

Session 5: God, the Trinity, and the Divinity of Jesus

For from the creation of the world **God's invisible qualities, both His eternal power and divinity, are clearly seen**, being understood by the things made, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:20

Six Arguments for God: **C**osmological, **O**rderliness, **M**oral, **E**xistential, **T**eleological, **H**istorical
 "Faith **COMETH** by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" Romans 10:17

Cosmological

1. Everything that begins to exist must have a cause.
2. The universe began to exist. *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth... Genesis 1:1*
 - 2a. Specifically, space, time and matter began to exist.
3. Therefore the universe must have a cause.
 - 3a. Specifically, this Cause must transcend time and space.
 - 3b. Doesn't this Cause sound like God?

Orderliness

1. Without God, there is no reason for the universe to behave in an orderly and consistent manner.
*"The fact that there are rules at all to be checked **is a kind of miracle**; that it is possible to find a rule, like the inverse square law of gravitation, is some sort of miracle. It is not understood at all, but it leads to the possibility of prediction."* Richard Feynman (Nobel Prize winner)
2. The universe does behave consistently (otherwise science would not be possible).
3. This suggests there is a God consistently *"upholding all things by the word of His power"* Heb. 1:3

Moral

1. Without God, there can be no absolute moral standards.
2. There are absolute moral standards. 2a. Specifically, there is evil in the world.
3. Therefore there is a God.
 - 3a. Specifically, rather than disproving God, the problem of evil actually points to the existence of moral standards and consequently, God.

Existential

1. If there is no God, then life has no meaning, value or purpose.
"Meaningless! Meaningless!..Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." Ecclesiastes. 1:2
2. Life does have meaning, value and purpose.
 - 2a. Specifically, we can find meaning, value and purpose through Christ.
3. Therefore there is a God!

Teleological (Design)

1. Design requires a Designer.
2. The Universe seems to be deliberately designed for life.
 - 2a. Biological life seems to clearly point towards a designer.
 - 2b. Cosmological constants that govern the universe seem fine-tuned for human existence.
3. Therefore the Universe must have a Designer.

Historical

1. If God is not real, the events described in the Bible could not possibly have happened.
"No one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." John 3:1b
2. There is no better historical alternative than to accept that the events of the Bible did happen.
"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed." Luke 1:3-4
3. Therefore God is real.

The Israelite Revelation: One God.

1. The Defining Moment: Israel at Sinai

And God spoke all these words, saying: 'I am YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, YHWH your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. Exodus 20:1-6

2. Israelite Monotheism

The key features of Israelite monotheism are clearly recognised and understood by Moses:

1. God is Absolute ('YHWH'="I AM WHO I AM" Ex. 3:14) — and uniquely so.
2. God is superior to all other 'gods'(systematically shown in 10 Plagues; cf. Ex. 8:18-19).
3. God refuses to be worshipped the way we worship our other idols (Golden Calf Ex. 32:5)—YHWH is not a tribal idol!
4. God is personal Ex. 33:12-23; (and therefore is "jealous" for us; Ex. 34:14).
5. And because God cares jealously for each individual person, he is interested in the nitty-gritty ethical issues of everyday life (eg. Ex. 21-23) —even when involvement becomes messy! (eg. Divorce: Deut. 24:1, Matt. 19:8).

But for all Israel to recognise this was a slow, painful process (as Moses prophesied! Deut. 31:29).

The Christian Revelation: Father, Son & Holy Spirit

1. The Defining Moment: Jesus' Baptism

"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from Heaven, "You are my beloved Son ; with you I am well pleased." Mark 1:9-11

2. The Trinity in the New Testament

Some say the Christian church didn't have any agreed systematic doctrine of the Trinity until the Church Councils of the 4th Century. But the New Testament never attempts to give us 'systematic doctrine', but is always teaching truth in the context of the lives of particular churches or people! Actually the Trinity is undeniably foundational to the thinking of the New Testament authors:

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of **the Father** and of **the Son** and of **the Holy Spirit**.* Matthew 28:19

*There are diversities of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. There are differences of ministries, but the same **Lord**. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same **God**...* 1 Cor. 12:4-6

*There is one body and **one Spirit**..., **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism, **one God** and Father of all...* Eph.4:4-6

*...according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**, in the sanctification of **the Spirit**, for obedience to **Jesus Christ**....* 1 Peter 1:2

