



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Holy Trinity, or the Uniqueness of Christianity”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege that is before us again of studying the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the attributes which are part of the essence of our God. And, Lord, enable us, as we consider the things that we are to consider tonight, to through these come to a deeper knowledge and a closer knowledge of Thee.

And we also pray, Lord, that as we consider the Trinity, which is of course beyond us in its comprehensiveness and in its depth, enable us, Lord, not only to perceive some of the intellectual facts of the character of our God, but also enable us to learn the things that will help us in our daily life. We know the Bible doctrine truth of the Scripture is the greatest force for sustenance in the life of God. So, Lord, we pray that we may be fed through the word.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, we have been studying the attributes of God. And we did not finish our lesson last time. And so before we begin the study of the Trinity tonight, I want to finish up the last two points of our outline.

You remember that we divided the attributes of God into the incommunicable attributes and the communicable attributes. And we stressed under the communicable

attributes in our last point the spirituality of God, the intellectual attributes of knowledge, wisdom, and voracity. And so we want to conclude by treating the moral attributes of holiness, righteousness, and goodness, and the volitional attributes of sovereignty.

Now, when we come to this moral attribute of holiness, righteousness, and judgment, we are coming to something that is fundamental in the character of God. Before we look at the details, let’s read Isaiah chapter 6 in verse 3, Isaiah chapter 6 in verse 3. Now, Isaiah 6 in verse 3 has to do with the moral attribute of holiness.

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Now, we need not consider the question of whether holy, holy, holy has to do with the tri-unity of God, or the Trinity. As if one holy is for the father, the second for the son, the third for the spirit, although there have been respectable commentators who have suggested that that is the force of these words. But we want to talk just for a few moments about the idea of holiness because it is very fundamental.

Now, when we think about holiness we are thinking about a term that means basically separation. The Hebrew word *garash* as well as the Greek word *hagios* or *hagiazo*, you need not put them down. But the Hebrew and Greek words, both of them, signify the idea of separation. So that to be holy is basically to be separated.

Now, of course, when God is referred to as a holy person, the idea back of it is that he is God and we are men and that he is separated from us. He is different from us. As a matter of fact, this word signifies not only a moral attribute, although it signifies that,

but it is an attribute which has to do with his position, and it looks at him as if he were completely different from men.

One of the things that contemporary theologians say today is that God is the holy other. You'll often hear a contemporary theologian using that term. Karl Barth likes to say God is the holy other. Now, I don't like that term myself. It is really at times more confusing than helpful. But there is something in that idea that Professor Barth is trying to communicate, and that is that God is utterly different from men. He is not one of us. He does not belong to *homo sapiens*. He is God, and we are men. He is holy. He is separated from us.

Now, that idea of holiness or separation is something that pervades all of his attributes. For example, in his spirituality he is different from us, in his righteousness he is different from us, in his goodness he is different from us, in his sovereignty he is completely different from us, and even in the attributes that are communicable, this idea of holiness applies to them. So that God is holy in all of his attributes. It's a term that looks at his position and so it is not really to be taken just with this one idea of holiness, but it is something that pervades all of the character of God. So it is the idea of position and relationship.

Now, of course, when we say that God is holy other, he is different from men. We are also secondarily saying that he is pure. Now, we think of the term holy as being pure primarily, but the biblical idea, as I've said, is separation. But, of course, if God is completely separated from us and we are sinful, there is also in this stress upon the fact that he is pure. But the basic idea of the word is that it denotes one who is separate. But that is why, by the way, we may be called in the Bible saints or more literally holy ones. We are called *hagios*, each one of us. I am *hagios* and you ladies are *hagia* because you are feminine, that is, if you have believed in Jesus Christ. We are saints. We are holy.

Now, the idea back of it of course is not that we are completely perfect or completely pure, our position is that practically we are still sinners, but we are separated

unto God. We belong to him now. That’s the concept of the word. That’s why I may be called a saint even though no church has ever canonized me. And by the way, I don’t want Believer’s Chapel to do it either when I pass on. But nevertheless, I am Saint Lewis really, not Missouri [laughter] nor even Texas, but that’s my designation spiritually. Of course, we don’t want to carry this too far because you know that Bible never does speak of an individual as a saint. It addresses the company of believers as saints. But anyway, this term has to do with God’s difference from men.

