

# Trinity: God Is

## *Lecture*

All right, well, this is one of my most favorite things to do, and that's to take big, complicated theological ideas and try and communicate them in a way that you can understand without missing the full-hearted significance of what's being taught. And so this is gonna be 12 lectures, it's gonna have a corresponding book. After about a decade of preaching, I had the honor of publishing a book with Dr. Gerry Breshears. He was former president of the Evangelical Theological Society which is all of the Bible college and seminary professors. And we published a systematic theology together, called "Doctrine". It was about 400 pages, about a thousand footnotes, it's now been about a decade, and so I am in the process of a significant rewrite and overhaul of that book. And so these lectures will serve as the basis of that, and I'm excited for that. So thank you for being with us today. And the question is, when it comes to study theology, and *theos* means God, *logos* means study. So theology really means the study of God, where do you start? And I'll start with a story, my wife Grace and I, we met in high school at the age of 17, and she was a sprinter, she was fast. I caught her, but she was fast. And so for basically the first year that she was on the track team, she was one of the fastest sprinters, but she started every race with the wrong foot forward. I guess if you're a runner, you can tell I'm not, if you are a runner, I think you're supposed to start with your dominant hand, also being your lead foot. And for her, she had it reversed. Well, what that meant was, in every race that she ran, literally, she started off on the wrong foot. And as a result, that meant that every step of the race was not optimal, it wasn't prime in so far as her exerting her energy. And so it's really important in anything to get off on the right foot, to get off on the right step. And the question is, when coming to study the Bible and the great doctrines of the Bible, where do you start? You know, what foot do you put forward? There's something called "The Five Points of Armenianism" that starts with the free will of humanity. There's something that is sort of opposed to that, called "The Five Points of Calvinism" that starts with human sinfulness. The problem with both, they start with us, they don't start with God. Some of the systematic theologies, and there are many good ones, they'll start with the Bible, and why we can trust the Bible and we're gonna get into that in the second lecture, but where I wanna start, I think it's important to start with God. And the reason is, is we're doing systematic theology, I wanted to follow the storyline of the Bible and where does the Bible begin? Well, it begins in Genesis 1:1, in the beginning, God. And so the Bible starts with God. So you need to know two of the most important things that you're gonna learn in the study of theology is who God is and who you are. But before you can understand who you are, you need to understand who God is. And so what He is telling us here is in Genesis chapter one, that ultimately there is a God. That means that Atheism is wrong. It doesn't say gods, there's just one God, so that means that Polytheism and the belief in many gods is also wrong. But this God reveals Himself, and He's speaking to us, therefore Agnosticism is wrong that says there may be a god, but we have no access to him or information from him. And what this ultimately means is that there is a God, and everything begins with God. And unless everything begins with God, nothing functions as God intended it. So your marriage has to start with God, your day has to start with God, your job has to start with God, your emotional well-being, your identity, your legacy, your family, your ministry, everything

needs to start with the proper understanding of God. And so where I wanna start is I wanna start with something called "The Doctrine of the Trinity" and we're here at the Trinity Church, and when we went to found and plant this church, we did so honoring Grace's father, who planted a church and he pastored a church called The Trinity Church until he passed away some years ago. But also for me, it was very, very significant and important, because this is one of the most unique and distinctive aspects of our Christian faith, and that is that our view of God is unique, it is exclusive, and it is unprecedented. And so what we're talking about in the Trinity is one God who eternally exists as three distinct persons, Father, Son and Spirit, who are each fully and equally God. Lemme unpack some of the terms, by persons it doesn't mean that God inhabits a human body as we do, that, in fact, the Holy Spirit does not occupy a human body, God the Father does not occupy a human body, Jesus, during His incarnation, added a human body, but He is, was pre-existent as the Son of God in spirit-form. And so we're not saying that to be a person is to have a body, what we're saying is that God is a person as opposed to an impersonal force. An impersonal force doesn't have feelings, God does. An impersonal force doesn't have a relationship, God does, an impersonal force doesn't communicate, God does. So by God being a person, that means He is also a personal God. And by saying equally God, what I'm saying is that the Father, Son and Spirit, one God in three persons, they share all of the divine attributes. So the Father, Son and Spirit are all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful. We'll get into all of this, what I'm gonna give you in seed form today is the beginning of some concepts that we'll pack in successive lectures. But ultimately, that's what we're talking about, one God, three persons, equally God, sharing all the divine attributes. And this is a theological term that we use to summarize what I'm gonna share as a significant amount of biblical doctrine and Scripture verses. And so if you are studying the Bible and you go to the back, you know, the concordance, and you're trying to figure, okay, where's the Trinity? The word Trinity doesn't appear in your Bible. Don't be alarmed though, neither does the word Bible. I don't know if you knew that. It's called the Word of God, and Scriptures, but we use the word Bible to summarize this book, and we use the word Trinity to summarize what this book teaches us about the God of the Bible. As far as we could tell, the term Trinity became popular with an early church father named Tertullian, and it has been adopted throughout church history. It's really not been of any significant opposition, and today there are three basic large teams of Christianity, there are orthodox Christians, Catholic Christians and Protestant Christians. What we all agree on, is the Trinity. It's a closed-handed issue, as opposed to an open-handed issue. This is one of those issues that defines whether or not you're a Christian. And so for all Christian traditions, we all agree that there is one God, three persons, Father, Son and Spirit. And some people will say different Christians believe different things, not about the Trinity. We all agree, there is one God, three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, and anyone that does not adhere to that, does not worship the same God as we do, they don't worship the same God as the Bible reveals and they don't worship the God that is historically honored within the Christian faith. So to take all of this together, I wanna start by showing you that there's one God, and that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God, that they appear together in the Old Testament, they appear together in the New Testament. So the first principle is there is only God. When my kids were little, I would give them little theological tests, and the first question I would always ask my kids was, how many gods are there? And most of my kids got it right, one of my kids it took a while. And seven, no three, they're just running numbers, no, no, we gotta get this number right,

there's only one God. Deuteronomy 4:35, the Lord is God, there is how many others? There's no other. Deuteronomy 32:39, there is no god beside me. God's up in heaven saying, "Yeah, I did a full inventory of the cosmos, can't find another divine being like me." He's unique, He's superior, He's distinct. Psalm 86:10, you alone are God. Isaiah 43:10, before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. God says, "Before me there is no god, today there is no god." Well, what in the future, God? Will there be another god? No, there's not gonna be any god showing up in the future either. And in this section of Isaiah from chapter 40, till about chapter 66 in that Book, if you just wanna read one section of Scripture that is primarily packed about what are called monotheism or the doctrine that there is one God, if you just read it, you're gonna hear God over and over. There is no god, I am the only God. There is no one like me, there's no one who's coming, who's gonna be like me. God is very clear that He's the only God. Isaiah 45:5, I am the Lord and there is no other, beside me there is no God. And then you jump to the New Testament, it speaks of God as the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, and then 1 Timothy 2:5, you know, if you just need the bottom line in a Tweet, there you go, there is one God. There you go, that's as clear as it can be. So, premise number one, there's just one God. So then it leads to this question, what about all the other religions, and what about all the other gods? There are other spirit beings, we're sort of leaning into a future lecture on the demonic, angels, demons, all of that, but what I will posit to you, is that the Bible does admit and acknowledge that other religions and belief systems have supernatural, powerful beings that at work, they're at work, rather, in and through their form of worship or gathering. But those are unclean spirits, not clean spirits. Those are enemies of God, not servant of God, those are not the real God, those are counterfeits. And so one of the major principles in the Bible is that God creates, and Satan counterfeits. And so Satan seeks to counterfeit himself to convince people to worship him or demons who serve him, as opposed to or instead of worshiping God. And so John 17:3 says that there is only one true God, well what about the other gods? 1 Corinthians 10:20, the church in Corinth, they had lots of illicit sexuality, they're suing each other, they're getting drunk at communion, they're practicing alternative lifestyles, they really were just an internship for the modern-day left coast in America, is really what they were. And they had a lot of tolerance for other religions, including in their services, and their partaking of communion, and they were inviting in other gods and other religions and pluralism and diversity. And he says, "What pagans sacrifice, they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons." What he's saying is when you get together to worship God, and you let other religions and other gods and other spirit beings come in, other practices from other religions, what you're doing, you're inviting the demonic into the church. You're inviting counterfeit spirits, you're inviting demonic principalities and powers into the church, okay? And he says this in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 and 10, the coming of the lawless one, that's talking about the antichrist at the end of time, is by the activity of Satan with all power and what? False signs and wonders, with all wicked deception. God creates, Satan counterfeits. What he says is the closer that we get to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom, the higher the proclivity and propensity there will be for false, counterfeit supernatural signs, wonders, miracles. And so Satan is willing to send out a demon to heal someone, as long as they worship the demon, rather than God, because they're still ultimately going to die and go to hell. Satan is willing to give someone clairvoyance, supernatural power, insight, revelation, authority, he doesn't mind, he will give you whatever will cause you to not

