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CHURCH HISTORY MONTHLY

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Timeline of Topics

-Quote

---Benedict of Nursia's "73 Commandments" (d. 550): In a first for the newsletter, the quote covers the entire second page

-Early Church

---Who coined the word "Trinity"?

Trinitas Bible Institute Summer Class

"Christian Maturity: A study in the Christian Spiritual Classics"

Date: Begins June 5

Length: 8 weeks

Cost: Free

Prerequisites: None, Enough time to reflect on what you read and being in a spiritual place in your life where you are not hindered by many outside distractions or problems.

In this class, we will examine 10 of the most loved Spiritual Classics from the years 300 to 1800. Unlike other classes I offer, this one does come with a warning: This does not contain current devotional literature but is intended only for those who find themselves wanting deeper spiritual teachings than they have been able to find. If you are satisfied with your current devotional reading, then do not take this class. If you would like to chat about it, just let me know.

Questions, comments, or want to join a free class contact Mark at marknickens@gmail.com

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Trinity: The word is not in the Bible, so who coined it?

You may hard that the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible, and that is true. To be sure, the idea is there, probably stated most prominently by Jesus in Matthew 28: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (NIV) Yet the word "Trinity" itself is not in the Bible.

So from were did it come? Two sources, actually: Theophilus (lived in the 100s) headed toward the word, but it is in Tertullian's (160-225) writing that we see the word for the first time. They both wrote apologies, which is a term used in Christianity to describe a written defense of Christianity. Theophilus wrote an apology in three books (long letters) to his friend Autolyucus. In this second book, in the fifteenth chapter, Theophilus explained how God created the world. Once he gets to the fourth day [when God created the sun, moon, and stars], Theophilus compares the first three days to God. He states: "In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries (sun, moon, and stars in the fourth day), are types of the "trias", of God, and His Word, and His Wisdom." "Trias" means to have three parts, like a triad. So, Theophilus did not come up with the word "Trinity," but was headed in the right direction. Tertullian eventually coined the word we are looking for. In his book "On Modesty" he mentions the word in chapter 21. Toward the end of that chapter he describes the church and then makes this statement: "For the very Church itself is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Tertullian wrote this book in Latin and the word he used is "Trinitas," which is "Trinity" in English. So there you have it. The word "Trinity" is not in the Bible, but the idea is; the word came later as the early Christians tried to explain the concept of 3 in 1.

A long devotional from the AD 500's: 73 Commandments

Benedict of Nursia (480-550) spent his life building and reforming monasteries and developing a manual, known as a Rule, which would stabilize the life of monks. Yet, although his "Rule" was intended for monks, the sixth chapter gives instructions on how to live a godly life which would apply to all Christians. [Some are directed to those living in the middle ages, such as 17, when not everyone received this, while others are beautiful brief statements of wisdom, such as 50.)

"(1) In the first place to love the Lord God with the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole strength. (2) Then, one's neighbor as one's self. (3) Then, not to kill. (4) Not to commit adultery. (5) Not to steal. (6) Not to covet. (7) Not to bear false witness. (8) To honor all people. (9) And what one would not have done to himself, not to do to another. (10) To deny one's self in order to follow Christ. (11) To chastise the body. (12) Not to seek after pleasures. (13) To love fasting. (14) To relieve the poor. (15) To clothe the naked. (16) To visit the sick. (17) To bury the dead. (18) To help those in trouble. (19) To console the sorrowing. (20) To hold one's self aloof from world ways. (21) To prefer nothing to the love of Christ. (22) Not to give way to anger. (23) Not to foster a desire for revenge. (24) Not to entertain deceit in the heart. (25) Not to make a false peace. (26) Not to forsake charity. (27) Not to swear, lest one swear falsely. (28) To speak the truth with heart and tongue. (29) Not to return evil for evil. (30) To do no injury, even more, to bear patiently the injury done to us. (31) To love one's enemies. (32) Not to curse them that curse us, but rather to bless them. (33) To bear persecution for justice sake. (34) Not to be proud. (35) Not to be given to wine. (36) Not to be a great eater. (37) Not to be drowsy. (38) Not to be slothful. (39) Not to be a murmurer. (40) Not to be a detractor. (41) To put one's trust in God. (42) To refer what good one sees in himself, not to self, but to God. (43) But as to any evil in himself, let him be convinced that it is his own and charge it to himself. (44) To fear the day of judgment. (45) To be in dread of hell. (46) To desire eternal life with all spiritual longing. (47) To keep death before one's eyes daily. (48) To keep a constant watch over the actions of our life. (49) To hold as certain that God sees us everywhere. (50) To dash at once against Christ the evil thoughts which rise in one's heart. (51) And to disclose them to our spiritual father. (52) To guard one's tongue against bad and wicked speech. (53) Not to love much speaking. (54) Not to speak useless words and such as provoke laughter. (55) Not to love much or boisterous laughter. (56) To listen willingly to holy reading. (57) To apply one's self often to prayer. (58) To confess one's past sins to God daily in prayer with sighs and tears, and to amend them for the future. (59) Not to fulfill the desires of the flesh. (60) To hate one's own will. (61) To obey the commands of the Abbot [the leader of the monks] in all matters, even though he himself (which Heaven forbid) act otherwise, mindful of that precept of the Lord: 'What they say, do; what they do, do not do' (Mat 23:3). (62) Not to desire to be called holy before one is; but to be holy first, that one may be truly so called. (63) To fulfill daily the commandments of God by works. (64) To love chastity. (65) To hate no one. (66) Not to be jealous; not to entertain envy. (67) Not to love strife. (68) Not to love pride. (69) To honor the aged. (70) To love the younger. (71) To pray for one's enemies in the love of Christ. (72) To make peace with an adversary before the setting of the sun. (73) And never to despair of God's mercy."