Now, let’s just look at a couple of other passages to merely substantiate the idea of righteousness and goodness. Let’s turn to 1 John 2:29, 1 John 2:29. By the way, our English word “holy” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *bol* which means well, so that the holy man is the man who is well, very close to the idea of salvation which makes a man sound. When he is holy, he is well.

Now 1 John 2, verse 29, “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” I just merely want you to notice that the righteousness of God is referred to here.

And, finally, will you turn to Mark chapter 10 in verse 18, Mark chapter 10 in verse 18. Now, this is a very interesting passage, and we are always tempted when we come to a passage like this to stop and explain the whole passage. But you’ll have to forgive me if we don’t do it. Mark chapter 10 in verse 17 we have the experience of our Lord and the rich young ruler. And we read in the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, “And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

Now, of course this man is altogether wrong. He is talking about eternal life and Jews were interested in that. This is equivalent to inheriting the kingdom in their language. But you’ll notice he says “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” And once you begin on “the do road” then you must continue. And the “doing” road for salvation is the road that never reaches salvation unless you “do” one hundred percent.

There is no great thing that you can "do" to inherit eternal life. One must persist in "doing." And the only way to gain eternal life by "doing" is to be everlastingly added from the first time you draw your first breath until you draw your last breath. And if you have never failed, then ideally you should inherit eternal life. But it's only an ideal thing. It's only a theoretical thing because we possess an old nature.

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother." Of course the reason that Jesus quoted these commandments to try to cause him to see his sins.

But the point that we are interested in is not that, but the statement in verse 18, "Why callest thou me good there is none good but one that is God." Now, aside from what our Lord meant by this statement you will notice that he attributes goodness to God. In other words, he answers in all parts to the ideal. Goodness is the *sumum bonum* and so all of that which answers to the *sumum bonum*, the greatest good is found in God. He is goodness. And so love, mercy, long suffering, all of the things that measure up to goodness, God is.

Now, this, of course, has tremendous application for us in our daily life because it means that this God whom we possess by our faith in Jesus Christ is one who is completely good. And if we trust ourselves to him he never does anything but that which is good for us. Have you ever felt when a decision faces you of a spiritual character, you don't know whether you can really turn your life over to the Lord? You think you can do a better job of it yourself. Why do you think you can do a better job of it yourself? Well, you think you care for your life better perhaps. You think you have the capacity to do that which is necessary better.

“The Holy Trinity, or the Uniqueness of Christianity, part I” by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2007 Believer’s Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

But just reflect upon this, he never does anything but that which is good for us. God has complete capacity, and, furthermore, he is completely good. And when you turn yourself over to someone who is absolutely good, the epitome of it, the *sumum bonum* of everything that is good, well, why shouldn’t you turn yourself over to it? You’re evil. You will commit suicide spiritually. You will slash your own throat. And you’ll do it in ignorance as well as on purpose, too. So how much better to turn it over to someone who is completely good, who loves you, cares for you like you never could. It’s utterly irrational, you know, not to trust God.

Now, we must hasten on, capital D, the volitional attribute of sovereignty. Acts chapter 17, verses 24 through 26. So let’s turn over to Acts and read this passage. Acts chapter 17, verse 24 through verse 26, “God who made the world and all things in it, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”

Just look at the tremendous things that are attributed to God here. God who made the world and all things in it. God who is the Lord of heaven and earth. God who cannot be confined to temples made with hands. God who is the one that gives breath and life to everything. The one who has made of one blood all nations of the earth. The one who has marked out and determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation. That is complete sovereignty. The creator of the creation, the creator of men, the one who determines the affairs of men and the place of the habitation upon the earth, in complete control of everything. He is the sovereign God.

