

# Think with the Trinity

*LECTURE 5. INTRODUCTION TO THE TRINITY*

*ALEC & BELLE WATERHOUSE LECTURES*

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# Everything We Think Should Be Grounded in the Trinity

- A. The Word of God
- B. The Words of God
- C. Take Every Thought Captive to the Word
- D. Be Filled with the Spirit
- E. Do All Things for the Glory of God

# A. The Word of God

1. The Word of God in the Old Testament
2. The Word of God in the New Testament
3. The Threefold Word of God

# 1. The Word of God in the Old Testament

- God created everything that is by speaking it into existence (Genesis 1:3, 1:6, 1:9, etc.).
- Creation is temporal, but God's Word (Hebrew *Dabar*) is, by direct contrast, eternal (Isaiah 40:8). The Word participates by nature in divine reality.
- The Word comes from above. The Word exercises personal agency to accomplish that which God sends the Word to do. In particular, the Word brings spiritual water and nourishment to parched humanity (Isaiah 55:8-12).

## 2. The Word of God in the New Testament

- “The Word of God” (Greek, *Logos Theou*) is explicitly identified with the eternal Son of God who became a human being, Jesus the Messiah. *Logos* indicates language, reason.
  - a. The Word was always both “with God” and “God” (John 1:1)—Note the distinction and the equality.
  - b. The Word “became flesh” (John 1:14).
  - c. The Word will return in the end to bring judgment (Revelation 19:11-16).

# 3. The Threefold Word of God

- a. The Word of God ***Incarnate***: In Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became the Son of David. He is the Revelation of God *par excellence* (Heb 1:1ff).
- b. The Word of God ***Invoiced***: The Word of God previously came to the prophets, who were moved by the Spirit of God (2 Pet 1:19ff).
- c. The Word of God ***Inscripturate***: The Word of God is also written. Scripture penetrates into the heart and mind of the one who hears (Heb 4:12f).



## B. The Words of God

1. God Created Human Beings in his Triune Image, including the Word
2. The Word of the Lord Came by the Holy Spirit
3. The Word of God is Illumined by the Holy Spirit

# 1. God Created Human Beings in His Triune Image

In the 2017 Day-Higginbotham Lectures, I developed a Trinitarian doctrine of humanity:

- Lecture 1: *Imago Trinitatis*—the creation of humanity in the image of God is a Trinitarian movement: Rule, Reason, Relation.
- Lecture 2: *Analogia*—human relations are similar to the internal divine relations.
- Lecture 3: *Sub Sole et Coram Deo*—we live under the sun and before God.



# God Created Human Beings in His Image

- Because we are created in the image of God, and the Word is God, like God we possess reason, language. By his Word, we have words.
- John 1 teaches us not only that the Word is with God and God, but also that we have the ability *to know* only through the Word. Note two truths:
  - a. Every human being has been granted access to truth through the Word by creation (vv 4, 9).
  - b. Human beings cannot overcome the Word (v 5).

## 2. The Word of the Lord Came by the Holy Spirit

The Spirit of God was the agent by which the Word of God came to the prophets:

- David said, “The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2).
- “Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you,” says the Wisdom of God (Proverbs 1:23).

# The Word of the Lord Came by the Holy Spirit

- Jesus said, “I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you” (John 14:25-26).
- John wrote, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet” (Revelation 1:10).

# 3. The Word of God is Illumined by the Holy Spirit

- If our ability to know depends on the Word, and the Spirit gave the Word to the prophets and the apostles, then we still require the Holy Spirit to perceive the Word conveyed by them.
- The human being, no matter how well educated, cannot, by his will, work his or her way into a proper interpretation of the Word.
- Correct interpretation is by the Spirit's grace.

# The Word of God is Illumined by the Holy Spirit

***“I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”***

John 16:12-14



# The Word of God is Illumined by the Holy Spirit

***“No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”***

2 Peter 1:20f

- a. The prophecy didn’t come by human will.
- b. The prophecy came by the Holy Spirit.
- c. Interpretation is not one’s “own.”



