

The Doctrine of the Trinity

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Dr. Matt Emerson teaches on the doctrine of the Trinity.

! The History of the Doctrine.

And what I'm going to give you is all Bible tonight, but I want you to hear me say out loud that what I'm going to give you is the argument that the early Christians used to articulate the doctrine of the Trinity.

So I'm not going to really quote any figures or talk through any specific theologians' works. I will very quickly tell you, if you're interested in reading some of the early church, a great place to start on exactly what we're talking about tonight.

There's a guy named Gregory. That's the easy part. His last name, which isn't a last name, but his last name is of Nazianzus. Okay, so there's the difficult part. You can just call him G-Naz, because that's what I call him.

[1 : 20] Gregory of Nazianzus' Five Theological Orations is the name of the book. So, Five Theological Orations.

If you type that in, it'll come up. That's a good place to start in terms of an early church work that details some of what we're going to talk about tonight.

I can give you some others afterward if you're interested, but I'll just mention that one and then we'll move on. So, what I want to do is walk through a number of passages in Scripture, but also read those passages together to articulate the doctrine of the Trinity.

And this is in line with how the early church articulated this doctrine. As we walk through that, I'll mention some ways in which this mattered a whole lot to them.

So, the first passage that I want you to turn to, if you close your Bible, just close it all the way. Have the front cover facing up. Okay, now open it to the first page.

[2 : 24] Okay, then flip past the table of contents and maps if you have them and copyright pages. Okay, now first page of the actual Bible, Genesis 1. I don't know how many pages y'all have before Genesis 1, but I have a lot.

It's pretty wild, isn't it? So, Genesis 1 is where we want to start. And what I'm going to do is I'm going to give you what I call a Trinitarian rhombus.

Do I have any elementary or middle school math teachers in here? I don't know that I've talked about the word rhombus since like sixth grade, but it's a four-sided shape.

Right? Isn't that right? Rhombus? Yeah, I don't know. That's correct. A triangle is three. You heard it here first. Okay, so it doesn't have to be a rectangle.

It doesn't have to be a square. But these are points, these are main points of the Bible's teaching about who God is.

[3 : 35] Okay, so I'm going to give us four points tonight. You can make those four points into anything you want, right? When I learned about rhombuses or rhombi or whatever the plural is, I think I learned about it like this, where there's kind of two diagonal lines and two straight lines.

You can do it that way, but you can also make it look like a Java transport if you're a Star Wars fan, right? You can do that. Whatever you want to do. It doesn't matter. But there's four main points that I want to give you.

All right, no more Star Wars jokes. I understand that now. There's, you got it. Thank you, Tyler. That's why you're my favorite student of all time. That's just for the recording and for Mike.

Four main building blocks of the doctrine of the Trinity from the Bible. And the reason why I'm calling them building blocks here is because they're foundational texts.

But the reason, and I'm going to say this again at the end, the reason why they're in this shape and not like building blocks like that is because you have to read other passages of Scripture, right, in light of these passages of Scripture.

[4 : 49] So this is like a filter. Wait a minute. This text sounds like it's not teaching this or that. Well, yes, it is, right? We know that the Bible teaches these things.

And so we can understand harder passages to understand the Bible through these big picture points. Okay. So Genesis 1 is the first one. Somebody read for us out loud. Genesis 1-1 through the end of chapter 2.

I'm just kidding. Just read verse 1 if somebody wants to read it out loud. Go for it. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. So what did God make? Everything. Is there anything that was made that wasn't made by God?

Did God... Was God made? Right? If everything is made by God, then God isn't made, because everything that was made is made by this unmade being.

[5 : 51] So it's a really simple point, but it's vital to everything else we're going to say tonight. You have two options for things that exist.

What are they? You're either God or you're not God. You're either created or you're the creator. Those are your two options. Okay. And if we went through and read the rest of Genesis 1 and 2, which we won't, but if we were to go through that, we would see that. Right?

Everything in existence is made by God. Now, let's combine that with another passage that we won't flip to necessarily every single passage I'm going to mention, but we will flip to this one.

Flip in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 6. Deuteronomy chapter 6.

[7 : 02] This is page 246 of my Bible. I'm not sure what page it says on yours. Now, this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

Hear, therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

So the context here is the second generation of Israel. They're getting ready to go into the land. Obey all my rules and statutes. What's rule number one in verse 4? Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

All right? So you have... These two texts are saying the same thing in different ways. Deuteronomy 6 is emphasizing to Israel, as they go into the promised land, where they are going to encounter people worshiping all kinds of gods, that there's really only one God.

All right? Genesis 1 is saying the same thing. There's either not God or God, and there's only one God in Genesis 1. All right? All right? So here, on this first point, right?

[8 : 32] And I'm sorry, my handwriting is illegible. I'm not trying to give you notes to copy off of this board. What I'm trying to do is just give you kind of a marker of where we are in the conversation.

Okay? So in Genesis 1 and in Deuteronomy 6-4, and there's a lot of other passages in the Bible, but we'll talk about those two.

