

The Doctrine of the Trinity

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Tim: If any of you are wondering what we are talking about here, we have been somewhat following Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology in this Bible study, although we haven't by any stretch of the imagination followed his material, but we are kind of following the outline of his book. And so, the next chapter deals with creation. If you have the book, or you want to get the book, you can read there. And which chapter are we in? Chapter 14, so the creation chapter is 15, which really, it's a big book.

That may sound like, wow, we are already in chapter 15, we must be getting towards the end. Folks, we haven't hardly scratched the surface yet, that's a great big book and I think chapter 15 is what, about that far in? So we've got a long ways to go if we continue doing this. Anyway, tonight I wanted to deal very specifically with a certain aspect, in fact, a certain error that is very prevalent today. In fact, in the anti-Trinitarian religions, or cults, anybody know what the biggest one is? The biggest anti-Trinitarian religion? [People answer] Mormons are number one. Anybody know number two? I heard the answer, it came about from right down here. Oneness Pentecostals. They are number two. And that is what I want to deal with tonight. Jehovah Witnesses, they are down the list even further. So, we are just laying down the fact that statistically the Oneness Pentecostal movement is the second largest anti-Trinitarian movement or religious group out there today.

Trinity! Guys, lay it down, this is essential. Because no matter who comes along and they say Trinity is not found in the Bible you can say, "That may be so. neither are a whole lot of other concepts we deal with." But here it is, these three fundamental truths undergird our Trinitarian doctrine, and they are Biblical. What are they? One God, one God in three distinct Persons -that's the second-, and what's true about all three of those Persons? They are all fully God, equally God. Those three realities are indeed in the Bible. So, say what you want about the term Trinity, those are the three propositions, or the three truths that undergird it. We have one God, we have three distinct Persons that make up that one God, and all three Persons are equally God. Which means that all three of the Persons possess every one of the attributes that is true of Deity. All of them.

So, we have tri-unity: Trinity. Tri: three; unity: one. We have three Persons in one God. We don't have three Gods in one Person. We don't have three Gods and one God. We don't have three beings in one God. We have three Persons in one God. So some of you may know this verse, and I think it's applicable. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways declares the Lord for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." And I'll tell you, you know what? We are going to find out viewing Christ face to face in that Day that the Trinity was something that went beyond our wildest imaginations. We try to put these concepts into something that our feeble little minds

can grasp. John Wesley said this, "Show me a worm who can comprehend man and I'll show you a man who can comprehend the Triune God." And I think it's about on that level.

Well, let's talk for a second about contradiction. Because that's what's going to be said. The anti-Trinitarian people come along, whether it's the Oneness people, the Jehovah's Witness, the Mormons, who else is anti-Trinitarian? Can anybody think of anybody? Yeah, Muslims, Jews. Exactly right. They come along, and one of the things they want to say is, "It's a contradiction. It's not logical, we can't compute this."

What I want to ask you is this: is it a contradiction? Is the idea of the Trinity a contradiction? You see, coming from an engineering background, I like these kind of things. You know, there is a law of non-contradiction. Anybody know about such things? I mean come on you guys, we can think on a rational level here. I mean if I say that this is paper, and then I come along and say this is a rock, well, we've got a contradiction flying there right? If I say, that this is "A" and I come along and I can't really say that this is "B", right? The law of non-contradiction basically means that if I establish, it states that "A" cannot be both "A", what it is, and "non-A", what it is not, right? I mean, bottom line is, I can't say something "is something" and something "is not something." Right? You guys understand? I can't say it is "A" and then say it is not "A". That's contradiction. But is it contradiction to say that God is three in one? Is that a contradictory statement?

And folks, we have ideas like this that come at us from the Scripture. Is it right to say that a many person body of believers is one? Christ prayed, "Father, that they may be one as We are one." How about a woman and a man, they come together in holy matrimony? The two become one flesh, now is that contradiction? That's not a contradiction in those things, we know the reality of those things. Look, if I said that the oneness about God and the threeness about God were exactly the same thing; if I meant exactly the same thing when I said both, it's contradictory right? But when I say that God is three in one, what do I mean? He's three what, in one what? He's three Persons in one essence, or one Being. Hey, you know what we really haven't done yet? We haven't thought about what is a person? And what is a being, or an essence? There are words: nature, attributes, essence, being, they're like "oh"! Philosophers - they dig through all these words.

