

Is a Sermon for "Trinity Sunday" a Biblical Sermon?

by Robert Schmid

It has been said that, if it would not have been for Martin Luther and the reformation he caused in the 16th century, the world, or at least the Western Christian world, would all be part of the (so-called) mother church, the Roman Catholic Church of today. Obviously, God had other plans, and so we have much to be grateful for that God raised up Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation to prevent the whole Christian world from becoming enslaved by Roman Catholicism.

Ironically, Martin Luther not only was born a Catholic, but for all intents and purpose, he died a Catholic, even though he was excommunicated by Pope Leo X in 1521. Yes, the reformation broke the strangle hold the Roman Catholic Church had on the Christian world, but Martin Luther and the subsequent Lutheran Church retained many and some of the most important Roman Catholic doctrines. These new churches were and are in fact but protesting daughter churches, and the mother church will forever try to bring them back into the fold.

What was the reformation all about? Well, the primary battle cry, in addition to many other issues, was "faith alone" (not faith and good works or infused righteousness) and "Scripture alone" (the Bible is the sole inspired rule of faith, rather than the Bible plus Tradition). These are obviously very important doctrines and we all benefited from their implementation. But, let's not forget, as I mentioned above, that the new movement retained many important Roman Catholic doctrines to this day, so that the daughter Protestant Church, Lutheran Church and most Evangelical churches of today, remain for all intents and purpose Roman Catholic captive churches, whether they like it or not.

What are the doctrines that continue to bind the daughter churches to the mother church?

First and primarily there is the question of who and what is God, the doctrine of the "**HOLY TRINITY**," as it was formulated by the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. Notice, it was formulated in 325 AD by the Catholic Church, in cahoots with the Roman Emperor Constantine I, not by God or the scriptures.

Secondly, and just as importantly, is "**SUNDAY KEEPING**," the change of the law of God from the seventh day Sabbath to the first day Sunday instituted by the Catholic Church in the second century (about 135 AD).

Thirdly, there is the holiday "**EASTER**" (celebrating the resurrection of Jesus) which the Roman Catholic Church made official doctrine at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, replacing God's commanded "Passover" day (commemorating the death of Jesus).

These are fundamental doctrines that define Roman Catholic Church teaching, and denying them will make you a heretic, subject to excommunication. Back in the 16th century a denial of the Trinity caused Michael Servetus and others to be executed, and others such as Isaac Newton were forced to keep their beliefs secret.

Considering the above, it should come as no surprise that the Roman Catholic Church has a special annual festival – “Trinity Sunday,” celebrating and commemorating the very changes they themselves have instituted.

This brings me back to Martin Luther and a sermon he gave back in 1522, “A Sermon for Trinity Sunday.” The first part of his two part sermon was simply entitled “The Holy Trinity.” Here are the three opening paragraphs from this sermon:

1. Today we celebrate the festival of the Holy Trinity, to which we must briefly allude, so that we may not celebrate it in vain. It is indeed true that the name “Trinity” is nowhere to be found in the Holy Scriptures, but has been conceived and invented by man. For this reason it sounds somewhat cold and we had better speak of “God” than of the “Trinity.”
2. This word signifies that there are three persons in God. It is a heavenly mystery which the world cannot understand. I have often told you that this, as well as every other article of faith, must not be based upon reason or comparison, but must be understood and established by means of passages from the Scriptures, for God has the only perfect knowledge and knows how to speak concerning himself.
3. The great universities have invented manifold distinctions, dreams and fictions by means of which they would explain the Holy Trinity, and have made fools of themselves. We shall therefore quote only passages from the Scriptures in order to determine and establish the divinity of Christ. In the first place, we quote from the New Testament, where we find many proof texts; for instance, John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.” Now if he is not made, but is himself the Maker, he must indeed be God. John also says afterwards; “And the Word became flesh.”

Let’s analyze what Mr. Luther had to say about the trinity, the divinity of Christ and of John 1:1-3, 14 and see if his Theology and Christology does indeed come only from passages of the Scriptures as he said above.

Let’s first of all consider that his premise of “scripture alone” is absolutely correct when viewed in comparison to the Catholic Church’s premise of “scripture and tradition.” However, when used as above, where Luther attempts to prove doctrine by a few specific passages that, even though they come from Scripture alone, can be and are being interpreted differently by different people, then these scripture verses are no longer the proof texts he would like them to be.

With this in mind, let’s analyze Luther’s interpretation of John 1:1-3, 14.

Luther wisely avoided the non-biblical word “Trinity,” replacing it with the word “God.” That is good, however, the implication that the word “God” is but a synonym of the word “Trinity” is not only false but deceptive. John 1:1 does not say; “In the beginning was the Trinity.”

