



**“For the prophecy came not in old time 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:** To study Articles I, 2, and 3 of our Doctrinal Statement.

**L314. Date:** October 1969. **Text:** John 16:13-14, 27; II Timothy 3:15; Genesis 2:1-7. **Topic:** Bible: Study of; Doctrine: Studies In.

INTRODUCTION—Come and join us on an exciting journey! For thirteen Sundays you will investigate the Word of God to hear what He says about essential Christian doctrines. That will be exciting!

Does the term “doctrine” look uninviting to you? Don't be afraid of it. It is a good word which expresses a wonderful concept. “Divine” means “the truth taught.” To speak of “Bible doctrine” means that truth is taught in the Bible and that we may know that truth by a study of God's Word.

The doctrines held by our churches are set forth in twenty-five Articles of Faith which are called the “Doctrinal Statement.” The next thirteen lessons will survey these twenty-five statements of doctrine.

Do you question why we should study Baptist doctrine? Because Baptist doctrine is Bible doctrine. Since many are departing from a Biblical faith, we need to be settled therein. **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils . . . Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine,”** I Timothy 4:1, 13. We observe this warning and obey this command by a careful study of Bible teachings.

Today's study covers three articles of faith: God, His Word, and creation. It is in these three areas that the devil is making the most severe attacks today. His propaganda declares that God is dead, His word is unreliable, and the universe came by accidental evolution rather than by divine creation.

Today's study is as relevant as tomorrow's newspaper! Let us see what

God has to say on these three important subjects. Open your Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher as we continue.

## EXPOSITION

### I. GOD IS!

1. Existence.—The majestic introduction to the foundation contained in the Holy Bible begins with these words: “In the beginning GOD. . .” Genesis 1:1.

There is no attempt in the Bible to prove the existence of God. His existence is assumed as an unquestionable fact. As the Biblical revelation continues, it speaks of evidence of God in the material universe (Psalm 19:1), which one has called “God's Braille for blind humanity.” It refers to evidence of God in history, which may more correctly be called “His-story.” It assumes the testimony of the soul of man who is incurably religious and whose heart is empty without faith in God. It uses scripture to interpret scripture that men may see and know God. Above all else, it records the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom- we see God in His purest expression, John 1:14; 14:7-9.

But all this is the revelation of what God is like and what He is doing in the affairs of human beings. The question of His existence is never raised, no proof of His existence ever systematically presented. The whole matter is summarized in a single statement: **"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,"** Psalm 14:1; 53:1. And the intimation is clear: He who denies the existence of God in any generation is a fool! The Bible doesn't waste time on fools. It reveals the God Who is.

2. Nature.—Various religions of the world have different concepts of God. To some their god is a fate-ruled machine; to others he is indifferent; to others he is weak; to others he is vengeful. But the Bible reveals the Lord God who is a Father.

(1) God is spirit, John 4:24. This means He has the highest and purest form of being. He is not corporal as are we. He has not a physical body which is limited to one place at a time as do we. He does not need these. He is spirit.

But this does not mean that God is less real because He is spirit. It

simply sets our God over against the physical nature of man and the material construction of idols. As spirit, He is superior to flesh. As spirit, He is beyond representation by a statue of wood, stone or metal.

The Bible often speaks of God's hands (Isaiah 59:1), eyes (II Chronicles 16:9), ears (Isaiah 59:1), feet (Nahum 1:3), and breath (Isaiah 30:33). These are called “anthropomorphisms”— the attributing of human shape and characteristics to an in tangible or non-human person or thing. These are used in the Scriptures to enable us to know what God is like, what He is doing, and how He, is working among men.

(2) God is a person. Though without a physical body, God is a person. This is why we can know Him and enter into relationship with Him as Father and child.

Three things are essential to personality: mind, will and moral judgment. A physical body is not essential to personality even though all persons we know (except God) live in a physical body. God is capable of reflective, deliverance and purposeful thought and relating this thought to ends consciously chosen. He is capable of forming and executing His own will. He is capable of judging and distinguishing between right and wrong. Hence, He is a divine person.

