

“I Don’t Get the Trinity”

Sermon Series “God Questions: Real Questions – Authentic Faith”

January 29, 2012

1. The Godhead subsists in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit

a. Traces in the Old Testament – Genesis 1:26-27 and the word Eloheim

Let me read Genesis 1:26-27 Then God (Eloheim) said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness”

b. Articulated more fully in the New Testament – Titus 3:4-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. ⁶ This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

c. Each member of the Trinity is fully God – John 1:1 Acts 5:3-4

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Acts 5:3-4 “Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!”

2. The three persons are one in essence, purpose and relationship

The classic passage about the oneness of God is here in Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

a. The essence are the attributes that make Him God. (see list below)

b. The God head is one (united) in purpose and – Titus 3:4-7

c. There is a mutual love between the members of the God head -

Matthew 3:17 ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

3. False views of the Trinity

a. There are three gods

b. There is one God who appears as three people

c. There are three different parts of God

d. One person of the trinity is subordinate to the others

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We will spend the next two weeks looking at the most perplexing aspect of the Christian faith, which is the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity has often been a point of critique from those of other faiths or those wanting to poke holes in the Christian faith. Even those within the faith often see the Trinity as an embarrassment or something that is irrelevant to our daily lives and faith. This first week we will look at the nature of the Trinity and seek to understand it (as best as we can in a sermon). Next week we will focus on the relevance of the Trinity to our faith and life.

1. When were you first introduced to the doctrine of the Trinity? What were the ways you were taught to think about the Trinity?
2. One aspect of the Trinity is that there are traces of the Trinity in the Old Testament. Read the following passages (Genesis 1:26-27, Daniel 3:24-25, Proverbs 8:22-31, Isaiah 9:6-7). How do you see elements of the Trinity shown in the Old Testament?
3. How do you see in the passages, of the New Testament, listed below ways in which the Trinity is both articulated and also how the Trinity functions in our lives and in the world? (Titus 3:4-7, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 1:35, Ephesians 3:14-16)
4. One objection to the concept of the Trinity is that Jesus and the Holy Spirit can’t be God. But how do the following passages articulate for us how both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are indeed God? (John 1:1-5, Acts 5:3-5) See the chart also on the second page.
5. If the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are indeed all God then how do we say that we worship one God and not three? Look at Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 10:28-31
6. We have said that all analogies fall short; think of some of the analogies for the Trinity (for example H₂O being water, ice, steam or comparing it to members of a family). How are those analogies helpful and where do they fall short? Using the model on the second page point out where analogies are helpful and where they fall short.
7. Take some time and pretend that you are explaining the Trinity to a new Christian and dialogue with one another to see if you can find ways to “explain” the Trinity.
8. Next week we will talk about why the Trinity is important. Take some time to talk about what you think are the implications of the Trinity for our lives.

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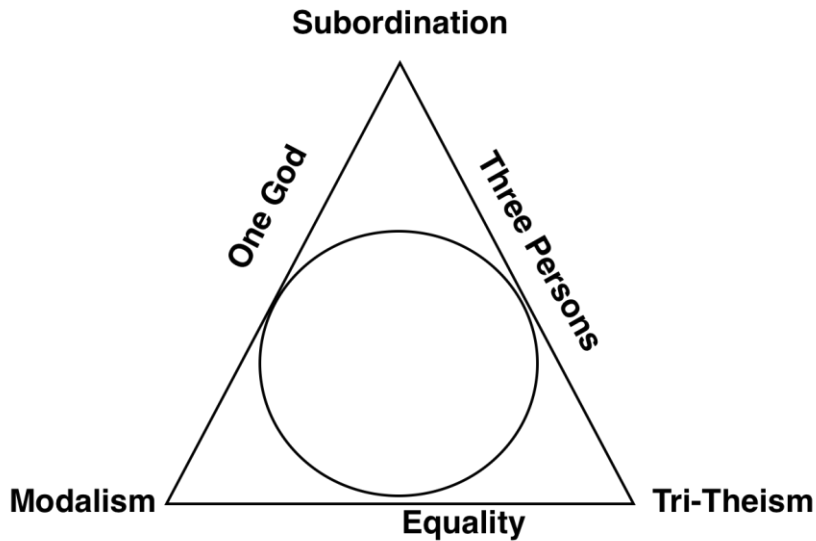


Table #1

Attribute	Father	Son	Holy Spirit
Eternality	Ps. 90:2	John 1:2, Rev 1:8	Heb 9:14
Power	1 Peter 1:5	2 Cor 12:9	Rom 15:19
Omniscience	Jer 17:10	Rev 2:23	1 Cor 2:11
Omnipresence	Jer 23:24	Matt 18:20	Ps 139:7
Holiness	Rev 15:4	Acts 3:14	Acts 1:8
Truth	John 7:28	Rev 3:7	1 John 5:6
Benevolence	Rom 2:4	Eph 5:25	Neh 9:20
Creation of World	Ps 102:25	Col 1:16	Job 26:13
Creation of Man	Gen 2:7	Col 1:16	Job 33:4
Baptism of Christ	Matt 3:17	Matt 3:16	Matt 3:16
Death of Christ	Heb 9:14	Heb 9:14	Heb 9:14

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Figure #1

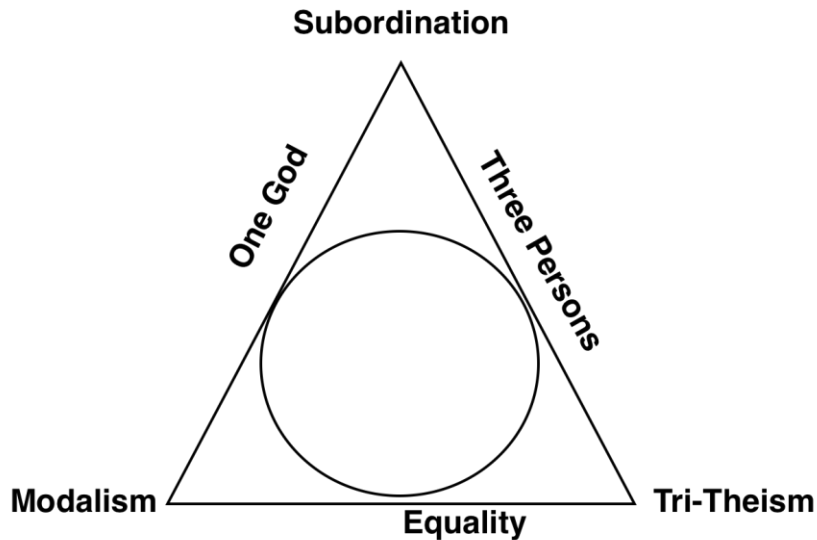


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