

# The Trinity

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[ 0 : 00 ] Something that I'm kind of afraid of, and here's why.

We're talking about the Trinity tonight. and there's always the potential when talking about the Godhead! that you say something stupid, wrong, or dare we say it, heretical.

And unfortunately now my heresies are going to be recorded for posterity, you know? And it's like, oh no, oh no. So excited to get to talk with you about this topic.

There is no more important topic in all of Christian faith. I mean, it's like the Trinity. That's who we are. We're Christians. We are Trinitarians. But I don't know if you guys notice, a lot of times in evangelicalism, we don't really seem to talk about the Trinity very much.

And I don't know why exactly that is. I think I have some theories. I think one reason might be we're confused a little bit by the Trinity. And so we don't talk about the Trinity.

[ 1 : 05 ] Or I think another could be the Trinity, when we say it, it seems oddly impersonal. But Jesus seems so personal. And so we're going to direct our attention on Christ alone, as opposed to thinking about the entirety of the Godhead.

But I think when we do that, we miss out a little bit, actually. I think we're missing out on not only just who the Godhead is in itself, but also we're missing out on the relationship between the Godhead. And there's a lot that we can learn. So let's go ahead and start. I went ahead and put on the top of your handout the statement from the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, which we all, as good Southern Baptists, affirm and believe.

The eternal triune God reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

I think that this is a good definition. Another definition could be, our one God is three co-equal, co-eternal, consubstantial persons sharing the same divine essence.

[ 2 : 15 ] So you see, we're already getting into big words, and I know it gets a little bit confusing, you know, which is one of the reasons why I like what they did in the Baptist Faith and Message. You can tell they've taken other statements and tried to distill it, tried to simplify it.

So we're talking about the Trinity. And our first question might be, why does this doctrine matter so much? And I would say it's because it is the essence of Christianity.

For example, without the Trinity, why would we not just be Jewish? Is God the Father a wrathful God from whom Jesus the Son must save us?

Is the goodness of our God shown equally in both the Old Testament and the New Testament? If Christ and the Father are both God, then can we say in all honesty that we as Christians are monotheists?

If we have only been left with just the Holy Spirit, does this mean that we have a reduced version of God who's been left with us? Is it true, like the song that we often sing, that all we have is Christ?

[ 3 : 25 ] These questions and countless others are answered in a diligent and humble study of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, something that has been noticed before, and it does stand out to me, is that oftentimes, like when you have a system of belief, it's the opponents of that system of belief who are able to look at that system and see what lies at the core of the system.

And so I say this because I worked with Muslims. So Muslims believe in one God. His name is Allah. And they talk about him being radically alone, radically single.

And so when you talk with Muslims, it's really interesting. We believe so much in common. It's actually kind of nice. It's a great way to start. For example, Muslims will say, yeah, the Bible? Yeah, that's a holy book. And God reveals himself in it. That's a pretty good starting point. They believe in heaven and hell. They believe in angels. They believe in demons.

They believe in most of the same prophets that we believe in. They even have the same names. They believe in Jesus. They believe in his miracles, his virgin birth. They believe he's the son of God. They'll even say that because the Quran says that.

[ 4 : 39 ] But then when they start to disagree with you, the first thing that they'll say, and they go right to it, it's from the Quran. They say, God has no partners.

That's the first thing a Muslim will say. Every little Muslim boy is programmed with that phrase, that God has no partners. And what they mean by that is that the Trinity is untrue, can't be true, completely wrong.

And I've watched Christians, and I've been that Christian, kind of taken aback. And I'm like, partnership? What are we talking about here? They see the Trinity is at the core of Christian doctrine. And so when a Muslim wants to disagree with you, he goes right to what he sees as the heart.

And that is the Trinity. But when we talk about Christianity, do we talk about the Trinity as the heart of our faith? I think a lot of times we don't. We talk about other things.

But we, as Christians, know that the Trinity is true, that it is the biblical revelation of who God is and the historic confession of the Christian church back to the very beginning.

[ 5 : 45 ] Therefore, it's not only a doctrine that should define our faith. It's also one that should shape our daily lives, even now. Now, theologian Michael Reeves, someone who's really helped me in my understanding of the Trinity, has a really helpful statement that I want to share before we begin.