What exactly was in the beginning? The passage in John 1:1 says that the “*Word*” was in the beginning. Here now we have the option to either **believe** what it says, or we can **interpret** what it says according to a pre-conceived paradigm. Since Luther’s pre-conceived paradigm was “trinity,” Luther automatically, in his mind, translated the word “Word” into the word “Son” or “Jesus.” In other words, what he was reading in his mind was; “In the beginning was Jesus; and Jesus was with God; and Jesus was God.” In contrast, if we simply believe what it says, then, the only logical question is; who’s “Word” was in the beginning? I would hope that we can all agree that it was the

“Word of God” that was in the beginning. Consider Gen 1:1 where it says that; “*In the beginning God created...*” How did God create? God created by using His Word – He spoke and it was! The question is; how many persons/beings/god’s does that involve? Obviously just ONE! God and His Word is ONE God, just like you and your word are ONE person, ONE center of thought, and not two or three.

In other words, John 1:1 simply says that in the beginning was God and His Word; and His Word was always with Him; and His Word was Him. The word “Word” is a none-personal word. It is an “IT,” not a “HE!” Only if you are a Trinitarian or Twinitarian will you automatically and subconsciously turn “it the Word” into “he the Son.” But, that is not what the verse says!

Now, verse 2 “*The same was in the beginning with God.*” What is meant by “*the same?*” Well, there are only two entities in verse 1, so that it is obvious that “*the same*” makes reference to “*the Word,*” so that verse two is but a repeat of verse 1 that; “*The Word was in the beginning with God.*”

Now, verse 3 “*All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*” We can see in this verse the change from an “it the word” in verse 1 and 2, to a “**him**” in verse 3. Who is the “*him*” of verse 3? On the one hand it is obvious that the “*him*” of verse 3 is a reference to “it the word” of verse 1 and 2, and since it the Word was God, the “*him*” of verse 3 becomes a reference to “God.” On the other hand, we also understand that the “**him**” of verse 3 is a reference to “**Jesus.**”

So, the question is: how did “it the word” of verse 1 and 2 turn into “him Jesus” of verse 3? In order to answer this, allow me to re-write the sequence of verses in John 1:1-3,14 as follows:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.
John 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.
John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.
John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

It becomes clear now that “it the Word” of John 1:1,2 was **made into**, or **became** something that it was not before. **It** the Word BECAME flesh, BECAME Jesus, BECAME the Son of God, therefore the change from “it” in verse 1 and 2, to “him” in verse 3.

Actually and in fact, what happened was that the one God of the Old Testament, reproduced Himself by having His Word (seed, sperm), through the power of His Holy Spirit, be implanted into the virgin Mary, His (surrogate) wife, representing all of Israel, and she bore His firstborn son whom He named Jesus.

Let’s ask the question: how unified, or how ONE was God and His Word from the beginning until “*the Word became flesh?*” Ask yourself the question of how unified is your word with you? Obviously 100%, for the simple reason that the word can not speak anything different than what the mind instructs the word to say. It is an **involuntary oneness** for there was only one center of thought. But what about after the **Word BECAME the Son** 2000 years ago? How unified, how ONE were the **Father** and the **Son**? Well, from his(s)tory and from the Scriptures we know that the **Father** and the **Son** were just as 100% ONE as the **Word** was ONE with **God**. Jesus said so; “*I and my Father are ONE,*” a **voluntary oneness**, even though there were now TWO centers of thought, where the Father knew things that the Son did not know.

What about Martin Luther's conclusion that since: "All things were made through HIM; and without HIM was not anything made that hath been made," therefore, Jesus was not made, but is himself **the Maker** and must therefore indeed be God? To be sure, Martin Luther was correct about the divinity of Christ and that Jesus was not made. However, Martin Luther was incorrect in his conclusion that the "him" of verse 3 was Jesus, "**the Maker**" of Gen 1:1. Remember, the "him" of verse 3 BECAME Jesus, not WAS Jesus! "**The Maker**" of Gen 1:1 was the Word (of God) and the Word (of God) was always with God and the Word (of God) WAS God. So, who was the Maker of Gen 1:1? Yahweh Elohim, God Almighty, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was **the Maker** who **spoke**, through and by **His Word**, and it was.

Martin Luther was a **Catholic**, and as a Catholic he was a **Trinitarian** and as a Trinitarian he was a **believer in the pre-existence of Jesus**, a belief that Jesus existed before Jesus was born! Why did he believe that? Because according to the (false) trinity doctrine the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit existed as three persons (gods) from all eternity, throughout Old and New Testament time, and into all eternity.

The trinity doctrine makes a mockery of the Old Testament prophecies pointing forward to the "fullness of time," to the most important event in human history, the birth of Jesus, the **firstborn Son of God**. If all that happened was that the "second person of the trinity," the "pre-existent son," or a "second supreme Personage (God)," or a "Spokesman" was changed from spirit to flesh via an incarnation, then this Jesus is not really and not literally the **true Son of God** that was **born** of God 2000 years ago!

The question from Jesus is the same for every human being: "*But who do YOU say that I am?*" Can you truly say with Simon Peter: "*You are the Christ, the **Son of the living God**,*" if the Christ you believe in did not really BECOME the "**Son of the living God**," 2000 years ago, but only the "**Son of man?**" Only YOU can answer that question. If your answer is correct, Jesus will answer and say; "*Blessed are you, (what's your name?)! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*"