



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Matthew 28:19-20

"The Holy Trinity"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee and thankful to Thee that we have the opportunity to turn again, to the word of God. We praise Thee for the greatness of Thy word, for its efficiency, for our needs, not only for salvation, but also for sanctification, and ultimately for all of our existence. For we know that when we reach heaven itself, we shall still be sustained by divine power through the word, and so we look forward to the future with hope and anticipation and also satisfaction. We praise Thee for the word, which effectually worketh in those who believe, and now tonight we ask that

Thou will give us special enablement as we consider one of the subjects that is so important, but yet for our human minds is so difficult to comprehend. May, Lord our study be useful and profitable for each of us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for tonight in the continuation in the series on Basis Bible Doctrine is The Holy Trinity, and I'd like for you to turn with me to Matthew 28. We'll read two verses, and then Acts chapter 5, we'll read a few verses there for our Scripture reading. Matthew chapter 28, verse 19 and verse 20, the last two verses of the first of the gospels.

Now, in Matthew chapter 28, in verse 19 and verse 20 the evangelist recording the words that the Lord Jesus spoke says,

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." (The important words for our subject tonight are the last words of verse 19,) "Baptizing them in the name." (Notice the singular,) "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

And then we turn now to Acts chapter 5, and read a few verses beginning with verse one. This is the account of Ananias and Sapphira, and Luke the author of this work of history begins the 5th chapter by saying,

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession," (and they evidentially were following the lead of Barnabas who had been described in the preceding chapter as having some land, and selling it and bringing the money, and laying it at the apostle's feet, so apparently Ananias and Sapphira sought to follow in the steps of Barnabas, as least outwardly, but we read in verse 2.) "And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet." (Incidentally, it was perfectly all right to bring only a certain part of the purchase price, but evidently in the light of Barnabas' example they were putting this forth as giving all of that price of that land, for the local church.) "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and died: and great fear came

on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wrapped him up, and carried him out, and buried him."

The subject for tonight is The Holy Trinity. H.L. Mencken many years ago said, "Theology was the effort to explain the unknowable in terms of the not worth knowing." Well, that is true of a great deal of theology, particularly the theology of the 20th Century which is so often simply human rationalism or religious experience, but that is not true of the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is all-important in Christian theology, and it is all-important in our Christian life, although we may not realize it fully. It touches the nature of the God that we worship. The Arians, and the Socinians, and others who down through the centuries who have veered from the doctrine of the Trinity as taught in the Word, do not really worship the same God as we worship. Frequently people say, "I believe in God." I had someone just this past week says to me, "I believe in God." But while in this case, after we discussed the matter, it was evident he did believe in the same God that Christians believe in.

When we say that we believe in God, we must ask a further question, "What God are you talking about?" To believe in God is not necessarily to believe in the Christian God. John Calvin said, "Unless we grasp these three." Referring to the three persons of the Trinity, "Only the bare and empty name of God flits about in our brains." There is a story of some men who were meeting. Three of them to be exact, and they began to talk about their life, and one of them said, in the course of the conversation said, somewhat incidentally, "Do you know Bob Smith?" And the others said, "Yes, we know Bob Smith." And one of them spoke up and said, "Isn't it terrible the way he murders the King's English." And the other two looked a little puzzled, but didn't say anything. And another one of the three spoke up and said, "Yes, and isn't it strange the way he takes his glass eye out in public, and dries it off and cleans it, and then puts it back in his eye?" And the other two looked a little astonished. Well, the result of the conversation of course was they all three knew a Bob Smith, but the Bob Smith was not the same Bob Smith, so to

say that we know Bob Smith, is not necessarily to say that we know the same person. To say I believe in God is not sufficient. We must ask the further question, what God are you speaking about? If you are speaking about the Christian God, then you must speak of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, one God who subsists in three persons.

Now, I am not saying that must understand the Trinity in order to be saved the doctrine of the Trinity is a profound mystery, and I am using mystery not in the common sense, but in the theological sense. It is a profound mystery. There is nothing contradictory about the doctrine of the Trinity. The fact that there is one God in three persons is no contradiction at all. For one, God has to do with essence. Three persons, has to do with personhood, but it is certainly true that we do not fully understand the Trinity, and the facts are, it seems to me, we will never understand the Trinity fully. When we get to heaven we will no doubt know a great deal more about the Trinity than we know now, but so far as understanding the Trinity in the fullest sense it will be a profound and majestic mystery for us throughout all the ages of the eternity, for an infinite being can never be understood fully by finite beings, and that is what we are even when we are glorified.