He says, The Trinity is not a problem. In looking at the Trinity, we are not walking off the map into dangerous and unchartable areas of pointless speculation.

Far, far from it. Pressing into the Trinity, we are doing what in Psalm 27, David said he could do all the days of his life. We are gazing on the beauty of the Lord.

And as we do so, I hope you will begin to feel as David did and that you could do the same. So when we study the Trinity, brothers and sisters, we're gazing on the beauty of the Lord.

So before we begin, a few notes and then two big ideas. And then we'll start looking at your handout. Firstly, our study today is brief. I have apparently 39 minutes left.

[ 6 : 51 ] We are scratching the surface. We cannot possibly cover everything. I'm going to leave aside a lot of the theological discussions around famous terms that are related to the Trinity.

Words like substance, essence, hypostasis, perichoresis. I'm not touching these tonight. We don't have time.

And these are beyond my ability to teach. One thing, somebody might say, objection. The Trinity, it's beyond our understanding.

It's a mystery that cannot be fully understood. Why are we spending our time on this? And the answer to that would be, yes, indeed, the Trinity is not simple.

But that does not mean that one cannot learn as much as possible about it. I don't know if you guys have ever heard somebody say, yeah, it's a mystery. And they don't even try to understand something.

[ 7 : 55 ] Yes, it's true. But also, I think it's a little bit of a cop out. And when I was thinking about it, honestly, as an old married man, I thought about my wife.

And heavens, the way her mind works, I will never fully understand. But that does not mean that it's not my duty as a husband to try to understand the way she thinks.

And the more I try, the more benefit comes to me and comes to her and comes to us relationally. Yeah, I'm never going to get all the way to the bottom. And it's always going to be things the way Caitlin thinks that are mysterious to me.

But that doesn't mean that I don't try. It's the same with the Trinity. We are never going to comprehend it all the way. But that's no excuse for not trying. Some people might say, if we can't fully understand this, why even bother?

And I would say to them what one of my heroes, St. Augustine, said. He said, I believe so that I can understand. So in our world today, people would say, oh, if you can't understand it all the way, you don't want to believe that.

[ 9 : 01 ] No way. You have to understand it 100%. Then you can put your faith in it. Augustine and countless Christians who have followed him have said, no, we believe so that the Lord can help our understanding through faith.

And I think that particularly applies to the Trinity. So those are just a couple of notes. Now, two big ideas before we start looking at the Bible. Firstly, the Trinity reveals who the persons of the Godhead are eternally.

So I'm going to use the term Godhead and Trinity interchangeably. So what this means is that who is God eternally? It's God the Father.

He is eternally the Father. And he has eternally begotten his Son, Jesus. And who is Jesus Christ eternally? He's God's Son eternally.

He is the eternally begotten Son of the Father. And the Spirit is eternally the Holy Spirit. And when we look at the Trinity, we have God who is eternally the Father, Christ who is eternally the Son, and the Holy Spirit who is eternally the Holy Spirit.

[10:13] This is really important. We'll hopefully come back to it later. That's the first idea. The second is where one person of the Trinity is working. All are working in unison.

And this is really important because the will and the works of the Trinity are undivided, though each person plays a specific role. For example, our salvation is uniquely a work of Jesus, the Son.

And because of this, Jesus is rightly called the Savior. So who saved us? Of course, we all say Jesus the Son saved us. And absolutely, we should. He is the Savior.

But who sent Jesus? God. Yeah, absolutely. And when Jesus was on the earth, who empowered him in the fullness of his ministry?

God, the Holy Spirit. The entire Trinity was active in our salvation. So who saved us? Of course, Christ saved us. But it's also accurate to say God saved us. And when you even read Mary's Magnificat that she prays and she calls God her Savior.

[11:21] And I remember thinking about that, wondering, how can I say that? And then it's like, no, the entire Trinity is active together in our salvation. But it's not just our salvation. The entire Trinity is active wherever one member of the Trinity is active.

For example, I was thinking about the Scripture. So the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. So, you know, this is the Word of God the Father. But who is the Word of God?

Christ the Son, absolutely. In the Spirit, the Spirit is identified with breath, the breathing out. So who is it that inspired the authors of Holy Scripture?

