**A Positive ID of the One True God**

Based on [John 8:48-59](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn8.48-59)

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The Holy Trinity

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The other day I was at the clinic. They were going to do a test and as I was in the waiting room they called my first name. I got up and began to follow the nurse, and as we were walking back she looked at her clipboard asked me what my last name was. At first I thought, **"good grief, didn’t my doctor give you that info when he set up the appointment?"** Of course he did and she knew it. She was just wanting to make sure that I was the right "Nathan." If I had responded with the wrong last name, she’d get test results from the wrong patient. Moreover, if I didn’t know my last name to say it, I could just be scamming her. Anybody can claim to be somebody else, but when it comes to something important, you need to make a positive ID.

Today is Trinity Sunday, the day we take time to reflect upon the fact that the God of the Bible is “The Holy Trinity.” God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **The one true God is triune, that is three persons in one God and it is necessary for you to confess this to get a positive ID of the God you worship and adore.** Every worship service you have been summoned from the waiting room of the world to worship the one true God. Imagine you didn’t have the Apostle’s Creed, or the Nicene Creed, or the creed we will confess today, the Athanasian Creed. **Imagine instead you were asked “who is the God you worship?” If you need to know your own name to prove to the world who you are; how much more do you need to know the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit to prove to the world who your God really is?** If you don’t know the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, how can anyone make a positive ID that you are a Christian, that you worship the God of the Bible and not some other god you made up in your idolatrous heart? If you don’t know the Name of the true God, as far as I know, you could just be scamming.

The Athanasian Creed that we are about to confess is long, but that’s only because it’s thorough. It describes God, and it also says at length how we are not to describe God. And it says something quite sobering; “**All who desire to be saved**” must confess what it confesses about God. Just think about that as you’re about to roll your eyes at the length of this creed. Knowing in biblical detail who God is and who he isn’t is a matter of eternal life and eternal death.

And why shouldn’t we seek to know God as fully as he allows us to; as fully as humanly possible? We all have our interests. My brother reads archery magazines religiously. Elvis fans take an interest to know every detail of his life and his death. And if someone has a new story, or some new documentary comes out that reveals even more about the King, well the true fan takes an interest, and takes pleasure in knowing Elvis even more fully. How much more should we seek after full knowledge of the God we worship and adore, and eagerly receive every nugget of wisdom from God, the full revelation of the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit…so that we might believe with our hearts and confess with our lips the God who we claim to be our own. After all, some of the most sobering words Jesus ever said were these from Matthew 7:21, “**Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven.**”

In today’s Gospel lesson, Jesus is having a conversation with “the Jews.” In particular, he is speaking to those who claim to know God through Abraham their father. They are saying, "**The God of Abraham, that's our God."** But the truth is, they don't really know Abraham's God, because he's standing right there before them. Jesus says, "**Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day and he was glad.**" Jesus says to them, "**Before Abraham was, I am**." Jesus says, I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob. He says elsewhere to these Jews who put their hope in Moses, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). The Jews, they hung their hat on mediators, certain men who had relationships with the true God. **God chose Abraham from among the nations, Moses saw God face to face, so the Jews, they used their relation to Abraham, and their confession of Moses as a substitute for their relation to and confession of the true God.** But what Jesus teaches us is that there is only one mediator between God and man, and that is himself.

I have a mediator between myself and Canada revenue, maybe you do to. She's an accountant. She is not Canada revenue, but she can talk to them for me, tell me what to say to them. I am not particularly interested in getting to know the CRA**. I would never spend my days off going to tax seminars. If I needed to know something for my own taxes, I would ask her and expect a succinct answer, not a history of the whole tax code.** And what's perhaps the most important, she not only does my taxes, she signs them, so that if there's a mistake she's accountable. She is a mediator like Abraham was a mediator and like Moses was a mediator. They were mediators to the Jews, and the Jews used them like I used my accountant. The problem is that knowing Abraham is not the same as knowing God. Knowing Moses is not the same as knowing God. Knowing your accountant is not the same as knowing the tax code. ... But knowing Jesus is the same as knowing God. That's why as scripture says, "**For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ**" (1 Timothy 2:5).

These Jews claimed to worship the God of their father Abraham. But Jesus says to them, **"...you have not know [the Father]. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word**" (John 8:55). These Jews, they did not have eternal life, for Jesus says as he prays to his Father, "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3).

Ladies and gentlemen, hear this. You do not have eternal life by joining the right church, or having the right pastor, or having been raised in the right household. You have eternal life by having the right God. And there is only one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, unity in trinity and trinity in unity..the one and only triune God.

The God of Islam and of the Jehovah’s witnesses and of the present day Jews is not triune, and their followers do not have eternal life. The God of Mormonism is not Triune. **The God of liberal American religion, and the gods of other pagan and world religions are not Triune.** They do not have eternal life. Only orthodox Christianity professes the Triune God, and only they/we have eternal life. **And Jesus Christ is the mediator, the gateway, the bridge connecting us to the triune God and inviting all nations to the ends of the earth into fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, through the Son.** On the one hand Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father except through me" and on the other hand he says, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Today we will confess the Athanasian Creed, and it's a serious business. But don't be frightened. **You do not enter into eternal life by knowing the Athanasian Creed, but rather by knowing the God this creed confesses.** You can know Abraham and not know this God, You can know your church family and not know this God, you can know your church heritage and not know this God. But when you know Jesus, you know this Triune God.

Just before his death at the Last Supper, Jesus was teaching his twelve disciples, and he said this. "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.**"

You have not seen Jesus like his first disciples, but you do know him, because you have his Word. **And because you know him, you know the Trinity. For who knows of a Son without a Father? And what family, bonded in love does not share the same Spirit?** When you were born, you were given your fathers last name because he gave you life and a family. When you were married, you took your husbands last name, because you became one flesh to start a new life and family. You are baptized into the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three persons, one Name, one God.

And that Name has become your true surname so that, when the Lord calls you from the waiting room of this world and asks by what Name do you presume to enter eternal life. **Not your surname, nor your church name, nor your given name will do.** You will stand before the mercy seat of God and give him a positive ID by bearing witness to your true family name...the Name that is above all names, the Name of Jesus Christ who is equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity. Although He is God and man, he is not two, but one Christ...who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead. At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds. And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire. This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

This is most certainly true.