

TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Source of Our Salvation (Part 12)

Satisfaction in the Trinity

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:2 and Selected Scriptures

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

NUMBER: 1PET14-0305

DATE: March 20, 2005

Read Passage

Good to be back . . .

Hoped to finish this section thru v. 2 (Trinity) before I left some 4 wks. ago, but that didn't happen. I know that some of you have been greatly enriched by this study & also happen to know that some of you have been a bit impatient for us to move on (something I can't personally understand, but sort of can generally speaking). For those of you who have been on t/impatient side of things I will remind you that it can always be worse. I've read several books covering this doctrine over t/past sev. months & found on t/back of one of them an endorsement from a pastor who wrote that his CH is starting a 3 year focus on t/Trinity. 3 Months is nothing in cf. to 3 yrs.

This AM we wrap it all up

Main idea The Flows out of this Passage ==>

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

I. Hope in The Sovereign Source of Our Salvation

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

B. Sanctified by the Spirit (1:2b)

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

Father Elects; Spirit Sanctifies; Son Saves. Where our hope lies

Trinity is foundational to all that==>

D. Parenthesis: Satisfaction in the Trinity

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

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

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

Essential! This is why we've spent some 8 weeks on this doctrine. It's near to t/heart of God & if that's true (if you don't believe that something's wrong) - if that's true then it has to be near to our hearts as well.

We've covered a lot of ground over t/past several weeks. Obv. I don't have time to review all of that. Just to give you an overview of where we've been . . .

1. What do we mean by the "Trinity?"

a. Complex Definitions of the Trinity:

**b. Simple Definition of the Trinity: "God is 1 as to E. 3 as to P."
("Being of who God is" - 1 WHAT (God) 3 WHOS (F/S/HS))**

2. The Trinity in History

a. A By-product of the deity of Jesus Christ

b. Early Witnesses: Athenagoras and Tertullian

c. Councils (Nicea and Carthage)

3. Three Essential Elements of the Triunity of God (three pillars of the faith)

a. Pillar #1 - God is one as to Essence (God is One in Unity)

(1) A Unity in Plurality (Passages)

b. Pillar #2 - God is Three as to Person (God is Three in Distinction) -

(1) Passages

(a) Personality of the Father

(b) Personality of the Son

(c) Personality of the Holy Spirit

(2) Summary - God is 3 in unity & distinction (not 3 manifestations)

c. Pillar #3 - Each Person (F/S/HS) is Fully God

(1) The Father is Fully God

(2) The Son is Fully God

(3) The Spirit is Fully God

(4) The Three Persons Work Together in Unity

(a) Implications as to Prayer

4. Pulling it all together: What do we mean by “Essence” and “Person” and how do these relate to each other in the unity of the Godhead

a. Ontological Trinity vs. Economical Trinity

5. Hairsplitting or Heresy? (Arianism and Modalism and Confusion, Oh My!)

a. Arianism / Watchtowerism

b. Modalism (dynamic/modalistic/oneness)

(1) The Contribution of John chapter 1 (1:1)

6. So What? What Difference Does It Make?

Why is it essential to understand what it means to worship a triune God? Certainly we've already touched on many reasons as we've progressed thru this study tog. But let me sort of boil it down in t/rest of t/time we have left this a.m.

a. The Trinity is Essential Because:

(1) The Very Nature of God is at stake

We're talking about t/highest revelation of who God is - how God has revealed himself to us. To pervert or deny t/Triunity of God is to pervert t/very nature/character of God. That's to tread upon t/Third commandment & to take his name in vain (n. = embodiment of his character or nature - who He is).

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to . . . images. (includes false images of who He is made up in t/minds of fallen men)

(a) Think a moment about the doctrine of modalism

This is a false doctrine, a heresy, as it relates to t/Trinity. Rem. modalists believe that there is one God who alternately manifests himself in three ways - F/S/HS. No distinction of persons. The F = S, etc.

