

GODHEAD COURSE

Lesson 17 The cross and the Trinity

The previous lesson discussed how a metaphorical sonship leads to a metaphorical battle between Christ and sin. This lesson will examine the impact of the trinity and Christ's metaphorical sonship on His death.

The death of Christ

The bible says the wages of sin is death. It is eternal separation from God. If Jesus is God in the same sense as God is God and is the second member of the Godhead (the trinity, a three in one God), then How could Jesus die an eternal death?

Keep in mind that the trinity teaches a three in one God.

“We must confess that the trinity is one indivisible God and that the distinctions of the persons do not destroy the divine unity. This unity of God is expressed by saying that he is one substance. Nevertheless, in the divine unity there are three co-eternal and co-equal persons, who, though distinct, are the One undivided and adorable God.”

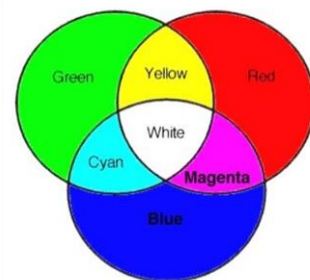
Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity, page 16, Andrews University Seminar Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January, 1970 by Raoul Dederen

“The three persons **SHARE ONE INDIVISIBLE NATURE**. Each person of the Godhead is **BY NATURE AND ESSENCE GOD**, and the fullness of the deity dwells in each of them. On the other hand, **EACH PERSON OF THE GODHEAD IS INSEPARABLY CONNECTED TO THE OTHER TWO.**”
(Ekkehardt Mueller, Biblical Research Institute Newsletter Reflections, July 2008)

“In Scripture **GOD HAS REVEALED HIS TRANSCENDENT NATURE AS TRINITY**, namely three distinct divine Persons who act directly and historically in history and **CONSTITUTING THE ONE DIVINE TRINITARIAN BEING.**” (Dr. Fernando Canale, the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Volume 12, page 138)

Think about it in terms of these colours:

Three light colours are needed to make white light. In the same way, the three persons of the godhead are needed to make up the trinity, the one divine trinitarian being, the one God of the bible.



Consider what the bible says about Christ's death:

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;” 1 Corinthians 15:3

“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” 1 Corinthians 15:4

Isaiah prophesied *“thou shalt make his soul [or life, his person] an offering for sin”* Isaiah 53:10

Notice, Isaiah was specific. He did not say you will make His body an offering for sin. No, it says His soul, His life, His spirit.

Peter in Acts 2:27 quotes from psalms 16:10 where David prophesying about Jesus says:

“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Acts 2:27

David, Isaiah and Peter were specific in what they said. They highlighted that the death of Jesus extended to His soul. It was not a make belief death. It was not only a bodily death, all that comprised Christ remained in the grave.

Paul in Hebrews highlights what type of spirit was laid down on the cross:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:14

“who with an eternal Spirit” Wms The Williams new testament

“Who, through his eternal Spirit” TCNT 20th century New Testament

“Who by virtue of [His] eternal Spirit [His own pre-existent personality] – AMP Amplified Bible

So According to the bible, the spirit or life that Jesus laid down on the cross, was His eternal spirit. In other words, on the cross there was a divine and eternal sacrifice. It was not a mere human sacrifice; it was the Divine Son of God who died.

And through His death, Christ destroyed the devil and death:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;” Hebrews 2:14

According to the Bible, it was the divine son of God that died on the cross:

*“I am he that liveth, and was **dead**; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of **hell and of death.**” Revelation 1:18*

The death of Christ is foundational to the gospel. However, if one follows the trinity to its logical conclusion, he would have to believe that Jesus could not have died because God cannot die. And Since Jesus is God in the fullest sense, meaning He is God the Son, the second member of the trinity, then it follows that He cannot and did not fully die.

The trinity teaches he is the indivisible God ... This unity of God is expressed by saying that he is one substance. ... the One undivided and adorable God.”

Some theologians have come to believe as a result of the trinity that:

Augustine:

No dead man can raise himself. He [Christ] only was able to raise Himself, who though His Body was dead, **was not dead**. For He raised up that which was dead. He raised up Himself, who in Himself was alive, but in His Body that was to be raised was dead. (*Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, volume 6, page 656, St. Augustine, “Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament”)

CARM - Christian apologetics and Research Ministry:

Did Jesus raise Himself from the grave or did God do it?

