

DOCTRINE OF GOD: TRINITY

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Lecture 1: Introduction

Looking at arguments for the doctrine of the Trinity. Step back and recognize the doctrine.

The first subsection of the doctrine of God that we looked at was the attributes of God in which we discussed the existence and against it. Now we want to come to the second subsection of the doctrine of God, and this is on the doctrine of the Trinity.

If I were to say that God is a person. Rather, God is three persons. This is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Christianity from other monotheistic faiths like Judaism or Islam which also agree that there is one God who is personal but they think there is only one person who is God. This also serves to distinguish Christianity from various Christian cults and sects like these sectarian groups get the doctrine of the Trinity wrong it is almost like a thermometer that you can use to test these different groups to see whether or not they adhere to biblical Christianity.

Unfortunately, the average Christian has little understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. If he gets into a conversation with a Jew or a Muslim and he tries to defend his Trinitarian faith. In fact, if you probe deeply, he probably turns out to be a heretic in the view of the Trinity that he actually espouses. So it is important, I think, that we discuss the doctrine of the Trinity to make sure we accurately understand it.

The doctrine of the Trinity is often obscured by Christians in mystery. Sometimes they will say that the doctrine of the Trinity is logically inconsistent or it is an affront to reason and something that can be held only by faith. It is a mystery. But I think this really does the doctrine a disservice. The doctrine of the Trinity is not even apparently logically contradictory. The doctrine of the Trinity is not the self-contradictory doctrine that three gods are somehow one God, or that three persons are somehow one person. Rather, the doctrine states that there are three persons in the one God. Another way to put it: God is tri-personal.

Often Christians will offer inadequate analogies of the Trinity in order to explicate this doctrine. For example, we are sometimes told that the doctrine of the Trinity is like one

man who is a son, a husband, and a father. There is one man but he is a son, he is a husband, he is a father. Unfortunately, that is not an adequate or accurate analogy for the Trinity because in that case you have only one person who is simply playing three roles or has three relationships, but there really is only one person that is there.¹ Another analogy that is often used is that water can be liquid, steam, or ice. Yet it is all H₂O. This is perhaps a better analogy because at least here you have one substance ó one essence (H₂O) ó but this could be in the form of a liquid or of steam or of ice. But again the analogy really fails because the water is only successively in those various stages. It can be first liquid, and then if it freezes it turns to ice, or if you boil it it turns to steam. But it is not simultaneous. It is a succession of states in the water.

I think it is better just to avoid these sorts of analogies. They are all, I think, going to be inadequate in the end. It is better to simply say that just as I am a being with one center of self-consciousness y j q o " K " e c n n " ð K ö . " I q f " k u " e " d g k p i " y j q " e q p u e k q w u p g u u " g c e j " q h " y j k-perjsoñ perspective: *think* ð K ö 0 " G c e that I am the Father. I am the Son. I am the Holy Spirit. In the same way that I can say, I am William Craig.

So God is a tri-personal being. He is a being with three centers of self-consciousness in contrast to human persons who are one being with one center of self-consciousness.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a systematic summary of the data of Scripture. Therefore, it f q g u p ø v " t g c n n { " o c v v g t " v j c v " v j g " y q t f " ð V t k p k v { thing is not the word, but rather the concept or the data that this word denominates. Any word could be used to denominate this doctrine so long as the scriptural data are respected and not twisted or bruised in any way. The significant thing is not the word ð V t k p k v { 0 ö " V j g " u k i p k h k e c p v " v j k p i " y k n n " d g " v j g that God is a single tri-personal being.

START DISCUSSION

Student: One way that I heard it explained that I thought made it helpful to me understand what the doctrine is is the way I heard Nabeel Qureshi once describe it. As he talks about k v . " k v " k u " ð q p g " y j c v . " d w v " He relates a little bit to what ð " Q p g " d g you said, but I like the way he explains it where he says if you ask me *What am I?* I can say, *I am a human being. I have a brain, lungs.* D w v " v j c v " f W h e h a n ? S o " c p u y g t " I q f " k u " q p g " ð y j c²v ö " d w v " v j t g g " ð y j q u 0 ö

Dr. Craig: [g c j 0 " V j c v " k u " x g t { " p k e g 0 " K ø x g " p q v " j g c t f k f g c " q h " v j t g g " r g t u q p u " ð e v b j n g , g n g s u b s t a n c e . T h a t ö s + " d w v " q p g

1 5:03

2 U g g < " P c d g g n " S w t g u j k . " ð V w t p k p i " h t q o " V c y j k f " v q " v j g " <http://www.christianity.com/god/trinity/turning-from-tawhid-to-the-trinity.html> (accessed July 14, 2016).

from a fellow who comes from a monotheistic faith that required a great adjustment and change on his part with a Muslim background.

Student: I would hope when you do that you address that.

Dr. Craig: We are going to look at the scriptural data here in a moment.

Student: What would make them independent rather than knowledgeable of all three?

Dr. Craig: These are great questions. I want to say yes they are distinct. These are three distinct persons. It is not as though one person can be another person. Persons are distinct. A person could exist without the other one because these persons belong to the same being.³ So it is not as though one of the persons could be extinguished and the other person still exists. So they are not independent, but they are distinct. They are not identical. The Father is not the Son and is not the Holy Spirit. We can say that the Father is not identical to the Son and is not the Holy Spirit. When we say that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, we are not making an identity statement. What we are making is a predication of divinity or deity to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A short answer would be that these are distinct persons. We must not try to merge them into one person. They are distinct persons, but they are not independent in that these are the self-conscious persons or consciousnesses of a single being which is God.

Student: But all three are all-knowing?

Dr. Craig: Yes.

Student: They are personally distinct in the sense of identity. Just as you are not Carol or Mary. These are distinct persons. But I think you are quite right in saying that because each one is divine (each one is deity) each one is omniscience, omnipotent, all-loving, and eternal. Each has to be looked at.

Student: There would be no distinction between the knowledge of each or the understanding of each then. What is distinct then?

Dr. Craig: Let me nuance it a little bit. Recall when we talked about the attribute of

is to say, in terms of knowledge of all true propositions or facts. We said that a being S is omniscient if and only if (or by definition) for any proposition P, S knows P and does not believe not-P. If those conditions are fulfilled then S is omniscient. This is defined as you notice in terms of propositional knowledge. If you look at your notes from that discussion of omniscience, we pointed out that God is even greater than omniscient because there is also non-propositional knowledge. This would be knowledge of first person statements
n k m g " ö K " c o " v j g " H c v j g t ö " V j c v " k u " p q v " u q o g v j k p
h t q o " j k u " r g t g u " r v g j e g v " k H c g v " j ö g t q ö " c D w v " j g " f q g u p ø v " v j
would be deluded if the Son believed he was the Father. Similarly the Holy Spirit knows
ö [q w " c t g " v j g " U q p ö " [q w " c t g " v j g " H c v j g t ö " V j g " J
H c v j g t ö " q t " k a k s a y i n g a l l t h i s b e c a u s e y o u a r e a s k i n g a v e r y i m p o r t a n t
question about what these persons know and are they different in knowledge. What I
want to say is that being omniscient they all have the same propositional knowledge, but
being different persons they would have different non-propositional knowledge. Each one
has a first person perspective that will yield unique first person non-propositional
m p q y n g f i g ö " K u " v j c v " e n g c t A " K h " { q w " f q p ø v " t g o g o
omniscience section.

Student: You used the word tri-personal to describe the Trinity. I think you have to be
t g c n n { " e c t g h w n " y k v j " v j c v " d g e c w u g " K ø x g " u g g p " g
where the Trinity is referred to as personalities, which would be an error. Each person of
the Trinity does have a unique personality but there is a difference between a person and
a personality.

Dr. Craig: By personality, you mean something like a psychology or kind of character?⁴

Student: Exactly. Say you assign a personality to the Father and another one with the
Son, you end up with Modalism.

Dr. Craig: I am talking about personhood here.

Student: I understand that. It is just that when you used the word tri-personal to describe
v j g " V t k p k v { . " K " y c u " c " n k v v n g " e q p e g t p g f " c d q w v "

Dr. Craig: Just understand that caveat that one is talking about personhood and not
personality.

Student: Since it was brought up the knowledge of the three different beings . . .

Dr. Craig: Three different persons! Not three different beings.

Student: U w t g 0 " K ø o " u q t t { 0 " [g u . " K ø o " l w u v " v c n m k p i " s
God. Could you address the Scripture where Jesus talks about the end times and says, *Not even the Son knows but only the Father knows?* Because that sounds like propositional.

Dr. Craig: We are getting a little ahead of ourselves just like the previous question about *The Father is greater than I* " N g v ø u " j q n f " v j q u g " s w g u v k q p u " w p v k
Son, then we can raise those issues. OK? Right now we are just introducing the doctrine and want to understand this idea of one God who has three centers of self-consciousness.

Student: Y q w n f " { q w " f g h k p g " r t q r q u k v k q p c n " m p q y n g f i g
under propositional knowledge?

Dr. Craig: It would. Yes, it would. By propositional knowledge, a proposition is the information content of a sentence. So, for example, t j g " u g p v g p e g " ð D c t c e m " Q d c
R t g u k f g p v " q h " v j g " W p k v g f " U v c v g u ö " j c u " v j c v " k p h
R t g u k f g p v " q h " v j g " W p k v g u " U v c v g u 0 " D w v " u w r r q u g " v j g " W p k v g f " U v c v g u 0 ö " n t s e n t e n c e j o e x p r e s s e s t h e s a m e . " j g " w u g u " c " r t q r q u k v k q p " v j c v " K " l w u v " g z r t g u u g f " y j g p " K " u c k W p k v g f " U v c v g u 0 ö " K v " j c u " v j g " u c o g " k p h q t o c v k q p " because he is saying it from a first person perspective c p f " K ø o " v c n m k p i " h t q o " c r g t u r g e v k x g 0 " C p q v j g t " y q t f " h f a c t u a l k n o w l e d g e . r t q r q u k v k
Maybe that would help. The idea basically is you take a declarative sentence and then { q w " c u m . " ð Y j c v " k u " v j g f k ø h ù v j c v k u p p e g p e g A ö " V j propositional content. Propositional knowledge would be knowledge of all true propositions. Again, this is what possible worlds are made of. Remember, a possible world is just a list of all the true propositions that describe reality. That would be similar. A knowledge of all true propositions.

Student: Would it be inappropriate to think of it as one being with three faces? Like in Revelation they talk about faces.

Dr. Craig: This is really interesting, what you just said. Historians have said that you f q p ø v " t g c n n { " j c x g " k p " v j g " c p e k g p v " y q t n f " r t k q t h c v j g t u " v j g " e q p e g r v " q h " r g t u p r o s o p o n a n d a 0 " V j g " I t g g m
prosopon was the face mask worn by a Greek actor in the Greek theater. When you wear that mask that would be your face or *prosopon*. This is the word that came eventually to mean a person. The problem with sticking with that metaphor of the face is that it sounds very much like the doctrine that there is really only one person here ó one actor ó but he k u " r n c { k p i " f k h h g t g p v " t q n g u " d { " r w v v k p i " q p " f k h

Student: K ø o " g p x k u k q p k p i " c " d g k p i " c p t f a ç h a r a p t a r ø r " v j c v " j g being, but I am thinking of a being that has three faces simultaneously.

Dr. Craig: All right. That is a metaphor, but I think I understand what you are saying.

That does capture the idea of this tri-personal being ó three (as it were) faces that stand to g c e j " q v v j j g q t w' ö k " p t " g ð n K c v k q p u j k r u " c p f " e c ⁵ p j u l s t k p v g t c e v " again, would caution about using metaphors like that because it could sound like a single c e v q t " y g c t k p i " v j t g g " o c u m u 0 " C p f " { q w " f q p ø v " y c p

Student: It is just so hard ó in a human mind ó to try to capture the reality of the Trinity without any help (if you will) in a way to envision it.

Dr. Craig: Yeah, an analogy. I appreciate that. Yes.

Student: Building on what was just said, and coming from a theatrical background, rather than saying one actor with three faces, that actor is portraying three different identities via the masks.

Dr. Craig: D w v " v j c v " c i c k p " y q w n f p ø v " d g " v j g " h w n n " f q e have only one person there.

Student: [g c j . " K ø o " l w u v " v c m k p i " j g t u " c " u v g r " h w t v j g

Dr. Craig: All right, Although that is not what she wanted to say. Right, a single Shakespearean actor might play a girl or he might play a fellow based upon the costuming and effect of his voice. Those can be different roles. That would be a heretical x g t u k q p " q h " v j g " V t k p k v { " d g e c w u g " { q w " f q p ø v " r t g we were talking about.

Student: Can I have you draw two diagrams ó real simple diagrams? The first is a circle with an arrow coming in and an arrow coming out.

Dr. Craig: OK. Is this what you had in mind?

Student: Yes, exactly. Then the next diagram will be two circles with one arrow in between.

Dr. Craig: OK. Which way does the arrow point?

Student: It doesn't matter. That's right. That's good. Can we say that man is the diagram on the top ó that we have to have input and output. Can we say that God is the diagram in the lower end where the Trinity are explained by those three things?

Dr. Craig: Ah. Don't we need to add a third circle?

Student: No. The Holy Spirit is the arrow.

Dr. Craig: Oh! OK. Well! There are theories of the Trinity advocated by certain medieval theologians like Thomas Aquinas in which he thought of the Son and the Holy Spirit as subsistent relations (that is what he called them) in which God stands. He would want to say something like this. This relation here is one of the persons of the Trinity. Now I can't make sense of that myself. I don't see how the idea of a relation can be a person. For me, I just find this completely unhelpful. But you are not out of bounds in talking this way, at least in terms of classical theology.

Student: Can I use an illustration of, say, if we say God the Father is the Creator and all his ways are expounded in words like the Bible or any truthful document or whatever. Then the Son is the receiver of all that and manifestor of all that.

Dr. Craig: The Son wouldn't be the receiver of God's creating activity. Otherwise you make the Son a creature, right? And you don't want to say that. But there is in among the church fathers, as we'll see, this doctrine that somehow the Son is begotten from the Father and not in his human nature but in his divine nature. Among the trinitarian persons, there is this relationship of dependence of the second person on the first. Some of these medieval theologians think of this in terms of a relation where God the Father is the source and the Son and the Holy Spirit are dependent on the Father. This is a type of medieval theology that thinks of the trinitarian persons (at least the Son and the Spirit) as these relations in which the Father stands. Again, to my mind, that doesn't make sense. It isn't what we mean by a person. I don't see how a relation can be a person. But you are not out of bounds so to speak in talking like this because among medieval theologians and Catholic thinkers in particular this type of trinitarian thinking is prevalent.

Student: The reason I wanted you to draw the two diagrams is I wanted to emphasize that men are entity-focused and God is relational-focused. Where I originally wanted you to draw one arrow from the Father to the Son, in essence God is probably demonstrating a relationship more so than an entity so that the Trinity comes in.

Dr. Craig: OK. Well, I won't say any more than what I've already said except that on these views they typically will add a third person who proceeds from the Father and sometimes from the Son. Indeed, sometimes they will say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father by the Son. That is a distinction between Eastern Orthodox thinking and Catholic thinking as to whether or not the Holy Spirit proceeds directly from the Father or

does he proceed through the Son. Here we are getting into very fine points of church history and Christian doctrine that, I think for now at least, I want to set to one side.

Student: I think I get your point that we can't come up with analogies for the trinitarian God. Maybe stop with coming up with analogies and try to understand who God is. Are we right to say that God is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit? Can we say that?

Dr. Craig: Yes, I think that is right.

Student: Then, when you drew up there saying the Father does not equal the Son, the Son does not equal the Holy Spirit, can we say that God equals Father plus Son plus Holy Spirit?

Dr. Craig: I think that that isn't the way that we should speak.

Student: I'm just trying to understand who God is myself.

Dr. Craig: Right. Remember Bill Clinton once remarked that it all depends upon what you could take that to be an identity statement ó some person is identical to the king. But suppose you have a co-regency in which, say, there are two kings that are sharing the throne as often happened in history. In that case then it is not an identity statement to say that *He is the king*. Rather, what you mean by that would be something like *He is royal*.

V j k u " u g e q p f " q p g " k u " p q v " c p " ö k u ö " q h " k f g p v k v { = " a property of that person. You are not saying that he is identical to something. It really is true that it all depends q p " y j c v " v j g " o g c p k p i " q h " v j g " y q t f " ö k u r t g f k e c v k q p " q t " c p " ö k u ö " q h " k f g p v k v { A " Y j g p " y g " u c { " v j c v " v j k u " k u " c p " ö k u ö " q h " k f g p v k v { " d g e c w u g the conclusion that the Father is the Son which we know is false. So this is not a way of

o c m k p i " c p " k f g p v k v { " u v c v g o g p v 0 " V j k u " k u " c p " ö k u The Son is divine. Therefore both the Father and the Son are divine.⁷ But they are not identity statements anymore than *He is royal* is an identity statement. That is why I want to explain when we say the Father is God, the Son is God we need to be sure that we w p f g t u v c p f " j q y " y g " c t g " w u k p i " v j g " y q t f " ö k u 0 ö " K

Student: Sure it is.

Dr. Craig: To someone at least! *[laughter]* Just think about it. Think about that f k h h g t g p e g " d g v y g g p " c p " k f g p v k v { " ö k u ö " c p f " c p " ö difficult! It is just that you ask questions! *[laughter]*

Student: I'm just looking for some advice on how to deal with grandchildren in this area. I was doing a devotional the other day with my grandchildren (they are six years old) and it

Dr. Craig: Oh, come on! You can't pass the buck! I would get them our children's series *What is God Like?* which is a series of ten illustrated booklets featuring this very endearing cartoon family Brown Bear and Red Goose and their two little children Charity and John. The ninth volume in that series is called *God is Three Persons*. It is an explanation by Papa Bear to the little children about what the doctrine of the Trinity is all about. This will be an easy and entertaining way to explain this to them, and then will provoke wonderful conversations with your grandchildren about what these issues mean. With respect to your specific question, I think you should say Jesus was not only God, he was also man. So as a man, he depended upon the Father to guide him and to empower him. He worshiped the Father. When Jesus is praying to the Father, this is Jesus as a man praying to God the Father.

Student: If we were to view a trinitarian being that was not God (not perfect in all ways), wouldn't one person of the Trinity be able to disagree with another person of the Trinity?

Dr. Craig: This is one of the objections that sometimes is raised against thinking of the persons of the Trinity as three centers of self-consciousness (as opposed to, say, subsistent relations such as what was discussed before). What if they disagreed with each other? There I think one would simply say that in virtue of their omniscience and their moral perfection, there isn't any possibility of disagreement, because what the Father wills, the Son and the Spirit also will, what the Father knows, the Son and the Spirit know, what the Father loves, the Son and the Spirit also love. So there isn't any possibility of disharmony among the persons of the Trinity precisely because he is the perfect being.

END DISCUSSION

With that, we have introduced the subject that we will be discussing over the next several weeks. I think at this point it would be a good time to simply bring today's lesson to a close. What we will talk about next time will be the scriptural data that undergird the doctrine of the Trinity. We will see that the Scriptures teach both that there is one God and one God alone, but also that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead.⁸

Lecture 2: The Biblical Data

We've just introduced the subject of the Trinity. Last time I indicated that although the doctrine of the Trinity is a systematic summary of the biblical data that indicate two things: that there is one God and that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead. If those facts are true then the doctrine of the Trinity is true. Let's look at the scriptural data today that support these two truths.

First, that there is one God. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament we find that this doctrine is taught ó monotheism, there is but one God. Turn to Deuteronomy 6:4: ó J g c t . " Q " K u t c g n < " V j g " N Q T F " q w t " I q f " k u " q p g " N Q T Judaism ó the so-called shema. The first clause of that confession is the uniqueness of God ó there is one LORD.

1 Kings 8:60 ó v j k u " k u " U q n q o q p ø u s i o n o f t h e d e d i c a t i o n o f t h e p " q p " v j g " q v g o r n g 0 " J g " r t c { u " ð v j c v " c n n " v j g " r g q r n g u " q h " v j k u " p q " q v j g t 0 ö " U q " v j g t g ó " t h e G o d o f I s r a e l q v j g t " I q f " v j c p "

Isaiah 45:5a, 18:

I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God. . . . For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be k p j c d k v g f # + < " ÷ K " c o " v j g " N Q T F . " c p f " v j g t g " k u

So the God of Israel is the only God that there is. There is no other God.

In Isaiah 44, you find at length a satirical critique of the pagan deities of Israel's neighbors. In Isaiah 44 you have this biting satire of idolatry ó how the idolater carves a piece of wood, paints it, decorates it, clothes it, and then falls down in front of his own creation and says, *Thou art my God*, and worships the products of his own hands. Isaiah just laughs at this ó makes fun of it, at its folly. Israel did not consider itself to simply have a special God ó one of the many gods, this was Israel's God. No. Israel's God was the only God that there is. There is no other God besides the LORD, besides Yahweh.

In the New Testament, the Christian followers of Jesus taught and believed the same thing ó there is only one God. Look, for example, at Mark 12:29. Jesus is asked what is v j g " i t g c v g u v " e q o o c p f o g p v " c p f " ð L g u w u " c p u y g t g f q w t " I q f . " v j g " N q t f " k u " q p g 0 ö ø ö " J g " m a n d m e n t " s w q v g u " and confession of Israel and affirms Jewish monotheism.⁹

Similarly, in Romans 3:29-5 2 c . " R c w n " c n u q " c h h k t o u " o q p q v j g k u o
God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is
q p g 0 ö äinPaul did not conceive the Jewish God to be just one of many. He says the
God of Israel is, in fact, also the God of Gentiles because there is only one God and
therefore Jew and Gentile alike can be united in the worship of the one true God.

In 1 Corinv j k c p u " : < 6 . " c f f t g u u k p i " v j g " u w d l g e v " q h " r c
of food offered to idols, we know that an idol has no real existence, and that there is no
I q f " d w v " q p g 0 ö " U q " v j g u g " k f q n " i q f u " nation. " p q v " t g c
In fact, he says, there is no God but one ó the God of Israel.

3 " V k o q v j { " 4 < 7 < " ð H q t " v j g t g " k u " q p g " I q f . " c p f " v j
v j g " o c p " E j t k u v " L g u w u 0 ö " C i c k - there is One God and h h k t o u " v
one mediator between God and man.

H k p c n n { . " k p " L c o g u " 4 < 3 ; . " L c o g u " u c { u . " ð [q w " d g n
demons believe ó c p f " u j w f f g t # ö " U q " g x g p " v j ó even the o q p k e " h q t
demons believe that there is one true God and they tremble because they stand under
God's wrath and condemnation.

So, to state the obvious, it is clear that the Bible teaches there is but one God, and the Old
and New Testaments concur that this is the God of Israel.

START DISCUSSION

Student: As I'm sure you know, in Mormonism they believe there is an infinite number of
gods that are created one after another and goes back to infinity. One of my favorite
verses when talking to Mormons about this is Isaiah 43:10 where it explicitly says,
Before me no God was formed nor shall there be any after me. That is a good verse that I
find works very well with Mormons.

Dr. Craig: OK. Excellent! It is amazing the forms that polytheism can take, isn't it? That
would preclude the idea of there being a god before the God of Israel.

Student: In fact, I find a lot of that stuff in Isaiah ó chapter 43 thru 48. It is just chock full
of all kinds of verses that just refute the Mormon conception of God.

Dr. Craig: Yes. Those passages in Isaiah are so powerful in their criticisms of polytheism
and idolatry. Very good.

Student: Especially when God says, *I know no other.*

Dr. Craig: Yeah, *I don't know of any other god. There is none but me,* he says.

Student: There is an important distinction that needs to be made in terms of how the Bible
approaches the subject of God compared to how a lot of other people approach it. It is

interesting in a way because as someone pointed out the Bible considers God's existence to be self-evident. It doesn't really attempt to directly justify the existence of God saying he exists because. I think that is interesting though. A lot of people will say that is circular reasoning to believe in the existence of God is self-evident but I really think considering something as self-evident is not the same as circular reasoning.¹⁰ For example, we consider it self-evident that people need water to survive because people will die if they go more than a few days without it. I think in maybe a bit of a somewhat less obvious way I would say the existence of God is self-evident like that. I really like the way the Bible approaches it. It seems it is the case based on the available evidence.

Dr. Craig: Alright. It is important that we note that the way you illustrated this ó that people need water in order to survive ó shows that by self-evident what you do mean is something like it is obvious. But you don't mean it is evident apart from evidence. The way we know that people can't survive without water is we have good evidence for that ó we see them die when they don't have fluids. It is not self-evident in the sense that $2+2=4$ where once you understand the meaning of the terms alone you don't need any evidence. It is true as it were by definition. Once you understand the meaning of $2+2$ and the meaning of the term 4 then it is self-evident in that mathematical sense. You are using it more in a colloquial sense that it is obvious. I think that is what the Scripture teaches. As you began your question, I thought about the invisible nature ó namely his eternal power and deity ó has been clearly perceived in the created world. When we look at the creation then it is evident that it has been fashioned by a powerful and eternal Creator, so much so that people have no excuse for unbelief. I think you are quite right in saying that God has revealed himself in the world in such a way that it is obvious that he exists.