Genesis 1-1, Deuteronomy 6-4, the starting point for your doctrine of God is that there is one and only one God. That's it.

Everything else in existence is a creature. Okay? So there are two ways to say this. One of them is, like we said in Genesis 1, this is a C, capital C.

This is a slash. That's a lowercase c. You're either the creator or you're a creature. That's it. Okay? Deuteronomy 6-4, one God.

[9 : 42] Only one God. Those are saying the same thing, slightly different ways, same point. There are no other gods but God.

Everything else in existence is a creature. All right? That's point number one on the rhombus. This is the easiest one.

The second one is fairly easy, fairly simple, even though it's going to make us ask a rather difficult question, or at least people think it's a difficult question.

I told you we might not turn to everyone, but I want you to turn. Turn to Matthew 28. Matthew 28.

Matthew 28. Matthew 28. Starting in, we'll just start in verse 16, whole paragraph.

[10:59] 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. How many names are you to baptize in? Three. That's a trick question. One. There's one name, but three persons named.

So, what's happening here? Well, this is the second plot point on our rhombus here.

There's one God who exists in three persons. And I'm going to put here Matthew 28.19 as a verse.

[12:22] That's one verse. I think that's the simplest one you could point to. But there are lots of others that we could point to here to show that the Bible describes three persons.

What are the names of those three persons? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. each of these three persons are described as God.

There's a lot of ways this happens in the Bible. One of the ways it happens is what I just gave you with this name. But I'm about to be super Baptist. You ready?

What's the most Baptist thing a preacher can do? Well, baptize, yeah. But in terms of like a talk or a sermon, you know you're hearing from a Baptist if they use the same letter to start each point.

Right? Okay? So, I'm about to alliterate for you how the Bible describes each of these three persons as fully God.

[13:30] Okay? So, first of all, each of these three persons does what only God does.

They perform divine actions. Okay? So, let's, I'm going to go a little bit slow here for just a second. And maybe you think I've already been at light speed, but I haven't.

And I'm sorry. So, let's go back over to this first point for just a second. You're either God or not God.

That includes what you do. That includes actions. There are some actions, in other words, that only God does and no one else does.

We already talked about one of them. What's something that only God does? Create. Create. Yes. The Father and the Son and the Spirit are described as creating in the Bible.

[14:45] I mean, if we had read through Genesis 1, in fact, all three of them are mentioned in Genesis 1. And God, what? Yeah, He created, but when it gets down to each of the days, it says, and God said, let there be light and there was light.

So, how did God create? His Word. And was another one of the persons of God mentioned in Genesis 1?

What does Moses say right after Genesis 1? In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form and void and what?

The Spirit hovered over the waters, right? So, even in Genesis 1, we see God's Word and God's Spirit at work.

But we also see that throughout the rest of Scripture. Maybe the simplest passage to point to with the Son, for instance, in terms of creation, is John 1.1.

[15:54] In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And nothing that was made was made apart from the Word, right?

Paul says very similarly in Colossians 1 that He made all things from Him and through Him and by Him or for Him and through Him and by Him are all things.

The writer of Hebrews, Paul, says the same thing. That everything that was made was made by the Son. Okay, so, and again, we can talk about that with the Spirit as well, being present in Genesis 1.

Throughout the rest of Scripture, there's attribution of creation to the Spirit. The point is, you can go all over the Bible and say, the Father creates, the Son creates, the Spirit creates.

That's something only God does. Now, we don't have time to walk through the other few actions, but for instance, salvation is only from God, resurrection is only from God, judgment is only from God, John 5, we're going to come back to John 5, so I'm not going to go there right now, but John 5 is a great place to go and see what the Father does, the Son does, and some of the things that I just mentioned.

[17:10] Okay, so, in terms of these three persons, they each perform divine actions. Each of these three persons also possess divine attributes.

Okay, I'm going to erase, there we go, okay, divine attributes. Divine attributes are characteristics that are only true of God.

Something that only God has as a trait. What's an example of that? Okay, he alone is holy in and of himself, yep. What else?

Think about like, you're here right now, are you somewhere else? Yeah, he's infinite, he's omnipresent, right? So, he's infinite in terms of his presence, he's omnipresent in terms of his knowledge, he's omniscient, he knows everything, so omnipresence means he's everywhere, omniscient means he knows everything, omnipotent means he can do anything.

Okay, so what's an example of a Bible verse that talks about either the Son or the Spirit as omnipresent, for instance? Psalm 139, if I lay my head in Sheol, you're there.

[18:35] And I mean, that's not the only place he talks about, right? It's basically like, no matter where I am, you're there, Holy Spirit. So the Spirit is omnipresent. Another example with the Spirit possessing divine attributes is 1 Corinthians chapter 2.

You remember how Paul talks about the wisdom of God and the foolishness of the Jews and the Greeks in chapter 1? Everybody remember that from 1 Corinthians? Well, in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, Paul keeps talking about God's own wisdom.