worship God, but to worship one of his demon servants in the place of God. God creates, Satan counterfeits. So there is one God, but there's lots of counterfeit gods and ultimately behind those religions, behind those powers, behind those miracles, behind those healings, are demonic forces and spirits at work. Again, he says it here, false signs and wonders, it's all wicked deception. Now, if you're at all familiar with the storyline in the Bible that, the case study for this, and we'll get into angels and demons a little bit later in future lectures, but the case study is the Book of Exodus. So here is really this battle between the real God and the false gods. It all plays out in this Book called Exodus. So there is the real God, Yahweh, and then in this nation of Egypt, because God has a kingdom, and the counterfeit is the nation of Egypt, and God is the real King, and the counterfeit king is who? It's the Pharaoh. He's worshiped as a god. They would say that Pharaoh was between god and the divine realm, and man and the human realm and he was like part human, part divine. He's a fake Jesus. So the Pharaoh, literally, is a fake, counterfeit Jesus, he's a fake, counterfeit king, he's ruling over a fake kingdom, God creates, Satan counterfeits. And so God shows up and God tells Moses, His servant, I need you to go speak to this man named Pharaoh and tell him that I don't approve of what he's doing. And so it says this in Exodus five, Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord moreover, and I will not let Israel go." So Moses shows up and says, "Hey, the real God says that His people, the Hebrews, there's now a few million of us, we get to go free." And Pharaoh says, "I don't know your God, so your God must not be a big God. I'm a much bigger god and I'm not going to do what your God tells me to do." 'Cause he's looking out and he's saying, "I rule over Egypt and you guys are slaves. I have wealth and power, and you have nothing." And so what happens then is God keeps sending Moses in to speak on behalf of the real God to the false god. So then God makes this promise in Exodus 12, "I will pass through the land of Egypt at night, I'll strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast," and here's the line, "and all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment, for I am the Lord." So what happens is God has real servants, Pharaoh has counterfeit priests, fake servants, demonically empowered religious leaders who rise up. God's servants do supernatural miracles, and if you read Exodus, you're gonna see some supernatural miracles. And then they're counterfeited by the false priests. And what this really is, this is the real God, versus the false gods, this is the God of the Bible at war against the demonic false gods that are empowering culture, religion and politics. So if you ask yourself, what are demons doing today? They're doing culture, they're doing politics, they're doing religion, and that's what they're doing. They're powerful forces working together to bring a counterfeit to the kingdom of God. So God says, "I'm gonna come and judge the nation, I'm gonna let my people go, and I will execute a judgment on all of the "gods" in Egypt." Those are, it's a language that refers to a spirit being of great power. There's a word in the Old Testament called Elohim, and sometimes that word refers to God, sometimes it refers to other spirit beings, angels and the like, and those are false gods. But it means a supernatural spirit being. And so what the real God says is, "I'm gonna go judge the false gods." And so, if you know the storyline of Exodus, there's a number and a succession of plagues, each one of those was a judgment on an Egyptian false demonic god. And so they would say, "Well, you know, we worship the god who does this, and the god who does that," and God says, "I can take them both." And He crushes them. So then, if you know the story,

God ultimately does deliver His people, and after He delivers, the Book of Exodus is written and it reflects back. Exodus 18, Jethro, this is Moses' father-in-law, Exodus 18:10 and 11, Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians, He says, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the other gods." See Jethro, his father-in-law, was probably a bit of a pagan, and he wasn't sure who the real God was, or who the real powerful God was, or who the Lord over all the gods was, and he says, "Wow, when I saw your God roll into Egypt and crush all their gods, I know that your God is the real God." It was a power struggle. And then this is why, a little bit later in Exodus 20, where God, through Moses, delivers the 10 commandments, the first two commandments are these, there's only one God, worship Him alone. There's only one God, worship Him alone. And if you do that, you won't worship sex and commit adultery. If you do that, you won't worship wealth and money and steal. If you do that, you won't worship your reputation and lie. And so, literally, all of human life comes down to, know who this God is, and worship Him, and the rest of life will sort itself out. And so that's why God revealed Himself to His people to deliver them, so they would be free to worship Him. And so He says this in the first two commandments, "You shall have no gods before me, you shall not take and make for yourself a carved image of any likeness, anything that is in heaven above, earth below, or that is in the water under the sea, you shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God." Let's talk about the jealousy of God briefly, do you think the jealousy of God is a good thing or a bad thing? It's a good thing. See, what jealousy means is I'm frustrated because someone is in my place, okay? I love Grace with all my heart, you guys are our church family, you know that, and if, you know, Friday is date night for Grace and I, okay? So Friday is a good day for me. And if Grace came downstairs and she was looking cute as usual, said, "Hey, babe, it's date day." "Yeah, I'm not going with you today." "Oh, well, you're going alone, right?" She said, "No, no, no, no, I'm going on a date with somebody else." I would be jealous, okay, jealous. And I would quote Scripture to defend my jealousy. Because we have a loving, unique, covenantal, special, sacred relationship, and no one is allowed to come into my place in regards to her, and for me, I'm not allowed to permit anyone, particularly another woman, into her place. See, because God sees His relationship with His people like a groom does with His bride. And this is one of the great storylines of the Bible, and so people will be like what's the big deal with different religions, different gods, whatever works for you? God says, "Because I see it as adultery. I love you, I made you, I want a relationship with you, Satan and demons have rebelled against me, they're trying to deceive you and lead you astray into false religion, and I want you to have a relationship with me and worship me, because that's the best life for you and that's the eternal life with me." So you need to see that God is personal, that God is relational, that God is loving, that God is covenantal, that God is exclusive and God is committed and God is devoted. Now that being said, this is all intimated in the doctrine of the Trinity, and lemme deal with a few heresies in regards to the doctrine of the Trinity, and then we'll move forward into a little more detail. The first heresy is that there is more than one God. And there's one God, three persons. Tritheism says that there is three Gods, polytheism, just poly means many, theism is gods, so there's many gods. Religions, like Mormonism, teach that there are many gods and Jesus is one of the many gods and that men can become gods. So all of that violates the concept of one God. There is something that some of you, because of your background, may be more familiar