Sometimes we liken this to an Actor Wearing Three Masks. In ancient Greece t/theater was quite pop. There were outdoor theaters that could seat some 10k people that were so well designed acoustically that a whisper from t/stage could be heard in t/entire aud. filled w/ppl. Back in t/days before JC t/actors who often wore masks were known as “hupocrites” (hypocrites). That’s t/origin of t/word. It’s someone acting out an artificial role - being who they aren’t.

One oneness writer, “All visible projections of God to the eyes are manifestations of God and not God’s original nature that is seen.” [Reeves, Dimensions, 37, as cited by Boyd, 180]. Did you hear that? {restate}

If God is just appearing in three manifestations like t/ancient hypocrites of Greece, we have to ask, “Will the real God please stand?” Like the old game show, To Tell the Truth. But at least in t/game show you get to finally see the real guy, in a modalistic perversion of t/Trinity you never get to see t/real God, just a masked illusion.

One wonders how anything can be a genuine manifestation of God if it isn’t a genuine manifestation of his original nature? Where is t/original God? God ends up being an illusion, a hologram that looks like something it isn’t. It’s hard to see how, in the modalistic/oneness view of things, God isn’t just an illusion wearing a mask.

In t/biblical view of things we see God thru His Son JC. We see t/real thing, not just a “manifestation” or an “illusion.” John 1:1,14,18 {read}

Even t/drama of t/cross becomes illusionary if you deny that t/Father & Son are distinct persons. Apart from that t/NT revelation of t/pain Father

experienced in t/sacrifice of His Son is lost. It all becomes a charade.

(1) The Very Nature of God is at stake

(2) The Very Nature of Jesus Christ is at Stake

All other views pervert the incarnation of Jesus Christ (doctrine central to t/Gospel). w/o t/incarnation there is no Gospel.

(a) Certainly this is true if you deny that Jesus Christ is God

If you make him out to be a created being, angelic or otherwise, you have cut t/head off of the body (head being X t/body being t/gospel).

i. Remember - This was something the church addressed early on

Arius who was a pastor in Alexandria came to t/heretical conclusion that “If the Father begat t/Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this is it evident that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows that he had his subsistence from nothing.” [New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, s.v. Arianism]

Arius was quite a promoter so he had his favorite slogan set to a popular tune and soon half of Alexandria was singing “There was a time when the Son was not.” In denying t/deity of X they denied t/only means by which they could be saved. Sort of like throwing t/pilot off t/plane & no one else can fly - everyone is going down to disaster.

Of course, all of this was based on an false understanding of what t/word “begotten” means. Rem. I’ve warned you before about t/dangers of making biblical words mean something they don’t. Begotten doesn’t mean having a beginning. The word means totally unique, w/o any like or equal. Very special. (μονογενής - “mono” = “one” + genos = “kind”)

John 3:16 **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.**

“only begotten” (two words in English come from one word in Gk.) means unique or special. We could read it like this {re-read}

Of course, the CH understood what t/Bible taught & how essential t/deity of X was, and t/views of Arius were rejected at Nicea in 325 (have been to this day). As Jesus Himself said in John 8:24 {read}

ii. So What Does God's Word Teach?

Teaches that JC is both God and man, fully God and fully man (hypostatic union). He had to be God to pay an eternal price for our sin (writer to t/Hebrews addresses that) he had to be man to stand in our place. We also see that in Hebrews ==>

Hebrews 2:17 **Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.**

If you deny his humanity or his divinity there is no grounds for salvation. Why we call departures from these truths "heresy."

(b) But what about modalism or oneness views?

Don't they believe that JC is both God and Man? Yes and no. They believe that he is God, but not God the Son. They believe that JC is t/father incarnate, not the eternal Son incarnate. For them, t/Father became incarnate & became Jesus (this happened in Bethlehem in 4 BC).

Father = God part; Jesus = man part. They effectively divide him into two (5th c. heresy of Nestorianism). JC has two natures (divine and human) but these two natures are not two separate persons w/i him.