Now, theologians like to speak of God as being sovereign in his decretive will. Put these two words down decretive is D-E-C-R-E-T-I-V-E. That comes from the word “decree,” and we’ll be talking about the decree and the relationship between the

sovereignty of God and the freedom of man before too long now. But his decretive will is his will that covers everything. Remember in Ephesians Paul says “He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.” That’s right everything. Everything. “He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.” His decretive will determines everything.

But not only is there his decretive will but there is his preceptive will. Now, his preceptive will has to do with the demands that he makes upon men for their daily life. It is the standard of life that he sets forth in the Scriptures for men to live by, his moral laws. They represent his preceptive will. But God is sovereign in his decretive will and he is sovereign in his preceptive will, consequently completely sovereign in everything.

Now, of course that does not mean that we are just robots. That does not mean that he has a job like Edgar Bergen, and we are all little Charlie McCarthys. And he holds us up, so to speak, and talks to us and then gives us the words that we say back to him, or does for us the things that he has already done for us. That is the kind of fatalism which the New Testament has nothing to say about, nor does the Old. But it is nevertheless true to say that God is sovereign in all things. He is sovereign in his decretive will, and he is sovereign in his preceptive will. Now, we’ll talk more about this later on.

Whenever I think about this question of freedom and then God’s sovereignty, I think about the discussion that two soldiers had during the war. And they were discussing the bullets that were flying all around them. And one soldier said to the other one, he says you know I never worry about these bullets except for that one that has my name on it. The other one says, I don’t worry about that one, I worry about the one that comes with the sign on it “to whom it may concern.” [Laughter] One of them believed in the sovereign will of God, the other was not so sure.

Now, let’s turn to the doctrine of the Trinity, the Trinity - the Trinity or the uniqueness of Christianity. Now, will you wait a minute while I put on the board a little

bit of an outline for us? You can memorize your Bible verses now. I’ll just put it on as we go. First, a few words by way of introduction. Now, we want to make plain at the beginning when we talk about the Trinity that the quest for the understanding of the Trinity in the deepest sense is futile. It is impossible for us to understand the Trinity. Remember as Terstegen said “a God comprehended is no God.” Tom Reese is a British evangelist and in one of his books he said that when he was in Texas, he was speaking in high schools over the state of Texas. In one of them when he opened it up for a series of questions afterwards, one of the kids spoke up and said Tom Reese please explain simply and briefly the Trinity. That is impossible.

I think this is beautifully expressed and favors him which has a stanza which goes like this, “timeless, spaceless, single, lonely, yet sublimely three thou art grandly always only God in unity. Lone in grandeur, lone in glory, who shall tell thy wondrous story, awe full Trinity.” Awe full, of course, in the sense of holy or awe inspiring. Yet nevertheless, it is a doctrine that while we cannot comprehend its depth, it is very important for us, in fact, in most of our churches we affirm the belief in the Trinity every Sunday when we meet together. We sing the doxology, praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The denials of the Trinity have come most vociferously from Judaism and Unitarian Gentilism. Now, Unitarianism, of course, is common to both Judaism and Gentiles. And the kinds of denials that have come have sometimes been denials that ridicule the doctrine of the Trinity. For example, some of the opponents of Christianity have said all you need to know to know that Christianity is not true is first grade arithmetic. And what they mean by that is that three in one and one in three, why even a child in the first grade would know that is impossible. So consequently how can you possibly have three persons who subsist in one essence? Why it is absurd mathematically. And so all you need to know is first grade arithmetic, and you won’t be a Christian. And



almost always this is a misunderstanding of what Christianity claims. Christianity makes a claim as strong as Judaism or any form of Unitarianism that God is one. But it also states that this one God subsists in three persons.

Now, let us say right at the beginning when we talk about the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, we do not say that the word “Trinity” is in the Bible. It is not in the Bible. You will not find the word “Trinity” in the Bible. But the Trinity is there; that’s what we say. By the way, I’m never impressed with an argument that says this must be a false doctrine because the term doesn’t occur in the Bible. I always go right back to this. The term “Trinity” is not in the Bible either.

