

From the Pastor:



Brothers and Sisters,

We thank You, Father, for keeping us through 2025, and we pray that Your goodness and mercy will continue to follow us in 2026--the year ahead.

Saints, it is my prayer that you will grow spiritually, deepen your personal relationship with the Savior of the world, and remain faithful in the work of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In our Series 53 lessons—**God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit**—we will explore the foundational truths of the faith once delivered to the saints. This phrase, used by our Lord's half-brother Jude, was a call to the early

Church to stand firm amid relentless attacks from false teachers who had infiltrated the Body of Christ. Today, we are called to that same steadfastness, holding fast to the sound doctrine established by the early fathers of our faith.

It is my sincere hope that you will be encouraged, strengthened, and inspired as we journey together through this exciting and enriching series.

May God continue to bless you and keep you. This is my prayer.

In His abundant grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyndon I. Smith".

Pastor

God***God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit******Mount Canaan Sunday School Series 53***

First Quarter

January, February, March 2026

God.....	4
God – <i>The Sovereign God of Creation</i>	6
Theology – <i>The Study of God</i>	8
Theology – <i>The Character of God</i>	10
Christology – Part 1 -- <i>The Doctrine of Christ</i>	12
Christology – Part 2 -- <i>The Doctrine of Christ</i>	14
Christology – Part 3 -- <i>The Doctrine of Christ</i>	16
Christology – Part 4 -- <i>The Doctrine of Christ</i>	18
Christology – Part 5 -- <i>The Doctrine of Christ</i>	20
Pneumatology – <i>The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit</i>	22
The Trinity – Part 1 -- <i>The Doctrine of the Godhead</i>	24
The Trinity – Part 2 – <i>The Doctrine of the Godhead</i>	26
The True God	28

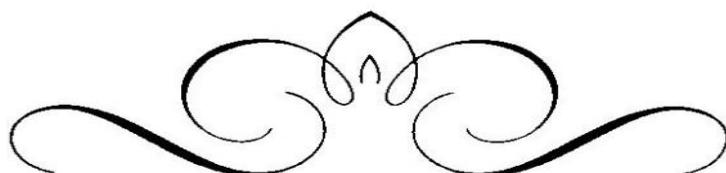
Brother Paul Pratt, Sunday School Superintendent

Contributing Writers

Brother Robert Silvie, Sr.

Dr. Russell Minor, Brother Lester Jones

Dr. Darrell L. Hampton



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

The simple statement that God created the heavens and the earth is one of the most challenging concepts confronting the modern mind. For a five-year-old mind in a small Louisiana town, this was perhaps my first learning experience of the awesomeness of God. My parents simply taught, “*God made everything.*” Still, even now the much older finite mind still struggles with the creation of “*everything.*” A person who reads and thinks—truthfully thinks—about the great statement in Genesis 1:1 is captivated by its astounding declaration. Why? Because he realizes that the basic questions of creation are captured in the divine statement. There is so much being said, so much to think about, so much to learn.

The Bible declares that God is behind everything. The universe is not eternal nor did it just happen. The universe did not just come into being by chance. Something did not come out of nothing. Nothing did not produce nor give rise to something. There is a Creator—a Supreme Person, a Supreme Intelligence and Force—who has created the universe, and the Creator has given the universe purpose and meaning.

- Scripture does not argue God's existence; it declares God's existence.
- Scripture does not argue that the heavens and earth have a Creator; it declares that God created the heavens and the earth.

Note a most significant fact: the first two verses of Scripture answer the basic questions concerning creation. They answer the very questions that man asks about his own personal origin and about the origin and roots of the universe.

The vast galaxy we live in is spinning at the incredible speed of 515,000 miles an hour. But even at this breakneck speed, our galaxy still needs 230 million years to make one rotation. And there are over one billion other galaxies just like ours in the universe.

Some scientists say that the number of stars in creation is equal to all the grains of all the sands on all the beaches of the world. Yet this complex sea of spinning stars functions with remarkable order and efficiency. To say that the universe "just happened" or "evolved" requires more faith than to believe that God is behind these amazing statistics. God truly did create a wonderful universe.

Beginnings/Origin of the Universe: The Bible does not discuss the subject of evolution. Rather, its worldview assumes God created the world. The biblical view of creation is not in conflict with science; rather, it is in conflict with any worldview that starts without a Creator. Equally committed and sincere Christians have struggled with the subject of beginnings and come to differing conclusions. This, of course, is to be expected because the evidence is very old and, due to the ravages of the ages, quite fragmented. Students of the Bible and of science should avoid polarizations and black/white thinking. Students of the Bible must be careful not to make the Bible say what it doesn't say, and students of science must not make science say what it doesn't say.

The most important aspect of the continuing discussion is not the process of creation, but the origin of creation. The world is not a product of blind chance and probability; God created it.

The Bible not only tells us that the world was created by God; more important, it tells us who this God is. It reveals God's personality, His character, and His plan for His creation. It also reveals God's deepest desire: to relate to and fellowship with the people He created. God took the ultimate step toward fellowship with us through His historic visit to this planet in the person of His Son Jesus Christ. We can know in a very personal way this God who created the universe. The heavens and the earth are here. We are here. God created all that we see and experience. The book of Genesis begins, *"God created the heavens and the earth."*

Just how did God create the earth? This is still a subject of great debate. Some say that with a sudden explosion, the universe appeared. Others say God started the process and the universe evolved over billions of years. Almost every ancient religion has its own story to explain how the earth came to be. And almost every scientist has an opinion on the origin of the universe. But only the Bible shows one Supreme God creating the earth out of His great love and giving all people a special place in it. We will never know all the answers to how God created the earth, but the Bible tells us that God did create it. That fact alone gives worth and dignity to all people.

The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Genesis 1:2 NLT

Who created God? To ask that question is to assume there was another creator before God. At some time, however, we are forced to stop asking that question and realize that there had to be something that has always existed. **God is that infinite Being who has always been and who was created by no one.** This is difficult to understand because finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite. For example, we can try to think of the highest number, but we can't do it. Likewise, we must not limit the infinite God by our finite understanding.

The statement *"the earth was formless and empty"* provides the setting for the creation narrative that follows. During the second and third days of creation, God gave form to the universe; during the next three days, God filled the earth with living beings. The *"darkness"* was dispelled on the first day, when God created light.

The image of the Spirit of God hovering over the earth's surface is similar to a mother bird caring for and protecting its young (see Deuteronomy 32:11, 12; Isaiah 31:5). God's Spirit was actively involved in the creation of the world (see Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30). God's care and protection are still active.

How long did it take God to create the world? There are two basic views about the days of creation: (1) Each day was a literal 24-hour period; (2) each day represents an indefinite period of time (even millions of years). The Bible does not say how long these time periods were. The real question, however, is not how long God took, but how He did it. God created the earth in an orderly fashion (He did not make plants before light), and He created men and women as unique beings capable of communication with Him. No other part of creation can claim that remarkable privilege. It is not important how long it took God to create the world, whether a few days or a few billion years, but that He created it just the way He wanted it.