Man's personality is but the reflection of God's personality. Man was made in the “image and likeness” of God, Genesis 1:26-27. We can meet Him, know Him, and enter into relationship with Him because our personality matches His personality. Our response to Him is the response of a person to person.

To deny the personality of God is to say He is an impersonal force like gravity. This would destroy religion as we know it. Sin is against Him as a person. Repentance is toward Him as a person. Faith is trust in Him as a person. Prayer is communion with Him as a person. We come to Him and meet a person, albeit, a divine person.

(3) God is infinite. There is no limit to His perfections. Whatever attribute may be named of Him is possessed in boundless measure. Knowledge—He has all knowledge, Romans 11:34. Holiness—He is absolutely holy, I Samuel 2:2. Power—He has all power, Matthew 28:18. Presence—He is everywhere at once, Psalm 139. Love—He is the absolute perfection and expression of love, I John 4:8.

Since He is limitless, He is God everywhere at the same time. His center is everywhere; His circumference is nowhere, II Chronicles 6:18. He is unlimited by time and so enjoys eternal existence where He does not grow old, I Timothy 1:17. Because He is absolutely limitless in perfection, He never changes, Hebrews 1:12. Thus He is absolutely sufficient of Himself

depending on none other for ought. Psalm 90:1-2.

And this is the God who loves and redeems finite, sinful man!

3. God is tri-unity. God has revealed Himself in the Bible as “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Yet, though each is a distinct person, the three are one God. This is the doctrine of “tri-unity” commonly called the “trinity.”

The Bible teaches there are three persons in the Godhead. At the baptism of Jesus the Father spoke from heaven, the Spirit descended as a dove, while the Son came out of the water, Matthew 3:16-17. Jesus commanded converts to be baptized, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” Matthew 28:20. The apostolic benediction refers to the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the communion of the Spirit, II Corinthians 13:14. These are but three of more than fifty passages in which the doctrine of the trinity is to be found.

Now the Father, Son and Spirit are not three separate Gods for then we would be poly-theists. They are one in essence, equally divine, having mutual knowledge and love. Hence, the three persons form one Godhead.

Can three be one? They must be for the Bible plainly declares there is but one God, **“Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord,”** Deuteronomy 6:4. **“There is one God. . .”** I Timothy 2:5. **“There is none other God but one. . .”** I Corinthians 8:4. The unity of God is thus definitely declared. How can three be one? This is a divine mystery, but true. Illustrations may be found in nature, but they are mere suggestions and not exact duplications of trinity. Ice, rain, and snow are water. Height, depth, and breadth are space. Father, Son, and Spirit are God.

Do not interpret this to mean that God merely appears at different times in a different role: in the Old Testament as Father, in the New Testament as Son, in the church age as Spirit. He is eternally Father, Son, and Spirit.

“We believe that there is one, and only one, living and a true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.”—New Hampshire Confession of Faith.

## II. GOD SPEAKS!

1. Revelation—This term literally means “drawing back the veil.” It means to make known that which formerly was hidden from view. Applied in the realm of religion, revelation means God's disclosure to man of truths

which he could not otherwise know.

Revelation is, therefore, God's deed. It is not the consequence of man's search and discovery. God takes the initiative in revealing Himself. Man knows only that which God reveals. Job 11:7 positively states that no man "by searching" can "find out the Almighty unto perfection."

All that we know of God, all we will ever know of Him, is the direct consequence of His revelation of Himself. If it seems that man seeks after God let it be remembered that man's seeking is the result of God's revealing Himself first.

So, we speak of revelation to mean that divine initiative in which God draws aside the veil of infinity and reveals to man His own divine person and nature.

Revelation is always redemptive in its purpose. God's plan of the ages is to recreate sinful humanity into the image of God again through Jesus Christ. He does not reveal Himself to us to make us theologians but to make us Christians. Spiritual truth has for its purpose the bringing of man into fellowship with God (through salvation) and into the image of Christ (through sanctification).

Man's greatest need is not the knowledge of facts about God but a redeeming contact with God. So God caused that which He revealed to be written in the languages of men that it may be passed without error from generation to generation. The purpose of God's revelation, recorded in the Bible, is to awaken men and women to faith that they might be saved.

