can’t fully understand the answers to these questions unless you understand God as a Trinity.

Gen 1:27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

It doesn’t say “God created **a** man”, but “God created man”, speaking of all mankind.

That’s why it says, “male and female He created them”.

In other words, He created man (singular) as a multiple (male and female – plural), in God’s image.

That’s plural, but with the purpose of being one – just like God is one.

We’ve got to understand that at the beginning of the old creation, God instituted marriage.

At the beginning of the new creation, He instituted the church.

Both are to reflect the image of God – community expressed in unity.

## **5. Father, Son and Holy Spirit illustrate different aspects of God’s nature.**

Whenever one of the three dimensions of God’s nature is neglected, we have an incomplete experience of God.

We will come to see that most problems with which we struggle in the everyday life of our churches are, in the final analysis, based on an incomplete understanding of the threefold revelation of God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament: Vol 3, Golden Nuggets* p26

<sup>2</sup> Schwarz, Christian A. *The Threefold Art of Experiencing God* p 9