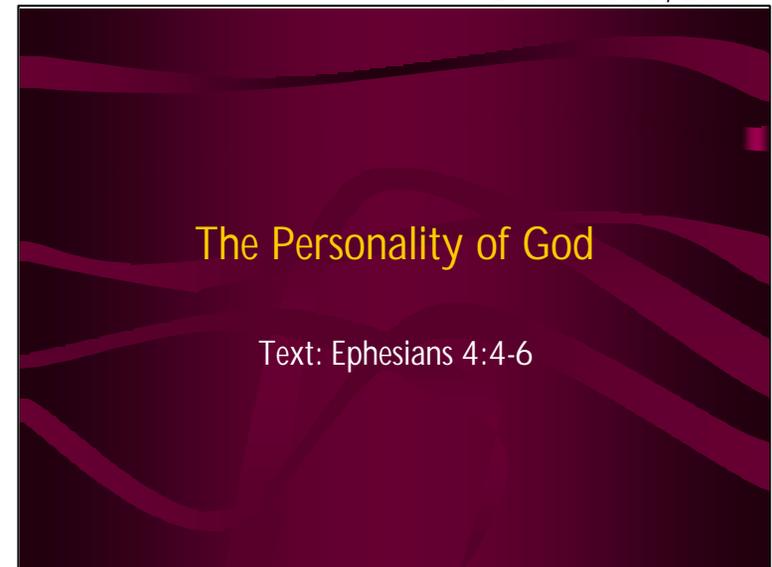


- A. Today we are looking at another great teaching of the Christian church
 - 1. The Trinitarian nature of God
 - 2. Which we have already discussed in our morning Bible class
 - a. And I am going to ask those present there
 - b. To bear with me a few moments
 - c. As we repeat some slides from that class



- A. The terms 'the Personality of God' and 'the Trinity'
 1. Properly speaking
 2. Refer to two different concepts
- B. The Personality of God means
 - a. That the Jewish and Christian God is personal in His nature
 - b. Unlike the impersonal Allah of Islam (Dave Coulter reminded me of this)
 - c. The Bible reveals that true, living God enters into personal relationships
 - d. He is rational, moral, volitional: all personal attributes
 - e. Which is not the same as saying He is a Trinity
- 1. But to put things in familiar terms
 - a. I have used the title 'The Personality of God'
 - b. Because the Bible shows that God manifests Himself
 - c. In three distinct Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Personality of the Triune God

- A. God is personal in His nature
 1. Bible reveals His having personal relationships
 - a. He loves: caring, pitying
 - b. He communicates: speaking, listening
 2. He has the marks of personality
 - a. He wills, plans, decides, acts
 - b. He knows, understands, determines
- B. Which strictly speaking differs from the Trinity
 1. But we will use that term inexactly today
 2. To speak of God's Tri-Personal nature

- A. So we use this term, 'Trinity' although it is not found in the Bible (the closest being the term 'Godhead' and the phrase 'fullness of God')
1. To describe the two complementary truths
 2. That the Lord, our God, is One, is Unity
 3. And that He subsists as Three distinct Persons
 4. But though we use one word to describe this truth
 5. It does not mean we comprehend this truth
- B. Because this is something outside of our personal experience
1. We are uni-personal, singular in our person
 - a. I am just Garth, no one else – in fact, if I start thinking I am someone else, then I have a problem (or Maureen does!)
 - b. You are just _____, no one else
 2. Yet God is Triune, Tri-Personal: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- C. In our inability to grasp this it is good to consider the faith exhibited by young children. Our cubbies know that if we ask the question "Who did this?" or "Who said this?" they are usually on pretty safe ground to say "God did", and even when we have just said that "Jesus did it" because they realize that Jesus is God. Maureen always adds, 'Yes, because Jesus is God'. — But one of them has recently come up with a new twist. After saying a memory verse spoken by Jesus, I asked, 'Now, who said that?' and the response I have been getting is, "I did"! So I ask further, "No, who said it before you did?" the answer ... "You did" or "Mrs Hutchinson did"!

Trinity

- A. Word not found in the Bible
 1. But used to describe a truth found in the Bible
 2. Made up of two parts: Tri–Unity
- B. So 'Trinity' is used to convey the truth
 1. That God is One, He is Unity
 2. But is revealed in Three distinct Persons
 3. Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- C. Man is made in God's image
 1. But man is uni-personal
 2. While God is Tri-Personal

December 17, 2006 The Personality of God 3

- A. While the word 'Trinity' is not found in the Bible
- B. Yet we use the Bible to show that it teaches this truth
- C. And the formal approach to proving this is as outlined here
- D. When I say that the "Bible assigns Deity" it may do so directly, or it may do so by ascribing attributes that can only be possessed by God, such as eternity, omniscience, omnipresence, and so on.
- E. Now, we did this rather hurriedly in the morning Bible class
 - 1. And we will not repeat it here
 - 2. But in your own Bible reading you should note when you come across these truths

