



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Holy Spirit and the Trinity, part I”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of study again, and we ask that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the blessed Trinity, may teach us the things that concern the Lord, Jesus Christ, and the plans of God, tonight. May, in the heart of each one of us present, we have the sense of his teaching ministry. And, may we leave with a deeper comprehension of who thou art, so that our worship may be purer and more pleasing to Thee.

And this we ask In Jesus' Name. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for tonight is the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity and this is the first of a short series on this subject. And, for our Scripture reading, I think that for tonight I want to read just one verse and that verse is John, chapter 17 in verse 3, John, chapter 17 in verse 3. And the Apostle John writes, giving the words of our Lord Jesus, in his great prayer:

“This is eternal life, that they might know thee the only genuine God and the one whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.” “The only genuine God.”

H. L. Minkin described theology as “The effort to explain the unknowable in terms of the not worth knowing.” And, what he was trying to say by that was that some theology, once you come to understand what the authors are saying, is really not worth knowing. And so, it is an attempt, he says, “to explain the unknowable in the terms of the not worth knowing.”

Now, I think one can say this about a great deal of theological thought today because it is largely religious rationalism on the one hand or political socialism on the other. It’s a striking thing, by the way, to know that in Europe today, the theologians are very much attracted now in some of the great German universities to the theology of revolution. And, theology for many of them has become nothing more than political Marxism. And, I think, Menken may certainly be right about such theology. It is “an effort to explain the unknowable in terms of the not worth knowing.”

We cannot, however, say this about the doctrine of the Trinity. It is all important; it touches the very nature of the God that we come to know. As Jesus said, “This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and, Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” So for our Lord, the essence of eternal life is the knowledge of the only “true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.”

Now, I think, that from this itself, from this one statement, we should be able to answer the question, is it important that we know God by saying, yes, it’s all important because in the knowledge of God is eternal life.

Now, if that’s true, then the Arians, those who worship a God that is not Trinitarian in the truest sense, for they feel that Jesus Christ was either a person whose nature was “like” God’s, or “different” depending on whether we think about the Arians or the Semi-Arians, and the Socinians, who believed really very little of the Bible, and thought that Jesus Christ was simply another man. It’s evident then that the Arians and the Socinians, who are the modern Unitarians by the way, and Trinitarians, worship different gods.

The Arian speaks of God, but his god is not the God of the trinitarians. The Semi-Arian speaks of God but his god is not the god of the trinitarians. And, the Socinian speaks of God but his god is not the god of the trinitarian. John Calvin said, “Unless we grasp these, three persons of the Trinity, unless we grasp these, only the bare and empty name of God flips about in our brains to the exclusion of the true God.”

And so, it is really foolish for us to speak about worshiping God, if we do not understand that this God is a Trinity. In fact, we do not really know God until we know God as the trinitarian God or as the triune God.

Now, I tried to think of some illustration that might bring this home to you and the only thing I can think of is, let’s suppose that three people are having a conversation and one of them, in the midst of the conversation says to the other, “I wonder if you know Bob Smith?” And the other two reply, almost in the same breath, “Yes, I know Bob Smith.” And one goes on to add “He’s a fine fellow although it’s too bad he murders the King’s English when he speaks.” And the other two fellows look a little puzzled at the remark but one adds, “I hadn’t noticed that, particularly, but it’s a funny thing the way he takes out his glass eye in public.” [Laughter] And, now it’s the turn of the other two to look a little puzzled and, of course, finally, they discover that they are using the term, Bob Smith, but they are each referring to a different Bob Smith.

Now, that is, I think, an illustration of what people really are doing when one speaks about God but he’s a Jew. And another is speaking of God, but he is a Rationalist. And still another is speaking about God and he is a Christian. The gods that they speak about are not the same gods. The terms are the same, but they are just as different as the Bob Smith who murders the King’s English and the Bob Smith who keeps taking out his glass eye in public.

And so, you see, it’s very important that we understand who and what our God is. For, otherwise, we don’t really know him. And, Jesus said, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

Now, I think, that some of you already ought to be making the application. There are lots of people who say, “I believe in God.” And, unfortunately, many Christians say, “Well, he must be a Christian because he says he believes in God.” And, the god that he may refer to by “god” may be an entirely different kind of god from the god to which the Christian refers when he says, God. He thinks of God as the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, but not only that for even the Arians can say that. But he thinks of God as the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who himself is very God of very God.

