



Advanced Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson 8: God the Father

A true Christian may be sure of the comfort of salvation for himself, now and in the future. This blessedness is in the hands of a triune God. For salvation it is essential to know a triune God. This lesson speaks of the Trinity in general and of God the Father in particular.

LORD'S DAY 8

Q.24. HOW ARE THESE ARTICLES DIVIDED?

ANSWER: INTO THREE PARTS; THE FIRST IS OF GOD THE FATHER AND OUR CREATION; THE SECOND, OF GOD THE SON AND OUR REDEMPTION; THE THIRD, OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST AND OUR SANCTIFICATION.

The Trinity in the Bible

God reveals Himself in the Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testament, as a triune God. We mention only a few texts here.

In Psalm 33:6 we read, *"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."* God the Father (here called *Lord*) has created heaven and earth and all things that are in them through His Son (here called the Word of the *LORD*, because God the Father speaks in and through Him) and through the Holy Ghost. And in I John 5:7 we read: *"For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are one."*

The origin of the Apostles' Creed

When we read the Apostles Creed carefully, we see that we can divide the articles into articles about God the Father, about God the Son, and about God the Holy Ghost. This confession tells us that there is a triune God.

This creed originated from the baptismal formula: I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Due to the struggle against errors, the confession was extended. It was in the fifth century that it attained the form that it has today.

Creation is the work of a triune God. Notice this in Psalm 33 quoted above. However, it is true that in creation the work of the Father stands in the foreground.

To God the Son the work of deliverance is particularly ascribed. The salvation which was designed by the Father and merited by Christ must be applied in our hearts. That is the particular work of the Holy Ghost. Therefore we speak of God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification. By sanctification is meant the inner renewal, so that the image of God is perfectly restored in man (see question 8). However, the division in the answer does not imply that the other Persons are not involved in the work which is particularly ascribed to one Person.

Q.25. SINCE THERE IS BUT ONE ONLY DIVINE ESSENCE (A), WHY SPEAKEST THOU OF FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST?

ANSWER: BECAUSE GOD HAS SO REVEALED HIMSELF IN HIS WORD (B), THAT THESE THREE DISTINCT PERSONS ARE THE ONE ONLY TRUE AND ETERNAL GOD.

(A) DEUT. 6:4; EPHESIANS 4:6; ISAIAH 44:6, 45:5; I CORINTHIANS 8:4,6;

(B) ISAIAH 61:1; LUKE 4:18; GENESIS 1:2-3; PSALM 33:6; ISAIAH 48:16;

MATTHEW 3:16-17, 28:19; I JOHN 5:7; ISAIAH 6:1,3; JOHN 14:26, 15:26;

II CORINTHIANS 13:13; GALATIANS 4:6; EPHESIANS 2:18; TITUS 3:5,6

Triune

The word “triune” is not literally found in the Bible, but Deuteronomy 6:4 and I John 5:7 clearly indicate what the term means. In Deuteronomy 6:4 we read the confession of faith of Israel: *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord!”*

And in Matthew 3:13-17 we read how the three Persons were present at the baptism of the Lord Jesus. The Father spoke from heaven; the Son came up out of the water; and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon Him.

The Lord Jesus commanded baptism be administered in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19)

The inquirer has a problem here. He wants to say, “If there are *three*, then it cannot be *one*, because *one* is not *three*, and *three* is not *one*.”

From this we realize that this doctrine is beyond our comprehension. Therefore we answer, yet it has clearly been revealed to us; we cannot fathom this mystery: there is one Being whom we call God and still there are three Persons, whom we also each call God. Job’s friend, Elihu, said, *“Behold, God is great, and we know Him not.”* (Job 36:26) There is one God, existing in three Persons. We believe this because God’s Word teaches this, and not because we should be able to understand it.

The only thing that we can do is repeat with reverence what God’s Word says. What we can know of God He has revealed to us, that is, made known to us. God has revealed Himself in His Word, and only from the Word of God do we know who God is.

The three Persons are necessary

We cannot do without *one* of the Persons. The Trinity concerns our salvation. The Father elected from all eternity. He created us. Throughout our entire life we experience His care. The Son merited deliverance, and the Holy Ghost applies the merited deliverance. Blessed is he who is granted to know the three Persons through faith.

Questions:

1. How and when did the Apostles' Creed come into existence?

2. Show from the Bible that creation is the work of a triune God. (Psalm 33)

3. How are the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost involved in the deliverance of man?

4. What is sanctification?

5. How does man obtain knowledge of God?

6. Look up the law of God in Exodus 20. Which commandment speaks of creation?

Evaluator: _____

Meditation: "The Trinity"

Three in one, one in three, God of my Salvation,
Heavenly Father, blessed Son, eternal Spirit,
 I adore thee as one Being, one Essence,
 one God in three distinct Persons,
 for bringing sinners to thy knowledge and to thy kingdom.
O Father, thou hast loved me sent Jesus to redeem me;
O Jesus, thou hast loved me and assumed my nature,
 shed thine own blood to wash away my sins,
 wrought righteousness to cover my unworthiness;
O Holy Spirit, thou hast loved me and entered my heart,
 implanted there eternal life,
 revealed to me the glories of Jesus.
Three Persons and one God, I bless and praise thee,
 for love so unmerited, so unspeakable, so wondrous,
 so mighty to save the lost and raise them to glory.
O Father, I thank thee that in fullness of grace
 thou hast given me to Jesus,
 to be his sheep, jewel, portion;
O Jesus, I thank thee that in fullness of grace
 thou hast accepted, espoused, bound me;
O Holy Spirit, I thank thee that in fullness of grace
 thou hast exhibited Jesus as my salvation,
 implanted faith within me,
 subdued my stubborn heart,
 made me one with him for ever.
O Father, thou art enthroned to hear my prayers,
O Jesus, thy hand is outstretched to take my petitions,
O Holy Spirit, thou art willing to help my infirmities,
 to show me my need, to supply words, to pray within me,
 to strengthen me that I faint not in supplication.
O Triune God, who commandeth the universe,
 thou hast commanded me to ask for those things
 that concern thy kingdom and my soul.
Let me live and pray as one baptized into the threefold Name.

Taken from "The Valley of Vision", a collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions