

TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Source of Our Salvation (Part 9)

Satisfaction in the Trinity

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:2 and Selected Scriptures

THEME: The Doctrine of the Trinity from 1 Peter 1:2

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Read Passage

Time Magazine Cover Story from Jan 2005

About a wk. ago 1 Time Mag. had a cover story, “25 Most Infl. Evang. in Amer.” Compiled w/help of preachers/politicians/scholars/activists, t/list chronicles a/who’s who of those who are said to be having t/greatest impact on Evang. CH today. If that’s true, it only makes me more concerned about t/state of t/Amer. Evang. CH today. Only about 7 names on t/list of 25 were men that we would consider truly committed to t/found. truths that we hold dear // those truths that I outlined during t/first part of last week’s message. On t/list were 2 of t/foremost names in t/Seeker-CH movt. which has done much to water down t/Gospel.

In fact, Paul talked about this in 1 Cor. 1:17 when he said that his mission was to proclaim t/Gospel, not w/cleverness of speech, so that t/cross of X should not be made void.

I found it interesting that there were 2 Roman Catholics on t/list—esp. interesting in light of t/fact that it was supposed to be t/top 25 Evang.

One woman preacher, Joyce Meyer, who does more motivational speaking than preaching as far as I’m concerned (I’ve watched her out of curiosity sev. times & I’ve never heard her say much of anything). Yet, as Time describes her, she’s a traveling road show offering a gospel of prosperity that rewards tithers w/material blessings. According to t/St. Louis Dispatch, Mrs. Meyer owns a 2 million dollar home and a 10 million dollar jet. So much for flying first class. (I always go coach).

Tim LaHaye was there, who has done much to deceive millions into

thinking that his million seller books are fact, rather than fiction, and who has joined w/Dave Hunt in a cesspool of ignorance, claiming that t/theology of Calvinism (which actually goes back to Augustine & NT) is libel against God's character.

Brian McLaren was on the list. McLaren is a pastor in Maryland and wrote the book "A New Kind of Christian" (which is indeed new, new to t/Bible). McLaren is taking t/seeker movt. a step further down t/slippery slope in seeking to water down t/truth even more. He is touted as a man who is trying to find a way to unite conservatives and liberals in t/CH together in spite of their theol. differences. I don't need to say any more about McLaren, other than to tell you that when asked at a conference last spring what he thought about gay marriage, he replied, "You know what, the thing that breaks my hear is that there's no way I can answer it without hurting someone on either side."

Mr. McLaren, maybe you should be more concerned that your insipid answer grieves t/Holy Spirit & misrepresents t/truth.

Last of all, a man whose name may be fam. to you, T.D. Jakes who leads t/35000 member mega-CH in Dallas, The Potter's House. And Mr. Jakes just happens to be part of t/heretical health-wealth-prosperity movt. (he walks t/walk as well as talks t/talk - been well documented that he is quite wealthy, lives in a 1.7 million dollar home & drives very expensive cars). But even more concerning to me, & this falls right in line w/our study, is that he denies t/biblical and historic doctrine of t/Trinity. Just in case you don't trust my theol. expertise on this point, listen to theologian Gordon Lewis of Denver Seminary who, after reviewing Mr. Jakes doctrinal position writes==>

[His statement] on God revives Sabellian Modalism. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are merely three manifestations of one God in history, three different hats he wears." [cited in Christian Research Journal, Vol. 22, No. 2]

So maybe Time ought to revise t/title of their article to, "What's Wrong w/The American Church Today." Or, more appropriately, from "25 Most Infl. Evang. in Amer" to "The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly."

Main idea ==>

Our Hope is Found in the Electing Grace of the Father, the Sanctifying Grace of the Spirit, and the Saving Grace of the Son.

This passage is one that reflects t/triunity of God. It a passage where we see all 3 members of t/Godhead actively involved in a creative work - that is, making us new creations in JC.

Father Elects; Spirit Sanctifies; Son Saves. We've said that this is a central aspect of our hope as believers==>

I. Hope in The Sovereign Source of Our Salvation

Tru Xns are only ppl. in world who have real hope. BTIM - we have a hope that is grounded in truth & therefore a hope that will not disappoint

Our Hope is in a Sovereign (God) who is the Source of our Salvation. This is the work of the 3 persons of the Trinity - We have been==>

A. Selected by the Father (1:2a)

We have been (in the past) "chosen"

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

It is t/Father who chooses us to be saved from out from t/entirety of t/lost. He chose us before we ever chose Him.