END DISCUSSION

In addition to that, the next point is that the Scriptures teach that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead. Let's look at each of the three persons ó the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

First, God the Father. The Scriptures teach that God the Father is a distinct person. Let's look at several passages that indicate that.

John 1:18 "The only-begotten Son, who has been with the Father, and who has been in the Father, and who has made himself manifest to the world." John 14:7 "Whoever has seen the Son, he has seen the Father, for the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, and they are both together." John 16:27 "The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, and they are both together." John 17:21 "That they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I am in you, that they also may be in us, and the world may believe that you have sent me."

differentiates himself as the Son from the Father. The Father and the Son stand in relationship to each other ó they know each other and the Son reveals the Father. So clearly the Father is a distinct person here from the Son who knows the Son, is known by the Son, and is revealed by the Son.

Also, Matthew 26:39. This is Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to his Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. ø ö " J g t g " L g u w u " r t c { u " v q " v j g " H c v j g t " c p f " c u m u suffering. But then he submits his will to the will of the Father and says, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*. Again, showing the distinction of the Father and the Son and the submission of the Son to the Father's will.¹¹

John 14:16-17. We've seen that the Father and the Son are distinct persons. Now in John 14:16-17 we see the Father's distinction from the Spirit. Jesus says,

And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

Here we have all three persons of the Godhead. The Son is praying to the Father to send another Advocate ó another Counselor ó and that will be the Spirit. We have three distinct persons here. The Father is distinct from both the Son and from the Spirit.

The second point is that not only is the Father a distinct person, but that the Father is I q f 0 " C i c k p . " v j k u " k u " v q " u v c v g " v j g " q d x k q w u 0 " N q c t v " o { " H c v j g t . " o { " I q f . " c p f " v j g " T q e m " q h " o { " u c which Israel conceived of the Lord (Israel's God) is as a heavenly Father. God is the Father of the children of Israel.

One finds this conception of God as Father elsewhere in the Old Testament. For example, K u c k c j " 8 5 < 3 8 < " ö H q t " v j q w " c t v " q w t " H c v j g t . " v j q w not acknowledge us; thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is thy p c o g 0 ö " J g t g " K u c k c j " u c { u " g x g p " k h " C d t c j c o " f q g u t g i c t f g f " c u " v j g " h c v j g t " q h " v j g " L g y k u j " p c v k q p + progeny, nevertheless the LORD is our Father. God is the Father of Israel.

In the New Testament, of course, this is the way in which Jesus presents the God of the Old Testament to his disciples and to the people whom he taught. Matthew 6:9. This is v j g " N q t f J ø g u " u r c t { c u { . g " t ö R t c { " v j g p " n k m g " v j k u . " ÷ Q w t " .

d g " v j { " p c o g 0 ö " L g u w u " v c w i j v " j k u " f k u e k r n g u " v q " regard God as their Father.

So the Scriptures teach that God the Father is distinct from the Son and from the Spirit, c p f " v j c v " v j g " H c v j g t " k u " I q f 0 " J g " k u " v j g " I q f " q h in the Greek, *ho theos* * n k v g t c n n { " o ó the article *ho* is the masculine definite article) usually, in the New Testament, refers to God the Father. When the authors of the New Testament say something about God (*ho theos*) they are talking about the Father.

H q t " g z c o r n g . " R c w n ø u " e w u v q o c t { " i t g g v k p i " k p " j k ð I t c e g " v q " { q w " c p f " r p d e " g " w h t " q n q ' t I f d ' f L " g u j w g u " " H E j t j k g u t v . C is identified with God ó God the Father.

Compare what Paul says in Galatians 4:4-6:¹²

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son k p v q " q w t " j g c t v u . " e t { k p i . " ÷ C d d c # " H c v j g t # ø J g t g . " c i c k p . " c n n " v j t g g " r g t u q p u " q h " v j g " I q f j g c h q t v j " j k u " ð The Spirit, it means God the Father. This is clear because the U r k t k v " v g c e j g u " w u " v q " e t { " q w v " v q " I q f . " ð C d d c # " typically refers to the person of the Father. But then it says the Father sends the Son (who is Jesus) and then he also sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts whereby we cry ð C d d c # " H c v j g t # ö

It is very interesting to read the New Testament in this light. When you read something about God, it is typically talking about God the Father.

So the first point is the Father is a distinct person, and the Father is God.

N g v ø u " i q " v q " v j g " u g e q p f " r q k p v . " c p f " v j c v " k u " v j indicate both that the Son is a distinct person and also that the Son is God.

H k t u v . " n o m e v e r s e " t h a t i n d i c a t e " t h a t t h e S o n i s a d i s t i n c t p e r s o n f r o m t h e F a t h e r . M a r k 1 : 9 - 1 1 . T h i s i s t h e b a p t i s m s c e n e o f J e s u s . M a r k s a y s ,

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came h t q o " j g c x g p . " ÷ V j q w " c t v " o { " d g n q x g f " U q p = " y k

Here we have all three persons of the Godhead mentioned. The Son undergoes baptism by John the Baptist, the Spirit descends upon him, and then the Father from heaven says, \tilde{o} V j q w " c t v " o { " d g n q x g f " U q p = " y k v j " v j g g " K " c o " y g n from both the Spirit and the Father in this passage.

John 17:1-5. This is L g u w u \emptyset " i t g c v " k p v g t e g u u q t { " r t c { g t " h q t

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, \div H c v j g t . " v j g " j q w t " j c u " e q o g = " i n q t k h { " v j { " U thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy q y p " r t g u g p e g " y k v j " v j g " i n q t { " y j k e j " K " j c f " y

Clearly here Jesus is praying to another person. He is not talking to himself. He is praying to the Father and asking that the Father would glorify himself in the Son and speaking of how the Son has glorified the Father while on this planet. We have here a clear distinction between the Father and the Son. The sixteenth and seventeenth chapter in John in general clearly speak of the three persons of the Godhead. If you want to read these passages (16 and 17) on your own, you will find over and over again the distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.¹³

N g v \emptyset u " n q q m " c v " L q j p " 9 < 5 ; " h q t " v j g " f k u v k p e v k q p " Scripture, \tilde{o} J g " y j q " d g n k g x g u " k p " o g . " q w v " q h " j k u " j g c t v v j g p " L q j p " u c { u . " \tilde{o} P q y " v j k u " j g " u c k f " c d q w v " v j g " to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorifk g f 0 \ddot{o} " So the distinction between the Spirit and the Son is clearly drawn here because the Son was with them but the Spirit was not. The Spirit was someone they would receive in the future after Jesus had departed from them and been glorified. So although the Son was present with them, the Spirit was not yet present with them in the way that he would be in his fullness. The Spirit and the Son are distinguished from each other personally.

H k p c n n { . " L q j p " 3 8 < 9 . " L g u w u " u is to your advantage x g t v j g n g u that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I y k n n " u g p f " j k o " v q " { q w 0 \ddot{o} " J g t g " L g u w u " k u " u r g c m k p the Father would send. Again, he distinguishes this person from himself: *So long as I am here with you, the Counselor will not come; but when I go then the Counselor (the Spirit of truth) will be sent to be with you and be in you.* So Jesus distinguishes himself from the Spirit of God who would come after him.

So in the New Testament we have the Son as a distinct person from the Father and from the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, this person is also God. The Son is God. Immediately this raises a problem. If *ho theos* refers to the Father, then how can you say that Jesus is God without implying that he is the Father, which the New Testament writers did not want to do? They did not believe that the Father had become incarnate and died on the cross! Or that somehow the Father is no longer in heaven. So how could the New Testament writers affirm the deity of Christ without saying or implying that he is the Father? What you find is that the New Testament authors wrangled every way that they could to assert the deity of Christ without saying that he is God the Father.

A very good popular level book on this is by Michael Green, *The Truth of God Incarnate*. Green does an excellent job of showing the extent to which New Testament writers went to affirm in some very creative ways the deity of Christ without saying that Jesus is *ho theos* which would be to say he is the Father. That is precisely why you do not find these writers wanted to say. So they find every other way conceivable to express the deity of Christ without coming right out and saying flatly that Jesus is *ho theos*. Some of these ways in which the deity of Christ is affirmed by New Testament authors.

First, Colossians 1:15-19 and then also 2:9.¹⁴ By way of background to the letter of Colossians, Paul is faced here with a sort of incipient gnosticism (it would appear) in Colossae. Gnostics held that the realm of the spiritual is good and the realm of the material is evil. Therefore, God being fully good cannot have any sort of concourse or relationship with the material world because that would taint him with evil. So Gnostics developed this system whereby God in his fullness and purity is utterly diverse and detached from the world. But there emerged from God in sort of descending stair step fashion quasi-divine beings that increasingly mediate between God and the material world. A kind of increasing materialization as you descend these stairs. What Paul says in Colossians 1:15-19 and 2:9 is that this bifurcation between God and the world is utterly misconceived. Paul says that the whole fullness of deity ó that pure God substance ó Christ:

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, for in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities ó all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.. He is the

head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Here Paul says this fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus Christ. Then in 2:9 he says
g x g p " o q t g " e n g c t n { . " ð H q t " k p " j k o " v j g " y j q n g " h w n
Gnostic. The fullness of deity dwells bodily in Christ. This is a statement of the deity of Christ which is, I think, one of the strongest in the New Testament. Jesus Christ is literally God incarnate. He is the fullness of deity dwelling bodily in this world ó literally God incarnate.

Secondly, New Testament authors used the name of God in the Old Testament in the Greek ó *kyrios* ó for Jesus. In the Old Testament, the name of God ó Yahweh ó was translated in the Greek Septuagint (which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament) as *kyrios* ó [c j y g j 0 " V j g " P g y " V g u v c o g k y r i o s) and then v g t u " e c n n " they apply to him Old Testament passages about Yahweh! So while not referring to Jesus as *ho theos* (which would make him the Father), they do refer to Jesus as *kyrios* (Lord) and apply to him Old Testament passages about Yahweh.

N q q m . " h q t " g z c o r n g . " c v " T q o c p u " 3 2 < ; . " 3 5 0 " R c w n " Jesus is Lord [*kyrios*] and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you y k n n " d g " u c x g f 0 ö " J g t g " k u " v j k u " h w p f ó Jesus p v c n " e q p is Lord.¹⁵ Jesus is *kyrios*. Then in verse 13 the prooftext is given from the Old Testament. Quoting from Jog n " 4 < 5 4 < " ð H q t " ÷ g x g t { q p g " y j q " e c n n u " w r q y k n n " d g " u c x g f 0 ø ö " V j g { " v c m g " v j ð the God of the " V g u v c o g p Old Testament ó and apply it to Jesus and says everyone who confesses that Jesus is Lord will be saved.

This was the most important confession in the New Testament church. Look at 1 Corinthians 12:3 ó ð K " y c p v " { q w " v q " w p f g t u v c p f " v j c v " p q " q p g x g t " u c { u " ÷ L g u w u " d g " e w t u g f k y r i o s _ e ' p f z ' e p g r ' v ' p g { ' e v j p g Hol{ " U r k t k v 0 ö

C n u q " n q q m " c v " 3 " E q t k p v j k c p u " 3 8 < 4 4 " y j g t g " R c w n " there is *maranatha* ó k v " k u " c " v t c p u n k v g t c v k q p " k p v q " I t g g m " y j k e j " o g c p u . " ð Q w t " N q t f . " e q o g # ö " t h u r c h a t " k u " v j g " n prayer. It goes right back to the Aramaic that the early followers of Jesus spoke in L g t w u c n g o 0 " C p f " v j g { " r t c { g f " v q " L g u w u " c u " N q t f .

here the original language of the Jerusalem fellowship praying to Jesus as Lord ó the name of God in the Old Testament.

K " v j k p m " { q w " e c p " u g g " j q y " p c ¹ x g " k v " k u " y j g p " u q o that Jesus is *ho theos* or is God. What it does say is Jesus is *kyrios* which is the Lord ó Yahweh ó in the Old Testament.

One last passage that I want to share with you, and this is 1 Corinthians 8:6. This differentiation between *ho theos* and *kyrios* leads to some really strange circumlocutions

k p " v j g " P g y " V g u v c o g p v 0 " N q q m " c v " 3 " E q t k p v j k c p u " from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through y j q o " c t g " c n n " v j k p i u " c p f " v j t q w i j " y j q o " y g " g z k u differentiated. There is one God, namely the Father, but one Lord, Jesus Christ, and then they are both described in virtually identical terms. They are the ones through whom everything exists. The ground of all being. They are both God but they are different persons. One is called the Father, the other is *kyrios*.

So chew on that during the week until we meet next time and talk about other creative

y c { u " k p " y j k e j " v j g " P g y " V g u v ¹⁶ o g p v " c w v j q t u " c h h k

Lecture 3: Jesus as God in the New Testament

We are continuing our lesson on the doctrine of the Trinity. Before we re-plunge into that subject, however, I just want to alert some of you to the fact that every Thursday on our Reasonable Faith Facebook page we are putting up a new feature. It is a short video *ec n n g f " õ L q k p " O g " K p " O { " U v w f { 0 ö " V j in my' k u " c " f q w d* study at home ó Jan does the video herself ó but it is also about my current study of the doctrine of the atonement and gives you a chance to join with me as I study from week to week and share the things that I am learning in this video. So if you have the chance to *n q q m" c v " v j g " T g c u q p c d n g " H c k v j " H c e g d q q m" r c i g . "* afternoon this short two-to-h *k x g " o k p w v g " x k f g q . " õ L q k p " O g " K p " O {* think, prove stimulating to you as we struggle to understand this very difficult doctrine of the atonement.

Today, however, we want to look at perhaps the equally difficult doctrine of the Trinity. Last time we saw that the biblical writers affirm the deity of Christ. In doing so they confronted the difficulty of saying that Jesus is God but without saying that Jesus is the Father. This is problematic because, as I shared, the word for God in the Greek ó *ho theos* (*ho k u " v j g " f g h k p k v g " c t v k ó* refers to the Father in the New *õ v j g " I q f ö* Testament Christians, while believing that Jesus was deity (was divine) did not think that *j g " y c u " v j g " H c v j g t 0 " V j c v " k u " y j { " { q w " f q p ø v " h k p* Jesus is *ho theos* ó that Jesus is God. That would be to say Jesus is the Father. Instead, as we saw, they picked a different term to characterize Jesus, and that was the term *kyrios* or Lord. *Kyrios* is the Greek word that translates the name of God in the Old Testament ó [*c j y g j 0 " V j g " g c t n { " E j t k u v k c p u . " c u " y g " u c y . " y q w* to him Old Testament passages about Yahweh saying that these are in reference to Christ. So you have the very odd situation that the New Testament writers, while shunning the label *theos* for Jesus, do affirm that Jesus is *kyrios*. Thus you get these odd *cire w o n q e w v k q p u " u w e j " c u " 3 " E q t k p v j k c p u " : < 8 . " õ H q* *N q t f . " L g u w u " E j t k u v 0 ö " Y g " h k p f " k p " v j g " P g y " V g u v* everything they could to affirm the deity of Christ but without saying that he was the Father.

The third point that we want to come to that illustrates this is the fact that Christ is given the role of God. To Christ, these authors ascribed roles that are normally reserved for God.

H q t " g z c o r n g . " n g v ø u " n q q m" c v e r s e k 5 a n d f o l l o w i n g . q n q u u k c p u "

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones

or dominions or principalities or authoritiesô all things were created through him and for him.

Here the role of being the Creator of all reality other than God is ascribed to Christ.¹⁷

Similarly, in John 1:1-3 we have the same teaching.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

Here, again, you have ascribed to Christ, the Word of God, the creation of all reality apart from God himself.

Finally, look at Hebrews 1:1-3a where you have the same teaching:

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power.

Here, just like Paul in Colossians 1 and John in John 1, Christ is said to be the creator of the world, he is the heir of all things just as Paul says he is the first-born of all creation, he reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature. The idea there is like a signet ring which is pressed into hot wax to seal a document or a letter. Just as that wax bears the imprint of the ring, so Christ bears the very stamp or imprint of the divine nature. He upholds the universe by his word of power, just as John says all things were created through him.

So the fact that we have in Colossians 1, Hebrews 1, and John 1 this same teaching about the cosmic Christ as the Creator and Sustainer of all things apart from God shows that this was the widespread conviction of the early church. This is not a doctrine taught by some idiosyncratic author. These are three different authors ó Paul, an anonymous author of Hebrews, and then John of the Gospel of John. All of them teach the same thing with respect to Christ ó that he is the Creator of the world. He plays the role of God in being the source of all reality apart from God.

Finally, sometimes the authors in the New Testament simply lose all restraint, and they come right out and say, yes, Jesus Christ is *ho theos* ó Jesus is God. The best book that is written on this is by the very fine New Testament scholar Murray Harris. It is called *Jesus as God*. The subtitle is *The New Testament Usage of Theos in Reference to Jesus*. Murray Harris was my Greek professor and spent a lifetime studying those passages in the New Testament which refer to Christ as *theos*. This is one of the few books that I

would recommend to every Christian to read and have on his bookshelf. Given the centrality of the deity of Christ for Christian monotheism, I think this is really an indispensable tool. So put that on your gift list or on your book list ó *Jesus as God* by Murray Harris.

What Harris points out is that there are several passages in the New Testament where the best interpretation ó the most plausible exegesis ó of these passages is that the New Testament writers are affirming that Jesus is *theos* " N g v ø u " n q q m " g e t h e r ! " v j g u g " r c

First would be Hebrews 1:8-12. We already saw in the opening paragraph of the book of Hebrews that Christ is attributed to the role of God, is said to bear the stamp of the divine nature, he upholds the universe by his word of power.¹⁸ Now look at what he says in verses 8-12. He says,

But of the Son he says,

÷ V j { " v j t q p g . " Q " I q f . " k u " h q t " g x g t " c p f " g x g t .
thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore
God, thy God, has anointed thee witj " v j g " q k n " q h " i n c f p g u u " d g { q
and,

÷ V j q w . " N q t f . " f k f u v " h q w p f " v j g " g c t v j " k p " v j g
of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a
garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou
c t v " v j g " u c o g . " c p f " v j { " { g c t u " y k n n " p g x g t " g p

K p " x g t u g " : . " j g " u c { u " q h " v j g " U q p " ð vójt&os. v j t q p g . "
V j k u " u g p v g p e g " e q w n f " d g " v t c p u n c v g fot" ð I q f " k u " v j
addressed as God. It could be translated in that way. But I think that the translation that I
read is preferable because of the parallelism between verse 8 and verse 10. What you
have here is Christ is addressed as both *theos* and *kyrios*. K p " x g t h y g h r o n e , O . " ð V
I q f . " k u " h q t " g x g t " c p f " g x g t ö " c p f " x g t u g " 3 2 . " ð V j
d g i k p p k p i 0 ö " U q " v j g " r c t c n n g n k u o " j g t g " q h " I q f " c
preferring the translation as I read it from the RSV.

Another passage ó Tituu " 4 < 3 5 0 " J g t g " v j g " c w v j q t " u c { u . " ð y g " c
c r r g c t k p i " q h " v j g " i n q t { " q h " q w t " i t g c v " I q f " c p f "
i n q t { " q h " q w t " i t g c v " I q f " c p f " U c x k q t " L g u w u " E j t k
great God and Saviq t 0 ö " V j c v " k u " y j q o " t y n e g a l o u g h e o n k a i n m k p i " c d q
soteris hemon. Megalou h t q o " ð ó w g i c v ö " o g c t h u o i i s t h e g e n i t i v e o f ö "
theos " U q " v j k u " h k t u v " k a i n . S o t e r i s k t a t i s t h e f r o m S a v i o r . T h e n t h e 0 ö " C p f " *

possessive pronoun *hemon* o g c p u " ð q w t 0 ö " V j g " d q q m g p f u " q h " v j k u
article *tou* c p f " v j g p " v j g " r q u u g u u k x g " r t q p q w p " ð q w t 0 ö " V
h t c o g " v j g " g p v k t g " r j t c u ἢ ἔ x ἵ q v 0 ö ḡ E ḡ u ṽ ō ḡ k w u " i ḡ ḡ ḡ
as not only our Savior but also as our God.

A third passage is Philippians 2:5-7. Here Paul says,

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he
was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but
emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Notice what it says here about Christ. It says that in his pre-incarnate state he was in the
form of God. If there is any doubt about what that means, look at the next phrase ó
equality with God.¹⁹ He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. The word
v j g t g " h q t " ð i t c u r g f ö " o g c p u " u q o g v j k p i " v q " d g " e n
to set that aside and to relinquish it and to humble himself and take the form of a servant.
In Philippians 2:5-7 we have this very strong assertion that the pre-incarnate Christ
g z k u v g f " k p " v j g " x g t { " h q t o " q h " I q f . " d w v " j g " f k f p
equality with God, but humbled himself and took on human likeness.

Finally, we come to the writings of John where we find several expressions that equate
Jesus with *theos*.

H k t u v " y q w n f " d g " k p " v j g " I q u r g n " q h " L q j p " 3 < 3 " y j k
c i c k the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was
I q f 0 ö " V j g " h k k p i t h e o s ' e n h o l o g o s ὁ ḡ j ḡ j ḡ ḡ t ḡ ḡ f " q t f g t " k u " k p x g t
y c u " v j g " Y q t f 0 ö " [t h e w d o e s n o t h a v e t h e d e f i n i t e a r t i c l e i n f r o n t o f v "
it. Why is that? Because the definite article indicates the subject of the sentence. The fact
that the article is not here shows that this is the predicate of the sentence. The sentence
u j q w n f " p q v " d g " v t c p u n c v g f " ð c p f " c a t e n t h a t t h e c u " v j g " Y q
u g p v g p e g " u j q w n f " d g " v t c p u n c v g f " ð c p f " v j g " Y q t f "
article with *ho logos* shows that that is the subject of the sentence and that *theos* is the
predicate. We saw that John goes on to then describe Christ as the Creator of the world,
of all things apart from God.

L q j p " 3 < 3 : < " ð P q " q p g " j c u " g x g t " u g g p " I q f . " v j g " q p
j g " j c u " o c f g " j k o " m p q y p 0 ö " N c v g t " e q r { k u v u " y g t g "
begotten God that is in the Greek here that they changed it to Son. Your translations will
r t q d c d n { " k p f k e c v g " v j c v " c u " c p " c n v g t p c v k x g " o c p
v j g " y q t f " ð U q p ö " j g t g " d g e c w u g " v j g { " e q w n f " p q v " k
God. Yet, that is what the best manuscripts read. The earliest manuscripts going back to

CF " 4 2 2 " k p f k e c v g " v j c v " v j g " q t k i k p c n " y q t f k p i " q h
 k p " v j g " d q u q o " q h " v j g " H c v j g t " j g " j c u " o c f g " j k o " m
 he already affirmed in verse 1 that the Word (or Jesus) is, in fact, God.

Turn to the end of the Gospel ó John 20:28. Again, these are like bookends. In chapter 1
 we saw that Jesus is affirmed to be God, and now in chapter 20 and verse 28 (at the end
 q h " L q j p ø u " Ig d' W r j g r o e " u ø g " è j q ø x g u u k q p 0 " K p " x g t u g " 4 : "
 L g u w u ø " h g g v " c p f " c p u y g t u " j k o . h ò t h e o s h o u k y r i o s
kyrios mou ó n k v g t c n n { " ð m o i j k g u " I o q { f + " q c h p " f o " g ö ö v " j * g " N q t f " q h " o g
 affirming that Christ is both *ho theos* and *ho kyrios* ó he is Lord and God. This is the
 Christological climax of the Gospel of John ó V j q o c u ø " e q p h g u u k q p 0 " K v " u j
 understands Jesus to be exactly who John in his prologue says that he is.²⁰

Finally, look at 1 John 5:20: ð C p f " y g " m p q y " v j c v " v j g " U q p " q h " I q f
 us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son
 L g u w u " E j t k u v 0 " V j k u " k u " v j g " v t w g " I q f " c p f " g v g t p
 is Christ - ð k p " p k ù L U q w u " E j t k u v ö " y j q " k u " ð v j g " v t w g " I q
 again, affirms the deity of Christ.

START DISCUSSION

Student: I was looking for clarity because usually when I read John 1, Hebrews 1,
 E q n q u u k c p u " 3 . " v j g " v g t o s e ã n a l m o s t l i k e a p o w e r o f G o d w r c n n { " o c m
 a utility or a tool of some kind that God, the Father, used to make. Not that he himself is
 v j g " E t g c v q t 0 " K ø o " p q v " u c { k p i " j g " k u " p q v 0 " K ø o " u
 one of those passages you used the word ð v j t q w i j 0 ö " J q y " f q g u " v j c v " o c
 and not a utility? Do you see what I am saying?