What does "being" mean? To be. Yeah, existence. A rock has a being right? Because it is. There is a being about a rock, and there is a being about a dog. We are human beings, right? A being simply refers to what something is, but a person, what do you say about a person? You see, being has to do with "be", person has to do with what? What? Ego? I am thinking that person has to do with personality. But yeah, you could say that. What do we mean when we say somebody has a personality? I think the thing that comes to my mind more than anything is it has a center of consciousness. In other words, if I am saying that there is three persons in one being, I am saying what each of them is, is identical. But they have three centers of consciousness.

Look, let's boil it down to simplicity, I know that this gets away from definition, but when I am talking about a personality, I am talking about somebody that can call themselves "I" and somebody who calls others who are not themselves "you" And when I come to the Bible, what I find is the Father saying, "I", and calling the Son "You". And I find the Son looking to the Father and saying "You" and speaking about "Me" and looking at the Spirit and saying "Him". You see, that kind of language is the kind of language that says, "I have got more than one person here". I have got distinctions. "Not My will, but Thine!" "Father, please if it's possible, take this cup away from Me, but not My will, but Thine."

You know, when you have separate wills- even though there's a oneness in their will- but when they're separate wills, when there's separate emotions, when there's separate identities, and identities of personality, and yet there's one Being. But see, if you go too far and you say, "Well, wait, I am a human being, you're a human being, you're a human being, does that make us three persons, one being?" No, because what we do know about God is there is such unity in His being, there isn't that kind of unity in our being. Because I am not the express image of him, or her and we are different and our wills are different. But there was a unity in their will, there was a unity in their identity. Christ is a very express image of His Father, the very radiance shines through Him, there is an identity there. This is where it begins to get away from how we identify with being, and with personality in the created realm. There is a unity in the Godhead and there is an identity there that is unlike what we can relate to. But, you hear where I am coming from? Personality--"I"; "you"; "me"; "him"; "me"; "them". We speak that way when we have various personalities.

Well, why am I hitting on this? Why spend so much time on it? Well, here is our basic three propositions: One God. Three distinct Persons in that one God. All of them equally God. What do the Oneness Pentecostals do? Who are also historically called what? Modalists, which, we are going to get into what is it that they hold to, but which of these three propositions do they attack? Distinction.

Now, watch folks. The thing about modalism and the thing about this Oneness thing... Let me tell you about the Oneness Pentecostal movement, I can't tell you everybody that believes this, but I know that the United Pentecostals, the United Apostolic churches, they definitely hold to this. Now there might be some exceptions, so if anybody listens to this and says, "I know someone." You know, I can't say I know everything about every single church in these denominations, but as a whole, this is what happens. And I'll tell you this, it can be more subtle than the Jehovah's Witnesses. Why? Because unlike the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, unlike the Jews and the Muslims, they say they adhere to the Bible, not their own rendition of the Bible, not the book of Mormon, not anything else. They say they hold to the same Bible we hold to. So that makes it extra deceptive.

What's the other thing? The other thing is, apparently they believe in one God and apparently they believe in the full Divinity of Jesus Christ and so at that level it's deceptive as well. What do you guys know about them? They only baptize in Jesus' name. Let me tell you this. And not only

do they believe in Jesus' name, which means they don't baptize according to Matthew 28. Isn't that interesting? Matthew 28, the Name. One name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Three persons, one name, and yet they are given three names. That Trinitarian reality comes out. They don't like that verse. They basically come to the book of Acts and they say, "Hey, we find that baptism in the book of Acts is done in the name of Jesus Christ." And so they insist that we baptize in the name of Jesus.

But it gets worse. They believe that you have to be baptized in the name of Jesus in order to be saved, that baptism is absolutely a requirement for salvation. So, it's a very works oriented system. Anybody know anything else you have to do to be saved in those movements? Tongues. You've got to speak in tongues. Listen folks, we can go to what Paul has to say about spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. Not all have the gift of tongues. He's very clear about it there. Anybody that comes along and says that everybody to be saved has to speak in tongues just denied what's said about tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14- absolutely denied it. The whole point there is that not all are eyes, not all are the same body part and you have a plurality, you have a whole assortment of gifts in the church. And he very specifically says, "Does everybody have tongues?" It's very plain--no! No. We are not saved by baptism. How do you know that?

Somebody prove to me right now that you are not saved by baptism. The thief on the cross. Now, the church of Christ, the Oneness Pentecostals, everybody that believes that you have to be baptized in order to be saved, including the Catholics themselves who believe that baptism washes away original sin, they all take great pains to explain away the thief on the cross. Now I would go there. We had a church of Christ guy today at San Antonio College, and you guys, don't ever let people disarm you from the word of God. Just because they say, "Well, that has to do with the fact that there is a New Covenant now and he was under the Old Covenant and it's not the same." Just ask them, "Please show me where the Bible says that? Please show me where the thief gets into heaven any different way than I do or you do?" "Well, you know, it's got to do with the Covenant. And that was before the Covenant and that was before Christ actually died, that's before Pentecost, that's before the Spirit was given and that's before we have to be sealed, you know by speaking in tongues and all that."

Well, wait, would you please show me where it says that? I hear all your theories but we need to support these things from the word of God. How about a second argument? Galatians 2:16, "We are justified by faith apart from works of the Law." Ephesians 2:8 "Through faith, which is not your own doing, it's a gift of God." 1 Peter 3:21, we talked about this today. 1 Peter 3:21 is actually one that scares a lot of people because it says that we are saved by baptism, so people don't go to that one. But let me tell you something, that's one of your greatest friends in defending this thing, because Peter is very adamant that we are saved by baptism, but not a removal of the dirt of the body. He is saying, "Look, we are saved by baptism, but I am not talking about getting wet, and I am not talking about the water that can take dirt off your body." He says "I am talking about the appeal to God."

Now look, don't get all hung up about that. Appeal to God just means my faith appeals to God through baptism, just the same way my lips appeal to God when I call upon the name of the Lord. Are you saved by calling upon the name of the Lord? Romans 10 says I am. But wait, I thought we were saved by faith? Well, we are. So are you saying if you just call? Isn't that a work? Well, it is just like baptism. But look, in both scenarios, what is being appealed to is the faith underneath it. The appeal is driven by faith in Christ. That's what saves. That's where the clear conscience comes from. That's why Peter's adamant we are not talking about the washing away of the filth of the body.

But anyways, we are talking Trinity, and not so much baptism and tongues. But, these are things that they definitely are adamant about. Okay, what do you guys know about their view of God? How do they explain God? One thing they can't do, they are using our same Bibles folks. Are they King James only people? Yeah, that doesn't surprise me at all. You know one thing I know, after ten years in the King James Bible? The King James Bible talks about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. So one thing I am absolutely certain that the Oneness Pentecostals can't do is deny that those three different names are used.

But how do they explain that? Different modes. Or He related to humans in different manifestations. In other words, the Father is Jesus in His divinity. The Son is Jesus incarnate and the Spirit is Jesus after Pentecost. That's what they say. Let me tell you something. If you say that the Son is Jesus only in His incarnation, guess what? I told you guys this before and even if this one is more sly, it's harder to detect, I told you before you can smell Satan, because He attacks Christ and He attacks His work. They do both. How do they attack His work? You have got to have works! Got to speak in tongues, got to be baptized. How do they attack His Person? They attack who the Son of God is! Because in their estimation the Son of God is only the incarnate Christ that walked this earth in His humanity. You know what they deny about the Son? They deny that divinity is attached to His Sonship! Which when He called God His father and declared Himself the Son, He was declaring Himself, the Word of God says, to be equal with God. So you see they do deny His deity, although it's more low-key. It's not as pronounced as the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Mormons because they use the Bible and because they talk in that kind of terminology it can be more difficult to discern.

Maybe some of you are thinking, "Well hey, I hear all that you are saying, and I hear what you are saying about them, but prove to me from Scripture that they are not right." Alright, let's do it. Let's start right at the beginning. God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." They would say there is one God, it's Jesus, He has manifested Himself as the Father in His divinity before the incarnation, as the Son as a man, the Holy Spirit following Pentecost." The Scripture speaks about at one and the same time a Godhead that speaks in the plurality. Now folks, we have got to come back to this. The way we speak indicates personality. I speak about me, I, us, and you, them, he, she. We use pronouns in a way to identify personality. When God says "Let Us make man in Our image", He is not speaking about a single personality. We don't use plurals. I should withdraw that. There are times we use plural pronouns to identify one person. Can anybody think of examples? The Queen or a King. Have you guys ever heard that? It's not uncommon for

a queen or a king speaking about themselves to speak in plural pronouns. And so probably that's what the Oneness Pentecostals, or anybody that denies the Godhead uses. You know, that text in creation, making of man, creates problems for any anti-Trinitarian people because basically if you are going to say Christ isn't God it creates a problem. If you are going to say there isn't three persons in making up the Trinitarian Godhead it creates problems. So you can say, "Well, that's a majestic, that's a kingly plural." Alright, I don't buy it, I don't believe that's true.

But let's say, okay we will grant sometimes it's used that way. Let's go further then. How about Isaiah 61? Somebody open your Bible and read to me Isaiah 61:1. And let's just hear, here there is no question. We don't have any majestic or kingly plural pronouns being used. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me". That Spirit upon Me. Now I can't from that absolutely identify that the Spirit is necessarily a person apart from a force like the Jehovah's Witnesses say. Seems like it's a person, sounds like it's a person, and that Spirit is upon Me. So because we are not dealing with plural pronouns here we can get away with the kingly idea altogether. These are singular personal pronouns - Me. "The Holy Spirit is upon Me." Okay, keep going. "Because the Lord has anointed Me." Wait, wait, the Lord, now who is that? "The Lord has anointed Me", so when I speak that way: "The Lord has anointed Me", language requires that the Lord that I am talking about isn't me. The Holy Spirit isn't Me, and the Lord isn't Me, right? Okay, keep going. "...to send good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up.." "He has sent Me", that doesn't mean "I sent Me" or I sent myself, or I came from myself, or I anointed myself, or I anointed myself with myself. He says, "He, the Lord, anointed Me with the Spirit", "He sent Me to go preach this gospel". Go ahead. "...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prisons to those who are bound." To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all who mourn."

Okay. How about somebody open up Zechariah 2:10-11, let's hit that one. Brethren, we clearly in a text like that, we have simultaneous personalities. There is just no getting around it. Language doesn't mean what language means to say anything else. Which I think you carry that out and you go to a text like we find in the creation account in Genesis 1, "Let Us make man in Our image", we are speaking about a plurality in the Godhead. Somebody read to me the text from Zechariah 2:10-11. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold I come and will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord." Okay. "I will dwell in the midst of you says the Lord". So we have an "I". We have somebody speaking in a pronoun sense there. "I am going to dwell in the midst of you", now that's a plural pronoun, that would be people there. Okay, keep going brother. "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people. And I will dwell in your midst." Okay, "they will be My people, I am going to dwell in their midst". Keep going. "...and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you." Okay, "The Lord of hosts has sent Me to you". The Lord of hosts and the "Me" are not the same people.

How about this one? You know this one, it is repeated in the New Testament. Psalm 45:6-7, "Your throne O God is forever and ever. The scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness, You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, your God..."

Okay, "Your throne O God is forever and ever, therefore God your God," wait, what is happening here? "Your throne O God" and then that God who is on that throne has a God. "Therefore God Your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." So you have God who is anointing God. That one is repeated in Hebrews 1 by the way. That is a phenomenal statement. You have God anointing God.

How about this? Psalm 110:1, "The LORD says to my Lord..." In one you have God anointing God, in here you have, "The LORD says to my Lord sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool." What do you mean the Lord says to my Lord? Folks, that is trinitarian talk if ever there was! That is just a bunch of nonsense if you hold to this Oneness idea, that is nonsense language right there. You cannot make heads or tails of it. You have got to so twist the Scriptures to be able to explain those and just push them away into just nonsensical meaning. And that's Old Testament! Of course, you can't hardly get to the New before we go to Isaiah. Isaiah like I told you guys before, Isaiah just has so many good things, the Trinity just flows out of Isaiah.

How about Isaiah 53:4? Folks, let me tell you something. I want you to hear this, because this is at the heart of the matter. Some have come up with various theories for why the Trinity is more pronounced in the New Testament. And there is no question it is. Why is that? You might be able to give a number of reasons as to why you think it is and the answer I am going to give you I didn't put a whole lot of time into trying to prove to you, but I think it probably is going to resonate with you that it might very well be a reality. And I think that we can see that it is a reality.

Why is the Trinity so much more pronounced in the New Testament? I believe it's because the way of salvation is so much more pronounced in the New Testament. Because we find that predestination is laid down. The Father does that. We find that it took an incarnate God in the flesh, the Word becoming flesh, born of a virgin, under the law, made in all respects like us kind of man, God-man, to fulfill the realities of accomplishing our salvation. And then when you see the church flowing out of Pentecost, and you see the Spirit being given- He said you are going to be clothed with power. "I am going to equip the church with power." And we see that that power has been given to the church by way of the Spirit of God. We see the sanctification of God's people made a reality explicitly in the New Testament. We see the fruits of the Spirit elaborated on, walking in the Spirit. We see Christ. I am laying this down because brethren, it takes a Trinitarian God, it takes Trinitarian salvation to be saved.

Brethren, these Oneness people, I guarantee you, they can't come to Isaiah 53 and drink deeply of Trinitarian salvation. Do you know what happens, the folks that deny the Trinity, there are certain places in the Bible they don't go because they don't like it. They are not comfortable there, because they don't have answers. I'll guarantee you that these churches don't dwell on Isaiah 53. Why? Isaiah 53:4, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." How do you take the Christ, the eternal Son of God, come in the flesh? It pleased the Lord to crush Him, He ground Him, His soul was

poured out like water. How do you have the Christ in the garden, "Father!" You know, He says He had this cup to drink, He said He was in distress until it was accomplished. Every day He woke up and there was distress. He was a man of sorrows. There was distress that gripped His soul that He could not get away from and here He is on the eve of it.

The Oneness people can't go to the garden, they can't go into Gethsemane, they can't go there. And I'll tell you what, if they can't go there, they have not salvation, and they can't go to the Cross. "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" They can't go there, because none of it makes sense. If you deny the Trinity, you deny your own salvation. What do we do, these are some of the most precious parts of the Bible? How does the Word who is God, who is with God, robe Himself in flesh and say from the Cross, "How does my God," the God who anoints God, "the LORD say to my Lord," how do we have this Trinitarian reality and oneness, how does God forsake God? How do we explain humanity joined with Divinity? And then that which is Divinity forsaking that which is the God-man? I don't know, but I can tell you your salvation rests on that reality.

John 1:1 is one of the most profound statements made in all the Bible. How in the beginning do you have the Word? "The Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. You know what it tells me? When you have the Word with God, you have distinction. When you have the Word is God, you have unity. There is distinction of Person, there is unity of being. And we can come back to it, we are like worms trying to explain men, when we as men try to explain the Triune God. His thoughts are beyond our thoughts. You are dealing with a Being who can't be explained.

Go to those first chapters of Ezekiel and you tell me what Ezekiel saw. You go to the book of Revelation and you try to tell me, comprehend with John what in the world is happening before his eyes. When men have been exposed to revelations of God that have exceeded the rest of us, they just sound crazy. They end up sounding like border line lunatics! It's indescribable. Ezekiel, what are you talking about? Wheels, and I don't know. I can't even make this out in my mind what he saw! Salvation depends on it. "My little children, I write to you that you sin not, but if you do, if you sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." How do I have an Advocate? How do I have a mediator between God and man? If my mediator cannot stand between? You see folks, we have the Father pouring out His wrath. We have the Son of God being crushed. The will of the Lord to crush Him. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. We have this reality.

