

## Introduction

- *When I first accepted the idea of God, it was in the philosophy of Taoism.*
  - *A non-personalized power that manages the “way” of the universe.*
  - *I liked the idea of a bodiless God because I carried a prejudices against the Christian God.*
  - *...who was always presented anthropomorphic, and I got hung up on that. ---*
  - *But Taoism left me hollow, empty, still alone.*
    - ❖ *Why would the creator not interact with His amazing creation?*
  - *The deeper I dove in to who God really was the deeper of a relationship I had with Him.*
    - ❖ *Example: Seeing the Milkyway is amazing beauty* [IMAGES]
    - ❖ *But we look deeper into space and ... vast ... incomprehensible ... awesome*
- Many people ask, *who is God? If He would only show Himself.*
  - Often used as an excuse to not engage in a relationship with God.  
*Story about Dad praying to stop horses*
  - God is not a vending machine - But He does make Himself known (if we will look).
  - Last week Donnie talked about how God makes Himself known in creation
  - Today we are going to talk about a very **imperative** attribute of God /and/ who Jesus is.
    - ❖ For some this is going to be a deep dive.
    - ❖ I think almost every time we have a deep mental exercise we come out the better.
    - ❖ This will be an (bit of a deep) exercise in understanding who God is God better.
- If you are new to Liferoads or weren't here last week, we are taking 8wks to look at the Apostles Creed
  - The Apostles Creed is a statement developed by the unified church in the first few centuries after Christ
    - It starts right off identifying who God is and Who Jesus is.
  - First structured in a letter to the bishop of Rome (341A.D.)
  - Then 50 years later in a letter from Ambrose gives an account of a council he attended in Milan to  
*“Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Church has always kept and preserved undefiled”*
  - A mere 300 years since the Apostles and those in the Church. Finally a reprieve from persecution and define what Christianity is. What does it mean to believe in Christ?
  - And Ambrose there is saying the Church has always believed these things, but did not write them down.

[<Read the Creed>]

- I am going to combine the first two lines from the Creed for today's lesson:
  - [\*] ***I Believe In God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.***  
*And in Jesus Christ, His **Only Son**, Our Lord. Who Was Conceived by the Holy Spirit; Born of the Virgin Mary...*
- What is the first thing that pops out here?
  - The verb: **believe**: in what? **God**
    - ❖ Ok – straight forward, and we talked about that last week.
      - But then the church fathers extend the understanding of God. || God making Himself known

- ❖ **Creator and Jesus Christ** His only Son – conceived by the **Holy Spirit**
  - What we know now as the **Trinity**.
- Embedded in there is a very important idea of Jesus.
  - Only Son – who was conceived and born. || God making Himself known in the nature of Jesus.
- ❖ This presents a very critical point about Jesus’s deity and humanity.
  - What we know as the **Hypostatic Union** or the Mystic Union.
- That is what we are going to try and do this morning - look at scripture behind these two challenging theological ideas (Trinity and Hypostatic Union).
  - And then look at the significance of what each of the idea means to us.
- These are very challenging subjects /actually/I don’t think they can be fully comprehended this side of death
  - We often assume there is only one method of understanding – western reason. Perhaps spiritual wisdom.
    - ❖ I would like a quote from Negal here
  - So if this is a challenge for you – don’t feel dumb. I pray there will be seeds that feed everyone here.

## TRINITY

- In the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- I have heard an argument that the trinity is a made up concept centuries after Christ.
  - *People love to make the Council of Nicaea this Illuminati conspiracy - Christianity was made up*
  - Declared the Son to be co-essential with the Father (325 A.D.)
- Well that quote, “In the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Comes from the mouth of the Son
  - Matt 28:19 – Jesus presenting the great commission:
 

**Matthew 28:18-20**

**18** And Jesus came and said to them, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

**19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- First place we see the word “Trinity”
  - Tertullian (~200 A.D.) – coined the term [**tri-unity**] – [Three - united]
    - In trying to work out Matt 28 with Ex. 20 “No other gods beside me” & Deut. ‘The Lord is one’
  - ❖ So at 200 AD (~170 years) is worse case the grand children of the apostles.
    - I have writings from my grandpa – not too unusual – *maybe a funny g’pa quip*
  - Tertullian wrote [I have reformatted the grammar for clarity]:
 

*...in thinking that [a person] cannot believe in Only One God - in any other way than by saying ~~that~~ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame Person. As if, in this way ~~also~~ one [of these] were not All [of these], in that **All are of One**, [all for one and one for all – 3 musketeers]*

*... by unity (~~that is~~) of substance; which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three, **however**, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; **yet of one substance**, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as **He is one God** ... **number without division**.*
  - Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.)

