



“For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” II Peter 1:21.

God and His Word

Lesson Aim: The study of Articles I, 2, 3.

1. The Trinity of God. 2. The infallible and plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. 3. The Biblical account of creation.

L496. Date: January 1960. **Text:** Matthew 3:16-17; II Peter 1:15-21.

Topic: Bible: Revelation of; Creation; God: Nature of;

INTRODUCTION — Today, we begin a series of studies on Baptist doctrine. The thirteen lessons of this quarter will survey the Doctrinal Statement of the [Baptist Missionary] Association [of America]. These are the essential doctrines held by true Baptist churches everywhere. This study will be most profitable.

The Bible contains the revelation of God. Revelation is the understanding of truth concerning God which comes to man through God's own initiative and which is above what may be known of Him by the light of nature or reason. God is able to reveal Himself to man. All sacred books of all religions witness that such a revelation has been made. Natural revelation is imperfect and calls for the aid of supernatural revelation. Man is a sinner and cannot truly know God without the aid of supernatural (Divine) revelation. Every man has a spiritual longing which can be satisfied only by personal acquaintance with God. Besides this man needs a final authority to bear witness to the truth in matters of religion. These needs are answered in the Holy Bible.

The Bible is an authentic revelation of God. The Old Testament was established as reliable by the words of Christ Jesus, Luke 24:27, 44. The reliability of the New Testament is established by its competency, its uprightness, and its trustworthiness. Thus the Divine Authority of the Scriptures constitutes them the final court of appeal in all matters of

Christian faith and practice, Isaiah 8:20. This Book is to be read, studied, believed, and its instruction obeyed. It affords light to one's way and keeps one from sin, Psalm 119:11, 105.

EXPOSITION

I. God Is a Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Mathew 3:16-17.

The Trinity of God is His tripersonal existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word “trinity” comes from the Latin word *trinus* which means “threefold.” It means that God is composed of three persons whom we identify with “Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” This doctrine is difficult to understand but there can be no reasonable doubt but that it is taught in the Bible.

1. The Trinity is taught in the Old Testament. Plural names are used for God (being correctly translated “Gods” in Genesis 1:1). Plural pronouns are used of Deity, (see the use of “us” in Genesis 1:26; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8) Various theophanies as Genesis 16 and 18 identify the “Angel of the Lord” as both being God and being separate from God. The work of the Holy Spirit is clearly referred to in passages such as Genesis 1:2; Judges 6:34. It will be seen the doctrine is intimated, though nowhere expressly stated, in the Old Testament.

2. The Trinity is taught in the New Testament. The doctrine is here explicitly declared. (Space does not permit the printing of each Scripture reference. The student should use his Bible to read these.) (1) At the baptism of Christ the Father speaks from heaven, the Spirit descends like a dove, while the Son comes from the water, Matthew 3:16-17. (2) The baptismal formula Jesus gave us demands our baptizing converts “*in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost,*” Matthew 28:20. (3) The Apostolic benediction speaks of “*the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . love of God (Father) . . . communion of the Holy Ghost,*” II Corinthians 13:14. (4) Jesus teaches the Trinity when He (the Son) prays the Father to send the Holy Spirit, John 14:16. (5) The New Testament reveals a Father who is God, Romans 1:7; a Son who is God, Hebrews 1:8; a Holy Spirit who is God, Acts 5:3-4. (The student may wish to investigate these other passages: John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Luke 3:21-22; Acts 2:33.) Boardman has summed up the Trinity in these words: “The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead invisible, John 1:18; the Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested, John 1:14-18; the Spirit is all the fulness of the Godhead acting immediately upon the creature, I Corinthians 2:9-10.”

3. The three persons of the Trinity form perfect unity in the Godhead. They are each divine, John 1:1; Acts 5:3, 5. They have mutual knowledge and love, Matthew 11:27; I Corinthians 2:10; Matthew 3:17; John 3:35; 3:34; 5:30; Romans 8:27. Their offices are distinct and yet related, I Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 2:18-22. The Father, Son and Spirit are not three separate Gods (for thus we would be polytheists) but are one in essence so that the three are a perfect unity. "Three in One and One in Three." While the word "trinity" does not appear in the Scriptures, the teaching is unquestionably there.

4. The Trinity of God may be seen in comparison with natural things. Understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of revelation. No illustration can match it exactly. However, the Three as One may be seen in that ice, rain, and snow are all water; height, depth, and breadth are all dimensions of space; spirit, soul, and body compose a man. These, being three, unite perfectly in one. Thus, Father, Son and Spirit unite in the one God whom we worship and serve. This doctrine should be believed even if it is not clearly understood.

It has been held that in the Trinity God only appears to men in three forms. In the Old Testament He is Father; in the New Testament He is Son; in the Church Age He is Holy Spirit. This dispensational trinity cannot be proven by Scripture. God has eternally been a Trinity. There never was a time when He was not Father, Son and Spirit. This is an essential Christian doctrine. Let no one rob you of it.

II. The Bible Is the Inspired Word Of God, II Peter 1:15-21.

Revelation preceded the Bible. The Bible comes to us by virtue of the fact that God gave a revelation to men. This revelation, as it concerns the Bible, is called "inspiration." It is a supernatural communication of truth to the mind of man plus the influence which makes him able to communicate it without error. Therefore, we conclude:

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, II Peter 1:21. This text of Scripture informs us that the Old Testament has come through the moving of the Holy Spirit. Men did not just decide to write sacred scripture. They wrote as God pleased to move upon them by the Spirit. Proof of inspiration is abundant. Jesus vouches for the inspiration of the Old Testament by His, "it is written." See Matthew 5:18. He promised the disciples would have supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit in their teaching as the prophets had, Matthew 10:19; John 17:8; 20:22. The apostles claim to have received the Spirit and wrote under His authority. Thus their writings are equal to Old

Testament scriptures, I Corinthians 11:23; 14:37-38; Galatians 1:12; I Thessalonians 4:2, 8. The word “inspiration” means “breathed-in” and refers to the influence of the Spirit when He puts within one the message of God. The Bible must be treated with great respect for its contents, for it is none other than the very message of God! “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God,*” II Timothy 3:16. There is such a thing as divinely inspired scripture. We have it in our Bible!

