



Part 3 – The Trinity and the Christian Life

Sunday 1 December 2024

Recap

The last two weeks we've seen...

Week 1 – The Trinity is something a Christian already knows and is defined by the following three statements:

1. God is three persons
2. Each person is fully God
3. There is one God

Week 2 – We can describe God, the Trinity as:

- The IMMANENT Trinity – who God is in himself
- The ECONOMIC Trinity – who God is revealed to be in *creation*, *revelation* and especially *salvation*.

Overview

Sunday 17 November - Introduction to the Trinity

What does it mean that God is Trinity and how we know this already.

Sunday 24 November - The Trinity and Salvation

How God being Trinity makes all the difference to salvation.

Sunday 1 December - The Trinity and the Christian Life

How God being Trinity makes all the difference to the Christian life.

Structure

1. The Economic Trinity & adoption to sonship
2. The Trinity and the Christian Life
 - a. Bible Reading
 - b. Prayer

4. The Economic Trinity (or, the Trinity after/once time began)

Now we **can** use one of these...



(b) Adoption into sonship

For us to truly understand the Lord Jesus can't simply state that he's "the God who is man" we need also to affirm that he is the Son of God!

Bible ref. (page no.)	What titles are used of the Lord Jesus?
Matthew 3:16-4:1 (967)	
John 1:14 (1061)	
Acts 9:20 (1103)	
Romans 1:1-4 (1128)	
Colossians 1:13-15 (1182)	
1 Thess. 1:9-10 (1186)	
Hebrews 1:1-4 (1201)	
2 Peter 1:16-17 (1222)	

If we underplay the importance of the Lord Jesus' sonship we are failing on two fronts:

- Failing to honour how God describes the Lord Jesus.
- Undermining our highest privilege as God's people – adoption as sons.

“For this design the Word made flesh, the Son made man, to make men the sons of God.” Robert Leighton

Bible ref. (page no.)	How is our adoption described?
John 1:12-13 (1062)	
Romans 8:15-17 (1135)	
Galatians 3:26-27 (1170)	
Galatians 4:4-6 (1170)	
Ephesians 1:5-6 (1173)	
1 John 2:29-3:1 (1226)	

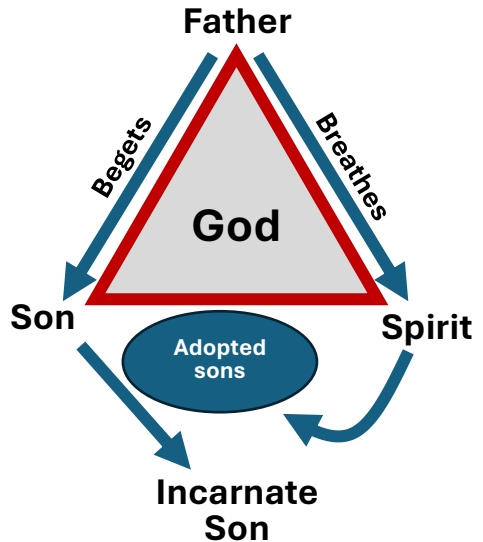
Because sonship is “hardwired” into the very existence of God, the concept of adoption into sonship for you and me is “cutting with the grain” of who God is.

Our adoption is marked by difference:

- Christ is the Son of God by nature
- We are sons by adoption

Yet, amazingly there's amazing similarity, even sameness, that of relationship of sonship.

“Adoption is the highest privilege the gospel offers: higher even than justification.” J I Packer



There are many privileges of adoption, which include:

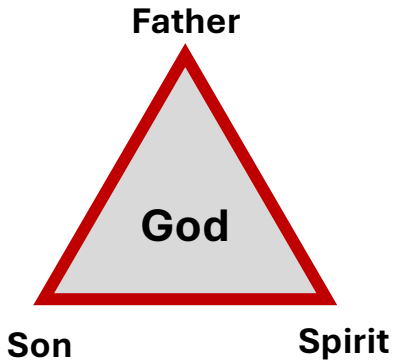
- Relationship with God
- Access & confidence in prayer
- Inheritance of heaven (co-heirs with Christ)
- Led by the Spirit
- Disciplined by our Father
- Folded into church family
- Imitate God
- Honour God

“But adoption is the mightiest of God's mighty acts of salvation, and without transgressing the line between the divine and the created, God does reach across it and establish a relationship more intimate than we could have imagined.”

Fred Sanders, Deep things of God, 167

1. The Trinity and the Christian life

Some reflections from God eternally being Trinity, i.e. the IMMANENT Trinity.



Before the universe began God existed eternally as Trinity. It was a perfect relationship of mutual love and glorification.

An intrinsic part of God being Trinity is that the persons of the Trinity communicated with one another. How else would they communicate love and glory to one another?

This means when it comes to communicating with you and me and listening to their prayers they are ***NOT*** learning anything new.

If God, however, is one person and not three, then he must learn how to communicate with others and how to listen to their words.

(a) Reading our Bible

All three persons of God are speaking in the Bible. Take a look at the following table to see who is speaking where.

Bible ref. (page no.)	Who is speaking Father, Son, Spirit?
Matthew 7:24-27 (972)	
John 14:26 (1083)	
John 15:26 (1084)	
John 16:12-15 (1084)	
Hebrews 1:1-2 (1201)	
Hebrews 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (1201)	
Hebrews 3:7 (1203)	
1 Peter 1:23 (1217)	
2 Peter 1:20-21 (1222)	

All three persons of the Trinity are speaking with one voice in the Scriptures.

The Spirit who inspired the writing of the Scriptures, is the same Spirit who grants us understanding of the Scriptures.

For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

2 Corinthians 2:11-12 (NIV 2011)

(b) Prayer

Prayer is made possible through adoption:

‘This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven...”’

Matthew 6:9f (NIV 2011)

*But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ **Galatians 4:4-6***

*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. **Romans 8:14-16 (NIV 2011)***

The pattern for prayer is a Trinitarian pattern

For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Ephesians 2:18 (NIV 2011)

- To the Father
- Through the Son
- By the power of the Spirit

Prayer is not the preserve of God's people, because God the Son and God the Spirit are involved in prayer.

How do we find the Son and the Spirit praying in these passages?

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Hebrews 7:25 (NIV 2011) (see also Romans 8:34)

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27 (NIV 2011)

Accuracy isn't necessary for God to hear, but accuracy in how we pray aids our assurance.

"Vagueness in prayer is to be avoided, and once you have considered the personal presence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you may not be able to go back to praying with the undifferentiated word God."

Fred Sanders, *The deep things of God*, 235

Summary

The doctrine of the Trinity deepens our understanding of the Christians life. Because God is Trinity:

- He adopts us as sons, into relationship with Father, Son & Spirit
- Speaking & listening is something he's been doing for eternity and he simply continues to do through the Bible and prayer.