

# **TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Source of Our Salvation (Part 8)**

## *Satisfaction in the Trinity*

**PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:2 and Selected Scriptures**

**THEME: The Doctrine of the Trinity from 1 Peter 1:2**

**NUMBER: 1PET10-0105**

**DATE: January 30, 2005**

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### **Read Passage**

#### **Title and subtitle . . .**

Short time ago I was once again reminded of t/essential nature of t/Trinity when I received my renewal for membership in ETS. For those of you who don't know what that is, t/ETS is THE scholarly think-tank organization for orthodox believers in JC. Society publishes a scholarly journal (JETS) & I would hasten to say that all of t/big hitters in t/CH today (scholars) are members of the ETS. I confess that my membership is on t/associate level as a Master of Arts degree, such as t/one I possess, is not enough for full membership. So until I finish my doctorate I will have to be content w/associate status (really no big deal).

My point in all of this is every year when my membership comes up for renewal I have to sign a statement that I believe in two things: 1) That I believe in inerrancy as it relates to t/Bible; 2) That I believe in t/Trinity as it relates to God ==>

The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs. God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person one in essence, equal in power and authority.

2 Essentials: 1) Sufficiency & Inerrancy of God's Word + Triunity of God's Nature. Among t/best of Xn theologians, men who differ on lots of different issues, men who come from different theol. traditions, from Presbyterian to Pentecostal - yet in agreement that t/Trinity is one of their two non-negotiable beliefs.

If you remember back==>

## I. Hope in The Sovereign Source of Our Salvation

Our Hope is Found in the Electing Grace of the Father, the Sanctifying Grace of the Spirit, and the Saving Grace of the Son.

## D. Parenthesis: Satisfaction in the Trinity

*If our Hope is Found in the Triune God then we must know and love Him in His Triunity.*

*If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must know about His Triunity.*

*If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must believe in His Triunity.*

In short - True believers will love & embrace the Triune God in all His fullness

## 1. Trinity is essential in same way blood is essential to life

This is what we call a cardinal doctrine of the Xn faith. If you take it away or pervert it you have taken away/perverted what means to be a Xn

Certainly not all doctrines are created equal. BTIM - We don't split hairs over absolutely everything. There are non-negiable issues & there are negiable issues.

## 2. How do you know the difference?

How do you know which doctrines are essential and which are not? Let me first say, all doctrine is essential. It's bad to be in error on anything related to God's Word. We want to be accurate, to ==>

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)**

After all, if it is God's Word that, in the words of 1 Tim. 3 ==>

**that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

Then we want to know it well & knowing it well doesn't mean being sloppy with it. Bad doctrine results in bad living. Can't apply what we do not know; and we cannot apply rightly what we know wrongly. It's all important.

### a. However, there is a sliding scale if you will

Being wrong about justification or who X is may land you in hell; being wrong about the nature of t/millennium certainly will not. Not all mistakes are created equal. Just ask any accountant - or policeman for that matter. If you run a stop sign you get a ticket. If you intentionally run over a person you get jail. So I think that the answer to this question sort of logically sorts itself out.

### b. Here's an interesting story . . .

Several tears ago, I attended a gathering of pastors in Phoenix to hear a guest speaker, a well-known church leader. He was touted as a superb speaker with a solid grasp of Scripture. However, I was a bit disappointed when he started talking about the need to tear down doctrinal barriers in favor of love and unity within the church all the while He supporting his contention with pragmatic pleas, not with Scripture. In return he was supported with choruses of "amens" and "hallelujahs."

Seems to be t/Spirit of our age (post-modernism/tolerance has found it's way in t/CH). We at CCC still believe that truth matters & that it matters so much that it is to be defended at all costs. We agree w/the great Reformer Martin Luther==>

"Hang 'unity' if the truth of the gospel is at stake."

### c. Don't get me wrong==>

I am not in favor of "cookie-cutter Christianity" where every believer must be a paper cutout, blindly like-minded on every minuscule point of doctrine and interpretation. I've spent thousands of hours studying doctrine and theology, I realize that within orthodoxy there is room for a degree of liberty. There are some points of interpretation upon which good men may disagree.

There are negotiables & non-negotiables. Question becomes, "Where do you draw the line?"

Biblically speaking, I can enjoy a friendship w/any believer in JC (eg. share over a cup of coffee) as long as he is not in sin or a heretic. We may have disagreements over some rather substantial things.