God

The Sovereign God of Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 NJKV

In the beginning God . . . When did the universe come into being? When did it first begin? When was matter first formed and energy first activated? When were the heavens and earth created? The Bible tells us, and it tells us in the simplest of ways, in a way that all nations of people can understand. The heavens and earth were created "*in the beginning*" (*bereshith*). There was a beginning for the universe. Neither the world nor human life are eternal. The universe has not always existed. The phrase "*in the beginning*" means there was a time when everything first started, when the universe first began. The idea is the absolute beginning of things, the absolute beginning of time. The great scholar H.C. Leopold says that it means "*the absolute beginning of created things*" (Genesis, Vol.1. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1942, p.39).

The universe had a beginning. There was a time when the world did not exist, and then all of a sudden—out of nowhere and out of nothing—the world began. The things of the world had a beginning. There was a beginning to the things...

- that surround man
- that man handles and deals with and possesses
- that constitute man's own being
- that are physical and material
- that compose the substances of the world
- that make up all matter and all energy

As stated, all things had a beginning. There was a time when there was nothing, no heavens and no earth, no physical matter and no physical energy, no atoms, electrons, protons, or neutrons and no hydrogen nor any other gaseous substance. There was nothing in the physical and material world or dimension of being. Then, all of a sudden, out of nowhere and out of nothing, the universe began to be made. The process of time began. There was a beginning. The universe—material and physical things—began. The physical world and dimension of being was launched. When? "*In the beginning*"—in the absolute beginning of creation. "*And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.*" Hebrews 1:10

Nothing whatsoever is said about how long ago the universe was created. No dates are given to determine the age of the heavens and earth. There is not even a hint given as to the age of either.

Man must heed this passage of Scripture. He must know where he has come from and why he is here. He can never fulfill his purpose upon earth unless he knows who put him here and why he was placed here.

This passage also stands as a dramatic warning to man. Since man had a beginning, he also has an ending; therefore, he must prepare to face the Person who gave him his beginning. Man must repent and prepare to face his Creator. "*Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah.*" Acts 3:19-20 NLT

Jesus Christ, God the Son, is the beginning and the ending of all things. It is to Him that man must repent and turn. *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."* (Revelation 1:8).

This is a universal truth: there was a beginning; consequently, there will be an ending. Everything that begins has an ending. The world and all that is in the world shall pass away. The physical and material things of the world change their form, pass on, deteriorate, decay, and waste away. Even man himself changes, ages, and wastes away. He dies. There is an end to all that begins, including man. *"Remember the former things of old: for I Am God, and there is none else; I Am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure"* (Isaiah 46:9-10).

"In the beginning God created . . ." Here we find a special sense of comfort and joy. God did act, freely and from His own choice, to create. There is meaning to the universe, and a purpose to human life. This is a particularly important thought.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God stands behind it all. The God of Genesis is no platonic demiurge who, like a potter, merely shaped an already existing clay. The living God does not share His eternity with rock, or even with the billion stars that span our sky. The Source of all, the only and the ultimate reality, is God.

In summary, the account of Creation is the logical starting point for Genesis, for it explains the beginning of the universe. These verses have received much attention in connection with science; this is to be expected. But the passage is a theological treatise as well, for it lays a foundation for the rest of the Pentateuch.

In writing this work for Israel, Moses wished to portray God as the Founder and Creator of all life. The account shows that the God who created Israel is the God who created the world and all who are in it. Thus, the theocracy is founded on the Sovereign God of Creation. That nation, her Law, and her customs and beliefs all go back to who God is. Israel would here learn what kind of God was forming them into a nation.

The implications of this are great. First, it means that everything that exists must be under God's control. The Creation must be in subjection to the Creator. Forces of nature, enemies, creatures and objects that became pagan deities—none of these would pose a threat to the servants of the living God.

Second, the account also reveals the basis of the Law. If indeed God was before all things and made all things, how foolish it would be for man to have any other gods before Him! There were none. If indeed God made man in His image to represent Him, how foolish it would be to make an image of God! If indeed God set aside one day for rest from His work, should not man who is walking with God follow Him? The commandments find their rationale here.

Third, the account reveals that God is a redeeming God. It records how He brought the cosmos out of chaos, turned darkness into light, made divisions between them, transformed cursing into blessing, and moved from what was evil and darkness to what was holy. This parallels the work of God in Exodus, which records His redeeming Israel by destroying the Egyptian forces of chaos. The prophets and the apostles saw here a paradigm of God's redemptive activities. Ultimately, He who caused light to shine out of darkness made His light shine in the hearts of believers (2 Corinthians 4:6) so that they become new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Theology

The Study of God

God replied, "**I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS.** Just tell them, '**I AM** has sent me to you.' " **Exodus 3:14**
NLT

God is one, unique, and sovereign, described as the LORD who is the first and the last (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6). He identifies Himself with the profound declaration "I AM WHO I AM," suggesting an eternal, self-existent nature (Exodus 3:14). God is understood as a Spiritual Being who is fundamentally love, and those who seek to know Him must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24; 1 John 4:8). He is also portrayed as the King of Israel, the Redeemer, and the LORD of hosts, emphasizing His supreme authority and role in redemption (Isa 44:6).

The personal name of Israel's God, *Yahweh* (usually rendered LORD, Exodus 3:15), is built from the Hebrew verb "to be." Exodus 3:14 uses an alternate form of the verb in the first person, "I am."

The word Jehovah or Yahweh comes from the verb "to be"; thus it means simply "I AM"—"I AM who I AM." This means that God is...

- the Self-Existent One
- the God who exists (who alone exists and who can never cease to exist)
- the Eternal One
- the Perfect One
- the Absolute One
- the Uncaused One

The Pulpit Commentary says this: "The idea expressed by the name is...that of real, perfect, unconditional, independent existence."

There are two wonderful facts about the name Jehovah.

1. *Jehovah is the God who is personal and who reveals Himself.* Jehovah is the personal name of God, the name that shows that God is the God of revelation.

- a. It is the name God chose for Himself when He revealed Himself to Moses.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. Exodus 3:14

- b. It is the name by which Adam and others of his day knew God (Genesis 4:26, cp. Genesis 2:4).

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, Genesis 2:4

And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD. Genesis 4:26

It can accurately be assumed that God had revealed His name (Jehovah) to Adam personally.

- c. It is the name which Christ claimed for Himself when He revealed Himself as God (John 8:58, cp. John 8:24, 28).

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. John 8:58

2. *Jehovah is the God who establishes a personal relationship with man—caring and looking after every need which man may have.* He is man's special guardian, completely dependable and utterly trustworthy. He can be relied upon totally.

- Jehovah is the redemptive name of God. God is the LORD (Jehovah, Yahweh), the God of redemption, salvation, and deliverance.
- Jehovah is the covenant or redemptive name of God (Exodus 19:3; Exodus 20:1-2; Jeremiah 31:34). Jehovah is the God of redemption, salvation, and deliverance.

The word Jehovah is sometimes combined with other words in the Old Testament. These combined words paint a revealing picture of God's redemptive dealings with man.