- Augustine (400A.D.) writes a whole book on the trinity. – attributed to:

*The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who has tried to understand the mystery fully will lose his **mind**; but he who would deny the Trinity will lose his **soul**.*

- Westminster confession of faith (1648) – summarizes and modernizes the language of Tertullian well

**[\*]** *In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance (essence), power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.*

- The primary example of the God revealing Himself as tri-une

[New Testament Scripture]

- Jesus baptism.

**Luke 3:21-22** Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, **22** and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

- ❖ Answering prophecy from Isaiah.

**Isa 11:2** And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

**Isa 42:1** Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ...

- The presentation of the Trinity in the Old Testament is not as explicit. **[Why?]**

- But it is still evident.

[Old Testament Scripture]

- God speaks of himself in the plural [Elohim] or [Adonai] vs. [El] or [YHWH]

**Gen 1:26** Then God said, "Let **us** make man in our image, after our likeness. (Creation)

**Gen 11:7** Come, let **us** go down and there confuse their language (Tower of Babel)

- ❖ So immediately we see a plurality to Gods person-hood.

- Angel of God

- ❖ An angel vs. "The angel of the Lord"

- ❖ Christophany – Christ appearing (literal: showing) Himself.

**Isaiah 63:9-10** (Speaking of Israel) In all their affliction he was afflicted, and **the angel of his presence** saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

**10** But they rebelled and grieved his **Holy Spirit**; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.

- ❖ **THE** Angel speaks with the authority of God

**Gen 16:10** (talking with Sarah) The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."

- ❖ Jesus tells us in [John 8:58](#), “before Abraham, I am”
  - [Mal 3:1](#) “Behold, I send my messenger [same word as “angel], and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Clearly talking of Jesus)
- (Holy Spirit) Wisdom personified – one example for time sake, but there are many...(and just read Isa)
  - [Prov 8:12](#) “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.
    - [14](#) I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength.
    - [15](#) By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just;
    - [16](#) by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.
    - [17](#) I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.
- *Three Persons of one substance, one power, one condition (eternity)*
  - Acting in unity. Guiding His people.
- There are many analogies to help us understand this idea of three in one.
  - None of them are completely accurate.
  - Here is my best attempt. – *Maybe use hats*
    - ❖ You are immediately cloned. Transportation machine goes wrong makes three of you.
    - ❖ But you realize you all share the same mind. But obviously not the same brain.
      - Like a Spock *Vulcan mind-meld* all the time.
    - ❖ You **share** thoughts, emotions, ideas, motives ... etc.
    - ❖ But there is three of you (in **form** / same **substance**).
    - ❖ All very different in body, but the same in mind – same essence – all Kylan.
- The main feature is UNITY!
- We have a relational God. He is relational with-in Himself. Never lonely || God is Love ([1 Jn 4:8](#) )
  - Charles Bartlett (1937): God is **necessarily** tri-personal*
  - Personality does not develop nor exist in isolation, but only in association with other persons. Hence it is not possible to conceive of personality in God apart from an association of equal persons in Him*
  - Not that God is required by some higher law to do anything to understand Unity.
    - ❖ There is no higher law. God is the highest law.
    - ❖ Similar to the idea: it is not that God does what is good, but that what God does is good.
  - Not that to be relational God had to be the trinity
  - Because God is triune. He is relational. So we are relational.
    - ❖ Not just communal: Like mice living in a colony, but deeply necessarily relational.
    - ❖ Made in His image.
- In fact, God is so relational that He sacrificed Himself so that we may know this unity
  - ❖ You go to Paris the best way to communicate is to speak French,
  - ❖ You go to Berlin the best way to communicate is to speak German,
  - ❖ [\*] God wants to communicate with us. He speaks Human
  - And that is just what He did.