with, and that is this false teaching that there are three divine manifestations, not persons. This is called Modalism, it's called Sabellianism, it's called Monarchinism, it sometimes is called is Jesus only, and there's a whole denomination called The United Pentecostal Church that is oneness only. It's Jesus only, they don't believe in the Trinity. They don't believe in the Trinity. And so within that, this teaching says that the Father, Son and Spirit is one God, not three persons, but three manifestations of one person. So they would say in the Old Testament, God showed up as an angry father. And then in the times of Jesus, God showed up as a loving man, and then after His ascension, the Holy Spirit is God showing up as a powerful force. But they would not say that these are three persons that are living in union and communion, they would say this is one person who is literally an actor, like changing roles in the course of human history, pretending to be the Father, pretending to be the Son, pretending to be the Spirit, but one person, three manifestations, not one God, three persons. Does that make sense? And if some of you know people that are Jesus only, that are United Pentecostal Church and sometimes they will be popular in, you know, Christian television and radio and teachings and such, but they don't hold to the doctrine of the Trinity. And then the third false teaching or heresy about the Trinity, is there is not one God, excuse me, there is one God, but not in three persons. And so this comes from a man named Arius, he was declared a heretic at an early church council in 325 AD, and the proponents of Arianism today are the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. They would say that there is one God, but not in three persons. And so what they would say is that the Holy Spirit is a created being and powerful force, they would also say that Jesus Christ is a created being and He is, in fact, the archangel Michael. And all of that is different. And so when people say all religions basically believe in the same God, no we don't. And I'll tell you, in Christianity, there are closed-handed issues and open-handed issues. The closed-handed issues are primary, the open-handed issues are secondary and what I'm saying is the Trinity is in the closed hand. Think of it in terms of our nation, our nation has national borders, Canada, Mexico, we also have state borders. Those state borders, you can pass through quite easily, but when you go to cross a national border, it's a much bigger endeavor because that's a more significant border issue. So when it comes to Christianity, let's say Lutherans, Presbyterians, different groups, they're states, but they're also the same country. When you lose the doctrine of the Trinity, you've crossed through a security checkpoint and you've now passed into another religion. So, if you don't believe the Trinity, you're in a cult, you're in another religion, and according to what I taught you just a few minutes ago, you're probably involved in demonic activity, thinking that it is godly. And that explains so much of our world. And so let me unpack for you some things about the Father, the Son and the Spirit, one God, three persons, and the first is that the Father is God. And I wanna establish that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God, we've already established that there's only one God, and these are the three persons of the Godhead. And so just some of the text, and, literally, we can do this all night, there's so many, John 6:27 speaks of God the Father. 1 Corinthians 8:6, there is one God, the Father. Jesus says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." And Colossians 1:15 says that He, Jesus, is the image of the invisible God. So, the Fatherhood of God is a dominant theme throughout the whole Bible. In the Old Testament, God is referred to as Father about 15 times, almost in every occasion by someone who is speaking of God in terms of His relationship to the nation of Israel, but it's not personal, it's corporate. Jesus comes along, His favorite name for God is Father. In the Matthew, Mark,

Luke and John, the four gospels, Jesus refers to God as Father 165 times. It's massive, it's massive. And what's interesting is that word, it is a word that was used of both little children and also adults. So you may have heard that Abba, which is language for father that Jesus uses, means daddy. It may mean dad, or father, but maybe not daddy. I talked to my dad, I think it was yesterday. My dad's 70 and I call him pops, I call him dad, I don't call him daddy, 'cause I'm not four. But he's still my dad, he's still my pops, and so this language for Abba Father, it's respectful, but it's personal, and it's warm and it's an affectionate term that whether you are a little kid or a grown kid, that's what you'd call your dad. And that's the language that Jesus uses to refer to God, as I said, 165 times. And some people would wonder, well, what is God the Father like? Well, He's like Jesus, or I should say Jesus is like the Father. So when Jesus says, "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father," when you got up this morning, and you looked in the mirror, the primary function of the mirror was to reflect back to you, accurately, who you are. And for some of you, that's a rough minute, amen, for me it is, it's rough. Okay, this is reality, I'm actually seeing what's going on here, I need to pray for Grace. Okay, so, my wife, and so, you know, when God looked down on the earth, He wanted to see His reflection in the world, and ultimately Jesus is the perfect mirror. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. 'Cause if you've looked in the, let's say I was standing before a mirror and you looked at the mirror, you would see me. By looking at the mirror, Jesus is a mirror and what He does, He reflects to the world and to the unseen realm, He reflects the character, the heart, the disposition, the inclinations of God the Father. So some people say, "I don't like God the Father, but I like Jesus." Jesus said, "I'm just reflecting His character, the love is His love, the forgiveness is His forgiveness, the relationship is His relationship." That's what He says in Colossians, He is the image of the invisible God. And the word there in the original Greek it's icon. Some religious traditions will have icons to represent God, and it was generally, oftentimes, are graven images because Jesus is the icon. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. People are like, "What does God look like?" Jesus, if you wanna know what God the Father looks like, look at Jesus, He's a mirror, reflecting the character of God the Father. Now, throughout the course of Christian history, anytime certain doctrines are debated, councils will convene and they will render verdicts as to who has an orthodox versus a heretical position, honestly, the deity of God the Father is not really debated. It's pretty clear, if you've read the Old Testament, they're like the Jewish people believe that there is one God, and that the Father is God. So that's not as controversial. As we move into the Son of God, and the Spirit of God, things do get a little bit more controversial and there is more debate about their divinity. So the second point is that Jesus Christ, the Son, is God. And John says this in John 1, in the beginning was the, was the Word, okay? And he's talking here about Jesus, he's talking about one who is present with God the Father and the agent through whom the Father will accomplish His work. And the Word was with God and the Word was God. So whoever this person is, they were there before creation, that means that this predates angels, this predates the earth, this predates humanity, we're gonna get all unpacking of that in the study of creation. But what it's saying is before there was anyone or anything, there was just God. Then there was God and then there was the Word who was with God and He was God too. That's Jesus, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Well, how do you know who that God is? He actually came down, His name is Jesus. His name is Jesus. Jesus is eternally God, ruling and reigning with God the Father. They're assisting in creation from the beginning of all people, places and things, and this God, this Word