NAMES OF GOD	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	ENGLISH MEANING
Jehovah-Jireh	Genesis 22:14	“Jehovah will provide” or “The Lord who has already seen the provision.” He provides the needed sacrifice (Genesis 22:14-15).
Jehovah-Ropheka or Rapha	Exodus 15:26	“Jehovah who heals you.”
Jehovah-Nissii	Exodus 17:15	“Jehovah is my banner.” Victory over one's enemies (physical or spiritual) is wholly due to “the Lord our banner.”
Jehovah-Meqaaddeshkem	Exodus 31:13	“Jehovah who sanctifies you.”
Jehovah-Shalom	Judges 6:24	“Jehovah is Peace.”
Jehovah-Hoseenu	Psalm 99:5, 8-9	“Jehovah, the Lord our God.”
Jehovah-Tsabaoth	1 Samuel 1:3	“Jehovah of hosts.”
Jehovah-Elyon	Psalm 7:17	“Jehovah Most High.”
Jehovah-Roi	Psalm 23:1	“Jehovah, my shepherd.”
Jehovah-Elohay	Zech. 14:5	“Jehovah, the Lord my God.”
Jehovah-Tsidkenu	Jeremiah 23:6; Jeremiah 33:16	“Jehovah is our righteousness.”
Jehovah-Shammah	Ezekiel 48:35; cp. Isaiah 60:14-22; Isaiah 62:2; Rev. 21:2	“Jehovah is there.” “He is there” in the future as well as there now, in the present.
Jehovah-Elohim	Genesis 2:4-25	“Jehovah the eternal creator.”
Adonai-Jehovah	Genesis 15:2, 8	“Jehovah the Sovereign Lord, our Master.”
Jehovah-Eloheka	Exodus 20:2, 5, 7	“Jehovah, the Lord your God”

Theology

The Character of God

*I can never escape from your spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there. **Psalm 139:7-8 NLT***

God is Present with Us

God is present in His world in a unique manner. He is never separated from any part of His creation. As spirit, God has the perfect capability of being present everywhere in the world at once. The psalmist exclaimed, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there” (Psalm 139:7-8). The prophet looked for the Messiah to be named Emmanuel, meaning, “God with us”; and Matthew reported that God fulfilled that promise in Jesus.

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. **Isaiah 7:14***

*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. **Matthew 1:23***

The end time will make the presence of God even more clear: God will live with His people.

*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. **Rev. 21:3***

The Bible speaks of God's presence in two major ways: in space and in relationships.

Theologians used the term *omnipresence*, derived from Latin, to speak of God's presence everywhere in all the world's space.

- Moses experienced that presence on a wilderness mountain (Exodus 3);
- Isaiah, in the Jerusalem Temple (Isaiah 6);
- Paul, on an international highway (Acts 9).

Most often the Bible speaks in terms of God being present in **relationships**.

- He called Israel to be His people (Exodus 19:3-6).
- He appeared to Elijah in a “still, small voice” (1 Kings 19:12).
- Most of all God appeared Person to person in the human flesh of His Son Jesus.

LORD refers to the master, the boss, the owner, the person with authority over another. As Lord, God is sovereign Ruler over all the earth; He is the Creator and Judge of all persons. Thus the Hebrew identifies God as “the Lord God (Yahweh), the God of Israel” (Exodus 34:23). He is “Lord of lords” (Deut. 10:17). The New Testament proclaims, “let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36 NIV). Thus Jesus receives the same titles as the Father, leading to a doctrine of the Trinity.

God is *holy*. The most basic word we have to describe God is holy. This is the unique quality of God's existence that marks Him off as separate and distinct from all else. Holiness includes the ideas of righteousness and purity, but it is more. Holiness belongs to God alone. It sets Him above us in majesty, power, authority, righteousness, and love. Persons can be said to be holy only by virtue of being drawn into relationship with God. (Compare Isaiah 5:16; Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:15-16.)

God is *eternal*. He has no beginning and no ending. All else begins and ends as an expression of the will of God, but God has always existed and will always continue to exist.

God is *spirit*. He is not material or physical as we are. As spirit, He does not have the limitations of material form. Spirit is the highest form of existence. It enables God to be with His people everywhere simultaneously. As spirit, God chose to humble Himself and take on the form of human flesh (Phil. 2:6-11).

God is *love*. "God is love itself" is the nearest humans can get to making a non-symbolic statement about God (1 John 4:8; 1 John 4:16). His love is coordinated perfectly with His righteousness. God's love is always righteous, and His righteousness is always marked by love. Love is the primary motivation behind revelation (John 3:16). God's love is expressed as His mercy in forgiving sinners and in rescuing or blessing those who do not deserve His attention. His love is expressed in grace, the love and power of God reaching to those who do not deserve His blessing. God's grace is shown in forgiveness, conversion, blessing, nurturing, and chastising of individual persons. God's grace creates a response of love, faith, and obedience in the hearts of people whom He is trying to reach. His grace also works in and through His servants to give them guidance and power as they seek to carry out His will.

God is *Father*. The love of God finds supreme expression as Father. God is known in Scripture as Father in three separate senses that must not be confused: (1) He is Father of Jesus Christ in a unique sense—by incarnation (Matthew 11:25-27; Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; 2 Peter 1:17); (2) He is Father of believers—by adoption or redemption (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 11:2; Luke 11:13; Galatians 3:26); (3) He is Father of all persons—by creation (Psalm 68:5; Isaiah 64:8; Malachi 2:10; Matthew 5:45; 1 Peter 1:17).

God is *intimate*. He is not an impersonal force like gravity, exerting influence in some mechanical, automatic way. He has personal characteristics, just as we do. God is living, working in His world, and relating to His people. He is aware of what is going on, makes plans, and carries them out. He forms relationships and has purpose and will. He is a *jealous* God, taking himself seriously and insisting that others take Him seriously (Exodus 34:14; Nahum 1:2; 1 Cor. 10:22).

For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Exodus 34:14

God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for His enemies. Nahum 1:2

Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He? 1 Cor. 10:22

He wants more than divided loyalty or indifference from His people!

Christology – Part 1

The Doctrine of Christ

In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and He was God. John 1:1 NLT

JESUS CHRIST is the Greek form of Joshua and of title meaning, “*Yahweh is salvation*” and “*the anointed one*” or “*Messiah*.” Proper name of the Savior of the world. The title “**Christ**” gathers all of the Old Testament prophetic hopes and infuses into them the meaning associated with the proper name Jesus, Man of Galilee—Man of sorrows. Jesus is the clearest picture of God the world has ever seen—that is the affirmation of believing hearts. In Jesus Christ are united the vertical of God’s revelation and the horizontal of history’s meaning. Christians see in this one proper name a conjunction of God and man.

The believers of the New Testament did not first “read” Jesus Christ chronologically. That is, they did not set down to construct a doctrine called Christology that would move from preexistence to *parousia* (final coming). Rather, they were caught up in the historical reality of what God was doing for them and all the world through Jesus Christ. Looking at the different episodes of the Christ event should show the New Testament understanding of Jesus, God’s Christ.

