

**Sermon Summary**  
**Trinity Sunday**  
**19<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

- The Great Commission at the end of Matthew's Gospel is a great text to bait Jehovah's Witnesses, who deny that Jesus was God.
- Most of the debates of the early church focus on this question, and a number of different answers jostled for position
- Orthodox Christians held that Jesus was both God and human
- Adoptionists argues that Jesus only became God's son when so named at the Baptism by John
- Docetists argued that Jesus only seemed to be human: an elaborate smoke and mirrors trick
- The answer is vitally important. Orthodox Christians are surely right to insist that Jesus is God and human. Because, if not, it makes God like one of those 1<sup>st</sup> World War generals who got others to do all their dirty work. At the heart of this we must ask: does or God get his own hands dirty, or send someone else as cannon fodder?
- The bulk of early church controversies are variations on such themes
- In their wisdom the Church Fathers formulated creeds which provided the boundaries within which a number of more precise beliefs might be incorporated. Anglicans tried to maintain this approach at the Reformation.
- Their approach was very different from the Reformers who, often demanding precise adherence to very specific doctrines, have provoked split after split in the churches they left behind. Check out any history of Calvinism or Presbyterianism.
- The Church Fathers ended up with the ring fence of the Nicene Creed which we say every Sunday.
- We used also to say the Athanasian creed, which includes the memorable, "The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible (9),.. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensible, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible (12)"
- I like that statement, but must qualify it. "Incomprehensible" means "beyond our power to comprehend", not gibberish.
- If we ever think we can comprehend God, we fool ourselves, make a little deity in our own image, and condemn ourselves to a spiritual life focussed on boredom- because there is nothing more to learn...
- An incomprehensible God always gives us something to look forward to....and new discoveries.

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