



“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: The study of Articles 1, 2, 3 of our Doctrinal Statement. 1. The Trinity of God. 2. The infallible and plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. 3. The Biblical account of creation.

L327. Date: October 1964. **Text:** John 14:16-17; 16:13-14, 27; II Timothy 3:15; Genesis 2:1-7. **Topic:** Bible; Study of; Creation; Doctrine: Studies in; God: Nature of; Theology.

INTRODUCTION—“I don't like doctrinal lessons,” someone complained. An expression like this reveals a misunderstanding of the term “doctrine.” It meant “teaching, instruction” and came to mean “that which is taught.” A doctrinal lesson, therefore, is one that presents Bible truths. Every scriptural lesson is a doctrinal lesson! The term “Baptist doctrine” refers to that system of truth which is taught by Baptist churches. The next thirteen lessons will briefly survey the doctrines of the historic Baptist faith. It will follow the statement of these doctrines as set out by the North American Baptist Association's doctrinal statement.

Any study of religious truth must begin with God. The Bible presents the revelation of God. Moved by His merciful love, because of the dread plight of mankind, God revealed Himself to men. Being a sinner, man could not find out God of his own accord. Yet he had a spiritual longing after God which could be satisfied only by a personal acquaintance with God. Moreover, man needed an authoritative guide to instruct him in all matters of faith and practice. God moved to answer this need by revealing Himself!

The Bible is an authentic revelation of God. Jesus declared the Old Testament to be authoritative and reliable, Luke 24:27. The consistency, competency, uprightness, and trustworthiness of the New Testament has

demonstrated its reliability. These divinely authorized Scriptures constitute the final court of appeal in all matters of Christian faith and practice, Isaiah 8:20. Throughout this series of lessons, the Word of God will be the sole authority for any and all statements of doctrinal principles.

EXPOSITION

I. THE TRIUNE GOD

Read John 14:16-17; 16:13-14, 27. These are only a few verses of the many which point out that God is triune. The trinity of God is His tripersonal existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word “trinity” comes from a Latin word **trinus** which means “threefold.” It means, when applied to God, that the Godhead is composed of three persons identified as the “Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” These three are not only a trinity (three persons) but are also a “triunity” (three in one). This doctrine is difficult to understand, though positively taught in the Word.

1. The Trinity in the Old Testament. The doctrine of the Trinity is not positively expressed in the Old Testament but it is clearly intimated. (1) Plural names and pronouns are used for God in Genesis 1:1, 26; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8 and elsewhere. (2) Various theophanies (Genesis 16 and 18) identify the “Angel of the Lord” as both being God and being separate from God. (3) The work of the Holy Spirit is clearly expressed in Genesis 1:2; Judges 6:34 and elsewhere. Therefore, while the doctrine is not positively stated, it is evidenced in the Old Testament.

2. The Trinity in the New Testament. It is in the New Testament that the doctrine the divine Trinity is explicitly declared. Here are some occasions where the three persons are clearly referred to. (1) At the baptism of Jesus 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 given by Jesus to the church demands that converts be baptized “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 (Son) . . . the love of God (Father) . . . the communion of the Holy Ghost (Spirit),” II Corinthians 13:14. (4) Jesus acknowledges the existence of the Trinity when He says that He, the Son, will pray the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples, John 14:16-17; 16:13-14. (5) The New Testament reveals a Father who is God (Romans 1:7), a Son who is God

(Hebrews 1:8), and a Holy Spirit who is God (Acts 5:34). Other references are made to the Trinity in John 14:26-27; 15:26; 16:13; Luke 3:21-22; Acts 2:33. One writer has summed up the Biblical teachings of this doctrine 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.”—Boardman.

3. Relation of persons of the Trinity. The three persons of the Trinity form perfect unity in the Godhead. They are each equally 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 3:3-35; 5:30; Romans 8:27. Their offices are distinct, yet related, I Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 2:18-22. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three separate Gods (for then we would be polytheists) but are one in essence so that they three are a perfect unity. While the word “trinity” does not appear in the Scriptures, the teaching that God is triune is unquestionably there. “Three in One and One in Three.”