Jesus’ Preexistence

Eternity began the story. If this one is the Son of God, then He must be tied on to the ancient people of God. He must be in the beginning . . . with God (John 1:1). Preexistence was not the first reflection of the early church about Jesus Christ, nor was it merely an afterthought. The purpose of Jesus’ preexistence is to tie Him onto God and to what God had been doing through Israel.

Matthew 1 established by His genealogy that Jesus is related to David, is related to Moses, is related to Abraham—one cannot be more integrally related to Israel than that.

Luke 3 established by His genealogy that Jesus is vitally related to all humans. Jesus came from Mary; but ultimately He came from God via a lineage that extends back to Adam, who was the direct child of God. Paul spoke of the fully divine Son of God who came down from God, who redeems us, and who returns to God (Ephes. 3). This heavenly Christ emptied Himself and became like us for our sake (Phil. 2).

God determined, before the foundation of the world, that the redemption of the world would be accomplished through Jesus, the Lord of Glory (Ephesians 1). John began a new Genesis with his bold assertion that “*in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God*” (John 1:1). This Word (Greek, *logos*) has become flesh (John 1:14) so that qualified witnesses can see, touch, and hear the revelation of God (1 John 1:1-4). It may have been in this way from resurrection to preexistence that early Christians stitched together, under the guidance of God, the story of Jesus. But His story lay also in His names, His titles, what He was called.

Names Assigned to the Lord. Matthew opens his gospel as “*the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David.*” Both designations are used here as a personal name, although usually “*Christ*” is a term employed rather as an appellative, or common name.

His Personal Name. The Lord’s personal name was Jesus, which signifies *Savior*. It is carefully accented by repetitions in the record as being highly important.

(1) *He was so called prospectively by Gabriel to Mary: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus”* (Luke 1:31, italics added).

(2) *He was so named by the angel to Joseph in his supernatural dream respecting Mary and the child: “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21).

(3) *He was so called on the day of His birth: “She gave birth to a son; and he called His name Jesus”* (Matthew 1:25).

(4) *He was so called when His name was officially bestowed at circumcision: “His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb”* (Luke 2:21).

His Official Name. His official appellative was *Christ*, which means *the Anointed One*. Here the Messiah and the Christ of the Scriptures meet and identify themselves in the personality of Jesus, who was anointed of God as the Prophet, Priest, and King (*Christos* = Christ = *the Anointed*; Hebrews. *Mashîah*, *Messiah* = *the Anointed*).

“*You know, Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him*” (Acts 10:38).

Andrew, who had been one of John the Baptist’s disciples, when he turned to follow Jesus, “found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘*We have found the Messiah*’ (which translated means *Christ*)” (John 1:41, italics added). “*It had been revealed*” to the just and devout Simeon “*by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ*” (Luke 2:25-26, italics added). Peter, answering the Lord’s question, said, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16, italics added). *The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament.*

(1) *Jesus is called “the Son of Man” (ho huios tou anthropou).* With this formula Jesus usually addressed Himself to the apprehension of His disciples. The reasons are obvious: Jesus was in His condition of humility; He was, as yet, thus best known to His followers in His humanity. He was to be known as the promised “seed” of the woman. He was a perfect man whose unique mission into this world was to be the **Redeemer** of lost mankind.

(2) *Jesus is called distinctively “the Son of God” (ho huios tou theou).* This title expresses the deity of the Lord Jesus as distinguished from His humanity. In Scripture this designation is never applied to His miraculous birth, or exclusively to His messiah-ship, which, however, is included, but invariably to His original relation to the Father as He was in His preexistence before He assumed humanity.

Christology – Part 2

The Doctrine of Christ

For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body, Colossians 2:9 NLT

Jesus Christ is the Source of reality and truth, the very presence of God Himself.

Note: reality and truth—the answers to the world and life—are not found in a philosophy nor in human ideas. They are found in a Person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think for a moment: if a Person (God) really created the world, then the answer to life and creation (truth and reality) are bound to be wrapped up in Him, not in the world He made. He (Jesus the Christ) is the Source to understanding the world; the world is not the source to understanding Him. True, we can look at the world and learn some things about God, but not all that we need to know. For example, the world cannot tell us how to conquer evil and death, not perfectly. Therefore, if we seek the truth only in the world, we are left short and incomplete and unfulfilled and in error. Thus, we must seek truth and the answer to all things in the Person who made all things. He alone knows the whole story.

The glorious message of the gospel and of this passage is that God does exist. He truly exists and He has revealed Himself in Christ. Christ is the revelation of God, of truth and reality, of life itself in all its origin, purpose, meaning, and destiny. Note three wonderful truths.

1. *Christ is the fullness of God.* Christ is God Himself who came to earth. Note the verse: “In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead.” **All that God is dwells in Christ.**

- Christ is God in an absolute, full, and perfect sense. Jesus Christ has the full nature and being of God just as God the Father has the full nature of God. God the Father and God the Son have the same being and nature, that of God. The word “fulness” ($\pi\lambda\epsilon\rho\mu\alpha$) means that not a single part of God’s nature is lacking in the nature of Christ.
- The word “dwells” ($\kappa\alpha\tau\omega\kappa\epsilon\iota$) means to be at home, to be permanently settled and present. This tells us...
 1. that the fulness of God has always dwelt in Christ, even before He came to earth (John 1:1, 18; John 17:5, 24; Phil. 2:6).
 2. that the fulness of God dwelt in Christ when Christ was walking upon earth in a human body (John 1:14, 18; 1 John 1:1-3).
 3. that the fulness of God was not just a temporary gift to Christ.

What does all this mean to us in practical day to day living? It means two wonderful things.

- a. First, God is not far off in outer space someplace. God is not unconcerned with the world. God has not just created the world and wound it up and left it on its own to fly throughout space with man making out the best he can. God is interested and concerned with the world—so much so that He has come to earth to show how vitally concerned He is.

b. God is love, not evil. Only a God of evil would leave man in the dark where he would have to grope and grasp and stumble about in order to find God. A God of love would reveal Himself and show man...

- the way to God.
- the truth of God, man, and his world.
- the life that man is to live (John 14:6).

Selected Scriptures (Recite and Discuss)

*For when you see Me, you are seeing the one who sent Me. **John 12:45 NLT***

*If you had known who I am, then you would have known who My Father is. From now on you know Him and have seen Him!" **John 14:7 NLT***

*Jesus replied, "Philip, don't you even yet know who I am, even after all the time I have been with you? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father! So why are you asking to see Him? **John 14:9 NLT***

*All that the Father has is Mine; this is what I mean when I say that the Spirit will reveal to you whatever He receives from Me. **John 16:15 NLT***

*Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ appeared in the flesh and was shown to be righteous by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and was announced to the nations. He was believed on in the world and was taken up into heaven. **1 Timothy 3:16 NLT***

*The Son reflects God's own glory, and everything about Him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of His command. After He died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, He sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven. **Hebrews 1:3 NLT***

....this outline will be continued in the next lesson...

Christology – Part 3

The Doctrine of Christ

And ye are complete in Him, ... Colossians 2:10a

....this outline is continued from the previous lesson...