2. The Bible is the infallible Word of God. “Infallible” means “incapable of mistakes; exempt from error; unerring.” Thus the Bible is said to be perfectly true and correct. Many people today say the Bible “contains the Word of God” but is not the Word of God. That is, we must search to see what is true and what is not. This is exactly contrary to the witness of the Scriptures. Jesus testifies, “*Thy word is truth,*” John 17:17. The Psalmist declares, “*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,*” Psalm 19:7. No one can prove the Word of God to be erroneous. This does not mean that any particular translation is infallible. Translations are made by men and are subject to mistakes. The original text, as God gave it, is a true and perfect revelation of eternal truth. Read Matthew 24:35.

3. The Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God. A common idea is that God inspired the thoughts of the Scriptures but left the wording up to the writers. We believe the very words of the Scripture are inspired. Paul says the scripture (which means, “writing”) is inspired of God, II Timothy 3:16. He sees the very *words*, not ideas only as inspired, I Corinthians 2:7-15. This means the original writings, not any certain translation, is divinely given. Verse 13 teaches the Spirit infallibly guides the choice of words from the writer's own vocabulary. The Holy Spirit was the real speaker in the writing of the Scriptures, Hebrews 3:7; (cf Psalm 95:7-8); Hebrews.10:15-16 (cf. Jeremiah 31:33). The more carefully one studies the Bible the more amazed he becomes at the accuracy of the very words and grammar (as verb tenses, etc.) used to express the exact thought. The Bible shines with the perfection with which the turn of a word reveals the absolute thought of God. We may read, believe, and obey the Bible without doubts. It is the very Word of God!

III. The Bible Records the True Account of Creation, Genesis 1:1.

1. The characteristics of the Biblical account of creation: The Bible explains the origin of the world by referring it to the creative act of God. The whole material universe is attributed to God's creative power, Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3. (The student should pause here to read

Genesis 1 and 2.) The Genesis account of creation is written in popular, not technical, language. It is highly poetical and figurative. It is pre-scientific and not antiscientific, (do. not expect it to argue scientific matters). It is in outline, partial form. (The whole creation account is only 1500 words, 2 chapters, or 1-600 part of the total Bible.) It is marked by dignity and moral exaltation when compared to creation myths of other religions. It is wonderfully accurate and reserved in detail. (Genesis 1:20 says the waters produced moving creatures and fowl without giving further explanation.) It is preeminently religious. Man is viewed as above animal creation. He has the essential and potential likeness of God, Genesis 1:26; 9:6. To read the creation account in Genesis is to stand amazed before the demonstration of God's power and purpose.

2. The purpose of creation according to the Bible: The Bible bears witness to a two-fold purpose of God in creation. First, He created the world for redemptive ends. The world was made for man and human life cannot be understood or appreciated separate from redemption. Creation and redemption are one great plan, John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4 and 5. God created man that He may redeem man and make him His child through the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, the world was created for the glory of God. God's glory is no selfish manifestation of Himself. He is primarily glorified by blessing His creatures. Thus creation finds its true end in redemption, which glorifies God.

3. Man is the crowning work of God's creation. There are two accounts of the creation of man in Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:7. These accounts are in perfect agreement. Man's creation was immediate—he did not have to evolve from the brute. (Note that three distinct creative acts are attributed to God: material substance, verse 1; animal life, verse 21; and human life, verses 26-27.) The creation of man is as sharply distinguished from animal life as animal life is distinguished from the inorganic matter. Man was created from earthly material previously created. It was the soul of man which made him unique from the rest of creation for it was especially given of God, Genesis 2:7. Thus the soul is not material, but spiritual, being even related to God since it came from God, Ecclesiastes 12:7. Man is again unique in that he is made in God's image, Genesis 1:26. This means man is somewhat like God! Like God he is a spiritual being. He has been given intelligence, rational affection, free will, and a moral sense. These four things mark him as being in God's image. He is made for God and is responsible to God. He can find the fulfillment of his spiritual self, only in God.

Man is thus made the supreme creature over all of God's creation.

God's purpose in creating him is the same as His purpose in saving him — *"that we should be to the praise of his glory,"* Ephesians 1:12. Each person who reads this is fulfilling God's purpose in his existence and redemption only as God's will is reflected in his life.

CONCLUSION—Today, we have studied that God is a Trinity (triunity) being composed of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This triune God has given us a revelation of Himself and of eternal truth through breathing His message into men and guarding them from error as they wrote the Scriptures. In the infallible record which was thus produced we have the true account of why and how our universe exists. We may accept this as true. Scientific discoveries have not disproved the Bible. Theories of scientists which are contrary to Bible truth are to be rejected as untrue. Next Sunday, we will learn where all evil theories, deeds and inclinations come from when we study, "Satan and the Fall of Man."

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject of our study this quarter?
2. Define "Trinity."
3. Give scriptures showing the Trinity in Old Testament and New Testament.
4. Give illustrations of unity in trinity.
5. Define "inspiration," "infallible," and "verbal inspiration."
6. What does II Peter 1:21 say of the Old Testament?
7. How does II Timothy 3:16 apply to the Bible?
8. What does I Corinthians 3:13 say about inspiration?