I have some friends, they don’t like the term “old nature.” They’d say the Bible doesn’t say anything about old nature. You’ll never find that term anywhere in the Bible. That’s true. You won’t. You’ll find the term flesh in the sense of the old nature. You’ll find the term old man in the sense of the old nature, but you won’t find the term “old nature.” But nevertheless, the idea of the old nature theologically is there. Just as the Trinity is not found as a term in the Bible but the idea is there.

Furthermore, this doctrine of the Trinity -- and when we try to prove it here we are not trying to dispel the mystery of God’s nature. The Trinity does not explain God. Actually in history the doctrine of the Trinity arose out of an attempt to prevent people from misunderstanding Christianity. It was not a doctrine that Christians thought up from the study of Scripture itself. It was something that was just implicit in the word of God. Its foreshadowings and I think also its reality in the Old Testament but fully revealed in the New. But they were forced to set forth the doctrine of the Trinity because the opponents of Christianity had difficulty in understanding how they could describe deity to the Father and to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit. And yet they knew that this was right from the word of God, and so the doctrine of the Trinity arose out of the attempt to prevent perversions of Christianity, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of it.

So we want to do, in a few simple steps, the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. And point one, the Bible recognizes three as God. Now, we want to look at a few passages. And, first of all, I want you to turn to John chapter 6 in verse 27, John 6, verse 27.

Now, this is a simple text and we are just looking for a phrase. Verse 27 Gospel of John, “Labor not for the food which perisheth, but for that food which endureth under everlasting life which the son of man shall give unto you or him hath God the Father sealed.” God the Father sealed. Now, notice simply that the father is referred to as God.

Now, secondly, let’s turn back to the first chapter of the Gospel of John, and let’s read the opening verses. John chapter 1 in verse 1, this is one of the great texts of the Bible. You know John wrote this text, such a tremendous text, in affirmation of the deity of Christ. He wrote this most likely, I feel, after he had finished his gospel. He came back and wrote his introduction. And he intends that we shall understand everything in this book in the light of this opening prologue which takes up the first eighteen verses of this book.

Now, notice what he says, “In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.” Now, if you have any question about who the word is the fourteenth verse says “And the word became flesh and dwelled among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The word is the son and it states in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Or not only is the father God but the son is God as well.

Now, let’s turn to Acts chapter 5, verses 3 and 4, Acts 5 verses 3 and 4. Another interesting incident, this is the incident of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, kept back part of the price, his wife also knowing of it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, was it not thine own?”

and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

Now, in verse 3 he said he had lied to the Holy Spirit. In verse 4 he states he had lied to God. I think he intends for us to understand the same person. In one text he speaks of him as the spirit, the next text he speaks of him as God. Now if the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are God; I think if we had only this before us we would have to say there must be three Gods. And at least we could say this, Unitarianism is not a biblical doctrine. Unitarianism is contrary to Scripture whether in its Gentile or Jewish form.

And let me say this, too, this is something that even the courts of some of our states have recognized. That anything that is Unitarian is by definition not Christian. I had a friend you lived in the state of New Jersey, and she was a very high employee in the YWCA. And as often happens to Christian institutions, non-Christians are allowed to come in. You know in the churches that often happened. People say let’s get them into the church. If we get them into the church it will be easier to convert them. Let me tell you this, if you take them into the church, it’s harder to convert them. It’s harder because you see you’ve already told them in effect, you’re all right, Jack. But it’s very hard.

And so they brought in Unitarians, non-Christians on the board of one of the YWCA’s. So finally this Christians became very much concerned about it because finally the balance of power had been tipped. And now in all of the activities of that YWCA the influence of Unitarianism carried the day. This friend was the kind of person who didn’t want to quit, so she just decided she was going to take it to court. And that’s what she did. And she took it not only to the local court. I think they lost the first case. But she finally took it to the New Jersey State Supreme Court, and she won the case. They had admitted of course that they were Unitarian and on the basis of that, the court decided on the basis of their confessions that they were not Christians -- because regardless of how we might define a Christian we would have to begin by saying that all Christians, true Christians acknowledge the doctrine of the Trinity. Whether Roman Catholic or Protestant

or what they acknowledged the doctrine of the Trinity, and Unitarianism is non-Christian. That’s why even the very, very liberal national council of churches, world council of churches has not accepted the Unitarian Universalistic Church into its membership because it’s basically non-Christian. So the Bible recognizes three as God.