So, while Christ’s body was dead, **He remained alive (since God cannot die)**. So, Would it have been possible that Jesus through His divine nature even while His human body lay dead could have displayed His power through resurrection? Absolutely. ... the act of raising Jesus from the dead was not the operation merely of one person within the Trinity but was a cooperative act done by the power of the divine substance. The fact that the Bible teaches that God raised Jesus from the dead and that Jesus raised Himself is yet another testament to Christ’s divinity.

William Lane Craig Q&A: Was God Dead for three days?

“So, you can see that the divine nature the divine person of Christ is not in any way extinguished in the death of the human nature of Christ on the cross.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4uhWvEpAvk> (1:28 seconds)

This is the logical conclusion of the trinity. The one God of the bible is made up of three persons and cannot change. “I am the Lord, I change not”. Then, how could you believe that a third of Him died or ceased to exist? It cannot be.

That is why the logical conclusion of the trinity is that Jesus was alive even though His body was dead. And the evidence they say is that He raised Himself

It is interesting that 23 times the NT says that God raise His Son from the dead. And not even once does the bible say that Jesus raised Himself:

23 verses stating the Father raised His Son:

Acts 2:24; 2:30-32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30; 13:34; 13:37; 17:31;
Romans 4:24; 6:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1Corinthians 6:14; 15:15; 2Corinthians
4:14; Gal 1:1; Ephesians 1:19-20; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:9-10;
Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 1:21

The idea that Jesus raised Himself is based on one misunderstood verse which could be easily clarified by reading it from another translation. Below is the CEV. In the KJV the word “received” is translated as “take” which has led to some confusion!

*“The Father loves me, because I give up my life, so that I may **receive** it back again. No one takes my life from me. I give it up willingly! I have the power to give it up and the power to **receive** it back again, just as my Father commanded me to do.” John 10:17, 18 CEV*

This translation of the verse is in perfect harmony with the 23 other verses in the NT stating God raised Jesus from the dead.

Here is another statement from another Christian organisation. Note how the reasoning is due to the trinity doctrine:

CBN- Christian Broadcasting Network is a global ministry and has a TV channel

When Jesus Died on the Cross, Did He Also Die Spiritually?

“Of course, God cannot die either. If God died, the universe would fall apart. And Jesus is God. If the Spirit of Jesus died, then God Himself would have died, and the whole universe would have collapsed..... If Jesus--the Son of God and second Person of the Trinity--were truly separated in spirit from the Father, then God Himself would be torn asunder and would cease to be--another impossibility..... His Spirit was neither dead nor separated from God. Instead, He was continuing to please and serve the Father, as He is at this moment.”

You cannot have the trinity doctrine and the atonement in the same reasoning. Either the trinity is true, and we only have a human sacrifice, or the trinity is false and we have a divine sacrifice.

A human sacrifice is not enough to save humanity, otherwise why couldn't a person die for humanity? Why couldn't any good human die for humanity? Why was there a need for God to send His divine Son to die in order to save humanity? A mere human sacrifice destroys the atonement and the gospel.

Plainly the trinity denies the death of Christ. If Christ did not die, if the Son of God did not make His soul an offering for sin, then there is not a divine sacrifice, we only have a human sacrifice. If that is the case, then there is no gospel, no forgiveness of sin, no atonement, no reconciliation with God. There is no plan of salvation.

Paul said:

*“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to **save him from death**, and was heard in that he feared;” Hebrews 5:7*

If Jesus could not, not would not, but could not die as the trinity teaches, then this verse is meaningless. God saved Him from death by resurrecting Him from the death. But how could God save His Son from death when it was impossible for the Son to die? That is oxymoronic.

The trinity marks the difference between a human sacrifice or a divine sacrifice.

You cannot have the trinity and a divine sacrifice at the same time. It just does not fit.

The trinity turns the death of God's Son into a metaphor. It reduces the divine sacrifice into a human sacrifice. It turns God and His Son's amazing sacrifice into a role play. While His body was dead, He was alive elsewhere watching things unfold.

Again, if the foundation is wrong, if the sonship of Christ is a metaphor, the whole gospel becomes a mockery, a great theatrical act to which is found not reality.

Far be it from the truth.

- God's love for us is real.
- Christ's sonship to the Father is real
- Christ's battle with sin is real
- Christ's death on the cross is real
- God's sacrifice to us was real