And he actually ends up talking about the knowledge of God and specifically the knowledge of the Holy Spirit. And does anybody know what he says about the Holy Spirit's knowledge in 1 Corinthians 2?

The Spirit knows even what? The mind of God. Well, that means he knows everything and he knows himself, right?

So the Spirit is omniscient, the Spirit is omnipresent, we could talk about that with the Son as well. The point is, each of the three persons are said to possess divine attributes throughout Scripture.

[19:40] They are also said to receive divine adoration. What does adoration mean? Praise or worship.

Right? So you think about, for instance, with Jesus. Can anybody think of an example where somebody worships Jesus? Okay, the Gospel of Thomas, not the Gospel of Thomas, in the Gospel of John, Thomas, right, says, my Lord and my God, when he sees Jesus, or after he, you know, touches his side.

What else? What's another example of somebody worshiping Jesus? Okay, so there are some actions in the Gospels that are worshipful actions, we would say, like the woman who breaks the perfume bottle and anoints Jesus with it.

Revelation, in Revelation 1, John falls on his feet and worships the risen Christ, right? These are all places, and unlike an angel, Jesus doesn't refuse that worship, he receives it.

So Jesus receives worship, what about the Holy Spirit? Okay, so, in Mark 3, in Mark 3, Jesus is confronting some of the leaders of the Jewish people in that area, and they tell him, after he's cast out a demon, that he's casting out that demon by Beelzebub.

[21:27] And Jesus says to them, no, no, no, no, how can Satan cast out Satan, that doesn't make any sense. But then he finishes that whole story with a mention of the unforgivable sin.

Do you remember what the unforgivable sin is? Not just grieve, but blaspheme, right? Blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Now let's press pause in your mind for just a second, and let's think about blasphemy.

What does it mean to blaspheme? Well, on the one hand, it could be that you worship something that's not God.

Right? So blasphemy, something that's blasphemous, could be I erect an idol of, you know, Chuck E. Cheese out here and fall down on my feet and worship him.

That would be blasphemy. It would also be ridiculous. But that would be blasphemy, right? Almost as dumb as worshipping a golden cow. Dumber.

[22:39] But you can also blaspheme God by not giving him the honor he's due. Right? So you're either worshipping something you shouldn't, or you're not worshipping something you should.

And when the Jewish leaders tell Jesus that he's casting out demons by a demon, they're not just wrong, they're blasphemous because they're not acknowledging the Holy Spirit as God.

Now, there are some other ways that we could talk about the Holy Spirit and his adoration in Scripture, but that is one of the most obvious places that you could turn to someone and say, hey, I know you don't think the Holy Spirit's God, but let me show you this text.

How could you blaspheme the Holy Spirit if the Holy Spirit isn't God? The only person you can blaspheme is God. That's about as simple as I can say it.

The only person you can ever blaspheme is God. When you don't acknowledge him for who he is, or you call him something he's not. And that's what the Jewish leaders are doing there in Mark 3. [23 : 55] Okay, finally, and this is how Baptist I am, and also how much of a nerd I am. I'm going to cheat on this last one to get the letter A up here at the front. The last category is that each of these persons are called by the same names.

So names is the idea, but there's a synonym for the word name that starts with an A. You know what it is? I'm sorry. Appellation, not like the mountains.

Like appellate. Appellation. Names. Each of these persons are called by names that only God is called.

So there are some examples of this throughout that we could talk about. I've already mentioned Matthew 28. I think it's a really important one.

Baptize them in the one singular name of the three persons. So there's one name, three persons. What would that common name be, by the way?

[25 : 08] Yahweh, right? Yahweh is God. Yahweh is not just the Father. Yahweh is God. God didn't start being the Trinity in Matthew 1. God's always been Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And so when we talk about the name of God, God has revealed His name to be Yahweh, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or Yahweh, we see that actually in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 6.

So we already read Deuteronomy 6, and in Deuteronomy 6, Moses goes back and forth between Yahweh and Elohim, and in fact, he doesn't go back and forth between them, the Lord your God, Yahweh your Elohim, same name for the one God.

In 1 Corinthians 8, 6, Paul uses Yahweh and Elohim in their translations in Greek to refer to the Father and the Son. Right?

So Father and Son are Yahweh Elohim. And then in 2 Corinthians 13, I'm just throwing, I'm sorry, I'm being a fire hose right now. 2 Corinthians 13, 14, May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all evermore.

[26 : 24] All three of those. Right? So he puts these two persons, Father and Son, at that point, right? It's not that the Spirit isn't God either. He's just talking about the Father and the Son specifically in 1 Corinthians 8.

He takes Father and Son and He uses the name of the one God in Deuteronomy 6 to refer to both of those persons. So, in the Bible, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit do what only God can do.

They are what only God is. Omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, etc. They are worshipped as only God should be worshipped, and they're called by names that only God is called.

So now we have, again, one God, three persons. Now we should just stop there and call it a night, right? How's that?