Dr. Craig: Yes, I do. I think we do want to affirm that Christ is the agent of creation. He
 k u " v j g " H c v j g t ø u " c i g p v " q h " e t i d e n t i n t h i s i d e a o f t h e j c v ø u " t k
Logos (or the Word). This is one of the most interesting examples of the influence of
 philosophy upon the New Testament. This idea of the *Logos* (or Word of God) as the
 agent of creation ó the means or instrument ó by which God created the world is not
 unique to John or the New Testament. It characterizes a philosophical school called
 Middle Platonism which developed during the centuries after Plato wrote. Middle
 Platonists believed that the *Logos*, which is sort of the mind of God in a way, is the
 instrument of creation by which God creates the world. Hellenistic Jews ó Greek-
 speaking Jews outside of Israel ó like Philo of Alexandria, Egypt talk a great deal about
 the *Logos* c u " I q f ø u " c i g p v " q h " e t g c v k r e a d i n g t h e q w " t g c f " R j k
 prologue of the Gospel of John. This is a very common idea in the ancient world that the

one of the reasons he liked evangelical Protestantism better than Catholicism was because in Catholicism the Holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and the Son. The Spirit proceeds from the Father through the *Logos* and then to us. Whereas in Greek Orthodoxy, the Spirit proceeds directly from the Father without passing through the filter of the *Logos*. That affords a more mystical approach to God ó a kind of a-rational approach to I q f " v j c v " j g . " c u " c p " Q t v j q f q z " d g n k g x g t . " h q w p f " of having this be logical ó being a rational expression. He wanted to have a more mystical spirituality that he thought was better in line with the idea of the Spirit coming directly from the Father, rather than proceeding through the filter of the *Logos*. I think that would bear out the point of the analogy that you are making.

Student: K " v j k p m " k v " k u " L q j p " y j g t g " v j g t g " k u " c " r c u u q p g 0 ö " K " v j k p m " k v " k u " k p v g t g u v k p i " k p " n k i j v " q h " Jesus being distinct from God the Father. To me it seems to be referring to a very special relationship in the same way that we might talk about oneness in marriage even though we have two individuals. People say that God invented marriage as a way to help us understand the union the believer has with Christ. Do you think there is also that aspect that it helps us understand the Trinity in a way?

Dr. Craig: I do think that undoubtedly John thought of Jesus as God and thought that they had a deep underlying unity of nature and essence. We see that from the other passages.²² O c { d g " L q j p " k p v g t r t g v g f " v j c v " u c { k p i " q h " L a deeper level of significance that *we are one in nature or substance or essence*. But on the surface of it at least it just seems to be that it is expressing *we are in harmony with each other ó I and the Father are of one mind on this*. He prays that believers would also be one in the same way and one with him and the Father. At least on the surface, it f q g u p ø v " n q q m " n k m g " v j k u " k u " c " f g g r " o g v c r j { u k e c Father. But, boy, given what John says elsewhere in his Gospel, it could well be that he saw that this had a deeper meaning than simply the surface meaning that *I and the Father are of one mind on this* or that *we agree on this*.

END DISCUSSION

The last point I want to make with respect to the affirmation of the deity of Christ in the New Testament is that there are many, many other passages which we will not take the time to read in which Christ functions as God. For example, receiving worship. This is unique to God. Only God can properly receive worship. And yet Christ receives worship in the New Testament. There are certain Christological titles given to him that seem to k o r n { " j k u " f g k v { 0 " H q t " g z c o r n g . " ð v j g " U q p " q h " I q status that he is especially anointed by God. But I think when you read the New

V g u v c o g p v " v j g { " v j k p m " q h " L g u t h e H e b r e w k i n g s q r f ø u " U q p " k
j q n { " o g p " e q w n f " p q v " d g " u c k f " v q " d g " I q f ø u " u q p u 0
u g p u g " v j c v " u g v " j k o " c r c t v 0 " Q t " L g u w u ø " e n c k o " v q
from Daniel 7 where Daniel has a vision of this divine-human figure which is called the
Son of Man who comes before the throne of God and God gives to him all authority and
r q y g t " c p f " f q o k p k q p " v j c v " c n n " v j g " r g q r n g ø u " q h "
is the title that Jesus applied to himself most frequently in the Gospels ó that he was the
Son of Man. The use of the definite article there ó ð v j g ö " U q p t h i n k h o w O t h a p "
j g " k u " j c t m k p i " d c e m " v q " F c p k g n ø u " x k u k q p " k p " e j c
to himself as a human being, as E l g m k g n " f k f " y j g p " j g " e c n n g f " j k o u
always consistently used the definite article ó j g " k u " ð v j g ö " U q p " q h " O c p 0

The point is that these New Testament believers thought that the Jesus of Nazareth who
had lived among them, who had died, who was raised from the dead by God, and
ascended into heaven, that in some difficult to express way he was God himself. Now, he
y c u " p q v " v j g " H c v j g t 0 " V j c v ø u " e n g c t 0 " D w v " j g " y c u
God.

START DISCUSSION

Student: I know the Defenders class does apologetics or the defense of the essentials of
the faith which I take to mean the things that constitute the Gospel. In other words, that is
what you have to believe to have to be saved, and also does theology. Would you see the
Trinit{ " c u " h c n n k p i " w p f g t " c r q n q i g v k e u " q t " v j g q n q i {
spread the Gospel in the book of Acts they asked people to believe in the Trinity. When
you do your apologetics work around the world, do you typically defend the Trinity? Is
that part of apologetics or is that just theology?

Dr. Craig: I think that it is primarily theology that we are doing here. We are examining
Christian doctrine. But I would say given the rejection of this doctrine by, for example,
Islam, which is the only world religion which has arisen with full knowledge of
Christianity and in rejection of its teaching, it becomes imperative that we be able to
state, articulate, and defend this doctrine of the Trinity.²³ As I mentioned as well, it is
denied by virtualn { " c n n " e w n v k e " q t " u g e v c t k c p " i t q w r u " n k m
Saints, Christian Science, and so forth. Therefore, it becomes an issue of apologetics
because it is a central theological doctrine that is under attack from these various non-
Christian groups. So I would see this as something that is involved in apologetics as well.

R g t j c r u " f g h g p u k x g " c r q n q i g v k e u " t c v j g t " v j c p " q h
v q " v t { " v q " r t q x g " v j c v " v j g " V t k p k v { " k a t u w e v t w g 0 " K "

c u " E j t k u v k c p u " d g n k g x g . ö " c p f " v j g p " c p u y g t " f g h g
doctrine launched by Muslims and others.

Student: So the doctrine is entailed by the essentials?

Dr. Craig: Yes, I think so.

END DISCUSSION

The next person to be looked at is the person of the Holy Spirit. This is a good point at which to break. We will come back next time and look at the third person of the Trinity ó the Holy Spirit.²⁴

Lecture 4: The Holy Spirit

We've been looking at the doctrine of the Trinity. We've seen that the New Testament affirms that the Father is a distinct person from the Spirit and the Son, and that the Father is God not in the sense that Jesus is the Father but in the sense that he is divine. The New Testament typically refers to Jesus by the Old Testament name of God *kyrios* or Lord.

Today we want to turn to the third person of the Trinity the Holy Spirit. Again, we will see that the New Testament affirms both that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person from the Father and the Son, and that the Holy Spirit is likewise God.

First, the Holy Spirit is a distinct person.

Here the Father is spoken of as distinct from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given by the Father to those who ask him.

my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said given by the Father in the name of the Son. The three persons are mentioned in this single saying as distinct persons.

Turn over to John 15:26 the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who persons mentioned. There is the Father, the Holy Spirit who will bear witness to the Son to Jesus. What is especially interesting about this verse is that John emphasizes the personhood of the Holy Spirit by using the masculine pronoun for him even though the Spirit who proceeds from the Father; *it* Spirit who proceeds from the Father; *it* masculine here about a person, not a thing. The Holy Spirit is a person just like the Father and the Son.

Romans 8:26-27. Paul says,

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.

And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.²⁵

Here Paul describes the intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit to the Father on our behalf. We don't know what to pray for many times. We have limited wisdom and insight. But the Holy Spirit intercedes with the Father on our behalf, and the Father knows the mind of the Spirit and knows how to answer our prayers because the Spirit intercedes according to God's will. So here you have this very interesting ministry of the Holy Spirit on our behalf in prayer or intercession before the Father so that he converts as it were our prayers into God's will.

Matthew 28:19 is one of the famous trinitarian verses in the New Testament where all of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Converts to Christianity are to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14 also mentions all three of the persons of the Trinity. A wonderful benediction (that is the Father), and then the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. So all three of the persons are mentioned in this benediction just as they are in the baptismal formula.

Finally, 1 Peter 1:1-2 also mentions all three of the trinitarian persons.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood, may grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Here you have all three of the persons: God the Father who has chosen and destined the believers, the Spirit who sanctifies them for obedience to Jesus Christ.

So we have a number of passages, I think, in which the Holy Spirit is distinguished from both the Father and the Son. He is a distinct person.

Here we also need to make a note about how the New Testament uses terminology. We know that the Holy Spirit, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come in his place and in his name.

He would continue to carry out the ministry of Jesus in the absence of Jesus after Jesus' departure.

the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your
Christ, and he serves to bring Christ's teaching to recollection on the part of the disciples.

Also look at John 16:13-14: Jesus says,²⁶

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Here we see the subordination of the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation to the Son. The Holy Spirit doesn't speak on his own authority. We've seen rather he comes in the name of the Son ó in the name of Christ ó and then he will declare to the disciples the things that he receives ó the things concerning Jesus Christ. The role of the Holy Spirit is that of attesting to and continuing the ministry of Jesus, acting in his name and authority, and in his place.

So in the New Testament the Holy Spirit becomes so closely identified with Jesus Christ that he is often spoken of as the Spirit of Christ ó not the Spirit of God but the Spirit of Christ, or even sometimes he is simply called Christ. Look, for example, at the very interesting passage in Romans 8:9-11. Here Paul says,

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

Did you notice the terminology here and the progression? It goes from the Spirit of God to the Spirit of Christ to simply Christ! If Christ is in you (meaning the Spirit of Christ, that is to say the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit). Here you have the identification of the Spirit so completely with Christ that he is actually referred to as Christ.

So very often today, people will talk about how, in order to be born again, you need to receive Christ as your Savior, and that it is receiving Christ that will produce the new birth and a relationship with God. Technically, it is really the Holy Spirit that you receive. When a person places his faith in Christ, he receives the Holy Spirit who now continues the ministry of Christ and that will produce the spiritual re-birth ó the new birth ó that will put him into a relationship with God. But because the Holy Spirit is so closely identified with Christ, we will often talk about receiving Christ. There is nothing the

matter with that so long as we keep in mind and understand that Christ in terms of his human nature is with the Father. He is absent from this world. Some day he will return again when Christ comes back, but in his absence it is the Holy Spirit who continues the ministry to the world and to the church as well.

When we come to our section on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we will look more at the manifold ministries that this third person of the Trinity has in the world today. But for now we simply want to note that the Holy Spirit is not the ghost of Jesus Christ. When they talk about the Holy Ghost they don't mean it is the ghost of Jesus. Nor do they mean by the Holy Spirit some sort of it ó a thing, a neutral force or impersonal object.²⁷ The Holy Spirit is a person just like the Son and the Father who is now at work in the world and in the church to carry on the ministry of Jesus.

That is the first point: the Holy Spirit is a person who is distinct from the Father and the Son.

Moreover, to state the obvious, the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit, like the Father and Son, is God.

Look at Matthew 12:28 for example. Here it would be easy to find passages attesting to v j g " f g k v { " q h " v j g " J q n { " U r k t k i s b y t h e S p i r i t o f G o d f " v j g " y q v j c v " K " e c u v " q w v " f g o q p u . " v j g p " v j g " m k p i f q o " q h " the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God who brings the Kingdom of God to Earth.

Acts 5:3-4 is a very interesting passage from the story about Ananias and Sapphira and God's judgment upon them in the early church. Here Peter is rebuking Ananias for his deception. Peter says,

D w v " R g v g t " u c k f . " õ C p c p k c u . " y j { " j c u " U c v c p " h and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to I q f 0 ö

P q v k e g " k p " x g t u g " 5 . ý R a s S a t a g f i l l e d y o u r h e a r t t o l i e t o t h e C e p c p k c u . " õ y J q n { " U r k t k v . ö " c p f " v j g p " k p " x g t u g " 6 " j g " u c { u . " õ equation there is made of the Holy Spirit with God. The Holy Spirit is deity.

Romans 8:9. We have already read this verse: õ [q w " c t g " p q v " k p " v j g " h n g u j U r k t k v " k h " k p " h c e v " v j g " U r k t k v " q h " I q f " f y g n n u " k as the Spirit of God.

H k p c n n { . " 3 " E q t k p v j k c p u " 8 < 3 3 0 " R c w n " u c { u . " ð [q w
justified " k p " v j g " p c o g " q h " v j g " N q t f " L g u w u " E j t k u v " c p

So the Holy Spirit is God and yet at the same time the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son. We have the same truths about the Holy Spirit that we saw with regard to the Father and the Son. He is a distinct person and he is divine.

START DISCUSSION

Student: With all of the scriptural evidence, I wonder what sort of response Unitarians and other skeptics have? Are any of those passages in dispute or maybe have textual variations that they could try to weasel out?

Dr. Craig: No, I don't think it would be a matter of textual variations as though there were some manuscripts that read differently. You are just going to have to put a totally different interpretation on these passages in order to avoid the force of what I've said here. I think probably Unitarianism is motivated not so much by the unclarity or ambiguity of the text as it is with the doctrine of the Trinity itself. For some people it just seems incomprehensible to say that one God could be three persons. So there is some way that you've got to get around this.

Student: Invariably, it costs Jesus' divinity.

Dr. Craig: Unless! Here is a way that it might not. It could mean you sacrifice the divinity of Jesus and regard Jesus as purely human, right? And God is simply God the Father.²⁸ But there are today what are called Oneness Pentecostals. I've actually met folks like this. When we were in France at French language school, one of the missionaries that was there learning French to go to Africa was a member of one of these Oneness Pentecostal denominations. What they believed is that God is one person and that that is Jesus. He affirmed the deity of Christ, but he thought that Jesus Christ is God ó the one person God ó incarnate. He denied the Trinity, but he affirms the deity of Christ. It is a sort of modern version of Modalism as we'll see. But, yeah, it was bizarre.

Student: As you know, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Holy Spirit is God's impersonal active force like electricity or water. One of the ways they sort of try to rebut c n n " v j g u g " r c u u c i g u " v j c v " u g g o " v q " t g h g t " v q " v j g is a person is they are using the language of personification and they give other examples like how Wisdom and other things that are impersonal are talked about in the Bible as if they are persons. They will try to use that to explain away a lot of the passages about the Holy Spirit where it seems to talk about a person. In John's Gospel they use the gender

neuter ó they will try to use that to say it shows it is an impersonal force and then any

Dr. Craig: Let me just address the second point first, and then go to the first point. In Greek, unlike English, you have gendered articles ó masculine, feminine, and neuter. *Hoö " k u " v j g 'heö ç k a w n k p g g Hoö ö k p k p g g " t p g g an " f g h k p k v g* just like German in this sense. In German you have *der, die,* and *das* as your definite articles. Anybody who has studied German knows how hard it is to remember all the time what is the gender of the noun that you've just learned and then how to inflect these articles as they switch cases like accusative, dative, genitive, with the indefinite articles, and the adjectives after it, and so on. It gets very complicated. There is no significance whatsoever to the gender of *v j g u g " c t v k e n g u 0 " H q t " g z c o r n g . " k p " l* *das Mädchen*. But that doesn't mean that people think little girls are neuter objects! It just is a peculiarity of the language. So you cannot infer anything about the personal character of someone from the gender of the definite article. Similarly in the Greek, in the Greek the word for Spirit is neuter ó *pneuma*. It is like our word *ö r p g w o c v k e ö " yTö pneuma means Spirit or wind. The fact that pneuma is* neuter says nothing about whether the Holy Spirit is a person. In fact, as we saw in John, he actually violates grammar by not using the relative pronoun that is neuter. He uses the relative pronoun that is masculine, which I think is very telling.

As to the first point, certainly you are quite right that Scripture will on various occasions use the literary device of personification. A great example is Proverbs 8 where God's Wisdom is personified as a lady ó Lady Wisdom. She cries out to people to *come to me and learn of me and to teach the young men how to walk in the ways of the Lord and not be foolish*. Lady Wisdom there speaks on behalf of God. It is clearly a literary personification. But I think you can see from the verses that I read today, none of these have anything to do with literary personification. None of them is like that.²⁹ Especially when you have the three listed together ó in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It is just clearly not a case of literary personification.

Student: The whole Matthew passage ó in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - one interesting thing James White does is he points out to Jehovah's Witnesses that if you really read that the way they have to read it, what you are really saying is you have to be baptized in the name of Jehovah God, Michael the archangel, and an impersonal force.

Dr. Craig: Which is absurd, isn't it? It would put other things on the same level with the Father that could not conceivably be put on that level.

Student: The Spirit is the only person of the Trinity that is sort of directly named as a Spirit. But of course God the Father is also spirit, and before the incarnation the Son was a spirit. Is there some way in which the Holy Spirit is spirit in a different way or is that just the only thing we have left to call it?

Dr. Craig: "P q v " ð k v # ö " U g g " j q *Is that all we have to call it? Call c n n " k p v q "* him! I am not sure why the Holy Spirit is given the name that he is. It could be that it emphasizes an aspect of God's being, namely, his activity and power. Right from the beginning of Genesis, you have the Spirit present in the creation narrative where darkness was on the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. It could be that this language of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit is meant to emphasize the activity of God in the world whereas Father and Son are more relational terms that would connote love, authority, submission, and love in turn. That is just an off-the-top-of-my-head speculation. I couldn't say why the Holy Spirit is given the name that he is.

Student: I think it is very interesting this concept of the Trinity for several reasons. One of them being it is one of the things that makes Christianity unique. No other major faith teaches this. But also I think it is a good reminder because not only is it kind of like a red flag whenever a religious doctrine of some kind denies it like Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons. That raises a red flag. But it is also a good reminder that however much we know about God, there will always be certain things about him that are beyond our understanding, and that is the way it should be. I think the doctrine of the Trinity is an essential doctrine not only because it is taught in Scripture but also because it reminds us that there will always be certain things about God that will be beyond our comprehension.

Dr. Craig: One of the traditional attributes of God is that God is incomprehensible. When they said that God is incomprehensible, that did not mean that God is unintelligible or illogical or incapable of being understood. What they meant was that you can't comprehend God in the sense of taking him all in. He is infinite, and so even though we gain genuine insight and knowledge about the nature of God (he is omnipotent, omniscient, morally perfect, eternal, necessary, and *a se*) yet we cannot comprehend him in the sense of putting our arms or our mind completely around God and understanding him exhaustively. I think you are right that the doctrine of the Trinity reminds us of that. For centuries, Jews worshiped God without any suspicion that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This was revealed only in time through his incarnation in the person of Jesus.

Student: Would you comment on John 17:21? Does that help us?³⁰

Dr. Craig: "Y g " u r q m g " c d q w v " v j k u " v j g " q v j g t " f c { 0 " L g u
all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so
v j c v " v j g " y q t n f " o c { " d g n k g x g " v j c v " v j q w " j c u v " u g
distinctness of the Father from the Son. I think that does show that. Jesus isn't talking to
himself. So I would say this would be a good verse for showing that the Father and the
Son are distinct persons. I am not persuaded that, in and of itself, it is a good proof-text for
the deity of Christ because the sense in which the disciples are in them (in God the
Father, in the Son) doesn't mean that we are God. This would need to be supplemented
with other verses to get the deity of Christ, I think. But at least you do get the distinctions
of the persons here.

Student: I like to think of the Trinity as the three persons reflect the three qualities of God
in relation to us. So the Father would be transcendent. The Son would be personal and
relational that way. And the Spirit would be immanence ó in terms of their function.

Dr. Craig: Well, I feel a little uncomfortable when you say the Son is personal because
y g " f q p ø v " y c p v " v q " g z e n w f g " v j c v " h t q o " v j g " H c v j g
God so loved the world that he gave his Son. So while I understand what you are saying
about the transcendence of the Father, it seems to me that something different than
personal needs to characterize the Son. I would have thought you were going to say
immanence for the Son because he enters into the world ó he enters into human history in
a way the Father has not.

Student: The Son calls us brothers and calls us friends.

Dr. Craig: Yes, he shares our human nature.

Student: I would say it is a modality, not modalism.

Dr. Craig: You are certainly right in drawing our attention to the fact that the Son is
unique among the persons of the Trinity in taking on a human nature and in sharing with
us our humanity. Neither the Father nor the Spirit does that. We will talk more about that
when we get to the doctrine of Christ and how we are to understand this notion that
Christ has a human nature as well as a divine nature.

Student: In the Old Testament, there are several mentions of the Spirit of God or the
Spirit of the Lord. Would you say that he is identical with the New Testament Holy
Spirit, or does the way that he works in the Old Testament differ because Christ had not
come yet?

Dr. Craig: I would be very cautious about making a sort of one-one identification
because the doctrine of the Trinity had not yet been revealed in the Old Testament. So
they could use terms with regard to God without that sort of precision. One example of
this would be in Isaiah 6 where Isaiah says, *I saw the Lord in the temple high and lifted*

up and his train filled the temple. He has this vision of God. In the New Testament, John says that was the Son ó that it was actually Christ. It was a vision of Christ that Isaiah u c y " k p " v j g " v g o r n g 0 " D w v " K u c k c j " y q w n f p ø v " m p q y " about the Spirit of the Lord doing this or that in the Old Testament, I think we ought to be x g t { " e c w v k q w u " c d q v k w "" tk gu c" fv kj pg i" "J dq cn e{ m "Ukr pk vt ck "v k0 vö "" ðKwj" we have to be cautious.

Student: There always seems to be this confusion like you talked about in the Romans 8 passage where he goes from the Spirit of God (*pneuma theos*) to the Spirit of Christ (*pneuma christos*) then just to Christ. There seems to be a blurry line there. We talk about c u " d g n k g x g t u " ð K " c u m " L g u w u " k p v q " o { " j g c t v ö " * n k where we are talking about Jesus is standing at the door and knocking and we open the door. But at the same time we know it really is not Jesus, it is really the Spirit that indwells us. How do we get there? How do we get to this idea?

Dr. Craig: I tried to get there by what I said ó v j g " J q n { " U r k t k v " f q g u p ø v " c authority.³¹ He doesnø v " i n q t k h { " j k o u g n h 0 " J g " f q g u p ø v " d t k p Christ. He comes in the place of Christ to glorify Christ and to bring to the disciples ó remember that is what Christ had taught them ó his role is completely subordinate, it seems to me, to Christ's. Therefore he becomes so closely identified with Christ that someone like Paul can say, *But if Christ is in you, you are alive because of righteousness*. But I think that technically if you are doing theology you would want to say it is the Holy Spirit. But they just become so closely identified with each other the terms can be used interchangeably. There is nothing the matter with that, I think, so long as we understand what is going on here.

Student: I think you mentioned this once before that thg " e q p e g r v " q h " r g t u q p j q q arise until the Council of Nicaea when they were debating and so are we adding semantic difficulties in witnessing by saying personhood instead of just mentioning Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father?

Dr. Craig: I did say that the modern concept of a person ó the psychological concept of a person ó seems to have been originated through these trinitarian debates where the church fathers were trying to express the distinctness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in these personal terms. But I would say that their insights are genuine and that we should appropriate them and not shun such terminology because you see in Scripture itself, not v j c v " v j g " U r k t k v " c p f " Kv "j fgk" fUppø v" "cct rgr" gø u g e n v g q f "" vö j r c g v t " u appealed to verses in which they interact as persons. The Son prays to the Father, or the H c v j g t " u c { u . " ð V j k u " k u " o -f h d g n g f ø f " U q g t k p c y g d ø y g " e q w n -v j" q w ö n " n t " g n Kc v k q p u j k r u " j Trinity. A first-v y g g p " v j g "

person perspective, a second-r g t u q p " r g t uvrjgqewök"xtgg0n"cCvpk"qõpKu j k r 0 " K ' e c r v w t g f " d { " v j g " e q p e g r v " q h " r g t u q p j q q f . " c p f " v terminology. I think it is important to embrace it.

END DISCUSSION

Next time we will begin to look at how the early church reflected on this biblical data in order to make sense of it.³²

Lecture 5: The Early Greek Apologists

We've examined the scriptural data concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and saw that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons and yet each is God. We now want to turn to a historical survey of how great Christian thinkers have sought to formulate this doctrine into a systematic package.

We are going to begin with the early Greek apologists of the second century. These were men like Justin Martyr, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, and so on. You might not have ever heard of these men but these were some of the earliest Christian authors writing in defense of the Christian faith during the second century. Since they wrote in Greek they are known collectively as the Greek apologists.

These thinkers sought to connect the divine Word of the prologue of John's Gospel ó the *Logos* ó whom John says was in the beginning with God and who was God with the *Logos* as it plays a role in the thought of the Jewish Hellenistic philosopher Philo of Alexandria. When we say that Philo was a Hellenistic Jew what one means is that he was heavily influenced in his thought by Greek thought. Hellenistic comes from the Greek word *hellene* y j k e j " o g c p u " ð I t g g m 0 ö " C u " c " J g n n g p k u v k e " categories of Greek philosophy. He lived in Alexandria in Egypt during the same time as the New Testament. He was born in 25 BC and died in AD 40.

