

The Triune God
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Let me begin this morning by briefly summarizing what I spoke to you about last week concerning God's character and nature. Many of you were not here due to either sickness or travel, and what I want to speak on this morning is dependent on understanding at least few basic truths about God.

We start with a working definition for Him. *"God is a spirit who is infinite and eternal in His being, perfect and unchangeable in His attributes, and in Whom all things have their source, support and end."* This definition alone demonstrates that God is something completely different from man. Many of His attributes do not exist in man at all because He is infinite in all respects. One consequence of this is that we cannot fully comprehend Him for we are but finite creatures. We are entrapped in the time space continuum but God encompasses it existing outside of it and permeating it all at the same time. In addition, because God made man in His image, He has placed some shared attributes within man, but man's sin has greatly tarnished and diminished them so that even in these God is very different from man. That means it is blasphemous for man to project upon God his own characteristics for such thoughts would be false ideas about God.

God is eternal because He is infinite with respect to time. He is without beginning or end existing before time began and continuing to exist after time ends. God is omnipresent because He is infinite with respect to space with His divine essence being everywhere present at the same time. God is also self-existent having life within Himself and having no cause prior to Him. Man is the opposite of all of these coming into existence at a particular time in a particular location in space due to a chain of physical causes and ultimately existing because of the action of God. These truths also apply to God's essence as a spiritual being and man's spirit created by God in reflection of Himself. God's spirit is unlimited in all respects while man's spirit is limited in time and space both now and in eternity.

God is omniscient knowing all things about everything because He is infinite with respect to knowledge. God is omnipotent because He is infinite with respect to power. He is the Creator, the source of everything that exists and He continues to sustain all of Creation by His own power, and neither of these cause any loss of power to Himself. Or to state it another way. He created the laws of thermodynamics and placed them upon His creation but those laws do not apply to Him. Man is a finite being in all respects having limited knowledge and power and in a state of decline from even before conception since the genetic code he receives from his parents is damaged compared to them.

All of these qualities of being infinite means that God is sovereign. There is nothing greater than God. He is the supreme authority. There is nothing that can thwart His will for nothing can outlast Him, nothing can avoid Him, nothing can out smart Him, nothing can over power Him. Despite how much man wants to think of himself as autonomous, man is completely subject to God's sovereignty. Man's freedom exists only within the boundaries God has placed upon him.

God is also immutable meaning He is unchanging in His essence and attributes. He is always completely consistent with Himself. Man is very mutable changing constantly in every direction and back again.

There are also characteristics of God in which man shares because God created man in His image. However, man is both limited in them as a physical creature and sin has corrupted them in man. Among God's communicable attributes are holiness, righteousness, truth, love, goodness, longsuffering, mercy, grace, forgiveness, jealousy, anger, wrath, and justice. Everyone one of these attributes in God is also marked by holiness and each works in perfect harmony with every other attribute. The attributes we think of negative such as jealousy, anger and wrath are perfectly balanced by God's love, mercy, grace

and justice. Man has or is commanded to also have every one of these attributes, but in man they are all tainted by sin so that they are usually out of balance with each other and are not holy except to some extent in the true Christian. This is why it is wrong for man to project his own characteristics upon God in trying to understand Him. When that is done it almost always blasphemous because it is projecting falsehoods upon God. The bottom line is this. God is not like you, so quit thinking that He is by projecting upon Him your thoughts and ideas. God states directly in Isaiah 55:8-9 which was part of our Scripture reading today, ⁸ *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts”* This is critical to being able to find a resolution for the theological conundrums we are going to talk about today and next week.

A conundrum is simply a confusing or difficult problem, often set as a riddle. Because God is so different from us there is much about Him and what He does that is confusing to us. There are aspects of His nature that we cannot fully comprehend and must learn to accept by faith that what He reveals about Himself is true even when we do not understand it because it is outside all human points of reference. There are things that He declares and does that seem contradictory because we do not know how all of God’s various attributes work together in harmony with one another or the exact nature of the boundaries He has set for man. We begin this morning with a conundrum about God’s very nature of being triune. One God existing in three persons. I will deal with additional conundrums in the future.