4. Illustration of the Trinity. Understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of divine revelation, not human insight. However, it is made clearer when compared with natural things, though no illustration can exactly match the Divine Trinity. The idea of “the three are one” can 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 one man. These being three, are yet one whole. Even so, the Father, Son and Spirit unite in the one God whom we worship and serve. If a reader does not fully understand the doctrine, let him not dismay. Some evident truths may be believed, though not fully understood, without one being intellectually dishonest.

It has been held that the Trinity is only one person appearing in three forms. In other words, in the Old Testament He is Father; in the New Testament He is Son; in the church age He is Holy Spirit. Such a dispensational trinity cannot be demonstrated by Scripture. Jesus recognizes a Father and Spirit at the same time He knows Himself to be the divine Son. God has eternally been Father, Son and Spirit. Let no one rob you of this blessed Biblical doctrine.

II. THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES

Which comes first, revelation or the Bible? Revelation is first. The Bible comes because God gave a revelation to men and is the record of that revelation. By “inspiration the revelation given to man is recorded in human speech by means of writing. Inspiration is, therefore, the supernatural

communication of truth to the mind of man plus the influence which makes him able to communicate it without error. It is through this manner that the Holy Bible came to be written; God communicated truth to the mind of man and then guarded him from error as he wrote it down. Thus it is said that the scriptures are the very “Word of God.”

1. An Inspired Bible. The Bible is inspired of God, the Old Testament as well as the new, II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16. This Inspiration to be able to write the Word of God was the direct consequence of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Men did not merely decide to write some sacred scripture. They wrote as God moved upon them in the person of His Spirit. There are many proofs of inspiration. (1) Jesus vouches for the inspiration of the Old Testament by quoting it with authority. See Matthew 5:18. (2) Jesus promised the disciples would have the supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit in their teaching ministry just as the prophets experienced His help, Matthew 10:19; John 17:8; 20:22. (3) The apostles claim to have received the Holy Spirit and to have written under his authority so that their writings are equal to the Old Testament writings in inspiration, I Corinthians 11:23; 14:37-38; Galatians 1:12; I Thessalonians 4:2, 8.

The word “inspiration” means “breathed in” and speaks of the Spirit's ministry when He puts within one the message of God. Since the contents of the Bible are nothing other than the very words of God, it must be treated with great respect. There is, indeed, such a thing as divinely inspired scripture. We have it in our Bible. **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God. . .”** II Timothy 3:16.

2. An infallible Bible. We believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God. As “infallible” means “incapable of mistakes; exempt from error; unerring,” we believe the Bible to be perfectly true and correct. There is no false doctrine approved and propagated therein. Jesus once said of God's Word, **“Thy word is truth,”** John 17:17. The Psalmist testifies, **“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,”** Psalm 19:7. No one can prove the Word of God to be erroneous on any point of its teaching.

There are some who question the reliability of parts of the Bible. They say, “The Bible contains the Word of God, but is not wholly His word. We must study and test it to see which part is reliable and which is not.” This is slanderous blasphemy against God's divinely-given revelation of Himself. No Bible-believing Christian should be led astray by such unbelief.

To say the Bible is exempt from error does not mean any particular translation (called a “version”) is infallible. Translations are made by men and are subject to the limitations of finite men. But the original text, as God gave it, is a true and perfect revelation of eternal truth. Read Matthew 24:35.

This is another reason why it is important for students of God's word to study it in the original languages in which it was written.

3. A verbally inspired Bible. There are several theories regarding the inspiration of the Bible. (1) The dynamical theory holds that the Spirit inspired the thought and each writer was left to his own ability in its expression. (2) The mechanical theory holds that the writers were mere secretaries who received dictation and put it down without change. (3) The naturalistic theory is that men simply wrote their higher thoughts and these gradually came to be collected into a Bible without divine aid anywhere along the line. (4) The plenary (full) verbal (word-by-word) theory is that God gave man the idea and then guided him in its expression. At the same time the words were chosen by the writer and by the Spirit. Every word is from man (who used his natural vocabulary and style) and from God (who kept the words from error and assured that the exact message would be conveyed). This last theory of inspiration is the one held by most Baptists.

