

Trinity Sunday 2022

Let's say for a moment that we are the children of Abraham, earthly descendants of Isaac and Jacob and King David. What is it that we don't like about Jesus? For starters, He violates our sacred traditions and laws. He works on our Sabbath, He disrespects our sacrificial system, He ransacks our Temple and tears down our elite covenantal status. What else? Well, there is the whole Messianic prophecy being fulfilled in Himself proclamation. He walks around our cities arrogating to Himself our Messianic hopes and dreams. He recasts the Messiah in His own image and likeness using our sacred writings to describe Himself. Is that it? Is there anything else about Him, which sets our teeth on edge? Yes, I do believe there is. We have saved the worst for last. Strike one: He is lawbreaker. Strike two: He claims to be the Messiah. Strike three: He reinterprets our understanding of God. This last strike against Him is of the gravest nature. It is the highest form of sacrilege. For we come from a chosen race, we are the chosen children of God; our ancestors personally walked with God, talked with God, communed with God. If anyone knows God intimately it is us. And what we know about God does not square with how Jesus is describing Him. God to us is and always will be One. He is immutable, indivisible, eternal. Our writings proclaim as much, "Hear O' Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." God is transcendent, dwelling in unapproachable light. And He is absolutely, unequivocally not three. He is singular in nature. God might take on different forms and be seen in a burning bush, a whirlwind, an earthquake, a pillar of fire by night or a pillar of cloud by day or even in the form of an avenging Angel. But these are but shadows and in no way implies He is divisible into separate parts or individual persons. He is one God now and forever. But that is not what Jesus is saying. This nobody from nowhere is claiming that God is now and always has been three separate persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But here's where it gets really strange. He is saying God is three, but then in the very next breath, He says God is one. Whatever does He mean by this: one God in substance, but three in persons. This is ludicrous, this is blasphemous. If that were not enough, He implies that of the three persons of the Trinity, He Himself is actually one of them—Enfleshed, embodied, incarnated God. I've heard others make similar claims about their gods. The Roman soldiers and statesmen who roam about our country uninvited and unwanted, they too have similar stories to tell. Their gods are crass and materialistic and downright sinful. They take the shapes of all kinds of earthly, created beings in order to work out their own dark fantasies on earth. Yes,

Jesus' God sounds more Roman than Jewish. There's more of Jupiter than Jehovah about Him. He is not God incarnated, but demonically possessed. Our ancestors warned us of such mania. We must avoid Jesus. We must plug our ears to His message. We must join our clansmen in discrediting Him, disparaging Him, removing Him by any means necessary. He is disruptive and radical. His message is offensive. Yes, He must be silenced.

But then there's something about Him. It's hard to put it into words. There's just something extra-ordinary in the way He speaks. He speaks with authority, but never condescending. His words gesture at ancient mysteries, of time grown old and yet eternally youthful, they are shaped and formed in ways, which are not of this world. There's something about His presence. It's like nothing you have ever experienced: a stillness, a calmness, a loving embrace. He moves through space and time, and yet the universe yields to His touch. Nothing on earth entices Him, and yet He is personally concerned for every living creature. He carries the weight of the world on His shoulders, but He does so with grace and understanding. There's something in His eyes. In His eyes you can see the infinite spread out before you. It's like they have seen everything that has been or ever will be in a single glance. His eyes look through you and you feel exposed like they know everything about you; His eyes look at you, but you don't feel judged, you feel safe like nothing can harm you. You want to hate Him. You need to hate him in order to protect your family's heritage, to preserve social harmony. But you can't. Something pulls you, compels you even. His followers call it the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet another person of this so-called Trinity. They also call it faith. An indescribable force that pushes you onwards and yet you never move. A risky leap in which your feet never leave the ground. A reckless abandon of yourself that leaves you feeling more human and alive than you have ever felt. To give in means leaving everything, to give up means losing everything. To yield means your whole world will be turned upside down: everything you know and love will be abandoned to follow Him. But the high cost of discipleship doesn't seem too costly. For all the securities and all the earthly pleasures of the world seem as nothing compared to just one moment in His kingdom. The choice is yours and yet for some strange reason there doesn't seem to be any choice at all. What is has already past, understood and known in an eternal moment, fated from the foundations of the world. Faith itself is really choosing not to choose. Choosing not ourselves, but confessing that we are nothing until we are made something by God's choice and design. Who is this Jesus? Is He God or just a man? Is He really who He says He is? You know. You've always known. Amen.