And so, we can talk about God as a Father, and we can even talk about the Holy Spirit and we can even talk about the Son and we still are not talking about the same God, until we understand the same things about our person whom we called, God.

And so, the fact that a person says, “I believe in God,” means nothing. The next question is: Who is your God? And then, if he says simply, “Well, he is a supreme being.” You would say, well, what else is there about your god that you are sure about? And, until he is able to explain that his god is the Triune God, well, he doesn’t really know the God that, I started to say we, but do we all know this god as the triune God.

Now, at the same time that I’m saying all of this, let’s remember that we are not trying to say that we must understand the Trinity in order to be saved or even happy in the Christian life. As a matter of fact, what I’m going to say is that it cannot be explained, really, finally. It’s a profound and majestic mystery; no one can explain the Trinity, ultimately. It cannot be proved or disproved by human reasoning because it is beyond us. I cannot prove it. And because it is beyond us, no one can disprove it.

We can only, when we study the Trinity, we can only accept what is revealed to us in holy Scripture.

Charles Hodge says on the purpose of theology, “It must be remembered that theology is not philosophy. It does not assume to discover truths or to reconcile what it teaches as true with all other truths. Its province is simply to state what God has revealed in his word and to vindicate those statements, as far as possible, from misconceptions and

objections.” And then he adds the text of Scripture, “The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.”

Now, there are some things that are revealed to us, and these are the things that we are studying. And so, tonight, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity and this is the first part of this very, very deep and yet, important subject.

Roman I, “The significance of the important terms.” Now, I think that in any theology class, it is extremely important that we be clear about certain theological terms. And, here are just four that, I think, are the most important: Trinity, substance, subsistence, and person.

What do we mean when we use these terms in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity? And so, I will now attempt to set forth the meaning of these terms very briefly. We could, actually, spend an hour on this, and an hour on this, and an hour on this, and probably two or three hours on this, if we wanted to exhaust it. But, it would not only be exhaustive, it would be exhausting at this stage of your theological life, and so, we will pass it by.

Now, the term: Trinity. The term Trinity is derived from the Latin term, *trinus*, T-R-I-N-U-S or the Greek word, *treis*.” Now, these words are words that are related to the word, three, as you can tell. In Latin, *tres unus*, *trenus*, and *tria*, or *treis*, in Greek.

Now, the term Trinity is not found in the Bible. We know that, some of you at least, who have studied theology about two years ago when we took one hour on the subject of the Trinity.

Now, these technical terms, however, though they’re not found in the Bible are an absolute necessity if we are to understand theology. And, I’m going to take the liberty of reading a rather lengthy section from John Calvin at this point because he, I believe, states as clearly as it could be stated, the necessity of knowing what our terms mean and understanding some specific terms. Listen to what he says. He says that “These expressions, like trinity and person, are necessary to “unmask” false teachers.” And then,

he writes: “However, the novelty of words of this sort, if such it must called, becomes especially useful when the truth is to be asserted against false accusers who evaded by their shifts. Of this today, we have abundant experience in our great efforts to rout the enemies of pure and wholesome doctrine. With such crooked and sinuous twisting, these slippery snakes glide away unless they are boldly pursued, caught and crushed.” Now, he’s talking about heretics. “Thus, men of old, stirred up by various struggles over depraved dogmas, were compelled to set forth with consummate clarity what they felt, lest they leave any devious shift to the envious who cloak their errors in layers of verbiage.” Seems like he’s using a little himself, isn’t he? [Laughter]

“Because he could not oppose manifest oracles, Arias confessed that Christ was God and the Son of God.”

Now, would you say that Arias should belong in the Church, if he confesses that Christ is God and the Son of God? Well, I don’t know of any Christian church that exists today that wouldn’t welcome such a man who believed that Christ was God and the Son of God. He confessed that Christ was God and the Son of God and, as if he had done what was right, pretended some agreement with the other men. Yet, in the meantime, he did not cease to prate that Christ was created and had a beginning as other creatures. The Ancients, to drag the man’s versatile craftiness out of its hiding places went farther, declaring Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, consubstantial with the Father. Here, impiety boiled over when the Arians began most wickedly to hate and curse the word, “homoousios.” Now, for those of you who are new tonight, the rest of the scholars in the class know that that means “of the same nature.” And, that was the word that the Orthodox insisted upon when they described the nature of Jesus Christ. His nature was of the same nature as the Father’s, Homoousios. And the Arians objected that. So, you can see, here are Arians who say Christ is God and the Son of God, but who do not say that he is “of the same nature” as the Father. In other words, they were heretics. But they said things that sounded very close to the doctrines of the word of God.