of God comes into human history as the God-man Jesus Christ. He takes upon Himself human flesh to come and walk the earth among us. We're gonna get into all of that in the incarnation section. Jesus says this in John 8:58, "Truly, truly," He says, "I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." And they're looking, you know, historically, like Abraham, well now we're going back millennia, and You're in Your 30s. How do You have more birthday candles than Abraham? How do You do that? It's because He's the Creator who predates. So Jesus' existence is eternal, and His entrance into history is temporal. He exists forever, but He enters in a moment. Thomas answered Him, after he sees Jesus risen from death, because Thomas was the doubter, and some of you would have the disposition of the doubter, and he said, "I'm not gonna believe Jesus rose from death unless I see it for myself." And lo and behold, it had to be an awkward moment. Have you ever had one of those moments where you're talking about somebody and they walk in? That's exactly what happened is I don't believe Jesus rose from death, I need to see it with my, hi, Jesus. Wow, okay, we're there, all right, so Jesus walks in and shows him, here are my scars of crucifixion in my hands and my side. And what Thomas does is he falls down and he looks at Jesus and he says, "My Lord, and my God." Lemme say, if Jesus isn't God, He should rebuke Thomas for worshiping Him as God. But He doesn't, He receives worship because He is Thomas' God. Next slide, a few more, Romans 9:5, Christ who is God over all. If you're like me, I like it simple, that's pretty simple. Christ is God. Titus 2:13 speaks of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. And then 1 John 5:20, Jesus Christ, He is the, singular and exclusive, true God. So we've established that the Father is God, the Son is God, we'll now deal with the Holy Spirit, because the doctrine of the Trinity, if I could make it as simple as possible, it's one God, three persons. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God, and they are together relationally as one God. And this is where a lot of the problems in explaining the doctrine of the Trinity come in. You know, some will say, oh, the Trinity's like an egg, there's a yolk and there's a, you know, there's the shell and whatever the other piece is, tell I'm not a real chef. And the issue was it's impossible to take anything that is created in physical and have it accurately depict the mystery of the Godhead, because the Father, Son and Spirit, their relationship is not physical, it is relational, emotional and spiritual. So we need to think in relational terms, more than physical terms, when we think of the Trinity. It's one God, three persons, and here I've established that Jesus Christ is God. Now the third is the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit God? That's the issue. There is no debate, really, about God the Father, there is some debate about Jesus Christ, and there is increasing debate about the Holy Spirit. Now lemme say this firstly about the person of the Holy Spirit, He, and Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as He. He says this repeatedly in John's Gospel, "I will send you another, the comforter, the advocate, the Holy Spirit, and He will lead you and guide you into truth, and He'll bring to mind everything that I've taught you." He refers to the Holy Spirit as a He, as a person, not as an impersonal force. So if you've seen "Star Wars", you know, this concept is of an impersonal, spiritual force. Other religions will have some concept of that, Wicca, Pantheism, Panentheism, where all is god or god is in and through all, folks that go up to sit to be in the presence of the aura or the energy source, they're seeing god as an impersonal force. The Holy Spirit is a person, okay? He's a person you have a relationship with, He's a personal God named He by Jesus. And so the Holy Spirit, He can be grieved. Ephesians 4:30 says to forgive people and don't grieve the Holy Spirit. You can't grieve an inanimate object. I mean, here's my phone, I plug it into a power source. I can't grieve electricity, 'cause it's not personal. The Holy Spirit, He



