

001 - In the Beginning Was the Word - John 1:1-3 - 2017-08-27

Call to Worship: Psalm 117

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:3

Sermon: "The Son of God Part One: In the Beginning Was the Word" John 1:1-3

Benediction: Revelation 19:5-6

## INTRODUCTION

We are the disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We love Him! We serve Him! We follow Him! He is our Teacher, and we are His students; but not the kind of students who reluctantly attend class and turn in our homework late and hurry off when the bell rings. No, we can't get enough of our Teacher. We come early to class and sit on the front row and ask questions and listen to him with rapt attention. When the bell rings, we don't want to leave Him; we want to go home with Him and eat with Him and spend all our time with Him.

We have learned from Him, early on, that

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

(The KJV you hear in what I said means that I was taught that verse as a child. The teachers in the church where I was raised in the 1970s used the KJV, but when I was in middle school I started memorizing verses in other translations. So I know I learned that verse as a child.)

But although it is wonderful to know that, we don't want that to be *all* we know of our dear Savior. We want to know Him more, and to grow stronger in our faith in Him by what we learn. We want to ponder anew the glorious truths the bible teaches us about the Son of God.

Now, the whole bible is about the Son of God, more or less directly. All of it is good, and useful for all kinds of teaching in His church. But for five weeks in these Lord's Day sermons, let's learn of Jesus Christ more directly than we sometimes do, by considering some of what the bible says directly about Him, about His person, not in symbol or shadow that represent Him, or about His law that points to Him, but directly about Him.

In theological terms, the study of Christ is naturally called "Christology." Let us engage in some simple Christology for the next five sessions, considering our Lord and Savior, the Son of God, in five headings:

Part 1

The Son of God in His eternal being, before coming to earth as a man

Part 2

The Son of God taking on human flesh, becoming a man

Part 3

The Son of God becoming a man, yet without sin, being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary

Part 4

The Son of God being of David, of Judah, and of Abraham, in fulfillment of the scripture prophecies

Part 5

The Son of God being the only mediator between holy God and sinful man

In preparing these sermons, I'm working primarily from the bible accounts of God giving His only-begotten Son in the bible, in the gospels Matthew, Luke, and John. (The gospel of Mark, being more brief, skips over the beginning, and starts when the Lord Jesus was an adult.)

I'm being guided in understanding and presenting the gospel truth by some old statements carefully composed by Christians of past centuries.

(The religion we are practicing in this church today is not anything new, nor is it anything original with us. By God's grace we are following the understanding of the bible laid down by many generations of Christians before us. The doctrine of the Son of God in which I plan to instruct the church these five weeks is what the church has believed the world over all the way back to when our Lord Jesus Christ's apostles began to preach the gospel. In this church of Jesus Christ, and others like it, we might on the same Lord's Day sing "In Christ Alone" written by Getty and Townsend in 2001, and "A Hymn of Glory" written by Bede, who was born in 673. We care about what goes on in theological discussions in our own generation, but we are more interested in the way biblical truth was insisted on in the council of Nicea 325.)

So, as I began to say, I'm being guided in understanding and presenting the gospel truth by some old statements carefully composed by Christians of past centuries.

- The Nicene Creed, A.D. 325
- The definition from the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451
- The Westminster Larger Catechism, 1647
- The Westminster Shorter Catechism, 1647, as corrected by the early Baptists and called The Baptist Catechism or Keach's Catechism
- The Second London Baptist Confession, published in 1677, affirmed publicly in 1689, and adopted by this church as its constitution when the church was started.
  - being essentially the same confession as the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of 1646, but corrected in part by the Congregationalists in the 1658 Savoy Declaration and corrected fully by the Baptists in the 1677
  - being the same confession republished as the Philadelphia Confession of 1741 and the Charleston Confession of 1821

If you would like to follow in our 1689 Confession, using your phone or your copy of it, or the copy in the back of the Trinity Hymnal, I'll be quoting primarily from Chapter 8 paragraph 2, also from Chapter 2, paragraph 3. If the hymnal you're looking in is not the Baptist Edition, you'll be seeing the Westminster Confession, but the sections on the Son of God are essentially the same.

So, let us consider together our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

#### TEXT

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

1689 Confession, Chapter 8, Paragraph 2

The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things he hath made . . .