The Christian apologists attempted to use the work of Philo in connection with the Gospel of John to articulate a sort of Logos Christology, or a doctrine of Christ, based on Philo's thinking. For Philo, the *Logos* is the reason or the mind of God who created the world and who imbued the world with its rational structure. Similarly, these Greek apologists also believed that the Father existing alone before the creation of the world had within himself (immanent within himself) his reason or Word which existed in him prior to creation. Then somehow this Word proceeded forth from God the Father rather like a spoken word proceeds forth from someone who utters that word and it becomes a distinct individual from the Father. It was through this individual ó through the *Logos* ó that the Father created the world, and the *Logos* then ultimately becomes incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth.

This procession of the *Logos* from the mind of the Father could be conceived to take place at the moment of creation when God created the world ó that was the moment at which the *Logos* proceeded from the Father's mind. Or else, alternatively, it could be thought to be an eternal procession that never had a beginning. The church fathers were often fond of using the analogy of the sun's rays proceeding from the sun. As long as the sun exists ó if the sun had existed eternally ó the light beams would always be proceeding from the sun. It is not as though they had a beginning to their procession. It was an eternal procession.

Let me read to you a statement by Athenagoras of this doctrine of the procession of the *Logos*, or the Son, from the Father.³³ Here is what Athenagoras writes:

The Son of God is the Word of the Father in Ideal Form and energizing power; for in his likeness and through him all things came into existence, which presupposes that the Father and the Son are one. Now since the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son by a powerful unity of Spirit, the Son of God is the mind and reason of the Father . . . He is the first begotten of the Father. The term is used not because he came into existence (for God, who is eternal mind, had in himself his word or reason from the beginning, since he was eternally rational) but because he came forth to serve as Ideal Form and Energizing Power for everything material. . . . The . . . Holy Spirit . . . we regard as an effluence of God which flows forth from him and returns like a ray of the sun.

This is from his treatise entitled *A Plea for the Christians*, chapter 10.

According to the *Logos* doctrine, there is only one God but this God is not an undifferentiated unity. Rather certain aspects of his mind become expressed as distinct individuals.

The *Logos* doctrine of the Greek apologists thus involves a fundamental reinterpretation of the fatherhood of God. God is seen not to be merely the Father of all mankind or the Father of Israel or even simply the Father of Jesus of Nazareth. Rather he is the Father from whom the *Logos* is begotten before all worlds. The *Logos* is begotten of the Father from eternity. So Christ is not merely the only begotten Son of God in virtue of his incarnation. You might say that the reason Jesus is the only begotten Son of God is because he was born of a virgin, as in the Gospel of Luke. But what these Christian apologists were saying is that the Son is begotten of the Father even in his pre-incarnate deity. He proceeds out of the Father from eternity.

This *Logos* doctrine of the Greek apologists was taken up into Western theology by the great church father and theologian Irenaeus in his treatise *Against Heresies*. Irenaeus identifies God's Word, or *Logos*, with the Son and he identifies God's Wisdom with the Holy Spirit. So God's Word is the Son; his Wisdom is the Holy Spirit. This then will be taken up into Western theology.

For better or worse, like it or not, this is one of the clearest examples of the influence of philosophical thinking upon theology because this doctrine (which then gets canonized at the Council of Nicaea later on) is formed out of a kind of synthesis between John's Gospel and the thought of Philo of Alexandria and the Middle Platonism that he represented.

START DISCUSSION

Student: Would we say God is formless and the Son is the form of God?

Dr. Craig: That is what Athenagoras said, didn't he? He said that the *Logos* is the Word
q h " v j g " H c v j g t " k p " õ K f g c n " H q t o " c p f " g p g t i k | k p i "
d g e c w u g " j g " u c k f " j g " e c o g " h q t v j " v q " u g t x g " c u " õ K
g x g t { v j k p i " o c v g t k c n 0 ö " K " v c Philo's doctrine of j c v " y j c v " j g
creation.³⁴ The idea there is that the pattern for the physical material world is in the mind
of God the Creator, specifically in the *Logos*. Philo compares the *Logos* to the mind of an
architect who is planning a city and who has the city planned all in his mind all laid out,
and then hires construction workers to actually build the city on the plan that he has in
mind. I suspect that that is what Athenagoras is thinking here in calling the Son the Ideal
Form and the creating power of the physical world. This is, as I say, a kind of marriage of
Greek philosophical thinking with John's Gospel.

Student: Logos o g c p u " õ Y q t f . ö " t k i j v A

Dr. Craig: [g u 0 " Q t " õ t g c u q p 0 ö " K v " e c p " o g c p " g k v j g t " q p

Student: So Jesus is the only begotten of the Father because he is the only Word God ever
spoke, or something like that? And the Spirit is God's Wisdom or God's thoughts? You
can't really use reason at the same time if they are different anyway.

Dr. Craig: Obviously these fellows are really struggling here to try to make sense of this.
Right? Because it is not easy to see the difference between reason and wisdom, is it? But
what this reflects is biblical metaphors or personifications. In John's Gospel you have the
Logos ó the Word ó which was in the beginning with God. Then the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, John says. That is where you get this figure of
the *Logos*. Wisdom comes from Proverbs 8 where Wisdom is personified as a woman
who goes out into the streets and calls young men to come to her and learn of her and
learn how to live properly. The author of Proverbs encourages his son ó commands his
son ó to learn of wisdom, to get wisdom. Above all things, get wisdom. Sit at the feet of
lady Wisdom and benefit. This is reflecting these biblical personifications of attributes of
God. It made a nice triad. You've got the Father, you've got his Word, and you've got his
Wisdom. That seemed to them to be a sort of pattern for the Trinity.

Student: Y j g p " { q w " u c { " õ u g g o g f . ö " { q w " c t g " p q v " u c { k p
exact way? Because even in the Bible it says *who knows God except for his mind?* and
that *we have God's mind because we have his Spirit*. That would make sense if we have
not necessarily a physical manifestation of God but like a spiritual one of his mind ó that

we have his Spirit. That is elsewhere, not just in the Gospel of John. What do modern scholars think? Do they agree with this doctrine of the Trinity?

Dr. Craig: I am glad you asked the question. As we'll see, I think that modern orthodox Christians would look back on this and see it as a first attempt at crafting a doctrine of the Trinity. Inadequate but groping, trying to figure out categories in which to express it. It is an attempt to do systematic theology. You've got this raw biblical data; now how do you make sense of it? Here is the earliest attempt to do it. I think in the end we'd say this is inadequate. It doesn't rise to the full character of what we want to say, but it is an attempt.

[The audio skips due to equipment failure.]

. . . the *Logos* would proceed from the Father at the moment of creation seems unacceptable. Even they themselves, I think, came to recognize that. With Athenagoras, for example, you have the procession eternal and not just beginning at the moment of creation as it was for some of them.

Student: It sounds like Athenagoras' statement is tying into Plato's Forms. There are the Forms ó they came from God.

Dr. Craig: That is Athenagoras' view, and that is Philo's view.³⁵ What you are mentioning is that in Plato's (who you will remember as one of the greatest of the ancient Greek philosophers) thought, this world is merely a shadow or a copy of a kind of ideal world in which perfect geometrical shapes exist ó like triangles and circles. In this physical world there are no perfect triangles or circles.

[At this point in the lecture, the power goes out in the lecture room.]

This is Plato's parable of the cave where he says people dwell in this shadowy world and need to be enlightened by getting in contact with the Forms. It is Platonic in the sense that Plato thought these Forms existed and the physical world is patterned on these Forms. But Plato didn't think these Forms were created by God. On the contrary, he thought that God looked to the Forms and then built the world on that model. They were independent of God. They were uncreated reality, and God simply created the physical world on the pattern of the Forms.

Well, for a Jewish monotheist like Philo, that was simply unacceptable. You couldn't have this independent, non-created reality existing along side of God. So he moved the Forms into the mind of God as God's ideas. Then it was on the basis of his own ideas that like an architect God planned and then built the physical world. You find this in the Greek apologists. Where they make an advance over Philo, I think, is that they think this *Logos* is not simply immanent in the mind of God (like the reason of an architect) but that

somehow he comes forth from him as a separate individual. The *Logos* emanates out of God and becomes, as it were, another person. This way they get a multiplicity of persons who are divine. It is not a full trinitarian doctrine such as we'll find later on, but they are struggling to express it.

Student: I think the God that they said looked at the Forms were the little gods. [inaudible]. There were Greek philosophers that said the little gods are not the real God ó there is one God.

Dr. Craig: OK. Fair enough. In Plato's *Timaeus*, he refers to this God who looks to the Ideal Forms and creates the world as a demiurge. This demiurge is, as you put it, a kind of lowercase-g god. But then where is God in Plato's system? The most you could get would be the Form of The Good, which is the highest Form. The Good. But the problem there is The Good is not a person. The Good is not a concrete reality. The Good is this abstract Form, and so it is not really God even though it is this sort of ultimate reality in Plato's view. The advance of people like Philo over Plato, I think, is that they say that this world of the Forms doesn't exist external to God. It exists in the mind of God, and the *Logos* who creates the world is not some sort of lower-class demiurge but the *Logos* is God himself.

Student: I wanted to go back to the word itself ó *Logos*. It seems to me to be a really thick word. There is not a really good English translation. Is that safe to say?

Dr. Craig: What I would say is this. It is a rich ó or as you put it, a thick ó word. It can be translated by different English words. It is not that we fail to have English words to express it, but rather it has multiple meanings. There are other terms like this that are used in Scripture. I've been studying one this week.³⁶ The term *dikaiosune* in the Greek. *Dikaiosune* can mean either righteousness or justice. So when Paul talks about the righteousness of God in Romans 3, this can also mean the justice of God. So you kind of think that is also true of *Logos*. The word *Logos* is multivalent. It has different meanings. The context will determine the meaning that it has in that context. So when we read these

Student: If you y g t g " v c n m k p i " v q " c " *Logos* means Word tou q p " c p f " { q v T g c u q p ö " K " h g g n " n k m g " v j g { " y q w n f " c n y c { u " u c { . " ö there that I don't know . . . we have to approach it from many different angles but that word to a real Greek means something that I don't think we . . . we have to really struggle with translating it.

Dr. Craig: *Logos* q h v g p " f q g u " l w u v " o g c p " ö y q t f 0 ö " U q . " t k i j just said. It is a multivalent term; it is a rich term, and the nuances might be lost on us through our English translations.

Student: I noticed when they described the *Logos* ó the Greek apologist ó they used y q t f u " n k m g " ö r q y g t ö " c p f " y j c v " p q v 0 " K v " u q w p f u " x *Logos* is a distinct person? How far were they in that department?

Dr. Craig: OK. I'm glad to have these questions, because you are pressing these same issues that I am wondering about. That is why I said that the *Logos* comes forth as a distinct ó K " w u g " v j g " y q t f " wõukgp" fvkj xgk" fywqct nf 0" öö" r Kg" t fukqf pp0) öv" K v clear yet that they had the modern concept of a person, as a sort of self-conscious individual. Maybe they did, but it is just not altogether clear. I think it becomes clear when we get to these later thinkers, as we'll see in our next section. But it does make you wonder to what extent did they think of the *Logos* as a distinct person from the Father and the Spirit as a distinct person. How could the mind of the Father be a different person than the Father? If the mind of the Father proceeded out, then what happened to the Father's mind? Did he lose his mind? *[laughter]* You don't want to say that! Again, as I said before, these are groping attempts to try to express what we've seen in the New Testament.

Student: I say that because the *Logos* is obviously Jesus because it says the Word became flesh, and Jesus is clearly a person ó somebody who has a will and speaks and all that. So it would seem would the *Logos* have to be a person?

Dr. Craig: Great question, and not always clear I would say.

Student: Can you shed some light on in what ways did these philosophers properly understand or misunderstand John's use of *Logos* in his Christology in the Gospel?

Dr. Craig: That is a really tough question because we don't know what really lies behind John's *Logos* doctrine in his opening chapter of his Gospel. I've done considerable study of this in connection with my work on God's aseity. It seems that John himself is reflecting the same tradition that you have embodied in Philo of Alexandria.³⁷ The idea of the *Logos* as a creative principle of God's mind wasn't original to Philo. He expresses it clearly, but it is not his own idea. It is characteristic of what is called Middle Platonism.

This Middle Platonism is what I talked about a moment ago when I said that these Middle Platonists took the Platonic realm of the Forms and put it in the mind of God as his ideas. It may well be that this is what John is reflecting ó this kind of Middle Platonism ó because so much of his vocabulary and emphases are to be found in Philo. The similarities ó the parallels ó are just stunning. They are really striking. But, at the end of the day, it is hard to know. I would say that most New Testament scholars would say that if John didn't know Philo's writings that at least the author of the prologue to John's Gospel comes out of the same Hellenizing Jewish tradition as Philo ó this Middle Platonic view of thinking of the *Logos* as sort of the mind of God and the agent through whom God creates the world. What is striking about John, which Philo could never have said, is that the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among us as a historical person. That is where John breaks the categories so to speak and where we need to recognize John's originality and contribution. He does think of the *Logos* as not some impersonal principle; he thinks it's Christ who has become incarnate for our benefit.

Student: It is interesting that the Platonic philosophy had an influence here. But where it is quite different ó wasn't Plato the one who said the flesh was evil and the spirit was good?

Dr. Craig: I think you are thinking of Gnosticism.

Student: But isn't that based on Platonic philosophy though?

Dr. Craig: It is similar. Gnosticism had the idea that the world of the material and physical is positively evil, and it is the spiritual realm that is good and pure. I think that would be inaccurate to represent Plato that way. What Plato did think is that this Ideal Realm is more real than this realm. He thought that this physical world is just a sort of shadowy existence that isn't really very substantial. The real world is this Ideal Realm. But I don't think that he would therefore characterize the physical world as being evil in a way that the Gnostics did.

Student: In talking about systematic theology, sometimes some Christians get really defensive or scared about talking about philosophy and bringing that into theology. But it seems to me John is using a Hellenistic style of philosophy in the way he wrote his Gospel. Would you say that you can't separate the philosophy of what even a person like John, who is Jewish, is using in his own writing of the Gospel itself?

Dr. Craig: You are exactly right. I said that the Greek apologists' use of Philo was a great example of the influence of philosophy upon theology. But what you rightly said is, *Wait a minute! This has already happened in the Gospel of John!* Already in John's prologue you have the author of the fourth Gospel adopting these Middle Platonic categories talking about the *Logos*. This is not from the Old Testament or Jewish Wisdom literature. John's doctrine originates in this sort of Middle Platonism. So I think you are quite right

in saying that already in the pages of the New Testament we see the interplay of philosophy and theology together in formulating doctrine.

END DISCUSSION

Next week we will turn to another primitive Christology.³⁸

Lecture 6: Modalism

Last time we were together we talked about the *Logos* Christology of the early Greek apologists. This doctrine was taken up into Western theology through the church father Irenaeus.

During the following century ó the third century ó a very different conception of the divine personages emerged in contrast to the *Logos* doctrine of the Greek apologists. People such as Noetus, Praxeus, and Sabellius enunciated a quite different view of God ó a unitarian view of God ó which goes under various names: Modalism, Monarchianism, or Sabellianism.

According to this view, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are not distinct persons. There is only one person who is God. Either it was the Father himself who became incarnate and suffered and died on the cross, the Son was at most the human side of the Father so to speak ó the human face of God the Father. Or, alternatively, the one God sequentially assumed three roles in his relationship to humanity: first, the Father; then the Son, and then the Holy Spirit.

One of the finest treatises written against this early Modalism is by the North African church father Tertullian who wrote a treatise called *Against Praxeas* (a refutation of the views of Praxeas). This is very much worth reading today. If you want to read a treatise by one of the early church fathers, I think this is the one that I would probably recommend. Tertullian's *Against Praxeas* is a brilliant piece of work. Extremely influential in his treatise, Tertullian brought greater precision to many of the ideas and also introduced much of the terminology that would later be adopted in the credal formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity. Indeed, the word *trinitas* q t " ð V t k p k v { ö " u v g c from Tertullian.

Tertullian was very anxious to preserve what was called the divine monarchy, which was a word used by the early Greek apologists for monotheism. To speak of the monarchy of God was to speak of the only true God ó the one God. Monotheism. While he wanted to insist upon the truth of the monarchy, Tertullian also wanted to emphasize what he called the divine economy ó a word which hg " d q t t q y g f " h t q o " K t g p c g w u 0 " V j g reference to God seems to have reference to the way in which the one God exists. There is one God but he doesn't exist just as one person as the Monarchians or the Modalists thought. He says the error of the O q p c t e j k c p u " y c u " ð v j k p m k p i " v j c v " one only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy U r k t k v " c t g " v j g " x g t { " u g n h u c o g " r g t u q p 0 ö " D w v " V g of substance he goes on to say,

the mystery of the economy . . . distributes the unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three persons ó the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: three, however,

not in condition but in degree; not in substance but in form; not in power but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

On Tertullian's view, there is one God ó one substance that God is ó but then this is distributed into this economy of three persons each of whom is God.³⁹

When Tertullian says that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one substance, both of the senses that the Greek philosopher Aristotle employed that term. On the one hand, according to Aristotle, a substance is just any individual thing. Any thing that exists is a substance. So this table is a substance. I am a substance. That chair is a substance. The plant is a substance. They are just individual things. He would say there is one thing which is God. There are not three gods. These three persons are one thing, namely, God. But the other sense in which Aristotle talk about substance in this sense was to talk about those properties that go to make a thing what it is. So, for example, a chair has a different essence or nature than a table does or than a horse does. They have different natures or different essences. That is why they are different things ó because they have different essential properties. Tertullian wants to affirm that the three persons also share the same essential divine nature. They are one thing ó God ó but they also share the same nature.

In responding to the proof-text that the Monarchians often used ó L q j p " 3 2 < 5 2 . " õ K " c p f H c v j g t " - V g g v w p g k ç p " r q k p v u " q w v " v j c v " v j g " h c e v " v and my Father ö " c p f " c " r n w t c n " x g t d " õ c t g ó namely, f w h e c v g " v j c persons. But he says the predicate here ó õ q p ó is an abstract (not a personal) noun. In Latin, it is the word *unum*, not *unus* ó p q v " c " r g t u q p c n " r t q p q l w p " d w v " c p c p f " o { " H c v ó *unum*. He comments, p g ö "

Unum, a neuter term, . . . does not imply singularity of number, but unity of essence, likeness, conjunction, affection on the Father's part, . . . and submission q p " v j g " " U q p) u 0 " 0 " 0 " 0 " Y j g p " j g " õ *unum* { ó u . " õ K " c p f He shows that there are two, whom He puts on an equality and unites in one.

U q " k p " v j g " r t q q h v g z v . " õ K " c p f " o { " H c v j g t " c t g " q p f k u v k p e v " r g t u q p u + " d w v " c " w p k - v d t ó namely, f w h e c v g 0 " õ K one in essence. They have the same nature.

When Tertullian says that the monarchy is distributed into the economy in three forms or aspects, he is not affirming Modalism. Rather, what he is saying is that the diversity of

the persons all share the same nature. They are one substance, one thing, having one nature.

It has become conventional wisdom today to say that when these church fathers like Tertullian said that God is three persons they did not mean this in the modern psychological sense. But I think when you read Tertullian himself what you'll find is that that claim is, shall we say, greatly exaggerated. It seems to me that Tertullian does think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three self-conscious persons.⁴⁰ For example, in a remarkable passage which is aimed at illustrating the doctrine of the Son as the immanent *Logos* in the Father's mind (remember, that is what the Greek apologists believed ó the *Logos* was originally immanent within the Father as the Father's reason or mind), Tertullian invites the reader, who he says is created in the image and likeness of God and so in that sense is like God, to think about the role of reason in the reader's own self-reflective thinking. He says,

Observe, then, that when you are silently conversing with yourself, this very process is carried on within you by your reason, which meets you with a word at every movement of your thought, at every impulse of your conception.

Tertullian is thinking here of your own reason as a kind of dialogue partner that you engage with in self-reflective thought. I think probably everyone of us has had that experience ó a sort of talking to himself where you are sort of engaged in this self-reflective conversation with yourself. Tertullian says that when we do that this reason within you meets you as a sort of self-conscious person. He says in a certain sense the word is a second person within you through which you generate thought.

Of course Tertullian realizes that no human being is literally two persons. But he says when you carry on this conversation with yourself, it is sort of like two persons within you. He says when it comes to God, this is much more fully transacted in God because God contains his immanent *Logos* even when he is not speaking ó when he is silent.

Again, when Tertullian wants to prove that the Father and the Son are personally distinct from each other, he quotes passages from the Scriptures in which the Father and the Son use first person and second person pronouns in dialogue with each other. For example, he quotes Psalm 2:⁴¹

40 10:14

41 Dr. Craig references the wrong passage here ó he meant to reference Psalm 2:7.

course, there is no such passage. He quotes numerous passages which, through the use of these personal pronouns, shows the I-thou relationship in which the Father and the Son stand to each other. An I-you relationship ó each one uses the appropriate first-person pronoun in talking to the other as a person.

He challenges the Modalist to explain how a being who is absolutely one and singular can use first-person pronouns clearly Tertullian thinks of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as capable of using personal pronouns by means of self-reference and addressing each other using second-person pronouns. ⁴¹ Some have argued that the distinction of persons in the Trinity is not a real distinction but only a distinction of names. ⁴²

I think it is very difficult to avoid the conclusion that Tertullian does believe that the persons of the Trinity are three distinct self-conscious individuals.⁴²

The only qualification that might be made to this picture lies in a vestige of the apologists' old *Logos* doctrine in Tertullian's theology. He not only accepts their view that there are relations of derivation between the persons of the Trinity ó that the Son, for example, is begotten from the Father ó but he also holds to the view that these relations are eternal. The Father, he says, exists eternally with the *Logos* immanent within his mind. But then at the moment of creation the *Logos* proceeds from the Father and becomes his only begotten Son through whom the world is created. So the *Logos* becomes the Son of God only when he first proceeds from the Father as a substantive being.

Tertullian is very fond of using analogies like the sunbeam emitted by the sun or the river that flows out of the spring to show the oneness of the Son with the Father from whom he proceeds. But he didn't think of this procession as eternal as later theologians were to do. He thinks of this as something that starts at the moment of creation. The Son, on his view, is God of God. Similarly, the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Father through the Son.

If I understand him right it would seem that Tertullian would consider the Son and the Spirit to be distinct persons only after their procession from the Father. Before that (as it were, before the moment of creation), they are merely immanent within the Father ó he is the fountainhead from which they flow. But they are not at that point personally distinct. Nevertheless, once the *Logos* proceeds from the Father and the Spirit from the Father and the Son, they clearly are then distinct persons from that point on.

Through the efforts of church fathers like Tertullian, Origen, Novatian, and many others, the church came to reject Modalism as a proper understanding of God and to affirm that there are three distinct persons within the Godhead who are called Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

During the following century the church would be confronted with a challenge from the opposite end of the spectrum ó Arianism ó which affirmed the personal distinction of the Father and the Son but denied the deity of the Son. As we'll see, whereas the Modalists affirmed that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all God but not distinct persons, Arius affirmed that the Father, Son and Spirit are distinct persons but they are not all God. Only the Father is God; the Son is, in fact, a creature who was made by God.

START DISCUSSION

Student: This is a topic that I spend a lot of time reflecting on. Sometimes the response that I get from people ó because I write about this topic ó is just kind of theological nitpicking because God is either three manifestations or three persons. It doesn't really matter. They believe Jesus is God anyway. How would you respond to that? Do you regard this as very important? Central? The Trinity versus Modalism?⁴³

Dr. Craig: It is important to understand that the Modalists at least did affirm the deity of E j t k u v . " w p n k m g " C t k w u 0 " K v " f q g u " u g g o " v q " o g " v j c view the Son is just a creature which would make worship of him idolatrous. With regard to Modalism, I think there it simply can't do justice to the teaching of Scripture. They would have to say that it is the Father who became incarnate and suffered and died on the cross. That is clearly not right because Jesus during his lifetime is able to pray to and depend on the Father. He is guided by the Holy Spirit. Modalism, it seems to me, just can't do justice to the biblical text which shows that these persons are three distinct members of the Godhead and that we shouldn't confuse them with each other by thinking that the Father died on the cross. Keeping the persons of the Trinity straight, I think, will have practical importance for our devotional life, our Christian life. For example, Jesus taught us to pray to the Father in the name of the Son and then through the power of the Holy Spirit. By keeping these persons of the Trinity straight it can help us to order our devotional lives in a proper way; for example, in prayer.

Student: How did the Modalists of the day exegete passages where Jesus is praying to the Father or when it is very clear (at least to me) they are distinct persons?

Dr. Craig: It seems that the best they could do would be to say in the incarnation Christ had a human side or a human nature or aspect and that it is the human nature or aspect that is praying to the divine nature or aspect. He really is talking to himself in these

prayers, but they would try to make sense of it by saying it is the human side talking to the divine side.

Student: That doesn't make any sense to me unless they are two different persons.