The Spirit. So we see in our salvation, the entire Trinity is active. And we see in something like the inspiration of Scripture, the entire Trinity is active. And there are other places we're going to look at tonight as well.

So that's just something I want you to be thinking about, that the Trinity reveals who the members of the Godhead are eternally. The Father, eternally. The Son, eternally.

[12:25] And the Holy Spirit, eternally. And that when one member of the Trinity is working, all members are working together. They're not divided from each other. So now let's go ahead and let's look at the Scripture.

And let's start with the Old Testament. So as we look at the Old Testament, you're going to say, oh, so is the Trinity in the Old Testament? I would say, no, it's not that clear.

But there are absolutely hints for us to look at that we know we're not just making this doctrine up. This is biblical from beginning to end. So firstly, let's look at Genesis 1.

Could somebody please read Genesis 1, 1 to 5 for us? Can we have a volunteer? James, you look like someone who wants to volunteer. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light. And there was light.

[13:26] And God saw the light, that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day. And the darkness called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Fantastic, brother. Thank you. So guys, obviously we see this is in the beginning. This is before all things. And we have God.

But also we have the Holy Spirit. And so if you look at this and think, oh, this can only be a rigid monotheism, the way contemporary Judaism believes.

How can we already have the Holy Spirit? It's clear even from the very beginning. There seems to be a multiplicity in the Godhead.

This is a phrase that's been used, a multiplicity within the Godhead. There's already more going on than just one being, even from the very beginning of Scripture. So we say, oh, okay.

[14:24] Well, we have God and we have the Holy Spirit. Well, where's Christ the Son? So, Mike, you're looking at me. Brother, could you please turn to Colossians 1, 15 and 17 and read that for us?

So we know we have the Father and we have the Spirit hovering. But now let's see what the New Testament says about the actions of Christ at creation.

Colossians 1, 15 to 17. Understandable. Understandable, sir. Yes, please.

So again, we see where one member of the Trinity is working.

All members of the Trinity are working. So we see God the Father and he speaks and all things are created. We see the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters. And then Paul writes in Colossians that all things were made through Christ.

[15:49] So they're made by God the Father through Jesus, his Son. And when you look at Psalm 33, verse 6, I put it there. This was interesting for me in this study. I didn't know this. It says, by the word of the Lord, the heavens were made.

And by the breath of his mouth, all their host. So remember, we were talking, who is the word of God? It's Jesus. And remember, the Holy Spirit.

The word for spirit in Hebrew is the same word for breath. So look at Psalm 33, verse 6 again and think about it. Think about word being Christ and breath being the spirit.

By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made. And by the breath of his mouth, all their host. This can be seen in a Trinitarian light. And guys, I'm just telling you, there are, I think that there are echoes of the Trinity throughout the Old Testament.

The question is, are we looking for them as we read? And our brothers and sisters since the beginning have been doing so. And so that's one of the reasons why it's really a fun doctrine to study, is to see where other Christians saw the Trinity in the Old Testament.

[16:57] Something else you could look at, I put that this is extra, we won't turn to it today, is Proverbs 9, 22 to 31. So this is a description of the wisdom of the Lord.

Lady. Proverbs 9 only has 18 words. Oh, blast. Then it has to be eight. Forgive me. Let me clarify this. Thank you for calling me on that.

Yeah. Okay. Well, I'm already here. So you guys are going to get a little extra. Here we go. So this is a description of the Lord's wisdom. So listen to the way his wisdom is described.

The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up at the first before the beginning of the earth.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth. When there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth. Before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world.

[17:58] When he established the heavens, I was there. When he drew a circle on the face of the deep. When he made firm the skies above. When he established the fountains of the deep.

When he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command. When he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was beside him like a master workman.

And I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always. Rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man. So you look at this and it's a description of God's wisdom.

And it could just be that. But Christians for ages have looked at this and seen God delights in his wisdom like this. So from the very beginning of all things, God was delighting in his wisdom.

Because that description sounds like he's describing Jesus. Because we know from John chapter 1 that the word was with God from the beginning. And without him was not anything made that was made.

