

The One God

As we talked about last week in our discussion on...

1

Doctrine vs Judgment

Over the course of the next few weeks we will be looking at doctrines that have been established in the Word of Truth that are immutable, they cannot be argued against, at least not in any way that might disavow their validity. As we saw in our examples from Hebrews 10:25 where the doctrine of assembly is commanded, there are still judgments that need to be made. Where to assemble, when to assemble, these are judgments that God has left up to man to decide as long as we understand that the doctrine of assembly cannot be denied and that any judgments we make must be in harmony with that doctrine. Many of the doctrines that we will be looking at are like this. God reveals His will in the form of doctrine, but allows us to make our own judgments in the how. That said, we must also note that there are doctrines that God has established that are not open for any judgment from man at all, they are immutable, unchangeable. Some of those things are established in the passage we looked at in Ephesians...

Eph 4:1-6

2

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is **ONE BODY** and **ONE SPIRIT**, just as also you were called in **ONE HOPE** of your calling; 5 **ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, 6 ONE GOD AND FATHER** of all who is over all and through all and in all.

These things are absolute. Man might argue till the day he dies that there is more than one body or one baptism, but seriously, that is just as foolish as arguing that there is no sun. The truth should be as obvious as the burning sun is. Now let's look at... 3

Gen 1:1

4

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

This term "God" here, comes from the Hebrew...

Elohiym (el-o-heem') OT:430

5

Plural form of OT:433 OT:433 elowahh, meaning a god in the ordinary sense.

This is something that is important in our studies that we recognize that in the Hebrew there is a distinction between the term god, as in a description and the Hebrew Yahweh, which is the proper name, used to describe God. Yahweh is the English pronunciation of the term, Jehovah is also used.

Why I find this so interesting is that the terms, El, Elohim, and the various other derivations of the word are descriptions. The context is what told the translators that what was under discussion was either Yahweh or one of the idol gods that were so common in the Old Testament. What makes this so interesting is that the terms derived from the root El were used to describe God. The concept of God in Genesis 1:1 is being used in the plural which would indicate that the God there is plural in nature. So how can this harmonize with what we see in Ephesians, that there is...

6

One God

Notice what the scriptures say...

Matt 28:19

7

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Christ instructs His disciples to go and Baptize in the...

8

“Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”

Now take note of...

Acts 4:12

9

12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Which is it? Peter tells us that...

1 Peter 3:21

10

21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience

Is it baptism that saves? Is it Baptism in the name of Christ, Acts 4:12? Or is it baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matt. 28, that saves? The answer is an unqualified yes! To all of the above. Man is saved when he comes to the One God, through the One Savior, in the One Baptism, receiving the gift of the One Holy Spirit, which brings us to this question concerning the One God...

11

Is Jesus the One God, is the Father the One God, or is it the Holy Spirit?

In John 1:1-3 and 14 we see that the Word is defined as being with God and as being God and then becoming flesh to dwell among man. John is clear that the God of Genesis, the God of creation, that God came to live amongst man. There has ever been only one man who has both claimed to be God and offered the proof of the evidence of power to support that claim. Jesus the Nazarene...

John 10:29-30

12

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one."

1 John 5:20

13

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

John gives the illustration here rather clearly. The Son of God came and gave man, revealed, if you will, an understanding of who God truly is and when we come to God, we must come through Christ, who is the true and eternal God.

This brings us to the discussion that we will focus on for the remainder of this lesson...

14

One God

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

This is what is called the Trinity, the three persons of the Godhead.

Even though the term trinity is not found in the scriptures, the concept most certainly is. We have already seen in **Gen. 1:1** how that the term used to describe the God of creation is plural, Elohim. We saw in **Matt. 28** that Christ commanded the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We saw in **John 1**, that through Christ who was God and became flesh to dwell among men, everything that was created was created by Him. And in...

Gen 1:2

15

2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

When the idea of the Trinity is looked at, of the three personages that make it up, the Holy Spirit seems to be the most incongruous. When we look at the Father, it becomes easy to see that He is the embodiment of the purpose of God. Christ is the revelation of that purpose to man. The purpose is both revealed and culminated in His death, burial, and resurrection. But more often than not the work of the Holy Spirit eludes people. In...

Matt 12:28

16

28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Please note that this is Christ speaking here, and Christ is saying that if He were to cast out demons by the Spirit of God, the third person of the trinity, what we know as the Holy Spirit. Then in...

John 14:26

17

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Christ tells the disciples that it would be the Holy Spirit which would guide them, teach them, all that they would know.