Furthermore we cannot prove the Trinity or disprove the Trinity to the unbelieving mind. This is something that human reasoning is incapable of handling. It is not sufficient for something like this. The doctrine of the Trinity can only be revealed as such and received as a divine revelation from God. When we talk about the divine Trinity or the Holy Trinity, there are some terms that I'd like to just simply identify for you. This is a study in basic Bible doctrine, and consequently it is not designed to give us everything that could be said, about the Trinity. In the first place, I wouldn't know everything there is to say about the Trinity, and in the second place, it wouldn't be appropriate even to deal with this in more detail in our series.

Trinity is a term that comes from a Latin word, "trinus," which is probably derived from tres and unus. Now, "tres" means three in Latin, and "unus" means one, so "trinus" means three in one or one which is three, and it is out of this particular terms that our English term Trinity comes or is derived. So when we think of Trinity we are thinking about one God who subsists in three persons.

Now, another term that is frequently used in these discussions is the term substance. Now, substance in another term for essence. It's a reference to the being of God, substance, one substance, three persons, one essence, three persons. Another term is subsistence. Subsistence is a mode of existence. It is really equivalent to our person, so we can speak of three persons or three subsistences, theologically. It's what constitutes a person, subsistence. And then person itself, and the person is a subsistence in a nature. And it is a reference to either man's or God's ego. It is the I, so when we say, three persons, we mean three persons who can be denominated by the pronoun I. One God, we mean one essence. There is no contradiction because the one and the three refer to different things. Some one said once, "All we need to know, to know that the Trinity is false is to know how to add, one plus, one plus one. They equal three not one, but we are talking about different things, when we say one, than when we say three.

Now, let me first of all tonight, and this if you are putting down an outline, this would be Roman 1 in the outline. The summary of the doctrine's chief points, and I am just going to state them because we have only forty-five minutes in this particular study. The summary of the doctrines chief points, and I am going to give you five of them and the would be A, B, C, D, and E. So the first of these chief points is A. Only one God, and this God is one, so it important when we think about the Trinity to realize that we are talking about only one God, and this God is one. He is a unified being in essence, one essence three persons. B. One divine essence exists eternally as Father, Son and Spirit. So there is one divine essence, one God, when the Mohammedans say, "We believe in God, you Christians believe in three." We say, "No, you don't know our doctrine. We

believe in one God also, but our one God subsists in three persons. There is one divine essence, but that divine essence, exists eternally as Father, Son and Spirit." In other words, there are three persons who possess the divine essence.

C. Distinctions between the three are personal distinctions, not essential distinctions. Distinctions between the three are personal, so that when we distinguish the Father from the Spirit, we are talking about distinctions that exist between persons. When we distinguish the Father from the Son, we are talking about personal distinctions. Each of these individuals, as you know, is referred to by personal pronouns in the Bible, and so when we think of them, we are to think of personal distinctions. D. The divine attributes are common to each. That is each of the persons of the Trinity possesses all of the divine attributes. The Father possesses them all the Son possesses them all, the Spirit possesses them all, and we have been talking about attributes, I know it was a long time ago, but we talked about incommunicable attributes and communicable attributes referring to the properties of the divine being.

Now, these properties all belong to each of the persons, that is the divine attributes are common to each of the three persons. E. There is a certain order of subsistence and operation. There is a certain order of subsistence and operation. That is there are some things within the Trinity that are peculiar to certain persons of the Trinity. They do not have to do with essence. They have to do with the operations of the persons of the Trinity, with order in the work that they carry out. For example the Father is never said to be begotten. The Holy Spirit is never said to be begotten. It is the Son who is begotten by the Father, eternally. The Holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and from the Son. The Father does not proceed so that there are certain actions, certain operations, that belong to certain members of the Trinity and we should bear that in mind as well.