is personal, He can be grieved. The Holy Spirit as well, we're told in Acts 7:51, he says that He can be resisted. The Holy Spirit is like a friend who's trying to help you, but you're fighting Him. The Holy Spirit is like a police officer trying to get you out of harm's way. And you're just determined to make a foolish decision, He can be resisted. He's trying to help, but you can resist Him and that's a person with whom you have a relationship and Hebrews 10:29 says He can also be insulted. It's possible to insult the Holy Spirit, because He's a person. And I want you to have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, like Jesus did. We'll get into this in the section on Jesus, Jesus lived by the powerful presence of the person of the Holy Spirit. And He gives us the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit so that our character can become increasingly like Christ. A few texts on the Holy Spirit is God, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, that's the Holy Spirit, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, that's God working on all of His kids, we're making progress. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. The Spirit is the Lord God, the Lord God is the Spirit. How about this next text, so there's an occasion in Acts chapter five where an early church leader sells a piece of real estate, determines that he will give a generous donation to the church. Gonna give a big gift. This married couple, Ananias and Sapphira, they observe this and they think to themselves, "Let's do that too." They kinda get caught up in the special offering. So they decide, "We're gonna sell an asset, a piece of real estate, we're gonna donate it to the church." And they come separately, the husband and the wife do, but they hold back a portion. I don't know why, it may be that they made more than they thought. How many of you are like, "Lord, I'll sell this car and give this money to the church or missions."? And you sell it and you're like, "Lord, I didn't know it would sell for that much." You answer, well, hey, Lord, I was thinking 10 and we got 15, so I'm still thinking 10. And they put the money in their pocket, and they come to give their offering and they're lying. They're lying, okay? Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart?" We'll deal with demonic possession and issues later, "To lie to the Holy Spirit?" What he says is the Holy Spirit is the one who convicted you to give the generous gift. The Holy Spirit was the one who was leading you to be a generous agent of God's grace, and a person who is a giver and not a taker. "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? You have not lied to men but to God." Do you see it? You've lied to the Holy Spirit, that's lying to God, because the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is God. Does that make sense? Okay, now, what I wanna do, we've established one God, three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, we've established the fact that there are heresies that will trip on various points regarding the nature and character of the Trinitarian God of the Bible, I wanna now look in the Old Testament, does the Trinity appear and then in the New Testament, does the Trinity appear? And sometimes you will hear people assume that the Trinity doesn't appear in the Old Testament. The Trinity appears throughout the Scriptures. I'll give you lots of verses, and you should have them all written out, because there's no way you'll keep up. We're basically auctioning off Scripture tonight, it's going fast, and so I wrote it down for you because I love you. Genesis 1:1 and 2, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. So the opening line of the Bible says there is God and the Holy Spirit present at creation. He told us again in John chapter one, in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God, He was with

God in the beginning. Colossians tells us that all things were created through Christ. So the Bible also tells us, then, when it came to the creation of the cosmos and the world as we know it, the reality that we enjoy, the Father, Son and Spirit were all active working in concert together to bring forth creation. Well, right there in the opening lines, you've got God, that's God the Father, and the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1:26 He goes to make man and woman in His image and likeness. We'll get into this in the image lecture, and here's what God said. Then God said, "Let us," plural language. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Now all the way back to the early church, Father Augustine who lived in the 4th century AD, he started teaching that that's referring to the Trinity. It's the only way to explain the plural language. It may refer, in addition, to God's divine counsel. So God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, they have two families. We'll get into all of this in future lectures, they have an unseen spiritual family, evangelic beings, they have a seen, visible family that is humanity. And God works through both, His unseen family and His seen family, His spiritual family and His physical family. And what this baby here, is that the divine counsel, the angelic beings, the heavenly host, what the Bible calls the sons of God, these beings that are made by God and are spiritual and angelic, they're observing, perhaps, the creation and God says let us make man in our image, in our likeness. It at least refers to the Trinity, it also might refer to the unseen realm, the heavenly host, the divine counsel and the sons of God. We'll get into all of that when we get into the angelic and the demonic. Next one, Genesis 3:22, then the Lord God said, "The man has become like one of us." That's interesting language for one God, us. I thought it was one God. It's one God, three persons. Genesis 11:6 and 7, the Lord said, "Come let us." This is one of my favorites, there's something that devout Jewish people will practice, as custom to this day, and it's something called the Shema. And the Shema is something that an orthodox Jew would say and to this day should say three times a day, and that is this, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." That's sort of their pledge of allegiance. That's their declaration of doctrine. Hear, O Israel, the people of God, our God is one. And then Jesus quotes this later when they ask what's the greatest commandment? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. He's going back to this, because as a little boy, he would have said it three times a day. He memorized it. It's why it's important for all of us, starting at a young age, to memorize God's Word. But what's interesting here, this word for one is a unique word. It's a Hebrew word in the original. How many of you love grapes? You love grapes? In grapes what you get is many grapes that form one cluster. That's similar to this Hebrew word. Literally what it's saying is hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one Gods. That's what they're saying. And they would say it three times a day, and I think it is God's way of saying yes, I am Father, Son and Spirit. There is one God, God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, there is one Gods. The Father, Son and Spirit, they're all God and together, relationally, they're one God. Now I don't, I can just tell by your face, your brain just exploded, okay? The goal is not to understand the doctrine of the Trinity, but to believe it, okay? Because, lemme just tell you this, any God that can be fully understood by a three pound fallen human brain is probably not the fullness of the totality of the God that made us all. My goal is not get heaven into my head, to paraphrase an old guy named G.K. Chesterton, but to get my head into heaven. I want to get into heaven and look around. I'm not expecting it all to fit in here. How about the next one, and now the Lord, and this is in Isaiah, the Lord God, that's the Father, has sent me, Jesus, and His Spirit. These are some of the quotes that Jesus uses early in His ministry to declare. They're like, "Who are

