

Beloved in the Lord,

He is revealed to us in God's Word this great plan of salvation. It is inconceivable to the world and beyond the imagination of any man, woman or child to conceive of. It would demand that a human being on his own come up with the reality of God, then a proper knowledge of that God and realize his position before God. What's more, if that person could somehow attain the knowledge of the Lord our God, he would be of godlike proportion himself, and thus, the need for God would be, if not diminished, non-existent.

When Adam sinned as the head of humanity, he plunged us all into sin and death but also religious ignorance and ever since, man, in his silly ways, continues to conjure up new gods for himself to explain the creation or to explain the sad reality he sees around him.

But there is God. The Lord God who made the heavens and the earth He alone is God, and there is no other God beside him. He revealed himself first through the creation, but after Adam's tragic act moved to bring to fruition the promise, He had made within Himself to save a people for Himself. But the people had to come to know Him. So, He acted, moved, and revealed Himself in beautiful ways by speaking, signs, wonders, and visions. Maybe no act was more potent than when He, god by god, destroyed the pantheon of Egypt so that even Pharaoh could not stop the carnage of the firstborn sons. And when Pharaoh, by His last act of rebelled and sent the troops after the redeemed community, He sent the walls of water there by the Red Sea crashing in on Israel. There could be no doubt that He alone was God, and no others were beside Him. He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of covenant and God alone!

It was He by Moses (and others) who wrote, ***Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. He also*** wrote, "Have no other gods before me." In the Old Testament, it was essential that God was to be known and that there were no other gods! All of this was revealed to us through the scriptures, the written revelation of God. Fundamental to our worship of God is that we know Him, and to know Him, He must make Himself clearly known, and so He has. He is one God.

Yet we read this afternoon from Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism that this one God is three in one. We would say that God is three in one, on the essence and indivisible, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit God and yet the Father is not the Son nor the Spirit the Father, but each is of and is to be worshipped as God. Based on flawed human logic, it is not something we can explain very well, yet the whole revelation of Scripture is divine logic. The doctrine of the Trinity is fundamental to it. It is one of the challenges of the missionary.

How does a missionary present the Gospel in a way simple to understand without mentioning Jesus? We cannot explain Jesus Christ and how He was crucified and resurrected without answering the question, "who is he?" We must answer: "He is the Son of God!" And how do we teach that truth without dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity? When we read of the creation and the word spoken (John 1- in the beginning was the word who is Jesus) and the Spirit hovering over the creation without teaching the doctrine of the Trinity, We must deal with the blessings in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and baptism, not into the names but the name as we go out into the world making disciples of them. Matthew, by the Spirit of God, reveals this remarkable presentation of the gospel and the Trinity in the baptism of Jesus. Here is the beginning of Jesus' work. The end of the work is the great commission and the command to baptize in the name of the Father, son and Holy spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is everywhere, so we confess God in here persons, blessed Trinity! I bring you the Word of the Lord under the theme:

The Lord God Reveals Himself as Triune at the Baptism of Jesus.

1. The Wonder of the Revelation and 2. The Power of It

Wonder Why is Jesus getting baptized? Jesus was perfect, and John was giving the baptism of repentance. The kingdom of God and such demanded confession of sin and a change of life and heart. The baptism signified the dying away of the older man and the coming to life of the new. But Jesus represented the new man. He was perfect! He was obedient. He never sinned.

See, Jesus, too, must represent sinful humanity. He had taken on the human body's deterioration unto His incorruptible self! He was not the Son of man to become God, but the son of God become man to become head of the redeemed people. He had come to be the King! As King of the covenant people, He had to be a brother; he was one of them selected to the office by the power of the Father and the Spirit. Jesus had come to earth to be the Christ, the anointed, the Messiah.

And so, He came to Jordan. The Jordan was the place where Naaman had to wash. It was not the most sparkling of rivers but rather brownish-looking water. Nonetheless, this is where Naaman was baptized, washed seven times and came out as clean as a baby, so now was his formerly leprous skin!

But Jordan was, of course, known for more than that. For it was just on the other side of the Jordan that Israel needed to repent. Then under the leadership of Joshua, the men and

boys were circumcised so that they could as clean enter the land and partake of the Passover, as opposed to those who would be forever cut off. Yahweh demanded clean hands and a clean heart. He alone was God. By His man Joshua, the name that means the Lord saves! Yahweh brought His people through the Jordan into the new Kingdom of Israel to be a God unto them and to bring the exiles home. Here the household of faith was set up, and the holy marriage was established between God and His people. Here the twelve stones were set up as a memorial for all God had done. This was the place of remarkable revelation.

Now comes the new Joshua. Now comes the one with the Aramaic name that means the lord Saves! He comes to Jordan, for it is there that He will identify with His people. Jesus will now go beyond the office and work of Joshua but must take on the responsibilities of Adam. He must bear the image of God ideally and yet must bear the sins of the image breakers obediently. So, Jesus has come to be baptized so that the people of God might be redeemed. He was chosen for this, and He agreed to do this and now must be empowered for this. Jesus, the Son of God, has become a man. He is thirty years old and is now ready to begin the work of bringing salvation to the world.