The Trinity

Trinity is a theological term first used by Tertullian at the end of the 2nd Century to refer to God’s revelation of Himself as a plural unity of one God existing in three co-equal but distinct persons. This is a concept that is reasonable, but beyond reason because it is not within the realm of human experience. It is a logical construct derived from two absolute Biblical facts. 1) There is only one God. 2) There are three distinct persons who are each God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Only One God. Many Scripture passages assert that there is only one true God. I will go over a few of them and reference others.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, A passage referred to as The Shema, - ⁴ *“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!”* ⁵ *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”* Jesus asserts the truth of the Shema in Mark 12:29-31.

Included in Solomon’s blessing in 1 Kings 8:60 after dedicating the Temple, *“so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no one else.”*

Similar statements occur throughout Isaiah including Isaiah 45:21, *“Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.”*

Similar statements are found in Deuteronomy 4:35,39; 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 37:16, 20; 42:8; 43:10; 44:6,8; 45:5-6, 18; Jeremiah 10:10-11; Psalm 83:18; 86:10, Malachi 2:20

In Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17:22-23 He includes the statement, ²² *“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”*

Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; ⁴ *“Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.”* ⁵ *For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, ⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.”*

(Similar statements can be found in John 10:30; 17:3; Galatians 3:20; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5)

Yet even in these statements that God is one there is revelation that He is a plural unity. The first clear statement is Genesis 1:26 concerning Him making man, *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. . ."* Notice the three plural pronouns - Us, Our and Our. To Whom is God talking with that He will make man in His image? It is not angels since they do not have the power to create people. Another indicator of plurality not noticeable to us in an English translation is that the Hebrew word used for God there, and in most other places it is used to reference God our Creator, is in the plural form Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) instead of the singular El (אֱלֹהִים). This even occurs in the Shema.

Deuteronomy 6:4 declares, *"Hear O Israel! the LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"* The word for God there is Elohim which is plural. In addition, the Hebrew word for one there, echad (אֶחָד), *"stresses unity while recognizing diversity within that oneness"* (TWOT 61), so even the cardinal number for one allows for a plurality.

The Father is God. The identity of the LORD God as Father occurs in both Testaments. In both Exodus 4:22 and Deuteronomy 14:1 the nation of Israel is identified as the sons of the LORD. Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8 both directly state of the LORD that *"You are our Father."* The LORD speaks in Jeremiah 3:19 of a future restoration of Israel telling them, *"You shall call Me, My Father, And not turn away from following Me."* The concept of God as Father is further developed in the New Testament in which multitudes of times He is called *"the heavenly Father"* (Matthew 5:48, etc.), *"our Father"* (Matthew 6:9), *"the Father"* (Matthew 24:36; John 4:21; 6:27; Ephesians 5:20; 1 John 1:3), *"God our Father"* (Romans 1:7, etc., James 1:27, 1 Peter 1:3), and *"God the Father"* (1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 John 3; Jude 1).

The Son is God. The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is well attested throughout the New Testament. A paper on Jesus' deity and humanity is in the literature rack. Here is a brief synopsis of the reasons Jesus is God. **1)** Jesus claims to be the Son of God (John 10:36) who pre-existed with the Father (John 17:5), is one with the Father (John 10:30), and identifies Himself with the covenant name of God, *"I Am"* (John 8:58). **2)** He is proclaimed to be God by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14 - cf. Matthew 1:22f), the apostles John (John 1:1, 14, 18), Thomas (John 20:28), Paul (Titus 2:13), the writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 1:3); Peter (2 Peter 1:1) and Jude (24-25). **3)** Jesus has the attributes of deity including being eternal (John 17:5,24), omnipresent (Matthew 28:20), omniscient (Colossians 2:3), omnipotent (Matthew 28:18; Revelation 1:8), and immutable (Hebrews 1:10-12; 13:8). **4)** He has the offices of deity as the creator and sustainer of all things (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17), and authority over the laws and institutions of God (Matthew 12:6). **5)** Jesus has the prerogatives of deity including forgiving sins (Matthew 9:2-7); judging the world (John 5:22) and raising people from the dead (John 5:25-29; 11:25). **6)** Jesus received honor and worship due only to God (Matthew 28:9; John 14:1; Philippians 2:10-11). **7)** He fulfilled the prophecies concerning being the Messiah as documented in our Life of Christ series.