God's revelation has come through many facets. He reveals Himself through nature: **"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork,"** Psalm 19:1. He reveals Himself through conscience: **". . . the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness. . ."** Romans 2:15. He reveals Himself through the law: **". . . I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written. . ."** Exodus 24:12. He reveals Himself through the entire Scriptures: **"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope,"** Romans 15:4. He reveals Himself through Christ: **"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth;"** John 1:14. He reveals Himself through law written on our hearts: **". . . I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. . ."** Hebrews 8:10. He reveals Himself through believers as living epistles: **". . . Ye are manifestly declared to the epistle of Christ. . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables**

**of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart,” II Corinthians 3:3.**

2. Inspiration—The Holy Bible is a record of the revelation of God which record is produced by the process of inspiration. The Bible is the result of revelation. Inspiration is the foundation of the Scriptures. Destroy this and there is nothing left in which to confidently find a message from God.

(1) Meaning: Inspiration is “the imparting of such a degree of divine influence, assistance, or guidance as to enable the authors of several Books of Scripture to communicate religious knowledge to others, without error or mistake.”—Horne. This means truth was made clear to the authors minds and guidance in expressing these truths was given so that whether the truth they communicated was previously known or unknown they were kept from all error in recording it.

Second Timothy 3:16 declares that “all scripture” is the product of the divine breath—is “God breathed.” This is what makes the Bible unique among all other books.

(2) Manner: There are several theories commonly held as to how the Bible was inspired. Some hold to natural inspiration of a few exceptionally gifted men with nothing supernatural about it. We reject this idea. Others believe the Bible writers were inspired in the same sense as Christians are inspired today. We reject this also. Another theory is that the thoughts were inspired and each writer left to his own ability in expressing them. This is insufficient. Others hold to a mechanical method in which men were mere machines, through which God wrote without using their own personality and vocabulary to express the truth. This is evidently not the case. Another suggestion is that part of the Bible is inspired but other parts are not. This theory destroys confidence in the Word for who can judge the inspired from the uninspired parts?

We believe in the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. This means God revealed the truth to chosen men and caused them to write it down. In the writing process each used his own thought patterns and vocabulary. But God guarded the writing so that what was written was not the words of men but the Word of God. **“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” II Peter 1:21.**

(3) Message: Therefore, the content of the Scriptures is God's own message to man. It is God making himself known; God speaking to man through men.

This means the Bible is the very breath of God. It not only contains but is, from beginning to end, the Word of God. Such expressions as “God

said,” “The Lord spake, saying,” or “The Lord commanded,” occurs 680 times in the Pentateuch, 418 in the historical books, and 1307 times in the Prophets. And that is just the Old Testament! The divine influence produced a book which is verbally inspired, unerringly accurate, and divinely wise in every word. What a Book!

Being inspired by the breath of God Himself, the Bible is without error. We say it is “infallible”—incapable of mistakes; exempt from error; unerring, The Psalmist said, **“The law of the Lord is PERFECT, converting the soul. . .”** 19:7. Jesus said, **“... thy word is truth,”** John 17:17. Many years ago a man offered to pay \$1,000.00 to anyone who could prove an error in the Bible. He has never had to payoff.

To say the Bible is exempt from error does not guarantee the accuracy of a particular translation (called a “version”). Translations made by men from one language to another may not be exactly correct. But the Word in its original language is infallible.

As the inspired Word of God, the Bible is authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct. It contains as much authority as the voice of God because it is the breath of His mouth. It does not merely offer religious advice which man may heed or disregard at his pleasure. All truth is authoritative and all of the Bible is absolute religious truth. It has authority to guide us and we can follow its teachings “into all truth!”

“We claim that the Bible is in deed and in truth the very Word of God; that it is the Word of God in the language of men; truly divine, and at the same time truly human; that it is the revelation of God to His creatures; that infallible guidance was given to those who wrote it, so as to preserve them from error in the statement of facts; that what the writer of the Scriptures say or write under this guidance is as truly said and written by God as if their instrumentality were not used at all; that the ideas expressed therein are the very ideas the Holy Ghost intended to convey; that God is in the fullest sense responsible for every word. This is what the Bible claims for itself.”—Wm. Evans.