I'll pause. Everybody just take a deep breath. You thought it was hard at this point. It's not. We're about to get into it. I'm going to pause and take a deep breath. I kind of want to pause and ask for questions, but I'm not.

[27 : 39] We'll do it at the end. So, if we can get these two things right, if we can say the Bible absolutely 100% teaches one and only one God who exists in these three persons, we're a long way toward having a biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

However, there's another question we need to ask. What's the next question you would ask? If there's only one God, how are there three persons?

What is that? I mean, so, in other words, if all of these three persons, if each of these three persons are fully God, there's only one God, they're each God, they're each fully God, they do what only God can do, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

How is that possible? Maybe another way to say that is, if there's only one God, how are these three persons different from each other? That's point number three on the rhombus here.

How are they different? Okay, so before we jump into some texts, I'm going to put three letters here that you probably are not familiar with yet.

[29 : 11] E-R-O. That is not E-R-A. We're not taking baseball statistics. E-R-O. Before we jump into some passages, and we're going to look at two, really, Proverbs 8, maybe, if we have time, and then John 5, 26.

Okay, so how are these three persons distinct? Now, I'll refer here to the early church. one more time, at least. In the early church, this is exactly how the argument went, right?

Okay, the Bible teaches that there's one God, the Bible teaches that these three persons are divine in some way, form, or fashion, so how is that true, that there's one in three? Well, the reason why the early church had such controversy over the doctrine of the Trinity is because other people answered that question in ways that were not in accordance with scripture.

So there was this guy named Arius. Anybody heard of this guy Arius? You know this name? It's okay if you haven't. I'm going to adjust my rhombus shape here for just a second.

this is going to be a really thin rhombus. I told you it didn't matter exactly the shape you draw.

[30 : 46] So what Arius did is he said, okay, well, yeah, there's one God and there's these three persons who are called divine, but actually what that means is there's the Father and then the Father kind of creates the spirit, but outside of time, but in time, and he's kind of God, but not really God, and then eventually you get the Spirit, and then down here is creation.

So Arius' famous slogan was there was a time when the Son was not. There was just the Father. And what Arius said is the Father has more eternity, the Father, which, how do you, does that make sense?

More authority, more glory, et cetera, but we can still call the Son divine in some sense. Okay? I'm going to, I know this is being recorded, I'm going to say this as gently as possible for the sake of the internet, but this is essentially what Mormonism teaches.

Okay? So, what's happening here, what's happening here is we're saying that each of these three persons, and that's an SP, I know it doesn't look like it, but that's what that is, each of these three persons are in some sense divine, but only the Father is really, truly, exclusively God.

Now, how does that make sense of where we started? it doesn't. Right? It doesn't make sense of the way the Bible describes who God is and what everything else is in relation to Him.

[32 : 34] You are either God or you're not God. Those are the two options. Okay, so that's what Arius said. There's another ancient heresy called, I'll call it adoptionism, that says the Son isn't even in any sense God, he's just a really good human being.

Okay, so this dotted line would become a solid line. Those are the two ancient false teachings, two ancient heresies that the early Christians were arguing with when they did this rhombus kind of argument.

And that's why they continually start right here. This is not an option according to the Bible. This kind of structure where there's a kind of God right here, a demigod, a semi-god, that's not an option in the Bible.

There are no demigods. There are no kind of gods. There's either God or not God. And so what the early Christians would say is, okay, if you're saying that the Son is kind to God and we should worship him, how does that relate to Deuteronomy 6-4 that says don't worship any other gods? Really, really important that we ask this question. Okay, so that's what Arianism said. Now, I'm going to draw another picture. I'm going to draw a pie chart, and I'm not saying that this is the same thing as Arianism.

[33 : 59] It's not. Okay, but we also have to be careful that we don't fall into a similar kind of argument when we talk about the Trinity. Okay, so sometimes when we say how are the persons distinguished, we do this.

This, I think that one's bigger, right? So, call that the Father. Okay. Sometimes when we talk about the Trinity and we ask this question, how are these persons distinct from each other, we'll say stuff like this.

And this is not to try to call anybody's thoughts out right here. This is just basic Trinitarian teaching that we have to work through. It's okay if this is like, oh, I shouldn't have thought of that. It's fine.

That's why we have teaching and discipleship.

So, the Father, sometimes we'll say things like this, the Father receives the most glory. Or, the Father is the one who has all the authority that he gives to the Son and the Spirit.

Or, we'll wrath. The Spirit is, and you can pick which person you want to pick, but, you know, when we get to the Spirit, oh, it's the Spirit who does this, as if the other two persons aren't doing that as well.

[35 : 21] The Son does this while the Father and the Spirit are doing what, I don't know. When we divide up the persons like this, what the early church would say is that also doesn't account for this right here.

It doesn't account for there's only one God. If there's only one God, we can't separate out his attributes or his actions.

Because when you do that, what you're really doing is you're breaking them apart into three different persons, three different beings, right? If the Father has something the Son doesn't have, he's a different kind of divine than the Son.