The Holy Spirit is God. Contrary to the cults claiming that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force that emanates from God, He also is deity and has personhood. In John 14:16 Jesus describes Him as having the same essence as Himself as *"another"* (heteros) comforter. In Acts 5:3-4 Peter directly equates Him with God telling Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit in verse 3 and that he had *"not lied to men, but to God"* in verse 5. That also demonstrates His personhood because you cannot lie to a force. The Holy Spirit has the attributes of deity including omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-12) and omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). He also has the prerogatives of deity being part of Creation (Genesis 1:2) and redemption (John 3:5-8; 16:7-12). His personhood is established by having intelligence, will and emotion (1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 4:30).

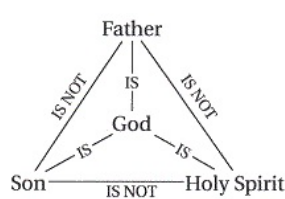
Triune Passages. There are several passages in which all three members of the Triune Godhead are presented together. The formula for Christian baptism is to be *"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19). Similar triune formulas are used in salutations such as 1 Peter 1:2 and benedictions such as 2 Corinthians 13:14. All three are present at the same time at the blessing pronounced upon Jesus at His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17). All three are involved in salvation

with 1 Peter 3:18 stating, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.” All three are involved in the origin of spiritual gifts, the particular ministry in which they are used and their empowerment (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Perhaps my favorite triune passage is actually in Hebrew Scriptures, Isaiah 48:12-16.

Notice in verse 12-13 that the speaker identifies Himself as, “I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens.” The speaker is the eternal Creator. Drop down to verse 16. “Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit.” The Lord God, Adoni Elohim, sent Me, the eternal creator, and His Spirit. All three members of the triune Godhead distinct from and interacting with each other.

The Conundrum. The difficulty for us is that we cannot understand how there can be only one God who is indivisible in His essence, yet within that unified essence there are three distinct persons who are co-eternal, co-equal, and co-substantial. That is what God has revealed about Himself and therefore it is to be believed. All efforts to reduce God into something understandable to men results in blasphemous heresy because they teach something false about God.

The Trinitarian Triangle is a good illustration of the truth God reveals about Himself in the Scriptures, however keep in mind that God is infinite while the illustration is finite.



We may not understand this, but it is not illogical or contradictory. *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* has a good discussion of this from which come the following selected quotes and my summarizations.

Though we do not understand the Trinity, it is both logical and reasonable for it does not violate any laws of rational thought. The contradictions people ascribe to this doctrine are due to either not understanding what the Bible does teach or rejection of it because they insist that God be understandable to them.

First, “*The Trinity is not the belief that God is three persons and only one person at the same time and in the same sense. . . Rather, it is the belief that there are three persons in one nature.*” That is a mystery beyond human comprehension, but it is not past human reason to recognize that it is still logical and not a contradiction.

“*Further, the Trinity is not the belief that there are three natures in one nature or three essences in one essence. . . Rather, Christians affirm that there are three persons in one essence. . . Or, to put it in terms of the law of non-contradiction, while God is one and many at the same time, He is not one and many in the same sense. He is one in the sense of his essence but many in the sense of his persons.*”

“*By saying God has one essence and three persons it is meant that he has one “What” and three “Whos.” The three Whos (persons) each share the same What (essence). So God is a unity of essence with a plurality of persons. Each person is different, yet they share a common nature.*”

God’s unity is in His essence, (what He is), and God’s plurality is in His persons, (who he is). The Biblical names Father, Son and Spirit used for the three persons of the Trinity give us some understanding of the interrelationship between those persons with the description of the interactions between them giving us even more. For example, “*God is the head of Christ*” (1 Cor. 11:3), “*No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him*” (John 1:18), “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life*” (John 3:16), “*When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me*” (John 15:26). These and other descriptions help us gain some understanding of the interrelationships of the persons within the Trinity and how each carries out their own work. However, it must be remembered that each person within the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit is fully God and all three share the same essence so that they unify as one Being.