Now, that is not so important for us in a study such as this in which we are seeking to cover this great big topic in forty-five minutes, so I'll drop it at that. Now, Roman II, in

the outline, this the substantiation of the doctrine. The substantiation of the doctrine Roman II, and here we have A, B, C, D, so if we are going to prove the Trinity to a believing man, what must we establish? Well, A. We must establish that God is one, that there is also only one God. They are related. God is one, and there is only one God. Now, let's turn to Scripture. And we'll turn first to Deuteronomy chapter 6 in verse 4, Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4, and here we'll seek to show that God is one. This as you know is the great "shema yisreal" it is perhaps the greatest doctrinal statement of Judaism. "Hear oh Israel." Deuteronomy 6:4. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" In other words, the Bible teaches that there is only one God. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" I saw somebody looking at someone next to them as if maybe I said the wrong the book, it's Deuteronomy chapter 6, in verse 4. ""Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:"

Now, when we discussed the self-existence of God, we discussed this text, and I suggest to you if you have any questions about it, that you go get that tape and listen to the two major interpretations that have been placed on that particular statement, but it does teach that God is one. Turn now to Ephesians, chapter 4, and we'll read verses 4 through 6 in order to support the other half of that statement that there is only one God. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 4 through verse 6. The Apostle Paul, in this section of the Ephesians, in which he discusses the walk of the believer after having discussed the wealth in of the believer in the first three chapters writes verse 4,

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. One Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father, who is above all and through all, and in you all."

God is one. There is only one God. B. Jesus of Nazareth is truly God, and yet a distinct person. Jesus of Nazareth is truly God, and yet a distinct person. Now, we must, to establish our doctrine, also prove that. So we want to turn now to Hebrews chapter 1, verse 8 and verse 9. Hebrews chapter 1, verse 8 and verse 9. I was looking for a quotation that I had, while you are trying to find that, I'll see if I can find the quotation that I wanted to suggest, and I have found it. Eureka. Our text is Hebrews chapter 1, verse 8 and verse 9. You recognize that this passage occurs in this series of texts cited from the Old Testament in order to prove the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ or that he is greater than the angels in the context of Hebrews 1, and our unknown author says, in the 8th verse,

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Now, in the English text, which in this case, is an accurate rendering of the great text, and true also to the Hebrew text of Psalm 45, of which we have a New Testament citation, he says, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God," so the Son here, the Lord Jesus Christ is addressed as God. In the next verse he says, "Therefore God, even thy God," so this person who is God also has a God himself.

Now, we know the answer to the questions that might arise from that because we are able to look back from the standpoint of the doctrine of the Trinity and know that our Lord is a divine person, but also possesses two natures, and he may truly speak of his God and at the same time be God himself, so Jesus of Nazareth must be truly God and a distinct person. Another text that we look at is John chapter 1 in verse 1. These are outstanding texts on the deity of Christ, and I think are extremely clear. John chapter 1 in verse 1, most of us are familiar with this text in which we read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Now, there is no question about who the Word is, for in the 14th verse, we read, "And the Word was made 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." It is our Lord Jesus Christ who came and dwelt among us, and it is he then who is the Word, and in the first verse it is stated the Word is God, so here we have one of the prime articles of divinity, and also one of the important things in the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity to believers.

Robert L. Dabney, who may have been the greatest of the Southern theologians, said that "the deity of Christ is a prime article of revealed theology," and then he went on to say, "Without his divinity, the Bible is the drama of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet omitted." So what he is saying is that the deity of the Lord Jesus is fundamental to Christianity, we would not have any Christianity if we did not have a divine Savior. All that we would have would be another interesting philosophy to compete with other human philosophies. Jesus of Nazareth is truly God but a distinct person. The third thing that we must prove in order to substantiate the doctrine of the Trinity is that Holy Spirit is God, and also a distinct person.

Now, we could turn to many lines of proof incidentally for each of these doctrines, and again I invite you in case you say, "Well, Dr. Johnson didn't much time on the deity of Christ, and I could think up some problem about Hebrews 1." I refer you to the tapes on the deity of Christ, there are several in which this subject is taken up in more than one message, and so you will have a good deal more substantiation if you have any question about it, but these are texts that I think, successfully establish the particular point that we want to make. The Holy Spirit is God and a distinct person.