Biblical Proof

- A. There is only One God; He is One
- B. Yet the Bible assigns Deity to Three Persons
 - 1. **The Father is God**
 - 2. **The Son is God**
 - 3. **The Holy Spirit is God**
- C. Each a distinct Person, having own personality
 - 1. **Each speaks, thinks, knows, acts, &c., as a Person**
 - 2. **Each has Personal relationships**
 - a. With One Another
 - b. With humankind

December 17, 2006 The Personality of God 4

- A. In the Bible class we spent a little time
 - 1. Discussing the few analogies shown here
 - 2. That have been used to illustrate the Trinity
 - 3. These are of necessity imperfect
 - 4. But they at least show that Tri-Unity is a valid concept

Analogies

- A. Water:
 - 1. exists as solid (ice), liquid, and gas (steam)
- B. Triangle: three sides but only one figure
- C. Humans, comprised of:
 - 1. Body – allowing relationship to physical world
 - 2. Soul – bearing life, making us distinct individuals
 - 3. Spirit – allowing relationship to & worship of God

December 17, 2006 The Personality of God 5

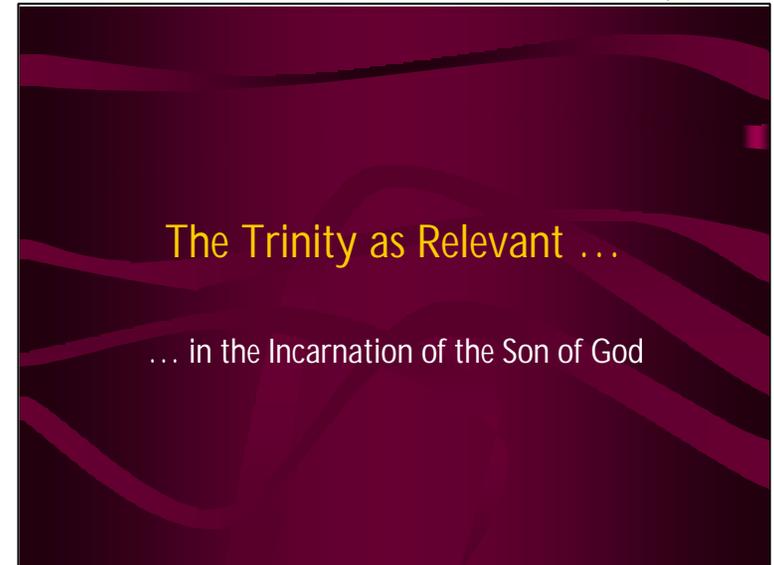
- A. But in our worship service this morning
 - 1. We are going to look at God as Trinity in terms of relevance
 - 2. The doctrines taught by God's word
 - a. Are not simply for theological study on a theoretical basis
 - b. But are found there because they are a relevant part of God's revelation to mankind
 - c. They are there to have an effect on us
 - i. With the life we live as we go out into the world this week
 - ii. With out eternal destiny

The Trinity as Relevant ...

- A. ... in the Incarnation of the Son of God
- B. ... in the Baptism of Jesus Christ
- C. ... in the Resurrection & Exaltation of Jesus
- D. ... in the Church, the body of Jesus Christ
- E. ... to the Believer

December 17, 2006 The Personality of God 6

- A. As this is the Christmas season
 - 1. It is most appropriate to stop and consider
 - 2. The active involvement of each Person of the Trinity
 - 3. In this great event
- B. That Almighty, Eternal God
 - 1. Came to be born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger there
 - 2. The Creator, dwelling and walking among His Creation, us
 - 3. The indescribable Gift of God (2 Corinthians 9:15)



- A. Was planned by Father God in eternity
 - 1. Giving His Son
 - 2. That phrase 'only begotten,' which is really a translation from the Latin vulgate than from the Greek, fails to properly convey that He is the 'beloved, one of a kind, unique Son' with the love relationship that exists between the Father and the Son. (This is the same word that is used of Isaac in Hebrews 11:17, compare Genesis 22:1, where it would be equally wrong to translate it 'only begotten' since Abraham had an older son, Ishmael, who was not, however, the beloved, unique, one of a kind son of promise.)
- B. Was worked out by Father God in time
 - 1. As we celebrate this season
 - 2. God sent forth His Son
- C. But, as we saw two weeks ago, the Son was not simply passive in the incarnation ...