But to take it a step further: I only really fellowship w/those who affirm t/fundamentals of Scripture. Areas where the implications transcend "differences in interpretation" and transgress the person of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, Salvation, or living t/Xn life. All differences are not created equal! So again, where do you draw the line?

#### **d. I believe we must draw the line along the truths of traditional Reformation theology**

In short we could say that we draw t/line at what were called the "Solas" of the Reformation. (sola means "solely or only"). So we have "sola gratia" and "sola fide" (salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, not works) // scriptura (t/foundation of our faith is found in t/Bible - that's our authority - it is inspired/inerrant) // solus Christus (the object of our faith & t/one who saves us is Christ alone) // Soli Deo Gloria (we serve God to His glory alone).

This would certainly be a good place to start when talking about essentials and non-essentials.

#### **(1) But I can even go a little beyond that**

I'll use our familiar little letter I love so much, the letter "S". Here are 6 such words that being w/an "S" that define certain areas where I believe we must draw t/line.

#### **(a) SYSTEMATICS**

This is what we will call the basic realm of "Theology Proper." Nature of who God is. This includes an orthodox understanding of the Trinity.

"There is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three co-eternal and co-equal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence" (James Orr, ed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

IOW there is no room for compromise on Person of God, JC, or t/HS. We believe in 1 God, yet 1 God in 3 co-equal, co-eternal Persons. JC is God who became man at His incarnation. He is fully completely & perfectly God & fully completely and perfectly man.

### **(b) SOVEREIGNTY**

God's sovereignty is an inseparable aspect of who He is as God. It is His active, omnipotent and wise control over all things everywhere according to His unconditional will (Eph 1:11). God's sov. encompasses His decrees: His unconditional, unalterable and fixed plan which He devised in eternity past. Any teaching that in any way, shape or form, places God at the mercy of man's will must be rejected. For me, that includes Pelagianism, semi or otherwise (denies total depravity), so-called open-theism (denies God's absolute omniscience), & "Free-will theism" (compromises God's sov. to t/exaltation of man's so-called free-will).

### **(c) SCRIPTURE**

Trumpet call of t/Reformation: Sola Scriptura. Bible as t/ultimate & final authority for belief, faith, & practice (for t/individ. Xn as well as for t/body of X). Must uphold t/inspiration of God's Word, & as a result of inspiration, inerrancy. In theol. we call this "verbal, plenary inspiration."

Or, defined==>

"God so superintended the human authors of Scripture that without negating their individuality, personal interests, or literary style, they recorded His divinely revealed truth without error, without excess, and without omission in the words of the original manuscripts"

### **(d) SIN**

Back in t/1970s Psychologist, Karl Menninger, shocked Christendom and much of secular culture by asking, in t/title of his book, "Whatever

Became of Sin?" He charged t/CH w/allowing t/concept of sin and repentance to fall to t/cutting room floor of CH polity. In 1995, Newsweek framed same ? "What Ever Happened to Sin?" T/author of that article reached a sim. conclusion==>

"The urgent sense of personal sin has all but disappeared in the current upbeat style in American religion."

This doctrine [sinfulness of man] is in serious decline these days, to the detriment of the church. We change the words of great hymns so that they don't refer to us as "wretches" or "worms." We buy into the self-esteem lie. We want to minimize our sin, eliminate our sense of shame, boost our ego, and feel good about ourselves. We want, in other words, all those things which deaden the conscience. We abhor shame, however justified. We abhor repentance because it is too hard. We avoid guilt. We want the easy street. [John MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience, 201-202]

Sev. yrs. ago I learned that an older man w/whom we once attended CH, was divorced by His wife due to a chronic problem w/pornography. He went to see some sort of counselor who told him, "Of course you like it, it's only natural; you're a man!" So, he bought t/lie that sin didn't exist & went pell-mell into t/depths of his depraved lifestyle.

"There will never be a a reduction in the wages of sin." Wages of sin is still death!

All men are sinners by nature and by action. We are born depraved, unable to save ourselves or merit salvation by our good intentions or religion. Sin is what separates us from God. It is our main problem, not a lack of self-esteem. See, it's t/other way around - we love ourselves too much & God too little.

Only remedy for our sin is t/regenerating power of God & t/continued work of t/HS on our behalf thru WOG.