Acts 1:7-8

18

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;

So the Spirit brought to the disciple not only knowledge but power. It would seem that as the Father is the embodiment of the wisdom and purpose, Christ is the revelation through which the wisdom and purpose of God is revealed, then the Holy Spirit would be the functionary in God's dealing with man. The power that was given to the disciples was given by, through, the Holy Spirit.

The concept of God being multiple personalities, entities, whatever term fits, is not unusual at all. According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, the term Trinity is a word not found in Scripture, but is used to express the concept of the unity of God as subsisting in three distinct Persons. This word is derived from the Greek trias, and was first used by Theophilus (A.D. 168 A.D. - 183 A.D.), or from the Latin trinitas, first used by Tertullian (A.D. 220 A.D.), to express this concept. The term "trinity" emerged in early Christian history as the designation for the uniquely Christian

monotheistic understanding of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit as tri-unity. Easton speaks of the different concepts of the Trinity and he explains the different ideas like this.

- 19** 1) That God is one, and that there is but one God (**Deut 6:4; 1 Kings 8:60; Isa 44:6; Mark 12:29,32; John 10:30**).
- 20** 2) That the Father is a distinct divine Person (hypostasis, subsistentia, persona, suppositum intellectuale), distinct from the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- 21** 3) That Jesus Christ was truly God, and yet was a Person distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- 22** 4) That the Holy Spirit is also a distinct divine Person.

There are some terms that are used which will serve to help us understand the concepts of the trinity. Easton puts forth the understanding that the creator, God, as seen in scriptural history as the God of Israel and the God and Father of Jesus Christ is tri-personal.

- 23** A) **Trinitarian**
(God is tri-personal; made up of three distinct personages)
- 24** B) **Modalism**
(God has revealed His divine self in three separate manifestations or forms)
- 25** C) **Tritheism**
(There are essentially three Gods, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

26 Of these three, I think that the last, Tritheism, can and should be disregarded completely. The idea that there are three Gods all equal in power but even with the same purpose, does not fit with the doctrine that is established of there being but one God.

Of the remaining two the Trinitarian concept is probably the most accepted among Christians today; that the one God is made up of three distinct personages, each with its own personality, will, desire, and intent. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia makes this statement...

27 ***There is no rational proof of it: The doctrine of the Trinity is undiscoverable by reason, so it is incapable of proof from reason.***

What this says is that the concept of the Trinity is not found in the scriptures at all. While the doctrine of One God is absolutely established, how that One God functions in His relationship with man is open to our judgment. The ISBE is right, the concept of the Trinity is man devised, as we have seen, in about the second or third century. The judgment that there are three distinct personages is a judgment that man has made based on the different passages that seem to indicate that the three are different.

Luke 22:41-42

28

41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, **42** saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

Christ here would seem to imply that His will and intent was different than that of the Father's and so He subjected His will to the Father's. And in John 14, in the passage we looked at where the comforter, the Holy Spirit, is sent to the disciples, that would surely seem to indicate that

the Spirit is a different entity than is either the Father or the Son. This thought would not violate the doctrine of one God, but would support it in the application of the scriptures that speak of God in the plural.

The second judgment of the idea of the Trinity is that of Modalism. This is the idea that God, being God, reveals Himself in different ways. When speaking about his call to preach to the Gentiles, Paul says...

Eph 3:10 29

10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

The revelation of God's purpose, His wisdom, is what Paul says was the task given to him to preach. Now combine that with...

1 Cor 1:23-24 30

23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, **24** but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Christ is the wisdom of God through which man must be saved. So if we look at this idea what we see is...

31 A) The Father
(The embodiment of the purpose; the plan)

32 B) The Son
(The revelation of the Purpose in the flesh as man)
[This would explain Luke 22. Jesus, His humanity, reacted as a man would react in the face of the danger and physical torture He knew was coming, did not want to have to experience that, not to mention His understanding that a part of that sacrifice would entail being separated from the purpose because of His sin]

33 C) The Holy Spirit
(The manifestation of the purpose, of God, in power and in the Word)

Either the judgment of **Trinitarian**, there being three distinct personages that make up the God-head, all with the same purpose and goal or that of **Modalism**, there being but one purpose that manifests itself in different ways would violate the fact of the doctrine that there is but..

34 **ONE GOD**

How you choose to view the Trinity is a matter of judgment, but understanding that there is but one God, is a matter of doctrine. A doctrine that is at the very center of all faith, a doctrine that must be believed and accepted to receive the promise of God made through Jesus Christ and revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Heb 11:6 35

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.