Did you notice, when we were reading in the Scripture reading what Luke says about that incident that happened in the early church involving Ananias and Sapphira? He said when Ananias and Sapphira brought their possessions forward as if they were the whole of the price. They divided what they received from their property. Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" Incidentally, that in

itself proves the personality of the Spirit. You cannot lie to a thing or to a principle. You lie to a person. So that suggests the personality of the Spirit, but notice he says in the 4th verse, "While it remained was it not thine own after it was so? Was it not thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this things in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." In the preceding verse, he said, he lied to the Holy Spirit, in the next verse he said, he has lied to God, so it is clear that in the mind of Peter the Holy Spirit is God. As I say, there are many other lines of proof that prove the deity of the Holy Spirit, the very fact that he is called the Holy Spirit of God suggests his deity.

Now, in John chapter 14, in verse 26, he is said to teach. An influence does not teach. A thing does not teach. Persons teach. He is a divine person. The fourth thing that we must establish in order to prove the doctrine of the Trinity is this, that the Scriptures teach a Trinity of persons in one Godhead. The Scriptures teach a Trinity of persons in one Godhead.

Now, we've seen that Jesus Christ is God. We've seen the Spirit is God. We don't have any need to refer to texts that refer to the Father as God. Even the Unitarians acknowledge that, so do the Scriptures teach a Trinity of persons in one Godhead? Well, in the Old Testament we have only suggestions. We have in the earlier part of the Old Testament, references to the deity in the plural. "Let us make man in our own image, and let us do this." That us is a suggestion of plurality in the deity. It does not of course substantiate the doctrine of the Trinity. It does not say, "Let us three, and three only." But it says, "Let us." And then of course there are the appearances of the angel of Jehovah. In our studies in the book of Genesis over that past sixty-five lessons, we have seen a half a dozen cases at least. I didn't try to count these, but a half a dozen cases at least, maybe more, in which the angel of Jehovah appeared to accomplish some particular spiritual task, and in the context it was made plain that the angel of the Lord was a divine being in those places. Genesis chapter 16, Genesis chapter 3 for that matter, Genesis

chapter 16, Genesis chapter 18, Genesis chapter 32, and so on through the book of Genesis.

We have only one passage in the Old Testament that may contain a reference to three persons of the Trinity as three divine beings in one context, and even then we are not told only three. It is in Isaiah chapter 48, verse 12 through verse 16, and if you can find a book of Isaiah then turn there with me. Isaiah chapter 48, in verse 12.

Now, God is speaking, and notice what we read in verse 12. Now, you'll have to follow very carefully here and pay attention to what is being said or you will miss it like a dummkopf or like someone a bump on a log. It's amazing you know, how much spiritual truth just drifts in front of the mind of so many people, and they get nothing out of it at all. They are impervious often to spiritual teaching. It's too bad, but nevertheless it's true.

All this great truth, if the Christians are going to have to learn it later, you may as well get into the swing of things now and pay some attention. Have you found Isaiah? It's page 754 in the approved edition of the King James Version, at least. Verse 12,

"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." (Now you'll notice the divine being is speaking.) "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me."

Now, it's the divine being a speaking. He is the first and the last, and yet he says that the Lord God and his Spirit have sent him. So the divine being says the Lord God and the Spirit have sent me, so there are obviously three divine beings here.

Now, there are not more than three, but the text doesn't say only three. So far as I know that is the only passage in the Old Testament in which the three divine beings are mentioned very plainly in the same context. Sometimes we say the Trinity is not taught in the Old Testament. Well, we should probably say, it's not taught clearly in the Old Testament. It is clear in this case that there is in this passage at least a very strong substantiation of three divine beings and one would, if he were a Jewish man, and if he studied the Old Testament. That would be a puzzle. I could imagine a Rabbi teaching a class in exegesis, well, I can hardly do that really, [laughter] but I mean if there were a Rabbi teaching a class in Hebrew exegesis in the book of Isaiah, I can imagine him saying, "Now, we have a problem here." And seeking to try to explain this. The divine being who says a divine being and the Holy Spirit has sent him to perform a particular task. The Messianic task as he says, and furthermore this being who is sent by the Lord God is said to be the first and the last. So that would be a problem for them, but I love it.

[Laughter] See it just tells me what I see plainly in the New Testament.