Two more==>

**(e) SALVATION**

Justification by grace alone [s. gratia] thru faith alone [fide] in t/person & work of JC alone [. christus]. [much in that single sentence . . . ]

As I have often said, if you add anything to equation of salv. by grace thru faith, you destroy t/equation. Those who believe that anything other than biblical faith and biblical faith alone is a requirement for salvation (water baptism/speaking in tongues/good works) are in gross & dangerous error (see Philippians 3:1-3 and Paul's response to those who would mingle works with grace).

God saves us, and He does so to His sovereign glory. Why we call it a “doctrine of grace.” Even our belief is a gift.

## **(f) SECOND COMING**

Blessed Hope of t/CH. JC will one day return personally & visibly. He will reward t/righteous (those whose sin has been forgiven by His grace). He will punish the unrighteous.

Here are 5 areas where we must "draw the line." I realize that I run the risk of being thought "too exclusive" for some. However, these are issues that have great implications to the health of the church, the integrity of God's Word, and the life of the believer.

That brings us back to t/Trinity - falls under t/umbrella of “systematics.”

### **2. Take a step back - perspective from 30,000 feet**

It may feel otherwise, but this is only our 5<sup>TH</sup> message on this subject (surprise you - feels like our 10<sup>th</sup>!). Really covered a lot in about 5 weeks. Problem is, we've been in & out (with t/holidays & illness & bad weather), so this is for all practical purposes the 1<sup>st</sup> time we've been back in this study since Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> (7 weeks ago). Well I'm committed to finishing this section in t/next 3 weeks or so.

But, again, to “take a step back” & refresh our memories==>

#### **a. Seen how this passage reflects the Triunity of God**

Why we've said all along that our hope is in a Sovereign (God) who is the Source of our Salvation. Also, how that salvation is t/work of t/3 Persons of t/Trinity - If you are a gen. believer in JC, you have been==>

### **A. Selected by the Father (1:2a)**

That's the reason why you're a genuine believer in JC. We have been (in the past) "chosen"

**[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**

**(1) We spent the good part of a Sunday looking at the word πρόγνωσις (translated foreknowledge)**

Took some time looking at t/classic Arminian view which equates God's foreknowledge to what is called prescience, akin to His omniscience. IOW - "God looks ahead and chooses those who choose Him."

### **(a) #1 It's Bad Theology**

God doesn't have foreknowledge in sense of prescience alone--He's not a divine fortune teller who predicts random future happenings (he's active/not reactive).

God at once has complete knowledge of all things past present & future. To say that God at some point "looked ahead" is an attempt to define God by our human terms/reasoning.

There's no such thing as "God looking ahead" because there is no "ahead" with God. God is omniscient which means that he knows all things at once.

St. Augustine: "But what is future to God? For, if divine knowledge includes all things at one instant, all things are present to Him and there is nothing future . . ." [Concerning Diverse Questions, 2.2.2]

Puritan Stephen Charnock "God considers all things in his own simple knowledge as if they were now acted; and therefore some have chosen to call



the knowledge of things to come, not prescience or foreknowledge, but knowledge; because God sees all things at one instant.” [God's Knowledge]

Great Theologian W.G.T. Shedd "The infinite mind comprehends all things in one simultaneous intuition, and, consequently, there is for it no 'before or 'after.'"

## (b) #2 It's Not What the Word Means

1 of great dangers in biblical interpret. is to restrict biblical words to English definitions. This particular word (πρόγνωσις) is only used 2x in NT - the other use is in Peter's sermon in Acts 2:23 where it is used of Jesus being ==>

. . . delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.  
(it's connected w/God's predestined plan; doesn't mean "looked ahead")

If you go back to OT & Heb. יָדָע -("to know"). יָדָע means to know w/experience or intimacy. NT Greek words for knowing/foreknowledge carry same idea given same context. Much deeper than our English word "know." Biblical words imply intimacy & relationship.

See that in Matthew 1:25, speaking of Joseph's relationship to Mary in that "he kept her a virgin." In t/Greek text it's lit. "he did not know her."

Biblically, to foreknow implies a relationship. "To foreknow is to forelove."

We see that in Rom. 11. TAP is wrestling w/issue of Israel rejected her Messiah. If salvation was from t/Jews & for t/Jews why did they reject JC? Is God done with Israel? Has God or His Word failed?

11:2 [No] God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew...

Not that God has a crystal ball; God knew them before they were a people. They were, are, and will be part of His plan. Intimacy.

1 Peter 1:20 (we will get there!) - For He [Christ, v. 19] was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has become appeared in these last times

for the sake of you.