Calvin continues, after a little lapse, and he says, afterward, (he really shouldn’t have said afterward, which shows that Calvin, while a great theologian was not an inspired theologian) he said “Afterwards, Sabellius ” (Actually, Sabellius was a few years before Arius) “Afterwards, Sabellius arose who counted the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as almost of no importance, arguing that it was not because of any distinction that they were put forward; but that they were diverse attributes of God, of which sort, there are very many.” In other words, these are just some of the attributes of God; he’s Father, he’s Son, he’s Spirit. “If it came to a debate, he was accustomed to confess that he recognized the Father as God, the Son as God, and the Spirit as God, but afterward, a way was found, contending that he had said nothing else than if he had spoken of God as if he was strong and just and wise.” In other words, he said “The Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God.”

Now, wouldn’t you have a man like that in your church? You’d say he was very good. He knows more than most people. But, yet, what he meant by it was that the Father is strong and just and wise. And, Calvin adds, “And so he re-echoed another old song that the Father is the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Father, without rank, without distinction.” In other words, he was a heretic. But he said words that sounded like they were words of the faithful.

Now, we have a lot of that in the Christian church today. We have people who talk about the atonement of Jesus Christ, but they don’t mean what you and I mean by the atonement. They don’t mean that Jesus Christ died as a substitute for anyone. They mean, simply, that some how or other, the saving work of Jesus Christ impresses itself upon men’s minds so that their hearts are made tender by it and somehow or other they seek to follow Jesus, as an example. Or, they talk about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but they do not mean the “bodily” resurrection. They mean, simply, that the spirit of Jesus lives on.

Now, it’s necessary then that we know what our terms mean. That’s why it is necessary to have technical terms. No one likes technical terms; least of all a teacher who is trying to keep an audience interested. He would like something not so technical, but is it interest or is it truth?

Now, the term trinity then, what we are saying is that the word trinity is a reference to the Triune God. It means, simply, that there are three persons who subsist in one essence and that together they form the Godhead. The word Trinity is not in the Bible, but the trinity is in the Bible. That’s what Christians say.

Now, the term substance. We’ll go a little faster now. Substance is a term for essence. It refers to the nature or the being of God; what God is is his essence, his substance. In the Godhead the three persons are of one in the same indivisible essence. The Father, Son, and Spirit are of the same essence. The Latin term is “substance.” The Greek term is “Ousia,” or being.

Now, some of you are on Bob Theme’s tapes and he likes to talk about the essence box. Now, the essence box, to Bob, is simply a way by which he can speak of the attributes that belong to the nature of God. And, in the essence box are such things as: holiness, righteousness, justice, etc., the attributes of God. But, now, the essence or the substance is not the attribute. It is the “being” of God.

Now, third, the term “subsistence.” This term refers to the mode or manner of existence. It’s that mode of existence which is peculiar to each of the divine persons and which, in each, constitutes the one essence; a distinct person. So, subsistence is a word for person; it refers to the mode of existence. But, we must not say that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are simply modes of the existence of God for then we fall into an ancient heresy of “Modalism.” But, subsistence refers to the mode of existence.

And, fourth, the term “person.” A person is a subsistence in the divine essence related to the other two, but distinguished from them by certain incommunicable properties. And so, the term “person” is the term by which we refer to the Father, and

particularly as he is to be distinguished from the Son and the Spirit. Or the term by which we refer to the Son and particularly to the way in which he is to be distinguished from the Father and the Spirit. And, it’s the term that we use to refer to the Holy Spirit, and we have particularly in mind those ways in which he is to be distinguished from the Father.

So, the “person” is a subsistence in the divine essence, related to the other two, but distinguished from them.

Now, what is a person? I’d like, again, to read you something from one of the theologians. And I think it is pretty good because it explains what we are talking about, “person.” “The person,” he says, “is the subject of all his actions.” In other words, the person who “does things” is a person. And, it remains the same (that is, this person) remains the same through whatever changes he may pass in life or in death.” Take me, for example, I am Lewis Johnson. Now, if I am converted, I am still Lewis Johnson, I’m not somebody else. There may be a radical transformation in my inner being, by which, I can be called a new creation, but I am still the same person. I’m not different. I am different in many ways but it is the same person who passes through this experience. And, when I die and my spirit goes to be with the Lord, if I die.