B. Sanctified by the Spirit (1:2b)

1. ἁγιασμος - basically means to be set apart as holy

In that sense, we have been set apart by God, in his eternal plan, to be holy unto Him. It's the work of the 3rd person of the Trinity - God the Holy Spirit - to draw us to X. It's what we call "Effectual Calling."

Thirdly we see t/work of the 2nd person of the Trinity==>

C. Saved for Service by the Son (1:2c)

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father with the sanctification of the Spirit for obedience (saving faith) to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with his blood.

Progression or order to t/completion of our salvation: Father Elects;

Spirit Sanctifies; Son Saves. Entirety of the Trinity was at work w/express purpose of securing your salvation.

D. Parenthesis: Satisfaction in the Trinity

1. What do we mean by the “Trinity?”

Word “Trinity” from Latin *trinitas* meaning “threeness” [Packer, 40].

2. Main idea for what we will be studying together on the Trinity of God (three-fold):

If our Hope is Found in the Triune God then we must know and love Him in His Triunity.

If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must know about His Triunity.

If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must believe in His Triunity.

In short - True believers will love & embrace the Triune God in all His fulness This is a nonnegotiable issue. To know t/God of the Bible is to know a Triune God. To deny a Triune God is to deny t/God of the Bible.

3. Simple Definition of the Trinity:

Not the best definition, but it’s short and the easiest to learn==>
“God is One as to Essence, Three as to Person.”

Encompassing the One Being/Essence of God there are 3 co-eternal, co-equal persons: F/S/HS. Yet, ontologically, there is 1 God.

This definition encompasses ==>

4. Three Essential Elements of the Triunity of God

Three necessary truths as it relates to God in His Triunity. Could call them “three pillars of the faith” If you take away any one or more of t/three t/entire equation of who God is will fall to the ground.

a. Pillar #1 God is one as to Essence

God is One in Unity. By this we affirm that there is only one God. We’re not bitheists (2 gods) // tritheists (3 gods) // polytheists (many

gods). We are monotheists (one God).

God is one undivided essence. The one undivided essence subsists in three forms or persons simultaneously and eternally. This, again, is possible only because we are talking about God, who is spirit (not matter) and infinite (not finite). [Shedd, 234]

Could say that God's oneness is ==>

(1) A Unity in Plurality

He can simultaneously exist in more than 1 mode at a time. He is one in essence, but three in personness. "Unity in trinality & trinality in unity."

The clue to the right construction of the doctrine of the Trinity lies in the accurate distinction and definition of essence and person. The doctrine is logically consistent because it affirms that God is one in another sense than he is three and that he is three in another sense than he is one." [Shedd, 230]

That is our second essential Pillar==>

b. Pillar #2 - God is Three as to Person

Law of non-contradiction says that two identical things cannot differ in the same way at the same time in the same place. Not saying that God is one god and yet three gods // one essence and three essence // one person and three persons.

What we are saying is that in one respect, God is One (essence), in another respect, God is three (person). Non-contradictory. It's only possible because we are talking about a spiritual eternal omnipotent God, not something that is temporal or physical. Not limited to space-time, or to our understanding of physics.

Even the fact that God can indwell so many person at once and yet be one God shows that we are talking about something spiritually possible.

Early CH Father Athanasius (3rd c.), Against the Arians, 4.10==>

"We assert the unity of the Godhead as expressly and strenuously ast he

distinction and diversity of the person. We believe the Father and the Son to be two, perfectly distinct from one another in their relative and personal characters; but withal we believe these two to be one God, one infinite essence or nature, the Son or Word begotten of the Father, united with him and inseparable from him in essence. And that illustration which we have so often made use of before, serves very well to explain our meaning, though by no means to explain the thing itself. Fire and light are truly distinct. The one is a body differently modified from the other, as is evident from their acting differently upon us. And yet, they are one as to substance and general properties. For light is the issue of fire and cannot subsist separate from it.”

b. Pillar #2 - God is Three as to Person

They each have personality (intellect, emotion, will). They each relate to the other on a me-you-he basis.