If the Spirit has something that the Father and the Son don't, he's a different kind of God than the Father and the Son. And we're back to the Arianism drawing. Right?

So, and if you read the early church, what you'll see is they walk through all the options. They say, okay, what does it mean for their, and they actually play off of the names, Father and Son.

[36 : 25] What does it mean for a father to be a father and a son to be a son? And they walk through the different options of how you could define that. And if we had time, I'd ask you what you think, but I'll just walk you through them very briefly.

Right? So, for a father to be a father, a son to be a son, you could say something like, the father has authority. Right? Okay, well, the issue with that is if the father has authority that the son doesn't, then they're divided in their attributes.

You could say something like, the father has possessions that the son doesn't have. That he gives to the son, but they're really the fathers, right?

Again, so in terms of attributes, in terms of actions, these are two distinct beings at that point. You could say all kinds of things about the relationship between a father and the son, but at its most fundamental level, at its most fundamental level, what does it mean for there to be a father and a son?

It means that you're the same kind of thing. Think about that with me for a second. If you're talking about in the animal kingdom, the son of an elephant is an elephant.

[37 : 42] The son of a giraffe is a, to move off of the African plains, the son of a duck is a duck. So what are the names father and son communicating at a very basic level?

If the son of a duck is a duck and the son of an elephant is an elephant, then the son of God is God. That's what these names are communicating. Now, it's also communicating something about how they are who they are.

A father gives his nature to his son. A son receives his nature from his father. So those names are telling us something about the relation between the father and the son, but it's not to distinguish them in terms of their attributes or their actions or their worthiness for adoration or their names.

It's telling us something about that they're each equally and fully God in relation to one another.

This is what John 5.26 says. So I'm going to erase this one.

John 5.26 Jesus is talking in John 5 about receiving everything that he has from the father. And in John 5.26 he says, just as the father has life in himself, so he has given it to the son to also have life in himself.

[39 : 14] this is like the linchpin here, everybody. What does it mean to have life in yourself?

You're not created. You exist on your own. The term for this in theology is the doctrine of aseity. A-S-E-I-T-Y. A-S-E-T-Y. You exist on your own apart from anything else. Guess who that's only true of? God.

Only God is uncreated. So the father is uncreated. To paraphrase John 5.26 just as the father is uncreated so also has he given it to the son to be uncreated.

so you have father and son who are uncreated and yet there's a relation between the two of them in that uncreatedness.

[40 : 35] So let's start with the uncreated part and this is where the E comes in. So uncreated means there is no time when this wasn't true.

Right? If you're uncreated it means you've always existed period. Correct? We're on the same page? Some of you are? Maybe you're aren't? I don't know.

Yes. Thank you sir. uncreated means it's never started and it will never stop. It's eternal. Okay? So that letter E stands for eternal.

Arius we already saw said there was a time when the sun was not. In other words he said the sun was created. But John 5 is telling us that the sun is uncreated.

He has life in himself. The sun is eternal. And yet John 5 also describes and this is the R John 5 also describes a relation eternal relation between father and son.

[41 : 47] How is it that the father has life in himself? He just does. How is it that the son has life in himself? The father gives it to him.

Can that start or stop? No. It's eternal. It's uncreated. So it's not a point in time in which the son becomes ah say that's illogical.

It makes no sense. You can't be uncreated but be created in a point in time. And yet eternally there's a relation in which the son receives being uncreated from the father.

Now you're going to ask me you won't because we're going to run out of time but you're going to ask me how is that possible? And I'll tell you if you go read the text that I recommended to you at the beginning and if you read some others what you will see is that this is the limit of our capacity as human beings to understand.

Right? We skirted the edge of it a few moments ago when I said just as the father of a duck is a duck so the father of the son the son of the divine father is divine as well we're skirting the edge of taking creation and trying to map it on to the creator.

[43 : 15] Right? We're not talking about and I'm going to be very careful here and in fact if you read Gregory of Nazianzus he's very careful and he gets really mad at this point. I'm not talking about biological processes as if we could even imagine that God exists like that.

That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about an analogy to our human or creaturely finitude that somehow tells us about God's life but we can never comprehend it fully or finally. Why? Because we're not God. You will never get what it's like to be one thing in three persons. And that's okay. That's why he's God and we're not God.

What this should bring you to is not frustration it should not bring you to kind of untheological unbiblical arguments. What it should bring you to is worship. The God who made us is in many ways incomprehensible which is how it should be.

If he's just a better version of you or me it's not great. But if he's something entirely different who nevertheless has revealed himself to us and come to know us not through just telling us about himself but by coming in the person of his son in the flesh.

[44 : 42] That's a God who we can worship and who saves us. So don't get frustrated by this is really hard to think about. Yeah it is. But just because it's hard to think about doesn't mean you shouldn't think about it.

And in fact by thinking about who God is and how much we can't understand him but he's made himself known to us that should drive you to worship. So there's a relation here.

The father eternally gives to the son this divine nature. This divine attribute of aseity. His divinity. It doesn't start and it doesn't stop. He's always been father. Son has always been son. That's why there's no distinction between them in terms of their divinity. But the way that they exist together as the one God is through this relation.