Now, when we turn to the New Testament we had the passage that we read in Scripture, we'll just use that. The Lord Jesus told the apostles and others that they were to go, and they were to preach the gospel, and they were to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now, notice it is singular, but nevertheless the three persons are there. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We have an incidental reference to the three persons of the Trinity and the baptism of the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 3. There in verses 13 and following Matthew describes the baptism of the Lord by John, and we read in verse 16,

"And Jesus when he was baptized went up straight way out of the water, and lo the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and abiding upon him," (That's the third person of the Trinity.) "And lo a voice from heaven

saying," (This is the first person of the Trinity.) "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

And here the three persons of the Trinity are uniting in this common work of the baptism of the Messiah in order to baptize him with the Holy Spirit in inauguration of the Messianic ministry. Did I say baptism of the Spirit? To baptize him in water as the ingurgitation of his Messianic ministry.

There are other passages we might refer to like 2 Corinthians chapter 13, in verse 14, in which each of the persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Spirit communicates a distinct blessing. To sum up, and I'll give the words of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer from his discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity as a summary. To sum up there is "One God eternally subsisting in a plurality of persons, three no less, and no more." I think that's good statement that Dr. Chafer has made, "One God eternally subsisting in a plurality of persons, three, no less and no more."

Let me conclude with a few words concerning the necessity of the doctrine of the Trinity. Why is it important for us that we believe in the doctrine of the Trinity? Is not this something that we could dispense with in the Christian faith? Well, now there are some very strong reasons why if we were to dispense with the doctrine we wouldn't have Christianity at all. Many have noticed this down through the centuries. It's not something new. In fact, many unbelievers have noticed it. Many of them have said, that if we did not a doctrine of the Trinity, Christian would evaporate and become simply another system of thought and of men and compete with other systems of human thought, but in it's doctrine of the Trinity it is unique.

Let me suggest to you three reasons why the doctrine of the Trinity is important. A, B, and C. A. It is essential to any proper theism. That is any proper doctrine of God, and let me explain what I mean. If God is love, that implies relationships, does it not? And even the unbelievers will accept the idea that God is a God of love, but if you have

love you must have an object. That implies relationships. But since the Lord God is perfect, he only can realize himself as love through relationships within his own being. He can only fully love himself, for being a perfect being and being a loving being and that love involved relationships, he can only love that which is a reflection of himself. To love something less than himself is something that is impossible to this perfect being. Furthermore, he is an eternal being. We know that from other facts of Scripture, and so this relationship of love antedates the creation. Someone might say, "Well, he loves me." But he loved before you ever came on the scene at all.

Now, since he is eternal, and since these relationships antedate the creation, if there were only a plurality of persons, that is two persons in the Trinity, then one would love the other, and the other would love the one. But then you might raise an objection and say, they love because they are loved. They love in reciprocation, and the Lord speaks about that you know in Luke. I believe it's about chapter 6. He talks about the love that is a love only because of the reciprocal loving back. We don't love if we love only because that person loves us. If we truly love, we love in the sense of giving ourselves to them regardless of their response to us, so love is a sovereign activity of the will directed toward a person, and if that person does not respond you still love. That's true love, so it would seem that in germ, a Trinity would be required, in order to avoid the objects that might be raised to theism of the ordinary kind. So we say it's essential to any proper theism. It is also essential to any proper revelation.

If it is true that God the Father cannot be seen by man, as Scripture says, "No man hath seen me, nor can see me." Or if we see him, we shall die, and a finite being looking upon an infinite being, we cannot do that. I've said many times that I think that that means throughout all eternity, since we are creatures, we will never look upon the unveiled essence of deity. We couldn't stand that, but if it is true that God cannot be seen by men, it means that here must be another divine being to come to reveal that God to us because we cannot be satisfied with any message from men, even a prophet. A man who

comes and says, "I am a prophet. Listen to me." Must have some ultimate authentication, and the ultimate reason that Jesus Christ came was to authenticate the line of the prophets to him. If we had only the prophets of the Old Testament, or only the priests of the Old Testament who taught or only a Moses, we could never be sure that we had a message from God. We must have something from God himself, to be absolutely certain. If I'd listened to Moses, I think that's probably what I would have thought before I was saved. I would have said, "What right does he have to talk to us. How do I know that this is the message from God?"