[18:57] And what do we see here? We see that God is delighting in his wisdom. And we know, yeah, no, it is. It's true. Paul will describe Christ as the wisdom of God. And so here we see God delighting in his wisdom before anything has happened.

It's like, seems to be an echo of the Trinity. It's something to think about. This is Proverbs 8. Yeah, it's 8 and it's 22 to 31.

And that one has been debated. But Christians for ages have looked at it and said, I think he's talking about more than just wisdom here.

Time is fleeing from us, guys. Gosh, it goes so fast when I'm talking. I don't know why. But at work, it goes so slow. So next, the angel of the Lord.

So again, we're talking about, yeah, let's say hints or echoes of the Trinity in the Old Testament. So the angel of the Lord. Sometimes it appears just to be a normal angel.

[ 19 : 59 ] Other times it could be a theophany, an appearance of God. Other times we think it could be a Christophany, an appearance of Christ before he was incarnate.

So we don't have to read these passages. I put them there just for your reference. Because there are aspects of the Lord. So in Genesis 16, the angel speaks as God.

So it's not just an angel. He's speaking as God. And he speaks about the Lord in the third person.

So he's speaking both as God and about the Lord in the third person.

He's talking about the Lord, but also speaking as the Lord. How can this be? That's really confusing. If there is only one God and it is a rigid monotheism, if there is no multiplicity in him, how can the angel of the Lord both speak about God and speak as God at the same time?

That's kind of confusing, isn't it? Just a little bit. In Genesis 22, the angel identifies himself as God.

In Exodus 3, it's the angel of the Lord who speaks to Moses from the bush.

[ 21 : 11 ] And then I put for your reference Exodus 23, 21. This is God speaking. He says, So this angel, this angel of the Lord, God is speaking and says, You listen very carefully to him.

My name is on him or my name is in him. Something special about this angel. And then we even see in Zechariah 3, the angel of the Lord pardons sin.

Who can pardon sin but God alone? That's a question that the Pharisees asked. They were asking a good question. No one can pardon sin but God alone. But we see that the angel of the Lord does in Zechariah.

Also, this is extra. We don't have to turn there. It is worth thinking about. Joshua 5, 13 to 15, the commander of the armies of the Lord. Joshua falls down and he worships in front of the commander of the armies of the Lord.

Is this just an angel? Or is there more here? Is there more to the story? Additionally, moving on, we look at the Messiah and we look at the Messianic prophecies.

[ 22 : 44 ] We see that in Psalm 2, specifically, it's identified with the Son. And it says, actually, let's just go ahead and turn there. Let's turn to Psalm 2.

Let's look at verses 7 to 12. This is Psalm 2.

I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now, therefore, O kings, be wise. Be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you perish in the way. For his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Brothers and sisters, I think that's pretty compelling.

[ 23 : 56 ] I think we're talking about Christ in the book of Psalms. Now, a lot of biblical scholars who are not believers will say, oh, this is a description of a king, of an earthly Israelite king.

It's like, and the Lord is going to give him all the nations? I don't believe it. I don't see it. I look at that and I see Christ the Son. But we also see that the Son of Man is going to be given dominion and honor.

And he's going to stand before the throne of God in Daniel chapter 7. We also know that in Isaiah 9, the Messiah, he is going to be called mighty God.

How can this be? So he comes from God, but he also is called God as well. We also see in Isaiah 53 that he's able to heal the consequences of sin.

So looking at the angel of the Lord, we see that there are aspects of him that are divine, only come from God. And the same with the Messiah. There are aspects of the description of the Messiah.

[ 25 : 03 ] It's like, that is God. But then we look at the Spirit. How about the Spirit in the Old Testament? We see in Psalm 104 that he's active in creation.

That's interesting. So that means that before anything was, the Spirit was, and the Spirit was working with God. We also see in Psalm 139 that the Spirit is everywhere where God is.

And God's omnipresence is the same as the Spirit's omnipresence. Well, that's a trait only God has, but the Spirit has it as well. And then an interesting point I didn't know until getting to do this study, Isaiah 63.

It says that the Spirit was grieved over Israel's sin. So grief, that's an emotion. Only a person can feel an emotion.

This isn't just some neutral force. This isn't like something magical. This Spirit has personality. The Spirit can be grieved. Interesting, isn't it?