There are many illustrations given to try to help grasp the nature of the Triune God. Some, like the Trinitarian Triangle are helpful, but all fail to some degree because we are still trying to use finite terms to describe an infinite being. Many illustrations fail because they include separable parts, and God is not separable. For example, God is not like a chain of three links because each link is separable and no one link equals the whole. The same is true of the illustration using a three leaved clover. Many illustrations are actually heretical as I will point out in a few minutes. Here are a couple of other illustrations that might be helpful in trying to grasp the concept of a Triune God.

Mathematical: God is like $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ or 1^3 for God is triune, not triplex ($1 + 1 + 1 = 3$) which is heretical. I have used $A=D, B=D, C=D$, but $A \neq B \neq C$ to show that God is outside of our understanding, but that illustration fails because A, B & C are actually co-equal, but they are distinct and not each other. It is better to use A is D, B is D, C is D, but A is not B is not C is not A.

Personal. Since God is love (1 John 4:16), Augustine used this as an illustration. Love cannot exist unless there is a lover, a beloved and a spirit of love between them. The Father is the lover, Jesus is the beloved, and the Holy Spirit is the spirit of love between them. This is a personal illustration since love only flows from persons. However, each person of the Trinity is fully God and therefore also love being the lover of each, the beloved of each and the spirit of love between each.

A quick note about this when working with Muslims. Islam rejects the Trinity for several reasons, the first is its denial of the incarnation and that God would have a Son since Muslims conceive that only in a gross, fleshy way. The second is that the unity of God cannot also have a plurality. However, Islam has a plural unity within its own belief system. Muslims believe the Qur'an is eternal and uncreated as the expression of God's mind which is as imperishable as God himself. That is a plurality within a unity for it is something other than God that is one with God in essential characteristics. You can use that belief to point them to Jesus Christ who is the eternal Word that has revealed God to man (John 1:1; Hebrews 1:1-3; etc.).

Trinitarian Heresies

In striving to gain an understanding of a difficult concept it is important to look at both what it is and what it is not. God has revealed Himself to be Triune and we have examined some ideas in trying to understand what that means. Stated simply, the Trinity is a plural unity of one God existing in three co-equal but distinct persons. Each person within the Trinity is fully God and yet the three are an inseparable unity. Knowing what something is not is helpful in clarifying what it is, so I want to briefly look at some of the heresies concerning the Trinity. These ideas were developed with a goal of trying to understand God, which can be commendable, but because each presents an idea that contradicts what God has revealed about Himself, they are false and therefore heretical.

One of the earliest heresies was tritheism because that easily fit the pagan mind. This heresy asserts the existence of three distinct Gods and therefore denies the unity of God's essence. It is having three gods instead of one God. This is the $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ idea. This is a pagan, polytheistic understanding of the Trinity.

Another early heresy is known as Monarchianism, modalism or in its more sophisticated form, Sabellianism, developed by the heretic Sabellius in the early third century. The basic premise in all of them is that one God changes modes to appear as three different persons. Two common illustrations that represent this heresy are water and relationships. Water is a single element that can exist in three states: vapor (steam), liquid (water) or solid (ice), but each mode can change into the other modes and is therefore a heretical illustration of God. The Father is not nor does He become either the Son or the Spirit neither of whom are or become the other or the Father. The relationship illustration of one man fulfilling three distinct roles as a son, a husband and a father, is also heretical for God is three distinct persons and not one person fulfilling different roles. There is no change of modes by any of the persons in the Trinity.

Another early heresy was Arianism, named after the heretic Arius (A.D. 256-336). This is also called subordinationism. In this heresy God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are subordinated to God the Father in nature and being so that they become lesser gods or a lesser god (Jesus) and a force (the Holy Spirit). In reality, this is polytheistic since there is more than one God even if the others are subordinate to Him. This is one of the heretical beliefs of Jehovah Witnesses. They have a different Jesus for God the Son in the Bible is also called “*the Mighty God*” (Isaiah 9:6), “*the Almighty*” (Revelation 1:8) and by God’s covenant name, Yahweh (the LORD) (Exodus 3:14 cf John 8:58; Isaiah 44:6).