The Father is a Person (person as opposed to an impersonal force, not a person like a man. He has intellect, emotion, will); Same thing with Son: The Son is a Person (intellect/emotion/will); Same thing w/H.S.

In theology we readily admit that although it is lacking, word “person” is the best that we have in the English language. It still falls short because when we think of a “person” we think of someone with a bodily existence. We can’t think in terms of three persons who make up one essential being. Keep in mind, we are talking about God who is an eternal, omnipotent, infinite, omnipresent Spirit. Person implies a distinction of awareness & personality. Each person has an “I, you, he” awareness. The Son knows he is not the Father (John 17:5); the Father knows He is not the Son (Heb. 1:5). The Spirit knows that He is neither the Father, nor the Son (Acts 13:2).

Quote from J.I. Packer (who was in t/list of top 25 evang.)==>

“The basic assertion of this doctrine is that the unity of the one God is complex. The three personal subsistences’ (as they are called) are coequal and coeternal centers of self-awareness, each being ‘I’ in relation to two who are ‘you’ and each partaking of the full divine essence . . . along with the other two. They are not three roles played by one person (that is *modalism*), nor are they three gods in a cluster (that is *tritheism*); the one God (‘he’) is also and

equally, 'they,' and 'they' are always together and always cooperating, with the Father initiating, the Son complying, and the Spirit executing the will of both, which is his will also." [Packer, 42]

c. Pillar #3 - Each Person is Fully God

Deity of t/Father, Son, & H.S. is fully in ea. person simult. & eternally. Ea. is fully, completely, eternally God. (Giana, "Jesus is God").

Wife w/my bad jokes: "need new material" - here's new material==>

5. The Three Persons of the Godhead Work in Unity

(Restate...). No division, no secrets, no disunity. 3 distinct persons in t/Godhead, but distinct Doesn't Mean Separate. They work in unity. Each is fully and completely in the other (Father in t/Son, Son in t/Father, Spirit in F&S).

You can't take one away & still have God. Not a three slice pie; not each 1/3 of God. The Father is 100% God; Son // HS //

Distinction in person doesn't mean independence. The persons are not independent from each other. Aspects of what the father does the son does, Spirit, etc. You cannot take a person away and have any of God left and each of the persons is fully God. We're talking about a distinction of what makes God, God in his essence, or mode of being. There's a distinction, but never a separation. Each of t/members of t/Trinity are in one another, yet they are distinct persons. Distinction, but never any division.

a. Brief List

(1) Work of creation

Father (Psa. 102:25; Gen. 1:1); Son (Col. 1:16; John 1:3); Spirit (Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4)

(2) Baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3

(3) Atonement or Salvation

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

(4) Resurrection of Christ

Father in Acts 2:32; Son in Jn. 10:17-18; Spirit in Rom. 1:4

(5) Wonderful Trinitarian Outline in Ephesians 1

All three work together in unity in the electing, saving and sanctifying of individual believers in JC. Father (vv. 3-6); Son (6-12); Spirit (13-14)

(6) Salvation as a work of all 3 (illustrated in our passage)

(7) Giving of Scripture is the work of all three

Word of the Father given through the Son by inspiration of the Spirit.

b. Distinct Properties

There are certain things that are unique to each person of the Trinity. We call these noncommunicable “properties.” Such as t/fact that t/Son is begotten of the Father and the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son.

Fatherhood is t/Father’s alone; Sonship is true of t/Son alone. procession is true of t/HS alone. Yet they equally share in t/Divine essence

There are other things that are normally attributed to one person & not t/others, such as Creation as normally ascribed to t/Father, Redemption normally ascribed to t/Son, sanctification is normally ascribed to t/HS.

All things are out of (ἐκ) the Father (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 2:8, 3:14-15) through (διὰ) the Son (John 1:3; Rom. 1:5; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 1:5, 2:18; Heb. 1:12) and by (ἐν) the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 2:18, 22; 3:5). The Father is the author, or source of all things. The Son brings them to pass and the Spirit makes them known and applies them. Yet, the persons never work apart from one another because it is impossible for

them to do so.

(1) Yet there is another side to the coin

By virtue of the common essence, what one divine person performs each may be said to perform (the principle of *perichoresis* or *coinherence*).