And then as Christ is preparing to leave, how can you even make any sense of what He said? In John 14, 15, 16, 17. How do you say, "Listen disciples, it's more profitable for you that I go. Because if I go, I will send the Comforter, the Helper"? What sort of language is that? "I go to My Father and He will send another Comforter." "I go to My Father, He will send another." Another! We don't talk that way when we are simply the same person that go by three names. It's not like my wife calling me "husband", my children calling me "father", you guys calling me "brother". That's not what we are dealing with here. We are not talking about three names for the same

person. When Christ says "It's more profitable for you that I go and He come." That's nonsense if He is saying, "It's more profitable that I go and get a different name and then come back." That's laughable, but it's also damnable.

Brethren, all you have to do is start looking at the various parts that each of the persons of the Godhead play in our salvation and you see a uniqueness there. What can we say about the baptism of Christ? The Spirit of God like a dove descended. We read that He was anointed with the Spirit, and then a voice comes from heaven, "This is My Son in whom I am well-pleased." We have the Father speaking to the Son, the Spirit anointing the Son. The Spirit drove Christ into the wilderness. The Spirit of God can be grieved, Ephesians 4, He is a person. He has emotions. He has feelings. Christ goes to His Father, "Father", He prayed that He would restore the glory to Him that He had with the Father before the world was made. The Word was with God and the Word was God.

You say, well why do they say what they say? They say it because the Bible says that Jesus said, "that if You have seen Me, you have seen the Father." But wait, that just simply means that the same glory that radiates from the Father radiates from the Son. It means that the same character, the same attributes, the same beauty shines from the One as the Other. That doesn't have to mean that we have one in the same person, it just means we have the very same nature shining from both of Them. Then they like to say this, "Well there is also a text that says, 'I and my Father are one'". Well, yeah, but there is also a text that says "My Father is greater than I." How do we explain those? "I and My Father are one," He said they were one in will. He said that. Did He not say in John 17, pray for our oneness that we be one the same way He and His Father are one? That no more makes all of us one person, than it makes He and His Father one person.

How about Isaiah 9? "For unto us a child is born, His name shall be called Everlasting Father." How about that one? Do you know in the original the meaning there is "father of eternity"? There are many places where that idea "father" come up in the Old Testament. Just one of them that I would pluck out that I think is worthy of our attention is Deuteronomy 32:6. "Is not He your Father who created you." Who created? Christ! "And without Him nothing was created that was created." He is the Creator. "Is not He your Father who created you who made you and has established you." Folks, you know what everlasting Father basically means? It means the author of eternity, the father of eternity, the father everlasting, it means He is the Creator. It doesn't say that He is the specific identity of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that's separate.

When you come to the New Testament, you find something like you find in 2 Cor. 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." Where He is the Father of Jesus Christ. It doesn't say Jesus Christ is His own Father. It says He is the Father of eternity. He is the Father everlasting. He is the One who oversees all this. He is the provider. He is the sustainer. Everything that He created He did create and He sustains it all. In that way He is the father, He is the giver, He is the provider of everything. That is not foreign to the way that concept is used in the Old Testament. It is not foreign to the way it's used right

here in Deuteronomy. I mean folks, to take that text in light of the vast, vast trinitarian texts that we find in a myriad of places in the Old Testament and virtually on every page of the New, you are insane. You are insane to take one obscure text, but is that not typically the way of the cults. Take one or two obscure texts that they have a difficulty understanding, make them to say something they don't actually say, and ignore a wealth of other texts. Brethren, it's damnable. It's damnable.

Well, we never want to redefine the Son to mean the human nature of Jesus while the Father refers to the divinity of Jesus. The fact is, the Son and the Father are two persons coexisting eternally in relationship to one another and to deny this fact I will guarantee you is to deny the Biblical concept of Sonship. You deny the Biblical eternal Son of God if you hold this view and thus you are left with a false view of Jesus. And it turns out then, look, your view of Christ, lay it down (we are ending now, but lay it down), your view of Christ can never be separated from your view of the Trinity, ever. Deny the Trinity and mark it down you have denied the Biblical Christ, every time. And if you deny the Biblical Christ, you have just denied salvation. And you are damned. You are damned. It is not a small thing when we find this folks. It's life and death, you lose the Biblical Christ. If you affirm the Biblical Christ you are going to affirm the doctrine of the Trinity. To affirm the true Christ who was sent by the true Father, who also sent the true Holy Spirit, you are going to find your true doctrine of the Trinity every time. It is in fact, the doctrine of the Trinity, that is a distinctive feature of the Christian revelation of the nature of the true God. And we just can't get away from it. The doctrine of the Trinity is fundamental. It is foundational. And if you weren't persuaded of it before, brothers and sisters, I hope you are now. Amen.