Now last night, Mr. Prier, speaking at the meeting, said that he felt that in that meeting in which there were lots of young people that that generation in that room, particularly the young people, were going to be alive at the coming of the Lord. And, I haven’t talked to Howard about that, but I felt like raising my hand and saying, “Is there any hope for me?” [Laughter] But, I knew that there was hope for me because, it just might be that my generation shall be alive when the Lord comes. But, now, if I should die and my body is put in the grave, don’t go up to my body and look at it and say, “That’s Lewis Johnson.” Because, it isn’t, it’s my body, but it is not I. I shall be with the Lord. And, I’ve left this poor vessel down here for a new model to be received at the time of the resurrection. And so, “I” is that subject that survives all of these experiences, conversion, death or the coming of the Lord.

Now, our author goes on to say, “I think, I desire, I speak, I see, I hear, I eat, and drink. I rejoice and sorrow. I love and hate. I sing and weep. I suffer and die. I am raised from the dead. In all these actions and experiences the person is the subject that performs and experiences them and that remains the same throughout. From infancy to old age, we remain the same individual subjects. In death, the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved; yet, it is the same person who passes through death and into his eternal home. A person, then, is the subject of all actions and experiences in a moral, rational nature.

A tree may be an individual tree and a cow may be an individual cow, but neither the tree nor the cow is a person. They possess no rational, moral natures. A human nature is rational, ethical and the individual in that nature is a self-conscious person; a rational moral subject acting through mind and will. When, therefore, we assert according to the doctrine of the Trinity that there are three persons in the Godhead, we mean that in the one spiritual nature of God there are three subjects. There are three people in the Trinity that say “I”. The Son may say I. The Father may say I. The Spirit may say I. Distinct from one another in personal properties, but subsisting in the same divine essence and eternally remaining the same in their distinct subsistence.

Person, that’s the “I.” That’s the I in the Trinity of the Father, the “I” of the Son, the “I” of the Spirit. But it’s not the “I” of God. But, the I of the Father, the I of the Son, the I of the Spirit. One substance, three persons.

Okay, Roman II - The summary of the chief points of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, there are several propositions essentially involved in the doctrine of the Trinity are these; and I’ll just read them and we’ll say a word about them because I want to spend a little time tonight about the “deity of the Son” as preparation for next week, The Holy Spirit.

Capital A - There is but one God and this God is one. In other words, there is only one God and this God is not divided up into several different gods, ever. So, there is one God and he is a single god, not divisible.

B - The one whole indivisible divine essence exists eternally as Father, Son, and Spirit. Each person possesses the whole essence. Now, the Father doesn't say I have one third and the Son doesn't say I have one third and the Spirit one third. Each person possesses the whole essence and is a distinct person by virtue of certain incommunicable properties not common to him with the others. Now, what we mean by this is, that every one of the persons of the Trinity may say, "I am holy, righteous, just, omniscience, omnipotent, omnipresent." All of the attributes of the triune God belong to each of the persons. Do we understand that? In other words, the Spirit is just as much God as the Son is God. And the Son is just as much God as the Father is God. There is nothing that the Father has by way of powers that the Son does not have and that the Spirit does not have. They each have all the attributes of deity. Do we understand that?

Are there not some Christians who pray to the Father because they think that perhaps, if they pray to the Father they are praying to someone who has more power than the Son? Or the Spirit? Well, now, if there is any of that feeling within us, we have not understood the Trinity. These three persons each possesses the whole of the divine essence.

Now, there are some things that the Son has, however, which the Father doesn't have. What are they? Suggest one? Well, now, let's think before the incarnation, before Jesus Christ took to himself a human nature; it's true, he now has a human nature. He has a human body, glorified now. These are things the Father does not have. But, what did he have eternally that the Father did not have? Someone?

Well, the Father didn't have a father. Let's put it another way. The Son possesses sonship. The Son possesses sonship. The Father doesn't have sonship. The Spirit

doesn't have sonship. The Son has sonship. This is something that belongs to the Son. Filiation, let's put it that way. We want a big technical word: filiations.

What does the Father have that the Son does not have? Well, he's the father, that's true. What else? Give me a good theological word? Fatherness? [Laughter] Is that what was said? Well, that's all right if that's what you said. The Son possesses filiations. The Father possesses the power of generation. Fatherness, call it that if you like.

