

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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**THREE IN ONE**

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Television was one of the greatest inventions of the last Century. It has become one of the essentials of life, something that few of us can ever remember being without. I have to say I don't watch a huge amount of television but it does provide a useful source of entertainment from time to time. For many people during the lock-down, especially for those who have been shielding, it has been a vital link with the outside world. Even the younger ones amongst us who are abandoning traditional televisions in favour of getting information on their phones or tablets have to acknowledge that the screen on the phone or tablet owes its existence to the fact that television had gone before.

Television started life as a grainy black and white image on a small but very heavy screen. It has been developed over the years, firstly into a colour version and then later into the flat liquid crystal version and the LED version that has now been used for everything from massive cinema sized monstrosities to the tiniest screens on phones gadgets and games.

Now most of the early development of television was done by a man called John Logie Baird. He wasn't the original inventor but he is credited with making the first working television that could be useful. He also went on to invent the first colour television and it is this part of the story I want to focus on.

John was the son of a Church of Scotland minister, also called John Baird, and was raised in a Christian environment. He went to Sunday school and attended the church where father ministered. Although John later declared himself to be agnostic, it was his bible knowledge that helped him with his invention of the colour television.

John knew that God is light, and also that God is three in one, so he reasoned that light could be split into 3 parts. This was not obvious, because the one time that people would have seen light split, was in a rainbow where the light splits into 7 parts. This would have been too much to incorporate into the fledgeling technology but 3 parts would be manageable.

Now this reminds us that the one true inventor is God himself. If anything is important in life the answers will be found in the bible.

So this leads me nicely into the question; Why do we say that God is three in one? And we might also ask; How does this help with our understanding of the Bible? Understanding the Trinity is not the easiest thing to do but as Christians we should at least try.

One thing is for sure, understanding the Bible helps us to piece together the different stories in the Bible and in doing so it brings the Bible to life. Understanding it as a whole puts the Bible into colour, just as John Logie Baird was trying to do with television.

In the Old Testament God gave some clues that He was not a singular God. In Genesis chapter 1 and verse 26 He says "Let US make man in OUR own image" In Isaiah chapter 48 verse 16 it says "come closer, and listen to what I have to say. From the beginning I have told you plainly what would happen. And now the Sovereign Lord and his Spirit have sent me with this message" In this verse we can clearly see two parts of God, God the Father and the Holy Spirit, but who is the one being sent? This would not have been clear at the time of writing but with the hindsight we now have we can understand that the one who was sent was Jesus, the Son.

When Jesus was being baptised we can see another appearance of all three persons of the Trinity. Jesus was, of course, present physically and this is how Matthew describes the event in Chapter 3 "After His baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened up and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said 'This is my dearly beloved Son, who brings me great joy'" So we can see that God the Father is speaking and God the Holy Spirit is descending and God the Son is standing in the river Jordan. Here we can see the three separate persons of God all present at the same time.

At the end of Matthews gospel as Jesus was giving his final instructions He told His disciples to baptise people in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul repeated this idea at the end of his second letter to the Corinthian Church saying "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all"

So from this we can see that God has 3 distinct persons so how do we know that God is not 3 different Gods?

There are plenty of scriptures that tell us that God is singular. Isaiah 45:5 "I am the Lord, there is no other God" Isaiah 44:6 "I am the first and the last, there is no other God" Deuteronomy 6:4 "Listen O Israel, The Lord is our God, the Lord alone" and in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 8:4 "There is only one God" and 1 Timothy 2:5 "There is only one God"

So God is one but God is also three, the three are all the same but are all different, the three are unified but they act independently.

It is not surprising that this is quite difficult to get your head round.

The early church fathers also struggled with this idea and came up with the following definitions which still hold true today.

" The trinity is three distinct persons who exist co-eternally in the Godhead. We should recognise that the Father is not the Son or the Spirit, the Son is not the Father or the Spirit and the Spirit is not the Father or the Son"

Then "The Father, Son and Holy Spirit all share the exact same nature with each other. Just as the Father is eternal, so the Son and the Spirit are eternal. Just as the Father is love, the Son and the Spirit are love. Just as the Father is all knowing so the Son and the Spirit are all knowing"

So where John Logie Baird applied the idea of 3 in 1 to his television perhaps we should apply a different aspect of this lesson. As Christians we should all seek the same level of unity. If we truly love one another this would happen without us even realising it.

As a final thought I will just mention one more thing about John Logie Baird. During the time that he was working on his inventions he had a workshop in an outbuilding next to his home. And what was this building? It was an old Coach House!



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