

# The Trinity at creation

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn back for that short time, we're really turning throughout all of Scripture, so keep your finger in Genesis chapter 1, but I'll read a few verses from John 1.

John 1, verses we know well. John 1, verses 1 down to verse 3. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

And just if you were perhaps not with us last week, or just to remind all of us together really, we started what will be a long-running, with gaps, with space in between, a long-running series looking at the Trinity.

With the background focused on actually being able to present this and defend to a level what we hold to be true and what we love to be true.

So last week, if you recall, we saw the very basics using the Catechism and the Confession to help us. What does it mean that we worship one God who is three persons?

[ 1 : 13 ] And we saw what that didn't mean. We saw the heresies around that and the wrong thinking about that. And we said that tonight we're starting really the journey in Scripture. This whole section of the next few weeks together, we call it a gentle introduction.

Gentle introduction in terms of what we're seeing, the Trinity as it's found in the Old Testament. Right from the very start of Scripture, we see evidence of our triune God.

Now, often it is asked by opponents to the Gospel, but also by Christians. We ask, well, why didn't God make clear at the very start he is triune?

Why does it take, really, until the New Testament age to make clear to his people that he is one God and three persons? Why did it take these thousands of years?

At the same time, it's a fair but also an unfair question. God did not take that long. He has revealed himself carefully and gently as triune from the start.

[ 2 : 25 ] But we have to think, who is God revealing himself to for most of the Old Testament? Abraham. The people of that day. Go back to the start.

Think of Moses. People of that day. Think forward even. Think of David. Think of the prophets. Think of the times of the kings. The times of the judges. Think who we're seeing.

What is the context? What is the culture? It is many gods, isn't it? Again and again, God is reminding his people, do not engage with the pagans who worship a hundred different gods.

Who worship this god for fertility. This god for warfare. This god for good crops. This god for a good family life. This god for this. This god for that. God is saying, do not be like the pagans.

And we see quite early on, we'll cover this in a few weeks time, that God makes that clear to his people. We are to worship God who is what?

[ 3 : 23 ] Who is one. One God. And the truth is, the patriarchs, the prophets, the people of God of old, they're just as human as we are today.

And they were amazing in many ways, but they were human like you and I. And God reveals to them at a level they are able to comprehend. At a level they are able to understand.

God is kind. But that being said, God did not stay silent. There is evidence all the way through the Old Testament that he is more. That he is triune.

That he is more majestic and more glorious that the people can even begin to understand. Again, we're starting this evening. A few verses of Genesis.

And work our way through then the rest of the Old Testament in time. Technically speaking, the Trinity is what we would call a progressive theology. Not in a modern use of that word.

[ 4 : 27 ] Where we think progressive as being liberalising. As being taking in things from the world. No, progressive in terms of it progresses as the ages go on. God reveals more and more to his people when they are able to understand it and comprehend it.

And by the time we get to the New Testament, God is showing himself as he truly, fully is to his people. If you recall last week we said, this is a change of scene for us really.

These are more lectures perhaps than sermons technically. But our goal is not knowledge. There will be a few words tonight. It's not about learning big words. You'll forget these words.

I shouldn't say that. There's a change to forget these words the second you leave this room. I'm only saying that because I spent four years studying these words. And I still couldn't spell them for you. To be quite honest.

It's not about knowing the big words. It's about understanding what these words are telling us about our glorious God. So our goal this evening, as every evening, is to leave this place in 20 minutes time. Having grown in our love for who God is.

[ 5 : 34 ] Right from the start we see our triune God. So we were reminded last week that God is one God with three persons. God has one single will.

But the persons of our triune God, Father, Son and Spirit, they take on and they are given different roles in the fulfilling of this will.

So it is God's will that there's a creation. It is God's will that the universe will be made. But in the creating of the universe, Father, Son and Spirit, they take on different roles within that will.

There's two words here for us to learn. And again, don't worry about remembering them. These are words we'll hear again and again throughout the next time together.

There is two ways that theologically we understand the Trinity. Two ways. So first of all is what is called the ontological Trinity. Ontological.

[ 6 : 37 ] So that means onto in terms of being. And the logical is just ology. So it's the understanding of the being of who God is. In other words, what is the Trinity like internally?

This is the Trinity we don't comprehend. This is the Trinity we never really understand fully. This is who God is internally. Before creation.

Before anything was made. This is who God is. The ontological Trinity. This is God as God. When God acts and God does, we call that the economic Trinity.

When we see the work of the different persons of the Godhead at work, we call that the economic Trinity. And in Genesis we see the economic Trinity.

We see God acting. We see God acting. Father, Son and Spirit. Or Father, Word and Spirit. In full power.