What does the Spirit possess that the others do not possess? Well, we know from our doctrine of the spirit so far that the Spirit, we hope we remember this, it's not too important, but the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Son does not proceed from the Spirit. The Spirit proceeds from the Son. It is the Spirit who is sent by the Son. Now, the Son is sent by the Father; but the Father is sent by no one. And so, there are certain things that certain members of the Trinity possess that the others do not possess. But, in so far as attributes and powers are concerned, they each possess the whole of the divine essence.

Now C - The distinction between the three is a personal one. Now, this is proved by the fact that in the Bible the personal pronouns are used with respect to the Father, with respect to the Son, and with respect to the Holy Spirit. I'm sorry, ladies, but these personal pronouns are masculine, too. And, this is something that we can do nothing about. It is there and it is there forever. And yet, there is not sex in God. Why this is so is one of those mysteries or parts of the mystery of the Trinity.

D - The divine attributes are common to each person. Now, I have stressed that. There is one substance in the Godhead, and so the divine attributes are common to each person because each person possesses the essence that is divine.

Now, that means that there is one intelligence, one will, in the Trinity. In Christ, however, the Godman, there are two spirits, there are two intelligences, there are two wills because he is the one person who possesses a divine nature and a human nature

and so, he has two wills: divine and human. Two intelligences: divine and human. Two spirits: divine and human. Divine attributes, however, are common to each person.

E - The persons have a certain order of subsistence and operation. They have a certain order of subsistence and operation. In other words, the Father is neither begotten nor proceeds. The Son is begotten. The Spirit proceeds. Further, the Father sends and operates through the Son. And the Father and Son send and operate through the Spirit. And, what I was really getting at is this: when we think of the Trinity, of whom do we think first? No, we don’t think of “God” first because God is true of all of the persons of the Trinity. When we think of the Trinity, who is the first person of the Trinity? God, the Father. Who is the second person? God, the Son. And the third person is God, the Holy Spirit.

Now, these terms are used to express the order of operation in the Trinity. Now, let’s suppose, for example, last night we had a baptismal service and Bill McCrae baptized. Let’s suppose he should say to one of the young ladies as he baptized her, “Now, Linda, by virtue of your confession of faith in the Lord, Jesus, I now baptize you in the name of the Holy Spirit and in the name of the Son and in the name of the Father.” Well, there would be something in the heart of every Christian would say, “No! No! That’s the wrong order. [Laughter] Say it Father, Son, and Spirit.” Now, that’s not just habit, you know. That really arises out of the tenor of the whole of the word of God. And, if you should shout out, “No! No!” And he should say, “Wait, I baptize you in the name of the Son and the Father and the Spirit.” You’d say, “No, no, not that!”

Until finally, he said, “Father, Son, and Spirit.” Then we’d say, “That’s right.

Now, I feel like I’ve been baptized.”

Now, I’m sure that we would be baptized if we were baptized in a different order of names, but the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is intended to express a certain order in God’s operation. And it does.

Now, the last, I know is kind of confusing. All ad extra works belong to each person of the Trinity but some ad intra belong exclusively to one. Now, ad extra means works toward the outside, outside the Trinity. Ad intra means works that are within the Trinity. So, there are works that the Trinity does outside of itself, towards man, towards the world, and there are works that transpire within the Trinity. All ad extra works belong to each but some belong exclusively to one.

Now, I want to see if you are learning something. All ad extra works belong to each. By that, of course, we mean simply, every work that God does that involves a manifestation of power, say, why that work belongs to each one of the Trinity. Works of power in creation, when the Father, for example, creates that really is a work that the Triune God does. The others participate, in other words. And that’s why in the Bible we read that God created and we read that the Son created. The great stress of the Bible rests upon creation by the Father. But the Son also participated because he is a member of the Trinity. So, all ad extra works belong to each but some belong exclusively to one.

Now, that, I think, we could apply in this way. The Father creates, the Son redeems, the Spirit sanctifies or applies the work of creation. And, this would refer to their order of operation but each would really participate in all. The work of redemption is not just the work of the Son. The work of sanctification is not just the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of creation is not just the work of the Father. They all participate but there is a preeminent leadership in them.

But, what about the “ad intra” works? They belong exclusively to some. What are they? Let’s see if you’ve learned something? What are they? Someone? No, that would be an ad extra work because that’s a work that the Trinity performs on us. Ad intra works are works that go on in the Trinity, only in the Trinity. What are they? We’ve been talking about them tonight already? Again? No, that’s an ad extra work. No, that’s a work that pertains to men. Yes? Right? Generation. The Father generates. Whom did the Father generate? The Son. What else? Procession? The Holy Spirit proceeds from the

Father and the Son; these are the ad intra and they belong exclusively to certain ones of the Trinity.