**Hebrews 1:1-3** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,  
**2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

## HYPOSTATIC UNION

- That leads us to the next layer of His unity.
- The second person of the Trinity joins us in humanity.
  - Removes His robe of glory to be a creature – like us – for us.

**[\*]** *Jesus Christ, His **Only Son**, Our Lord. Who Was Conceived by the Holy Spirit; Born of the Virgin Mary...*

- Jesus's conception and birth are emphasized to highlight Jesus being **fully** Man and **fully** God

**Col 2:9** For in him the whole **fullness** of **deity** dwells **bodily**,

- Of course someone along the way trying to understand it – over simplifies it – gets it a little off and teaches heresy.
  - ❖ (Apollo – in – aris) of Laodicea (360) taught that Jesus could not have had a human mind.
    - He would have had to have a *divine mind* and a *human body*.
  - ❖ You see the short fall in this?
  - ❖ How then could Jesus be like us in every respect? Hebrews states:

**Hebrews 2:17-18** Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

**18** For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

- Apollinaris's teaching is declared a heresy within 20yrs at the First Council of Constantinople (381)
- Then the Hypostatic union defined at the ~~Eumenical~~ Council of Chalcedon (451)

*...our Lord Jesus Christ is to us One and the same Son, the Self-same Perfect in Godhead, the Self-same Perfect in Manhood; truly God and truly Man; the Self-same of a rational soul and body; co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, the Self-same co-essential with us according to the Manhood; like us in all things, sin apart*

- Again, why is this history important? -- Because these are not new ideas.
  - They were recognized and defined very early on.
  - First, a better understanding of the Trinity then, a better understanding of Christ follows.
- The Gospel of John presents Jesus in this light better than any other gospel.
  - John most brilliantly writes
  - In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*], and the Word [*Logos*] was with God, and the Word [*Logos*] was God.
    - ❖ *Logos* is very interesting word to use. Translated as “word” but has a much deeper meaning
    - ❖ Reason, knowledge, truth. We use it in English when we put ology on the end of something.
      - Theology (Study of God), (Biology Study of Bio-life)

**John 1:1-5, 14**

1 In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*], and the Word [*Logos*] was with God, and the Word [*Logos*] was God.

2 **He** was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life (*zoe*), and the life was the light of men.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

14 And the Word [*Logos*] **became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

## FULLY HUMAN

[*Gods*] **Only Son**, Our Lord. Who Was Conceived by the Holy Spirit; Born of the Virgin Mary

- First, **why** be born? Why not descend in all His glory? That's what Thor would do.
  - *Seems like some limitations ... Recent back injury. A reminder that the body is so limited*
  - Because Jesus had to be fully human.
    - ❖ He wants a relationship not a tyranny
    - ❖ He wants holiness not empty piety
  - Here is an example out of Hebrews but let me make it a bit more relevant for you.
    - ❖ Say you are need to confess. You did something wrong and you just have to get it off your chest.
      - Are you more readily going to do that with a person that shows you compassion (empathy)
      - Or more likely to suck it up and hide if from a person who is distant and judgmental.
    - ❖ The priest plays that role, the high priest receives confession and offerings for sins of the people.
- Hebrews 4:14-16** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.
  - 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- Hebrews 2:17-18** Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect
  - ❖ That comes with a true relationship, true empathy and the true power to forgive.
- Jesus can empathize with our struggles. Our temptations and even our unanswered prayers.
  - ❖ It is very hard to actually trust in superheroes. Tony Stark is stuck up – Jarvis, cold – Thor, lore.
  - ❖ Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are.
    - He had offers of power, temptations to escape suffering.
    - Don't you think He was tempted by greed, by wine, by sex, by anger
    - Just like you and I.
    - Also good for us to understand Jesus asked His father to take the cup of suffering from him,
      - **IF** it was in His will.
      - Of course God the father does not grant that prayer, it was planned sense eternity.
- **Why** be born and suffer – so He could fully represent us.
- **Why** a virgin? To prove His deity.