Now, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit conveyed that, but that was in the anticipation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They witness of the Spirit. Testified to the authenticity of the words that the prophets spoke, but there must be some ultimate authentication, and so God came in the person of Jesus Christ. That's why we must have visit from God himself, in order that we can be sure of divine truth, and he did come. So the Trinity a plurality within the deity is necessary for Christianity. The Trinity is essential to any proper revelation because only God can reveal God. We know, as a result of the saving work of Christ too, he's at the right hand of the Father, and we need a Spirit now, to teach us the things of the Lord God, but he must be the Spirit of God.

And finally the doctrine of the Trinity is essential to any proper redemption. The Apostle Paul writing in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, in verse 19 writes some rather interesting words, he says in chapter 5, verse 19 these words, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" (Ah, that's a great text on the definiteness of the atonement, isn't it?) "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" (Not imputing the trespasses to the world. Must be a reference to those for whom he came to die.) "And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." "To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

We must have, in order to have a doctrine of redemption, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. God could not depute redemption to any other person than a divine being. He could not turn over the work of redemption to a demigod. He cannot turn over the work of an angel. He must turn over the work of redemption, or call to the work of redemption, a divine being who had the capacity and the qualifications to die for human beings, and that of course is accomplished only by a God man.

Donald Grey Barnhouse, in one of his works describes how a young Christian read 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 16, and how it said there that God was a person whom no man has seen nor could see. And he was talking with a Jehovah's Witness. The Jehovah's Witness pointed him to that text because they don't believe in the Trinity. They're not Christians, and he went to Dr. Barnhouse, and said, he was troubled over this. It says that God cannot be seen, and how can we say that Jesus Christ then is God because we've seen him. Well, Dr. Barnhouse thinking that maybe he had some problems with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity said, "Well, what are the persons of the Trinity to you?" And he said, "Well, there is God, there is Christ and there is the Holy Spirit." And he said, "Ah, I see your problem already. If you are going to begin with God, the term God, that's not parallel with those other terms, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, or Christ." He said, "If you are going to begin with God then you should say the persons of the Trinity are God, God and God, so you are talking about essence, but if you are talking about persons, you must say the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Robert L. Dabney, I say, was one of the great Southern theologians, and listen to what he has to say about why Jesus Christ must be God, and why we must have a Trinity. He says, "Had he been the noblest creature in heaven, his life and powers would have been the property of God, our offended judge because of our sin, and our advocate could not have claimed as he does, John 10:18, that he had authority to lay down his life and to take it again, then unless above the law, he could have no imputable active obedience. In other words, if he was not God, he couldn't comment off of perfect obedience and have

that perfect obedience imputed as righteous to the saved. Third, unless sustained by omnipotence, unless sustained by inward, omnipotence he would never have endured the wrath of the almighty for the sins of the world. It would have sunk him into perdition. Fourth, had there not been a divine nature to reflect an infinite dignity upon his person his suffering the curse of sin for a few years would not have been a satisfaction for sins sufficient to propitiate God.

After the sacrifice comes intercession. His petitioners and their wants are so numerous that unless he were endowed with sleepless attention and omnipotence, which can never tire, and infinite understanding omnipresence and exhaustless kindness, he could not wisely and graciously attend to so many in multifarious calls. Here we see how worthless our popish intercessors who are only creatures." So in order for him to die for us, he must be both man and God in order for him to make successful intercession for us now, he must be both man and God, and he must do this through the Holy Spirit for our benefit.

Well, now I must apologize for talking about the Trinity for forty-five minutes, when it's a subject that needs hours and hours really. I hope you will study. That reminds me of the professor, a biologist who spent his whole lifetime studying the beetle, and he was saying to some friends as he finally finished his life that he was sorry that he had spent his whole lifetime studying the beetle, that he should have given his whole lifetime to the study of the wing of the beetle. [Laughter] So I assure you there is at least that much to know about the doctrine of the Trinity. May God help us to know the God that we believe as Father, Son and Spirit, and don't hesitate when your friends say to you? "I believe in God too." Just say, "What God?" That'll get you in a good discussion. [Laughter] Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the wonderful teaching of the word of God concerning the Trinity. We acknowledge, Lord, that it is a great and majestic mystery, but we thank Thee for the indications in the word of God that seem to clearly point to the

importance, the absolute necessity of such a doctrine for the foundation of our redemption, for Jesus' sake. Amen.