

October 13, 2021

The Economic Trinity: The Works of God in Creation and Redemption

1. The Purpose of Revelation in the Economic Trinity

General Revelation (Seen in the work of Creation)

Special Revelation (Seen in the work of Redemption)

Discussion Points

- If the purpose of God's revelation is for us to truly know God, then we can be sure that we can truly know God for who he is based on how he has revealed himself.
- The work of creation and redemption does not change God's essence, but shows us God's essence.
- Because we can see how the subsistence's of the One God relates to each other as Father, Son, and Spirit all throughout Scripture (his special revelation), we can know they have always related to each other this way before creation (because he is unchanging).
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2. The Undivided Work of God in Creation

From God the Father Creation Happened

- *Genesis 1:1* – "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."
- *Romans 11:36* – "For *from him* and *through him* and *to him* are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
- *1 Corinthians 8:6* – "Yet for us there is one God, the *Father, from whom* are all things and from whom we exist, and one Lord, *Jesus Christ, through whom* are all things and *through whom* we exist.

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Through God the Son Creation Happened

- *John 1:1-3* – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made *through him*, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- *John 1:10* – “He was in the world, and the world was made *through him*, yet the world did not know him.
- *Colossians 1:16* – “For *by him* all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created *through him and for him*.”
- *Hebrews 1:10* – “And, You, Lord [referring to Christ], laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning and the heavens are the work of your hands.”

By/In God the Spirit Creation Happened

- *Genesis 1:2* – “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”
- *Psalms 33:6* – “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and *by the breath* of his mouth all their host.”

Augustine (354-430) – “Not that the Father should be understood to have made one part of the whole creation and the Son another and the Holy Spirit yet another, but that each and every nature has been made simultaneously *by* the Father *through* the Son, *in* the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Every particular thing, you see, has simultaneously about it these three: that it is one something, and that it is distinguished by its own proper look or species from other things, and that it does not overstep the order of things.”

Discussion Points

- The Father is described as the one from whom all things come in creation, yet he does it through the Son (making the Son also creator, but not a distinct creator), and by the Spirit (as the Spirit applies the work of creation as he hovers over the waters).
- The Son is called creator because he is the one God with the Father because all of creation happened through him and without him was not anything made that was made.
- The Spirit is less visible in creation, but we do see him present. It is by the breath of God (his Spirit) creation was accomplished.
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3. The Undivided Work of God in Redemption

From God the Father Redemption Occurs

- *John 1:14* – “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as the only Son *from the Father*, full of grace and truth.”
- *John 6:65* – “And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him *by the Father*.”
- *2 Corinthians 5:18* – “All this is *from God, who through Christ* reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”
- *Ephesians 1:5* – “He [the Father] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”
- *1 Peter 1:3* – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, *he has caused us to be born again* to the living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.”

Through God the Son Redemption Occurs

- *John 1:17* – “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came *through Jesus Christ*.”
- *John 3:16-17* – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved *through him*.”
- *Romans 3:21-25a* – “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – the righteousness of God *through faith in Jesus Christ* for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward* as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.”
- *Romans 5:21* – “So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life *through Jesus Christ* our Lord.”
- *1 Thessalonians 5:9* – “For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation *through our Lord Jesus Christ*.”

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- *Through Christ* – Romans 5:1, 17; 7:4, 25; 10:17; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 1:5; 3:4, 14; Galatians 1:12; Philippians 1:13; Hebrews 10:10; 13:21; 1 Peter 2:5; 3:21, 4:11; Jude 1:25

By/In God the Spirit Redemption Occurs

- *Romans 8:9* – “You, however, are not in the flesh but *in the Spirit*, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”
- *Romans 8:14* – “For all who are led *by the Spirit* of God are sons of God.”
- *1 Corinthians 6:11* – “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and *by the Spirit* of our God.”
- *Galatians 5:18* – “But if you are led *by the Spirit*, you are not under the law.”
- *Ephesians 2:22* – “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God *by the Spirit*.”
- *Titus 3:5-6* – “He saved us... according to his own mercy, *by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

Discussion Points

- The external works of God, to reveal himself, looks like the Father causing things through the Son and by/in the Spirit.
- This means the Father initiates the work, the son accomplishes the work, and the Spirit applies the work.
- Or you can say, the Father initiates the work and accomplishes it through the Son and by in Spirit.
- Or you can say, the Son accomplishes the work that is initiated from the Father by the Spirit.
- Or you can say, the Spirit applies the work from the Father that is completed through the Son.
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Developing a Theological Vocabulary - taken from the glossary from Matthew Barrett's book *Simply Trinity*.

1. *Ontological/Imminent* – “The Trinity in and of itself, apart from creation and salvation.”
2. *Functional/Economic* – “God’s operations toward the created order (creation, providence, or redemption). God reveals his triune identity by means of the economy, but is not constituted by the economy.”
3. *Begotten* – “To come forth, to proceed. The Son is eternally begotten from the Father’s essence. Only the Son is begotten. Other terms: eternal generation
4. *Spiration* – “Reflects the name ‘Spirit.’ The Spirit is spirated, eternally breathed out by the Father and Son. Since the Spirit is not another Son, he is not begotten but spirated.
5. *Subsistence* – “Another way to referring to a divine person. The one, simple divine essence subsists or exists in three persons. Each person is a subsisting relation of the divine essence. The divine essence has three modes of subsistence.
6. *Eternal Relations of Origin* – “Distinguishes how each person is related to another, identifying the everlasting provenance (principle/origin/source) from which each person proceeds. Paternity: the Father is unbegotten (without origin), and therefore the eternal origin of the Son. Filiation: the Son’s origin is the Father, begotten (generated) from the Father’s essence from all eternity. Spiration: the Father and the Son are the origin of the Spirit, spirating the Spirit from all eternity. The relations alone distinguish the persons, identifying each person’s personal property. Another phrase, essence of God eternally subsists in each person. Hence, persons are subsisting relations.”

Reflection From The Week:

- With the doctrine of inseparable operations in mind, reflect/write on how God’s revelation makes a way for us to respond to God in worship with Ephesians 2:18 in mind.

Preparation For Next Week:

- Read - <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/worship-god-as-our-father>
- Listen - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueWpzCBuRNE>

Resources For Going Further:

Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*