You?" He's like, "Well, in Isaiah it told you I was coming, the Father said He would send me with the Holy Spirit, so here I am." So the Trinity is there, and Isaiah 61:1, this is Jesus' ministry commissioning verse. Jesus, after He has 40 days of temptation, He enters into the synagogue, He opens to the scroll of Isaiah and He reads this, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. That's where Jesus starts His ministry. He says, "I got the Holy Spirit, I'm sent by the Father, and I'm here as the Son of God." All appearing together, and Isaiah so you know, is written 700 years before Jesus Christ walked on the earth. So this is God foreshadowing and revealing that Jesus is coming from the Father, here comes the Son of God, how do we know it's Him? Because He has the Spirit of God. The whole Trinity is involved in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. How about in the New Testament, does the Trinity appear in the New Testament? We're gonna read a lot. Here we go. Luke chapter one, at the announcement of the birth of Jesus to His mother Mary, we'll deal more with her when we get to the doctrine of the incarnation, the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High, God the Father, will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." Who's that? Jesus, she's like, "I'm a virgin and what's the baby plan? I don't understand." And the angel says, "Well, the Holy Spirit will allow you to conceive." This is by the plan of God the Father, so that you can give birth to God the Son. The whole Trinity is involved. How about this one, the baptism of Jesus is one of the most clear declarations and demonstrations of the Trinity, and to me this is a kryptonite verse for those who are modalist, Jesus only, those who are United Pentecostal, church folks, they'd say well God, He just plays three different roles. But you know what's weird? It's really weird if one person plays three roles and then all three persons show up at the same time. Right, and you're like, obviously that's three persons, not one, one person can play three roles, but not at the same time. Here's what happens at the baptism of Jesus. When Jesus was baptized, so there's Jesus, the Son of God, immediately He went up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, descending upon Him. So the Son of God is in the water, the Holy Spirit descends from heaven to earth, showing kingdom down, the kingdom of God is coming down with its King, and ultimately, you know, God is anointing and demonstrating that this is the chosen one, Jesus, that we just looked at, who was promised and foreshadowed in Isaiah, here He comes with the Spirit. The Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest upon Him. The language there in the original Greek, it's abiding, it's continuing, it's ongoing. So the presence and power of the person of the Spirit is there continually there throughout the entire life and ministry of Jesus. And so Jesus needed the Holy Spirit, we all do. And he goes on to say, "This is my," God says, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Who's that? That's God the Father. So at the baptism, you're like, okay, there's Jesus, there goes the Holy Spirit, who sent the Holy Spirit to Jesus? The Father did. How do we know? He actually opened heaven and said, "Hey, just so you know, that's my boy. I sent Him. Hey, guys, you've been waiting, guess what, it's a good day for you, He's here." God made this as obvious as possible, amen? I'll just tell you what, once the Holy Spirit falls on you and God speaks from heaven, it's official, you're the guy, okay? And that's the whole Trinity present at the baptism of Jesus Christ. And then one more, this is the Great Commission, after Jesus rises from death and He commissions His followers to go tell the news to the nations, Matthew 28:19, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in what? The name of the Father, Son and Holy