Question: "Pastor Tim, we know what the other cults and stuff believe, modalism and stuff, but what do you think would be their purpose for believing it, what advantage does it have to the flesh or to the cult itself? Like you said, there is a myriad of other texts just everywhere where it talks about three distinct persons. Why would they do this?"

Tim: The thing is, false religion is tied closely with demonic activity. False religions. You know a lot of people have the idea that Satan's play place is out there in the ghettos, and in the back alleys, the drug addicts shooting up, and the orgies and the prostitutes out here. The devil's playground is false religion. They are demonic deceptions. And the fact is, that the devil really plays on man's innate hatred for the true Biblical God and the true Biblical Christ and the true Biblical way of salvation. Men love darkness and Satan's playground is religion. If you deny the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity, you deny the Biblical Christ. If you deny the Biblical Christ, you deny the Biblical way of salvation and every denial of the Biblical way of salvation ultimately comes back to this, it's works salvation and men will go to hell rather than to admit that they are worthless, and that their works are nothing in the sight of God. Men would rather be damned than admit that. And Satan can play on that and play it to the destruction of the majority of mankind.

(from the room) I guess it is the pride of man.

Tim: It is, dead on, because to accept the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity, the Biblical Christ, the Biblical way of salvation, it's humbling. We know from 1 John 1, we have got to own our sin, we have got to confess it. And man loves his sin. He loves to think of himself as good. He loves to believe he is righteous. He loves to believe that he can make God accountable to him because of his righteousness. He wants God to owe him, because if he has got a God that bows to him, then he has made himself ultimately god, and the god of his imagination, as he sees the true god, serviceable to him. Man wants to put himself in the primary spot. And you go around and you begin to tell people about the Biblical God, and they hate Him. And Satan can come right in and He can play that tune all day long. He can come in and light a fire under that and man is ready and willing to run with his demonic deceptions. Anything else?

(from the room) "Philippians 2:5-11 is a good text right? To prove the preexistence of Christ before the incarnation?"

Tim: "Equality with God, was not a thing to be grasped." Basically He laid aside His glory, but there was the equality with God as established there. And it's not that He could lay down His equal nature, but He definitely set aside His glory. Question: "Can the 'Us' in Genesis 1:26 be God and angels, and Jesus is an angel?" The problem is, that the writer of Hebrews is explicit. Jesus Christ came in the likeness of the offspring of Abraham, not in the image of an angel. He is explicit. If man is created in the image of both God and angels, then for Christ to come as a man would have required that He come as an angel image bearer and yet Scripture is very distinct that that is not the case. Man and angels are very distinctly separated in Scripture as having a different image, a different nature.

You know where I am talking about? Yeah. Well, let me read it. How about Hebrews chapter 2:5? "For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels." Now you see if He came in the image of angels, then He wouldn't be made lower than angels, He would be like an angel. Let's keep reading. "You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham."

Derek, how does that read in the King James Version, verse 16?

Derek: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels."

Tim: Yeah, what's the deal here? I am accustomed to the King James Version there, that's why I was looking for it. I am not certain, I need to look up some Greek on this one, because I don't like the way the English Standard Version says that. Read verse 16 again.

Derek: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels."

Tim: Hear that! "Verily He took not upon Him the nature of angels." He was made like us in every respect, but He did not take upon Him the nature of angels which would be a strong case for the fact that us, we, our, those plural pronouns there can't be God saying that We made man in Our image. In other words, My image and your angel image, that doesn't work as far as this text here. Keep going.

Derek: "But He took on Him the seed of Abraham."

Tim: Yeah. I mean even the way the English Standard Version has it, is pretty plain there that it is not angels, but it's the seed of Abraham. Basically, angels and humans, there are distinctions. Can anybody think of anywhere else in the Scriptures that we can see the clear distinctions between the natures? That I think is the clearest verse in the New Testament on the matter, the way the King James Version brings it out. The English Standard Version has it a little more obscure and I do want to look into it.