Do you see him now as He enters the water? It is as if He is unclean somehow. It feels improper to John, but John needs to understand the Messiah's role. So, God, in a powerful way, portrays what we see in the descent of Jonah into the depths of the sea. Jesus must be submerged. Jesus must drown. Jesus must die like a sinner. Jesus is the new Adam, and as such, He must take back to Himself what Adam lost, namely life and eternal life, not for Himself but for others! This is a most marvellous and wonderful revelation of the goodness of God.

But there is more for now. He comes up out of the watering dripping wet. He was refreshed, renewed and clean. The act is deplorable had he remained submerged! It would have put a terrible stamp on this Gospel if he had remained somehow on the riverbed forever covered by the water. Now He rises out of the water. He is alive and well. The man who needs change becomes like those who do and then reveals the promise of a coming resurrection to be excellent to imagine. Yes, a man must be born again! A man must be saved. A man must die to sin and be alive to God (Romans 6:1-5).

The Kingdom of God is at hand. And there, by the river, the voice of God the Father is added to this beautiful revelation! This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased! Jesus is revealed as the Son of God. And the Spirit of God descends upon Him in the form of a dove.

The voice, the lamb and the dove are all there by the Jordan. And peace like a river attends our souls!

The Power: Why now? Why does God appear this way now? There, at the creation of the universe, the Spirit hovered over the creation and was instrumental in the creation of man. The Word created all things, and that Word was Jesus Christ, as John 1 tells us. We realize that all three were involved in the creation, salvation and sanctification. All three have their role and work with and through each other. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are all there by the Jordan.

We are once drawn to that wonder. Jesus is the Son of God first. The Father speaks that way. The child of God knows this and confesses it; still, it is a wonder. We are reminded of God looking over Adam and Eve on that sixth day and declaring it was perfect. God the Father is pleased with this Son who has become a son of Adam. He is fit to represent the body of Christ. It is not revealed to all but to the Son, John, and us. Jesus is the bearer of the image of God. He has stepped in for a fallen man and is now approved as King and the appropriate substitute. He has been appointed to be a priest and anointed to be a prophet.

Yes, there He is, the Son of God. But He is fully human—Philippians 2:1-11 tells us that much. He is a faithful God and a true man! He is wet, and He is happy in the presence of God and with the approval of the King. He has come to save the people of God. He has come to preach the Gospel of salvation. He has come to signs and wonders. He has come to take on Satan and destroy the evil one! He is the one who will reconcile with the people.

But He comes by the Father's will and approval. The Father is gracious and so loved us that He sent us to die for us. That Father and the Son love one another, and so this action for us poor sinners. This is the revelation of the precious love of God. Herein the revelation of God's faithfulness is made known.

But too, the Holy Spirit has come. There is a sense that Jesus has become a man and, as such, needs the power of the Holy Spirit. He is anointed as the new Adam and the head of the new humanity. But as Adam was enlivened by the Lord and giver of life, so to Jesus becomes Christ by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Like a dove, He comes from heaven to set Jesus apart. There is something inherently different between John and Jesus. John baptized with water, but Jesus received the Holy Spirit.

And so, Jesus is commissioned to bring the promises of God to fruition. Here is the beginning of the new creation, Adam, humanity, and the Kingdom's restoration. In the

beginning, there were three and now too! Yet even after Jesus' work on earth in terms of His physical death and resurrection is accomplished, He makes clear that as the new Adam, he will have dominion over the earth. Matthew recalls that Jesus reminded the disciples of their commission as the ambassadors of the King.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The baptism of repentance has been transformed into baptism into Christ into the one name of the triune God Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is a reminder that just as Jesus was sent as part of the Trinity, the Trinity endowed Jesus with royalty and authority, authorizing them to incorporate people by baptism into the name that is the revelation of God's father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Conclusion We cannot get around it. If we tell the story of redemption, we will be at a loss to bypass this wonderful truth. God is one and three in one. Jesus is the Son of God with whom the Father is well pleased and anointed by the Spirit. But how can this be? But it is for God is God and the divine math is most beautiful. This fills us with new devotion as we realize what our triune God did for us in sending the Son. We respond with deep heartfelt love when we realize what Jesus did for us! By the Spirit, we know and believe these things.

Is this not part of that beautiful comfort we have in life and death. We are not our own but belong to Jesus Christ, who has redeemed and has reconciled us to the Father who by the spirit makes us ready and willing to serve Him. And as God is all in all working in the totality of His immense being for our salvation, we in the finite truth of our existence must give it all back with all that we have! So, we will tell the extraordinary story of our God, Yahweh, who made the heavens and the earth. He is one! He is three in one. Blessed be the name of the Lord who has saved in Christ and sanctified us by the spirit, so as Jesus became Christ, we become Christians baptized into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit! Amen