

I Believe in the Trinity (Part 3)

We come to the last of three devotions on the Trinity. We have already seen that the Trinity is a biblical teaching and a progressively revealed teaching. Let's look at a few more things about the Trinity.

The Trinity is a unique teaching. No other religion teaches that God is both one and three. Christianity is absolutely unique in this sense. In fact, it is the doctrine of the Trinity that separates Christianity from Judaism and Islam. All three religions believe there is only one God, yet we believe that this one God is revealed in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Often Christians are accused of believing in three gods. Muslims at times accuse us of this. The Koran reads, “Believe therefore in God and his apostles, and say not, ‘Three:’ (there is a Trinity)—Forbear—it will be better for you. God is only one God! Far be it from His glory that He should have a son!” (Sura IV, 169). Also, “They surely are Infidels who say, ‘God is the third of three:’ for there is no God but one God: and if they refrain not from what they say, a grievous chastisement shall light on such of them as are Infidels” (Sura V, 77). Yet, we do not believe in three gods; we believe in one God revealed in three persons. We are not polytheistic; we are Trinitarian.

The Trinity is an incomprehensible teaching. I'm not saying that it is contradictory, nor am I saying that we can't understand anything about the Trinity. What I am saying is that we will never be able to fully understand or explain the Trinity. There will always remain a certain level of mystery about God and his triune nature. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said about the Trinity, “It is beyond any question the most mysterious and the most difficult of all biblical doctrines” (God the Father, God the Son, 84).

Such mystery should not alarm us or make us think that this doctrine is false. Actually, the opposite is true. The mystery of the Trinity points to it being from God, for no human would think up such a teaching. In the end, we must decide which will be our guide and authority—our limited, human reason or divine revelation. Though we cannot fully understand it, we must believe and proclaim the triune God. As one has said, “Try to explain it, and you'll lose your mind; but try to deny it, and you'll lose your soul.”

The Trinity is a practical teaching. Believe it or not, there is practical benefit from the doctrine of the Trinity. First, it assures us of our salvation. For the one who died for our sins is not merely a man but God in human form, and only the God-man could atone for our sin on the cross. Also, the one who indwells us is not simply a force but the very presence of God; thus, his personal care and protection will secure us to the end. Secondly, the truth of the Trinity affirms the importance of love and relationships. The Trinity reveals that God is thoroughly and eternally relational. God has always existed in a relationship of love, a relationship involving Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That's why we are social creatures: we are social because God is social. Thus, when we engage in loving, wholesome relationships we reflect the character of God. So, as Paul said, live a life of love and you will imitate God (see Ephesians 5.1-2).

Pastor Mark