Does foreknowledge in this context mean that God had no absolute plan -no causative personal relationship to mission of X? Would be absurd to say that God looked ahead & saw Jesus. What God foreknows He causes. It's God's active & intimate involvement in bringing to pass what he desires as it relates to those He loves.

**[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,**

It is t/Father who chooses us to be saved from out from t/entirety of t/lost. He chose us before we ever chose Him (we chose Him because He chose us). This is the unique work of 1P of the Trinity . . .

***B. Sanctified by the Spirit (1:2b)*** That is, t/HS - 3P of t/Trinity

**(2) ἁγιασμος** - basically means to be set apart as holy  
In that sense, we have been set apart by God, in his eternal plan, to be holy unto Him. It's the work of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the Trinity - God the Holy Spirit - to draw us to X. It's what we call "Effectual Calling."

Thirdly we see t/work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity==>

***C. Saved for Service by the Son (1:2c)***

**[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father with the sanctification of the Spirit for obedience (saving faith) to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with his blood.**

Progression or order to t/completion of our salvation: Father Elects; Spirit Sanctifies; Son Saves. Grace of t/Triune God who planned, secured and purchased your salvation from sin to eternal life.

That is the genius behind this study. I would normally not spend this much time on an issue such as this while expositionally preaching through a book of the Bible. But this is such a key issue, & a doctrine

that has in many circles been neglected, misunderstood, & vilified - even in so-called Xn circles.

This brought us to our ==>

### ***D. Parenthesis: Satisfaction in the Trinity***

#### **b. Simple Definition of the Trinity:**

May not be most precise, but it's short and easy to learn==>

“God is One as to Essence, Three as to Person.”

Not one person and three persons (contra.) not one essence and three essences (contra.) but [^] (1 essence - 3 persons). Encompassing the One Being/Essence of God there are 3 co-eternal, co-equal persons: F/S/HS. Yet, ontologically, there is 1 God.

#### **c. The Trinity in History**

Safe to say that t/Xn CH from its earliest times to present has uncompromisingly believed & taught that God is a Triunity of F, S, & H.S. - Even if, early on that belief was implicit rather than explicit.

#### **(1) This was really a by-product of the Church's belief in the oneness of God and the deity of Jesus Christ**

CH upheld what t/Jews were taught in t/OT - that God is one. There is no other (we call this 'monotheism'). But, then, what do you do w/the Messiah? The one who called himself God; the great "I AM" of Jn. 8:58 The first thing that the CH this side of the Apostles dealt with was who X was and is. Seems like the big issues first centered around His person before they centered around His work (not that the two can be divorced from each other).

So, we find that t/post-apostolic CH upheld t/Triunity of God. In fact, - we have evidence that dates as early as t/first part of t/2nd c. (a generation w/i t/Apostles)==>

The Letter of Barnabas, dated to t/early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. affirms “a Trinity of God

t/Father, Christ t/preexisting Lord and Judge, and the Holy Spirit who prepares hearts for salvation.” [cited in Lewis, 255]

Later in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD ==>

The Didache (teaching) a document discovered in the late 1800s in Constantinople indicates that t/CH believed in a Triune God. [cited in Lewis, 255]

2<sup>nd</sup> c. theologian, Theophilus, was t/1st to use t/term “Trinity” (trias) of t/Godhead (FSHS). [cited in Lewis, 255]

Irenaeus (c. 190) wrote against t/heresy of t/Gnostics and claimed that the one Creator and Redeemer God subsists as Father, Son, and Spirit.

Tertullian (c. 200) wrote extensively on the Trinity. He claimed that God is a unity of substance, with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit distinct divine persons w/i t/substance of the one God. [cited in Lewis, 255]

We said that the test of any teaching is whether it is biblical. Creeds, councils, the collective teaching of t/CH is important and carries weight. CH is t/pillar and support of t/truth & creeds councils show how God has been at work in history in building His CH. But creeds are still bound to t/plain teaching of Scripture and are therefore only useful in as much as they are biblical themselves.

From this point we moved forward to ==>

## c. The Three Essential Elements of the Triunity of God

Three necessary truths as it relates to God in His Triunity. Could call them “three pillars of the faith” If you take away any one or more of t/three t/entire equation of who God is will fall to the ground.

### (1) Pillar #1 God is one as to Essence

God is One in Unity. By this we affirm that there is only one God. We w/o hesitation dogmatically affirm monotheism (one God).