[ 26 : 10 ] Oh, wait. Objection, I hear you say. I'm on to you in the back. The Shema from Deuteronomy chapter 6. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God.

The Lord is one. Case closed. There's no Trinity in the Old Testament. Or is there? There are multiple words for one in Hebrew.

The word that's used in the Shema. It can mean one, like the number. It can also mean a unity. One of the things that Christians have always said is that in Genesis chapter 2, God makes them male and female.

And they too shall be one flesh. And the same word for one is used. Is the idea there the idea of a number or is the idea of a unity? And I say this like this is a much, much deeper conversation.

But it's something to think about. The same idea. Are we talking specifically about God as one or God as unity in the Shema of Deuteronomy chapter 6?

[ 27 : 16 ] It's a good question and it's a good answer that Christians, we have been able to answer that when Jewish people have challenged it. An extra that we're not going to look at but is really interesting is Genesis 18, the three angelic visitors to Abraham.

One of them is clearly the Lord. But why are there three of them? Here in the United States, in the Western church, we don't really think about this story a lot.

But I lived in Russia and there are Orthodox Christians there. This story is one of the most important in their entire conception of the Christian faith.

They make icons of the stories that they think are important. All the time you go into churches in Russia and it will be a picture of an old man with three angels. And that is the three visitors to Abraham.

And the reason that's important to the Russian Orthodox is that they think that is the first clear depiction of the Trinity in the scripture. So they make an icon out of it. This one's not 100%.

[ 28 : 22 ] Again, we're talking about hints. We're talking about echoes in the Old Testament. But it is something to think about. So now my time is way over half.

Let's get to the New Testament. Let's really get down to business, you know. Okay. Interesting thought. We're going to...

Let's not turn to Luke 2. Please go ahead and turn to Matthew chapter 3. So while you turn there, a thought where one member of the Trinity is working, all members of the Trinity are working.

The reason I put Luke 2 here is that it's the description of the angel talking to Mary. And he said, the angel is speaking the words of God.

And the angel is talking about God. And Mary says, well, how am I going to be pregnant? He says, the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. So we know that we have God. We have the Holy Spirit.

[ 29 : 37 ] And who will Mary bear? She's going to bear Christ the Son. So again, it's Trinitarian. And if you look at the passage in Luke 2, it's clearly Trinitarian. I didn't notice this for years.

And then most recently, like when I've been reading it, it's like it jumps off the page at me. So let's look at Matthew chapter 3 then. It says, Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him.

John would have prevented him saying, I need to be baptized by you. And do you come to me? But Jesus answered him, let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were open to him. And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him.

Man. Man. That's the Spirit of God coming. Could be. Could be. And the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him.

[ 30 : 40 ] And behold, a voice from heaven said, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. So we have Christ the Son. We have the Holy Spirit descending upon him.

And we have a voice speaking from heaven, identifying the Son. But guys, something I want you to think about. I never noticed that. I never even thought about it. What does the voice from heaven say?

It says, this is my Son. More than that, it says, this is my beloved Son. The Father is identifying that this is the Son, the object of his love eternally.

Because the Father is the Father eternally. And Christ is eternally the begotten Son of God. And for all eternity, they have loved each other.

And that's what the Father is saying. He's like, this is my Son. And I love him. And you need to know that. And I am pleased with him. It's a powerful picture of the Trinity.

[ 31 : 37 ] Matthew 17. We're not going to turn there because we don't have time. I'm sorry. This is my fault. The Bible is full of Trinitarian stories.

Matthew 17 is the transfiguration of the Lord. So again, we see the Son. And there's a voice that speaks from a cloud.

And he says, this is my Son. Listen to him. So we have a voice. That's the Father. Claiming this is my Son. And that's Jesus. But the Holy Spirit's not present.

It's not Trinitarian. And then you realize, wait a second. Where is the voice speaking from? The voice is speaking from a cloud. And throughout the Old Testament, we see when the glory of God is present.

So often he's present in a cloud of glory. A cloud fills the tabernacle. A cloud fills the temple. And at the transfiguration of the Lord, there's a cloud present.

