

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:6-8** Chapter 26- Understanding and Valuing the Doctrine of the Trinity 238 Our Triune God Part 10

WAOY Thursday 08/21/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John taught about "The Doctrine of the Trinity". So, let's open our Bibles and read **1John 5:6-8**- again together:

6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

7 For there are three that testify:

8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

Now on the last broadcast- we were going over just how important it is for the Church to know and to rightly preach Who Jesus is. For almost five chapters- the Apostle John has been teaching us that there are four things that are essential to being a Christian:

1. Love of God and for God
2. Keeping God's Commandments
3. Loving the Brethren
4. A Correct Understanding of Who Jesus is

Now on the last broadcast- we were going over a time in Church History when the Christian Faith almost lost its understanding of Who Jesus is. This time is called the Arian Controversy and it involves a battle within the Church over the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Now we left off last time by me introducing the rest of the cast of this real life drama that captivated the Christian Church in the fourth

century. Here are those six men who played major roles in the Arian Controversy:

Arius- the presbyter of the Church in Alexandria who began the error and who gave the heresy its name.

Alexander, the bishop of the Church in Alexandria who excommunicated Arius for teaching against the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Constantine, the Roman Emperor who had converted to Christianity and who wanted this division within the Church to be solved.

Then we have two men who had the same name.

Eusebius, the historian, who wrote about this time in Church history.

Eusebius, the Arian, who was in league with Arius to take over the Church

And then we have the hero of this story- **Athanasius**, who almost single handedly rescued the Church from the error of the Arians.

Now as I told you last time, the Church of the fourth century was very laid back and very few leaders back then had the nerve or the wherewithal to fight off a doctrinal challenge- no matter how serious it was. We need to remember that the Emperor Constantine had just issued the Edict of Milan, which in effect ended 300 years of persecution against the Church almost overnight. And so Christianity went from being an illegal and resisted religion to the state religion of the Roman Empire almost immediately.

And this had the effect of causing great prosperity and the people of the church enjoyed a season of safety they had never known. And the result of this was that many in the Church had no heart to earnestly contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. And a culture of pragmatism rose up where more and more people were willing to compromise the serious and eternal Truths of Scripture so they could maintain their new found peace and prosperity. And of course- this made the Church ripe for heresy to enter in and take over-

which it did.

Arius was now teaching boldly and regularly the heresy that Jesus was more than a man- but less than God. And this had the net effect of denying Jesus' full Divinity. And the controversy centered around one letter of a single Greek word used by the Church to describe Jesus' relationship with the Father.

Since the very beginning- the Church had used the Greek word, *homoousia* to describe Jesus' relation to God the Father. *Homoousia* was a combination of two words, "homo"- meaning the same and "ousia" meaning substance or essence. So the official position of the Christian Church late in the third century was the Jesus was *homoousia* with the Father- or that Jesus was of the very same Substance or the very same Essence with the Father.

And of course- this went along with the Doctrine of the Trinity which says that God is one in Essence, but is eternally manifested in three Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

But Arius said, "*Not so!*" And so Arius added one letter- the letter "I" which in the Greek alphabet was the "iota" to the word, *homoousia* and changed the word to be *homoiousia*, which was a combination of the words, "homoi"- which means: *similar* and "ousia" which means: *substance*.

So by adding a single letter to a single word, Arius had changed everything and was teaching that Jesus was of a similar but different substance or Essence than God the Father. And this error had the effect of removing Christ's Deity and made Jesus to be a "created being" rather than what the Bible said that He was. Let's look at a very familiar passage that underlies what was at stake here. Let's look at **John 1:1**:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

So the Bible clearly teaches here that Jesus was the most unique Person in all human history. The Bible says unashamedly that Christ was God. And that makes Jesus to be special because Jesus and only Jesus had a dual nature of being fully God and fully Man. But we must understand that Jesus was not 50% God and 50% Man- no, Jesus was

100% God and 100% Man in the same body at the same time without conflict or controversy. And that makes Jesus to be a living miracle.

But it is very important, dear friends, that even though The Doctrine of the Trinity may stretch our minds- we need to get this right because any deviation at all from this- changes everything. For example- it is *incorrect* to say that Jesus was almost God, but not quite; It is also wrong to say that Jesus was an angelic being. No, even though it is fantastic- the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ was God Himself wrapped in human flesh.

And Arius was teaching that this was not true. Arius taught that Jesus was *similar* to God but was, in fact, a created being which God had created at some point during Creation.

And so after years of trying to reason with Arius, Alexander finally convened a Church Council and had Arius formally excommunicated.