So, all the ad extra works belong to each person of the Trinity. There isn’t anything that the Father does toward us that the Son doesn’t participate in, and vice versa.

But, when it comes to things within the Trinity, there are some special properties that each has exclusively and they belong to their person. That’s why he’s the Father. That’s why the Son is the son. That’s why the Spirit is the spirit.

Now, I don’t know how to illustrate this, but there is this order in the Trinity: Father, Son, Spirit. And, all illustrations about the Trinity fail. But, if we could imagine the chairman of the board of a corporation who, in a sense, is the director of its activities and then, if we could imagine a president who’s responsible for the general administration of the affairs of that company. And then, if we could think of a person who was the chief executive officer who was really responsible for carrying out the desires of the chairman of the board, who represents the board, and the president, then we would have a human kind of illustration, faulty, of Father, Son and Spirit in their operation.

Now, third, The substantiation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, denials of the Trinity have come most vociferously from Judaism, naturally. And, as you know, this is the chief problem that exists between Judaism and Christianity. Christianity affirms that God is Triune. Judaism affirms that God is a unity, a unity only. Judaism is Unitarian. Unitarians are like Judaism in that respect. They are all ancient Socinians, except Judaism goes back before Socinianism.

Now, people when they want to refute the doctrine of the Trinity popularly will say, “All you need to know to know that Christianity is not true, is first grade arithmetic because if the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Spirit is God, one plus one plus one does not equal one.” And Christians say, there is one God. And yet, they say the

Son is God and the Father is God and the Spirit is God. And that, of course, has a specious appeal to the man of the flesh. It sounds very reasonable.

Now, if we are to establish the doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture, we must prove the following things. I have more than two, but we will deal with them next time.

Capital A - God is One and there is but one God. Well, let’s turn to a passage in Scripture now. And, Deuteronomy 6:4 will do us, because this states the unity of God and his indivisibility just about as well as you can find it anywhere. God is one and there is but one god. Deuteronomy, chapter 6 and verse 4, Deuteronomy 6, verse 4. And here we read:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”

Now, there’s a statement of the unity of God. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”

Now, we’re going to look at this text later on in another context, I just want you to notice that it says, “Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” To him belong all of the divine attributes. This one god is self existent. He does not depend upon anyone else for his existence, he is infinite, he is eternal, he is immutable, he is transcendent, he is omnipresent, he is omniscient, he is good, he is righteous, he is holy, he is gracious, he is merciful, he is glorious, and he is blessed. And all of these things are part of the things that belong within his essence box.

You know, I find that a lot of Christians, when they are told things like that, sit and just do not see how in the world this could ever really affect them with any significance. But, will you, for just a moment, think of the immutability of God? What does that really mean? Practically?

Well, let’s suppose that he hath made a great promise to us. Let’s suppose that he hath said, “Believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” And, let’s suppose

that we have believed on the Lord, Jesus Christ. What does it mean to have an immutable or unchangeable God? Well, it means, my dear friends, that when ten million ages have passed by that truth is still truth. “Believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” He has not and will not go back on his promises. Or if he has said that the one who believes on the Lord, Jesus, will be my Son and I will be to him a god, and he is immutable, it means that he will never, never, never, never go back on his promises. That’s why it’s wonderful to have an immutable god. Suppose you had a mutable god? Suppose you had a god who said, yes, I’ll do this for the next hundred years but after that, it’s every man for himself. Well, let’s suppose that God is omniscient and let’s think of that in the light of the doctrine of guidance? How would you like to have a person guide you who didn’t really know what the future held? I wouldn’t like one like that to guide me. But, to know that the one that guides me is omniscient, he knows the future just as well as he knows the past, why, that is of tremendous significance.

Well, we could talk for a long time about this, but when we say these words these words have practical significance.

Now, capital B - Jesus of Nazareth as to his divine nature, we’re not talking about his human nature, as to his divine nature is truly God and yet a distinct person. That is, from the Father and the Spirit.