Dr. Craig: I'm just trying to answer how they would say it. But I think you are quite right. It is a completely inadequate answer to deal with the prayer life of Jesus, for

Student: I had a question about these heresies we are going over. I understand Modalism to be a different heresy from Monarchianism. Is that correct or not?

Dr. Craig: Not in my understanding. My understanding is that these are both unitarian views of God. They might have different explanations of how it is that God appears to be three. Remember I said they might say that Jesus is the sort of human nature of God, or they might say, no, this is God playing three sequential roles. You could have different accounts of how the appearance of threeness arises, but they would be one in their fundamental conviction that God is one person and that the appearance of threeness is just that ó it is merely an appearance, it is not real.

Student: When I think of Monarchianism I was thinking more along the lines that whoever came up with the heresy saw the Trinity as of all the same substance however there is a subordination in the Trinity ó a subordination of the Son to the Father and the Spirit to both of them.

Dr. Craig: That is not my understanding of Monarchianism. In one sense that sounds almost Orthodox because in the Orthodox view you have this notion of the Son being begotten from the Father ó the Father is the sort of fountainhead from which the Son proceeds. He exists because of the Father. Then the Spirit from the Father and the Son. There is that kind of dependence. You are right. You don't want to say it is subordination in the sense of inferiority because they affirm that they all have the same nature. But there is a kind of dependence. Whether or not that is an acceptable subordination, I think, is a matter of real debate.⁴⁴

Student: I would just say that in the economy of redemption there is subordination but that is different than what we are talking about.

Dr. Craig: I agree. What you are talking about there is the difference between what is sometimes called the ontological Trinity and the economic Trinity. The ontological Trinity would be the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as they are in themselves ó God in himself. There, there is no subordination in the sense of inferiority or subordination of one person to another. But in the economic Trinity this is how the Trinity engages

humanity for the plan of salvation. There, there is subordination because the Son submits to and does the Father's will. The Holy Spirit does not glory himself; he glorifies the Son and speaks whatever has been told to him to be said. There, in the economic Trinity, you have a kind of subordination but it is not ontological. It would be the sort of subordination that you would have in a marriage relationship where the wife and the husband are equal before God but for the economy of the family the wife submits to the loving leadership of her husband. That doesn't imply her inferiority in any way. It is a purely economic sort of submission.

Student: They would say that there is no distinction of persons, right? It is all one substance but there is no distinction of persons. How would that translate into the fact that all humans bear God's image? Even though we all share the same nature but we are all not the same person. Obviously there is a multiplicity of human persons around, but we all share one thing in common ó that is our humanity. We all have the same *imago Deo*, but there is a diversity of persons nevertheless. How would they go about explaining how the *imago Deo* expressed?

Dr. Craig: The idea would be that human beings have the same nature. Aristotle said the nature of humanity is to be a rational animal. We have a biological body but a rational soul. When we have three instances of that nature you have three different individuals. We have Adam, John, and George ó those each have the same fundamental human nature but each one exemplifies that nature or instantiates that nature as an individual man. We will see that that actually becomes very important in these trinitarian debates over Arianism. I don't think that is a problem for the unitarian. The unitarian would say that God is one person and each one of us is one person. In that sense we are like God. We are made in his likeness and image. We are each one person. What the trinitarian would say is that we do not share God's nature insofar as the fact each of us is one person and not three persons.

Student: I was also curious about how the Modalist deals with Jesus referring to the Holy Spirit when he says, *I'm leaving but I'll send a Comforter in my place*. How do they deal with that when there is supposed to be another.

Dr. Craig: Here could be what they would say: Jesus says, *Alright, the Holy Spirit is going to come after I leave*. He exists the room, changes clothes, and comes back in as the Holy Spirit. It is really just role playing. It is masquerade really. Where it gets difficult is where you have the three persons at the same time like at the baptism of Jesus where the Father u c { u . " õ V j k u " k u " o { " d g n q x g f " U q p " y k v j " y j Spirit descends upon the Son in the form of a dove. That is where it is difficult for the Modalist to say these are three sequential roles played by the one person because they are all there interacting with each other at the same time.

END DISCUSSION

We will now draw it to a close. Next week we will look at the challenge that the church faced in Arianism and how this led to the Council of Nicaea and the codification of the doctrine of the Trinity.⁴⁵

Lecture 7: Arianism

Logos Christology of the early Greek apologists and then at Modalism. Now we come to the subject of Arianism.

In the year 319 a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, Egypt named Arius began to propagate his doctrine that the Son is not of the same substance as the Father. You will remember that according to Tertullian and other church fathers who opposed those who denied the full deity of Christ that Christ is of the same substance or essence as the Father and therefore fully divine. Arius denied that Christ is the same substance as the Father. Rather, he said that Christ had been created by the Father before the beginning of the world. This episode marked now the great trinitarian controversy that would occupy the church until the end of the century and give us the Nicene Creed and the Constantinopolitan Creeds as a result.

You will remember that Tertullian thought that the *Logos* was begotten by God the Father at the beginning of creation. By contrast, Alexandrian theologians like Origen held that the begetting of the Son (or the *Logos*) from the Father did not have a beginning. Rather it was an eternal begetting that had always taken place. Arius thought that the reason that the orthodox theologians were so opposed to his view that the Son had a beginning was because he affirmed that the Son did not exist eternally. In his letter to Eusebius of P k e q o g f k c " j g " c h h k t o g f . " ð V j g " U q p " j c u " c " d g i k p p thought this is why the orthodox theologians were so opposed to him, because he affirmed t j c v " v j g " U q p " j c f " c " d g i k p p k p i 0 " D w v " v j c v " y c that the *Logos* was begotten at a certain point in time prior to the creation of the world. Y j c v " v j g " v j g q n q i k c p u " q d l g e v g f " v q " c d q w v " C t k w u beginning; what they objected to was that this beginning was not a begetting but it was in fact a creation and that the Son was therefore a creature. Arius denied that the *Logos* even pre-existed immanently within the Father prior to the creation of the w o t n f 0 " V j g t g " y c u p even an immanent *Logos* or Word or Reason within God prior to the creation of the world. So the beginning of the *Logos* was not from the substance of the Father; the Father created the *Logos* out of nothing. He created the Son and therefore the Son was a creature. This is what the orthodox theologians really found offensive.

Athanasius, who became the bishop of Alexandria and was a champion of Nicene

q t v j q f q z { . " r t q v g u v g f " v j c v " q p " C t k w u ø " x k g y " I q f even j k u " Y q t f " c p f " j k u " y k u f q o 0 " J g " f k f p ø v " j c x g " v j is blasphemous. This is from his *Orations Against the Arians* [1.3.9] ó j g " u c { u " q p " C t k w u x k g y " v j g " U q p " k u " ð c " e t g c v w t g " c p f " c " y q t m . " p q v " simply blasphemy to affirm that the Son is a work and a creature, not belonging to the essence of the Father.

They condemned anybody who says that the Son is a creature or that the Son is originated or created or made or not truly an offspring ó that is someone who is begotten, not made. They condemned anyone who said that at one time the Son did not exist. Later in that same year, 325, the emperor Constantine convened an ecumenical council at Nicaea. That is to say, this was not a local council. This was a universal council that drew bishops from all across the Roman Empire to convene at Nicaea and pronounce on this doctrine of Arius.

The Council of Nicaea then propagated the creedal formulation of trinitarian belief in the Nicene Creed. It is worth mentioning that the Arians who were represented at the Council were very few. There were probably only six Arian bishops present at the Council. There were thirty bishops who were squarely in Athanasius's orthodox camp. The vast majority belonged to this sort of confused center camp which had around 200 debate. Then there were the Semi-Arians of whom we will speak later ó probably around seventy to ninety of the bishops were in this sort of Semi-Arian camp. What they wanted the Father. A sort of quasi-divine as it were.

The Athanasian camp carried the day and persuaded the vast majority of the bishops to condemn Arianism and to propagate the statement of the Trinity that we confess today.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, Who because of us men and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

So we believe in one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit ó all three members of the Trinity.

Then there are affixed to the Creed these condemnations of Arian propositions:

D w v " h q t " v j q u g " y j q " u c { " ÷ v j g t g " y c u " y j g p "
 j g " y c u " p q v ø " c p f " v j c v " ÷ j g " e c o g " k p v q " g z k
 ÷ v j g " U q p " q h " I q f " p d s t a s i s [w e w i l l s a y s o m e t h i n g
 about that later] or substance, or is created, or is subject to alteration or
 e j c p ó t h e s e t h e C a t h o l i c C h u r c h a n a t h e m a t i z e s .

These Arian propositions are condemned in this suffix to the creed.

Several features of this statement deserve comment.⁴⁷

1. Notice that the Son, and I think by implication the Holy Spirit, is declared to be of the
 same substance as the Father. The Greek word for this is *homoousios*. *Homo*, the word
 h q t " ð a u s i a s h g t = ç ö " " v j g " y q t f " t h e F a t h e r a n d t h e S o n (a n d I t h i n k
 by implication the Holy Spirit) are declared to be of the same substance. That is to say
 they are of the same essence. They have the same divine nature. This is to say that the
 Son and the Father both exemplify the divine nature. Therefore the Son cannot be a
 creature as Arius claimed. Arius wanted to say that the Son has a different nature ó
 heteroousios ó from the Father. *Hetero* o g c p k p i " ð f k h h g t g p v " v j c p . ö " c u
 ð j g v g t q u g z w c n e t e r o u s i a s a d i f f e r e n t s u b s t a n c e w h e r e a s
 affirmed the same substance, the same essence.

I mentioned the Semi-Arians who were present at the Council. They were championing
 the word *homoiousios* to describe the relation of the Father and the Son meaning that they
 were similar in essence. They feared that by saying they were the same substance this
 would imply Modalism ó v j c v " v j g t g " y c u p ø v " c " f k x g t u k v { " q h "
 wanted to say he is not of a different essence or substance but he is of a similar substance.
 There was a world of difference that lay in this single iota that distinguished *homoousios*
 from *homoiousios*. On *homoousios*, the Son is fully divine. He is God. On *homoiousios*
 j g " k u p ø v " f k x k p g 0 " J g " f q g u p ø s i m i l a r t o t h e F a t h e r a n d
 therefore just as much as the Arians they affirmed that the Son is in fact a creature and a
 work, which was blasphemy.

2. Notice that the Son is declared to be begotten not made. The creed says that he is God
 from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made. This is the
 vestige of the old *Logos* Christology of the Greek apologists which held that the *Logos* is
 begotten in his divine nature from the Father, but not created.

Notice that this is said with respect n q v " v q " E j t k u v ø u " j w o c p " p c v w t g " d
 divine nature. In his very divinity he is begotten from the Father. Therefore just as
 products of natural generations which are begotten share the same nature as their parents
 ó cats beget cats, dogs beget dogs, people beget people ó so the Son and the Father share

the same divine nature because the Son is begotten from the Father, not created by the Father.

The Nicene statement is based upon a draft of a creed that was proposed by Eusebius of Caesarea. This Eusebius is from the coastal town in Israel called Caesarea. You can still visit the ruins of this town today on a trip to Israel and see the ruins of this great port city of Caesarea Maritima there on the coast of the Mediterranean. This is where Eusebius of Caesarea flourished and worked. In his initial draft of the Creed he used the word *Logos* before all ages. That is, as I say, the legacy of this old *Logos* Christology of the Greek apologists.

Notice similarly in the condemnations which are affixed to the end of the Nicene Creed, they reject the view that this begetting had a beginning.⁴⁸ The begetting is eternal. They say that they condemn those who say there was when he was not or before being born he was not. They anathematize anyone who says that this begetting of the Son or the *Logos* in his divine nature is not eternal but had a beginning.

Athanasius, in his treatise *Four Discourses Against the Arians*, uses a very subtle and interesting word play to differentiate between the Father and the Son in this regard. It is really a pun. He says that the Father and the Son are both *agenetos* (*agenetos* means uncreated or unoriginated or it never came into being). This is something that never came into being. He says that the Father and the Son are both *agenetos*. By contrast he says that only the Father is *agenetos* and the Son is *gennetos*. The Son is *gennetos* or begotten of the Father. Just as there was a world of difference with that single iota between *homoiousios* and *homoousios*, so there is a world of difference between *agenetos* and *gennetos*. The Son are both *agenetos* in the sense of uncreated, never had a time when they came into being, but only the Father is unbegotten in the sense of *agenetos*. The Son is *gennetos* or begotten of the Father.

START DISCUSSION

Student: The examples you gave of a child being begotten from their parents implies a precedence. In other words, the parents were there and then the child was there.

What is actually meant by "the Son is begotten of the Father" is what you are saying that God was there and Christ came from God being a precedence, and how do

{ q w " v k g " v j c v " v q " L q j p " 3 " y j k e j " k u " ð K p " v j g " d g i k
I q f " c p f " v j g " Y q t f " y c u " I q f ö A

Dr. Craig: Good question. Yes, there is a precedence here, but it is not chronological. It is not a temporal precedence. The Son derives from the Father. It is a precedence of f g t k x c v k q p 0 " V j g " H c v j g t " f q g u p ø v " f g t k x g " h t q o " c the Son on this view does derive from the Father. The Father precedes the Son, not in a temporal or chronological sense, but in the sense that he is underivative whereas the Son k u " f g t k x c v k x g 0 " V j g " g z c o r n g u " v j c v " v j g " h c v j g t u things like the relationship between the sun and its rays. The sun can never exist without k v u " t c { u 0 " K v " k u " c n y c { u " g o c p c v k p i " k v u " u w p n k i j rays. The rays derive from the sun. So if the sun has existed from eternity, the sun rays ó the sunbeams ó will also exist from eternity. So even though they are derivative they have no beginning chronologically.

Student: V j c v " k u " y j c v " K ø o " u v t w i i n k p i " y k v j " c " n k v v n something by its very definition means that there is a time aspect to it?

Dr. Craig: What about the illustration of the sun and its rays? To me that seems like a good illustration.

Student: What actually produces the sun rays is obviously the chemical reactions that is happening in the sun. Without that chemical reaction happening there is no subsequent ray that happens. So there is a sequence even in that example that you give.⁴⁹

Dr. Craig: You are importing modern science into the example, which of course they f k f p ø v " j c x g 0 " V j g { " f k f p ø v " m p q y ö r t c The idea " p w e n g c t " there, though, I think on a popular level seems to be pretty clear that you could have something that is derivative from something else without any sort of chronological precedence. Why, if there is a kind of ontological dependence, does that need to have a e j t q p q n q i k e c n " d g i k p p k p i A " K " f q p ø v " u g g " y j { " k v "

Student: Who was it that used the terminologies of *agenetos*?

Dr. Craig: That was Athanasius. Actually it is fairly universal among the orthodox theologians this distinction between *agenetos* meaning uncreated and *agennetos* meaning unbegotten. But you can find it especially in Athanasius.

Student: V j g " U q p " * E j t k u v + " g z k u v g f " y k v j " I q f " d w v " h q became a tangible entity.

Dr. Craig: I think that is the idea. The beginning here is not just the beginning of humanity. It is the beginning of the whole world. John thinks that the whole cosmos came

into being through the *Logos*. The world was made through the *Logos*. In the beginning was just God and his Word. Then the world was created through the *Logos*. But as a result of the speculations of these early Greek apologists they thought of the *Logos* as somehow derivative from God the Father.

Student: I agree, and for functional purposes (functional for the purpose of physical man and their accountability).

Dr. Craig: I understand the distinction. I am not committing myself to this view. I am ontological derivation of the Son from the Father. Maybe we shouldn't introduce that into the Godhead. Maybe they are just co-eternal, co-equal, but there is a sort of functional submission of the Son to the Father for the sake of the plan of salvation. There were some church fathers who held to a view like that. Bu v " v j c v " y c u p ø v " v j g " o c l q t k v majority view, because of this influence of these Greek apologists, was that there is this kind of derivation within the Godhead ó the Son deriving from the Father. Further, we j c x g p ø v " v c n m g f " c d t h e H o l y S p i r i t b e i n g d e r i v a t i v e a s w e l l a s d e r i v i n g . " d w v " from the Father and the Son.

Student: The way I see this is that Jesus always imitates God the Father. That makes sense to me to where Jesus always says, *Hc v j g t a u ' y k n ' p q v ' b k p g 0* But when it says he is imitating it sounds like God the Father would be the greater person of the three. That f q g u p ø v " o c m g " u g p u g " v q " o g 0

Dr. Craig: That is a tension within orthodoxy that I imagine some of the church fathers would want to affirm ó that the Father is greater than the Son in the sense that the Father is not only *agenetos* (uncreated) but he is also unbegotten, whereas the Son has a kind of derivative being. The Father is the fount of the Son and is therefore the greatest of all. Someone asked the other day about the verse where Jesus says, *The Father is greater than I* " K " v j k p m " h q t " v j g " q t v j q f q z " r c t v { " c v " P k e c g o statement like that because they would see the Son as begotten from the Father. But this k u p ø v " c " e t g c v k q t p h o " t o k e e p f i r m l y i n m i n d . T h e y " a r e b o t h G o d i n c the same way, as I say, that puppies are dogs just as much as their parents, or kittens are feline just as much as the cats who give birth to them. They share the same nature, but the Son is begotten from the Father.

END DISCUSSION

N g v ø u " i q " q p " v q " v j g " v j k t f " r q k p v " v j c v " K " y c p v g f 5 0 " P q v k e g " v j g " e q p f g o p c v k q p " c v " v j g " g p f 0 " ð Q h " v h y p o s t a s i s q t " u w d u v c p e g " h t q o " v j g e d H e a t c o n f u s i o n a n d " V j k u " e n c v

controversy within the early church.⁵⁰ *Hypostasis* is a Greek word which is etymologically similar to, and therefore synonymous with, the Latin word *substantia* or needle (it goes under the skin). Or hypothermia ó your temperature goes down. *Hypo* under the water. In Latin *sub* means the same thing as *hypo* in Greek. *Stasis* and *stantia* *hypostasis* is something that stands under something. A substance (*substantia*) is something that stands under something in the sense that these are property bearers. They exist in themselves. Properties exist in these substances. They are possessed by these substances. A *hypostasis* and a substance would seem to be the same meaning. These two words just seem to be the Greek and the Latin of the same thing.

Although the Nicene Creed is drafted in Greek, the meaning of its terms is Latin. It is in Greek but they take *hypostasis* to mean the same thing as *substantia*. Therefore they condemn those who say that there is a plurality of *hypostases* in God. There is only one substance in God, right? God is one substance. So they condemn anyone who says that there is more than one *hypostasis* or *ousias* ó substance ó in God.

The problem is for native Greek-speaking theologians from the eastern part of the Roman Empire. For them, a *hypostasis* just meant a concrete individual, a bearer of properties. So, for example, Gregory of Nyssa, one of the great Greek church fathers, explains that a *hypostasis* is an individual. This individual is in contrast to *ousia* in Greek which is the essence of something. So they would say that Paul and Jim and Cindy all have the same *ousia* ó they all have the same essence ó but they are different *hypostases* ó different individuals exemplifying that essence or having that nature. Therefore to say that there are not distinct *hypostases* in God is to endorse Modalism. It is to say the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all the same individual. That was obviously wrong. Clearly there are distinct *hypostases* in the Trinity because they have different properties. For example, only the Father has the property of being unbegotten, whereas the Son has the property of being begotten. So there are different individuals in the Trinity. They have different properties. To these eastern theologians the statement of the Nicene Creed that condemns those who say that the Son is a different *hypostasis* from the Father sounded like Modalism ó that they were all the same person.

50 25:12

This led to enormous confusion and debate. Finally after decades of debate the confusion was finally cleared up at the Council of Alexandria in 362. At that council they affirmed the doctrine of *homoousios* ó there is one substance, one essence, in God ó but they allowed that there are three different divine *hypostases*. They recognized the Greek understanding of what a *hypostasis* is.⁵¹ It is not a synonym to substance. Rather, a *hypostasis* is a concrete individual who bears or exemplifies a nature.

Eventually the church came to recognize that in God there is one substance with three *hypostases* ó three individuals.

The Nicene Creed that we affirm today is not the same one as the original that condemned those who say there are more than one *hypostasis*. The one that we affirm and that was promulgated later affirms that there are a plurality of *hypostases*.

START DISCUSSION

Student: How do you reconcile the Old Testament with the plurality of the creation in the words that are in Hebrew where God the Father and the Son were all there in the creation? There are words that are used ó the plural form in Hebrew ó in the Old Testament.

Dr. Craig: Even the Spirit is mentioned in Genesis chapter 1, I think verse 2, where it says the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. They would say that the Son is implicitly involved in the work of creation even if in the old covenant he is not

g z r n k e k v n { " o g p v k q p g f 0 " D g e c w u g . " c h v g t " c n n . " v j v j c v " I q f ø u " h w n n " t g x g n c v k q p " v q q m " v k o g " w p v k n " E statements ad q w v " I q f " v j c v " f q p ø v " f k h h g t g p v k c v g " e n g c t

END DISCUSSION

With that we come to the end of our time. What we will want to do next time is examine more closely exactly what these *hypostases* were that were affirmed to be in the Godhead. There is one God, one substance, and then there are these three *hypostases*. What were those? That is what we will look at next time.⁵²

51 30:12

52 Total Running Time: 33:00 (Copyright © 2016 William Lane Craig)

Lecture 8: The Three Persons of the Trinity

Last time we were together we looked in some detail at the Nicene Creed. I think as we begin today it would be useful to read it through one more time to refresh our memories before we proceed.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, Who because of us men and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

God is from a different hypostasis or substance, or is created, or is subject to these things, or is the Catholic Church mathematizes

Last week we had a blizzard of terminology in discussing this creedal statement, and lest you go away confused let me pare it down to just a couple of essential terms that I think you should add to your theological vocabulary on the basis of the Creed. The first would be the word *homoousias*. That comes from the Greek words *homo* * o g c p k p i " ð v j g " u c o c u " k p " ð j q o q i g p k | g f ö " q t " ð j q o q u o u s i a which ö + . " c p f " v j o g c p u " ð u w d u v c p e g ö " q t " ð g u u g p e g 0 ö " V j g " E t g g f " f g implication the Holy Spirit) are the same substance. They are the same essence. That is to say the Son is fully divine. He's not some sort of subordinate deity or a created thing however exalted. He is God. The Father and the Son have the same substance or essence.

The other word that would be helpful for you to know ó *hypostasis*. A *hypostasis* is an individual. It means something that has properties ó a property bearer. As I pointed out in the original Nicene Creed the word *hypostasis* is taken to be synonymous with substance ó *ousia* or essence. That's why the Creed has this anathema appended to it condemning anyone who says that the Son is of a different *hypostasis* or substance. This is the term that created so much controversy in the Eastern church because to the Greek-speaking Eastern theologians *hypostasis* y c u p) v " u { p q p { o q w u " y k v j " u w d u v c p e same meaning. *Hypostasis*, as I say, was an individual. So, for example, Paul and Cash and Jim are different individuals but they all share the same nature ó humanity. They are

individual instances or examples of the same substance. Their common substance is humanity, and they are individually different men. That's why over the course of that fourth century the church revised the Creed so that *hypostasis* and substance were no longer considered synonyms, and now the orthodox doctrine became that there are indeed three *hypostases* ó three individuals ó in one substance.⁵³ That became the Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. There's one substance ó God. One divine essence. Then there are three individuals ó three *hypostases* ó that exemplify that divine essence: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

START DISCUSSION

Student: Last Sunday you had said towards the end of class that the Father is in a sense greater than the Son or something to that effect. Is that correct? Is that what you're saying?

Dr. Craig: I think you're referring to this notion that the Son is begotten from the Father. I think I indicated (if my memory serves me right) that that could have been a way in which one might interpret the verse where Jesus says, *The Father is greater than I*. Because for these theologians the Father is the sort of fountainhead of the Trinity. He is the only one that is underived in his being. The Son is begotten from the Father. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Spirit and the Son have a kind of derivative being that the Father doesn't share. He is the only one that is unbegotten and underived. One could interpret that as an explanation of why Jesus said, *The Father is greater than I*, because he proceeds from the Father.

Student: I want to challenge that on one point. I am defining greatness in terms of value. K p " v j c v " u g p u g " K " f q p ø v " d g n k g x g " v j g " H c v j g t " j c u Spirit. I believe they all have equal value. I looked into this, and what I saw was what I think might be helpful. Basically, when the Father begot the Son he didn't divide himself but he distributed himself. He gave a full infinite distribution of himself to Christ. Then of course to the Spirit which proceeds from both the Father and the Son. Again, you get that full distribution into the Holy Spirit also. Here's something that I would consider also to be worth bringing up. If you look at the narrative of creation, you see that the woman is begotten from the man in the sense that part of the man is taken from the man and then God fabricates that into a woman. But as far as value is concerned, even though the man proceeds the woman he's not of more value. Absolutely not. There is complete equality there. I believe that's a good analogy to say the Father and the Son have that same sort of value even though there might be in terms of authority or something like that ó you do have the Father sending the Son and the Son and the Father sending the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Craig: K " y c u p) v " o g c p k p i " v q " o c m g " c " x c n w g " l w f i o g more in a kind of metaphysical sense that one is derivative and the other one is underived. But you're quite right that it would be a mistake to say that the Father has, say, moral perfection and the Son does not. So, yes, I think that is a good reminder.