3. The Trinity in the Old Testament

- a. Appearance of pre-incarnate Jesus (Ezek. 1:26, Gen. 32:22ff., Josh. 5:14)
- b. Outpouring of pre-Pentecostal Spirit (Num.11:24; 2 Kings 2:9)
- c. Plurality of Creator (Gen. 1:26-27; Psalm 110:1; Psalm 45:6-7)

Two Common Stumbling Blocks

1. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

- i. Shown by use of masculine pronouns in spite of “pneuma” being neuter (Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:8).
- ii. Also HS is said to “help”, “intercede” (Rom.8:26), be “insulted” (Heb 10:29), & “grieved” (Eph.4:30).

2. The Full Deity and Full Humanity of Jesus

The Full Deity of Jesus

This is implicit in God’s resurrection of the man condemned for blasphemy:

...who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead ... Romans 1:4

And – contrary to popular assumption – it is actually explicit throughout the New Testament.

Consider: The Christian ‘Shema’.

“Hear [שְׁמַע] (shema)] O Israel: The **LORD** our **God**, the **LORD** is one” Deuteronomy 6:4

The above verse was and is prayed daily by religious Jews. And look at how Paul reworks it as a Christian – in the context of resisting the pressures for Christians to worship idols.

*We know “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or earth (as indeed there are many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’), for us there is one **God**, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is one **Lord**, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.* 1 Cor. 8:6

We see here four clear evidences of Jesus’ divinity. He is:

- 1. worthy of worship, 2. involved in creation, 3. pre-existent, and 4. shares the divine name.

1. Worthy of Worship

*The Father has given all judgement to the Son, that all may honor the Son, **just as** they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.* John 5:22b-23

“Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb...!”

Revelation 5:13

...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth...

Philippians 2:10

2. Involved in Creation

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:3

By him all things were created.

Colossians 1:16

...through whom God created the universe.

Hebrews 1:2

3. Pre-existent

*“Father, glorify me in your own presence, with **the glory I had before the world existed**”* John 17:5

He is before all things...

Colossians 1:17

Before Abraham was...

John 8:58

4. Divine Name

*...the [singular] name of **the Father** and of **the Son** and of **the Holy Spirit**.* Matthew 28:19

*... that **by the name of Jesus Christ** the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health...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.***

Acts 4:10,12 (in the light of Joel 2:32)

*Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place, and **gave Him the name above all names.*** Phil.2:9

“I AM...” (John 6:35,48; 8:12, 9:5; 8:58; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1 18:6. Cf. Exodus 3:14)

Unity with the Father

Unity of Being...

I and the Father are one.

John 10:30

*Even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that **the Father is in me, and I in the Father...***

John 10:38

*Do you not believe that **I am in the Father and the Father is in me**? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.*

John 14:10

*...that they may all be one, just as **you, Father, are in me, and I in you**, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

John 17:21

...Evidenced by Unity of Action

*Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else **believe on account of the works themselves.***

John 14:11

The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me

John 10:25

The Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing"

John 5:19

- working on Sabbath John 5:17
- raising dead John 5:21
- teaching John 7:16
- judgement John 8:16

But what about 'the Father is greater than I'?

*You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for **the Father is greater than I.***

John 14:28

Don't take the phrase out of context. The Last Supper dialogue begins with: *Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God...*

John 13:3

Jesus is returning to the Father's glory which is greater than his 'emptied' humanity.

'The comparison is only meaningful if they're already on the same plane' (Carson, in Case for Christ.)

And Jesus is Not an Angel (contra Jehovah's Witnesses)

Having become as much superior to angels...

Hebrews 1:4

"You must not do that!" (ie. worship angels!)

Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9

Let no-one disqualify you... insisting on the worship of angels.

Col. 2:18

Conclusion: God Is Love

Once we have been convinced that the Bible clearly teaches that God is Trinity, and have begun to get a little more comfortable with the idea that there is only One God, and yet Three Persons, we might go even further, and make a somewhat audacious suggestion:

If God truly is love, how could he not be Trinity?

The logic goes something like this:

1. "Love seeks not its own" (1 Cor.13:5)
2. Therefore since love is personal, it requires multiple persons.
3. Eternal love therefore requires multiple eternal persons.
4. Thus if God is love (1 Jn.4:16), God must be multiple persons.

*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love**—& whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.*

1 John 4:15-16