Paul held to a verbal inspiration of the Bible for he says the **words**, not just the ideas were inspired, I Corinthians 2:7-15. The Spirit infallibly guided the choice of words from the writer's own vocabulary. Though a man's words were used, the real speaker in the Scriptures is the Holy Spirit, Hebrews 3:7; 10:15-16. The more one studies the Bible the more amazed he becomes at the accuracy of the grammar (verb tenses, etc.) and words used to express the precise thought intended. The Bible shines with a perfection in which the turn of a word reveals the very thought of God! It may be read, believed and obeyed without doubt. It is the very word of God!

III. THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

Genesis 1-2 record the Biblical account of creation. This account should be read before pursuing this topic of study. We believe this Biblical account to be a factual and true record of the origin of all things. It is being assailed today by unbelievers. Christians should study this matter so as to be able to give a reason for their loyalty to this sacred record.

1. Characteristics. An examination of the Genesis account of creation may well increase appreciation for its beauty, stateliness, and truth. These qualities are suggested for study: (1) The origin of the universe is in the creative act of God, Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 11:3. (2) The Genesis account is written in non-technical language as if intended for common men. (3) It is highly poetic and figurative. (4) It is pre-scientific, but not antiscientific, and does not argue scientific matters. (5) It is in partial, outline form. The whole account is only 1500 words, two chapters,

and one six-hundredth part of the total Bible. (6) It is marked by dignity and moral exaltation when compared to creation myths of other ancient religions. (7) It is wonderfully accurate and reserved in detail, presenting basic truths without bothering to answer questions of idle curiosity. (8) It is pre-eminently religious. God is at the center of all and man is made in His image and likeness. To read the creation account in Genesis is to stand amazed before the demonstration of God's power and purpose.

2. Purpose. Why did God create a universe including man? 1 The Bible gives a twofold answer: for redemption and for glory. (1) God created the world for man and created man that He might redeem him. Creation and redemption are parts of one great plan! John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4.5. God knew the man He would create would sin and fall, but created him anyway that He might redeem him into His family by grace. Therefore, the man who rejects God's offer of grace in Christ Jesus misses the very thing for which he was brought into existence. (2) God created the world for His own glory. This was no selfish manifestation of Himself because He is primarily glorified by blessing His creatures. Creation finds its true purpose in redemption which works to God's glory.

3. Man. The crowning act of God's creative work was the origin of man. There are two accounts of the creation of man in Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:7. These accounts are in perfect agreement and suggest the four facts which follow. (1) Man's creation was immediate so that he did not have to evolve from the brute. Observe that three distinct **creative** acts are attributed to God; material substance, Genesis 1:1; animal life, 1:21; and human life, 1:26-27. The creation of man is as sharply distinguished from animal life as animal life is distinguished from inorganic matter. (2) Man's body was made from earthly material previously created—"the dust of the earth." (3) The soul of man was given directly from God and made him unique from the rest of creation, Genesis 2:7. Since the soul (spirit) came from God, it will return to God at death, Ecclesiastes 12:7. (4) Man was made in the image and likeness of God, Genesis 1:26. Man is like God in that he is a rational and spiritual being with intelligence, rational affection, free will, and a moral sense. These four things mark him as being in God's image. He was made for God and is responsible to God. He will fulfill his high calling only in the will of God. Man is supreme of all God's creation. He exists solely that he might be to the "praise of His glory," Ephesians 1:12.

CONCLUSION—Today's study has dealt with God, God's Word, and God's creation. It has been set out that God is a trinity in His person—Father, Son and Spirit equally divine and working in perfect unity. Our

triune God has given a revelation of Himself by breathing His message into men. This message was then written for posterity. The written account was so superintended by the Holy Spirit that it came from the pens of men without error whatsoever. This record begins with an account of the origin of the universe and all that is therein. This record is true. Next Sunday's study will be concerned with the origin of sin and depravity in the human race. Be sure to study and be in class for a discussion of "Satan and the Fall of Man."

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject of study for this lesson?
2. What does "trinity" mean?
3. How can you illustrate the trinity of God?
4. Which came first, revelation or the Bible? Explain.
5. What evidence is there that the Bible is God's inspired word?
6. What do we mean by "infallible" Bible?
7. Is the Old Testament equally inspired with the New Testament?
8. Where is the account of creation found in the Bible?
9. What is meant by "It is pre-scientific but not anti-scientific"?
10. What were the three distinct creative acts in Genesis 1 and 2?