### III. GOD ACTS!

**“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,”** Genesis 1:1.

1. The record of creation. Genesis 1 and 2 record the origin of the world and all that is therein. Several characteristics are evident in this account.

(1) It is preeminently religious. The name of God occurs 32 times in Genesis 1. The origin of all things are definitely related to God who is at the

center of all and in whose image and likeness man is made.

(2) It is written in non-technical language as if intended for common men. The pre-scientific language has bothered many, (It is not unscientific but pre-scientific.) If it was written in technical terminology none of us could understand it.

(3) It is in outline form; the story is only partly told. The whole account is only 1500 words, two chapters of the Bible and only one six-hundredth of the entire Book.

(4) It is accurate (not an error or mistake has been found therein) and reserved in detail. In broad outline it sets out organic matter, animal life and human life as coming from the creative hand of God. Beyond that it does not seek to satisfy the curious. That is enough for man to know for religious purposes.

(5) It is marked by moral dignity and elevation when compared to creation myths in other religions in the world.

(6) It is orderly. Even materialistic scientists agree that the order of events given in Genesis 1 was the way the creation must have developed. Take a piece of paper and write 1, 2, 3 down the left margin; then write 4, 5, 6 down the center. Write what God did on each day and note the beautiful symmetry of the account.

2. The phases of creation. The term “create” means “to bring into existence that which never existed before without using previously existing materials to make something out of nothing.” The term is used only three times in Genesis 1. (1) Organic matter was created in verse 1. (2) Animal life was created in verse 21. (3) Human life was created in verses 26-27.

Evidently God created by instantaneous origination and by development as well. He brought something into existence and then gave it a period of development. During this development period the Bible says “the water brought forth” and “the earth brought forth.” Thus did God create in three great phases all that exists.

3. The purpose of creation. Love is native to the nature of God. It motivates and permeates all that He does. It is even evident in the miracle of creation.

(1) The world was created for redemptive purposes. The world was made for man and God made man in order to redeem him. The Book of Revelation clearly sets forth the thesis that creation and redemption are but two sides of one great plan. Before man was created God knew he would sin and made provision for his redemption in Jesus Christ. In a very real sense, therefore, it can be said that God created man in order to redeem him and that He might bring many sons into glory.



(2) The world was created for the glory of God. This does not mean that God is self-centered and wanted a world to play with regardless of what else was involved. His glory is no selfish manifestation of His majesty. He is glorified in blessing and redeeming men. He is glorified in blessing His creation. He is glorified as He gives Himself to His creation for their good. And when it is all over we will be able to see how God has been glorified through that which He has made.

4. The alternative to creation. There are many people in the world today who deny the Biblical account of creation. Some do it because of their education and some because of their ignorance! But it is popular to deny divine creation.

What alternative is there if God's work of creation is rejected? There are only two forces in the world: personal will and physical force. If a personal will (God) is taken from the explanation of the universe all that remains is physical force. But physical force can bring only change, not origin. Without God, how can the origin of matter be explained? How can the origin of life be explained? How can man's ethical nature be explained?

It takes a greater act of faith (or gullibility) to accept a materialistic explanation of the origin and process of the universe than it takes to attribute it to God. The Bible says God is behind it, in it, and before it all. We believe the Bible.

**CONCLUSION**—God is—existence! God speaks—revelation! God acts—creation! In nine words, this is the summary of today's study. We believe in the Trinity of God, the infallible and plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and the Biblical account of creation.

If either of these three doctrines are denied, man is lost without hope. If God is not, man is on his own without help. If God has not revealed Himself, man is still on His own without help. If God has nothing to do with His universe, man is even more hopeless. Hold these doctrines. They are divinely revealed truths. Upon them is based all that the Bible has to say about events in time and hope in eternity.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What is “doctrine”?
2. How does I Timothy 4:1, 12 encourage doctrinal faithfulness?
3. What does the Bible say about the existence of God?
4. Explain: “God is a person.”