



1 JOHN: Light . Life . Love

Beautiful God

1 John 1:1-4

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The Father revealed in Jesus Christ is the most Beautiful Person in the universe – purely generous, good, loving and trustworthy. If you are in Christ, He is for you and with you

I. Trusting God as Our Refuge and Strength (Psalm 46:1-2)

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." Corrie Ten Boom

The fight of faith over fear is moving from the "what if ..." question to the "Who is in control?" question.

II. Jesus Christ Supremely Reveals God to Us (1 John 1:1-3, John 14:5-11)

A. Jesus reveals God to us, because He is the Eternal Son (1 John 1:3, John 14:7-10)

B. Jesus reveals God ultimately as Father (1 John 1:3, John 14:7-10)

John's favorite way of expressing our salvation (1 John 1:3b).

Jesus teaches us that it's the Father's generosity and love that is behind all creation and salvation.

"You are the son[daughter] of a kind, strong, and engaged Father, a Father wise enough to guide you in the Way, generous enough to provide for your journey, offering to walk with you every step. This is perhaps the hardest thing for us to believe – really believe, down deep in our hearts, so that it changes us forever, changes the way we approach each day." John Eldredge, "Fathered by God"

C. Jesus reveals God as an eternal community of pure love and joy (John 17:13, 24, 26)

Trinity: One God, Three Persons (profound mystery, but revealed mystery)

"In the deepest mystery of His being God is an intimate relationship, a fellowship, a community of love." Darrel Johnson, "Experiencing the Trinity"

"The love and goodness of the triune God is the source of all love and goodness. . . . Indeed, in the triune God is the love behind all love, the life behind all life, the music behind all music, the beauty behind all beauty and the joy behind all joy." Michael Reeves, "Delighting in the Trinity"

III. The Battle for Our Hearts and Truth (Genesis 3:1-5)

The most basic temptation we are always presented by Satan is whether God is truly good, loving and trustworthy.

Q: How will we answer that question? Our answer has profound implications for our lives, and that is never more obvious than in times of great uncertainty, like now.

The Old Testament is full of men and women who saw enough of God's glory to know He was worthy of their devotion and trust. David was given enough revelation of God to see that He was truly the most Beautiful Person in the world (Psalm 27:4, 8).

Even David couldn't see or know God the way Jesus the Son knows Him.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

*"In the deepest mystery of His being God is an intimate relationship, a fellowship, a community of love."
Darrel Johnson, "Experiencing the Trinity"*

You will not find the word "Trinity" anywhere in the Bible, but the reality of the Trinity hinted at in the Old Testament is on virtually every page of the New Testament. When we wrestle with the Trinity, we are clearly wrestling with a profound mystery revealed in Jesus Christ the Son of God. Michael Reeves says, "God is a mystery in that who he is and what he is like are secrets, things we would never have worked out by ourselves. But this triune God has revealed himself to us." Dr. Paul Jewett says, "The church did not formulate the doctrine of the Trinity in order to resolve the mystery of God's self-revelation, but rather to preserve the mystery."

*"But even the most basic call to believe in the Son of God (John 20:31) is an invitation to a Trinitarian faith. Jesus is described as the Son of God. God is his Father. And he is the Christ, the one anointed by the Spirit. When you start with the Jesus of the Bible, it is a triune God that you get."
Michael Reeves, "Delighting in the Trinity"*

The basic idea of the Trinity is that there is One God existing in Three Persons. The doctrine preserves three basic truths which emerge from God's self-revelation:

1. There is one God, and only one.
2. This God not only exists, but exists eternally in three distinct Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. The three Persons are equally divine in their essence and attributes.

Attempts to try to understand this profound mystery have led to three errors. The first is "modalism," which sees God as one Person, but three different modes or moods. The One God comes to us in different modes in the same way water can be ice, liquid or steam. A common articulation of modalism is the claim that God revealed Himself as Father in the Old Testament, as the Son in the New Testament times, and as the Spirit in the church era. The modalist is left with a deeply confused God and no assurance of salvation.

The second common heresy is "subordinationism," which views the Father as inherently divine, but the Son and the Spirit possess a subordinate kind of divinity. Arius was the first to contend that Jesus Christ was not fully God, but the Father's

first creation and the One through whom God created everything else. Arius' famous line was "there was a time when the Son was not."

The third common heresy is "tri-theism," which is really three Gods that get along really well. This is what Muslims accuse Christians of believing.

All of these errors illustrate the need of holding together all three basic truths of the doctrine of the Trinity.

"...the Father, Son and Spirit, while distinct persons, are absolutely inseparable from each other. Not confused, but undividable. They are who they are together. They always are together, and thus they always work together." Michael Reeves, "Delighting in the Trinity"

The reality of the Trinity is what distinguishes Christianity from every other religion, spirituality and philosophy. The greatest theologians and thinkers in the church have recognized the doctrine of the Trinity as the center and foundation of all Christian theology.

"Perhaps the most important difference between Christianity and all other religions is that in Christianity God is not a static thing – not even a person – but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama.

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The words 'God is love' have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single Person, then before the world was made, He was not love." C.S. Lewis