

TREES AND FRUIT PART III

Matthew 7:17 *“So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.”*

Deuteronomy 6:4 *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”* Most of us have heard that there is one God, but when we actually stop to think about it we frequently have some difficulty with the concept and get confused. God, in the scriptures, is seen as being Triune, which means one God in three persons; Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

What is the trinity?

How has the trinity been explained to you?

In the sermon, Aaron talked about Tertullian (a 2nd century church father). Tertullian explained the puzzle of the Trinity as such; In the Roman Empire, the Emperor shared power with his son, declaring him “co-emperor.” In these cases the empire itself was not divided... but each had full imperial authority over all the land. Each was emperor, each was in full possession of imperial power, and that power was not divided...yet one of them was not the other. Tertullian said, “Divinity is shared by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is only one divinity, only one God, just as there is only one empire.”

Read Philippians 2:5-7

Whenever we try and explain the trinity, we often become frustrated because it naturally does not make sense. We arrive at the understanding of the trinity not because Christians like confusing things, but because God himself revealed His nature to Christians through general and special revelation.

What have you learned about God’s character through nature (general revelation)?

What have you learned about God’s character through scripture (special revelation)?



Tertullian’s understanding was one of the dominant ideas until the 4th century, until Christianity’s most famous heretic showed up. Arius, in an attempt to explain the trinity, reduced Jesus to being created by God the Father. Arius said, “He is not God truly, but by participation in grace...He too is called God in name only.”

Why is it important that Jesus was eternal and not created?

Good ole’ Saint Nick (Santa) understood the gravity of Arius’ teaching. According to history he got fed up with Arius’ nonsense and he actually “laid into Arius with his fist.” Athanasius another church father who was the main defender of the trinity states we cannot owe our salvation – our recreation- to a lesser being than the one we owe our creation.

What is a topic, that it comes up and people disagree with you, you feel like “laying into them with your fist”?

The way people answer questions about the trinity determine largely how they view God. If you believe that Jesus was lesser than God, you essentially believe God is distant and does not care about our struggles. If you believe that Jesus came in the flesh, as God in the flesh, it shows He cares about us and He has the power to save us. That is some very powerful implications to what we believe!

What can we learn from the trinity?

The Trinity teaches us that God, who is the ONLY God, does not stand alone in solitary splendor, God Himself exists in relationship. God is one, and yet God is one in community. If anyone ever says to you that the doctrine of the Trinity asks you to believe in the nonsensical notion that three can be one, we can answer that, on the contrary, the Trinity is a unique example of what it means truly to be ONE. God’s oneness is such that there is love even within the Godhead itself. God is love, not just in the sense that God loves us, but also in the sense that the inner life of the Trinity is a life of love.