[ 32 : 40 ] And a voice is speaking from the cloud about the Son. Christians have identified this as the Trinity. It's not 100%. We don't know. The Scripture doesn't say 100%.

But I think it's very reasonable. Let's go to Matthew 28. Let's go to Matthew 28. So this is a familiar passage.

But it's a beloved passage. And it has to be. This is what we're supposed to do and be on the earth. This is what we're supposed to be fulfilling. So let's read about it. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. So we see that this is the Great Commission. We know that this is what we're supposed to be doing on earth, fulfilling this commission.

[ 34 : 03 ] And specifically, it is a Trinitarian commission. And where did Christ send all of his followers? Out to the nations. To go out and make other followers.

And guys, you remember just a little bit ago, we looked at Psalm 2, talking about the Son. And what would be given to the Son? The nations. There's a connection there. This is powerful stuff.

Moving on, we have the resurrection. We don't need to turn to these passages just for want of time. Oh, sorry, this is mine. This isn't in your notes. Remember, we said earlier, where one member of the Trinity is working, all members of the Trinity are working.

So in Acts chapter 2, verse 4, and in Romans 4, 24, it says that God raised Jesus from the dead.

But in Romans chapter 8, verse 11, it says that the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead.

And then in John 10, 17, and 18, Jesus said that he has authority to lay his life down and to take his life back up again. So who raised Jesus from the dead?

[ 35 : 13 ] There's actually four answers there. One, God did. Two, God the Father raised up his Son, validating everything he had said about him when he raised him up in glory.

Three, the Holy Spirit raised up Christ. And then four, Christ raised himself up in victory. He laid his life down, and then he took it back up again.

And it's like, I think that's pretty powerful. I don't know about you. It's an incredible truth, and it's from the Scripture. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 12. 1 Corinthians 12. We're going to look at verses 1 to 6 together.

Tyler, if you're there, would you mind reading for us, brother? I can get there really quick. Oh, sorry.

Sorry. 1 Corinthians 12. Is somebody else there? Jerry, are you there, brother? 1 Corinthians 12.

Are you there? I'm not very good at reading. Okay, no worries. Get it, Tyler. Go. All right. Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans, you used to be enticed and led astray by mute idols.

[ 36 : 30 ] Therefore, I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says that Jesus is cursed, and no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Now, there are different gifts, but the same Spirit.

There are different ministries, but the same Lord, and there are different activities, but the same God produces each gift in each person. Fantastic. So this is one of the classic Trinitarian passages in the New Testament.

We see Christ described and proclaimed as Lord, and that can only happen by the Holy Spirit. But also, look in verse, yeah, look in verse 3.

The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of God. And then in verse 5, in verse 5 and 6, we see both Lord and God used. This is a clearly Trinitarian passage.

So who is it that is empowering the church? The entire Trinity is empowering the church, which I think is pretty encouraging news. We're not going to turn there, but Revelation chapter 4 and 5 are fascinating because it's a description of the throne room of God.

[ 37 : 38 ] So God is sitting on the throne, and then who stands before the throne? The Lamb who had been slain. But there are seven torches, and it identifies those seven torches as the seven spirits of God.

But then on the Lamb, this work gets a little weird. The Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes. And once again, those are identified as the seven spirits of God.

So we have God the Father on the throne. We have Christ, the Lamb who had been slain. And then He has seven horns and seven eyes.

What do we do with that? And it says, those are the seven spirits of God. What is this? And then we have to think, well, seven is the number of completion. Horns are symbols of power in the Bible. And eyes are symbols of wisdom or knowledge. It's like, okay. So we have God the Father who stands before Him but His Son.

[ 38 : 44 ] And who is on the Son? Here's the Holy Spirit. This is Revelation 4 and 5. I encourage you to look it up. When I looked at it myself years ago, it just hit me like a freight train.

I'd never seen that before. So guys, we have looked at some of the passages from both the Old Testament and the New Testament about the Trinity. Now let's take a little bit of time and let's look at the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the early church.

And I'm really fascinated by this period. It's really the first 300 years after Christ's ascension. And this is when we get the doctrine of the Trinity made into something that we can actually talk about, including the word Trinity.