Robert Dabney, who was one of our outstanding Southern theologians, in fact, one of the few Southern theologians, he was a man who was distinguished in many ways. Not only was he a great theologian, but he was also chief of staff of one of the greatest generals who ever lived. In fact, in my opinion, the greatest, Thomas Jonathan Jackson, known as Stonewall Jackson. Now, Stonewall was a great Christian and an even greater Calvinist. And, Dabney was one of the greatest Southern Calvinistic theologians, and they were somewhat related. And, he had him on his staff. Dabney said, with regard to this, he has written a theology, that the doctrine of the Trinity and particularly the deity of Christ is a prime article of revealed theology. And then he adds, “Without his divinity, the

Bible is the drama of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet omitted.” And so, the Bible is the drama of Jesus Christ but if you take out the divinity of Jesus Christ you’ve taken out the whole point.

Now, how can we prove or substantiate the deity of Christ? Well Arabic 1 in the outline – Arabic 1 - From the direct teaching of Scripture. Would you put it in your notes that way. Arabic 1 – The direct teaching of Scripture. First of all, let’s turn now to Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 8 and 9. Hebrews 1:8 and 9. Now, in Hebrews chapter 1:8 and 9, which is a citation from the Old Testament, the author of the Epistle of the Hebrews writes:

“But,” this is page 1292, this is the old edition. “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God.” Did you see that? “Thy throne, O God.” But that’s a word addressed to the Son. “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God.” Well, that indicates that the Son is God.

Well, let’s turn back to the Old Testament. In Isaiah, chapter 9 in verse 6, we have a Messianic passage. And in this Messianic passage, which in Matthew, chapter 4 is shown to be concerning Jesus of Nazareth, we have these words stated concerning the Messiah. Isaiah, chapter 9 in verse 6. This is page 721. Isaiah, chapter 9, verse 6.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.”

By the way, isn’t it interesting? It says, “the child is born” and “the Son is given.” It doesn’t say the Son is born and the child is given. Because, you see he was a Son before he was born, but he was born as a child.

The Bible is very careful about the words it uses, you know. Have you noticed that the Bible hardly ever uses the term, generally speaking? Have you ever noticed that?

[Laughter] It’s quite a bit different from human language. It never says, “I reckon.” Or, “we hope” in the sense as we are hoping such and such shall be true. But notice,

“ And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called wonderful Counselor, the mighty God.”

The mighty God, the everlasting Father, that is, the father of eternity, the eternal one is really the meaning of that expression. The Prince of Peace.

Now, let’s turn back to the New Testament. “The mighty God.”

Now, turn to John, chapter 1, verse 1. Now, John writes in his prologue to his wonderful Gospel, “In the beginning was the Word.” Who is the word? This scholar right here. Who is the word? Right, Jesus Christ. By the way, how do you know it is Jesus Christ? Can you think? She can’t think right now because we’re all looking at her, but she probably knows. How do we know that the “word” is Jesus Christ? Where does it say so? There’s a great babble of incoherence. [Laughter] Where does it say so? Right, verse 14. Thank you, men. In verse 14 it says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” And so, when we read in verse 1, “In the beginning was the Word,” we mean Jesus Christ. “And the Word was with God and the Word was God.” So, from the direct teaching of Scripture and, really, there are just countless passages to which we could appeal, we learn that Jesus Christ is truly God.

Now, second from the Old Testament - theophanies. So, from the direct teaching of Scripture we know that Jesus of Nazareth is God and second from the theophanies.

Now, those of you that have been here before know, we have referred to this term, “theophany” before. And a theophany is an appearance of God. This word is a root that means, “to appear,” and “theo” you recognize from *theos*. And so a theophany is

an appearance of God in human form or in some other form; not the divine spirit, invisible.

So from Scripture we learn, of course, that the Father is the invisible God. That is stated in 1 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 17. And further, in the Old Testament, it is stated, “No man can see God and live,” in Exodus, chapter 33 and verse 20.

And in the New Testament, we read right here in John 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath led him forth into full revelation.” So, the Father is the invisible God. No man has ever seen the Father. If a man ever looked upon the Father he would die. Well, we do not even have the power to see the Father.

Well, what about these passages in the Old Testament that seem to indicate that God speaks face to face with a person? Moses? Gideon, Samson’s father? Others? Abraham? What about them? Well, let’s take a look at them. Let’s turn back to Genesis, chapter 18. We’re just getting warmed up tonight. I’m really going to let you go in a minute, but I started five minutes late tonight.

Now, in Genesis chapter 18, we have the incident in which Abraham is visited by three men. Now, they are called angels. In chapter 19 at least two of them are called angels. In chapter 19, verse 1 “And there came two angels to Sodom at even and Lot sat in the gate.” But now, let’s notice just verse 2: “And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him.” Verse 3, and Abraham said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight.” Verse 10, “And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, thy wife shall have a son.” One of these men says now to Abraham, I’m going to give your wife a son. Verse 14, “Sarah laughed, of course, and the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, shall I be sure to bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” And, verse 13, “And the Lord said unto Abraham, wherefore did Sarah laugh.”

