

WorshipGod Conference

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Beholding the Glory of God's Salvation

I. Introduction

There is a sub-text to this message on beholding the glory of God's salvation, and the sub-text really presses this question: Do we read our Bibles and understand God, as we ought, in a trinitarian manner? May I propose to you this thesis: Beholding the glory of God in salvation necessarily involves understanding and appreciating the respective roles of the triune Persons of the Godhead in securing our salvation.

So, does the doctrine of the Trinity matter? Are other areas of theology and life affected by a trinitarian perspective? Consider with me some examples where a trinitarian understanding is not only helpful and enriching but necessary in getting things right.

- For example, the doctrine of *creation* – One God creates all (Gen 1:1), and the Spirit hovers over the deep (Gen 1:2), but how does he create? He speaks (Gen 1:3, 6, etc; Psa 33:6-9) and we learn in John 1 and Heb 11:3 that the Word who was with God and was God creates all that is.
- Or, consider *prayer* – made to the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- And so it is with *salvation*. Of course more in a moment, but just here consider with me how incomprehensible the cross work of Christ is apart from the Trinity:
 1. God-man – God to make a payment of infinite value, but human to take our place
 2. Spirit – to empower the human Jesus to obey the Father and go to the cross
 3. Father – to plan redemption, send the Son, and to execute his just judgment against our sin, born by his Son, so that he would be satisfied and we might be forgiven.

Yes, the Trinity is necessary to understand the cross of Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-14 is particularly instructive here for three reasons:

- It illustrates how we need to read the Bible, particularly the NT, through “trinitarian glasses”
- It demonstrates that salvation is the work of the triune God
- It focuses on the centrality of the Son in securing our glorious salvation

[Read Eph 1:3-14, pointing out the trinitarian indicators]

II. The *Glory of the Father* in our Salvation – *Architect*

1. Designed salvation in eternity past – 1 Pet 1:20; Eph 1:4; Rom 8:29
2. Brings it about in history, all through the Son – John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Isa 53:10
3. Receives ultimate glory for salvation – Phil 2:11; 1 Cor 15:27-28

III. The *Glory of the Son* in our Salvation – *Accomplishment*

1. Obeys the Father in eternity past by choosing to carry out the Father’s will in coming into the world – John 6:38 (“I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me”).
2. Comes to earth, takes on our humanity, to die for our sin
 - a. Becomes incarnate to be the God-man – John 1:1, 14, 18
 - b. Accepts the limitations of our humanity (kenosis) – Phil 2:5-11

- c. Lives his life and accomplishes the Father's will, in the power of the Spirit – Luke 4; Matt 12; Acts 10:38
 - d. Endures our sin and God's wrath for our eternal salvation – 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 3:21-26
3. Completes his saving work, through his Spirit, and reigns triumphant over all
- a. Sends the Spirit to extend the benefits of his saving death to his own – John 16; Acts 2:38
 - b. Culminates salvation in cosmic reconciliation, bringing all things into subjection under his feet – Col 1:19-20; 1 Cor 15:27-28
 - c. Reigns victorious as King of kings, and Lord of lords – Rev 19:16; Rev 21-22

IV. The *Glory of the Holy Spirit* in our Salvation – *Application*

- 1. Empowers the Son to obey the Father and fulfill his assigned work – Luke 4; Acts 10:38
 - 2. Glorifies the Son in extending Christ's saving work to his own – John 16:14
- The Spirit glorifies Christ by:
- a. Empowering bold witness of the gospel of Christ – Acts 1:8
 - b. Empowering repentance and saving faith in Christ – John 3; Titus 3:5
 - c. Empowering character transformation into the likeness of Christ – 2 Cor 3:18

V. Lessons from the Glory of God's Salvation

1. Marvel at the *wisdom and intricacy of salvation* that requires all three persons of the Godhead, working in harmonious relationship, each with their distinctive roles yet all fulfilling the same uniform divine plan.
2. Marvel at the *evident authority and submission in the Godhead*—with the Father, supreme in authority; the Son under the Father and over the Spirit, yet in his humanity submitting to the Spirit during his earthly life and ministry; and the Spirit gladly empowering the Son, yet giving glory to the Son. Marvel at authority and submission in the Godhead, with full unity, yet diversity of role.
3. Marvel at the *Father*, who though he is supreme in the Trinity, shines the spotlight on his Son. As the Father states to Peter, James and John on the Mt of Transfiguration, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him!” (Matt 17:5). And also Heb 1:6 states that, “when he [the Father] brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship him!’”
4. Marvel at the *Spirit*, who though third in rank in the trinity, submits gladly to his calling to empower the Son and then submit to the Son. Marvel that all of his work is to bring glory to the Son.
5. Marvel at the *Son*, who obeyed his Father with the most difficult task imaginable, who condescended to take on our flesh, who submitted to the Spirit, and endured the folly of men and the wrath of God, all to win our salvation and reconcile us to his Father. Praise be to Jesus, who gave himself for us, in the power of the Spirit, to the glory of the Father. Love him, trust in him, be made like him, adore him, and worship him!

VI. Conclusion:

The glory of God's salvation is the glory of the Father and of the Spirit who, in ways unique to each of them, focus attention on the Son. “Look at Jesus!” they both say, in their respective ways. The glory of salvation focuses, then, on the life, ministry, teaching, death, resurrection, ascension, and consummation of the Son, who is the only Savior and Lord over all, full of grace and of truth and of glory, for now and forevermore. Amen.