T/Son creates (1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16) & the Spirit creates (Job. 33:4; Psa. 33:6); t/Father redeems (2 Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 2:4-5,8) & t/Spirit redeems (Rom. 8:4; Titus 3:5); & t/Father sanctifies (Eph. 1:3-4; 1 Thess. 5:23) & t/Son sanctifies (Eph. 4:15-16; 5:25-27).” [Lewis, 267]

“Each [person] is in each [person], and all [three persons] are in each [person], and each [person] is in all [three persons], and all [three persons] are one being.” [Augustine, On The Trinity, 6.10]

There is a simultaneous existence of t/undivided & total nature in ea. of t/3 persons. It is a continual in-being & indwelling of t/Father in t/Son (son in Father); of t/Spirit in t/Son & t/Father & t/Father & Son in t/spirit

John 14, Jesus could say ==>

I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me and the Father [abides] in Me

Also, that the HS, along w/the Father & t/Son will triunally come into t/life of ea. genuine believer.

John 17, Jesus prayed that ==>

they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, {art} in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; . . . that they may be one, just as We are one . . .

An unceasing circulation of the essence, whereby there is an eternal intercommunion and interaction of being in the Godhead so that each person coinheres in the others and the others in each.” [Shedd, 249-50]

c. Implications as to Prayer

I've been asked sev. times about Prayer & t/Trinity. Questions that involve statements like, "Sometimes I don't know which person to pray to." Or, "When you pray should you pray to one to the exclusion of the others? and How does this relate to the oneness of God?"

You CAN'T pray to one and exclude the other two. Impossible. When you pray to t/Father, you also invoke the Son and HS in your prayer. True by virtue of t/unity of essence shared by all three persons.

It's never been an issue to me. I believe in God's Trinity & I also believe in prayer. When I pray to the Father, there's a sense in which I'm also praying to the Son and the H.S. When I pray to Jesus, there's also a sense in which I'm praying to t/HS and t/Father.

Theologian Shedd agrees==>

"When men say, 'Our Father who is in heaven.' they do not address the first person of the Godhead to the exclusion of the second and third. They address, not the untriune God of deism and natural religion, but the God of revelation, who is triune and as such the providential Father of all men and the redemptive Father of believers. If a man deliberately and consciously intends in his supplication to exclude from his worship the Son and the Holy Spirit, his petition is not acceptable . . . (John 5:23). A man may not have the three persons distinctly and formally in his mind when he utters this petition, and in this case, he does not intentionally exclude any trinitarian person or persons; but the petition, nevertheless, ascends to the divine three, not to a single person exclusively; and the answer returns to him from the triune God, not from any solitary person exclusively."

Says Augustine (*On the Trinity* 5:2), 'That which is written, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord," ought not to be understood as if the Son were excepted or the Holy Spirit were excepted. This one Lord our God, we rightly call, also, our Father.'" [Shedd, 253-54]

Triune God of t/univ. saved you; He's t/one to whom you pray. He is t/one who answers. Not like you can play one against t/other, "Gee, I really would like a new car, so I'll ask t/HS because he's not so strict." Giana does that. In that analogy, Lois is t/Father & I'm t/HS!

6. What About Illustrations?

I know we all like illustrations to help us understand things. Trinity has been subject to t/worst illustrations imaginable, from an egg, to water, to a lightbulb, to t/different roles a person may play in life.

Some have brought up an intriguing illust. “triple point” of water, which is t/point where water can co-exist in all three states of matter (solid, liquid, gas). That happens at a particular ambient temperature coupled w/a particular barometric pressure. At 32 deg. F and 4.62 mm Hg pressure H₂O coexists as all three. “The triple point shows that one substance (God) can have three coexisting phases (persons) all having identical intrinsic characteristics . . .” [Cook, 126]

But even this illustration has its limitations, as they all do because we are t/finite trying to comprehend t/infinite.

Best as far as I’m concerned was put together by t/Council of Constantinople in t/12th Century. Copy of it on your outline.

Keep in mind that t/doctrine of t/Trinity is grounded in one of t/most profound theological concepts ever devised (ready): God knows more than we do. If you get that into your head, you’ve got it all in a nutshell!

