

Title: The Majesty of God Revealed

Subtitle: The Spirit of truth reveals that God is personal and knowable.

Video URL: <https://youtu.be/kHnO5tPZ80A>

Today is Trinity Sunday, a day the Church sets aside on the First Sunday after Pentecost to affirm the most fundamental doctrine of Christianity: The Trinity—that God, who is one, has one being and one nature, but is revealed to us as three distinct “persons,” Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Admittedly, this is a great mystery. The Apostle Paul said it best when he wrote, “*Without any doubt, great is the mystery of godliness.*”¹

A mystery is something that has been kept secret. But in the Christian faith, that doesn’t mean that it is unknowable, but only that it takes a revelation from God to make it known. In our Gospel today, Jesus admits that there are many things that he wanted to share with his disciples, but “*they could not bear them now.*”² The Trinity was one such doctrine. It took the Church 300 years to hammer out a thumbnail sketch of what it means. And as we attempt to wrap our minds around it, we need “*the Spirit of truth*” that our Gospel today highlights. Jesus promised that when He, “*the Spirit of Truth,*” comes, He will “*guide us into all the truth.*”³ This means that without the Holy Spirit, who gives instruction and assistance, such mysteries as the Trinity will remain undisclosed.

The Christian life is meant to be a divine adventure. It is filled with intrigue, drama, and the wonder of discovery. It was

¹ 1 Timothy 3:16

² John 16:12

³ John 16:13

never meant to be a spectator sport, where someone else gets all the action and fun of discovery.

Mysteries are not easily solved. It has been said that “Christianity does not deal in trifles. Like the eagle, it does not hawk for flies; it aspires to conquer the loftiest themes of thought. Right or wrong, the subjects with which we deal are not secondary but wear about them a majestic interest which none but the frivolous despise.”⁴ Therefore, these things are to be handled with great reverence and careful study.

Mysteries, whether in the form of novels or movies, can be great fun. The unfolding of facts that lead to a grand, surprising conclusion is something that thrills the best reader and most avid moviegoer. But mysteries, such as the Trinity, do not lend themselves to easy answers.

I remember being stifled at one time, with only wanting quick answers to complex questions. In my laziness, I used to think that reading Cliff Notes was as good as reading the real thing. But, boy, was I ever wrong! I have since learned the joy of reading, asking questions, and having God work with me as I wrestle with issues concerning his divine nature. But, like most inquiries, I don’t need to ask those questions in a vacuum. I need the Christian community to help me find the correct answers. From the earliest times, Jewish rabbis gathered in groups for teaching and debate. Later, when questions about the Trinity arose, the Church Fathers gathered in councils to deal with erroneous ideas.

In much the same way as the wisdom literature from the Book of Proverbs that was read today, the wisdom of the early

⁴ Quote from Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Church fathers calls out to us. The instructor of wisdom and learning in the book asks, “Does not Wisdom call and does not understanding raise her voice?”⁵ This personification of wisdom has direct parallels to the wisdom offered to us through Church councils handed down through the ages.

In history, the Church had to deal with erroneous ideas presented by Arius in the 4th century AD. “He taught that the Father existed prior to the Son who was not, by nature, God but rather a changeable creature who was granted the dignity of becoming “Son of God.”⁶ He separated the Son from God entirely so that they believed he was a creature having a beginning and was famously known for saying, “There was when he was not.”

Therefore, the Church leaders gathered at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and hammered out a statement of faith that refuted Arian beliefs in what is now known as the Nicene Creed. In it, they described Christ as “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father and the Holy Ghost.”⁷

Accepting the faith that has been handed down to us is more just mentally accenting a dogmatic hypothesis. It is meant to be a starting point for knowing, loving, and experiencing God in a dynamic, life-giving way.

The fact that we are made in God’s image has many ramifications for how we live and fellowship with each other.