Council of Chalcedon dealt w/this in 451 AD & these early theologians put together a statement on t/person of JC that has not been matched in over 1500 yrs. & that is believed by all ortho. theologians everywhere=>

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and also in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we are ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the father, in respect of his deity, and now in these 'last days,' for us and on behalf of our salvation, this

selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness. We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ–Son, Lord, only-begotten–in two natures [divine/human]; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories. . . . The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union [IOW - as t/God-Man he is not less than fully God or less than fully man]. Instead the ‘properties’ of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one ‘person’ They are not divided or cut into two . . . but are together the one and only and only-begotten Logos of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us; thus the [creed] of the Fathers has handed down to us.

Denial of t/Trinity is a perversion the incarnation and a retreat of Nestorianism and Apollinarianism.

This logically leads us to our next point==>

a. The Trinity is Important (not only) Because:

(1) The Very Nature of God is at stake

(2) The Very Nature of Jesus Christ is at Stake

But, our third point (The Trinity is Important Because)==>

(3) The Nature of the Gospel is at Stake

Already said that “If you deny his humanity or his divinity there is no grounds for salvation.” But what about other views? What about view of t/modalist - a view that’s today tolerated–even embraced in t/CH? A view that’s held by men who have great influence in t/CH (T.D. Jakes; Tommy Tenny; Rod Parsley among them)? I know a lot of people who hold these views haven’t thot this all thru. Many who ignorantly hold these views even in evang. CH’s haven’t. The issue arises when people do think these things thru and take them to their logical ends.

(a) Follow me:

Modalism divides X into two persons, making his two natures (human & divine) essentially two different persons w/i X who communicate w/each other. One nature is t/Father; the other nature is man (Son).

Question becomes: “What happened on the cross? Who died?” Those who deny t/Trinity contend that when JC died, He ONLY died as a man, not as God. Ask t/? “After all, How can God die?” “If God died (Father), who was running t/universe?”

i. That’s a misunderstanding of the issue

#1 - God t/Father didn’t die; God the Son did. #2 Death does not mean to cease to exist. Death means separation (spiritual death = S. from God temporally ; physical death = S. from physical life; eternal death = S. from God eternally). JC as Man and as God could die in that when He took upon himself t/sins of the world He was for a moment in time separated from t/F & t/Spirit. He not only experienced phys. death, he experienced spiritual death.

The God-man died on the cross as a person. Jesus, as the 2nd person of the Trinity was, momentarily, spiritually separated from the Godhead, although ontologically, he remained an inseparable part of it. Practically speaking, there was a brief fracture in t/fellowship of t/Trinity.

You can’t have only t/humanity of JC suffering for sin & not t/deity. Yet, that’s what modalists do when they have JC on t/cross dying only in his humanity (as t/son), not in his divinity (for them that means as t/Father). A man died on t/cross.

One writer points out the error of this when he writes==>

“A belief in the incarnation means that everything Christ went through and did, God went through and did; otherwise it is a meaningless belief. The one person of Jesus Christ cannot be split in two . . . When Jesus suffered, God experienced suffering. When Jesus was hungry, God experienced hunger and when Jesus experienced death, God experienced death. [Boyd, 58]

That same writer goes on to say==>

“The Oneness insistence that it was not as God, but only as a man, that Christ did these things [I would include his death] splits Christ in two and is tantamount to denying the incarnation altogether.” [Boyd, 58-59]

TAP, in Acts 20, called t/elders of Eph. together and said in v.28 to guard not only themselves, but also t/CH which God purchased w/His own blood. Wasn't just t/blood of a man, it was t/blood of t/God-man (certainly as far as blood goes, it would have retained t/props. of human blood). But concept of blood in t/Bible looks past t/bleeding to t/concept of death. (Life is in t/blood, Lev. 17:11). JC died as t/God-Man. God t/father didn't die; God t/Spirit didn't die. God the Son died for your sin. He had to die as man and as God. As one theologian writes==>