Shedd— “. . . the doctrine of the Trinity, though not discovered by human reason, is susceptible of a rational defense when revealed. Shedd quotes Dr. South - “as he that denies this fundamental article of the Christian religion may lose his soul, so he that much strives to understand it may lose his wits.” [Shedd, 219]

Do you have a headache yet? ==>

7. Ontological Trinity vs. Economical Trinity

This is really imp. for you to grasp; this is an area that is greatly & grossly misunderstood by so many . . . You are going to have to use your brains (“rats!”). Understanding this will prevent you grief later.

a. This is a word I’ve used & defined several times

From t/Grk. word ὄντως which means “being.” Ontological means what someone or something is as to it’s very essence. Essential nature or character of what something is.

When we say that “God is One as to Essence” we’re saying that ontologically speaking, God is one in perfect equality. He has one undivided essence.

Even as it relates to God being “Three as to Person” - The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally and fully to each person. Simply put, each person is fully and completely God, even though each person is not the entirety of the Godhead. Ontological equality (co-equal, co-eternal persons).

(1) Ontologically - Father, Son, Holy Spirit are Equal

Father is not more of God than the Son. The Son is not more of God than t/H.S. They are three co-equal, co-eternal persons who are one in essence. (make sense?)

However, while there is essential equality, there is also a functional difference & levels of leadership (for lack of a better word) among the Father, the Son, and the H.S.

(2) This is what we call The Economic Trinity

IOW - in t/Economic ordering of things, t/Father is in greater authority than t/Son, & t/Son over t/Spirit. This doesn’t imply inferiority or subordination. Just an economic difference in function.

Why it is t/Father who has t/auth. to give all things to t/Son (John 3:35)

John 5:22-23 ==> “. . . the Father ... has given all judgment to the Son ... “

Why Jesus said things like==>

“I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. “ [5:30]

And that even t/H.S. does not speak on His own initiative, but what he hears (presumably from t/Father & t/Son) he speaks [16:13]

“The Father is greater than I” [14:28]

There’s a misunderstood verse. This doesn’t mean X is inferior or subordinate or less than God. It means that economically, the Father is greater in authority than t/Son.

Jesus receives commandments from t/Father, obeys t/Father & honors him, even while t/H.S. brings honor to X (John 10:18; 16:14).

(a) We can go on to the Epistles

Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 3:23 that “. . . Christ belongs to God.

1CO 11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

1CO 15:28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

(b) Not subordinationism which teaches inequality

Difference in function and/or authority. Like me saying “The President of the USA is greater than me.” Is t/President inherently a greater man than anyone here this morning? Of course not, but he is greater in authority.

Ontologically or essentially, all men are equal (not only are we all equally created in God’s image, but we are all equally depraved sinners in need of a Savior).

Yet, economically there is inequality. Some are in a place of higher rank than others.

1CO 11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman . . .

“Wives, be subject to your own husbands.” (Eph. 5:22)

Men & women are essentially equal, even though t/Bible teaches a principle of submission. Submission doesn't imply inferiority.

True of leadership in t/CH==>

I once had a man leave t/CH because I wrote to him something about t/need for members of t/CH to be subject to t/leadership. When I went to see him personally, I clarified what I meant and read Heb. 13:17 to him==>

Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Same thing in 1 Peter 2:13-15 [=>]

Basic principle of an orderly society. We all have to deal w/authority. When you're driving around & you glance up in your rear-view mirror to see a police car w/red lights on, you don't say, “He has no authority over me, I'm not stopping.” No, you stop!

When t/guy gets out to write you a ticket you don't look at him & think this person is greater than me in t/sense that we are unequal as men, but you do realize that he is greater than you in t/sense of his rank.

Same sort of thing w/the Trinity. In fact, that's even implied in the “Father/Son” relationship. No essential inequality even though there is a functional difference.

Father is always t/1st person who sends t/Son & t/Spirit. Father is not begotten or proceeding. Son is always t/second person who is eternally begotten of the Father. HS is always t/3rd person who eternally proceeds from t/Father & t/Son. Order, that the Father works through the Son in the Power of the Spirit. Relational order.

Next week we will have fun looking at our next (likely last) point==>

4. Hairsplitting or Heresy? (Arianism and Modalism & Confusion, Oh My!)

"I believe a very large majority of churchgoers are merely unthinking, slumbering, worshipers of an unknown God. [C.H. Spurgeon]

We are told that God seeks worshipers. John 4. We also told in t/same place that those who worship Him must do so in Spirit & Truth. No better place to start than t/Truth about who He is in His Triunity.