



LESSON 54

Foundations Curriculum

The Triune God

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Introduction

The Triune God

In this fifty-fourth lesson, we will talk about the Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, presenting the relationship between them. We will learn what the Word says about this subject, with the goal of clearing away some of the confused ideas that are widely spread, for which there is no biblical basis.

As we begin a new cycle called “God the Father,” we will present, first, the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

This subject is widely known as “the Trinity.” However, we know that this word is not found in the Scriptures, and for that reason we do not want to use it. What we will do is explain, in a simple way, what we believe about this subject, since there is much confusion about it. After all, are they three gods, or one person? How can this be?

Let us begin by saying what we do not believe, because we find no biblical basis for it.

1. The Scriptures do not say that He is one God divided into three. Therefore, we do not believe that He is a God made up of three parts, one third for each, which together would form one complete God.
2. The Scriptures do not say that there are three different manifestations of God — that God manifested Himself in one way in the Old Testament, in another way through Jesus, and that the Holy Spirit would be yet another way for God to manifest Himself today.
3. The Scriptures do not say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God and also one single person — that it makes no difference which one you speak of, that it is merely a matter of names, being, in the end, one and the same thing.
4. The Scriptures do not say that there are three gods.

Based on the Word of God, then, what do we believe?

We believe that the three are one God and three different persons. Each person has His own identity. The chart below illustrates our understanding.

CHART 1 <i>The Triune God</i>
The Father IS God — the Son IS God — the Holy Spirit IS God
The Father IS NOT the Son
The Son IS NOT the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit IS NOT the Father
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God and three distinct persons.

Two questions are necessary to improve our understanding:

CHART 2
What is the nature of God? — A question about the divine nature. It points to His deity.
Who is God? — A question about the divine person. It points to His identity.

Let us answer the question “What is the nature of God?” for the three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We will show that all three possess the same nature, the divine nature — that all three are God.

The Nature of the Father

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:23–24 (NKJV)

Here Jesus is speaking of the Father. He calls the Father God and says that God is Spirit.

because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse

Romans 1:19–20

Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.

John 6:27

We saw in these texts that God is Spirit and that the Father is God.

Concerning the nature of God, we cannot go any further than this, because it is not something we know how to explain. It is another dimension that we have no way of reaching. And God Himself knows that we have no way of understanding this. In His conversation with Moses, He presents Himself as the “I AM.”

Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Exodus 3:13–14

The Nature of the Son

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 1:18

I and My Father are one.

John 10:30

The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

John 10:33

Jesus was being accused by the Jews of making Himself equal to the Father.

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.”

John 10:37–38

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ; for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily

Colossians 2:8–9

In John 1:1–3 we learn that “the Word was with God, the Word was God” — a fact that confirms that Jesus is 100% God.

The Nature of the Holy Spirit

We know that the Holy Spirit is spirit and that His nature is divine. We will show that He is God, and that He and the Father, in fact, are one.

But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the

spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:9–11

But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

John 15:26

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2 Corinthians 3:17

This word “Lord” is used throughout the New Testament to refer to God Himself. This means the Holy Spirit is God.

Up to this point, we have sought to answer the question “What is the nature of God?” in order to show that the nature of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit is the same. We have seen that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Spirit is God. We have also seen that all three are the same God.

Let us now answer the question “Who is God?” — who the Father is, who the Son is, and who the Holy Spirit is.

We will show that they are different persons. When we say “different,” we mean that the Father is one person, the Son is another person, and the Holy Spirit is another person. A person is someone with his own identity and his own characteristics — that is, someone who has life, has will, has feelings, has knowledge, speaks, hears, sees, thinks, and so on.

It is possible to observe, in the texts we will cite below, that all of these characteristics are found in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

Let us note two things: they possess the characteristics of a person, and they are different persons.

In the creation account, in the first chapter of Genesis, we see that the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

*The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

Genesis 1:2

Right after that we find the expression “let Us make man.”

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 1:26

In the episode of the Tower of Babel, they say, “Let Us go down...”

"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

Genesis 11:7

These texts show us a plurality. They indicate that we are not dealing with only one person. Even though the Son is not specifically mentioned, if we remember what John tells us, we complete the picture: "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1–3). We see that at the beginning of creation, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all present.

When Jesus commanded us to make disciples, He commanded us to baptize in the name of three different persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

Matthew 28:18–19

In John we see that God (the Father) sent the Son...

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

The Father manifests Himself from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son"...

And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:17

Whose voice was that which was heard? Could it have been thunder?

Jesus talks with the Father at all times. He affirmed that everything He spoke, He had heard from the Father:

For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

John 12:49

On the cross, Jesus feels forsaken by the Father:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Matthew 27:46

Now then, was Jesus out of His mind? Was He talking to Himself? Was Jesus only pretending that there was another person with whom He related? This makes it very clear that He and the Father are different persons.

We have already mentioned John 1:1–3, which says that the Word was with God. This text is very expressive, because it confirms exactly what we are saying. John says that the Word (Jesus) was God and was with God.

For our limited human minds, it is difficult to understand that someone can be and be with someone at the same time. Either you are, or you are with.

This is why we need to remember that they have a divine nature, and not one of flesh and blood like ours. Jesus said that He needed to go to the Father, because if He went, He would send the Holy Spirit:

“And now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”

John 16:5–7

Here, then, we see the three persons.

He also said that the Holy Spirit would not speak on His own authority, but would say what He had heard.

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

John 16:13

He said that the Holy Spirit would glorify Him, because He would receive from what was His.

“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

John 16:14

Pay attention to these words, for they show us that these are different persons: one sends, and the other comes. One speaks, and the other hears. One gives, and the other receives.

And to close, I would like to point out where each one is right now, at this very moment. Where are they?

The Father is on His throne. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. And the Holy Spirit is here on earth with the Church.

It is also important for us to consider that the Bible affirms that we have become partakers of the divine nature:

as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature

2 Peter 1:3–4

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

1 John 3:9

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 Corinthians 3:16

Amen!

CONCLUSION

In this fifty-fourth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we studied the Triune God. We first clarified what we do not believe — even though it is widely held — because we find no biblical basis for it. Then, based on the Word of God, we affirmed our faith regarding this subject, answering two main questions: “What is the nature of God?” and “Who is God?” We learned that the three are one God and three different persons who relate to one another: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and that each person has His own characteristics and His own identity as well.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

- 01** Based on what we learned today, how would you answer the question: What is God?
- 02** Based on what we learned today, how would you answer the question: Who is God?
- 03** Did the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit already exist before the foundation of the world?

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

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