Objection, I hear you say in the back. The Trinity is a man-made idea that is not in the Bible because that word is not in the Bible. Guys, I don't know if you've ever had somebody do this to you.

I don't know if you've had a Jehovah's Witness do it or a Mormon. I've had Muslims do it where they say, show me the Trinity in the Bible. Show me the word Trinity. It's not in the Bible.

[ 39 : 51 ] If you're not prepared for that, Christians are like, oh, oh, I'm a failure. And then they just walk away. And it's like, yeah, that word's not in there. But the concept, the idea absolutely is.

Just because the word's not in there doesn't mean anything. We've just looked at some of the passages today. I would say it's pretty compelling. There's something going on here. There's not just a rigid, monotheistic Father God.

There's more happening. The Son is divine. But so is the Spirit. So how do we describe this? And the brothers and sisters who came before us came up with the word Trinity to describe this concept, which is really, really helpful.

And guys, this idea of the Trinity, some people might say, it's a man-made doctrine. The early church got together. They had these councils.

Probably looked something like this. And they made up this doctrine. And we would say, that is not true. They didn't make up anything. They identified or they recognized the biblical teaching of the Trinity.

[ 40 : 56 ] They didn't make something up. They saw what was in the Scripture and put a word to it. But this is not a man-made doctrine. This is God Himself revealing Himself to us.

And guys, think about this for a second. What is more confusing than the Trinity? I don't know anything.

It's three, but one. Always one, but always three. That's really complicated. Who would make that up?

If you were making a religion to go out and try to fool people, is that the type of doctrine you would make? A doctrine you yourself can't even explain? Nobody would make that up. The reason the church has believed and confessed the Trinity is because it is the clear teaching of Scripture. And so from the beginning, though it is mysterious, Christians have confessed and believed the Trinity, just like we do. And so this idea of the Trinity, it was really, it's made concrete between 325 and 380.

[ 42 : 06 ] And we see this, we have creeds. Creeds are statements of belief from the early church. And those creeds, those statements, have endured until today.

So I gave you an example. This is perhaps the most significant of all the creeds. This is the Nicene Creed. And it is Trinitarian. For one of time, we won't read it, but you see how it begins with, we believe in one God, the Father Almighty.

In the middle, it says, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. And then down at the bottom, and we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life.

He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. God, the early church came together and they came around the doctrine of the Trinity. And this is how they described it. And these words have been read without stop for more than 1700 years, which is an amazing thing to think about.

[ 43 : 06 ] It's beautiful and I love it. I love these creeds. So for one of time, let's go back up to the Trinity in the Christian life. So we've heard about the Trinity, both from the scripture and then a little bit from history.

But what are the practical applications of being Trinitarian? So again, I worked with Muslims and Muslims make a big deal about the oneness of God.

They talk about it all the time. They look at the Trinity and they're deeply confused and incredibly uncomfortable. So what they have is a God named Allah.

And Allah is on His own. He is distant. He is off, removed, doing His own thing. That's how they conceptualize God. That's how they conceptualize perfection.

But we don't have this. We have a God who is triune. We have a God who is eternally the Father, who is eternally begetting His Son, who eternally loves His Son.

[ 44 : 19 ] We have the Son who is eternally begotten of His Father, who responds to the Father's love in love. And we have the Holy Spirit who's there between them both, the expression of their love.

We have a God who is communal. And so what that tells us is that perfection, because God is perfect, perfection is not found in individuality.

It's not found in isolation. Otherwise, God would be alone doing His own thing. Rather, perfection is found in community. This is a really interesting thought because it has applications for us as Christians.

Because why don't we just take our Bibles and go off into the desert? I'm going off by myself. It's just going to be me and the Lord. All you people are sinful and filthy, especially Lee.

I'm going off by myself. Why don't we do that? Why don't we do that? Is that what God wants us to do? It's like, absolutely not.

[ 45 : 16 ] He wants us in community. And where is the community of God? It's in His church. So this is what He wants us to do. In the same way that the Trinity shows us a picture of love, of mutually submitting and exalting the other.

That's what's given to us as Christians. It's one of the ramifications of believing in the Trinity is that we're supposed to try to live out the Trinity in our daily lives. And I think that this is a huge concept and we really struggle with it.