# C. Take Every Thought Captive to the Word

- It should now be increasingly clear that the Christian cannot know anything whatsoever apart from the Word and the Spirit of God, by nature or by special revelation.
- One major implication is that all Christian thinking must be by the Trinity. We must:
  - a. Take Every Thought Captive to the *Word*
  - b. Be Filled with the *Spirit*
  - c. Do All Things for the Glory of God

# Take Every Thought Captive to the Word

*“When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God’s power.”*

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

# Take Every Thought Captive to the Word

***“For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.”***

## D. Be Filled with the Spirit

1. In the Old Testament Era, the Spirit was Promised
2. In the New Testament Era, the Son Baptizes Believers in the Spirit
3. Being Born Again and Being Filled

# 1. In the Old Testament Era, the Spirit Was Promised

- You will remember that the Spirit came upon Saul in order to equip him for his calling as king, but then He left Saul due to his wickedness.
- When shown his own depravity, David thus cried out for God to change his heart and not to withdraw his Spirit from David.
- The Holy Spirit did not come to regenerate believers until after the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.



# In the Old Testament Era, the Spirit Was Promised

The prophet Isaiah promised the Messiah would possess the Spirit without measure and bring righteousness to the people:

- “Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:1-2; cf. 42:1; 48:16; 61:1-3).



# In the Old Testament Era, the Spirit Was Promised

The problem with Israel was that, though it had the Covenant, it could not keep God's Law. Ezekiel promised the Spirit would come to change hearts:

- “I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances.” (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

## 2. In the New Testament Era, the Son Baptizes Believers in the Spirit

As we previously noted, the Holy Spirit comes to change people's hearts. Jesus promised to give believers new life through the Spirit's work of faith in Christ and of regeneration (and of repentance).

- *Regeneration*: "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).
- *Faith*: "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

# 3. Being Born Again and Being Filled

- A person is “born again” by the Spirit, given the “Gift” of the Spirit, or “baptized” with or in the Spirit when they are converted to Jesus Christ.
- A person, however, may “grieve” the Spirit, after conversion.
- Acts 4:8, 31; 13:9; etc. treat being “filled with the Holy Spirit” as occurring after salvation. Being filled empowers Christians for a holy and committed life and for the ministry of speaking God’s Word.

# Being Born Again and Being Filled

- Paul thus prays that we would be continually filled with the Holy Spirit:
  - “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).
  - “And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

# E. Do All Things for the Glory of God

From considering the role of the Word and the Spirit in our thought processes, let us now turn to the end of all our thoughts: God's own glory.

1. Human Vainglory
2. Divine Glory—Trinitarian Possession
3. Divine Glory—An Invitation



# 1. Human Vainglory

***“If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, make my joy complete by thinking the same way, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.”***

Philippians 2:1-3



# Human Vainglory

*“Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us. For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame; and they are focused on earthly things.”*

Philippians 3:17-19

## 2. Divine Glory—Trinitarian

- “Glory” (Hebrew *kabod*; Greek *doxa*) indicates a heavily significant personal presence. It is a term related to “light.” It is possessed with power.
- God possesses glory in perfection (John 17:5).
- Glory is ascribed to God by God and ought to be ascribed to God alone by human beings:
  - a. The Spirit glorifies the Son (John 16:14).
  - b. The Father glorifies the Son (John 8:54; 17:5).
  - c. The Son glorifies the Father (John 17:4).
  - d. Disciples glorify God, even in death (John 21:19).

# 3. Divine Glory—An Invitation

The New Testament relates how we see God's glory:

- Jesus said to her, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:40).
- “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they will see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the world’s foundation” (John 17:24).

# Divine Glory—An Invitation

- After threatening them further, they released them. They found no way to punish them because the people were all giving glory to God over what had been done (Acts 4:21).

In our final lecture, we turn to the glory of seeing the Triune God then face-to-face, even as we see Him now only in part.