I started preaching and that's my fault. The same thing is true of the spirit. John 15 26. John 16. I can't remember the verse off the top of my head.

[45 : 43] But in both of those chapters we also see Jesus talking about the spirit who proceeds from the father. The spirit who belongs to the son just as he belongs to the father.

So in theology we say that the son is eternally begotten from the father and the spirit eternally proceeds from the father and the son. That word begotten is taken from Proverbs 8.

The word proceed is taken from John 15 and John 16. These three persons aren't distinguished through some kind of hierarchy.

They are not distinguished through differences in authority, attributes, etc., etc. That would give us three gods. Both of these scenarios give us three gods.

The only one that doesn't and the one that's taught in the Bible is this eternal relations of origin. O-R-I-G-I-N.

[46 : 46] Eternal relations of origin. In other words, how do these persons originate in the sense that how do they exist as the one God? God. The Father exists life in himself.

I'll say. The Son exists life in himself. I'll say from the Father. The Spirit exists in and of himself.

I'll say from the Father and the Son. That's how God exists. Again, if we were to press this, if you were to say, I don't understand this, great, me either.

God. We have to match our language to the Bible and be content with the limit of our knowledge and our comprehension.

Okay, what's this fourth point though? Did I just forget? No, I did not. This fourth point is, the scripture is Philippians 2, and I'm going to have to be very quick here, but the scripture is Philippians 2.

[47 : 57] I'm trying to think of a not big word to give you, but I'm struggling, so I'll give it to you. I'm going to put PE. That does not stand for physical exercise. That stands for partitive, P-A-R-T-I-T-I-V-E, partitive, and then exegesis, E-X-E-G-E-S-I-S, partitive, exegesis.

And what this means is, and this is in reference to Philippians 2, so think about Philippians 2 for just a moment. Have this mind amongst yourselves, which is in Christ Jesus, that though he was in the form of God, you guys know it?

Anybody know it? Though he was in the form of God, he did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he humbled himself, becoming obedient, taking on the form of a servant, right?

So, hear those two things right there. Though he was in the form of God, and then later on in verse 7, it's either 7 or 8, I can never remember, though he was in the form of God, he humbled himself and took on the form of a servant, or a slave, right?

So, in Philippians 2, what you have is Paul talking about Jesus according to both of his natures. Jesus is one person, this is another hour-long talk at least, okay?

[49 : 33] I've got to give you the short version, but it's important for this whole picture, okay? Jesus is one person with two natures, fully God, fully human.

If he's fully God, what does that mean? It means this right here. He has always and always will be divine in terms of his actions, attributes, adoration, appellation, which is why John can fall down before the incarnate Christ in worship, because he's fully human, but he's also fully God, right? But he's also a human being. He got hungry, ate, got tired, he slept, cried, got mad, righteously so. These are all fully human things. He was born. He had diapers, or whatever the equivalent of that was in that time. In fact, if you read Gregory of Nazianzus, there's a beautiful, I think it's the third, at the end of the third oration or the fourth oration, I can't remember off the top of my head, but at the end of one of those two orations, there's this beautiful paragraph, and it's essentially, though he is the divine, omnipotent, omniscient, lord of the universe, he's also a baby in swaddling cloths.

And both of those things are true at the same time, in the same person. So why does that matter for what we're talking about here? Well, it matters because Arius, when he read about Jesus sleeping and weeping and hungering and thirsting and dying, he said that can't be true of God.

[51 : 28] What's he doing? He's only, he's forgetting about that Jesus is not just fully God, he's also fully human. When the Bible talks about, man, I don't want to open this can of worms, but I'm going to anyway, sorry, Tyler, sorry, Mike, on the microphone.

You know, when Jesus talks about not knowing the day or the hour, when he talks about not my will, but yours be done, that's according to his humanity, his human nature. He has a fully human will that submits to the one divine will of God.

He has a fully human brain that even though he's super smart, because he listened to his mama, he's also not omniscient according to his humanity. He is according to his divinity, so he can both not know in Mark 13 according to his humanity, and also know according to his divinity at the same time.

Now, I know this was a brain buster, but that is too. But this is what the Bible teaches, and there are ways to, I don't mean to say that don't ask any more questions about this, and I'm not trying to say that you shouldn't ask any more questions about how Jesus can be fully God and fully human at the same time.

People have spent the last two millennia asking those questions. It's okay to ask those questions. My point here is not to say this is all you should say, or this is all you should ask, but when you ask the questions and get the answers and read the Bible for those, these are the boundary markers.

[53 : 00] God is one God who exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Those three persons can't be distinguished on anything but their eternal relations of origin, which are taught in the Bible, and when we talk about Jesus, we have to talk about him as both fully human and fully divine, and make sure that the passage that we're reading, we're reading according to which nature is in focus.

Okay? Now, I've got like 60 seconds. Right, Tyler? Whatever you want. Okay. So I'm happy to answer some questions.

