

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Glory of Christ's Triune Essence

TEXT: [John 8:12-30](#)

INTRODUCTION

The Church has tried to wrestle with the Trinity for centuries. The idea that there are three Persons in one essence stretches even the most brilliant of thinkers. Jonathan Edwards who is arguably the greatest theologian and perhaps the greatest thinker that America has produced provides insight into the Trinity in an unpublished article entitled: "An Essay on the Trinity"¹. His ideas are sophisticated and complicated, but from Edwards I learned this²:

The Trinity is represented in the Bible starting with the Father who is ultimate, eternal and absolutely God. The Son is also ultimate, eternal and absolutely God, one and equal but is also the production of the Father's understanding, mind and thought, therefore called The Word. God the Word, in human flesh.

It's almost like the Father, in complete understanding of Himself, or as the Scriptures say, "a perfect image of Himself" is presented to the world, but at the same time this Image, the Second Person of the Trinity is not an idea, but a real Person and this Person totally encapsulates the mind of God and is the fullness of God.

In the passage we are examining today, this is the foundation of Jesus' argument to the Pharisees. "I am totally at one with the Father, yet distinct," He says. And in the key verses (vv8:28-29) He instructs us that "his lifting up" is the final evidence that this is true. Note:

"So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."" (John 8:28-29, ESV)

This truth, this reality, that I will call the Essential Union of the Father and Son, is shown by Jesus in two different debates He has with the Pharisees. These 2 debates are divided and structured by John by their introductory clause:

1. "Again Jesus spoke to them . . . (John 8:12a, ESV); and

¹ <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/Edwards,%20Jonathan%20-%20An%20Unpublished%20Essay%20on%20the%20Tr.pdf>

² "And this I suppose to be that blessed Trinity that we read of in the Holy Scriptures. The Father is the Deity subsisting in the prime, un-originated and most absolute manner, or the Deity in its direct existence. The Son is the Deity generated by God's understanding, or having an idea of Himself and subsisting in that idea."

2. "So he said to them again . . . (John 8:21a, ESV).

The first debate I will call,

1. QUESTIONING CHRIST'S SELF-IDENTIFICATION

The first events are recorded in [John 8:12-20](#). Jesus affirms that He is the Light of the World. This is a direct correlation with the events at the Feast. During the celebration of living waters and resting on Zechariah 14:5-8³ where the promise of evening becoming light and then living waters flowing out of Jerusalem, Jesus stood up and said that He was the Light of the World.

The Pharisees immediately questioned Him about His right to give His own credentials. Jesus answers, in short, by saying that His self-assessment is true because:

- a. He makes such a statement from the vantage point of Heaven, not earth; and
- b. He carries with Him the assessment of His Father, not just Himself.

The Pharisees ask, "Who is your Father?" Jesus silences this discussion by simply saying, if you knew me, you'd know the Father." What an astounding thing to say to religious leaders of the Jewish nation!

Notice, before we move on, Christ's claim to his oneness with God the Father. It's summed up in His words, "Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me." (John 8:16, ESV). The one-mindedness, the single-mindedness between God the Son and God the Father is so precise, when One makes a judgment, the other does in exactly the same way. **God the Son and God the Father think identically as one, yet distinct.**

Next another debate forms, which I will call,

2. QUESTIONING CHRIST'S MESSIAHSHIP

In verse 25, the Pharisees ask, "Who are you?" It is my opinion that this is more than asking who you are in the sense of nationality are, job, status in life, position in society. This is the question we ask when we hear Jesus say, "I came from Heaven, sent by my Father; and my Father and I do the same things, act the same way, make the same judgments, think the same thoughts, etc." And then you go, "WHO ARE YOU?"

³ "And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter." (Zechariah 14:5-8, ESV)

All this is said on the heels of Jesus' words where He said that He was going away and they couldn't find Him, even though they sought Him – AND THEY WILL DIE IN THEIR SINS!

As Jews, they will still search for the Messiah but without any hope. Why? Because they have rejected the identity of the One who is speaking to them. They think earthly. Their so-called messiah will save them from Rome; save them from poverty; save them from conflict; etc. They have rejected the One who will save them from their sins.

What are they to believe, if they don't want to die in their sins? Jesus said, "Unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."⁴ The ESV adds a word to make it more readable. The Greek reads: "Unless you believe that I am" (period). "What Jesus' hearers had to acknowledge is that he was who he claimed to be, i.e., the Messiah."⁵ It is here that Jesus uses the familiar Greek phrase "*egō eimi*" – "I Am", "I am" the eternal God who always existed. You ask, "Who are you", that's who I am – I am who I am.

THE MAIN POINT →

Remember I said, the point that John wants to make; the point that is going to impact profoundly his target audience (those 2nd generation Jews living in Asia Minor; wondering about this Jesus) is this: the ultimate proof of that Jesus is the Messiah will occur when He is "lifted up". We see that in what I am calling the key verses in John 8:28–29 (ESV)

²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."

In John's Gospel this "lifting up" can mean the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection and exaltation. Notice the great irony in Jesus' words. He tells them that His identity will be revealed when they "lift him up". The cross will be the means of His exaltation. Their murderous hatred will be the means of Christ's glorification. Their act of treachery will become a single event in history: His death, resurrection and ascension.

This promise of Christ was partially and miraculously fulfilled in Pentecost when there were three thousand conversions. Peter stood up and preached, saying,

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:36–38, ESV)

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Jn 8:24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁵ Biblical Studies Press. (2005). *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible*. Biblical Studies Press.

CONCLUSION

This promise of Jesus will also be fulfilled at the end of time. Even those who do not believe today will stand before Christ, whom they “lifted up” and be compelled to kneel and confess that Jesus is Lord. Paul wrote,

“so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10–11, ESV)

One day everyone will awaken to the reality that this Christ is both Savior and Lord. For those who confess Him as Lord today will be saved. To those who deny who He is, by Christ’s own words, *“I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”* (John 8:24, ESV)