Now, secondly the Bible recognizes three as distinct persons. The Bible recognizes three as distinct persons, three as distinct persons. Let’s look at just a few passages, John 3:16. You know that text. That’s a pretty good one. Think back to your Sunday school days, I know it’s a long way. John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Now, I just want you to notice this that it is the father who gave the son. The father and the son are separate. That’s all we need to notice in this text.

Let’s turn to John 14, verses 16 and 17. Jesus is speaking. And remember we’ve already established that each one of these persons of the Trinity is referred to as God. Here we read in John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, (I Jesus will pray the Father) and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth.” So here we have all three. Jesus prayed the Father and the Father giving the Spirit. So we have all three of the persons distinguished at this place.

One last passage, a very familiar one. Matthew chapter 28 in verse 19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the names of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Did I quote the text right? No. I didn’t quote the text right, did you know it? Well if you didn’t know it you should be a little better acquainted with Matthew 28, verse 19. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the names of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” I mean, that isn’t what the text says, that is what I said. What does it say? In the name, in the name, singular of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Now, of course, implicit in this is the fact that there is a unity between the Father, Son, and Spirit. The use of those terms stresses the fact that they are distinct persons.

“The Holy Trinity, or the Uniqueness of Christianity, part I” by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2007 Believer’s Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

Now, see the Bible reveals three as one essence. You could say as one in essence, but I’ll just put it as one essence. The Bible reveals three as one essence. Now, let’s turn to the Old Testament. I want to turn to the passage which is the banner of Judaism. It’s in Deuteronomy chapter 6 in verse 4, Deuteronomy 6 in verse 4. Every Israelite knows *Shema Yisrael - Adonai Elobeinu Adonai Echad*, that’s the way it sounds. *Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elobeinu Adonai Echad.*

Now, notice what it says, this is the text that Jewish friends often use to stress the fact that the God of the Bible is a unity. Notice Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” It’s almost as if the text at first glance was written to refute Christianity’s Trinity, doesn’t it? “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” But you know it’s striking the way this appears in the Hebrew because what it says in the Hebrew is Hear O Israel the Lord our -- course I’m not going to make a point over this, but it says the Lord or Jehovah our God, *Elobeinu* is plural, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity, but I don’t want to make anything of the *Elobeinu* although it is plural, what I want to especially say something about is the Hebrew word *echad*, and I’ll write it out for you here, transliterate it for you, E-C-H-A-D, E-C-H-A-D, because this word refers to a compound unity in Hebrew, not absolute unity, compound unity. There is another word in Hebrew which refers to absolute unity. It is the word *yachid*. I’ll spell it out for you again, Y-A-C-H-I-D, *yachid*. This word is the absolute unity. And I want you now to take a look at a couple of passages and we are going to see what this *echad* really means.

Now, let’s turn to Genesis chapter 1 in verse 5. After all, one of these days you may talk to a Jewish person who really is open about the Trinity. He may say to you, how can you understand the Trinity as Bible doctrine in the light of – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” And so you can say, well now if you read Hebrew follow me in my explanation. Genesis 1:5 says, “And God called the light Day, and the evening he called Night. And the evening and the morning were day *echad*.” In other words the day is composed of evening and morning compound unity of evening and morning. Turn

over to chapter 2, verse 24, this one is even clearer. Chapter 2, verse 24, “And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman (*issab*) because she is taken out of Man.” Notice that text men. Woman is a dependent being. Now, that’s not my point, but it’s a very good one. [Laughter] “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh, *echad*.” In other words the two who are different who have their own flesh are conceived of as a compound unity in the sight of God.

Now, that’s the term that is used in Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4, “Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one Lord,” compound unity, Father, Son, and Spirit. We shall see later on; at this stage in divine revelation not so evident.

Now to show you the other word, turn over to Genesis chapter 22. This word also means one, but this word is a word that refers to absolute unity, and it is never used with God in the Old Testament, never, *yachid*. Genesis chapter 22 in verse 2 we read, “And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Take now thine son, thine only son Isaac. There it is. Now, that is absolute unity. Isaac is one of a kind, absolutely the unity but that is never used of God.