If you need to leave, I mean, you're welcome to leave. If everybody walks out, I won't take it personally. And if a lot of people need to leave and there are people who want to hang around and hang around to ask questions, I'm happy to do that too.

But just for a couple minutes, does anybody have any questions that they want to ask in front of the group? And if not, like I said, I'll hang around. Yes, sir?

I have a question. In Genesis, when God said, let us make man in our image, that's plural, how does Jewish authorities get around that?

[54 : 10] Yeah, so I'm going to repeat that for the recording, but the question is, in Genesis 1, Moses says, or God says over and over, and Moses records, let us make man in our image, right?

God and so throughout the chapter, I guess I should say, he says, and God said, let there be light, and there was light, etc. And then when he gets to making him beings, let us make man.

So the way that, and the question was asked, how do Jewish interpreters or other interpreters who might say this isn't talking about the Trinity, how would they handle that? Well, the reason, the way they would handle that is to say in Hebrew, the word for God is, and the word used there is Elohim, okay?

And so Elohim in Hebrew is a plural noun. So, if you want to talk about a singular God, you would use the root of that word, which is El, but Elohim is a plural version of that noun.

And so what Jewish scholars or other scholars who don't think that this passage teaches the Trinity or that we shouldn't assume anything from that word at the very least, they would just say the plural verb is used because it's a plural noun.

[55 : 36] Right? So, if, you know, if me and Tyler are going to go drive to Brahms after this and, you know, maybe get an M&M; mix or something, I mean, I don't know if you're down, Tyler, but we're going to go do that, right?

And I said, let us, you know, let us drives to Brahms. That doesn't make sense, right?

It should be let us drive. Right? Why? Because the noun, us, is plural, plural, therefore the verb ought to be plural as well. So, not drives, but drive.

So, they would say, you know, it's Elohim here in Genesis 1, therefore it ought to be a plural verb to go with the plural noun. The problem with that is Elohim very clearly can be used in the singular and is used in that way throughout the Hebrew Bible.

And so, it's really, it's, you don't want to stake your entire claim on the doctrine of Trinity on that, but it's also not true that you can't read it that way.

[56 : 43] So, you can say, well, yes, this noun is plural. This is getting super nerdy, I'm really sorry. This noun is plural, but you can use what's called a plural construct and use a singular noun with it if it's a clearly singular reference.

Okay? And that's what many would argue is happening. That even though the construct of the noun is plural, it's very clearly intended to be used singularly, therefore the singular verb makes sense. Genesis 1 is a really tricky passage to use for the whole doctrine of the Trinity, but I think it's cool, so you can do it.

I give you permission. I'm not Catholic. I just waved my hands for the microphone. All right, so what else? What other questions? I'll try not to be as long-winded on the next question if somebody has a second one.

And if nobody does, it's fine. I have a simple one. Yes, sir. Sorry, my handwriting is terrible, as you can see.

[57 : 47] This is actually pretty good comparatively. So, ah, that's one word, just the letter A. And then say is the second word.

So it's not one word, ASE, it's two words, A, and then SE. And the doctrine of aseity is it's roughly like without being caused.

So this is a negation, this A. It negates the SE. So the SE is indicating a cause or a beginning point and origin.

And each of the three persons of God are without cause. A, without, and if anybody listens to this as a Latin scholar, they're going to kill me for summarizing it this way, but that's fine.

SE, cause, beginning, or, yeah, not cause, not, not created, basically. Yes, right, so life in yourself. And ASE, that phrase, is a synonym to life in himself or life in yourself.

[59 : 02] other questions? Yes, ma'am. So, since Jesus has all attributes of the Father, when the Father gives life to the Son, is that to say that is giving him to him as his fully human self?

Because he already would have attributes of his self. Yeah, right. So, that's a good question. I'm going to try to be brief. That's why I'm pausing. Creatures, yeah, sorry. So, she asks, when, in John 5, when Jesus says that the Father gives him life in himself, is Jesus talking about the Father giving Jesus life in himself as a human, right?

I think the easiest way to answer that question is to say that is impossible, right? So, if you're a creature, you don't have life in yourself. So, he can't be talking about Jesus according to his, Jesus can't be talking about himself according to his human nature because human natures don't have uncreatedness.

They don't, to be human is to be created. So, Jesus, according to his human nature, is created, right? He didn't exist prior to the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary.

[60 : 34] According to his divine nature, though, he's eternal. He's uncreated. He's assayed. He has life in himself. So, that's probably the easiest way to answer that question even though it might not sound sensible or easy, but it's just a definitional thing.

If you're a human, that means you're a creature. And if you're a creature, there was a time when you didn't exist. So, Jesus isn't talking about his human nature when he says that the Father gives him life in himself because you can't give that to a creature.

What else? Anything else? You may have other questions. Oh, I'll go these two and then I'll say we're done and I'll stand up front.

