

Sermon Notes

Acts Series #49

Sermon Title: The Unknown God Made Known #4

Speaker: Pastor Dan Cleghorn

Passage: Acts 17:27-32

Date: August 13, 2017

- I. Does Idolatry Stir You to Action? – Acts 17:16–17
- II. Are You Ready to Give an Answer? – Acts 17:18–23
- III. How Well Do You Know God?
 - A. God is the Creator – Acts 17:22–24
 - B. God is Lord – Acts 17:24
 - C. God is Omnipresent – Acts 17:24
 - D. God is Spirit – Acts 17:25
 - E. God is Omnipotent – Acts 17:25
 - F. God Provides – Acts 17:25
 - G. God is the God of All – Acts 17:26
 - H. God is Sovereign – Acts 17:26

How do you define the Trinity? God is one in being and in essence, but He has manifested Himself in three personal distinctions: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Westminster Shorter Catechism: How many persons are there in the Godhead? There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (1 John 5:7, Matt. 28:19) (The Westminster Shorter Catechism: With Scripture Proofs, 3rd edition. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996).

Defender Study Bible note - Henry Morris: This remarkable structure of God, like His eternal power, is clearly reflected in His physical creation, which could almost be said to be a model of the Godhead. That is, the created universe is actually a tri-universe of space, matter and time, with each permeating and representing the whole.

However, the universe is not partly composed of space, partly of matter, partly of time (like, for example, the three sides of a triangle). A trinity is not a trio or a triad, but a tri-unity, with each part comprising the whole, yet all three required to make the whole. Thus the universe is all space, all time, and all matter (including energy as a form of matter); in fact, scientists speak of it as a space-matter-time continuum. Furthermore, note the parallels between the tri-universe and the divine Trinity in terms of the logical order of the three components. Space (like the Father) is the invisible, omnipresent background of everything. Matter (like the Son) reveals the universe (like the Godhead) in visible, understandable form. Time (like the Spirit) is the entity by which the universe (like the Godhead) becomes applicable and understandable in events and experience. But that is not all. Space is a tri-unity comprised of three dimensions, with each dimension permeating all space. The reality of any portion of space is obtained by multiplying the three dimensions together (the "mathematics of the Trinity" is not $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$, but rather $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$). Further, space is identified in one dimension, seen in the second dimension, experienced in the third dimension. Similarly, time is future, present and past. The future is the unseen source of time, manifest moment-by-moment in the present, experienced and understood in the past. Finally, matter is unseen, omnipresent energy, manifesting itself in various forms of measurable motion, then experienced in corresponding phenomena. For example, light energy generates light waves which are experienced in the seeing of light. Sound energy generates sound waves which we experience when we hear sound.

Thus the physical universe is a great "Trinity of trinities," with the inner relationships of each element beautifully modeling the relationships of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All of this does not prove that God is a Trinity, but it certainly is a remarkable fact. It is an amazing effect that can be explained on the assumption that God is a triune God, and has made His creation to reflect Himself, but it is very hard to explain any other way. (The Defender's Study Bible, (Austin, TX: WORDsearch, 2012), WORDsearch CROSS e-book)

I. God is a Triunity – Acts 17:29

Charles Ryrie - Any concept of the Trinity must be carefully balanced, for it must maintain on the one side the unity of God, and on the other, the distinctness and equality of the Persons. That is why the word trinity only tells half of the doctrine—the "threeness" part and not the unity. Perhaps the word triunity is better since it contains both ideas—the "tri" (the threeness) and the "unity" (the oneness). (Charles Ryrie, A Survey of Bible Doctrine, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 30.)

1. Scripture clearly teaches that God is one. – Isaiah 46:9; Mark 12:29–32; James 2:19

2. Scripture clearly teaches that God is plural. – Deuteronomy 6:4; Genesis 1:26; 3:22

God = Elohim = plural

On the word *Elohim*, Simeon Ben Joachi says; “Come and see the mystery of the word Elohim: there are *three degrees*, and each degree is by itself *alone*, and yet they are all *one*, and *joined together* in *one*, and are not *divided* from each other” (Zohar. Lev. Sect. 16. Col 116). (Jerome H. Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Thomas Nelson, 1992), 204.)

3. Scripture clearly teaches three distinctions of the one God. – Matthew 3:16–17; 28:19; John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 5:7

Defenders Study Bible - This verse...obviously carries the clearest and most explicit statement of the doctrine of the Trinity to be found in the Bible. However, it only is found in manuscripts of the Latin Bible, and in four Greek manuscripts, so is believed by many Biblical scholars to have been a pious addition or marginal annotation by some unknown ancient copyist. The doctrine of the Trinity does not depend on this verse, of course, as it is implied in many other Scriptures (e.g., Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). On the other hand, since it does fit perfectly in the context, it also seems that this verse could well have been in John's original autograph, and then been expunged from most of the accessible manuscripts at the height of the Arian controversy in the fourth century. To eliminate this verse would leave 1 John 5:8 as a largely redundant repetition of 1 John 5:6, whereas the continuity and sense are beautifully structured and sequenced if it is included. It would seem much more likely for Origen or Arius, both of whom rejected the doctrines of the Trinity and Biblical inerrancy, or one of their followers in the third or fourth centuries, to boldly excise the offending verse, than for some godly copyist to insert it. One who believed in the Trinity would surely have held the Scriptures in too much esteem to presume to amend them on his own initiative. Despite the weight of scholarly opinion to the contrary, the internal evidence, as well as the testimony of the Latin manuscripts and such later authorities as Erasmus and the Reformers, as well as many great commentators since, such as John Wesley and Matthew Henry, strongly argues that (this passage) was actually written by John in his epistle and should still be regarded as part of the true text. (*The Defender's Study Bible*, (Austin, TX: WORDsearch, 2012), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Notes".)

J. God Can Be Found – Acts 17:27–28

seek = To seek God means to turn to Him, to strive humbly and sincerely to follow and obey Him (Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

IV. Are You Ready to Repent?

A. If You Repent, God Will Save – Acts 17:29–30

B. If You Don't Repent, God Will Judge – Acts 17:31

V. How Will You Respond to God? – Acts 17:32