- If He were conceived in the conventional way there is a much harder prove He is God.
- Plenty before Him and after tried this route. But Jesus actually IS God. That's the difference.

## FULLY GOD

**[\*]** *[Gods] Only Son, Our Lord, Who Was Conceived by the Holy Spirit*

- First, it is the Fulfillment of prophecy story...

**Isa 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

- Translation story. H5959 **almah** (al-maw') /Septuagint/ G3933 **parthenos** (par-then'-os)

**Luke 1:26- 27** In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, **27** to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

- Most importantly; (why there was prophecy); this is the perfect presentation of His unity with us.
  - His duality of God and Man.
  - Born human, but God in essence --> Remember what we learned about the Trinity. (substance/Form)

**Colossians 1:15-20** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

**16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **17** And he is before all things, and **in him all things hold together**. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be **preeminent**. **19** For **in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell**, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

- The fullness of God was pleased to dwell!
  - Think about this is the only way we can be reconciled with God.
  - He **MUST** be God. How could forgiveness be granted by any other than the one who is sinned against?
  - I wish I had the time to read you chapter 9 & 10 of Hebrews
  - Here are some excerpts from chapter 10

**Heb 10:4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

**10:10-14** ... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

**11** And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

**12** But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

**13** waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

**14** For by a single offering He has **perfected** for **all time** those who are being sanctified.

## THE UNITY

- Do we see why this is important?
- Who you say Jesus is? – means everything.
- Any of this gets out of place and your theology doesn't add up.
  - A broken trinity is an invitation for dis-unity
  - A non-divine Jesus cannot complete what is required
    - ❖ Forgiveness

- A non-human Jesus cannot be accessed
  - ❖ He is our Priest and King, personal – relational.
- God has gone to the extremes to be in Unity with us
  - [\*] We have a God of relationships \ We have a God of Unity
  - We have a sacrificial God \ A personal God
  - He is consistent, trustworthy --> He is not fickle driven by emotion
- When you look at Jesus you look at God ([Jn 12:45, 14:9](#)) --> Unity to a point of being Sacrificial (Love)
- We are made in His image, we are relational
- So we should forgive as He forgives ([Eph 4:32](#))
- We should love as He has loved. For they will know you serve Jesus by the love ([John 13:35](#))
- As Christians we should be the example, model, and the teachers of a Unity, abundant and fulfilling.
- We should be in Unity with each other.
  - It is the very nature of our creator.

## PRAY

- [Heb 13:8](#) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
  - Triune – unified God; at creation, leading Abraham, In Christ – The H.S. in us and forever – past the ends of our days.
- Unity – each other, Christ and ultimately our triune God.
- Transform us to seek unity – With you! With others,
  - fellow Christians, global – cosmic unity.



**OUTLINE****TRINITY** (Matt 28:16-20)

In the **unity** of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, **power**, and **eternity**

-- Westminster confession of faith (1648)

Luke 3:21-22	Jesus Baptism
Isaiah 11:2, 42:1	Prophecy
Genesis 1:26, 11:7	God the Father
Isa 63:9-10, Gen 16:10, John 8:58, Mal 3:1	Christophany
Prov 8:12-17	Spirit of God

God speaks **Human**

Hebrews 1:1-3

**HYPOSTATIC UNION** (Heb 2:17-18, John 1:1-5)

In Jesus the whole fullness of **deity** dwells **bodily**.

-- Colossians 2:9

**Fully Human**

Hebrews 4:14-16	Tempted
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**Fully God**

Isa 7:14, Luke 1:26-27	Prophecy
Col 1:15-20	Preeminence of Christ
Hebrews 10:4-14	Forgiveness of Sins

We have a God of **Unity**

**OUTLINE**

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We have a God of \_\_\_\_\_!

**SEED QUESTIONS/NOTES**

Supporting Scripture

[IMAGE]

- More information with a point in the outline.

**LUKE 12: 42b** "Who then

**[NIV] Luke 12:49** "I have come

- *Recent back injury. A reminder that the body is so limited*
  - Imagine a relationship without consistency.
  - Reflect on the human part of relationships; high maintenance
  - There is a separation and distrust if there is no empathy.