Morris Zutrau was a worker among Jews, and he once led a rabbi to the Lord through Deuteronomy 6:4 and just what I’m telling you. It was at Mount Hermon, California. And he and the rabbi were very good friends. They had talked together quite a bit. The rabbi said to him one day, “Morris, I’ve got a book that you ought to read. It’s on the unity of God.” And Mr. Zutrau said to him, “Well, I’d be very much interested in reading it.” He said “what word is used for unity?” And he said “the word *yachid*.” He said, “But did you know the word *yachid* is never used in the Old Testament of the unity of God.” And the rabbi was stopped and thought, he said “you know I believe you are right.” And then he went on to explain to him Deuteronomy 6:4, Hear O Israel the Lord

our God is one Lord but hear O Israel Jehovah our God is Jehovah in compound unity. And the rabbi saw that implicit in his own text was an acknowledgement of plurality in the deity.

Now, I must conclude here. The Bible refers to the Trinity explicitly, refers to the Trinity explicitly. Now, by this I, of course, do not mean that the word Trinity is found in the Bible but that the idea is referred to explicitly. Now, I’m going to take just a couple of texts, one in the Old Testament and one in the New. Now, remember by the progress of divine revelation we don’t expect to find the Old Testament, the same fullness of truth that we find in the New. For example, remember in Genesis 1, verse 26 we read, “God said let us make man in our image.” Now, that text states that there is plurality in the God-head. It does not state that the Godhead is a Trinity. It states that there are more than one in the Godhead. But I’m going to ask you to turn to Isaiah chapter 48 where we have three persons referred to. 48, verse 12 through verse 16.

Now, verse 12 -- now, remember God is speaking, and we read in verse 12, “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? The Lord hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come near unto me, hear this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me.”

Did you notice this? Look! I have not spoken in secret from the beginning from the time that it was there am I, the first and the last, God. And now the Lord God and his spirit hath sent me who am also God. So right here in the text in verse 16 is explicitly a Trinity in deity.

Now, quickly to the New Testament. Well, we’ve already read Matthew chapter 28 verse 19, let’s just let it go at that. Remember the baptism, Matthew chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of a dove and the voice from heaven said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, the Trinity in the baptism of our Lord.

Now, what about illustrations of the Trinity? It’s unwise to illustrate the Trinity, I think, for the simple reason that no illustration could ever possibly explain the Trinity. And if some of these appeal to you, it’s merely because you don’t completely understand the Trinity. But here are some of the illustrations that have been given, cloud, a rain, and a rising mist, all liquid, oneness in essence but yet different. Sunlight, rainbow, heat, and one solar radiance. For the ray of light which has actinic, luminiferous, calorific elements within it. If you know something about light, you’ll understand that illustration. I don’t understand it too well. Oil, wick, and flame yet one candle.

Or an egg, one egg with its yolk, its white, and its shell, three angles of the triangle, spirit, soul, and body of man perhaps the best illustration, spirit, soul, and body. Each one separable, but yet one individual. Augustine liked the illustration of a tree with its roots, its trunk, its branches, three elements but one in essence. But the idea of personality is not involved in any of these is there except spirit, soul, body. Or someone has even suggested the legislative, the judicial, and the executive functions of the one government of the United States of America.

Well, our time is up and I don’t want to consider the problems of the doctrine of the Trinity without a few more minutes, so we’ll just have to save that part for next time.

Let’s close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and we know, Lord, it is because Jesus Christ is the Son of God and his saving work has merit and value before Thee. And we know that it is because he is the Son of God that



“The Holy Trinity, or the Uniqueness of Christianity, part I” by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2007 Believer’s Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

his revelation of Thee is true and reliable. And we thank Thee for this. We thank Thee that when we gaze upon him, we know one who is God. And who can give to us and authoritative revelation. So Lord may the great truth of the Trinity strengthen us in our inner man and give us confidence and assurance in the faith that we possess.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.