#### (a) Deut. 6:4

“The Shema” which means “hear” (taken from first word of t/verse)==>

**Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!**

The word “one” carries the idea of uniqueness. There is none other like

the Lord. He is unique in that he has no like or equal.

God's oneness is A Unity in Plurality. He can simultaneously exist in more than one mode at a time. He is one in essence, but three in personness. "Unity in trinality and trinality in unity." TPIAW - "God is not one and three, but one in three"

## (2) Pillar #2 - God is Three as to Person

### (a) Something we see in embryonic form in OT

See it in plural pronouns used in reference to God. Such as in ==>

Gen.1:26 (let us make man in our own image)

Gen. 3:22 (man, in knowing good and evil has become like us)

Gen. 11:7 (let us go down and confuse their language)

Indicates a distinction of persons.

We see the same thing in the NT

John 14:23 **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. "We" in that v. = 3 members of the Godhead.**

This is a NT parallel to what we see among other places in Genesis w/use of a plural pronoun to refer to God.

### (b) We see that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One in Essence, but Distinctly Three in Person

They are distinct persons. Distinct Doesn't Mean Separate. They are distinct, but not separate. They work in unity. Each is fully and completely in the other (Father in t/Son, Son in t/Father, Spirit in F&S).

You can't take one away & still have God. They're not each 1/3 of God. The Father is 100% God; Son // HS //

Yet, they each have personality (intellect, emotion, will). They each relate to the other on a me-you-he basis.

### **i. The Father is a Person**

He is a person as opposed to an impersonal force, not a person like a man. He has intellect, emotion, will. Same w/The Son==>

### **ii. The Son is a Person**

Jesus has intellect (He thinks, reasons)

Emotion ==> Matt. 23:37 (wept over Jerusalem)

Also has Will (Garden of Gethsemane, “Not what I will, but what thou wilt”).

### **iii. The Holy Spirit is a Person**

HS has intellect, emotion and will. He teaches (John 14:26); He prays on our behalf (Rom. 8:26-27); He gives spiritual gifts as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11). He forbids things (Acts 16:6-7); He speaks (Acts 8:29, 13:2); Can be grieved (Eph. 4:30). Masc. pronoun used w/Spirit which is neuter (would be expected to see a neuter pn. used). (John 14:26; ;15:26; 16:13-14).

God is Three in Distinction, But not in separation. The persons are not independent from each other. There is a sense in which what the Father does the Son does also. Same thing w/the H.S. Would be impossible to remove a person from t/Godhead & still have God. Rem. - F/S/HS are each fully & completely God.

So, we're talking about a distinction of what makes God, God in his essence, or mode of being. There's a distinction, but never a separation. Each of t/members of t/Trinity are in one another, yet they are distinct persons. (have more to say about that later).

We could simply say God, as God, is made up of three distinct, but not separate modes--a mode of God's essence would be another way of saying who God is.

### **(3) Pillar #3 - Each Person is Fully God**

Deity of t/Father, Son, & H.S. is fully in each person simultaneously and

eternally. Ea. is fully, completely, eternally God.

**(a) Father is Fully God** - No argument here

**(b) The Son is Fully God**

We looked at how that can be demonstrated along the lines of 6 diff. categories of evidence, such as how he possesses t/attributes of God // Does Things Only God Can Do // Possesses Names of God // Claimed to be God // Worshiped as God // Scripture says he is God.

Father is fully God, the Son is Fully God==>

**(c) The Spirit is Fully God**

HS possesses attributes of God // does t/works of God // Called God.

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**Three Essential Elements of the Triunity of God**

Three pillars of the faith. 1) God is One as to Essence (only one God); 2) God is Three as to Person (God is Three in Distinction, but not separation); 3) Each Person is Fully God (God is Complete in Each Person). Majesty of the One who Selected, Sanctified, Saved us by His grace!

What C.H. Spurgeon said about his CH's ministry, specifically their Pastor's College, must be true for us as well.

"Definite doctrines are held and taught. We hold by the doctrines of grace and the old orthodox faith, and have no sympathy with the countless theological novelties of the present day, which are novelties only in outward form: in substance they are repetitions of errors exploded long ago. . . . we find no failure in the number of earnest spirits who rally to our standard, believing that in truth alone can true freedom be found." [Lectures to my Students, iv]

Yes, we hold to t/doctrines of grace & t/old orthodox faith, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. May God grant us a CH filled w/earnest men & women who rally to that standard, believing that in truth alone

can freedom be found.