And as bad as this may sound to us today- this is what you have to do with heretics who refuse to repent. You must and you should try to reason with them with much effort and tears; and you should plead with them and try to bring them back to Scriptural Truth. You must try to correct their thinking and encourage them to believe what God has revealed in the Bible about that issue- but sooner or later you have to come to terms with the fact that most heretics are not sincere people who are just off a little bit in their doctrine. The Bible says that heretics are not godly at all. No, real- sure-nuff heretics always have been and are today *exactly* what the Bible says that they are- ravening wolves in sheep's clothing who creep into the Church with damnable heresies with the stated intention of destroying the Church. So as a leader in the House of God- your options are very limited.

You can either allow people who do not believe the Bible to go ahead and teach false doctrine and deceive the sheep in your Church, or you have to stop them. And that is really the only two choices you have. And if you are of the opinion that it doesn't matter what people believe- then go ahead and entrust the souls of your congregation to these goats that Jude said were ungodly men. But if you think that the souls of the people that you are responsible for are valuable and precious in the eyes of God, then you have to stand up against anyone who teaches false doctrine and stop them.

And rest assured that when you do that- you will be labeled as

being dictatorial, autocratic, unloving, mean spirited, legalistic, and even unchristian- which is really a compliment coming from a heretic.

But to choose to ignore the heretics and the false teaching that they are promoting is only to allow the problem to grow larger and to allow the infection of false teaching to touch and harm more people. So you really haven't solved anything by ignoring heresy, dear friends, you will still have to deal with the issue later on- but by ignoring it and allowing the heresy to grow and take root- all you have accomplished is that now the problem is much harder and much bigger and will do much more damage when you finally do decide to act.

Now one of the most important tools that you can have at your disposal in these cases is to have a written Doctrinal Statement that is very detailed and which lays out *exactly* what you believe and teach and which has been unanimously approved by the leaders of your Church. This Doctrinal Statement should have several components to it. It should be 100% Scriptural and it should be very detailed. And without this, you really have nothing to appeal to when heretics come knocking on your door.

So, for example, if your Doctrinal Statement is purposely vague, or is based upon human reasoning; worldly wisdom; pragmatism; and personal opinions- rather than Scripture- then you will have gaps and holes which will be easily exploited by those whom satan has sent to your church to tear it up.

Stop and think about this for a moment. Those who genuinely love the Lord don't want to believe or teach anything that isn't True anyway. Because part of being saved is that God has placed within your heart the desire to do what is pleasing in His sight. Now it is true that we don't always succeed in doing what is right, but we always want to and so truly saved people don't want to teach or believe error. We don't want to teach or believe a lie; and we have no desire to lead anyone astray.

But in every area of our beliefs and teaching- at the point where we get off base; where we stray away from the revealed Truth of Scripture; where we either add to or take away from that which God has said- it is at that point where we are opening the door to the enemy to come in and exploit that.

And there is only one place that has proven to be reliable and trustworthy as it pertains to Sound Doctrine and that is the 66 books of

the Holy Bible. The problem with the Bible is that it isn't written in subject order. For example- Scriptures that teach about Salvation are not found in just one place- they are found from cover to cover in the Bible. So it remains our responsibility to "pull out" of Scripture from both the Old and New Testaments those verses that prove our stand on each Doctrinal Issue. And the "pulling out" of those Scriptures and the placing of those Scriptures in a systematic and cohesive and organized format is what is called, the development of a Doctrinal Statement or a Confession of Faith.

And that is precisely why all Doctrine; all holy reproof; all godly correction and all instruction in righteousness must come from the Bible and from the Bible alone. Because we do not have the right; nor did God give anyone the authority to create Doctrine based upon anything else but Scripture. And so we must all be very careful that we do not insert our own human reasoning; or our own worldly wisdom; or our own carnal pragmatism to the development of Doctrine. Our human logic has proven to be unreliable when it comes to Doctrinal issues.

And Church Doctrine should *never* be developed from visions or dreams or angelic visitations or prophecies. And Doctrine should not come from Church Councils or from bulls, writs or edicts from popes, elders, cardinals, bishops or pastors.

Church Doctrine should not come from Church tradition or from history or from science books or from social and cultural trends.

Church Doctrine should never come forth from golden tablets or from hidden codes or from other mystical sources- because we already have a Source that is both reliable and trustworthy from which we can develop Doctrine. We already have a Source that has been time tested and proven. We already have a Source that is the *only* Source that exists on the face of the earth that came directly out of the very Mind and Heart and Mouth of God. And this Source was literally exhaled by the Owner and the Creator of the Universe. This Source is inspired. This Source is infallible. This one single Source is inerrant, and it is eternal, and it is authoritative, and it is relevant. And that one single Source from which all Church Doctrine should come is the 66 Books of the Holy Bible.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

© 2007- 2023 by Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America
Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from The New American Standard Bible © 1995 by The Lockmann Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse Journey through the Epistle of 1John. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.