Student: K " y q w n f " g z r n c k p " v j c v " x g t u g " d { " u c { k p i " k p " *Pleroma*, I think, is the theory of the fullness and how much Christ gave up ó theologians have debated that. How much did he give up for the incarnation? We know he gave up s w k v g " c " n q v 0 " J g " y c u " p q v " q o p k u e k g p v " h q t " q p g " v H c v j g t " k u " i t g c v g t " v j n essence that he is Greater than he is v " f q g u p) v "

Dr. Craig: I was saying this is one way a person could interpret that verse. But you are offering another way. Actually what you are talking about there is Kenotic Christology based upon Philippians 2 where Christ is said to have emptied himself and taken on human form. When we get to the doctrine of Christ we will have a section on this issue of *kenosis* and whether or not the incarnation did involve this sort of divesting of certain divine attributes in becoming incarnate, like omniscience for example. So hold onto that. That will be later.⁵⁴

Student: *Homoousias* is the same. Can you equate that to Spirit or life? Or is there some distinction?

Dr. Craig: P q . " K " f q p) v " v j k p m " u q " d g e c w a u g e " g y q " g c " p y f q " t v j " a v could be applied to a horse or mare and a colt. A mare and a colt are the same substance because the one is begotten from the other. The term, though it's theologically useful, in and of itself doesn't carry these kinds of implications. It could be used of physical things.

Student: I'm thinking of where it says if God withdrew his Spirit all flesh would die.

Dr. Craig: In the case of God, immateriality and incorporeality does belong to the divine substance or essence. That's certainly true. Remember when we talked about the attributes of God I believe one of the attributes of God we discussed was immateriality or incorporeality. God is not a physical object. In that respect I think orthodox Christianity differs from Mormonism, for example, which conceives of God or gods as being physical humanoid objects. So that's true. But the term itself doesn't mean immaterial or spiritual.

END DISCUSSION

Now the question is: if there are three *hypostases* all exemplifying the divine nature, what are these? The opinion unanimously on the part of orthodox theologians is that these are persons. Three persons. It's very frequently said today (as I mentioned in an earlier class) that we must not read this affirmation that they are persons anachronistically by

importing into it the modern psychological concept of a person. While this caution may be in order, still I think that it needs to be seriously qualified. What is true is that the word *hypostasis* does not mean person. They're not synonymous words. *Hypostasis* is an individual or a property bearer. Nevertheless when you talk about a rational *hypostasis* then this does come very close indeed to the modern concept of a person. For Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, the essence or nature of man is captured by the phrase "animal body joined with a rational soul, and that differentiates us from mere animals. Animals have souls according to Aristotle, but they lack rationality. They have a sort of lower-order souls that don't have rationality. So it's this property of rationality that serves to distinguish human beings from other animals. So a rational *hypostasis* is what you can only refer to as a person. It is a person.

This was strongly emphasized by the Cappadocian church fathers or some of the most important of the post-Nicene church fathers. Cappadocia is in central Turkey today. If you ever get a chance to visit Cappadocia by all means go. It is unworldly this ancient region in central Turkey. Among the Cappadocian fathers were people like Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus. There were two Gregory's. And then there was Basil of Caesarea. These Cappadocian fathers were very emphatic about the personal nature of these three *hypostases* in the Godhead.⁵⁵ For example, Gregory of Nyssa illustrates the idea of three *hypostases* having one nature by pointing out Peter, James, and John. He says these are three *hypostases* or Peter, James, and John or all exemplifying the same human nature. I don't know how else you could take that than by saying that these are three persons who share the same human nature. Moreover they ascribe to the three divine *hypostases* properties which are constitutive of a personhood such as mutual knowledge of one another, mutual love, and mutual will. They emphasize that these three persons are always in concord, always in harmony, with each other, and so they cannot be separated or disagree with each other. But nevertheless they are characterized by mutual knowledge, love, and will. Gregory Nazianzus boasts that unlike the modalists he says we worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one Godhead or God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One nature in three personalities or intellectual, perfect, self-existent, numerically separate, but not separate in the Godhead.

The ascription of personal properties to these three individuals in the Godhead is especially evident in the Cappadocian "h c v j g t u ø" u v t q p i" g o r j c u k u" w r the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. You notice in the Nicene Creed the Holy Ur k t k v" i g v u" u j q t v" u j t k h v Ø we Believe in him too. But u" k u" ð c p the Cappadocian fathers emphasized that like the Son the Holy Spirit is a divine

hypostasis. Basil, for example, says that the Holy Spirit is not only incorporeal, purely
think of an intellk i g p v " d g k p i " d q w p f n g u u " k p " r q y g t 0 ö " U q " v
being boundless in power. He quotes 1 Corinthians 2:11 where Paul says *who knows the
person of a man except for the spirit that is in him*. He compares the Holy Spirit to the
human spirit that is in each of us. He says in his sanctifying work the Holy Spirit makes
people spiritual by bringing them into fellowship with himself.

So these Cappadocian fathers would have resisted fiercely any attempt to depersonalize
the Holy Spirit and make him into some sort of impersonal divine force. I think it's
evident that their intention was to affirm that there are really three persons in a rich
psychological sense in the one God.

While modalism affirmed the equal deity of the three persons at the expense of their
distinctness, and Arianism affirmed their distinctness at the expense of their equal deity,
orthodox Christianity maintained both the equal deity and the personal distinctness of the
three persons. Moreover they did this without surrendering their commitment to
monotheism. There exists only one God who is three persons ó Father, Son, and Holy
Spirit.

START DISCUSSION

Student: [inaudible]

Dr. Craig: I think it's a helpful contrast. Modalism affirmed the equal deity of the three
persons but at the expense of their personal distinctness. Remember it collapsed the
persons down to just a unitarian view of God. Modalism affirmed the equal deity of the
persons but at the expense of their personal distinctness. By contrast, Arianism affirmed
the personal distinctness of the three persons ó the Father, the Son are not the same
person on Arianism ó but at the expense of their equal deity.⁵⁶ Only the Father is God.
The Son is a created thing however great or exalted. Modalism affirmed the equal deity at
the expense of the distinct personhood. Arianism affirmed the distinct personhood at the
expense of the equal deity. And orthodoxy maintained both the equal deity and personal
distinctness of the three persons, and all the while still affirming monotheism ó that there
is one God.

Student: I'm going to propose a functional hypothesis. To relate a spiritual being (God) to
a physical being (man), I thought deity may play a very clear functional role in such a
relationship where Jesus is the visible form of the invisible God, and the Holy Spirit is
the invisible form of the visible man. Through that, the relationship is possible.

Dr. Craig: Okay, so what you are talking about is a kind of functional Trinity whereas what we've been talking about so far is an ontological Trinity. Maybe that's a useful distinction to make at this point. The ontological Trinity would be the way God is in and of himself, and this functional Trinity that you are talking about is often called the economic Trinity. That is to say what are the different roles or functions that the persons play in the economy of the plan of salvation. Clearly the economic Trinity is rather different than the ontological Trinity. In the ontological Trinity the persons are all equal, but in the economic Trinity the Son is subordinated to the Father. The Father doesn't come and die on the cross. The Son does. And the Holy Spirit doesn't proclaim himself, he proclaims the Son and will only proclaim what he has been given to proclaim. So I think you're right in wanting to differentiate these different functions of the persons of the Trinity in the economic Trinity. But at this point at least that's not our concern. We are still trying to understand the ontological Trinity before we get to the economic Trinity, or the roles that they might play.

Student: In Revelation when it says *he now has become your Father*, that's the economic Trinity. Do they change roles?

Dr. Craig: I'm not sure what passage you're referring to.

Student: It says, [*qwæni'hpqy 'j kə 'cu'qwt 'Hcɤj gt 'ó* talking about Christ *ó* and you will be his Son. They are changing roles in the economic Trinity *ó* the Father and the Son?

Dr. Craig: I don't know, I'd have to look at that. I think that certainly there are ways in which the Son could be thought of as sort of like a father. But I don't think that the Father ever abandons his role. It might be a more metaphorical way of speaking of the Son.

Student: Not ontologically.

Dr. Craig: I understand. You are saying functionally. I'd have to look at the passage.

END DISCUSSION

That completes the historical survey that I wanted to do with you of the doctrine of the Trinity. I think it does bear mentioning, at least, as we conclude this section that you can see how misleading it is when certain cultic groups like Jehovah's Witnesses or secular authors like Dan Brown say that at the Council of Nicaea 325 years after Christ the church voted to make Jesus divine and voted to adopt the doctrine of the Trinity. That is a gross misrepresentation. Right from the very beginning *ó* from the *Logos* doctrine of the Greek apologists *ó* Christ was regarded as divine. The modalists affirmed that he was divine. This wasn't some sort of late developing doctrine that the church suddenly voted on at Nicaea. What they were struggling to articulate is the relationship between these three persons *ó* the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But it's not as though this was a

late developing doctrine that the church just sort of voted to adopt.⁵⁷ Right from the very beginning Christ was affirmed to be God. That's in the pages of the New Testament. The question was how can he be God and not be the Father? How do you make sense of that? The doctrine of the Trinity was the church's attempt to make sense of that truth.

This brings us to the problem of the Trinity. Is this a logically comprehensible and defensible doctrine that there are three persons who are one God? At one level the problem seems to be that the doctrine of the Trinity looks logically incoherent because the doctrine of the Trinity says that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and yet the Father is not the Son. So if you say the Father is identical with God and you say the Son is identical with God then it follows from the transitivity of identity that the Father is identical to the Son. Yet that's not right. So how do you make sense of this idea that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, and yet the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit? You have three distinct persons. Basically the problem is the transitivity of identity. If A is identical to B, and B is identical to C then A is identical to C. And yet in this case that fails.

START DISCUSSION

Student: In John 14 we had in the sermon today talks about *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me*. Equality can be considered the Father is a subset of God and God is a other.

Dr. Craig: OK, but the idea of subsets is not the same thing as identity. Let's take the set of natural numbers. A proper subset of that would be the set of even numbers. But avoid this problem occasioned by these identity relations through sets and subsets.

Student: Mathematics says both have to be subsets of each other.

Dr. Craig: The natural numbers are not a subset of the even numbers because it's got all the odd numbers.

Student: So they wouldn't be equal, but if they were subsets of each other than they would be.

Dr. Craig: Oh. So you're saying it's an improper subset. A subset of the natural numbers

Student: I know. But in John 14 what was quoted today in Scripture he said, *Show us the Father . . . I've been with you so long you don't know me? I am in the Father, and the Father is in me .*

Dr. Craig: That still leaves the question how do we make sense of that? What does that mean?

END DISCUSSION

Let me suggest a proposed solution. One solution is to say that the Trinity is God. If you want to make an identity statement then God is identical to the Trinity. If someone says, substance is God. But obviously the Trinity is not identical to the Father nor identical to the Son because the Son is one person, not three. The Father is one person, not three. So the Trinity is not identical to the persons. These persons are therefore not instances of the divine nature of God. The Trinity is an instance of the divine nature. This tri-personal being.⁵⁸ That's why the Trinity is not a fourth god in addition to the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. There's only one God and that God is the Trinity.

Now you might say but aren't the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit God? Don't you want to affirm that? Not in the sense of an identity statement. When one says that the identical to the queen. I am saying she holds the office or the role or the title of being queen. But it would be possible for there to be co-regents. Right? Sometimes that happens. There's more than one king or queen. Not an identity statement but you're assigning a predicate. Elizabeth is regal.

So when we say the Father is God, this is a way of saying the Father is divine. When we say the Son is God, that's a way of saying the Son is divine. You're making a predication of the Father and the Son. You're predicating full divinity of the Father and the Son. You're not making an identity statement. Otherwise you would get three gods.

say the Father is God, the Son is God, those are not identity statements, rather they are predications. They are predicating properties of the Father and the Son, namely the property of being fully divine.

START DISCUSSION

Student: We often hear in the secular society and inclusiveness that all roads lead to the Father or to God, the God of Abraham, the Jewish God, the Hindu, the Muslim, Allah. I think when they use the word in that sense of God, and I would say no it's not Allah. It's not the same god. The true god is the triune God. So we can't think of God in the same y c { " k h " { q w " c t g " c " O w u n k o . " g x g p " v j q w i j " K " v j k p m conceptions of a higher being.

Dr. Craig: That is well put. She is absolutely right. There is a kind of dictionary f g h k p k v k q p " q h " v j g " y q t f " õ i q f 0 ö " K v " y q w n f " d g " u q i t g c v g u v " t g c n k v { 0 ö " C p f " k p " v j c v " u g p u g " { q w " e c p But what we're talking about here is in an even more specific metaphysical sense, not the f k e v k q p c t { " f g h k p k v k q p " q h " v j g " y q t f " õ i q f ö " k p " C u w d u v c p e g " v j c v " k u " k f g p v k e c n " y k v j " I q f A ö " C p f " K ó the Godhead.

Student: I would go so far as to say we don't believe in the same god.

Dr. Craig: K " y q w n f . " v q q . " c p f " K ø x g " f g h g p f g f " v j c v " k p

Student: When you look at the Jewish concept of God, Yahweh, even though it's not distinguished in three persons conceptually I think in the early times . . . can you comment on Yahweh? Was that understood to be three persons? Or just monotheism?

Dr. Craig: Jews did not understand there to be three persons in the Godhead. They thought there was one person who is God. What these early Christian Jews believed was on the basis of Jesus in fact there was a kind of further, deeper progressive revelation of who God is. And it turns out that God is in fact three persons unbeknownst to his people to whom he had not yet revealed that truth. This is a truth that is only disclosed with the coming of Christ.

Student: So they worship the same God but the revelation of who he was in its entirety was not known at that time.

Dr. Craig: Yeah, I think that's correct.

END DISCUSSION

All right. That brings us to the end of our time. What we will do next time is try to address the question: how can there be three persons that all are divine ó three divine persons ó and yet there not be three separate beings? Three gods? How can you have

three persons who is each divine and yet not have three gods? That's what we'll talk about next Sunday.⁵⁹

Lecture 9: A Possible Model of the Trinity

We left off our discussion of the Trinity last time by saying that the doctrine of the Trinity that there are three persons who are one being is a logically coherent doctrine when properly understood. But that still leaves us with the question: how can three distinct persons be one being? How can you have three divine persons who are together one being?

Maybe we can get a start at this question by means of an analogy. I want to caution that there is no reason to think that there has to be an analogy to the doctrine of the Trinity among created things. But I think that analogies can be helpful as a springboard so to speak for philosophical reflection and for accurate formulation. So consider this analogy. In Greco-Roman mythology one of the labors of Hercules was to subdue the ferocious three-headed dog named Cerberus who guarded the gates of Hades. We can suppose that Cerberus, having three heads, must have had three brains and therefore three distinct states of consciousness. Each one would be whatever it is like to be a dog. Therefore Cerberus, although he is a sentient being, doesn't have a unified consciousness. Rather he has three consciousnesses. Even though he's one being, he has three consciousnesses. We could even give proper names to each of these consciousnesses. For example, rather whimsically, we can refer to them as Rover, Bowser, and Spike. These three centers of consciousness are entirely discreet, and when you think about it they might even come into conflict with one another. Still, in order for Cerberus to be viable as a biological organism not to speak of being able to function effectively as a guard dog, there has to be a considerable degree of cooperation among these three consciousnesses Rover, Bowser, and Spike.

Despite the diversity of his three mental states, Cerberus is clearly, I think, one dog. He is a single biological organism exemplifying a canine nature of some sort. Rover, Bowser, and Spike may also be said to be canine even though they're not three dogs. They are parts or aspects of the one three-headed dog Cerberus. So if Hercules were attempting to enter into Hades and Spike snarled at him or bit him on the leg Hercules might well say *Cerberus snarled at me* or *Cerberus attacked me*.

Now I have to confess that the church fathers would have resisted analogies like Cerberus. But I think once you give up the doctrine of divine simplicity (that God has no aspects or distinctions within his being) then Cerberus, I think, does seem to be what St. Augustine called an image of the Trinity among creatures. These are not exact analogies but they are sort of a shadow image of what the Trinity is among creatures. You have here one biological organism ó one dog ó which has three centers of consciousness.

We can enhance the Cerberus story by imagining that Cerberus is rational and has self-consciousness. In that case Rover, Bowser, and Spike are plausibly personal agents. They are self-conscious, personal agents. Cerberus would therefore be a tri-personal being.⁶⁰

If we were asked what makes Cerberus a single being despite his three minds, I think it's because he is a single biological organism that we would say Cerberus is one thing even though he has three mental states, three persons. But think about this. Suppose Cerberus were to be killed and his minds survive the death of his body. Suppose they're immortal and live beyond the death of his body. In what sense would they then still be one being? How would those three persons differ intrinsically from three exactly similar minds which have always been unembodied? Do you see the question? If he is one being because he is embodied in this canine organism, if the three minds survive the death of the body, how would they be any different than three minds that have just always existed unembodied? What would make them one being any more as opposed to three separate beings? And in the case of the Trinity, since the divine persons are (at least prior to the incarnation) unembodied then we can ask why do we have here one being rather than three individual beings?

This is a difficult question but maybe we can get some insight on it by reflecting on the nature of the soul. Souls are immaterial substances, and some philosophers think that animals have souls as well as human beings. On this view souls come in a wide spectrum of varying capacities and faculties. For example, higher animals like chimpanzees and dolphins have souls that are more richly endowed than the souls of lower animals like turtles and iguanas. What makes the human soul a person is the fact that the human soul is equipped with rational faculties of intellect and volition which enable it to be a self-reflective agent capable of self-determination. Animals don't have souls that are so richly endowed as to be self-reflective agents capable of self-determination.

When you think about it God is very much like an unembodied soul. In fact as a mental substance God just seems to be a soul of some sort. We normally would equate a rational soul with a person but that's because the human souls that we are acquainted with are persons. In our experience all persons. But the reason that human souls are individual persons is because each soul is equipped with one set of rational faculties which are sufficient for being a person. Suppose then that God is a soul which is endowed with three complete sets of rational faculties each of which is sufficient for personhood. In that case God, though one soul, would not be one person but rather he would be three persons for God would have three centers of self-consciousness, intentionality, and volition. God would clearly not be three

discrete souls because these cognitive faculties are all faculties of just one soul. So God would be one soul which is tri-personal in nature. Just as our individual souls support one person because they are equipped with one set of rational faculties sufficient for personhood, we can think of God as a soul which is equipped with three sets of rational faculties, each sufficient for personhood.⁶¹ This sort of model, I think, would seem to give a clear sense to the classical formula *three persons in one substance*.

So that's the model of the Trinity that I want to propose as a possibility.

START DISCUSSION

Student: Is it possible for any of the three persons to disagree with one another? In our

Dr. Craig: I don't think it is possible. I kind of give a hint at that when I talked about Cerberus where you could have these three heads snarling at each other and getting in conflict. But with God I think what we want to say is that he is always in harmony with respect to what he knows, loves, and wills. There is a classical doctrine, especially among the Greek Church fathers, called *perichoresis* which helps to illuminate this. According to the doctrine of *perichoresis* there is a kind of interpenetration of the divine life among the persons of the Trinity considered in abstraction from the world ó God existing alone just the three persons. What the Father wills, the Son and the Spirit also wills. What the Father loves, the Son and the Spirit also love. What the Father knows, the Son and the Spirit also know. So there is a complete unity and interpenetration of love, will, and knowledge among these three distinct persons so that disagreement would be impossible. I think that makes good sense in light of their perfect goodness, their perfect knowledge. It would seem that they would always be in harmony with each other.

Student: In light of that, and maybe this relates more of the incarnation, when Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane he c u m u " ð v c m g " v j k u " e w r " c y c { " h t goes through with it in the end obviously but there is still that moment where he is basically saying, *F q'Kt gcm'j cxg'vq'f q'vj ku'Kf qpø'y cpv'vq0* Would that have some more to do with the incarnation perhaps?

Dr. Craig: I think it is intimately connected with the incarnation. Here we see the *Logos* ó the second person of the Trinity ó in his so-called state of humiliation (this state in which he has given up his glory and magnificence that he had with the Father before the world began) and has entered into this state in which he identifies with human beings in their fallenness and finitude, and as such experiences all the limitations of human

finitude. Physically he could grow tired, he could feel pain, he could get weary, he could get hungry or thirsty. Mentally he didn't know everything that was going on. He had to ask questions. The Scripture says that the boy Jesus increased in wisdom and knowledge as he grew older. He grew morally. The book of Hebrews says that he was perfected through what he suffered. So all of these would have relation to his human nature, and so I would say in his human nature Christ can pray to the Father, *Let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done*. We'll talk more about that when we get to the doctrine of Christ, but you're quite right in seeing it intimately connected with the doctrine of the Trinity.

Student: The last couple weeks I've been trying to get my mind around this because it's difficult, but I found something in my old systematic theology book that I just wanted to get your opinion on. Louis Berkhof, a Reformed theologian from about a hundred years ago, but not of the same school as you, but he says that the Father is the ground of the Son, whereby he within the divine being is the ground of a second personal subsistence like his own and puts the second person in possession of the whole divine essence without division. ⁶² Basically what he's saying there is that there is a distribution but since God is infinite there is an infinite distribution into the second and I guess also by extension the third person of the Trinity. I'm just wondering if you have any thoughts on that. But to me it also raises a question which is a speculative question in nature: why the number three? If God is infinite and can infinitely distribute himself why not an infinite distribution? Why three?

Dr. Craig: To answer the last question first, I don't think there's anything wrong with saying that God is more than three persons. This is an essential property of God just like omnipotence, omniscience, or moral perfection.

But with respect to the first question, I think it's really important when we hear these theological formulations that we demand clear meanings of them, that these aren't just fancy words but they have clear meanings. Certainly I think we want to agree that there isn't alienation among the persons of the Trinity (or I think he said change; I think that's true). But diversity is affirmed distinctness. I don't see how you can have distinction without diversity. That would be what I understand by diversity. I would say that that kind of distinctness or diversity is necessary in virtue of there being three persons. I take

very seriously and literally the idea that we have here three first-person perspectives each of which can say *I think that*. So we have three centers of self-consciousness which are therefore necessarily distinct and diverse. Now there are views of the Trinity that deny that. Sometimes the view that I'm laying out here is called a social trinitarianism which takes very seriously and literally the three persons or centers of self-consciousness. So-called Latin trinitarianism that characterizes people like Thomas Aquinas tends to think of the three persons of the Trinity as just relations. That insofar as God is the subject he is I, and insofar as he is the object he is the Son. It seems to me that that's no different than when I think of me or if I love myself. Some views of the Trinity take seriously enough the notion that we have here three distinct persons each of which has a first-person perspective on things.

Student: One of my favorite G.K. Chesterton quotes is he says that paganism was all the rage then Christianity became the biggest thing and everything since then has been boring. The Trinity, I think, is connected with that. What doctrine is like the Trinity? In people, they quote people like Dawkins that say if you think you understand quantum theory, then that should fit right in with what you think about quantum theory. Why not embrace that part of it?⁶³ The Trinity is the deepest part of theology, and we should try to wrap our brain around it.

Dr. Craig: The reason scientists believe in quantum theory is because there's good evidence for it even if it is very, very difficult to understand and perhaps nobody can make sense out of it. Similarly, with respect to the Trinity, I think what we would want to say is there is good evidence to believe that God exists and that he's revealed himself in a way proposed here is not an attempt to say this is the way it is. That would be presumptuous. That would be what Martin Luther would call a *theology of glory* where you claim to have a model. This makes sense of the doctrine and therefore removes any rational objection to it that Muslims, cultists, or other unitarians might propose. I think this is a really good model for thinking of the Trinity. But, as I say, it is just a possibility.

Student: Maybe I would modify your concept just a little by saying this: we don't know much at all about the soul, do we? I mean, we have some hints in Scripture that the spirit is a division of the soul which is especially responsible for our communication with God, and we have many other divisions, too. Frankly I don't know any way on this side of eternity to know what those divisions are. But maybe if we think of the three members of the Trinity as sharing portions of their soul, rather than having the same soul (which I know involves volition, personality, and awareness) but maybe they share enough whatever the subdivisions of these souls are that you would say the same essence, but of course then retain their individuality as you have said by maintaining that for yourself. Maybe they do so in a way that is impossible for us to share our soul with somebody else, but maybe the Trinity is shared.

Dr. Craig: I just want to resist any slide into tri-theism. You have got to have one being here which is God. So we have to be very careful lest you get three souls like Cerberus when he dies you seem to have these three canine souls.

Student: I wouldn't push it that far but wouldn't you think you could have the essence as being the same if you do have one God. If enough of the soul is shared so this would be known only to God so that it is one God. There is not three Gods.

