

The Trinity at Christmas

Scripture Readings: Luke 1:26-38 and John 1:29-34

Introduction:

The 3 truths distinctive to Christianity – as contrasted with other world religions – are the incarnation, the self-sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and the Trinity.

Karl Rahner commented that if the Trinity were to suddenly be disproved as a doctrine, most popular Christian writers wouldn't have to bother revising their books. He was right; we teach and talk like Unitarians!

The Trinity is not just a doctrinal concept to be believed:
The Trinity is our God to be loved & worshipped!

As the Disney movie says, "It's a tale as old as time." A young man and a young woman are barely friends, but things move along in the relationship. Over time, they fall in love. And they want to know everything about the other. Each wants to know about where the other grew up. She wants to know all about his family. He wants to know what it was like where she went to school.

Imagine an engaged young couple driving past a youth league ballpark. He comments, "That's where I played little league." And she replies, "Is there some way that will be a practical help in making our marriage better?" "Are you a rich professional baseball player?" "Is there something in this for me?" When the answer is no, will she then say, "Then, don't bother me with all the boring details"?

No! Because they're in love, there's nothing about the other that's disinteresting. The ones you love, you delight in knowing and understanding.

God has revealed himself to be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – a Tri-unity. *He has told us about Himself.* Yet, many modern Christians yawn, thinking this is a bunch of abstract gobbledygook. There is this attitude that "If there isn't practical benefit for me, then I don't care."

But the ones you love, you delight in knowing and understanding. The Trinity is our God... to be loved and worshipped!

The Trinity:

There is one, and only one, true God whose eternal being has been revealed to us as a tri-unity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three distinct, yet inseparable Persons possessing one and the same divine nature.

In Eternity Past:

The Father Planning

- Acts 1:7 “[Jesus] said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which *the Father* has put in His own authority.’”
- Acts 2:23 “[Jesus], being delivered *by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God*, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death”

Note: Most times in the NT, the word *God* is referring to God the Father
Sometimes, we think of a “Nice Jesus” coming to rescue us from the overly-strict and hot-headed Father. But it is the Father who initiated the plan of salvation and reached out to us.

The Son Sharing Glory

- John 17:5 “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with *the glory which I had with You before the world was.*”

Jesus’ existence didn’t begin with His birth or with His conception.

The Eternal Spirit

- Hebrews 9:14 “...Christ, who through *the eternal Spirit* offered Himself without spot to God...”

Idea that God decided to have a Spirit at some point in time to fulfill some purpose.

How long have you had your human spirit? As long as you’ve been you!

The Holy Spirit is *eternally* God; He was not created to meet a need.

The Father is the eternal Father of the eternal Son
...never a time when the Father *became* a Father
There was never a time when the Son *became* the Son
Or was created... or somehow came into being
He is from all eternity past... into all eternity future...
the eternal Son of the eternal Father
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-eternal
and co-equal in majesty.

In the incarnation, we see:

The Father Sending

- Galatians 4:4 “But when the fullness of the time had come, *God sent forth His Son*, born of a woman...”

[Parents of missionaries know something about this]

The Spirit Conceiving

- Matthew 1:20 “...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is *conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*’”

It has been said that Jesus was without mother in Heaven and without no father on earth. The Holy Spirit made this possible.

The Son Humbling Himself

- Philippians 2:5-8, NASB “...Although He [Jesus] existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, *He humbled Himself* by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Jesus hung His *glory robes* on a hook on the way out of the door to earth.

In Heaven... On earth...

Recognized by all... Some only, by special revelation.

Worshipped by all... Worshipped by a few

Residing in Glory with the Father... Born in a barn, living in a world of suffering and sin

- 2 Corinthians 8:9 “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that *though He was rich*, yet for your sakes *He became poor*, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

In Jesus' Life and Ministry:

The Father Directing

- John 8:28, Amplified “...I do nothing of Myself (of My own accord or on My own authority), but *I say [exactly] what My Father* has taught Me.”

Jesus lived as Adam was supposed to live
 And as we are supposed to live
 In constant fellowship with the Father
 In complete reliance upon the Father
 And in continuous obedience to the Father

The Spirit Empowering

- Luke 4:14 “Then [after his temptation] Jesus returned *in the power of the Spirit* to Galilee...”
- Matthew 12:28 “But if I cast out demons *by the Spirit of God*, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Jesus is the prototype of the Spirit-filled life.

The Son Revealing

- John 1:18, CSB “No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side—*he has revealed him.*”

God the Father is above and beyond us. It seems sometimes that He is in shadows and aloof from us. However, He has not been a distant Father. In Jesus Christ, He has reached out to us and made Himself known.

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