

Mystery of the Trinity, part 2

In our first study on the Trinity, we discovered that God is a difficult person to understand. Interestingly enough, Cicero tells us about a gentleman named Simonides, an ancient Greek poet. He was asked by Hiero the Tyrant, "What is God?" Simonides asked for permission to take a day to consider the question and respond. Simonides returned the next day and said, "I would like another day." He took another day and returned. Then he took another day. Finally after several days, he concluded that the question only became more baffling the longer he thought about it: Who is God? What is God?

We can understand some basics about God, but it is very difficult to completely understand who God is. We stated last week that the word trinity is not in the Bible. That does not mean the concept is not there. We saw that the Bible teaches there is only one God. We learned that there are many passages in both the Old and New Testaments that teach there is only one God. We demonstrated that Scripture says there is

only one God. There are no others. We saw in Deuteronomy 6:4 that there is one God. That is all. That statement is known as The Great Shema. We stated that not only does the Bible say that, no matter what cult or group you talk to that claims to be Christian, they all say that there is only one God. It is

amazing that no matter whether you are in a mainline Christian church or you are in a cult, they all believe there is only one God -Yahweh. So we have to ask the question, why do we believe that God is a trinity?

We went on to say that we believe that God is God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We started to answer the question, why we believe there is a trinity by considering some major passages that seem to create problems for us to believe in the Trinity. I call them stumbling block passages. Interestingly, they are all targeted at Jesus Christ. The first passage was Colossians 1:15. We saw the term "firstborn." That is a problem

for some groups. The question is, What does it mean that Jesus is the firstborn? We saw that the Greek term means that He is the priority one, the supreme one. He is superior to and over all creation. He is superior to anybody who has ever come back from the dead. It does not mean that He was the first one or that He was born. It means that He is the superior one. That is the meaning of the Greek wording.

We also discovered in the first study that when one tries to translate from one language to another language, it is very difficult at times to accurately translate the meaning. This word is a Greek word that is very difficult to translate. What is also interesting is that there are actually two different words that could mean



first born. One of them literally means “the person who was born first in the family.” That word is not the word in Colossians 1:15. This one means “supreme, superior one, the priority one.”

We also went to John 3:16. That was the second passage that sometimes creates problems, where we read that Jesus is the “only begotten.” The NIV translates it correctly as “the one and only.” Another translation of that word would be “He is the unique one.” That is the same idea as “one and only.” He is the one and only, or He is the unique one. Jesus is the unique one, the one and only. The NIV has it correct.

The third passage we discussed was John 10:31-33. The passage says,

The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. John 10:31 (NASB)

That is, to stone Jesus.

Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?” The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.” John 10:32-33 (NASB)

Now some people say, “Jesus never, ever claimed that He was God.” Well, the Jewish leaders here did. The Jewish leaders understood that He was claiming to be God. It is very difficult for us 2,000 years later to get our information correct. What we should just do is listen to the witnesses of Jesus’ day as to what He really claimed to say. Verse 33 says that,

You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.

That was their claim. They understood that Jesus was claiming to be God. That is a really important statement! They accused Him of blasphemy. They said His problem was that “you make yourself out to be God.” Now look at verse 34. We find that Jesus answered them, and He said,

Has it not been written in your Law, ‘I SAID, YOU ARE GODS’?

If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? John 10:34-36 (NASB)

Jesus is talking, and He says,

Do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’

They said that Jesus was claiming that He was God. Then Jesus said that they were accusing Him of being God because He said He was the Son of God. This means that the phrase “Son of God” means that He is God. The verses 33 and 36, taken together, tell us the phrase “Son of God” is the equivalent of claiming that He was God. That is what Jesus said and they understood that completely. What an interesting passage and statement! Every time we see in the New Testament the phrase “Son of God,” we ought to instantly think “God.” If you have ever wondered what that phrase meant, Jesus has just defined it for us here in verse 36.

There is one other definition of it in Luke 1:35. In verse 35 the angel is speaking to Mary and says,

The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:35 (NASB)

Now somebody might say, “That means that Jesus was born.” No, the emphasis is on the fact that deity came into human flesh. The emphasis of the verse is that God became flesh, that Jesus is God. The phrase “Son of God” means He is God. It is an equivalent statement.