But I do think it's absolutely something to think about because otherwise, we should all go find a cave and live in it by ourselves. But that's not what God has for us. So looking down a little bit, guys, this is what we'll finish.

Sorry, I'm running over just a little bit. Integrating the Trinity into our lives. I put up there, I don't think you can see it. I wrote analogies.

So people talk about water. Like the Trinity is, it's like water because it's always H<sub>2</sub>O, but it's sometimes liquid, sometimes it's ice, sometimes it's steam.

[ 46 : 24 ] The Trinity is like the sun where you have the star itself and you have heat and light. All analogies break down when you actually try to put them on the Trinity.

I don't find any of them helpful. So I don't know if you do, but a question you might ask is, how can we think about the Trinity? How can we learn about it and how can we try to integrate it more into our lives?

Firstly, I would say, brothers and sisters, look at the scripture. I gave you some passages. Seek the Trinity in those passages. I promise you'll find the Trinity because the Trinity is there and there are many, many more.

You'll notice that these are in the opening greetings of Paul's epistles, most of them. And it's because in his epistles, he's writing to these churches and he almost always brings up the whole Trinity.

It's amazing. Also, something we can do is that we can pray Trinitarian prayers. We can pray to God the Father through Christ the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit.

[ 47 : 27 ] And this is an ancient Christian practice is always to try to mention all three. Instead of just saying, in Jesus' name, amen. Brothers and sisters, there's more. We can choose to name each member of the Trinity.

And I think that this is a good habit because as we consciously name the members of the Trinity, it helps us to think more Trinitarian. And it helps us to pray then even more Trinitarian.

I put a Trinitarian prayer there. We'll skip it for one at a time, but it's something to look at. I gave it to you as an example. Another thing that we can do is that we can sing the Trinity.

We can sing about the Trinity because the Trinity, it's kind of hard to understand. But through music, we can help teach ourselves and help teach each other. So something to think about, the doxology.

I know if I started singing it, all of you could join in. But I love you, so I'm not going to sing to you, you know? You don't want that. It is consciously Trinitarian.

[ 48 : 28 ] And it's ancient. It's been sung forever. Why do Christians, like one of the most basic songs that seemingly all of us know, of all things it could be about, it's Trinitarian. Or, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning, our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity. You can turn to the back in the hymnal. Look up the word Trinity.

It's got a whole list of Trinitarian hymns. It's really something to think about. Through song, we help teach our hearts what we actually should believe. We have the creeds.

I gave you the Nicene Creed, but I also listed off the Apostles Creed and the Athanasian Creed. And that one is Trinitarian, and that one is intense.

So just be careful if you go to the Athanasian one. That one's a little rough. But the Nicene one, in particular, is just a wonderful description of what we believe. And then finally, guys, this is a complex doctrine.

[ 49 : 29 ] It is a doctrine worthy of study. And I don't know why we wouldn't read about it. We read about other things. And so a really good book that I put that's very accessible, but really helpful, it's really been a blessing to me, is *Delighting in the Trinity* by Michael Reeves.

Lastly, I won't explain it because you guys are all adults, but I gave you a strange diagram in the back. This is called *The Shield of the Trinity*.

This is a thousand years old. And it was called *The Shield of the Trinity* because originally it kind of looked like a shield. And there were medieval knights who, believe it or not, drew this on their shields so that when they went into battle, they were protected by the Holy Trinity.

We don't know if they survived. We have no idea. But I find this to be particularly helpful because it says who the Father is, God, but who the Father is not because the Father is not the Son and the Father is not the Spirit.

It says who the Spirit is because the Spirit is God, but the Spirit is not the Father and the Spirit is not the Son. They are each unique persons.

[ 50 : 40 ] And then we see the Son who is God, but He's not the Father and He's not the Spirit. They are each of them distinct. And this diagram has been helpful for a lot of people, which is why even after a thousand years, it's still in circulation.

So I gave that to you and I hope it'll be useful. Forgive me for going long. I am of all men most wretched. Forgive me. But I thank you so much for your attention.

This is complicated, but I really, really think it's a doctrine worthy of study and something that we can try to draw from and apply in our lives.

At least should I close this in prayer? Okay, guys, let's pray. Thank you. Thank you.