2. *Believers are complete in Christ.* The word “complete” ($\pi\epsilon\pi\lambda\epsilon$ | $\rho\circ$ | $\mu\epsilon\nu\circ\iota$) means to be made full.

The Greek actually says, “**In Him you are full.**”

When a person truly believes and partakes of Christ, he receives the fullness of Christ. Just what is the fullness of Christ which believers receive? Scripture describes it in several ways.

a. Believers receive wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

God alone made it possible for you to be in Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made Christ to be wisdom itself. He is the One who made us acceptable to God. He made us pure and holy, and He gave Himself to purchase our freedom. 1 Cor. 1:30 NLT

- **Wisdom** means that we understand God, the world, and man: the origin, purpose, and end of creation.
- **Righteousness** means that we understand the evil in the world, both sin and death and that we know the only way to attain righteousness is through Christ.
- **Sanctification** means that we have set our lives apart unto God to live for Him and to serve Him.
- **Redemption** means that we have been saved from corruption and death and given eternal life.

b. Believers receive the fullness of Christ’s nature. The divine nature of God is actually placed in believers and they become new creatures in Christ.

And by that same mighty power, He has given us all of His rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in His divine nature. 2 Peter 1:4 NLT

What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness—righteous, holy, and true. Ephesians 4:24 NLT

In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.

Col. 3:10 NLT

c. Believers receive fullness of life now. From the time believers receive Christ, they should lack nothing. If a believer ever lacks anything—any fullness of life—it is because he has taken his eyes off Christ and has slipped away. When dealing with day to day living...

- the believer receives an abundance of life.

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

- the believer receives fullness of joy.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11).

- the believer receives all the necessities of life including food, clothing, and shelter (cp. Matthew 6:24-34).

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

- the believer receives the fullness of God’s Spirit, of God Himself.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19).

“Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

d. Believers receive the fullness of life eternal.

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:15-16).

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:8).

e. Believers receive the fullness of the knowledge of God’s will.

*So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what He wants to do in your lives, and we ask Him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom. **Col. 1:9 NLT***

Christology – Part 4

The Doctrine of Christ

He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe. Col. 2:10b NLT

....this outline is continued from the previous lesson...

3. *Christ is the Head of all principality and power*; that is, no rule, authority, or power stands between God and man. Nothing, absolutely nothing, stands between God (ultimate Truth and Reality) and man...

- no force
- no power
- no energy
- no person
- no science
- no law of the universe
- no zodiac sign
- no sign or spirit of the stars and planets
- no astrological energy

The explanation and fate of man and his world are found in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. He is the only Intermediary between God and man. **Man can approach God only through Christ.** No one else—person or force—can present us to God and make us acceptable to God. God accepts only those persons who come to Him by Christ.

Selected Scriptures

(Recite and Discuss)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all” (John 3:31).

“Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

*Christ is the One through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through Him and for Him. **Colossians 1:16 NLT***

This passage concerns the creation of the universe. It deals with such questions as...

- What is the origin of the universe?
- How did the world come into existence?
- What was the force that brought the universe forth?
- Is there more than one world or universe? More than the physical dimension of being? Are there invisible worlds in other dimensions?
- What is the purpose or end of things or of creation?
- What holds things together? What is the cohesive force that gives order to the universe? What is the power behind the laws of nature such as gravity?

Jesus Christ created all things. This is a matter of fact declaration, yet note how profound the truth is and how much is covered in the verse.

The words “by Him” (ἐν αὐτῷ) mean *in Him*; that is, creation took place *in Christ, within His very being*.

- The heart of Christ desired the world.
- The mind of Christ planned the world.
- The will of Christ destined the world.
- The Word of Christ created the world.

Christ created all things for Himself. Think for a moment: if Christ really created all things, to whom would creation look? Who would creation praise and honor, worship and serve? The answer is obvious: creation looks to its Creator. Creation owes its existence to its Creator; therefore, creation is to exalt its Creator. Creation finds its end and consummation in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ created the universe...

- that in the ages to come He might show the riches of His grace and kindness (Ephes. 2:7).
- that He might reveal His glory (Romans 8:18).

Simply stated, the universe was created for Christ, that it might be His...

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to love• to bless• to redeem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to receive• to save• to exalt
--	---

Therefore, creation owes its praise and honor, worship and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. The universe exists for its Creator.

*Then, when He has conquered all things, the Son will present Himself to God, so that God, who gave His Son authority over all things, will be utterly Supreme over everything everywhere. **1 Corinthians 15:28 NLT***

Christology – Part 5

The Doctrine of Christ

He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe. Col. 2:10b NLT

Jesus Christ is before all things. This is a critical point; it means two things.

1. *Jesus Christ was before all things in time.* Before the first thing was ever created, Jesus Christ was already there. He is not a created being; He is the **Creator**. There was nothing existing in the universe when He created. Before the beginning of time, before the universe ever existed, He was there. He alone is eternal.

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psalm 90:2).

“I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was” (Proverbs 8:23).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

“And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev. 22:13).

2. *Jesus Christ is before all things in importance, supremacy, and preeminence.* Nothing is superior to Him. He alone is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He alone stands before all as Supreme; all else—every single thing—stands under Him owing their existence, worship, and service to Him.

Their ancestors were great people of God, and Christ himself was a Jew as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. Romans 9:5 NLT

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation. Col. 1:15 NLT

He existed before everything else began, and He holds all creation together. Col. 1:17 NLT



This point destroys all ideas that Jesus Christ is only a great teacher, only one among many great men who can lead us to God.

Jesus Christ holds all things together. Wuest quotes Lightfoot as making an excellent statement on this point:

“[Jesus Christ] is the principle of cohesion in the universe. He impresses upon creation that unity and solidarity which makes it a cosmos (an ordered system) instead of a chaos (an unformed mass). Thus (to take one instance) the action of gravitation, which keeps in their places things fixed and regulates the motions of things moving, is an expression of His mind” (Ephesians and Colossians, Vol.1, p.185).

Barclay, as is so often the case, is descriptive in his exposition:

“...it is the Son who, as it were, holds the world together. That is to say, all the laws by which this world is an order and not a chaos are an expression of the mind of the Son. The law of gravity and all the so-called scientific laws are not only scientific laws; they are divine laws. They are the laws which make sense of the universe. They are the laws which make this a reliable and a dependable world. Every law of science and of nature is, in fact, an expression of the thought of God. It is by these laws, and therefore by the mind of God, that the universe hangs together, and does not disintegrate in chaos” (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.144).

The point is clear: Jesus Christ is what holds the world together. It is His love and power...

- that keeps the universe from flying apart and disintegrating.
- that keeps all creatures from utterly destroying themselves through savagery.

“And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17).

“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3).

Jesus Christ is the Sustainer of the universe. No man holds the universe together, but Christ does.

God has not created the world and left it to fly through space to take whatever course it will. God is not going to let the world destroy itself. **God is in control.** His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is controlling the world and moving it forward to a climactic moment of renewal and recreation—what the Bible calls the *great day of redemption*. And note how He is holding it together: by the power of His Word. He simply speaks and the laws that hold the world together are set in motion. The Word of Jesus Christ is...