And so the passage which begins with three men coming to Abraham and one engaging in conversation suddenly becomes a passage in which the Lord speaks to Abraham.

Verse 17, “And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do.”

Verse 20, “And the Lord said because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great.

Verse 22 “And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: [two of them] but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.”

And so suddenly one of these men who has come from Abraham is seen by Abraham to be the Lord but Abraham didn’t die. Why didn’t he die? Because this was God the Son. This was God the Son, not the invisible Father. Just as much God as the Father is God, but God the Son. Now, there are many passages in the Old Testament but we don’t have time to look at them.

Three - We may argue for the divinity of Christ from the son’s Names. What is he called in the New Testament? He is called Lord. He is called God. He is called Savior. These are things that can only be referred to God. We can argue deity from the son’s attributes. Now we’ve said that God is eternal. Is the Son eternal? “The same was in the beginning with God.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.”

Is the Son immutable? Unchangeable? Are you changeable? Yes, you’re changeable. I might ask your husband in case you say you’re not, vice versa. Is the Son immutable? Can anyone give me a text in which we affirm the immutability of the Son? All right Jack. Did you raise your hand? Oh, you were just scratching your head? All right. [Laughter] All right, what does it say? Yes, Jesus Christ, “the same yesterday, today and forever.”

Is the Son omnipresent? Is the Son omnipresent? Emily, text?

“Low, I am with you always, even to the end of the earth.” Now, that’s in his divine nature. Where is his human nature? I mean his human body, I should say? Where

is his human body? It’s at the right hand of the Father. But, by the Spirit he is with us always.

Is the Son omniscient? Yes, he’s omniscient. Is he omnipotent? Yes, he’s omnipotent. As a matter of fact, he’s controlling history; he’s controlling everything that’s happening here. As a matter of fact, that breath that you just drew and the one that you’re just about to draw is with the express permission of Jesus Christ. He upholds all things by the word of his power. So, we can argue from his attributes: they are divine.

And fifth - From the Son’s works. He participates in creation, he is the preserver of the creation, as we just said from Colossians 1:17, he is the God who exercises providence and governs the affairs of this earth, we learned that from Hebrews 1:3. He performs mighty miracles, which only a God can do. He judges men, ultimately. And, finally, he forgives sins.

And so, we can argue for the deity of Christ from the direct teaching of Scripture, from the Old Testament theophanies in which in a moment we have a visible God and in the next he’s called God, we can argue from the Son’s names, we can argue from his attributes, and we can argue from his works. It’s evident that the Bible regards Jesus of Nazareth as the supreme God.

And, I guess, the last evidence of this is the fact that he is the object of human worship. Someone must be able to make satisfaction. No one ought to make it but man. No one can make it but God. And, consequently, Jesus Christ, because he is God can die for men’s sins. He is the Godman. And, because he’s man he can be our substitute but he’s the Godman and because he’s the Godman, his death has infinite value and in it there is power sufficient to save all who acknowledge that they are sinners and come by faith to him.

One of our great theologians was a man by the name of Henry Smith. And Henry Smith began his life under Unitarian influences but he was converted in college. And, one of his college classmates wrote, “I regard Smith’s conversion as the most remarkable

event in college in my day.” He had doubts of human depravity. He had doubts about Jesus Christ’s divinity. He was a Unitarian. And, as he described it later, he said, “Of one thing I feel assured. I need an infinite Savior.” And the Holy Spirit came, convinced him of his sin, brought him face to face with God and he affirmed afterwards, “None, but an infinite Savior can ever save me.” And, finally, in his theology, I think it’s in his theology, he wrote, “When the doctrine of the Trinity was abandoned, other articles of the faith such as the atonement and regeneration have almost always followed, by logical necessity, as when one draws the wire from a necklace of gems. The gems all fall asunder.” And so, Jesus Christ is God.

Next Monday night, we want to talk about the Holy Spirit and his divinity.

Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we than Thee for Thy word and Thy truth and we rejoice that through the studies of Holy Scripture we now know Thee better. Thou art the Triune God, subsisting in one essence and yet distinguished as Father, Son, and Spirit. We worship Thee, the true God, Jesus Christ, who thou hast sent.

In his name. Amen.