Spirit. Notice it doesn't say the names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You know why? It's one God with the name God, Yahweh, three persons, Father, Son, Spirit. So when we baptize people here at the Trinity Church, I'll let you in on a little shock, we baptize them in the name of the Trinity. We baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And that is the Trinitarian baptismal formula of the Great Commission. Lemme hit two things in closing and then we'll go to questions. Number one, some people ask, how does the Trinity work together? And you need to know that they work in perfect union and communion. 1 Peter 1:2 is one example, it speaks of the foreknowledge of God the Father. So the concept of governance in the Bible is singular headship, plural leadership. Within the Trinity, the Father, Son and Spirit are plural leaders with a singular head. This is gonna be important when we get to the doctrine of family, because the mother and father, husband and wife, are co-leaders, but the husband is the head of the household. And so here what he is saying is that God the Father is the one with foreknowledge. He is the one in the seat of authority who has the divine cosmic plan for the revelation of himself and the redemption of his people. The foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ for sprinkling with His blood. And what He's saying is this, that God the Father fore-made, foreknew, fore-caused a plan. We were gonna sin, and so He had a plan to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to go to the cross and to die in our place for our sins. And that that work of Jesus would be applied to us by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So the Father, knowing, foreknowing the future of sin, devises a plan to send the Son, and the Father, Son and Spirit agree to this plan and then they also agree that the Holy Spirit would take the finished work of Jesus and apply it to you, so that you could be set apart as a child of God. You need to see that the Trinity is always working together. If you wanna really sort of get a mind-blow on this, just what comes to mind is in Ephesians 1:3 through 14, Paul talks about the predestination of the Father, the forgiveness of Jesus, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit, and in 1:3 through 14, it's this massive run on concept where he is so overwhelmed by the Trinity working together from eternity past into eternity future for our salvation, it just pours out of him in this magnificent prayer in Ephesians 1:3 through 14. The Father, Son and Spirit, they work together. That's what I'm telling you. That's why unity is godly and division is demonic. That's why humility is godly and pride is demonic, because the character of God is to be the character of us all. And then some people will ask, well, who do I pray to, the Father, Son or the Spirit? Well, it depends on what you're praying for. Let's say you're reading the Bible and you read something about the cross or forgiveness of sin through shed blood, and you wanna stop and pray, who should you thank? Jesus, Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. Let's say you're sitting down to open the Bible, and you wanna learn it, and you're like, okay, the Holy Spirit wrote the Scriptures, I need Him to teach me, is it okay to pray and say, Holy Spirit, thank You for writing the Bible, please come teach me what it means? Is that okay? Sure, and Jesus taught us, when we pray, a lot our prayers should simply be our Father. So it's okay to pray to the Father, it's okay to pray to the Son, it's okay to pray to the Spirit, most of our prayers are by the Spirit, through the Son to the Father. Most of our worship is by the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. So all of life is Trinitarian. The Holy Spirit is in the child of God, Jesus is the one mediator between man and God, and our prayers are from the Spirit through the Son to the Father. Our worship is from the Spirit through the Son to the Father, all of life is Trinitarian and relational. Now I'll close with this, God is love. 1 John 4:8, God is love. John 3:35, the Father loves the Son, John 14:31, Jesus says I love the Father. If God is not

Trinitarian, God cannot be loving. Because God is Trinitarian, that means that God is relational, God doesn't just do relationships, God is relational. You know what that means, the Father, Son and Spirit? They talk to each other, they serve each other. They love each other, they have a perfect relationship. If God was just one God, He'd be very lonely. Some religions, in fact, teach that the reason God made us, is because God was lonely and He wanted a relationship. God has no lack, God has no need, God has no deficiency. The Father, Son and Spirit, they were fine without us. In fact, it was easier for them. But God is love means that the Father, Son and Spirit and their loving relationship, is literally the source from which our life and all of creation flows and comes, it all comes from the relationship of a loving God. So lemme close with this, God is relational. Do you know what it means to be godly? It means to be relational. God has perfect relationships, healthy relationships, the Father, Son and Spirit, and so for those of us that wanna have a relationship with God and healthy relationships with others, the first place we look to is the Trinity and we say that's what a perfect relationship looks like. Therefore I want my marriage, my family, my friends, my business, my ministry to be Trinitarian, meaning, the way the Father and Son and Spirit love each other and honor one another and serve one another and communicate with one another and bless one another, that's what a healthy, loving relationship looks like. Number two, God is loving with perfect love, and so if we wanna understand what love even looks like, where do we look? God. A lot of people would be like well, you know, yeah, they were married and they ran off together, or they're dating and they moved in together, but they love each other. That's not love, that's not Trinitarian love, because Trinitarian love is holy and it gives and it doesn't take and it builds up and it doesn't beat down, and it brings people into closer relationship with God, it doesn't sever or separate their relationship with God. So, relationship is defined by the Trinity, love is defined by the Trinity, community is defined by the Trinity, and lastly, family is defined by the Trinity. God is not just relational, loving and personal, He's also familial. The language of the Father and the Son, that's family language, amen? I mean, God could've used any metaphor, analogy or word picture or imagery, John Calvin, a great Protestant Reformer, he says that God speaks to us in what he calls baby talk. Have you ever had a little kid, trying to figure out how to speak to them in a way that they would get it? And what John Calvin says is that God is so magnificent, God is so wonderful, God is so glorious, He needed to speak to us in baby talk. He needed to come down and kind of put it down on the bottom shelf, put it in our language and on our level, and so God uses the language of the Father and the Son, which is language of family. And this is important, because as we look in future lectures, God made us in His image and likeness, it's not good to be alone. Throughout the Old Testament, God is making for Himself a people for His own possession, God's all about making a family. God is all about making a family, you know why people wanna get married and have a family? Because they were made in the image and likeness of God. And God has exclusive love in a covenantal relationship and He's building a family. And that's what it means to be the people of God, and that's what it means to be the church of Jesus Christ, is to have the loving relationship of the family relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit start to include us as we receive the Spirit and the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to the Father, they actually invite you into a relationship with them, a relationship of love and unity and blessing and safety and fidelity and faithfulness, and that relationship changes you to make you more like them, so that then you can be a mirror to the

world, reflecting forth something of the image and glory of God. And that's where we'll get in future in lectures.