

The Only True God

by Paul Bramsen

The sermon emphasizes the oneness of God as revealed in Scripture, the nature of the Trinity, and the significance of Christ's Incarnation for salvation.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:39, Matthew 28:18, Luke 1:28, John 3:16, John 10:27

Topics: "Godhead", "Incarnation"

Description

Paul Bramsen preaches about the fundamental truth of the Bible that there is only one God, as testified in both the Old and New Testaments. The sermon delves into the oneness of God, explaining that His oneness differs from man's oneness, and explores the nature of the Godhead as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being one God. The sermon also discusses the Incarnation of Christ, emphasizing how Christ, being both God and Man, became the perfect Redeemer through His death on the cross for the salvation of mankind.

Transcript

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

The Holy Bible, which is the inspired Word of God that never has been nor ever will be changed, testifies that there is only one God. It is a well-known fact that the Bible is the oldest book in existence. Thus, if any other book is found that testifies that God is one, the Bible has preceded it in asserting this fact. The following are some quotations from the Bible concerning the fact that God is one.

From the Old Testament:

"Know therefore this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above, and on the earth beneath: there is no other." (Deuteronomy 4:39 NKJV)

"I am the LORD, and there is no other, there is no God beside Me." (Isaiah 45:5)

"Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:10)

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:4,5)

From the New Testament:

"It is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" (Matthew 4:10)

"There is one God; and there is no other but He." (Mark 12:32)

"You believe that there is one God; you do well." (James 2:19)

"Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one." (Galatians 3:20)

"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men." (1 Timothy 2:5)

THE MEANING OF GOD'S ONENESS

It is obvious that God's oneness differs from man's oneness. Man's oneness makes him limited. Thus it is not possible for one man to be in two places at the same time. But God can be on His throne in heaven and, at the same time, be here on this earth. This is neither impossible nor difficult for God. And we do not mean that part of Him is in heaven while the other part is on the earth. We mean that God, in all His glory, can be on His throne in heaven and at the same time be here on this earth.

This is exactly what happened when Christ came to this earth. The Bible states clearly that in Christ "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). This is what we call the Incarnation. We have heard of great men and kings who wore poor people's clothes and went to visit the poor in their homes without taking servants with them in order not to frighten the poor, and in order to see their needs and to help them. We admire such great men, and praise them for their humility and nobility. The greater the person, the greater is his nobility in humbling himself.

But who is the greatest of all? Is it not God Almighty? And who is the most noble? Is it not He who created them all? To sum up then, we assert, and God unequivocally declares, that "God is one!" But His oneness is not the same as man's oneness, because God is not limited. And the human mind cannot fathom the depth of what deity is. It therefore suits man to stand in awe when he considers what God revealed about Himself.

WHAT GOD REVEALED

Man cannot truly know about God except through divine revelation. It is not possible for the finite human mind to understand the nature of the infinite God. Therefore, it was necessary that God reveal Himself to us through divinely inspired writings, and that He protect and guard them from any attempt to change even one word or one letter. It is certain that God's Word abides forever, as the prophet had said long ago: "Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). And the New Testament declares that "The word of God ... lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23).

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

Before Christ ascended to heaven, He commanded His disciples saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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" (Matthew 28:18,19). Notice that He did not say to them, "in the names of the Father and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He said, "in the name" because it is one name--the glorious name of the one and only true and living God.

But someone might object and say, "How can that be? How can three be one?" This objection rises from the great error in trying to apply the rules of physics and mathematics to the Godhead. Herein lies the

mistake and the cause of the perplexity. The Almighty God, who created nature and imposed on it rules of mathematics and other natural laws, is Himself not under such laws. We cannot, and should not, apply the laws of created material to spiritual issues.

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT: ONE GOD

Clearly then, the Holy Bible teaches us that there is only one God. Now let's consider how that agrees with the mention of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in seven places in the Bible.

"Baptizing them in the name (not names) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). It is one name of one God as we have seen.

Of true believers, who have received Christ in their hearts and thus were born again by a new spiritual birth. Christ said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to me is greater than all, and no man is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and My Father are one" (John 10:27-30).

"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long and yet you have not known Me, Philip? ... He who has seen Me has seen the Father ... I am in the Father, and the Father in Me ... the Father who dwells in Me does the works'" (John 14:8-10).

"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His"--meaning, he does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9). Thus the Holy Spirit of God is also called the Spirit of Christ because of the oneness of God.

"But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit ... which things we also speak ... which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Corinthians 2:9-13). Thus the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the Spirit of God repeatedly through the Word of God.

"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ... you have not lied unto men but unto God'" (Acts 5:3,4). Thus we see that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God because the Holy Spirit is God and is one with the Father and Son.

Jesus said, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28). Thus we see that the Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and He is the Spirit of Christ. There are also verses that begin with the statement, "Thus says the Lord" which are quoted elsewhere with "Thus says the Holy Spirit."

We see therefore that the Bible teaches us that God is one, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the one and only true and living God. The difficulty is in the limitation of the human mind, and the wrong attempt to analyze God in the same way that we analyze matter--according to the laws of physics, chemistry and other sciences. These laws apply to matter, but should not and cannot be applied to God.