Now we want to look at a new passage. This will be the fourth stumbling block to sometimes understanding the Trinity. And that is in 1 Timothy 2:5. When I was in my thirties, I remember my wife, my children and I were having lunch, and we had some Jehovah’s Witnesses come to our door. I decided I would interact with these Jehovah’s Witnesses. Initially I probably had them on the run, and I was feeling a little

arrogant, unfortunately, at the time. One of them stopped me and said, “I have a verse for you. Would you look it up in your Bible?” I said, “Oh sure!” So I opened my Bible and I turned to 1 Timothy 2:5, and she said, “Read it.” So I read it:

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5 (NASB)

I said, “Whoops, ‘the man Christ Jesus.’” She said, “Well, He’s a man.” I was confused and did not know how to respond to the fact the verse said Jesus was a man. No sooner had I excused myself and let them go on their way that I began to realize that of course Jesus is a man! He was born into human flesh, He walked the earth, He slept, He ate, He got tired. He cried. He was a human being, just like you and me. But He was also God! He was both man and God. At that point I thought to myself, “I really blew it, did I not?” It was a great learning opportunity for me and also an opportunity to be humbled.

The question now is that we have gone through four major stumbling blocks to understanding who Jesus is and why that prevents some people from accepting the concept of the Trinity. There is universal agreement that Jesus was a man. The problem is that there are some who do not believe He was also God.

PASSAGES PROVING JESUS IS GOD. So the question this morning is how do we know that Jesus is actually God? I want to show you fourteen verses that tell us that Jesus was and is God. In order to accept the concept of the Trinity, we have to first of all understand whether or not Jesus is God.

Jesus is Immanuel — Isaiah 7:14. Turn with me to Isaiah 7:14. Isaiah 7:14 is a great prophetic passage about Jesus Christ. The verse says,

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: . . . Isaiah 7:14a (NASB)

A sign is something that should cause you to stop and pay attention.

. . . Behold, a virgin will be with child . . . Isaiah 7:14 (NASB)

Some people want to say this is just a woman, or just a married woman. A married woman shall be with child. But that is not a sign! There is nothing significant or unusual about a married woman having children. That is not a sign. So when it says, “Behold, a sign,” a married woman does not qualify in this situation, but a virgin does.

Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 (NASB)

Immanuel means “God with us.” This is a prophetic prediction about Jesus Christ, and the statement is that He will be God, who will be with us. Turn with me to Isaiah, chapter 9, verse 6.

Mighty God— Isaiah 9:6. Another prophecy, and again it is about the child, Jesus Christ. Isaiah 9:6 says,

**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Isaiah 9:6 (NASB)**

The child will be the Mighty God. I could not help but stop and think about that. Jesus in the flesh as a baby was the Mighty God. It just baffles me! The Mighty God in diapers— incredible concept! So it is not a surprise that some people have a stumbling block with that thought.

Jesus is Immanuel — Matthew 1:23. This is the third passage. An angel has just told Joseph that Mary is going to have a child by the Holy Spirit. Then the angel quotes a prophecy, verse 23:

“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.” Matthew 1:23 (NASB)

So if we were not sure what the word “Emanuel” meant, here is the definition for it. It means “God With Us.” And this is a prophetic statement about Jesus. Jesus was a virgin-born child, and He is God With Us. So far we have seen that Scripture

claims Jesus is God. That is the testimony of three passages, and we have eleven to go.

Jesus is the Word or God — John 1:1. John 1:1 is a very familiar passage, a passage Jehovah's Witnesses like to use a lot. In John 1:1 it says,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1 (NASB)

That is what our Bible says. The Jehovah's Witnesses have translated this so that the last part of it reads "was a God." There is a major problem with that, because the indefinite article "a" does not occur in the Greek. In the Greek there is only a definite article, "the." That is it! There is no "a" or "an" in the Greek. So to put in "the Word was a God" is a mistranslation of the passage. It just cannot be true. It is a lie. The actual Greek grammar tells us that the Word was every bit God—had all the attributes in the fullest, complete sense, the Word was God. So that is passage number 4. It tells us that Jesus was God.

Jesus is God — John 5:18. Our next passage is John 5:18. This is a wonderful passage because we are going to find that the Jewish leaders saw that Jesus claimed to be God. Jesus was teaching about Himself. In John 5:18, we read:

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. John 5:18 (NASB)

Is that not a great statement? Here the religious leaders understood He was claiming to be God.