Christ was afraid to die on the cross. He had to know essentially all his days that he was here to be sacrificed. He told his disciples, *Καὶ ἴσχυε ὡς ἔπος εἰπὴν ὅτι δεῖ μὲν* He had to know that. With all the strength he had, I just have found that difficult to believe. I want to throw this out. It might be a little controversial. Some of you may have heard it; maybe some of you have heard of it. He was praying up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death and he was crying out, *καὶ ἔλεγεν βοᾶν λέγων ὁ θεός ὁ κύριε ἰησοῦν υἱοῦ δαυὶδ σὺ δέσποτα ἁβραάμ ὁ κύριε ἰησοῦν υἱοῦ δαυὶδ σὺ δέσποτα ἁβραάμ*. In Greek the structure is God answered that prayer in the affirmative. So we all say how could he have done that? He had to go the cross. Yes, if the cup is going to the cross. But I have come to believe that Satan tried to kill him physically in the Garden of Gethsemane and that's what he was praying for. *Don't let him kill me so that I can go to the cross.* God answered that in the affirmative. He died on the cross rather than dying from Satan. If you think of the story, remember how he told the disciples to stay away and stay back. He may have just been under physical attack. . . . Satan may have just been pulling out every bit of power he had to deprive Christ of his life to keep him from going to the cross. This is a theory that quite a few people agree with. One of them is Vernon McGee (he died several years ago) so he is a well known Bible teacher who now has

Through The Bible With Vernon McGee going all around the world.⁶⁴ When I first heard the v " K " f k f p ø v " c i t g g " y k v j " k v 0 " D w v " q x g t " v j g " f g e out.

Dr. Craig: All right. Well, you're certainly free to throw it out. I think that one would be desirous of having a better textual warrant for it. It seems like one has a sort of gap there and so you just make up this hypothesis to stick in the gap without any textual warrant for saying that that's what was going on. Whereas you have Jesus saying, *Let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done*, it seems very much that the cup which he says he has to drink is his death on the cross and he's willing to in the end take it but he would have God have it pass from him. What is the difficulty? Oh, the difficulty was you said Jesus knows that he is going to die. That's true, but remember in his finite human consciousness it's not as though Jesus is omniscient and knows everything. He is still at that moment willing to pray *if there's some way to do this without my dying then let's do it that way but nevertheless I'll do your will*.

Student: I'm just saying the closest thing to a proof-text would be Hebrews 5:7 which implies that God answered in the affirmative.

Dr. Craig: The problem is it doesn't mention Satan trying to kill him, and that's my concern.

Student: But it says death.

Dr. Craig: OK.

Student: Y j c v " K " v j q w i j v " c d q w v " y c u " v j g " e w r " v j c v " j g y j c v " K " v j k p m 0 " V j c v ø u n o t d y i n g . T h e f a c t t h a t h e w a s d r i n k i n g c i q p { " q x his Father's wrath on himself.

Dr. Craig: And one would need to look earlier in the Gospels where Jesus talks about the cup and what that means. When he says to the disciples, *You want to be at his right and left hand in the Kingdom*. He said something like that: *are you able to drink the cup that I have to drink; are you willing to be baptized with the baptism I have to undergo*. It does seem that, I think, it's talking about what you are referring to.

Student: God passes over us and puts all the wrath on Jesus.

Dr. Craig: [g c j . " v j c v ø u " v j g " f q e v t k p g " q h l y . v j g " c v q p g o

Student: D c e m " v q " v j g " c p c n q i { " q h " v j g " E g t d g t w u 0 " K v " either three Fathers, three Sons, or three Holy Spirits. It has a real benefit in helping us in seeing the atonement of the cross.

Dr. Craig: Okay, that forms a wonderful segue to the next section that I want to address but let me just see if there's any final comment on this before we move on.

Student: K " v j q w i j v " v j k u " k u " k p v g t g u v k p i 0 " K h " o c t t k c and purpose then that unity is like a unit but two different souls. I thought it's interesting that Jesus Christ is the second Adam so in the beginning before the fall of man God and Adam (Adam and Eve, man) are in unity, almost like Jesus and God are in unity until after man fell. Then Jesus in unity wants to restore (that's the marriage between Christ and the church) that unity back to God. I just thought that is the heaven that God wanted to realize.

Dr. Craig: I think that while the marriage analogy can be a useful springboard for thinking about the Trinity, in the end we're still looking for something that makes these two one being, and it's not enough just to have unity of love or unity of will and harmony. That can exist among diverse beings.⁶⁵ What we're still looking for is something that would make these three persons one being, and that is what my model is attempting to get at.

Student: I think these personalities relate to function. You can have these diversities and unity if you talk about function and integrating those three by function. In answer to o q f c n k u v u . " w p k v c t k c p u . " q t " O w u n k o u . " o q u v " q h " v c p q v j g t " r g t u q p c n k v { 0 " V j g { " v c n m " c d q w v . " k p " v j g God. So you have multiple persons being identified as God. In the case of the modalist, if you got redemption ongoing (we talked about this a little bit last week) which was Christ's mission, if he changed into the Spirit whose function is to convict in righteousness and judgment you would have an offset to redemption. These are just some thoughts in support of the trinitarian concept.

Dr. Craig: It seems to me that functions alone aren't going to provide a diversity of persons though the different functions of the persons might address the question someone earlier was raising as to what differentiates the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in terms of perhaps the functions they play.

END DISCUSSION

Let me go on to that right now and we will conclude our time together today by looking at this.

Some of you may have noticed that the model that I gave doesn't include the derivation of one person from the other which is enshrined in the confession of the Nicene Creed that the Son is begotten of the Father, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made. The model doesn't preclude that either. It just leaves it an open question. So if you want

to add the derivation of one person from another, you are free to do so. But on the model of cognitive faculties and capacities. Three self-consciousnesses. I, frankly, think this is a strength of the model because although the doctrine of the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Spirit is a part of Nicene orthodoxy, nevertheless it seems to be a relic of this old *Logos* Christology of the Greek apologists which has no warrant in the biblical text and seems to me to introduce a kind of subordinationism into the Godhead which anybody who wants to affirm the full deity of Christ ought to find really troubling.

Biblically speaking, the vast majority of contemporary New Testament scholars (namely *monogenes*) do not think that the word *monogenes* (which is used in the context of a family) then to say that a child is *monogenes* is an only child would imply that he's only begotten. It doesn't mean only begotten but it would imply that this child is only begotten. But when you look at the biblical references to *monogenes* which would include verses like John 1:14 or John 1:18 when it says *the only begotten God* or *God the one and only who is in the bosom of the Father has made the Father known* they're not talking in these verses about some kind of pre-creation or eternal procession of the divine Son from the Father.⁶⁶ Rather, they seem to be connected with the historical Jesus being God's Son. It is in virtue of the incarnation that Jesus is God's special Son. Look for example at Luke 1:35 as an illustration of this. Luke 1:35 *this is the annunciation to Mary by the angel. the most high will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called Holy, because Jesus had no human father that he could be called God's special Son. If that's right then Jesus being *monogenes* has less to do with the Trinity than with the incarnation.*

[In the letters of the very early post-council fathers (Irenaeus, Hippolytus, etc.)] Ignatius (c. 110 AD) in his letter to the Smyrnaeans (Ephesians 7). Here Ignatius associates Jesus being begotten with his flesh being begotten of Mary, but insofar as he is Spirit and of God he is unbegotten he says. There is no idea here in Ignatius at least that Christ is begotten in his divine nature.

66 35:10

V j g " v t c p u h g t g p e g " q h " L g u Nazareth to theppie-lndarqafe ø u " U q p " h t
Logos seems to be an invention of these early Greek apologists. I think it has helped to
 depreciate the importance of the historical Jesus for Christian faith.

Theologically speaking, orthodox theology rejects firmly any depreciation of the Son
 y k v j " t g i c t f " v q " v j g " H c v j g t 0 " H q t " g z c o r n g . " C v j c
 Only-Begotten Son of God blaspheme God, defaming His perfection and accusing Him
 of imperfection, and render themselves liable to the severest chastisement" (*In illud
 omnia mihi tradia sunt* 6). Here what Athanasius is condemning is subordinationism
 which is a doctrine inspired by Gnostic or Neo-Platonic thought which conceived of God
 c u " ð v j- g klnQof undifferentiated unity which then in a kind of series of stair steps
 descends down to the world and in which you could have these kind of intermediate
 stages that are not equal to the One but are kind of lower-class deities. For example,
 Origen who was trained under the Neo-Platonist philosopher Ammonius Saccas, says this
 about the Son. He speaks of the Son as a deity of the second rank having a sort of
 derivative divinity as far removed from that of the Father as he himself is from creatures.
 He says the Son's divinity is as far from the Father's divinity as it is from the creatures
 below him. That kind of subordinationism was rejected by the church fathers. Origen was
 condemned for holding such a view. Yet at the same time these very same theologians
 continued to affirm the doctrine that the *Logos* is begotten of the Father. The Son in their
 view derives his being from God the Father.⁶⁷ C v j c p c u k w u " u c { u " v j k u < " ð v j
 d g k p i " p q v " q h " J k o *On the Opindow of Diapylis 15*). Hilary c v j g t ö " *
 * c p q v j g t " e j w t e j " h c v j g t " u " ð J g " k u
 J k u "] v j g " H c v j g t) u _ " c d k f k p i " p c v w t g *On the* c v " v j g " U
Trinity 9.53; 6.14; cf. 4.9). These same theologians that affirmed the full equality of the
 Son and the Father also affit o g f " v j c v " v j g " U q p " f q g u p ø v " j c x g " g z
 f g t k x g u " j k u " d g k p i " h t q o " v j g " H c v j g t 0 " K " f q p ø v " v
 contrary, this can do anything but diminish the Son because he becomes an effect which
 is contingent upon the Father. Even if this eternal procession takes place necessarily and
 c r c t v " h t q o " v j g " H c v j g t ø u " y k n n . " v j g " U q p " k u " n g u
 exists *a se*, that is to say through himself or of himself. He has aseity. The Father exists *a
 se* while the Son exists through another.

There is much more that I want to say about that, but we are out of time. I will simply
 n g c x g " { q w " y k v j " v j c v " v q " v j k p m" c d q w v " h q t " v j g " e
 bring it to a close as to whether or not we need to affirm that the Son is begotten or
 i g p g t c v g f " d { " v j g " H c v j g t " c p f " v j g " U⁶⁸ k t k v " r t q e g

67 40:02

68 Total Running Time: 42:24 (Copyright © 2016 William Lane Craig)

Lecture 10: The Ontological and Economic Trinity

As we are drawing to a close our discussion of the Trinity I have focused on a feature of the model that I think is of some interest, and that is that the model I've offered of the Trinity of God as a tri-personal soul does not feature (though it does not preclude) the derivation of one person of the Trinity from another. It does not include the notion of the Son's being eternally begotten from the Father. I suggested last time that I think it's good that the model leaves this an open question because the doctrine of the begetting of the Son from the Father in his divine (as opposed to human) nature is not biblically attested. It also seems to introduce an inevitable element of subordinationism into the Godhead which would seem to make the Son inferior to the Father because only the Father is unbegotten who exists in a self-existent way and the Son has the ground of his being in the Father and therefore has a kind of derivative existence which, to me at least, seems to make the Son arguably inferior to the Father.

It is very interesting to note that the early church fathers interpreted this Arian proof-text in terms of his being generated eternally from the Father. Athanasius, for example, affirms that the reason the Father is greater than the Son is because only the Father is unbegotten. He manifestly He is greater Who makes another to be all that He Himself is, Who imparts to the Son by the mystery of the birth the image of His own unbegotten nature, Who begets the Son therefore inferior to the Father if the Father is the source and the origin of the Son? Hilary of Poitiers therefore is greater, because He is Father, but the Son, who is of the same substance as the Father, is not greater than the Father. Basil of Caesarea (Fourth Theological Oration 9). So what Basil is saying is that the Father is greater in terms of origination (because he's unbegotten whereas the Son is begotten) but in terms of nature they both share the same nature and therefore are equal. This reply seems to me to be a good one. The question is whether the Son can be the Father's individual person to be begotten? Or is there a possible world in which the Father is begotten and not unbegotten? Classical trinitarian theology would deny this. So how are the Father and the Son equal in nature if greatness refers to origination and the manner of their origination is essential to their individual natures. If you think about it suppose that

they are equal in nature but that the Father has the contingent property of being unbegotten and the Son has the contingent property of being begotten.⁶⁹ In that case they have the same nature but the Father still has this contingent property of being unbegotten, respect? It would seem to me that it would.

So at the end of the day what Basil has to say is that having self-existence is not after all a perfection or a great- Cause is not inferior to that which has no Cause; for it would share the glory of the lack a ground of being in oneself alone, and that surely is not as great as to be a self- itself. This kind of derivative being is the same way in which creatures exist. Creatures exist in virtue of being caused by another.

So despite the protestations to the contrary, it does seem to me that Nicaean orthodoxy has not completely shed the sort of subordinationism that was introduced into the doctrine of the Trinity by the early Greek apologists with their *Logos* doctrine.

START DISCUSSION

Student: Can you comment on John 6:57 which sounds like it could be used as a proof-text by the Nicaeans where Jesus says, *I live because of the Father?*

Dr. Craig: Right, we did talk about that outside of class. I think I said when you look at self- that the Son has. So I don't think that taken in context is relevant to this.

Student: This is related to the procession ó that idea of the proceeding of the Son and whatever. I always liked the example of the Trinity of ice water ó not just water but the system. A glass of ice water has cubes, it has water, and it has vapor over the top. I'm working on a lesson this week ó Trinity and the incarnation in our Bible study. I was thinking about this. An extension of that is if water is a cube it becomes . . . not always as become water and the water will become vapor if just left. These are the same substance (ontologically) but different functions. Steam is good in some places but not in others. Water is good in some places but not in others. And cubes are good in some places and not in others. I see this related to being a functional or in terms of this differentiation of personalities.

Dr. Craig: However apt the analogy might be, it is only an analogy or an illustration. I want to address the philosophical or theological point that I'm trying to make, and that is that having derivative being is not as great as having a ground of existence in yourself. Yet that is what the Nicene doctrine of the begetting of the Son affirms. It seems to me that that makes it difficult to think of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as fully equal.

Student: Are some of these people making this more complicated than it has to be?

Dr. Craig: I think so!

Student: In the beginning (as we know there was no beginning to the deity, he has no beginning), the second person of the Trinity was there ó the *Logos*. He was there. The only thing that was begotten here for the incarnation was the body in which the second person of the Trinity agreed to abide to fulfill this atonement (which you are studying now).⁷⁰ The second person of the Trinity agreed to inhabit so that he could die for us. I don't understand all the problem of the body of Jesus Christ was, yes, created by God, but the spirit (the soul) of Jesus Christ as the second person of the Trinity was most certainly not created by God.

Dr. Craig: I think the view you are expressing is similar to the view that I am wanting to propose. But it is not the view of classical Nicene orthodoxy. When we hear, I think as Christians today, that Jesus is the only begotten Son from the Father, we think of the virgin birth. We think of his human nature. But the point I'm making is that when you read the creed and the theologians leading up to it talking about him being begotten in his divine nature ó that before the universe was created, the Son was begotten from the Father eternally. So in the Godhead from eternity prior to creation there is the Father who is unbegotten and then the Son who is derivative from the Father ó begotten, the *Logos* is derivative from the Father ó and then the Spirit derives from either one or both of them. If you find that, as you say, overly complicated I sympathize with you. But I'm trying to give you an accurate understanding of what the Nicene Creed affirms.

Student: Just one follow-up question. You say the Son was begotten from the Father eternally. So in the Godhead from eternity prior to creation there is the Father who is unbegotten and then the Son who is derivative from the Father ó begotten, the *Logos* is derivative from the Father ó and then the Spirit derives from either one or both of them. If you find that, as you say, overly complicated I sympathize with you. But I'm trying to give you an accurate understanding of what the Nicene Creed affirms.

Dr. Craig: You know what? This is an excellent question. I think it is due to the *Logos* Christology of these early Greek apologists. Remember they were struggling to explain

is a difficult question. The way they solved that was by saying that the Son is the *Logos* or the mind of the Father and it proceeded out of the Father as a sort of separate person. Nicene orthodoxy never really shed that *Logos* doctrine of the derivation of the second person from the first person of the Trinity.

Student: Considering John 12:48-72. "K" y c u " e w t k q w u " c d q w v " j k u " x q that he spoke ó the things that he said ó was of the Father and not of him ó are his own words, the things that he says, from the Father?

Dr. Craig: What you are referring to is verses in the twelfth chapter of John where Jesus says things like this: *I have not spoken on my own authority. The Father who sent me has given me command on what to say and what to speak. What I say therefore I say as the Father has bidden me.* You know elsewhere in John Jesus says something very similar of the Holy Spirit ó *He will not speak on his own authority but he will glorify me* ó which does indicate a kind of subordination of the Son to the Father. Now, having said that, that forms of very nice segue to the next section where I want to talk about the difference between the ontological Trinity (which is the Godhead in and of itself) and the economic Trinity (which is the roles played by these various persons in the plan of salvation). I v j k p m " k v ø u " v j g " g e q p q o k e " V t k p k v { " v j c v " k u " g x k f

Student: How would you comment on the notion that the second person of the Trinity ó the Son ó is intrinsically linked to humanity? In other words, if you asked somebody to define Jesus Christ, they would define Jesus Christ as God in human form.⁷¹ In other words, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is intrinsically human and defined as having a human nature. For instance, I think of theophanies in the Old Testament. Whenever we see God personified and acting like a human we say that could be a theophany ó v j c v ø u " L g u w u " E j t k u v 0 " U q " y q w n f " { q w " u c { " v Jesus Christ is intrinsically linked to his humanity and has always been and his existence outside of the world is just like we will exist? When we die and go to heaven we will still have a human soul even though we don't have a human body; Jesus Christ still has like a human soul because it's part of the definition of who he is.

Dr. Craig: I would strongly resist that. That would make the body of Christ essential to the second person of the Trinity, and I think that's very problematic. I don't think Jesus j c f " c " d q f { " r t k q t " v q " v j g " k p e c t p c v k q p . " u q " k v ø u will) to the existence of the universe the second person of the Trinity didn't have a body q t " c " j w o c p " p c v w t g 0 " U q " k v ø u " p q v " g u u g p v k c n 0 " O q never creates and exists alone in which case the second person of the Trinity doesn't have a body. And there may even be possible worlds where t j g t g ø u " p g x g t " c p " k p e c t p

for whatever reason. So I think we should resist saying that having a human nature is intrinsic or essential to the nature of the second person to the Trinity. This seems to me to be a contingent property of the second person of the Trinity which is adopted for the sake of our salvation.

Student: Would you say the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, is exactly synonymous with Jesus Christ?

Dr. Craig < " Y j g p " { q w " v c n m " c d q w v " u { p q p { things w u . " { q w ø t g T k i j v A " K " f q p ø v " m p q y " j q y " q p g " y q w n f " 0 " 0 " 0 " r t q d synonymous: Son of God, Jesus Christ. What I would say is that they both refer to the same person. Those two expressions ó the first of them, the Son of God, that's what n k p i w k u v u " e c n n " c " f g h k p k v g " f g u e t k r v k q p " n k m g " ö v c d n g . ö " ö v j g " j k i j g u v " d w k n f k p i " k p " P g y " [q t m 0 ö " God is a definite description. Jesus Christ is a proper name like Ben or Jim or Cindy. And what we would say is that in both cases those two linguistic expressions (one a definite description, one a proper name) both have the same person ó the same entity ó as their denotation or their referent. They refer to the same person.

Student: I may be misunderstanding where you're going so correct me if I'm wrong, but if { q w ø t g " u w i i g u v k p i " v j c v " E j t k u v " d g e c o g " v j g " d g i { q w " c t g " u w i i g u v k p i + " y q w n f " k H " c w j j g g t " ö d ' g " p v t " w g " g v " j y c u p ø v " ö v j g " U q p ö " w p v k n " v j g " k p e c t p c v k q p A " V j g { each other?

Dr. Craig: Alright, we have been flirting with this question for some time. So let's now proceed to talk about that.

END DISCUSSION

Suppose that we drop from the doctrine of the Trinity the notion that the Son and the Spirit proceed eternally from the Father. Remember I said the model I've offered doesn't feature it though it doesn't preclude it. So let's suppose we drop that. How then should we understand the intra-trinitarian relations? Here I want to draw this distinction between the ontological Trinity and the economic Trinity. By the ontological Trinity, I mean the V t k p k v { " c u " k v " g z k u v u " k p " c p f " e a t i o n . " T h i s i s t h e n h " c r c t v " Trinity or God insofar as he exists in and of himself apart from any relation to the created order. The economic Trinity has reference to the different roles played by the persons of the Trinity in relation to the world and in particular to the plan of salvation. So the question that is raised is: to what degree is the economic Trinity a reflection of the ontological Trinity?⁷²

Here I want to mention a church father that is perhaps not so well known to you, but important in his own time ó Marcellus of Ancyra. Marcellus was one of the leaders at the Council of Nicaea who championed the orthodox cause. But as Marcellus read the Gospel of John he noticed that the *Logos* k u " p q v " t g h g t t g f " v q " c u " õ v j g " U q p incarnation. In fact you would be hard-pressed to find anywhere in the New Testament where there is a reference unambiguously to the pre-k p e c t p c v g " E j t k u v " c u " õ v j observations led Marcellus to hypothesize that prior to creation the economic Trinity just did not exist. The *Logos* d g e q o g u " õ v j g " U q p ö " q p n { " y k v j " j k u " k p view the relations in the economic Trinity do not always mirror the distinctions within the ontological Trinity.

U k o k n c t n { " q p " v j g " o q f g n " v j c v " K l o ð r i n g y " c a n b e g u g p v g f " v just as similar to one another as three individuals can be in terms of having the same knowledge, the same love, the same will, although each one from its own first-person perspective. It may well be arbitrary which person chooses to play the role of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Those titles have reference to the economic Trinity ó the relations that are played by the three persons in the plan of salvation with respect to the e t g c v g f " q t f g t 0 " õ V j g " U q p ö " q p n { " y k v j " j k u " k p j w o c p " p c v w t g 0 " õ V j g " U r k t k v ö " k u " v j g " q p g " y j q " u v o k p k u v t { " q h " v j g " U q p 0 " C p f " õ v j g " H c v j g t ö " k u " v j g a possible world in which God did not create any world at all but just existed alone the economic Trinity would not exist even though the ontological Trinity would exist.

K p " e q p v t c u v " v q " O c t e g n n w u " y g " f q p ø v " p g g f " v q " u c moment of creation as he thought. We could say that the economic Trinity exists eternally because the persons of the Godhead all knew the respective roles that they would play in the plan of salvation. They have foreknowledge of the different roles that they will play even if the deployment of that economy doesn't take place until the fullness of time when Christ eventually becomes incarnate and so forth so.

On this view the economic Trinity can be just as eternal as the ontological Trinity but it isn't fundamental to the nature of God or of the persons. Although they didn't agree with O c t e g n n w u ø " t c v j g t " o c x g t k e m " x k g y . " d q v j " C v j c p c party continued to support him. Although he was pushing the boundaries of orthodoxy, they felt that he was still one of themselves and part of the orthodox party.

On this view within the economic Trinity there is subordination (or maybe a better word y q w n f " d g " u w d o k u u k q p + " q h " q p g " r g t u q p " v q " c p q v j g c i q . " v j g " U q p " u w d o k v u l l , a n d t h e S p i r i t s p e a k s o n h i s o w n a c c o u n t b u t h e s p e a k s o n b e h a l f o f t h e S o n . T h i s e c o n o m i c T r i n i t y d o e s n o t m i r r o r o r r e f l e c t d i f f e r e n c e s i n t h e o n t o l o g i c a l T r i n i t y b e t w e e n t h e p e r s o n s . R a t h e r t h e e c o n o m i c

V t k p k v { " k u " c p " g z r loving and descension on behalf for the t g g " c p f sake of our salvation. So on this view the error of *Logos* Christology was conflating the economic Trinity with the ontological Trinity and thereby introducing this subordinationism right into the nature of God himself rather than seeing it as purely functional.⁷³

So those are my comments on that issue. It is highly controversial, and I've tried to represent fairly what Nicene orthodoxy holds and how this view would differ from it. But the model doesn't preclude, as I say, the procession of one person from another but it just f q g u p ø v " k p e n w f g " k v . " c p f " k v " u g g o u " v q " o g " v j c v " comments.

START DISCUSSION

Student: How would you respond to talking about existence and proceeding and begetting? Many Catholic theologians who are very obviously . . . they hold onto that Nicaean begotten thing. They would say that (I think even C. S. Lewis said this) when a dog begets a dog the dog is not better than it, it just makes another one of the same nature u q " v j g t g h q t g " k v) u " p q v " d g v v g t 0 " K v ø u " l w u v " r t q e that? They would say God is the same way. God can only beget another God.

Dr. Craig: In the case of the dog begetting another dog, both dogs are contingent beings and are derived from another parent. But when we come to God, the Father is unoriginated. He is unbegotten and uncreated. The Son by contrast (though he is uncreated ó j g ø u " p q v " c " y q t m + " j g ø u " p q v " w p d g i q v v g p 0 " J his own existence in himself. He only exists in this kind of derivative way. My concern is that that makes him less great than the Father because it's greater to have the ground of your being in yourself alone rather than in another. I don't think, as I said earlier, this can be refuted by appealing to analogies. You've got to deal with the issue. Is it greater to be unbegotten in your being rather than derivative in your being? If you think that it is then I think you're going to sympathize with my struggles. If you think it's not greater than I think that would lead to a very peculiar view of God that there could be worlds in which God himself is begotten or derives from another ó that he doesn't exist *a se*, in and of j k o u g n h 0 " K v " u g g city of self-existence is just absolutely fundamental u to who God is. So this does seem to me to be a perfection. That's my struggle here.