A final heresy in this area is Unitarianism in which God is a singular unity. The Father, Son and Spirit are all part of and together form God, but the individual divinity of each person in the Trinity is denied. An illustration of this heresy is an egg which has a shell, white & yolk,(actually, it has a lot more than three parts), but all the parts must be together to be an egg,

Conclusions

The Athanasian Creed was developed in the battle against Arius and it defines our understanding of what the Bible declares about the nature of God as being Triune. To paraphrase and summarize the section dealing with the Trinity, “*we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance. . . the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit] is all one: . . . [They are] equal in glory and co-eternal in majesty, uncreated, eternal, almighty, immeasurable. There are not three Gods; but one God. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy [Spirit] Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord, For like as we are compelled . . . to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord, So are we forbidden . . . to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created; nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made; neither created; nor begotten; but proceeding. . . in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal . . . the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.*”

This last part is crucial for us. While the Triune nature of God maybe confusing, you must believe what God has declared about Himself lest you endanger your soul by believing blasphemy about God in the attempt to reduce Him down to something you can understand. It is one thing to be ignorant or confused, and quite something else to deny truth about God once it is revealed. You cannot be saved by the wrong God or wrong Jesus. There is only one God and He will not tolerate any other god or allow His glory to be given to another (Exodus 20:3-5; Isaiah 42:8), so polytheism excludes salvation. A Jesus who is not God or is a lesser god cannot redeem man and is not the Savior. An impersonal Holy Spirit cannot convict of sin, righteousness or judgment.

People reject the Trinity or adulterate it because it is too complex for them to understand, but that is exactly one of the reasons that it is true. Man could not come up with this doctrine if he would, and he would not come up with it if he could.

The God who has revealed Himself in the holy Scriptures is beyond human understanding because He Himself is neither a man nor the creation of man. He is the Creator God who is infinitely greater and more complex than man or what man can even imagine. It is as He Himself has declared in Isaiah 55:8-9, ⁸ “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*” declares the LORD. ⁹ “*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.*”

If you can understand the God you worship, then you have a lesser god of human imagination and not the LORD God, Creator of heaven and earth, eternal, all knowing, everywhere present, all powerful, unchanging, and sovereign. You will have to decide for yourself what god you will worship, but as for me and my house, we will humble ourselves and serve the LORD.

Sermon Notes - January 12, 2020
The Triune God - Selected Scriptures

Introduction -

God is a spirit who is infinite and eternal in His being, perfect and unchangeable in His attributes, and in Whom all things have their source, support and end

God is a self-existent & Spirit who is infinite with respect to time (_____), space (omnipresent), knowledge (omniscient), power (omnipotent) and is therefore the Sovereign. God is immutable (unchanging) in His essence & attributes - always completely consistent with Himself

God's communicable attributes are holy & in perfect _____ while man's reflection of them is distorted

God is not like man (Isaiah 55:8-9), so do not project _____ characteristics or limitations upon Him

The Trinity

A theological term for God's nature as a _____ of one God existing in three co-equal distinct persons

1) There is only one God. 2) There are three distinct _____ who are God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Only One God. Deut. 6:4-5 / Mark 12:29-31; 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 45:21; John 17:22-23; 1 Cor. 8:4-6

There is a plurality within the one God: _____ in Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4, etc.

The Father is God. Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:1; Isaiah 63:16 & 64:8; Jeremiah 3:19; throughout NT

The Son (Jesus) is God. 1) Jesus claims to be the Son of _____ (John 10:36; 17:5; 10:30 & 8:58)

2) Jesus is called / identified as God by _____, Matthew, John Thomas, Paul, Hebrews 1:1; Peter & Jude

3) Jesus has the _____ of deity: eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, immutable

4) He has the _____ of deity: Creator & sustainer of all things (Jn 1:3; Col. 1:16-17); all authority (Mt 12:6)

5) He has the _____ of deity: Forgive sin (Mt 9:2-7), judge the world (Jn 5:22), raise the dead (Jn 11)

6) Jesus receives _____ only due God (Jn 14:1; Phil. 2:10-11) and 7) fulfills all the Messianic prophecies

The Holy Spirit is God. He is another (hetros) comforter. He is identified as _____ by Peter in Acts 5

He has the _____ and prerogatives of deity (omnipresence, omniscience, redeems sinful man, etc.)