• perfect and pure energy	• perfect and pure unity
• perfect and pure force	• perfect and pure solidarity
• perfect and pure power	• perfect and pure cohesion
• perfect and pure order	

It is His Word that holds everything together. It is his love and power...

- that keeps the universe from flying apart and disintegrating.
- that keeps evil from completely conquering and utterly destroying all things.

“And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:17).

Pneumatology

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

*The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. **Genesis 1:2 NLT***

The Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost is the mysterious third Person of the Trinity through whom God acts, reveals His will, empowers individuals, and discloses His personal presence in the Old and New Testament.

The term “Holy Spirit” in the Old Testament is found only in Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10-11.

*Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. **Psalm 51:11***

*But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. ¹¹Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? **Isaiah 63:10-11 NLT***

References to the spirit of God, however, are abundant. In one sense the Spirit of God is depicted as a mighty wind, Hebrew using the same word *ruach* for wind, breath, and spirit. During the time of the Exodus, God deployed this wind to part the sea thus enabling the Israelites to pass through safely and elude Pharaoh and his army.

*And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. **Exodus 14:21 NLT***

God used this agent in two ways: as a destructive force that dries up the waters, or as the power of God in gathering clouds to bring the refreshing rain.

*Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. **Hosea 13:15 NLT***

*And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. **1 Kings 18:45***

The spirit exercised control over the chaotic waters at the beginning of creation. Of the eighty-seven times that the Spirit is described as wind, thirty-seven describe the wind as the agent of God, mostly bane-ful, and ever strong and intense. This property of the Spirit clearly reflects the power of God. An additional quality of the Spirit is that of mysteriousness. Psalm 104:3 demonstrates that the Spirit as wind is able to transport God on its wings to the outer limits of the earth. No one can tell where He has been or where He is going. Power and mystery state the nature of God.

The Holy Spirit can be better understood by the attributes ascribed to Him by Scripture.

The Holy Spirit is a person that possesses intelligence and a will.

He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive Him, because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. John 14:17 NLT

But when the Father sends the Counselor as My representative—and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit—He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you. John 14:26 NLT

"But I will send you the Counselor—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will tell you all about Me. John 15:26 NLT

But we know these things because God has revealed them to us by His Spirit, and His Spirit searches out everything and shows us even God's deep secrets. ¹¹No one can know what anyone else is really thinking except that person alone, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 NLT

The Holy Spirit reproves (reprimands), helps, glorifies, intercedes (John 16:7-13; Romans 8:26).

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. ⁸When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹in regard to sin, because men do not believe in Me; ¹⁰in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. John 16:7-10 NIV

And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; Romans 8:26

The Holy Spirit executes the offices peculiar only to a person. The very nature of these offices involves personal distinction.

for the Holy Spirit will teach you what needs to be said even as you are standing there." Luke 12:12 NLT

We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him." Acts 5:32 NLT

"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these requirements: Acts 15:28 NLT

The Holy Spirit is omnipresent. (Psalm 139:7; Ephes. 2:17-18; 1 Corinthians 12:13); omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:10-11); omnipotence (Luke 1:35; Romans 8:11); eternity (Hebrews 9:4). (3) Creation is ascribed to Him (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30), and the working of miracles (Matthew 12:28; 1 Cor. 12:9-11). (4) Worship is required and ascribed to Him (Isaiah 6:3; Acts 28:25; Romans 9:1; Revelation 1:4; Matthew 28:19).

The Trinity – Part 1

The Doctrine of the Godhead

*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. **1 John 5:7-8***

Theological term used to define God as an undivided unity expressed in the threefold nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As a distinctive Christian doctrine, the Trinity is considered as a divine mystery beyond human comprehension to be reflected upon only through scriptural revelation. The Trinity is a biblical concept that expresses the dynamic character of God, not a Greek idea pressed into Scripture from philosophical or religious speculation. While the term *trinity* does not appear in Scripture, the trinitarian structure appears throughout the New Testament to affirm that God Himself is manifested through Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit.

A proper biblical view of the Trinity balances the concepts of unity and distinctiveness.

The Old Testament does feature implications of the trinitarian idea.

This does not mean that the Trinity was fully knowable from the Old Testament, but that a vocabulary was established through the events of God's nearness and creativity; both receive developed meaning from New Testament writers. For example...

- The word of God is recognized as the agent of creation
By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

Psalm 33:6

*For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. **Psalm 33:9***

The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.
Proverbs 3:19

*He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. **Psalm 107:20***

- This same vocabulary is given distinct personality in John's prologue in the person of Jesus Christ.
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²*The same was in the beginning with God.* ³*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. **John 1:1-3***
- Another vocabulary category includes the Spirit of God
*And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. **Genesis 1:2***

*Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. **Psalm 104:30***
Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying,
*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. **Zech. 4:6***

A distinguishing feature of the New Testament is the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is remarkable that New Testament writers present the doctrine in such a manner that it does not violate the Old Testament concept of the oneness of God. In fact, they unanimously affirm the Hebrew monotheistic faith, but they extend it to include the coming of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The early Christian church experienced the God of Abraham in a new and dramatic way without abandoning the oneness of God that permeates the Old Testament. As a fresh expression of God, the concept of the Trinity—rooted in the God of the past and consistent with the God of the past—absorbs the idea of the God of the past, but goes beyond the God of the past in a more personal encounter.

The New Testament evidence for the Trinity can be grouped into four types of passages.

The first is the trinitarian formula.....

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Matthew 28:19

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. 2 Cor. 13:14

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 1 Peter 1:2

In each passage a trinitarian formula, repeated in summation fashion, registers a distinctive contribution of each person of the Godhead. Matthew 28:19, for example, follows the triple formula of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that distinguishes Christian baptism. The risen Lord commissioned the disciples to baptize converts with a trinitarian emphasis that carries the distinctiveness of each person of the Godhead while associating their inner relationship. This passage is the clearest scriptural reference to a systematic presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

A second type of New Testament passage is the triadic form.....

Two passages cast in this structure are as follows:

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Ephes. 4:4-6

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. ⁴Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 1 Cor. 12:3-6

Both passages refer to the three Persons, but not in the definitive formula of the previous passage. Each Scripture balances the unity of the church. Emphasis is placed on the administration of gifts by the Godhead.

This concept of the *Trinity* is continued in the next lesson.....

The Trinity – Part 2

The Doctrine of the Godhead

*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are One. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. **1 John 5:7-8***

The New Testament evidence for the Trinity can be grouped into four types of passages. The Trinitarian formula and the triadic form were discussed in the previous lesson.

A third category of passages mentions the three persons of the Godhead, but without a clear triadic structure.

In the accounts of the baptism of Jesus the three synoptic writers recorded the presence of the Trinity when the Son was baptized, the Spirit descended, and the Father spoke with approval.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. ¹⁶And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: ¹⁷And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

*And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. ¹⁰And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: ¹¹And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **Mark 1:9-11***

*Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, ²²And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. **Luke 3:21-22***

Paul, in Galatians 4:4-6, outlined the work of the Trinity in the aspect of the sending Father.