Student: I just want to point something out here. I'm going to read something from the Athanasian Creed which is a litv n g " o q t g " f g x g n q r g f " v j c p " v j g " P k e 25 to 27 real quick:

And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.

I think the problem with the model you are proposing when you say the Father is greater than the Son . . .

Dr. Craig: That is a view I am disagreeing with.

Student: Oh, you are?

Dr. Craig: I'm saying on my view there are three co-equal persons as the creed you read even though its proponents denied this.

Student: Oh, I see what you're saying. I was going to say if that really were the case in Scripture you would see a higher position of the Father than the Son. It would be kind of but not least we also pray to

Dr. Craig: Or worship! What about worship? Would worship be directed to the Son or only to the Father? I want to have as high a Christology as possible. Christology is the Christ as great as we can. The Scriptures speak of him as God. That is what I find so disquieting about this element of subordinationism that the *Logos* doctrine seems to introduce.⁷⁴

Student: A quick question about the ontological vs. economic distinction. My question is if the economic is true, what basis is there for choosing which one would be subordinate so to say to the other one? If the ontological is true that they are all co-equal then how did they choose, so to say, which one is going to be subordinate to whom in the economic view? That seems arbitrary to me.

Dr. Craig: Right, it would seem to me that this is an arbitrary choice. God has freedom of the will to arbitrarily choose which person will play which role.

Student: Right. The *Logos* could be the Father, or the Holy Spirit could be the Son. It all could just be arbitrary.

Dr. Craig: I think that that is the essence of free will ó to choose arbitrarily between two completely similar options.

Student: With this view then, the three persons of the Godhead preceded eternal and for whatever reason there was a three-person God. Correct?

Dr. Craig: Yes, there is and was and always will be.

Student: Are we saying that there was a council of the persons? Was their role always their role? Or was there actually a decision made who would be submitting to be put in a human body and serve the role of salvation and the Holy Spirit as well? In that view, it is a little disturbing because it sounds like there are three gods and they are making a decision. Is it that their roles were eternally determined in the past?

Dr. Craig< " F k f " { q w " u c { " ð g v g t p c n n { ö " q t " ð k p v g t p c n n {

Student: Pick one! [laughter]

Dr. Craig< " Q M 0 " K ø n n " r k e m " ð g v g t p c n n O { c 0 t ö e " g N g n v w ' u o ø g " x c k f g f y t
was that this was a temporal decision taken at some point in the finite past, like the
o q o g p v " q h " e t g c v k q p 0 " K ø o " p q v " e q o h q t v c d n g " y k v j
divine foreknowledge of the future that the three persons would know from eternity
which roles that they would play, and that therefore there is no reason to say the
economic Trinity was decided upon at some time a finite number of years ago. This is an
eternal sort of decision on the part of God, but it is a free decision. It is not one that he
had to make.

Student< " J q y " o w e j " u w r r q t v " f q g u " O c t e g n n w u ø " k f g c " j

Dr. Craig< " K " f q p ø v " m p q y 0 " V j k u " l w u v " k u p ø v " v c n m g f " c
should read a paper on this at the Evangelical Theological Society conference sometime
and see if it raises a storm of controversy or whether or not it meets with a lot of
resonance. I do not know.

Student: Could the ontological members of the Trinity have taken turns being Jesus?

Dr. Craig< " V j c v " u g g o u " v q " o g " v q " d g " o q t g " r t q d n g o c v k
ascension into heaven. He always has the same body. An interesting question would be:
suppose there are extraterrestrial, intelligent life on some other planet in some other
galaxy, and they fall into sin, and God wants to have an incarnation there to redeem them
and rescue them. Could one of the other members of the Trinity have become incarnate in
that world to save those people? Maybe there is a Klingon savior that is a member of the
V t k p k v { 0 " K " f q p ø v " m p q y #

END DISCUSSION

Now we are really pushing the boundaries! Next time I will offer a plausibility argument for the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity.⁷⁵

Lecture 11: Argument for the Truth of the Doctrine of the Trinity / Application of the Doctrine of the Trinity

Today we bring our study of the doctrine of the Trinity to a close. You'll remember I have defended a model of the Trinity according to which we think of God as an infinite, unembodied soul but a very special sort of soul, namely a soul so richly endowed with rational faculties that God has three sets of rational faculties each sufficient for personhood so that God is a tri-personal being. I explained last time that this doctrine or model does not feature but neither does it preclude the notion of relations of derivation between the three members of the Trinity. We can think of them as simply three co-equal members of the triune God, or we can add derivative relations if we want to. It seems to me that this is a positive feature the model.

V q f c { " K ø f " n k m g " v q " y t c r " w r " d { " q h h g t k p i " c " r n c w of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity belongs to revealed theology not natural theology. That is to say you will not be able to prove that God is a tri-personal being through the resources of human reason alone. You might be able to prove that God exists d w v " { q w " y q w n f p ø v " m p q y " v j c v " I q f " k u " c " V t k p k v { 0 and one accepts this doctrine based upon I q f ø urevelation in Scripture as a tri-personal being: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Still, we can ask if there are any arguments that we might give that would support the plausibility of this doctrine that would say, yes, this teaching or doctrine is a credible teaching.

I want to close our discussion of the Trinity with a plausibility argument that has been f g h g p f g f " d { " c " p w o d g t " q h " e q p v g o r q t c t { " E j t k u v k of persons ó not simply one person but a plurality of persons. The argument goes like v j k u 0 " D { " f g h k p k v k q p " I q f " k u " v j g " i t g c v g u v " e q p e the ontological argument. If you could conceive of anything greater than God then that would be God. So by definition God is the greatest conceivable being. Now as the greatest conceivable being God must be morally perfect. A perfect being must be morally perfect because to be morally perfect is a great-making property. Love is a moral perfection, and therefore a most perfect being (a greatest conceivable being) must be a loving being. It is better for a person to be loving than to be unloving. So as a morally perfect person God must be essentially loving ó a perfectly loving being.

When you think about the nature of love, it belongs to the very nature of love to give oneself away to another. Love reaches out to another person rather than centering wholly in oneself. If you love you are giving yourself away to another. Since God is perfectly loving by his very nature (this belongs to the essence of God) that means that God must be giving himself in love to another. But who is that other? It cannot be any created r g t u q p " d g e c w u g " e t g c v k q p " k u " c " t g u w n v " q h " I q f ø u

to the very nature of God to be loving, but it doesn't belong to the very nature of God to be creating.⁷⁶ So we can imagine a possible world in which God freely chooses to refrain from creating anything at all. There are no creatures at all in such a world and God remains solitary and alone. And yet God would still be essentially loving in such a world because love belongs to his very nature as the most perfect being. So created persons, though they are loved by God, cannot be the explanation for whom God essentially loves. Moreover we know from modern science that created persons have not always existed. The universe has been around for some 14 billion years and human beings have only appeared relatively recently on the scene. Therefore even though God loves created persons, they are not eternal. They have not always existed. But God is eternally loving.

J g " f k f p ø v " l w u v " d g i k p " v q " d g " n q x k p i " u q o g " v k o g " U q . " c i c k p . " e t g c v g f " r g t u q p u " e c p p q v " u w h h k e k g p v perfectly loving being.

K v " v j g t g h q t g " h q n n q y u " v j c v " v j g " q v j g t " v q " y j q o " internal to God himself. In other words, God is not a single isolated individual person as unitarian forms of theism like Islam hold. Rather God must be a plurality of persons as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity affirms. On a unitarian view of God like Islam, God is a person who does not give himself away essentially in love for another. He is focused essentially only on himself, and therefore he cannot be the most perfect being, the greatest conceivable being. But on the Christian view, God is a triad of persons in eternal, self-giving, love relationships. Because God is essentially loving, the doctrine of the Trinity is more plausible than any unitarian concept of God.

I think this is a very good argument for thinking that God is a plurality of persons. It f q g u p ø v " r t q x g " v j c v " I q f " k u " v j t g g " r g t u q p u . " d w v r g t u q p u " k p " I q f " v q " y j q o " I q f ø u "it serves to show " p g e g u u c the plausibility, at least, I think, of the doctrine of the Trinity.

START DISCUSSION

Student < " " K " y c u " t g e g p v n { " t g c f k p i " c " d q q m " d { " c " L g j briefly tries to give a scriptural argument against this by pointing to passages. His main c t i w o g p v " t g c n n { " t g u v u " q p " v j g " y j q n g " ð n q x g " { q w to areas in Scripture where it says the idea that you have to love yourself, and so if one can love yourself it is therefore not required for there to be another person.

Dr. Craig: I do think you could have love directed toward yourself but that's what I said. I think that on that view of God, God is entirely self-centered and self-h q e w u g f 0 " J g ø u " p c giving himself away in love. The commandment v j c v " j g ø u " s w q v k p i " k u " v q "

self-centered and selfish but to love your neighbor as you love yourself. So I think that toward others and not to be just a self-centered person but to love another. So I would actually enlist that verse in favor of this argument. It would show that it is a moral perfection to be giving oneself in love to another.

Student: It seems like the argument depends on that at least some creation is outside and not a part of God.

Dr. Craig: Right. This would be the view that there is a possible world in which God act of God and therefore he could refrain from it.⁷⁷ Also, if you think about the argument based on modern science, even if in every world God created humans beings, the fact is billions and billions of years on the vig y " v j c v " j w o c p " d g k p i u " c t g " v j g " U q " k v " u v k n n " y q w n f p ø v " g z r n c k p " j q y " I q f " e q w n f " d accidentally or contingently loving.

Student: I was listening to Nabeel, and what I thought I heard him say was that on the u w d l g e v " q h " I q f ø u " x g t { " p c v w t g " d g k p i " n q x g " v j c v been in a relationship in that love before anything. I just thought it was a beautiful way of knowing where love comes from.

Dr. Craig< " Y q p f g t h w n # " g V j r q k ø v " g z c ø v r t " i w j k p i " h q t 0 " K ø doctrine which is taught by scripture is very credible.

Student: Which is John 1:1?

Dr. Craig< " [g u . " ø K p " v j g " d g i k p p k p i " y c u " v j g " Y q t f . " c

Student: They were in relationship in love by their very nature.

Dr. Craig< " [g u . " d { " I q f ø u " x g t { " p c v w t g " j g " k u " c " v t k c one another.

Student< " G x g p " k p " y j c v " { q w " u c k f . " k v " f q g u p ø v " r t q x g plausibility of the fact that he is a triune, plural God.

Dr. Craig: You got it. Yes.

Student: I was wondering if perhaps someone could try and get around the fact that j w o c p u " y g t g p ø v " e t g c v g f " h q t " c y j k n g " d { " u c { k p i " yet due to his perfect knowledge.

Dr. Craig: V j c v ø u " p q v " c p " k o r n c w u k d n g " o q x g " v j q w i j " K t g c n n { " k u " n q x k p i " v j c v " q v j g t " r g t u q p " d g e c w u g " v knows that he will love that other person once that person exists, but to say that God is n q x k p i " v j c v " r g t u q p " l w u v " d g e c w u g " j g " m p q y u " v j c be a very rich concept of love ó of giving yourself to that other person. He will do it but not yet.

Student: So we can simply define that God is relationship.

Dr. Craig: < " N g v ø u " d g " e c t g h w n " j g t g 0 " K ø o " p q v " v t { k p i " J g ø u " c " r g t u q p " g ø u " k j t i n g r e l a t i o n s h i p s . S o w e c a n " say that by definition or by his very essence God is *in* t g n c v k q p u j k r a 0 K ' d g ø j u K ' r p q ' v J ' g ø u the person standing in the relationship.

Student: Well, we can say that God is love and love pertains to relationships so God is relationship which has the quality of love.

Dr. Craig: < " Y j g p " y g " u c { " v j c v " I q f " k a l k e d a b o u t w h e n w e n g v ø u " i q u c k f " v j g " H c v j g t " k u " I q f . " v j g " U q p " q h " I q f . " c p f " u j q w n f p ø v " w p f g t u v c p f " v j k u " v q " d g " c p " k f g p v k v { " y q t f " ð k u ö " k u " c o d k i w q w u " k p " G p k i v n k ' u j t 0 " k k v " e æ ø p " d g g q h " r t g f k e c v k q p 0 " Y j g p " y g " u c { " I q f " k u " n q x g " K " v j identity ó v j c v " u q o g j q y " n q x g " k u " I q f 0 " D w v " k v ø u " c p " ð k has the property being love. It is like saying ð v j g " e j c k t " k u " t g f 0 ö " [q w ø t g e j c k t " y k v j " c " e q n q t " d w v " { q w ø t g " u c { k p i " v j g " e j c ð I q f " k u " n q x g ö " K " y q w n f " u c { " k u " c " r t g f k e c v k q p " c it even stronger and say God is essentially love. He is essentially loving. It belongs to his nature to be loving.

Student: Is it more plausible with God loving humans on the B-theory of time vs. the A-v j g q t { " q h " v k o g A " Q h " e q w t u g . " p q y " K ø -theory k v j " { q w 0 of time. But if you believe the B-theory of time that God is outside of time then humans from his perspective would always be in existence in order to love them. Or is there still an issue with that as well?

Dr. Craig: OK. This class is too-clever-by-half bringing things up.⁷⁸ OK, remember on the so-called B-theory or tenseless theory of time, the difference between the past, present, and future is an illusion. In fact, all events in space-time from the Big Bang to the Big Crunch (if there is such a thing) are equally real and time is merely an internal ordering dimension of this four-dimensional space-time manifold or continuum. So the people who exist in 20 BC are no more real or existent than the people who exist in 1965

or the people who exist in 3015. V j g { ø t g " c n n " g s w c n n { " t g c n " c p f " I q
four-dimensional space-v k o g . " c p f " j g " n q x g u " c n n " q h " v j g u g " r g
v j c v " v j g " c t i w o g p v " v j c v " K " i c x g " d c u g f " q p " v j g " h
presupposing the A-theory of time, which is that things really do come into being and go
out of being, that the difference between past, present, and future is not an illusion ó it is
q d l g e v k x g 0 " D w v " K " v j k p m " { q w ø t g " s w k v g " t k i j v 0 " K
relatiq p u j k r " v q " k v " v j g p " k v " f q g u p ø v " o c v v g t " j q y " v j
God will just timelessly love them all. The more important point though would be that
v j k u " k u p ø v " g w k g p g v " k q n g u " p ø j v k " p " g w f c " ø g g " s g z k u v 0 " V j g t
y j g t g " I q f " f q g u p ø v " e t g c v g " k v " c p f " v j g t g h q t g " l w
version of the argument based upon the possibility of God existing alone is more
powerful than the argument based simply on temporal creation of persons.

Student: Is it possible that everything that is created is within God, and the B-theory is
e q t t g e v " k p " v j c v " c n n " v j g " r c u v " g z k u v u " w r " w p v k n
truly gives us free will and himself free will to create. He predestines certain things to
happen in the future but they have not occurred, but because of his sovereignty he creates
them as he goes.

Dr. Craig: Q M 0 " [q w " c t g " t c k u k p i " c " x g t { " k p v g t g u v k p i "
relationship to space. Classical theologians not op n { " v c n m g f " c d q w v " I q f ø u " q
v j g { " c n u q " u r q m g " k p " c " x g t { " r w | | n k p i " y c { " c d q w v
immensity is the idea that these physical things ó space ó somehow literally exist in God.
God is immense. He fills all of space, and he is present wholly at every point in space.
K v ø u " p q v " c u " v j q w i j " v j g t g ø u " c " r k g e g " q h " I q f " v j
r k g e g " q h " j k o " k p " v j g " q v j g t " t q q o " c p f " c p q v j g t " r
spread throughout space like an ether. Rather God is wholly present at every point in
space and all of space and creation is somehow in God in this sort of spatial way.

K ø o " q h " v y q " o k p f u " q p " v j k u " h t c p m n { 0 " K " v g p f " v q "
v t c p u e g p f g p e g t ~~In space or does space exist in him, but~~ that God is
d g { q p f " u r c e g " c p f " j g ø u " q o p k r t g u g p v " k p " v j g " u g p
of everything that is happening in space. At every point in space God is there in the sense
that he is causaln { " c e v k x g " v j g t g " c p f " j g " k u " e q i p k | c p v " q l

I think that doctrine is plausible in view of the doctrine of creation because this space-
v k o g " y q t n f " j c u p ø v " c n y c { u " g z k u v g f 0 " V j g t g " y c u "
k v " f g k z f k p u ø v " c v " c n n 0 " V j g t g " y c u " l w u v " I q f . " c p f " v j
coming into being of space-time would draw God into space in this way; that it would

therefore be literally in God rather than saying God transcends it. He is immanent just in
Student look at the *Improbable Planet*, they know a lot know about the big extinction episodes
and the immediate abundance of diverse life. This is like a painting of what happened in
the past and it is extreme evidence for God creating everything. There is no evolution.
was the only one that would be a death knell to that view.

Dr. Craig: any diversity of planets that might have existed in the past or distant reaches of our
universe. Those would all be encompassed within this. So even if you say that, say, our
earthly existence just occupies a little stretch on the timeline and that prior to that God
did other things, other sorts of creations and planets, they are still all within this grand
four-dimensional space
suffice to solve the problem that I spoke of
have to exist. There is a state of affairs in the actual world which is just God existing
alone without any sort of created order
God. Because all of that is a result of his free will.

Student: this doctrine was not agreed to for 300 years after Christ. I wonder what your comment
would be on why it took that long to sort of disassemble or reverse engineer and come up
with the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity? One possible answer would be, I think, that the
urgent task of the New Testament was to establish the church. And
they thought that the second coming was going to happen in their lifetimes or very soon
and so they did not feel a need to get into this kind of detail. But I wonder what your
comment would be on that.

Dr. Craig: it took 325 years to come up with the doctrine of the Trinity. The reason we went so
painstakingly through the biblical material and then each stage of church history was to
show how Christians were struggling to understand the idea that the Father is God, the
Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God and all of which is affirmed in Scripture and yet there
effort to work it out. The central affirmation or the raw material of the Trinity is already
in the New Testament. The deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and yet
monotheism. Anybody who affirms that I think is affirming the Trinity, and it just took a

while of hard thinking that went through *Logos* Christology, modalism, and then the challenge of Arianism in order to formulate this idea of three persons in one substance. So I don't find that at all surprising. The point is that the raw materials for the doctrine are right there in the New Testament.

END DISCUSSION

Let me go on to say a word about the application of the doctrine of the Trinity to our lives. There are three points that I wanted to share.

1. *The doctrine of the Trinity helps us to order our prayer lives correctly.* When the disciples came to Jesus and said to him, *Teach us to pray*, how did Jesus teach them to pray? Jesus said, *When you pray, say, "Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen."* So we are to come to the Father in the person and the authority of the Son. It is because we are in Christ that we dare to approach the throne of the holy God, sinful creatures though we are, to give our request. Then we do it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember Paul says in Romans 8, *For we do not know what to pray for as we ought but the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness with groans too deep to be uttered, and he who knows the mind of the Spirit then knows what requests we make of him and what we need.* The Spirit intercedes for us according to the will of God. On occasion pray to the Lord Jesus or invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit, the normal model for our prayer life ought to be prayer directed to the Father in the authority and name of the Son and with the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. *The Trinity provides a very healthy model of the family and the marriage relationship.* Remember we saw that in the Trinity all three of the persons are co-equal. They are all omnipotent, omniscient, morally perfect, eternal, and so forth. They are all partakers of the divine nature and so completely equal. And yet in the economic Trinity these persons take on different roles in the plan of salvation. The Father sends the Son into the world. The Son takes a human nature to himself and dies on the cross as a substitutionary punishment for our sins. The Holy Spirit then works in the place of the Son to establish the church until the Son returns to Earth. So there is a subordinationism (or a submission) of the persons in the economic Trinity. The Son submits to the Father and his will. The Holy Spirit submits to the Son and stands in his place and continues his ministry. So even though all three of the persons are co-equal there is a kind of submission of one person to another within the economic Trinity.

In the same way, in the marriage relationship the husband and the wife are co-equal before God. The husband is the head of the church as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he saves and sanctifies himself by the word of water with the word, to present to himself the church, a holy and blameless church, not having spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, that he might present it to himself in glory, without stain or anything of the kind. The church is the body of Christ, which he himself saves with the word of water by the word, to present it to himself in glory, without stain or anything of the kind.

there is neither male nor female, slave nor free, but you are all one in Christ and before God. They are all equal. Similarly, the children are equal with the parents insofar as they are in Christ and before God. They are all equal. But in the family unit, for the sake of the functioning of the family, God says submit to their parents and do as they are commanded by their parents. Contrary to what feminists assert, this does not in any way imply inferiority of the wife or of the children for that matter. This is a purely functional submission for the sake of order in the family co-equal before God.

3. Finally, I wanted to share with you an email I got this week from a student who listens to the Defenders class and wanted me to share something of the impact that the doctrine of the Trinity had on his own personal spiritual life. So I want to read this testimonial that was sent in by Diego. He said,

As you wrap up the doctrine of the Trinity in Defenders class I was hoping that at the end of your lecture you would share with the class how much of a difference some of the other attributes of God that we have already discussed.

For me, the Trinity illuminated how, as you have said, creation like salvation is an I think that you express this concept well in your article even though you were talking about [I q f ø u " t g n c v k q p u j k r " v q " v k o g 0 " U v k n n " v j k u " r c paragraph from that article]

Consider the love relationship between the members of the Trinity! Since intra-Trinitarian relations are not based on physical influence chains or rooted in any material substrata, but are, as it were, purely telepathic, the entails neither change of temporal separation. Just as we speak metaphorically of two lovers who u k v . " p q v " u r g c m k p i " c " y q t f . " i c | k p i " k p v q " v k o g n g u u " o q o g p v . ö " u q " y g " o c { " u r g c m " n k v g of the Father, Son, and Spirit for one another. . . . Within the fullness of the Godhead itself, the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit enjoy the inter-personal relations afforded by the Trinity which God is. As a Trinity, God is eternally complete, with no need of fellowship with finite

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82 See <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/divine-timelessness-and-personhood> (accessed September 30, 2016).

finite persons and invite them to share in the love and joy of the inner Trinitarian life of God.

What a gift! What a life! When I first read that it was like a switch went off in my holy and sacred the Trinity is. His aseity took on a whole new level for me because if he has a life like that why would he need anything else? I was so like me to enjoy that relationship forever. And his omniscience implied that he would know how to providentially order the world so that I would come to know incarnation and the atonement. To think that Christ would suffer the agonies of hell on the cross for my benefit so that I could enter into that relationship free from the sin that separated me from it, it brings tears to my eyes. Wow! What a God he is. This is more than I could ever expect even from the paradigm of goodness. So if you have time, please tell the folks in the class what a difference this doctrine can make in their lives. It sure has made a difference in mine.

Respectfully,

Diego

I thought that was a wonderful testimony to the practical implications in the spiritual life of this doctrine of the Trinity.

START DISCUSSION

Student: is a Christ-centered church or that. My feeling based on this study is that while that might be nice shorthand, it is not truly what we ought to be saying. We should be truly a Trinity-centered church and a Trinity-centered home. Is that correct?

Dr. Craig: I resonate with you. I remember when I first read Karl Barth, the German theologian, and his Christianity. Christianity is not Christ-centered; it is Trinity-centered. It is these three eternal persons in loving relationships ó Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ó that is the principal object of our faith. I quite agree with you on that.

Student: We all consider the Trinity one of the foundational aspects of the Christian faith. In light of that, my question is does one need to believe in the Trinity in order to be saved? What is your view on that?

Dr. Craig: I really wrestled with that. When Jan and I were at French language school in France one of the missionaries that was with us in French language school was a member of one of these Oneness Pentecostal groups.⁸³ It seemed no doubt that he was a Christian. He seemed to have a vital, vibrant relationship with Christ, and yet he did not believe in the Trinity. These Oneness Pentecostals believe that Jesus is God and that the Father and the Son are the same person. It seemed to me that perhaps it is belief in the deity of Christ that is the doctrine or theology might be excused so long as he affirms the deity of Christ for himself. But it does seem to me that what is really, really essential here would be that affirmation Jesus is Lord and that Jesus is God.

Student: I am going to attempt to break into this relationship theory in my head. Relationship by itself is ever-expanding because you keep on relating. I tried to integrate the ontological Trinity with the functional or economic Trinity in this relationship theory that when God created the heavens and Earth he put everything in the proper relationship with the Father. So the work of the Lord and Jesus said is to believe that *I come from the Father*. And we get into this relationship with Jesus and through him we get into this relationship with the Trinity. So in my mind if I think of God as relationship then we become godly and enter into a relationship mindset.

Dr. Craig: I think you are exactly right. The wonder of salvation is that we become adopted sons of God and are invited into that inner-trinitarian fellowship as adopted children of God. So salvation does consist in coming into that relationship with God. So praise be to him!⁸⁴

83 35:12

84 Total Running Time: 39:46 (Copyright © 2016 William Lane Craig)