Father and Son in the Incarnation

- A. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. — (John 3:16 NAS)
- B. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law... — (Galatians 4:4 NAS)

- A. ... but the Son was an active participant in the incarnation
 - 1. Willingly – and in the Father's will – leaving heaven
 - 2. And emptied Himself of His prerogatives, His glory
 - 3. He took on human form, likeness, appearance, frailty

The Son in the Incarnation

- A. ... Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
— (Philippians 2:5b-8 NAS)

- A. And, we have already heard this truth before this morning
 - 1. But we will present it before you again
 - 2. The birth of Jesus Christ
 - 3. Was a specific act and work of the Holy Spirit
- B. ***So, God as Trinity acted, all Three Persons in concert, to bring our Saviour of mankind into the world***

Holy Spirit in the Incarnation

- A. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." —(Matthew 1:20 NAS)
- B. So, God as Trinity acted, all Three Persons in concert, to bring our Saviour into the world — that's relevant!

A. The next event I want to look at is Christ's baptism

December 17, 2006

The Trinity as Relevant ...

... in the Baptism of Jesus Christ

- A. Jesus Christ, the Son of God took the initiative in His baptism
 - 1. We shall comment on the implication in a moment
 - 2. John the Baptist tried to dissuade Him by saying "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" (Matthew 3:14 NAS)
 - 3. But note now how Jesus responds
 - 4. Jesus came to fulfill the Law, and part of that was to identify Himself with the people for whose salvation He would be sacrificed
 - 5. Then Luke tells us that when 'Jesus was also baptized and ...'

The Son in His Baptism

- A. But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. — (Matthew 3:15 NAS)

- A. The Holy Spirit came in a visible form
 - 1. Demonstrating the anointing that took place
 - 2. And then ... here is the implication of the baptism of Jesus Christ

Holy Spirit in His Baptism

- A. ... while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, ... — (Luke 3:21b-22a NAS)

- A. The confirming voice of the Father comes
- B. Then Luke goes on to record Jesus' genealogy back to Adam, the 'son of God'
- C. Showing Jesus to be the perfect man
- D. And then describes Jesus' overcoming the temptation by the devil
- E. Which brings us back to the implication of Christ's baptism

Father in Baptism

A. ... and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased." — (Luke 3:22b NAS)

December 17, 2006 The Personality of God 14

- A. The implication being that this act formally commenced His ministry among men
 1. In a special way
 2. Jesus of Nazareth
 3. Was Anointed by the Holy Spirit
 4. Became "Messiah", the Anointed One
 5. Commended and ordained by the other members of the Trinity for His earthly ministry
- B. *So, God as Trinity acted, all Three Persons in concert, in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ*

Holy Spirit Anointing

- A. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." — (Luke 4:18-21 NAS)

- A. And, at the end of that earthly ministry, we find the Trinity still at work ...

The Trinity as Relevant ...

... in the Resurrection & Exaltation of
Jesus

- A. About a dozen times in the book of Acts alone is this or a similar statement made
- B. When taken along with the passage from Galatians
 - 1. Shows us that
 - 2. When the word 'God' is used in the New Testament
 - 3. Without further qualification or explanation
 - 4. It usually refers to the Person of God the Father
- C. But, there are some other passages to consider

The Father in the Resurrection

- A. "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses." — (Acts 2:32 NAS) — from Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost
- B. "Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)," — (Galatians 1:1 NAS)

- A. The Holy Spirit is associated with the giving of life
 - 1. Though it is the Father who does this
 - 2. The Holy Spirit being present at Christ's resurrection is also the one who brings new life to the believer
 - 3. But there was another involvement, more pertinent to us, we shall see in a moment

Holy Spirit and the Resurrection

- A. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. — (Romans 8:2 NAS)
- B. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you. — (Romans 8:11 NAS)

- A. As we saw with His incarnation, so also with the resurrection
1. The Son of God is not merely passive,
 2. Being raised by the Father
 3. But active, participating in His resurrection
 4. (and also in His exaltation, as He spoke, 'I go to my Father')

The Son in the Resurrection

- A. "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."
— (John 10:17-18 NAS)

- A. But the resurrection was only a precursor
 1. To the next step in God's plan
 2. The exaltation of the man Jesus Christ, God the Son, to God's right hand (and that is an human way of describing a spiritual reality beyond words)
 3. So that Holy Spirit could be sent forth to complete the work of salvation
- B. *So, God as Trinity acted, all Three Persons in concert, in the exaltation of Jesus Christ***
- C. Which led to His heavenly ministry in the church Which we will look at now in ...

Holy Spirit and the Exalted Son

- A. But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified. — (John 7:39 NAS)
- B. ... Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places* — (Ephesians 1:20 NAS)
- C. "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." — (John 16:7 NAS)

The Trinity as Relevant ...