“By denying that Christ died for men’s sins as God (not merely as man), Oneness theology implies an atonement and redemption inadequate for man’s salvation, for: 1) No other sacrifice would be adequate to pay the infinite debt for man’s sin, for no other sacrifice would have been of infinite value. It is impossible for a mere human to make full atonement and ransom for sin; God must do it (Ps. 49:7-9, 15). 2) Therefore, it was essential that the one who died as a ransom and satisfaction for man’s sins be both human (to represent human beings properly; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 5:12-19) and God. 3) Any other redeemer would put people in debt and servitude to someone other than God, for we belong to whoever redeems us (1 Cor. 6:19-20; see also 7:22-23; Rev. 5:9).” [E. Calvin Beisner, Jesus Only Churches, 16]

This is why modalism ultimately loses the heart of t/doctrine of t/atonement. God sent His Son as a substitutionary sacrifice. The Son bore the wrath of God in our place, & t/Father, representing the interests of t/Trinity, saw t/suffering of Christ and was satisfied (Isa. 53:11).

All of that is lost if JC didn't die as a complete person. If God the Son didn't die on the cross you have no eternal, effective substitute for sin. You only have half t/equation: a man who died for men, not t/other half: God who died for men.

You can't sing with Charles Wesley - Amazing Love, How Can it Be,
That Thou My God Shouldst Die for Me!

(b) BTW - for you theologians out there:

This is why t/doctrine of imputation is crucial. Imputation is having something credited to you that you don't yourself deserve. As far as t/cross is concerned, Imputation means that our sin was credited to JC. He didn't inherently become sinful. He wasn't a sinner on t/cross; no - he was t/sinless lamb of God. God made a transaction by crediting our

sin to Him who knew not sin. I believe this was necessary because that was the only way that JC as God could die. He could not become a sinful person (that was imp. for him as God). But sin could be imputed to him as a legal transaction. {pause}

(3) The Nature of the Gospel is at Stake

This is why we are not talking about some sort of negotiable issue. Why those who know better take this issue so seriously even at a time when so many w/i t/CH don't. Also why one of t/foremost systematic theologians of our day, Dr. Wayne Grudem, can categorically state that those who reject t/Trinity as oneness and modalists do,

“... should not be considered evangelical, and it is doubtful whether [they] should be considered genuinely Christian at all.” [Grudem, 243 fn.]

Very last point that I wanted to cover this AM is this==>

7. Why Should We Love the Trinity?

Let me give you a single answer followed by three additional thoughts

a. Because This is Who God is!

God exists and has revealed himself to his chosen people as a Trinal being, or as a Trinity of F/S/HS.

This is t/One who ordained, purchased, and completed our salvation from sin. That's where we began in 1 Peter 1:2 {read}

Jesus in John 17:3 {read}

So we love t/Trinity because we love God. The Trinity isn't a sterile concept stuffed in between t/dry covers of a theology text. The Trinity is God - God our all-in-all.

b. Here are three additional thoughts==>

(1) Loving The Trinity Encourages our Prayer

The general pattern of prayer in the Bible is to pray to the Father through

the Son and in the Holy Spirit.

We see that in Eph. 2:18==>

for through Him [Christ] we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Jesus prays to t/Father for us (John 17). The Spirit also intercedes for us w/groaning too deep for words & in keeping w/God's will (Rom. 8:26-27)

(2) Loving The Trinity Deepens our Love and Fellowship

Think about this statement: "Love and fellowship can only exist eternally if God is Triune." {repeat}

(a) What does 1 John 4:8 say? God is (what)?

LOVE - This is part and parcel of his nature.

Have to ask t/? "How could God have been love if for all eternity there was no one for him to love?"

Apart from t/Trinity 1 John 4:8 should have read "God became love."

As Augustine wrote centuries ago==>

If God is love, there has to be someone who is loving, someone who is being loved, and a spirit of love [SWC notes]

(b) There was eternal love and fellowship w/i the Trinity.