*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁶And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. **Galatians 4:4-6***

Other representative passages in this category portray each member of the Trinity in relation to a particular redemptive function.

*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: ¹⁴Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. **2 Thes. 2:13-15***

*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ⁶Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; **Titus 3:4-6***

*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, ²¹Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. **Jude 1:20-21***

The fourth category of trinitarian passages includes those presented in the farewell discourse of Jesus to His disciples.

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; **John 14:16***

*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me: **John 15:26***

*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. ¹⁴He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. ¹⁵All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. **John 16:13-15***

In the context of these passages, Jesus expounded the work and ministry of the third person of the Godhead as the Agent of God in the continuing ministry of the Son. The Spirit is a Teacher who facilitates understanding on the disciples' part and, in being sent from the Father and the Son, is one in nature with the other Persons of the Trinity. He makes known the Son and "at the same time makes known the Father who is revealed in the Son". The discourse emphasizes the interrelatedness of the Trinity in equality and operational significance.

All of these passages are embryonic efforts by the early church to express its awareness of the Trinity. The New Testament is Christological in its approach, but it involves the fullness of God being made available to the individual believer through Jesus and by the Spirit.

Four statements can summarize and clarify this study.

(1) God is One. The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. His offer of salvation in the Old Testament receives a fuller revelation in the New Testament in a way that is not different, but more complete. The doctrine of the Trinity does not abandon the monotheistic faith of Israel.

(2) God has three distinct ways of being in the redemptive event, yet He remains an undivided unity. That God the Father imparts Himself to mankind through Son and Spirit without ceasing to be Himself is at the very heart of the Christian faith. A compromise in either the absolute sameness of the Godhead or the true diversity reduces the reality of salvation.

(3) The primary way of grasping the concept of the Trinity is through the threefold participation in salvation. The approach of the New Testament is not to discuss the essence of the Godhead, but the particular aspects of the revelatory event that includes the definitive presence of the Father in the person of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

(4) The doctrine of the Trinity is an absolute mystery. It is primarily known, not through speculation, but through experiencing the act of grace through personal faith.

The True GOD

*And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM**: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.* Exodus 3:14 (KJV)

Our National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. has in its Articles of Faith: Article II. **The True God.**

*We believe the Scriptures teach that there is **One**, and only **One**, living and 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.*

As we begin our study on the True God and what we believe, please know that it would be like our paddling around the edges of the huge Pacific Ocean or even just dipping our toe into it. Our God is infinite, and our mere human minds are inadequate in comprehending Him.

John Wesley captured that same truth in a different way. “Give me a worm that can understand a man,” he wrote, “and I will give you a man who can understand God.” And in Psalm 145:3, David said of God, “*His greatness is unsearchable.*”

That doesn’t mean we cannot come to know God, because God has revealed Himself to us in a number of ways, GENERAL REVELATION and in the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-14) and through the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16) which is known to us as God’s Word (God’s biography). And so by studying the Bible and looking at the person and work of Christ we will begin to understand something of our great unsearchable God. (Theology).

Yet there is a warning or stipulation: we cannot know God through the Scriptures unless we are willing to be changed by them (coming to know God is not just some theoretical exercise) but to actually come to know God, we must begin to know ourselves and be aware of our deep spiritual need before God and be responsive to God’s provision through the work of Christ and by the application of that Work to us by God’s Holy Spirit.

It’s only at (*conversion*) can we begin to grasp something of God (*revelation*), as we begin a relationship with Him. For instance, I could write a biography about my mother unpacking her life story and you could read all about her and be informed about her and begin to draw up a mental picture of her in your mind. But the difference between your knowing about her through the book and myself knowing her, is that I’m in a relationship. And that’s the difference between knowing something about God and really coming to know God for yourself.

1. OUR GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT.

At the very beginning of the Bible we are told, Genesis 1:1 “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*” Note: This is profound first verse not that God is Creator, that’s profound enough, but go back another step, **In the beginning God.** Before anything was there was God. This is a profound statement for

our finite minds - but we must understand that God is infinite and far beyond our understanding. From this verse we see that our God is self-existent that He is the cause of all that we see around us today.

The most profound questions often come from children? “Who made God?” Of course, the answer to that question is no one made God for He is self-existent; if somebody had made God, He would cease to be God. Our finite minds work within the remit of cause and effect - but God is outside of this process – He is self-existent - Our eternal God is the uncaused cause of all things.

But let's unpack Gods self-existence some more and the best place to start is found in Exodus 3:1-15. Let's read this Scripture passage from Exodus. Here we have God's own self-revelation of Himself to Moses; here we see Moses asking God what is Your name? God's reply (Exodus 3:13 -14) ***“I AM THAT I AM..... Say this to the people of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.”*** This term 'I AM' is linked to the ancient name of God – the LORD. Bible scholars agree that this is God's proper name and that all of the other names are simply a further description of His character and activity. But it's more than a name, it's also descriptive in regard to God's self-existence, pointing to the fact that God is in Himself; it shows that He is the One who is entirely self-existent, self-sufficient and eternal.

NOBODY SHARES

The attributes of God's self-existence is at the very core of God--they are attributes which no other person/deities share with Him. We human beings are created in His image and we may share something of God's attributes/character -- for instance His wisdom, His love, His compassion, the sense of Justice and of His power albeit limited but none share in His self-existence; He exists in Himself. Isaiah 42:8 (NLT) ***“I AM the LORD; that is My name! I will not give My glory to anyone else, nor share My praise with carved idols.”***

So our God had no origins – He has no beginning or end – as human beings we have a beginning and end and we are what we are by the grace of God and none of us share in His self-existence.

Our world functions upon the cause and effect principle: Where everything we see - smell – taste and touch all have an explanation for being, we can hardly think in another way – some scientists try and destroy God in explaining our origins in this way, bringing the work of God down to natural laws. You see God for many is outside our box of thinking. In reality we do live in a cause and effect principle world but the cause of the effect is the uncaused cause of all things our self-existent God. Revelation 1:8 (NLT) ***“I AM the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end,” says the Lord God. “I AM the One who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.”***

Important to note: Many people will readily admit it, that God exists through the cause and effect principle – (just look around there has to be a God). - they rationally infer everything comes from something - so there must be a God - Yet this God is unknowable, and they indicate that God cannot be known.

Yet the wonderful truth is that our self-existent God who has created all that we see, all that we are and all that will be, has made Himself known to us. God was contracted into human form in the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 1:14) and through the Scriptures by the illuminating and indwelling work of God the Holy Spirit we can come to experience Him (John 15,16). We can know Him in part.

The Apostle Paul states: *Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.* 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NLT2).

Psalm 90:2 NKJV tells us “*Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*” I wonder do we spend enough time as Christians thinking about God’s person and character; are we in awe of our self-existent God who has made Himself known to us or have we confined Him into a small box? Brothers and sisters, our God cannot be contained; it time for you and I to stand in awe.