... in the Church, the body of Jesus
Christ

- A. The church is the body of Christ
 - 1. And the unity that God wants to see in it
 - 2. Is not the false unity of ecumenism which sweeps doctrine and truth out the door
 - 3. But the unity which is found in the Trinity God – a unity in diversity as it were
 - 4. So here we have the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus and the Father God as united,
 - 5. An illustration of what the church should be
 - 6. Let's briefly look just at the church's commission given by Jesus Christ

The Trinity in The Church

- A. So now we come to our text ...
- B. *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. — (Ephesians 4:4-6 NAS)*

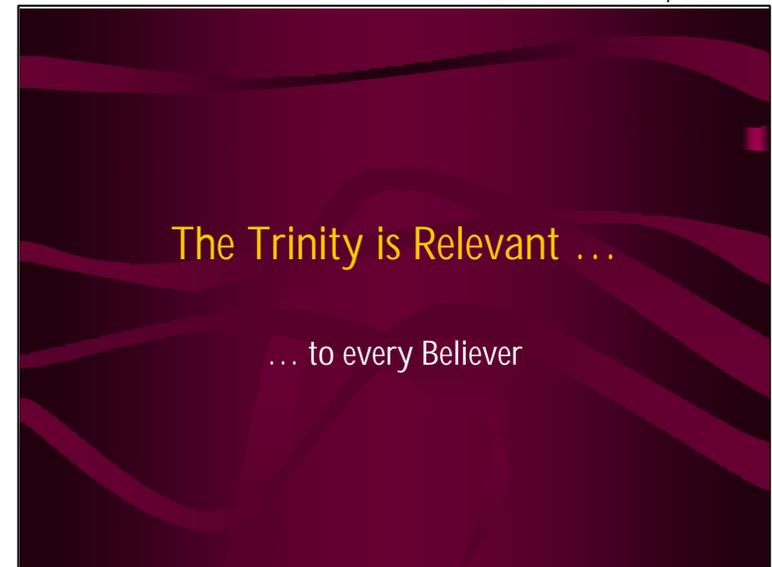
December 17, 2006 The Personality of God 22

- A. Baptism is a symbol
 - 1. Of our death to our old self as we die in Christ
 - 2. Our resurrection to a new life
 - 3. This to be done by one single Name, one single Power
 - 4. That is by the Triune God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- B. From which we may see, once again, the the entire Godhead was involved in bringing salvation to us
- C. And this brings us to our conclusion
 - 1. That ...

Trinity in Church's Commission

- A. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." — (Matthew 28:19-20 NAS)

- A. This fact of the Trinity is relevant
 - 1. To you and to me who are believers
 - 2. Today, tomorrow, and throughout our lives



- A. For first of all, as part of His regenerative work in bringing salvation to the believer
 - 1. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in his or her life
 - 2. In order that He may change your and me to be conformed to the Image of God the Son (Romans 8:29)
- B. And ...

The Spirit in the Believer

- A. *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. — (John 14:17 NAS)
- B. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? — (1 Corinthians 6:19 NAS)

- A. Also as part of the work of Salvation
 - 1. As part of our identification with Him in His death and in His resurrection
 - 2. Jesus Christ, the Son of God takes up residence in our lives
- B. And as well, ...

The Son in the Believer

- A. to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. — (Colossians 1:27 NAS)
- B. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. — (Galatians 2:20 NAS)

- A. We find that God the Father, Himself comes to dwell in us
 - 1. With the purpose that as we increase in the practical, practising knowledge of God and His love in Christ
 - 2. We will be possessed by the fullness of the Presence of the Triune God out of which will flow the gifts and grace He grants
- B. And so we see in this Divine indwelling, ...

The Father in the Believer

- A. Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."—(John 14:23 NAS)
- B. and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. — (Ephesians 3:19 NAS)

- A. The fulfillment of God's promise of full salvation to those who come humbly to Him for it

December 17, 2006

God's Promise Fulfilled

- A. For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell *on* a high and holy place, And *also* with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite." — (Isaiah 57:15 NAS)

December 17, 2006

The Personality of God

28

- A. And from this we find the blessings of the indwelling of the son
 - 1. In His intercession for us when we fail
 - 2. And the forgiveness we thus receive

Blessing of the Son's Residence

- A. My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous — (1 John 2:1 NAS)
- B. Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. — (Hebrews 7:25 NAS)

- A. And the blessing of the Holy Spirit's indwelling
 - 1. As He entirely knows our heart and hurts
 - 2. And puts into prayer that which we are unable to do

Blessing of Holy Spirit Residence

- A. "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*. — (Romans 8:26-27 NAS)

A. So the teaching of the Trinity is practical, relevant

1. For the Trinity is involved in every aspect of our salvation
2. And in empowering us so that we may live lives witnessing to His grace each day.
3. For which let us give praise to God in closing as we sing, 'As With Gladness Men of Old'

December 17, 2006