He is a _____ having intelligence, will and emotion (1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 4:30)

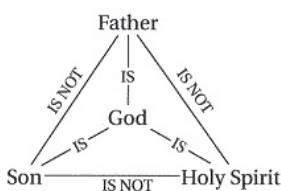
Triune Passages. Formulas: _____ (Mt. 28:19), salutations (1 Pet. 1:2), benedictions (2 Cor. 13:14)

All present at Jesus' baptism (Mt. 3); all involved in _____ (1 Pet. 3:18), & spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12)

Isaiah 48:12-16. The Lord God (Adoni Elohim), sent Me (the eternal creator), and His _____

The Conundrum. How can God be only one & indivisible, yet also be three distinct persons who are God?

Believe what God has _____ about Himself and do not reduce Him to something understandable to you



We may not understand this, but it is not illogical or contradictory

Contradictions people ascribe to the Trinity are due to their ignorance or _____

The Trinity is not 3 persons & only 1 person at the same time & in the same _____

The Trinity is three persons in one nature (essence)

While God is one and many at the same time, He is not one and many in the same _____

God has one What (essence) and three _____ (persons)

Biblical _____ (Father, Son & Spirit) & descriptions give some understanding of the interrelationships
The Father is the head who gives from His bosom the Son who sends the Spirit that proceeds from the Father
God is not like a 3 linked chain or a 3 leafed clover each link / leaf is separable & no link / leaf = the whole
God is like $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ or 1^3 but not like $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$. A is D, B is D, C is D, but A is not B is not C

Trinitarian Heresies - Knowing what something is not _____ in understanding what it is

Truth: The Trinity is a plural unity of one God existing in three _____ but distinct persons

Tritheism - Asserts there are 3 distinct Gods & denies the _____ of God's essence. $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$

Monarchianism / modalism / Sabellianism. God _____ mode to appear as 3 different persons

Heretical illustrations: _____ (vapor, liquid, solid). Relationships (son, husband, father)

Arianism / subordinationism. God the Son & God the Holy Spirit are _____ to God the Father

This is _____ since Jesus is a lesser god and the Holy Spirit is non-personal force. Jehovah's Witness

Heresy: Unitarianism. The Father, Son & Spirit together form God, but _____ divinity is denied

Heretical Illustration: An _____ - which consists of a shell, white & yolk

Conclusions - Athanasian Creed (<https://www.christian-history.org/athanasian-creed.html>)

The Triune nature of God may be _____, but it must be believed lest you endanger your soul

There is only one God who will not tolerate any other (Exod. 20) which excludes _____

A Jesus who is not God or is a lesser god cannot _____ man and is not the Savior

An impersonal Holy Spirit cannot _____ of sin, righteousness or judgment.

The _____ of the Trinity is a reason we know it is true - man neither could or would imagine it

The God of the Bible is beyond our understanding because He is _____ & we are finite (Isaiah 55:8-9)

An understandable god is a lesser god of human _____ & not the LORD God, Creator of everything

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children**

- draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch.

Older Children - 1) Count how many times God is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about what it means that there is one God who exists in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Define God. What are His infinite attributes? What are His communicable attributes? What Biblical facts drive the belief in a Triune God? List scriptures that teach the following: There is only one God. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. The only God is a plurality. The simultaneous presence or action of all three persons of the Trinity. Read Isaiah 48:12-16 and explain why this teaches God is triune. Define what the Trinity is and what it is not. What are some illustrations of the Trinity that are helpful in explaining it. What is the weakness of Augustine's God is love illustration? Explain each of the following heresies: Tritheism. Monarchianism / modalism / Sabellianism. Arianism / subordinationism. Unitarianism. Why are each of the following illustrations of the trinity poor or heretical: A chain of three links. A three leafed clover. Water. Relationships. An egg. Read the Athanasian Creed and highlight the sections that help you understand the Trinity. Why would the rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity be damning to the soul? Why is the Trinity necessary for the gospel of Jesus Christ? Why is the complexity / incomprehensible nature of the Trinity proof it is true? What kind of god does a person have if they can claim that they understand Him? Explain.