2. OUR GOD IS SELF-SUFFICIENT “I AM THAT I AM”

The second quality we learn about God’s name “**I AM THAT I AM**” is that God is not only self-existent but self-sufficient. If God has always existed before time and space, before any created thing or person it means our God has no needs and therefore depends upon nobody. He has always been completely self-sufficient, within Himself He has all that He needs in the Triune Godhead.

Unlike us mere humans, we are not self-sufficient, we need air to breath, water to drink, we need food to eat and we need gravity to keep our feet firm on *Terra firma* (in other words--dry ground; the earth). We are dependent upon these things and so we are not self-sufficient in the truest sense of the word. We all have needs and depend upon each other, but God runs contrary He is completely self-sufficient.

Acts 17:24 -25 reaffirms this point So God doesn’t need us in any shape or form this quite humbling thought. That God doesn’t need

Our Worship: Rev 4: 1-11. After all he is incessantly worshipped in heaven.

Our Witness: Luke 3:8 “God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.”

Our Fellowship: After all perfect fellowship within the plurality of the Godhead.

QUESTION: So why did this self-existent and self-sufficient God who has no need for us, create us in the first place? Well, although He doesn’t need us, God does love us and He wants us, why else would he save us? In so doing God demonstrates His Glory and grace through us. (Isaiah 43:7 Ephesians 1:11-12). So Rather than God needing us, we need Him.

Practical applications: God’s self-sufficiency

a. Human beings are incomplete (insufficient) and unfulfilled apart from a personal relationship with God. How often do we see people seeking for meaning to life, for purpose, for significance and yet are never satisfied. We see an insatiable human appetite for fulfillment and it’s all because human beings are incomplete until they find the God who is all sufficient.

b. If our God is self-sufficient, and has come into our lives, then will not all our needs be met in Him.

Negative: Why is it so often we fail to trust in our all sufficient God, instead we trust in ourselves, in others, in our own resources, and in our sufficiency, which is insufficient for God’s task.

c. Trust in the all sufficient God who lives within us in all our situations. He is all that we need. We are complete in Him. Paul made this claim: Colossians 2:9-10 (NLT) *For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.*

In Christ we have all our sufficiency we need, We need to trust in Him in all our situations. Our God has all the resources we need to be the people of God He wants us to be.

3. OUR GOD IS ETERNAL

The third quality in the name that God give Moses for himself **I AM WHO I AM** not only conveys God’s self-existence and self-sufficiency but also Gods eternal nature. Simply put God has always been and always will be and that He is ever the same in His eternal nature.

- Can you grasp that which is eternal? Can you imagine putting your hand into eternity and taking a bit of eternity out you would still have an eternity left, its mind boggling.

TEMPORAL NATURE

Unlike God's our lives upon this earth are temporal in nature; we decay, and we die.

- A grave stone: Name - a few words - birth and death dates 1939 – 2009--the hyphen is our temporal life. Moses lived a long life, yet on Mount Nebo at the ripe old age of 120 he died (Deuteronomy 34:7). He reached the end of His temporal life. Moses was fully aware of the temporal nature of life and he held it in sharp contrast to the eternal nature of God. Yet our God is eternal and Moses knew it! Psalm 90:1- 6 -- *From everlasting to everlasting You are God.*

Here we see the eternal nature of God and the temporal nature of humanity.

Throughout the Bible individuals lived out their lives in the light of God's eternal nature (Genesis 21:33, Isaiah 57:15, 1 Timothy 1:17) These individuals saw the importance of not holding onto the temporal but lived by faith in an everlasting God. (Hebrews 11: 1-3). They had a faith which was sure of what we hope for and certain of what they did not see and they were commended for it. They had an eternal perspective in life.

ETERNAL NATURE

In Revelation, we have a window actually into eternity itself -- *The throne room of heaven.* In Revelation 4:8 we read about the living creatures who never stop saying: *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come* and then in verse 10 the 24 elders worship Him and acknowledge He lives forever and ever.

Let's paddle along the water edge of the Great Pacific Ocean together of the eternal nature of God.

Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13 describes God as the Alpha and Omega the beginning and the end. It's basically saying that God is the A to Z of all history and life. He is the author and finisher. He sees and knows all and is control of all. He began it and He will end it as we know it. But God Himself in His eternal nature is outside of it.

Eternal/temporal

We live in the cortex of that A TO Z and we are governed by a sequence of events within it—past, present and future; yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We are governed by the ticking clock; we cannot escape it.

On the other hand, in the eternal it's not the extension of time – The eternal supersedes time, it's outside of time and space - so eternity is not an extension of these lives we live today; it is completely different. God is eternal. With Him there is no past, present and future although He can work within the framework of time and Human History. He is over and above it. With God there is always the eternal-and it is now! So God can sees our whole lives from beginning to end and He sees yesterdays, todays and tomorrows, right now!

- Imagine you're at the Natchitoches Christmas Festival parade and you're standing in a certain location watching the colorful floats, the bands, dance and drill teams go by in succession one at a time. You have viewed a succession of events unknown to you what floats, bands or teams were coming next.
- But now imagine you have been taken up in the police helicopter above and from here you can see the whole festival and parade. You can distinguish the floats; no longer do you see a sequence of events but you see the parade from beginning to end - you know what's coming next – it's all becomes part of your

consciousness at once -- not a sequence of events - this is exactly what God sees as the Alpha and Omega, the whole our lives -- in fact the whole of History.

But what does this all mean for us as Christians?

a) It means we can rest in our God who knows all our tomorrows. With Him our lives are mapped out, there is no surprises with God. He has planned the joys to come, He knows the tragedies we shall face, He knows the failures and successes, our hopes and our fears. His perfect plan.

Ephesians 1:11 (NKJV) *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,*

Romans 8:28 (NKJV) *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

b) It means God does not change (*immutability – unchangeableness*), This means He can be trusted to remain as He has shown Himself to be to us through the Scriptures. James 1:17 (NKJV) *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

All His promises in this Word can be trusted and are reliable. Whether that's to do with the greatness of His love towards us in Christ - He cannot love us one minute and then somehow take His love away . Or whether in regard to sin, He will not change His mind, as though He is going to begin see some sins as 'permissible' something that was prohibited. Sin will always be a transgression to the law of God which is unchangeable. God will always be everything He reveals Himself to be.....He can be trusted!

c) It means God is inescapable: In our humanity we can ignore one another; we can simply walk away from situations and escape. We can do that to an extent with God to reject Him do our own thing in this lifetime. But ultimately whether you believe or not you cannot escape from God. You cannot walk away from God for eternity; He is inescapable (Psalm 139:7-12). People may ignore Him and reject but one day we all will stand before the **One True Living God** who is *self-existent, self-sufficient* and *eternal* -- the great **I AM WHO I AM** .

The only testimony before Him worth having will be

1 John 5:11-12 (NKJV) *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

The only thing we can do as Moses and the people of Israel did was fall at His feet and worship Him and declare Holy is the Lord who **was** and **is** and **is to come!**

Commentary references and excerpts were derived from the following resources:

The Holy Bible

Logos Bible Software

The Preacher's Sermon Outline Bible

Life Application Bible Notes

Word Search Bible Study Software

Internet Resources