Jesus is God — John 8:58. In John 8:58, this is an unabashedly clear statement that Jesus claimed He is God. Jesus has been teaching about Himself and He has been teaching about the Father. He has been making the point again, and again, and again that He is God. When He gets to verse 58, He makes this statement,

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM." John 8:58 (NASB)

In the Greek, "I AM" is *ego ami*. That is I AM that I AM. Jesus declared that He is the God who spoke in Exodus 3:14. In that passage, you find that God identified Himself to Moses by saying He was the I AM. "I AM who I AM." Then Jesus just said in black and white statements that He is God. "I AM." He is Yahweh. Some people have said that Jesus never claimed to be Yahweh. He did, right here. He claims that He is Yahweh, "I Am." That is a very strong statement. He is echoing exactly God's statement to Moses.

Jesus is God — John 14:9. In John 14:8 we read that,

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." John 14:8 (NASB)

In verse 9, Jesus answers Philip.

Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" John 14:9 (NASB)

Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, show us the Father?"

Jesus just made Himself equal to the Father. He said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." Jesus declared once again that He is deity.

Jesus is God — Romans 9:5. Romans 9:5 is the ninth passage that demonstrates Jesus is God. It says,

Whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. Romans 9:5 (NASB)

This is a reference to Christ, and then immediately at the end of the verse we are told that Christ is "God blessed forever." This is the testimony of the Apostle Paul.

The Old Testament said that Jesus was God. The Old Testament predicted He was God. Matthew, who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that Jesus is God. John the apostle, who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that Jesus is God. Now here is Paul the apostle in Romans claiming that Jesus is God!

Jesus is God — *Colossians 2:9*. In Colossians 2:9, Paul writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit made another very powerful statement. He said,

For in Him ...

That is, Jesus.

... all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form. Colossians 2:9 (NASB)

There are two very important words here. The first is “all.” In the Greek, the word “all” means “all.” It is rather inclusive. The “fullness.” That means “complete” or “total.” So we have “all of the fullness of deity.” That is, all of God dwells in Him in bodily form. The word for “dwells” has the idea of living or existing. That means that all of God, all of His attributes, everything that God is, dwells in Jesus! Now that is a strong statement that Jesus was and is God.

Jesus is God — *Titus 2:13*. The next passage is Titus 2:13. It says,

Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, Titus 2:13 (NASB)

Now some people have said this is not talking about Jesus being God. All it says is that Jesus is the Savior, and the great God is another person. Some people have said that this is talking about two separate beings, God and Jesus. That is not true. The Greek grammar actually has the definite article, “the” before God. When that occurs, and the word “and” is in the middle, in the Greek it is called *kai*. So “the God” and “Savior” is actually the same person in the Greek grammar. The Greek grammar conveys to us that Jesus is the Savior, and Jesus is our God.

Jesus is God — *Hebrews 1:8*. Hebrews 1:8 is a very pointed statement. We do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews, but look at what it says:

But of the Son He says,

“YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER.”

Hebrews 1:8 (NASB)

That is a very important statement. The Son, Jesus Christ, is God!

Jesus is God — *2 Peter 1:1*. Our next passage about the deity of Christ is 2 Peter 1:1. It says,

... To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:1b (NASB)

It is the same construction as the verse in Titus. We have two nouns, the definite article, and also the word “and.” This means that God and Savior refers to the same person, Jesus Christ.

JESUS IS GOD — **1 JOHN 5:20**. The next passage is 1 John 5:20. I just love this passage; it is so wonderful. If you ever before had any doubts, this passage will help you. 1 John 5:20 says,

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. 1 John 5:20 (NASB)

Jesus is the true God!

Jesus is Fully God — *Philippians 2:6-8*. Now you ask, “Are there any passages that reveal Jesus is fully God?” We already discovered that Colossians 2:9 says Jesus has all the attributes of God. Another one is Philippians 2:6. What we are going to read now is not just a statement that He is God, but another passage that tells us that Jesus has all of the attributes of God.

Let us start with Philippians 2:5. Paul is writing, and he says,

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God ... Philippians 2:5-6a (NASB)

Stop right there. The word “form” is *morphe* in the Greek. *Morphe* has the idea of being exact, being equal. This means that Jesus was exactly God.

Now look at verse 7, about the middle where it says,

... taking the form of a bond-servant . . . **Philippians 2:7b(NASB)**

The word “form” there is *morphe* once again. Jesus was exactly God and He was exactly man. We call that a mystery. We call that the God-man. He was completely human and He was completely God. He was both! How we are to understand that, I do not know; but that is the testimony of Scripture.

