



Title: Transformed by Trinity

Key Idea:

Trinity makes salvation possible and Trinity makes salvation sweet. Only with a God of Trinity can we be freely welcomed in together as brothers and sisters to share the joy of God and cry together, "Abba Father!"

Key Text:

Genesis 1:1-3. ¹ 'In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters. ³ And **God said**, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.' Genesis 1:1-3

John 1:1-3. 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.'

Outline:

I. Introduction

A. St. Augustine, in the 5th century, said God reveals Himself bit by bit. That may be one reason it took him 15 years to write his book on the Trinity of God.

B. C.S. Lewis wrote:

He wrote, "Everyone has warned me ... 'The ordinary reader does not want theology; give him plain practical religion.' I have rejected their advice. I do not think the ordinary reader is such a fool. Theology means 'the science of God,' and I think anyone who wants to think about God at all would like to have the clearest and most accurate ideas about him which are available."

C. Denying trinity is heresy.

- D. The church at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and the subsequent Council of Constantinople in 381 determined God is one in substance and three in person.
- E. There are **no human analogies**. Still, we must believe the doctrine true, and we must do so for at least **three reasons**.
 - 1) **First**, Jesus taught it.
 - 2) **Second, no other explanation** for the God of the Bible makes sense.
 - 3) **And third**, almost **every other doctrine** in what we call Christian faith depends on the truth of trinity.
 - a. If the trinity isn't real, then **Jesus is not God**
 - b. If Jesus isn't God then he was created **not eternal**.
 - c. If Jesus isn't God, then there is **no salvation**, no atonement, and **no perfect sinless sacrifice**. (John 1:29).

II. Our Initial Text

'In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters. And **God said**, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. ' Genesis 1:1-3

- A. We see God creating, God's Spirit is hovering, and God's Word is bringing light out of darkness.
- B. What about before the beginning? What was there.
 - 1) Some say, gods of Chaos like Titan Prometheus, or the Egyptian sun god Ra, or the Aztec war god.
 - 2) Some say, nothing existed before the beginning.
 - 3) Some say, it was a singular, solitary god of power.
 - 4) The Christian faith says it is one God in three Persons, united in love.

III. Our Secondary Text

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ' John 1:1,3-4

- A. John starts his Gospel with "In the beginning," and points back to the first verses of Genesis.

- B. John identifies God as Father, Son and, later Holy Spirit; all equally God, but distinct persons.

IV. Finite Analogies of Trinity Fail

- A. H₂O is one thing in three forms. But God is one being in three persons. Liquid, ice and steam do not exist at the same time in the same relationship.
- B. Eggishness of God. Shell, white, and yolk are three parts of one thing. God is not one in three parts; He is one in being and three in persons.
- C. Failed arithmetic: $1+1+1=1$. Nonsense.
- D. God does not violate the law of non-contradiction which states A cannot be non-A at the same time and in the same relationship. We are not saying God is one persona and three persons; or God is one essence and three essences. Trinity says God is one in being, essences, or substance; and three in personhood.

V. Trinity does not violate the law of non-contradiction and we are not sub-trinitarian

- A. Jesus taking our punishment is sometimes called cosmic child abuse by skeptics and atheists, because they think trinity means Jesus is apart from God and apart from us.
- B. Christ is not a third party, He's God substituting Himself for us.
- C. Trinity means everywhere we read Jesus' name in the Bible, we're reading about God.

VI. Why Did a Member of the Trinity join humanity?

- A. Love is ultimate reality because Father, Son, and Spirit have been united in love for eternity, they create out of an overflowing abundance of love; but man has marred God's perfect creation and brought sin, death, shame, and misery into the world.
- B. Jesus comes into the world to become our brother.
- C. To paraphrase G.K. Chesterton, He showed us the way out of the pit we've buried ourselves in by showing us the way out of the grave.
- D. Why did Jesus come and die for His enemies? Because The Father, Son, and Spirit love us and want us to join in their family of love.

'Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ' **John 1:12-13**

- E. Christianity is not a religion that insists we trudge through the Christian life submitting and obeying.
- F. Salvation is about becoming Spirit-anointed sons of God, more than forgiven, adopted.

'For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 'Romans 8:14-17

- G. In verse 14, Paul is not saying that sonship is a sexist thing. It's about understanding the role of son as inheritor in his father's home. It's about our sharing in nothing less than what the Son Himself has naturally.
- H. And more, the Son shares with us His own Sonship.
- I. In the subsequent verses, Paul is showing us that the same Holy Spirit that unites Father and Son is given to us by grace so that we enter the very relationship on the Triune God.
- J. John Calvin said that Christ's aim in all that He did was "to restore us to God's grace, and so make the children of men, children of God; to make the heirs of Gehenna, heirs of the heavenly kingdom."
- K. Athanasius said, "God became man so that we might become god." Athanasius isn't saying the Gospel means we take on the actual nature of God, rather when you read him in context, the connotation is one of participating rather than becoming.

VII. Application

- A. Have you brought into the idea of another kind of god? Chaos, nothingness, or power?
- B. Have you accepted the Triune God, but believe you need to "sort myself out before God will love me?"
- C. Do you reflect the most essential character trait of God; that Father loves the Son and Son loves the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit?
- D. Do you practice the "down and out" character of God's love? That it comes down to us and we're to extend it out to others.

VIII. The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Communion

Benediction

Our benediction comes from Paul's own benediction in his **2nd letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13 verse 14**

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."