

Trinity Sunday  
June 16th, 2019  
Pastor Matthew Ude

**John 8:48-59 NKJ** <sup>48</sup> Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" <sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. <sup>50</sup> "And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. <sup>51</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." <sup>52</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' <sup>53</sup> "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?" <sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. <sup>55</sup> "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. <sup>56</sup> "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." <sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." <sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

### **The Only Name Of Salvation**

Jesus is the only name given under heaven by which men might be saved. Because it is the name of salvation it is essential that we recognize the truth of who and what Jesus is.

1700 years ago there was a man who called Jesus by a different name. His name was Arius. He did not give Jesus the honor that was due him for he claimed that Jesus was not the one eternal God but was a created being one step lower than the Father. Many believed him. For this reason the council of Nicea was called. They condemned Arius and wrote the Nicene Creed to combat the false teachings of Arius. Later they also wrote the Athanasian Creed and later still others decided that the first Sunday after Pentecost would be Trinity Sunday. That day, this day would serve as a constant reminder of the false teaching of Arius and the truth of the Trinity.

And so we have Trinity Sunday. Many of you know it as that super annoying Sunday when you sometimes have to speak the entirety of the Athanasian Creed. But there is a good reason for using and knowing the Athanasian Creed. Yet simply reciting it doesn't help. The Creed has a purpose and if we are going to recite it we had better make sure we understand it and its purpose.

The first question many might have about the Athanasian Creed is the opening line: "Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the Catholic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally." So that sounds pretty serious. In fact some of you might be thinking that sounds a little too serious. A little scary even. Do we really mean it when we say whoever does not agree with the Athanasian Creed has no hope of salvation?

Actually most of you probably already think in line with the Athansian creed even if you don't realize it. Let me give you some examples of people who deny the Athansian creed: Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Unitarians. Now some examples of people who do not deny the Athansian creed: Most Baptists, Catholics, Anglican, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran's, Evangelicals etc. Notice that this second group are those you already recognize as being basically Christian. The first group are those you probably already recognize as not Christian even though they say they are.

The point here is that even you didn't know you probably already in your mind were making the same distinction that the creed makes. Most people recognize Mormons and JW as not Christian even though they claim to be. By the same token most people recognize Baptists and Anglican, even the Seventh Day Adventist as a different branch of Christians, in which Christ is followed even if they are wrong about things like baptism etc. Thus according the Athansian creed it is possible for a Baptist to be saved but not a Mormon. That is really all that we are saying when we confess, "Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally."

Now an even more important question: is it biblical? Our text offers over and over again definite proofs of Christ's eternal deity. This is a good text to keep on hand whenever a Jehovah Witness or a Mormon knocks on your door.

In verse 51, Jesus calls it "My word." Think about what He is saying when He calls it my word. He takes the entirety of scripture and claims it as His own. In so doing He clearly claims the name of Jehovah as His own.

In verse 58, He says, "Before Abraham was, I AM" He not only claims to have existed prior to Abraham but indeed claims to be the one who spoke to Abraham. I AM is here the personal name of God. The name God gave to Moses in the burning bush. I AM is the name Jehovah. If this were to be translated, "I was" or "I have been" (which is how the JW translate it), then it would mean nothing more than what Jesus has already claimed. For he already claimed to have seen Abraham. Yet the Jews do not fly into a rage when he merely claims to be older than Abraham, they only ridicule him. But when he claims for himself the name of God then the Jews recognized that he was claiming not just to be really old, but to in fact be Jehovah. The God who spoke to Moses from the burning bush.

Jesus is the only name given under heaven by which men must be saved. The Jews also call Jesus a name. They call him a demon and a Samaritan. In this they are no different from us. This is one of the first tricks we learn as little children. IF you don't like what someone else is saying but you don't have a good reason for it, call them a name. Imply their head is made out of human waste. Attack them so that you don't have to listen. If we criticize Jesus, or his word, or even the pastor that brings that word, then we think we have an excuse not to listen. We think that we have an excuse to do what we want. Yet when we destroy His name we also destroy our hope of salvation.

Thus the creed insists on calling Jesus by His correct name. Making sure that we know that Jesus is true God equal to the Father with authority both to judge and to save. We can acknowledge who He is, repent of our sins and believe. Or we can deny him and die in our sins. Notice that both the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses do this. By brining Christ lower even a little bit, they allow the possibility of man to earn his own salvation.

So our text makes it clear that Jesus is true God. Our text also makes it clear that if you deny Jesus there is no chance of salvation. As we said in the creed: "Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally."

In verse 55 For He says of the Jews, "you have not know Him." Because they rejected Jesus they have no part with the Father. Thus Jesus himself claims, whoever does not recognize him as true God equal to the Father, has no part with God and has no salvation.

**John 5:23** "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

The Greek word "kathos" which here is translated "just as" could also be translated, "to the same degree." Thus Jesus tells us that if we do not give him all the honor and recognize him as equal to the Father , we are not worshipping the Father either.

Indeed the one word which we have from the Father is this, "this is my beloved son, hear him." Thus the Father also concurs with the Son that those who do not recognize Jesus as true God equal to the Father are condemned

This is the irony of the Jehovah's Witness. Their very name implies that they are here to be the correct witness to who and what Jehovah is. But they deny that Jesus is Jehovah, despite the fact that this is exactly what Jesus claims here in our text.

Notice also in verse 50 "I do not seek my own glory, There is One who seeks and judges" The implication here is that Father seeks to glorify His Son Jesus Christ and whoever does not honor Jesus Christ will be judged.

Salvation comes through Jesus Christ. This is the reason that Jesus was sent into the world. This is the reason that Abraham rejoiced to see Christ. He knew Salvation came through Jesus Christ even if he didn't know as much as we do

When I was in high school physics class we had to judge our own assignment. That is hard to do because you want to simply say, "A." But if you aren't honest the teacher isn't going to give you a bad grade in how you judge yourself.

Abraham judged himself correctly. He knew what grade to give his life, "F." And therefore He rejoiced to see Christ who did the project for him. Jesus who lived for us and died and received an A which A is given to us.

Thus the Athanasian creed teaches us to judge correctly, who is Christ and who we are. So that recognize both our sin and His righteousness. We might believe who is the eternal God yet become man to save us. And believing we might have life in His name.

Amen