

#3: Isn't the Trinity Illogical?

Sunday Evening Bible Study, September 30, 2018

The Menu of Religious Options (Including Special Orders)

Polytheism (Many Gods)	Monotheism (One God)	Atheism (No God)
Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Greco-Roman Polytheism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness	Judaism Christianity Islam	Religious faith usually replaced by scientific faith. Also, includes pantheism: "no God; god is in all"

Once a friend concedes that God probably exists, the next question is, Which God/gods? Even if we concede that God exists, why believe that he/she is the God of the Bible? There are so many religions to choose from. At this point you might say, *To keep it simple, do you mind if I tell you why I choose Christianity? I did so because it is unique and distinct from all other religions. In fact, there are at least five features that distinguish Biblical Christianity from every other religion.* (The Five G's):

1. **Gospels:** The eyewitness accounts about the founder of Christianity are preserved in the most scrutinized and best attested of all ancient documents (see last week's message).
2. **God:** Only Jesus claimed to be God, the Creator of all things. No other religious founder claimed this.
3. **Grave:** Only Jesus was raised from the dead, and it would not be intellectually honest to summarily dismiss his claim to be God without examining the evidence for his resurrection.
4. **Grace:** Only Jesus offers eternal salvation by grace alone, and this is better news than you think!
5. **Growth:** The rapid growth of early Christianity came not by the power of the sword or political maneuvering but by the persuasive proclamation of people marked by love. The global spread and distribution of Christianity is unrivaled.

When you get to "#2 God," it's easy to understand how unbelievers could become confused. If Jesus is God, then why does Jesus speak about his Father being God but distinct from himself? (ex. Jn. 3:16). So, isn't the Trinity illogical?

#3 Isn't the Trinity Illogical?

1. Jesus claimed to be God.
 1. He said the sort of things only God should say (Mt. 11:10; Mk. 10:18).
 2. He did the sort of things only God can do (Jn. 5:18,21;11:43,44).
 3. He received worship that only God deserves (Jn. 4:42; 8:58; 20:28).
 4. His opponents understood his words as a claim to be God (Jn. 5:18; 10:33).
 5. His followers, eyewitnesses to his life, death, and resurrection, claimed that Jesus is God (Jn. 1:1; Col. 1:16).
 6. Extrabiblical sources confirm that the early church worshipped Jesus as God. Pliny the Younger (110 AD) in *Letter to Emperor Trajan*, refers to early Christians singing to Jesus "as if to a god."
2. Jesus was not merely a good man. C.S. Lewis' Trilemma:
 1. Jesus is a liar: "the devil of hell" ("father of lies")
 2. Jesus is a lunatic: "on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg"
 3. Jesus is Lord: "my Lord and my God"

3. Note on the trilemma: Someone may insist on a fourth option: “Jesus never said these things, but much later these words were fabricated by others.” You might respond: “All of the earliest and best historical sources on the life of Jesus—written by eyewitnesses—agree that he said these things. Do you know of any sources that are earlier than the gospels (closer to Jesus’ lifetime) that report otherwise which I can consider?”
4. The Bible affirms that Jesus is God, but it also affirms that there is only one God. The doctrine of the trinity is the only logical way to harmonize the data of Scripture which clearly asserts four reconcilable facts.
 1. The Father is God: Mt. 28:19; Mt. 6:9; Gen. 1:26
 2. The Son (Jesus) is God: Jn. 1:1,14; Mt. 22:46; Titus 2:13
 3. The Holy Spirit is God: Acts 5:3,4; 2 Cor. 13:14
 4. There is one God: 1 Tim. 2:5; Dt. 6:4
5. Therefore, God is a being (one God) who exists as three distinct persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
6. The trinity is not illogical: The Law of Noncontradiction states that contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time (A cannot be A and non-A).
 1. Example of a contradiction: Jesus is God (A) and Jesus is not God (non-A).
 2. Example of a noncontradiction: Jesus is God (A) and the Father is God (B) and there is one God (C).

Reasons to Believe the Doctrine of the Trinity

1. The historical reliability of the Bible which reports the four reconcilable facts.
2. It is logically valid.
3. It is the best way to harmonize this set of facts we have.
4. It is reasonable to believe what we do not understand when we follow the facts (ex. ice at the equator, cell phone). There are thousands of things that scientists believe, often counterintuitive, that they don’t understand (ex. dark matter, freezing water, etc.).