Did you notice what happened? The Old Testament predicted the Messiah would be God. Matthew said that He was God. John said that He was God. Paul in Romans and Colossians said He was God. Titus said that He was God. Peter said that He was God. The writer of Hebrews said that He was God. We have the testimony of the Old and New Testaments. We see that Jesus declared that He was God. Major apostles all said that He was God. How can anyone say that Jesus never taught that He was God, or that the New Testament never taught that He was God?

Jesus is My God— 1 John 5:28. The last verse I would like to show you is John 20:28. This is the testimony of one of the apostles. He is sometimes called doubting Thomas because he was not sure that Jesus really had come back to life from the grave. He wanted to put his fingers into Jesus’ hands and His feet and His side for proof. Let us look at verse John 20:27.

Then He . . .

That is, Jesus.

... said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.” Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” **John 20:27-28 (NASB)**

To whom was Thomas talking? He was talking to a man! He was talking to Jesus Who was in human flesh. He was talking to a man, but he called Him God. Thomas understood Jesus’ message. He had seen the miracles, the wonders, all that had happened when Jesus was here on earth. He now had no doubt that Jesus was God.

HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD — ACTS 5:3-4. So let us change directions for a minute. What about the Holy Spirit? Is the

Holy Spirit God? We are going to show you just one passage here for the sake of time. In Acts 5:4 the passage is about Ananias and Sapphira, who had lied about how much money they were giving to the church. We will start with Acts 5:3. Peter says,

Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? Acts 5:3 (NASB)

Peter said here in effect, “Ananias, you have just lied to the Holy Spirit.”

Verse 4 then states:

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God. Acts 5:4 (NASB)

Now in verse three, Peter said that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit. That tells us that the Holy Spirit is God too.

THE TRINITY. Here is the picture now: the Father is God, Jesus is God, the Holy Spirit is God. How many Gods do we have? Well, the first clue to solving the answer is in Genesis 1:26. Genesis 1:26 says,

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image.” Genesis 1:26 (NASB)

The word for “God” here is *Elohim*. The word “us” implies there is plurality to God. “Our,” also implies plurality.

Turn with me to Deuteronomy, chapter 6. We are going to come back to The Great Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4.

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! Deuteronomy 6:4 (NASB)

We have already seen in the last study that the Lord is one. The word for “Lord” here is “Yahweh.” Yahweh is one. But in the middle of that verse it says, “the Lord is our God.” The word for “Lord” is “Yahweh.” But the word “God” is “Elohim,” and the “I Am” at the end of the word means it is plural. So in the

middle of the verse, it says that Yahweh is plural. And then at the end of the verse it says that the Lord or Yahweh is one. We have a plural one. We have a plural God.

The only way you can explain God is that He is the Father; He is the Holy Spirit; and He is the Son. The only way you can explain it is that there is the Trinity. Or I like the phrase, “a plural one.” That is it. We cannot understand Him. We can read about Him. We can see the Scripture teaches these things. But we do not and cannot understand the concept very well.

John Wesley has made the following statement. He said,

Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will
show you a man that can comprehend the triune God.

That is a great statement, is it not? Show me a worm that understands me or you or anybody else. Then John Wesley said, “I will show you a man who can understand God.” What did Pastor Wesley admit here? He admitted that God is not to be completely understood. Personally, I would put it this way: If I could understand God, I would not think He could be God. I mean, if my God was on an equal plane with me, and He was not something way beyond my imagination or understanding, then how did anything ever get created? The fact that I cannot understand God who has no beginning is an important comment. The fact is that I cannot understand how there is a God who had no beginning; He has always been. We believe that everything has a beginning. But God has always been. No matter how far back you go, God has always been there. If you go back further, God is still there. So I conclude that if I could understand God, He would not be God.

I would like to close with an important verse, John 8:24. Jesus is talking to the religious leaders of His day, and said,

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you
believe that I AM He, you will die in your sins. John 8:24 (NASB)

Jesus said in effect, that unless you believe who I am telling you that I am, you are going to die in your sins. If we do not believe that Jesus is God, we cannot be saved. Jesus said, “You are going to die in your sins, unless you believe that I Am.” Jesus uses the statement “I Am.” In your Bibles you may see a

little “he” in italics. It is not in the original Greek. You have to believe who Jesus is, that Jesus is God. Otherwise, it makes no sense. He died on a cross for you and for me so that our sins could be forgiven because only a holy God could satisfy His own standard of a perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness and to take away the sins of the world.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I would invite you to read [how you can know your sins are forgiven](#).