- [ 7 : 41 ] In full glory. In short, we see in these first few verses of Genesis. Father, Son and Spirit. With distinctive roles. But all working with one will.
- The one purpose of God. First of all, the Father. What do we see the Father doing in creation? In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
- Now often, and rightly so, we take the statement as being only about God the Father. And we're right, in a sense, to think that way.
- Of course, the Father is fully involved in creation. But this statement, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. That statement does not exclude the full Godhead in creation.
- It does not exclude the Son and the Spirit in creation. In fact, the Father, Son and Spirit, as we said, have a full role to play in creation. But what's a Father's role?
- [ 8 : 43 ] Well, to help us understand, we would say the Father is the initiating agent in creation. He is the initiating person, the initiating agent, you see written down in theological works.
- To help us understand this. And again, we said last week, we're very careful putting human analogies onto Trinity. So this is not perfect. It works just very barely.
- But just to help us understand. The Father, we could say there, is the architect of creation. He is there with the plan.
- He is there with the will that will be a creation. And creation will be according to his blueprints. According to his perfect plan.
- The Father is there. It's his creation. It's his plan. He is the initiating agent. Then we see the Son.
- [ 9 : 45 ] And interestingly enough, I'm sure you see this yourself. Scripture says much about the Son's role in creation. We perhaps skip past it so often that when we read verses.
- But Scripture tells us a lot about the Son's role in creation. Although it's not always fully clear to us what that means. It is there. It gives us a sense of what's going on.
- We read some verses here from John. When John writes his gospel. When John writes, In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was of God. And the Word was God.
- John is doing that on purpose. To mirror the words of Genesis. He is trying to bring his readers' minds back to Genesis. To say at the start, There was the Word.
- And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. And John tells us that this Word who was there at the start, That He has an active role in creation.
- [ 10 : 44 ] We can make no mistake about it. John 1 verse 3. All things, speaking of the Word here, the Son, All things were made through Him.
- And without Him was not anything made that was made. That word there, all, panta. Again, we cover this before in every areas. Panta, a Greek word which takes in everything.
- All of creation. All of time and space and reality. It was all made, what? All made through Jesus. All made, we'll see later on, by Jesus.
- As a father in Genesis. As God says and God speaks. As a father speaks creation into existence.
- He does so how? By His Word. And who is the Word? The Word is the Son. As a father speaks the Word into creation. Creation comes into fruition, into reality.
- [ 11 : 47 ] By the work of the Word. The work of the Son. The mechanics of it, we can't understand or comprehend. Colossians 1 gives us further backing up for this.
- Again, a verse we know. Colossians 1, 16. For, speaking of Jesus. Colossians 1, 16. For, by Him all things were created. In heaven and on earth. Visible and invisible.

Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. So Colossians tells us.

All of creation is made by the Son. Through the Son. And for the Son. He perhaps might minimize the role of our Savior in creation.

The role of the Son in creation. But He is there as the Word. As the Logos. As the active intelligence.

[ 12 : 49 ] The active divinity of God. As a father enacts. As a father says, let there be light. As a father says, let there be. Let there be. Let there be.

Creation comes into bursting glorious light. Through the work of the Son. Again, the mechanics of it. We will never understand.

But this is what scripture tells us. All things through Him. By Him. And for Him. So the Father is there as the architect.

We could say. The plan is His. He initiates the work of creation. And creation is then brought to fruition. Through the Son. And of course we see in Genesis.

The Spirit. The Spirit of God is there hovering over the water. And again. The word there in Spirit. In Hebrew.

[ 13 : 50 ] It's the same word for breath. For the. The exclamation. The breath of life. The breath of God. Quite literally.

Is hovering over the water. Here we see. God plans creation. God speaks creation. Now God. His Spirit is there. As creation is breathed out.

As creation is spoken out. Through the living word. The Son. We see the Holy Spirit hovering. Over. The unformed wasteland.

As about to be transformed. Into glorious creation. And the word there hovering. It's a very purposeful word. It's the same word. That is used. For a.

A bird. That is. Keeping watch over her eggs. Over her young. The Holy Spirit is there. Intimately involved. In creation.

[ 14 : 46 ] Not distant. He is there. Almost hovering over. We are very careful. We do not dare. To put imagery. To our God.

But that's the imagery used. The word hovering. Is given to us. It's a word God chose. And the image is there. Of her mother. Hen. Hovering over her eggs. Over her chicks.

An image of care. Of protection. Of purpose. As a whole. As a Holy Spirit. As he hovers. As it were.

As he is over this. Watery. Wasteland. Bit by bit. We see. Life. Appearing. We sang. Psalm 33. I read again.

Psalm 33. Verse 6. By the word of the Lord. The heavens were made. And by the breath of his mouth. All their host. That word.