Fortunately for us, though He is very big, he had proven himself willing to become very small – as small as we are—

⁵ Proverbs 8:1

⁶ Wikipedia, on the Doctrine of the Trinity

⁷ Wikipedia, on the First Council of Nicaea (325)

when he humbled himself to become a human in the person of Jesus Christ. As a man, he was subject to hunger and thirst, aggression, hostility, and tragedy. This tells me God feels, He empathizes with us, and He cares about my pains. And that encourages me when I hurt. God understands when my cross gets heavy, or when I am feeling misunderstood, or feeling that I have been forsaken. It's because he knows exactly what I am going through I can turn to him, trust him, and obey him.

A Gospel songwriter said it best in a hymn entitled, "Somebody Bigger Than You and I."⁸ One of the stanzas goes:

*He lights the way when the road is long
He keeps you company
And with His love to guide you
He walks beside you
Just like He walks with me.*

To me, this means his almighty power can lift us above the pain, worry and doubt that often veil the reality of his presence in this world.

The last stanza of that same hymn eloquently expresses this thought:

*When I am weary, filled with despair
Who gives me courage to go on from there?
And who gives me faith that will never die
Somebody bigger than you and I*

Our God knows our deepest heartaches and fears. And just as parents long for their children to know and trust their love for them, God wants to be known lovingly and intimately by us so that we can come to know Him and trust Him in all of his fullness—the fullness of the love that has existed in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all eternity. Amen.

⁸ Songwriters: Burke J Francis / Lange Johnny / Heath Hy

Notes from Wikipedia.com on the Doctrine of the Trinity

The [Christian doctrine](#) of the **Trinity** defines [God](#) as being [one God](#) existing in three [coequal, coeternal, consubstantial divine persons](#):^{[2][3]} [God the Father](#), [God the Son \(Jesus Christ\)](#) and [God the Holy Spirit](#), three distinct persons sharing one [homoousion](#) (essence).^[4] In this context, the three persons define *who* God is, while the one essence defines *what* God is

In the fourth century, [Arianism](#), as traditionally understood,^[5] taught that the Father existed prior to the Son who was not, by nature, God but rather a changeable creature who was granted the dignity of becoming “Son of God”.^{[6][5]} The Arians wished to avoid the heresy of Sabellius who believed in a divine monad (a single unit) which, by expansion, projected itself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit-in different aspects or modes consequently they were not truly distinct from each other. In this belief the persons of the Trinity are not distinct and coexisting persons in the divine nature.)

. The Arians separated the Son from God entirely so that they believed he was a creature having a beginning. “There was when he was not.”

In 325, the [First Council of Nicaea](#) adopted the Nicene Creed which described Christ as “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father”, and the “Holy Ghost” as the one by which “[was incarnate](#) ... of the [Virgin Mary](#)”

The Confession of the First Council of Nicaea, the Nicene Creed, said little about the Holy Spirit.^{[6][8]} At the First Council of Nicea (325) all attention was focused on the relationship between the Father and the Son, without making any similar statement about the Holy Spirit.

Later, at the [First Council of Constantinople](#) (381), the Nicene Creed would be expanded, known as Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, by saying that the Holy Spirit is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son (suggesting that he was also consubstantial (of the same substance or essence with them)). The Creed added: ... We believe ..in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets .

Late 6th century, some Latin-speaking churches added the words “and from the Son” ([Filioque](#)) to the description of the procession of the Holy Spirit.

(Jesus) The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being ...” (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus perfectly reflected the inner character, substance, essence, “ultimate radiance” of the Father. Homoousion lit. ‘same in being, same in essence’, from ὁμός, homós, “same” and οὐσία, ousía, “being” or “essence”)[1][2] is a Christian theological term, most notably used in the Nicene Creed for describing Jesus (God the Son) as “same in being” or “same in essence” with God the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί). The same term was later also applied to the Holy Spirit in order to designate him as being “same in essence” with the Father and the Son. Those notions became cornerstones of theology in Nicene Christianity, and also represent one of the most important theological concepts within the Trinitarian doctrinal understanding of God.