WHAT "FATHER AND SON" MEANS

No intelligent person would ever think that God took a wife or a mistress. Such a thought would be a terrible blasphemy against God. Every Christian abhors such a thought, for God is not a man like us. The

Bible says, "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). In other words, their worship should not be mere rituals and ordinances related to the flesh, or to places and positions, as the context of John 4:19-26 clearly shows.

The sonship of Christ is a spiritual relationship, and not a physical nor procreational one. It denotes oneness in nature and essence. It must be noticed that it was not Christians who called Christ the Son of God, but it was God Himself who called Jesus His Son:

When the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to the Virgin Mary, he said to her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest." And he also 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" (Luke 1:28-35).

When Christ was baptized by John the Baptist (known by most Arabs as Yahia Ibn Zakarea), the heavens were opened and a voice came from heaven saying, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22; Mark 1:11; Matthew 3:17).

About the above incident, John the Baptist said, "I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

When Christ took three of His disciples to a high mountain, two prophets, Moses and Elijah, appeared to them: "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!' And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise and do not be afraid'" (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35).

There are many other verses in the Bible which declare that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, a sonship that denotes a divine relationship which is above human understanding. This is why the Bible says, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). Thus we see that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as the triune God, are all one God. This is a divine truth, and he who denies it makes God a liar. But he who believes it finds in it an eternal joy and blessing, as we will now see.

THE TRIUNE GOD AND MAN'S SALVATION

It is obvious that as far as man is concerned, the most important thing is for him to receive forgiveness of sins, so that he will go to heaven and not be cast into hell. God said of Himself, that He is "a just God and a Savior" (Isaiah 45:21). But how can God be just--that is, holy and righteous and one who must punish sin--and at the same time be a Savior who can deliver man from his sins and their punishment? In other words, how can He be perfectly just, and at the same time perfectly merciful?

Here the human mind is helpless. It does not have an answer. Will God forgive me and thus be merciful and compassionate, or will He punish me and be just but not merciful? It is impossible for men and angels together to find a solution to this dilemma. But God has the answer, and in His answer we see His wisdom and power. We see His love and perfect mercy as well as His perfect justice and holiness.

Human solutions to this question are all defective and lead to man's damnation, because sin is a very serious matter in God's sight. Sin is an insult to God because it is disobedience to Him. If you insult an

ordinary person, you may be lightly punished. But if you insult a king or a president, your punishment is much more serious. How much worse will it be if you disobey God, whether by thought or word or deed? The idea that God will put the good deeds on one side of the scale, and the evil deeds on the other side to determine which is greater is totally wrong. First of all, it is wrong because good deeds are required of man, and they are not a favor to God. Good deeds do not erase offenses, neither in human laws nor in God's laws. Secondly, such an idea, if true, would require that we would know the weight of sin in the sight of God. We would need to know how much a lie weighs, how much each evil thought weighs, how much pride weighs, and finally how much do all our innumerable sins weigh. He who trusts in his good deeds to erase or outweigh his sins will only discover at the end that he is lost forever. What then is the solution to this problem, and how can God be "a just God and a Savior" at the same time? The answer is in the Incarnation of Christ.

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

We saw that the Holy Bible testifies that Christ is the Son of God, and we explained that this sonship is not a physical sonship, nor a result of procreation, because God is a Spirit. It is a spiritual and divine relationship that surpasses human understanding. But we must remember also that Christ became a perfect man, and said of Himself, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Thus we see that Christ came not merely to teach and do miracles, though He certainly did both. He came mainly to redeem us by dying on our behalf. This required that He become a Man, so that He could die for us. This is the reason for the Incarnation of Christ.

There are two reasons why no one else could have redeemed us. First, the redeemer has to be someone who never sinned, otherwise he has to bear his own punishment only. Christ is the only one who never sinned. All the true prophets were protected from making mistakes in religious teachings and prophecies, but not in their own personal lives. They all sinned. The prophet David said: "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight" (Psalm 51:3,4). But of Christ, the Holy Bible declares that He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). It also says that He "committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). Then it says that He "knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21), and that "He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5). He is the only Redeemer; all others needed to be redeemed.

Secondly, Christ is not a mere prophet or apostle. He is "God manifest in the flesh"--both God and man. He is the Son of God, and the Son of Man. The value of His death therefore is unlimited. By His death He can redeem everyone that believes in Him: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:2). Christ is both God and Man. And of course, God cannot die. The One who died is the perfect Man, Jesus Christ, who pleased God in everything, and who said that He came "to give His life a ransom for many."

The death of Christ on our behalf is a definite fact that has at least four infallible proofs. First of all, the prophets spoke of it hundreds of years before Christ came. These prophecies are still in the Old Testament, which is the holy book of the Jews. They neither did nor could remove one word from it. Secondly, Christ told His disciples many times before His death, that the Jews will kill Him and that He will rise on the third day. Thirdly, it was recorded for us by eyewitnesses. Finally, the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, makes it clear that Christ's death is the only way for man's salvation.

Now we come to the role of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in man's salvation. The Bible says that "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (Jesus Christ, to die for us) that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Thus we see that the Father loves man and wants his salvation, and the Son willingly paid the price to attain that salvation. The Holy Spirit awakens man's conscience and convicts him of his sins (John 16:7-8), so that he will receive Christ as Savior. Thus God saves man through His love, but not at the expense of His holiness and justice. There is no salvation except that which is offered by God--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--the only true and living God.

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