## BODY

- I. The Son of God Is the Word of God
  - A. In the beginning was the Word
  - B. Glancing down a little farther in the passage, you see that the Word being spoken of is none other than the only-begotten Son of God the Father
  - C. We knew from Genesis 1 that the universe was created by the *word* of God
    1. God *said*, “Let the earth bring forth grass . . .”
    2. God *said*, “Let the waters abound with living creatures . . .”
  - D. Now we have that explained to us more fully than it was in Genesis. Here we learn that when the Genesis account records that the universe was created by the word of God, it was not merely the speech of God, but a person, who is the Word of God.
  - E. APPLICATION
    1. There are many words out there in the world, competing with each other for our attention.
      - a) the words of celebrities, like movie stars, musicians, or athletes
      - b) the words of politicians
      - c) the words of our friends and families
      - d) the words of advertisers
      - e) the words of news reporters or commentators
    2. Far too often we are eager for the word of all these, but not much interested in the Word of God; yet the Word of God is vastly superior to all other words
    3. So, seek the Word of God over the word of any other. Know the Word of God. Be ruled by the Word of God. Seek your peace with God in the Word of God.

The Son of God is the Word of God; and

- II. The Son of God Is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity (1689.8.2)
  - A. God is one God, whose being is in three persons
    1. as to person, God is three persons - the Word was with God
    2. as to essence or being or nature, God is one God - the Word was God
  - B. 1689.2.3 [In the one true God] there are three persons or subsistences
    1. God tells us right up front that there is just one God: “In the beginning God . . .”; He then repeatedly and emphatically teaches us that truth, as when He said through Moses: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one!” Here in John 1 the bible speaks not of “the gods” or “one of the gods,” but simply of “God.”
    2. Yet the one true God’s being is in three persons; thus the word “Trinity” from “Tri” and “Unity,” three persons in the one God; here in John you see these truths stated very briefly

- a) the Word was God - there is just one God, not two or three or more
  - b) the Word was with God - God's being is in more than one person
- 3. the three persons of God are
  - a) the Father
  - b) the Word or Son
  - c) the Holy Spirit
- 4. the relationship among the three persons is
  - a) the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son
  - b) the Word or Son is eternally begotten of the Father
    - (1) John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.
  - c) the Father is neither begotten of any or proceeding from any
- 5. this is wonderful to us, since no other being is more than one person
  - a) no angel or demon
  - b) not Satan, the devil
  - c) no human being
- 6. this is wonderful to us, since we cannot know it by natural revelation, but only by special revelation
  - a) you can tell there is one and only one God without knowing what the bible says
  - b) but you cannot tell that God is a Trinity of three person in one God without knowing it from the bible
- C. 1689.2.3 The three persons in God are of one substance, power, and eternity
- D. 1689.2.3 Each has the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided
- E. 1689.2.3 All three persons in God are infinite, all without beginning; therefore not three gods but one God in three persons
- F. 1689.2.3 The three persons of God cannot be divided or separated in nature and being; but in describing God the three persons can be distinguished
  - 1. APPLICATION: Take care not to think that at any time God the Father and God the Son were separated, or could be separated.
- G. 1689.2.3 This doctrine of God the Trinity forms the foundation for all our communion with God, and all our comfort in depending on Him
  - 1. If God were only one person, whom could He send into the world to reconcile sinners to Himself? There would have been no one suitable to send!
  - 2. But God being three persons, God the Father sent the Son into the world to save sinners, to die for our sins on the cross, to be buried, and to rise again, to be the one through whom sinful men can be reconciled to holy God
  - 3. God being three persons, the Son of God, having done His work here, and having returned to heaven, to the right hand of God the Father, continues His work here on earth by sending His Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of

poor sinners, working in us saving faith in the Son and repentance unto life.

4. Is the work of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners acceptable to God the Father? Yes, He is the only-begotten, beloved Son of God!
5. Is, then, the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of sinners effectual for their salvation? Yes, He is the very Spirit of God!

#### H. APPLICATION

1. So think of the Son of God not as something lower than God; think of Him as He truly is---as the second person in the Trinity.
2. Think of God as one being in three persons. Worship Him as such.
3. Seek the sweet communion that there is for sinful human beings with holy God by the operations of all three persons in the Godhead.