Yes. I know there's some controversy in the Orthodox.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, the question was, I mentioned John 15, John 16, and said the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

[61 : 54] And that's actually very controversial in the Greek Orthodox, or in the Eastern Orthodox Church, I should say. And it's not really controversial, they just say that's not true. Okay.

So, I've got to learn how to be short and succinct. In the 1000s AD, 1054 I think is the date, although, the Eastern Church and the Western Church split.

And it was over that issue, where the Eastern Church said, no, no, no, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, there's no and the Son.

And this is in the Nicene Creed, it's an issue of Greek versions versus Latin versions, the Eastern Orthodox kept the Greek version of that. It doesn't, in some manuscripts, it doesn't say, and the Son.

The Latin version does say, and the Son. Okay. So, the easiest way to answer that is first of all to say, in John 15 and 16, Jesus is talking about possessing and then giving what the Father possesses and gives.

[63 : 06] right? So, it doesn't make sense for the Son to possess the Spirit without the Spirit being from the Son. It also doesn't make sense for the Spirit to be given by the Son if the Spirit isn't proceeding from the Son.

In other words, if it's not the Son's Spirit, why would the Son be the one sending the Spirit? Right? Then you're back over here in this scenario. First Father, then Son, then Spirit. Actually, a second way to answer, this is really important for this whole conversation, by the way.

If we go with Arius' model, or even if you went over here to the pie chart, if you go to Arius' model, and there are gaps or breaks between the kind of divinity that each of these three persons has, and at worst, if you deny the divinity of the Son entirely, or the Spirit entirely, you're not saved.

This is a crucial argument in the early church. First of all, if this is true, Arius, and you're worshipping the Son, you're committing blasphemy. But every church since the church was born worships the Son.

So Arius, what are you doing with your life? But the other thing they said is, if this is true, if there's some kind of break in divinity, the Spirit can only indwell you and regenerate you as far as His own existence goes up to the Son's.

[64 : 38] And the Son can only take you so far up to where His stops. In other words, you're not saved up here. There's a gap.

How can Jesus say that if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father, if He's not equal to the Father? How can the Spirit conform you into the image of the Son if He's less than the Son?

This matters for your worship, and it matters for your salvation. This is, I get, I'm sorry everybody, I get really passionate about this because so often we ask this question and we go, you know what, I already signed off on the church's covenant, other people, you know, yes, I believe the Trinity, I

don't even know what that means, but yeah, I'm in, and I don't ever want to think about it again. Guess what, everybody, you're going to think about it for eternity because that's what you're going to be doing is dwelling with God, who is Father, Son, and Spirit. You're going to be growing in your knowledge and love for God, who is Father, and Son, and Spirit.

That's what you're doing right now. So it matters for your worship, it matters for your devotional life, it matters for your salvation, that you know you're really and truly saved. How can you know you're saved? Because the Spirit is God.

[66 : 07] The same Spirit who raised Christ Jesus from the dead now dwells in you. And that same Spirit can raise Jesus from the dead because He's the God of the living.

that's why this stuff matters. Okay, so it's really hard to think about. I'm sweating, my brain hurts, I get it. But this is the beginning and end of your Christian life.

Thinking about this stuff. Okay, one more question and then I'll be quiet and turn off the mic and if you want to ask others you can. 1 Corinthians 15, 27 and 28.

Yeah. And 28 says and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Yes. And I had a grandson in law who was trying to use this to prove that God, that Jesus was created.

[67 : 11] Right. Yeah, so the question is about 1 Corinthians 15, 27 and 28 which says in part that at the end of all things the Son will give back the kingdom to the Father so that God may be all in all, right?

So let's put that text just like we put earlier a few moments ago. I put Mark 13 here where Jesus says He doesn't know the day or the hour. I mentioned something else that I forgot already.

1 Corinthians 15. 27, 28. Okay, so we know there's only one God. We know each of these three persons is equally God.

We know that they're not distinguished by anything else but their eternal relations of origin. So how do we account for that text? What point is left on the rhombus to account for it? This one.

Philippians 2. According to what nature is Paul talking about the Son here? Is he talking about it according to a divine nature?

[68 : 12] That would be impossible, right? That's impossible according to these other three points of the rhombus. So according to which of Jesus' nature is he talking about in 1 Corinthians 15? It's according to his human nature. And of course that makes sense.

Of course it makes sense that the Davidic king, the second Adam, is going to give the kingdom that he has inherited back to God.

God. That's what Jesus is doing according to his human nature. But then, you know what he does when he gives this kingdom? Read Revelation 21 and 22. What does he do? He sits in the middle of it on the throne.

So we've got to pick the point of the rhombus that is going to help us with any given text and then apply it accordingly. Okay, I'm going to pray for us.

I will hang around if you have other questions. Let me pray. God, thank you for your word. Thank you for who you are and what you've done for us. In the person and work of your Son and by the power of your Holy Spirit, we pray, Lord, that you'd help us to grow in our love and our knowledge of you through growing deeper in our understanding of your word.

[69 : 19] And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. To learn more, visit us in person or see the website at highlandparkbaptist.net.