If God were a singular wooden monad He could not have experienced either love or fellowship until he created. He couldn't have. Both love and fellowship ring hallow w/o an object (like trying to clap w/one hand). And to contend that God had to created in order for him to exp. L&F makes him dependent on t/creation & therefore imperfect.

Sometimes inquiring minds ask, "What was God doing before He created the world?" (He wasn't sitting alone whistling in t/dark).

What was He doing? He was enjoying unbroken fellowship.

Jesus spoke of that in John 17:5 when he talked about t/glory he had w/the Father from before t/creation of t/world. Or in 17:24 when he spoke of t/love t/Father had for him from before t/found. of t/world.

Before the world was, before any creative activity (angels or otherwise), the F/S/HS enjoyed unbroken and harmonious fellowship in perfect love.

(c) Might be asking the Question:

“How does Loving The Trinity Deepen OUR Love and Fellowship?”

i. It starts w/how God created us

Man created in the image of God means that man is relational. There is a social aspect of man that evidences itself in the CH and in Family and in our love relationships. We are never complete in solitude. Yet, the Bible teaches that God is essentially & eternally loving, as well as essentially and eternally a God of fellowship. As we've said, these things can't exist apart from t/Trinity.

God created us to be relational. Integrity of our relationships has a direct correlation to our joy - beginning first w/our relationship w/God through X, and our relationships w/our family (spouses, kids, siblings), then our relationships in t/local CH. This is part of what it means to be created in God's image. God can only be truly relational if He eternally exists in a Triunity (note “unity”) of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

ii. This is then an example for us

Do you realize that God has never had a problem w/disunity? The Son never threatened to move out of t/KD because He was tired of submitting to t/Father. The HS never complained because He was in t/background giving glory to t/Father & t/Son. That's an example for us. Why Jesus could twice pray in John 17 that we, his disciples, are to be one (unified)

even as the three members of t/Trinity are one.

Are you willing to imitate t/highest example of love and unity you could ever have in God's relational Trinity in order that you may model that pattern in your life?

(3) Loving The Trinity Fuels our Worship

We exist to worship God. And God seeks people to worship Him in "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Therefore we must always endeavor to deepen our worship of God--in truth as well as in our hearts.

This really caps it all off. You cannot worship God w/o worshipping him in His Trinity.

The Swiss Reformer John Calvin quoting Gregory of Nazianzus:

"I cannot think of the one without quickly being encircled by the splendor of the three; nor can I discern the three without being straightway carried back to the one." [1.13.17]

This is no insignificant issue

It touches upon the nature of God, the incarnation, and even t/sufficiency of t/person of JC in his role as Savior.

Can't separate t/truth of who God is (Trinity) from t/Gospel. It is inseparably part of t/faith "once for all delivered from t/saints."

Melito, Bishop of ancient Sardis, died around the year 180 AD. Recently a sermon Melito wrote on the Passover was discovered. Here's a CH leader writing about t/Passover Lamb, JC & doing so only a scant few years from t/lives of t/Apostles. Close your eyes & worship as we close with this. Speaking of t/eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ he wrote==>

He who hung the earth in place is hanged.

He who fixed the heavens in place is fixed in place.
He who made all things fast is made fast on a tree.
The sovereign is insulted.
God is murdered.
The King of Israel is destroyed by an Israelite hand.

This is the One who made the heavens and the earth, and formed mankind in
the beginning,

The One proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets,

The One enfleshed in a virgin,

The One hanged on a tree,

The One buried in the earth,

The One raised from the dead and who went up into the heights of heaven

The One sitting at the right hand of the Father,

The One having all authority to judge and save,

Through Whom the Father made the things which exist from the beginning of
time.

This One is “the Alpha and Omega,”

This One is “the beginning and the end” . . . the beginning indescribable and
the end incomprehensible.

This One is the Christ.

This One is the King.

This One is Jesus.

This One is the Leader.

This One is the Lord.

This One is the One who rose from the dead.

This One is the One sitting on the right hand of the Father.

He bears the Father and is borne by the Father.

“To him be the glory and the power forever. Amen.”