(from the room) Between Jesus and angels? Is that the distinction?

Tim: Well the distinction is between the seed of Abraham and angels.

(from the room) In Matthew 1 in the genealogy of Christ and his royal bloodline.

Tim: Right, but that doesn't give us any idea about whether it might have been possible for God in the beginning to be speaking of Himself plus angels when He said, "Let Us make man in Our image". Some have said, "Well, the plural there is God is including the angels," but the Bible simply does not say that man was created in the image of angels, anywhere. It says we were created in the image of God and it clearly makes a distinction between the seed of Abraham and the angels. And the fact that Christ in all respects became like us who are men, like Abraham, not like the angels.

(from the room) I was going to say that also in Jude, it talks about how Michael the archangel would not speak a blasphemous word against Satan, but said, "The Lord rebuke you", and yet we see Christ rebuking Satan to his face.

Tim: There are definite distinctions made.

(from the room) Hebrews 1:4-5 talks about it...

Tim: Yeah, and Hebrews 1 would be a place that we could really probably make a case for this as well because the fact is that the comparison in Hebrews 1 is between Christ and the angels and if Christ came in our likeness in every respect, and we were angel bearers, it would be hard to make all the dogmatic separate statements about it. And yet, some of that has to do with the Deity of Christ.

(from the room) Hebrews 1:6 in our Bible says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him", and prior to 1970, their New World Translation read it this way, until after that they changed it "do obeisance to Him."

Tim: Hmm, yeah. You can imagine, they don't like that fact. You get a Jehovah's Witness coming to your door, ask them about that. Say, "Do you worship Christ? Do you love Christ? Do you adore Christ?" We have talked about that before. That's something they can't relate with.

(from the room) So, the Oneness people, they find their little loop-hole in Genesis 1, but would this be a good text though? John 14:23, "Jesus answered 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 home with him."

Tim: Isaiah 40, through the end of Isaiah, John 14, 15, 16, 17; like I said before, they can't go there. Yeah, you are in John 14, they just can't go there and come away without seeing it. The Trinity spills from those parts of Scripture.

(from the room) But John 8:17-18 says, "Your law is written that the testimony of two men is true, I am the one who bears witness about myself."

Tim: Yeah, I have that in my notes actually, I didn't say a number of them. But there are several times in the book of John where Christ Himself says, "My Father bears witness and I bear witness" and He says there are two that bear witness. Very distinct. Distinction, separate, distinct personalities.

(from the room) So in verse 17 He makes the point when He says, "In Your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true," so if the Father and Son are one person, then didn't Jesus basically give invalid testimony?

Tim: Say it again? Oh yes, it would be an invalid testimony if they were both one, you don't have two, I mean He is appealing to the Mosaic law there where two were required to confirm a thing and clearly He is saying "we have got two here."

(from the room) It proves the Trinity point?

Tim: Right, it's proving we have two individuals that are bearing witness. And yet in the very being of God there are not three gods. Where in the being of man, when I have three distinct persons, I have three human beings, and yet in God there is one being. We will be most thrilled when we, in a glorified way with glorified minds and glorified abilities, begin the eternal conquest of knowing God in a face to face manner. And I really believe it's going to be glorious. We are going to look back and what we are talking about right now is going to be, you know, we are going to realize because what we were saying really was based on the word of God. We are going to realize the matters we were talking about, we were saying a lot of right things, but when we really see Him face to face we are going to realize God gave us such a meager glimpse of Himself from the Word, we just had no idea. We were like little children playing around with these little blocks that have ABC on them and we are looking at them and we are saying, "that's an A" and we are right, but there is literally a library out there that, you know, we are going to spend eternity just going through the volumes. Anything else?

Well, Father we just pray that the glories and the wonder of Your person, Your triune nature, Your persons, Your unity, Lord, we want to know You. Let this not just be some deep theory and head knowledge, book stuff, Lord we want it to be real and living. We want it to shake our souls to the very depths. We want it to be real Lord. Please draw near to us, reveal Yourself in ways, even in this lifetime that are unimaginable to us right now. I pray it in Christ's name, I pray it for His glory. Amen.