[ 15 : 40 ] The breath of his mouth. That's the exact same word. As the spirit. In Genesis 1. By the breath of his mouth. So here we see. We told in creation.

In scripture. That creation is made. And from the father. Creation is from the son. Creation here is from the spirit. Again. The full. Active role. Of our triune God.

In all that there is. And we're jumping ahead here. By weeks. If not months. But creation. Is a sign to us. A simple sign. Of a Godhead.

The triune God. That God is involved. Fully. Father. Son. And spirit. In all that he does. And that's true for creation. And it's also true.

For you and I. In our salvation. As the spirit. Hoveres. And brings life. To a dead. Barren wasteland. At one point.

[ 16 : 34 ] The spirit. As it were. Hovered. Over our. Dead. Barren. Wastelands. Of souls. And of lives. And he brought new life. To us. As a father.

He initiates. This new creation. This brand new thing. At one point. In our existence. The father was there. And he initiates. In our existence.

A new start. As a son is there. All things made. Through him. And for him. We have our saviour. The son. And we are for him.

We were made for him. We are his precious people. We are his inheritance. The world is his. But more importantly than that. We are his.

We. We. Can't understand. The full breadth. Of this glorious truth.

[ 17 : 29 ] We just can't. But we can have confidence. That right from the start. We see. The glorious truth. Of trinity.

The father. Of the son. And the spirit. Now. You know. We didn't touch. On. The end there. Where God says. Let us make man. And very often. That's what we go to. We say. Well. Here God is clearly speaking.

To God. And it's let us. And although. I would agree with that. Personally. I would say. Yes. That's a good evidence. Of God. Speaking. To God.

Father. The son. The son. The spirit. It's there. Clearly. Our whole study. Is focusing on. How we defend. The trinity. To those. Especially really. Our friends.

Who are in the JWs. I'll say this carefully. But honestly. If a JW. Comes to your door. And you start saying to them. Well. It says in Genesis. When God says. Let us.

[ 18 : 26 ] They will. Quote to you. Well. If they've done. Their hard work. They will quote to you. Pages of Hebrew grammar. Unless you're wanting.

To borrow my books. Which I've hardly touched. From the manse. On Hebrew grammar. Of Genesis 1. Then feel free. But. Don't take them there. Because. They will understand. Not because.

They're not intelligent. They are. But it's drilled into them. What to say. And that's the most common thing. They'll say. No. It's actually. It's a different verb case. And actually. That's a modern usage.

Of the old verb case. And I know this. Because. Quite cruelly. In ETS. Our professor. Took us there. And he. Took on the role of a JW. And he absolutely wiped the floor.

Of every one of us. We thought we knew how to defend it. We didn't. And by third year. We still couldn't really beat him. And he would argue the case. For the JW side.

[ 19 : 21 ] Of a Muslim side. And he would win every time. And he himself says. Well. It is about the Trinity. But don't take people there. Because. They will speak to you in a second.

With. Their memorized. Hebrew grammar. It's not because they're right. But it's because they're working harder at it. Than we are. Much harder than we are. But what's harder for them to work with.

Is how you compare. John. Or Colossians. Or Hebrews 1. To Genesis 1. Scripture. Interpret scripture. Take them to scripture. And show them how the New Testament.

Illuminates Old Testament. And how. How on earth. Can John 1. Colossians. Hebrews. Revelation. We'll get to that eventually. How can all that.

Be true. And not show. That God. Is there. A triune God. Right at the start. And summary. For us. Again.

- [ 20 : 18 ] We can never. Understand fully. This glorious truth. We have to be happy. Not to understand it. It's not about getting it. It's about. Understanding. What we can of it.
- And then using that. To bring us. Closer. To a place of. Glorious worship of God. Again. I don't think. I certainly hope not.
- We're not here. To improve. Our head knowledge only. All creation. Was made. According. To the father.
- Done. Through. Done. By. Done. For. The son. And all creation. Is encompassed. And empowered. And enlivened.
- By the Holy Spirit. One last. Glorious thought. Brothers and sisters. Every single. Waking moment. Literally.
- [ 21 : 16 ] Every single. Waking second. Of our lives. From morning to night. And all the way through the night. We live. And move. And exist. In a creation.
- That was created. And sustained. By our triune God. That is the beauty of it. That is the glory of it. So be confident. Right from the first few words. Of Genesis.
- We can see. Our God is triune. Father. Son. And spirit. I'll move on. Next week. Or week after. To see. Even in the. Even in parts.
- Which are so clearly speaking. About God being one. Even there. We see actually evidence. That yes. He is one. One God. But three persons.
- But we'll. We'll leave that. For our next time. Together. Ben. Order prayer please forever. Thank you. He's done here.
- [ 22 : 29 ] Thank you. True. There is a lot of food. Plaid walk. There is the descendant.