The Son of God is the Word of God;

The Son of God is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity; and

### III. The Son of God Is True and Eternal God (Old-Fashioned Language: *Very* and Eternal God)

- A. "Him who made the world" is the primary definition God has given us, by which we are to understand who He is; Q: Who is God? A: He is the one who made all things.
  1. Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
  2. Psalms 96:5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens.
  3. Acts 17:24-25 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. (25) Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.
  4. Revelation 4:9-11 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (10) the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: (11) "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."
    - a) Why is the Lord worthy to receive the worship of the creatures? It is because He created all things!
- B. Therefore, the surest way to communicate to us that the Son of God, the Word of God, is true God, or very God, is to reveal to us that He is equal to the one who made the world
  1. that is the very thing testified to here, John 1:3
  2. the Son of God, the Word of God, is of once substance and equal with Him who made the world

- C. Even as the bible tells us that the Word of God is true God, or very God, it tells us in the same breath that He is eternal God
1. that could go without saying, because to say “eternal God” is to use part of the definition as a description; but all of the heresies, the false teachings that have caused controversy in the churches over the centuries, have shown that although it could go without saying, we need to go ahead and say it: The Word of God has no beginning, but is eternal God
  2. hear the first words in the bible, Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God
  3. now compare that with the first words in the Gospel of John, which is intentionally modeled after Genesis 1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God
  4. notice the place of the Word of God in the description: He is there before creation
    - a) not: In the beginning God created the Word, then the heavens and the earth
    - b) instead: In the beginning was the Word
  5. in the beginning, the Word of God already was with God, and already was God

D. APPLICATION

1. Let nothing that has ever been told to you overrule the truth that the Son of God is very, true, eternal God. Let this truth erase and replace anything else you have heard to the contrary.
2. Let nothing that ever might be told to you overrule the truth that the Son of God is very, true, eternal God.
3. Take care you do not have too low a view of the Son of God.
4. Do not let the uniqueness of the Son of God make you think that what the bible teaches you of his uniqueness cannot be true.
5. Now worship the Son of God in spirit and in truth.

## CONCLUSION

The Son of God is the Word of God  
The Son of God is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity  
The Son of God Is True and Eternal God

### Nicene Creed

[We believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
begotten from the Father before all ages,  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made;  
of the same essence as the Father.  
Through him all things were made.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
(2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.



2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

1689 Confession, Chapter 8, Paragraph 2

The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things he hath made . . .

1689 Confession, Chapter 2, Paragraph 3

In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.

Definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451)

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

The fact that he is called, "Son of God" shows that when talking about God the Father and God the Son, the Father is often referred to simply as "God."

If begotten of God, then he must be God.

Dickson:

The Greek word is *hypostasis*, substance or person, whereby is understood, the person of the Father as distinct from the Son, and subsisting of himself, and in himself, and is, as the original of the person of the Son, by an eternal and ineffable [Webster: that cannot be expressed in words] generation.

It is evident also, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are really distinct from one another, and are three persons. They are indeed, in respect of their essence, which is indivisibly communicable to them, one and the same God; but considered personally, they differ really . . . Neither the Father nor the Spirit were incarnate, but the Son, who died, and was buried, which cannot be said of none but of a person: it cannot be said that the Father died, or that the Spirit died.

The Son, as was said, is called the express image of the Father's person, which evidently shews, that the Father, considered as distinct from the Son, is a person, and subsists: If then thus it be, must not the Son, as distinct from the Father, and so lively and expressly representing his person, be a person also, having this from the Father? The same must be true likewise of the Holy Ghost, who is God equal with both, yet different from both; for he who proceedeth from the Father, and from the Son, must differ from the Father, and from the Son; as he who is begotten, must be distinct from him that begat him.

Christ . . . distinguished from the person of the Father, by whom the Father executes his operations, and shews his properties, even as the sun by its light doth shine.

Hebrews 1:1-3 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (2) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; (3) who being the brightness of His glory and the **express image [G5481 charakter]** of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Colossians 1:15-17 He is the **image [G1504 eikon]** of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (16) For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. (17) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Matthew 3:16-17 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. (17) And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Romans 8:1-3 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

Hebrews 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

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

Matthew 1:22-23 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: (23) "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which is translated, "God with us."

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

John 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Prelude: Trinity xv "Gloria Patri" (the top one on the page)  
Camille - Piano  
Noah - Trumpet - sheet music attached  
Anna - Clarinet - sheet music attached

Trinity xvi "Doxology" (the top one on the page)  
Camille - Piano  
Noah - Trumpet - sheet music attached  
Anna - Clarinet - sheet music attached

Trinity 3 "From All That Dwell Below the Skies"  
(this is the same tune as prelude last week)  
Camille - Piano - transpose down one step  
Noah - Trumpet  
Anna - Clarinet

Trinity 83 "We Praise Thee, O God"  
Camille - Piano  
Noah - Trumpet - sheet music attached  
Anna - Sing

Grace 138 "Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It"  
Camille - Sing  
Noah - Trumpet  
Anna - Piano - transpose down one step

Grace 158 "The Lily of the Valley"  
Camille - Flute  
Noah - Sing  
Anna - Piano