

TRUTH LESSONS—LEVEL ONE

LESSON TWO

THE TRIUNE GOD

OUTLINE

- I. God being only one.
- II. God having the aspect of three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit:
 - A. God speaking as I and also as Us.
 - B. The matter of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
- III. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexisting simultaneously from eternity to eternity:
 - A. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit all being God:
 - 1. The Father being God.
 - 2. The Son being God.
 - 3. The Spirit being God.
 - B. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit all being eternal:
 - 1. The Father being eternal.
 - 2. The Son being eternal.
 - 3. The Spirit being eternal.
 - C. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexisting simultaneously.
- IV. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit coinhering and being inseparable.
- V. The Three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit— being one:
 - A. The Son being the Father.
 - B. The Son (the last Adam) becoming the life-giving Spirit.
 - C. The Lord (the Son) being the Spirit.
- VI. The reason for God being triune.

TEXT

The Bible reveals that God is triune. This is a revelation of great importance. God is uniquely one, and His name is Jehovah; yet this God is also triune—He is the Father, Son, and Spirit. This is a mystery; in fact, it is a mystery of mysteries. Small and finite as we are, we human beings cannot understand it thoroughly; even less can we define it in a full way. Many things relating to the matter of life are not within the comprehension of men; men can only have a general idea of them. For instance, though we have life in our physical body, no one can explain it thoroughly, for life is a mystery. Furthermore, there is a spirit within us—this is even more of a mystery. No one can give a full explanation of what the life of man and the spirit of man are. We are not able to comprehend such a comparatively small mystery as man, to say nothing of the great mystery of the Triune God—the Father, Son, and Spirit. If we cannot fully understand man, how much less the Triune God!

Nevertheless, we can receive and enjoy this mysterious God. We cannot understand, but we can enjoy! In former days men had no knowledge of vitamins, though they greatly enjoyed their benefit. The Triune God is not for us to understand, but to enjoy. All that He is for us to enjoy is revealed in the Scriptures; we cannot fully understand it, yet we may, according to all that is declared in the Scriptures, accept whatever is said.

Although we cannot find the term “triune” in the Scriptures, we can see the fact concerning the Trinity of the Godhead. Let us now examine the verses in the Bible that are more evidently related to this matter.

I. GOD BEING ONLY ONE

The Scriptures in many instances and in many ways tell us that God is uniquely one. Both in the Old Testament and in the New, there are many passages which clearly and definitely tell us that God is only one. First Corinthians 8:4 says, “There is no God but one,” and Isaiah 45:5 says, “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me.” Similar words also can be found in Isaiah 45:6, 21, 22; and 44:6, 9.

In these passages God repeatedly says, “There is no God besides me.” He does not say, “There is no God besides us,” but, “There is no God besides me.” Me is singular, only one. These repeated declarations of God strongly prove that God is uniquely one.

Psalm 86:10 says, “Thou art God alone.” Here it does not say, “Ye are God alone,” but, “Thou art God alone.” This also proves that God is only one.

That God is one is a clear and definite revelation of the Scriptures; it is also a fundamental and consummate principle.

Perhaps some will ask, “Since God is only one, why did God speak of Himself as Us in Genesis 1:26? And why did He say Our image? Is there just one God, or is there more than one?” The answer is: He is the Triune God; He is one, yet three—the Father, Son, and Spirit.

II. GOD HAVING THE ASPECT OF THREE— THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE SPIRIT

A. God Speaking as I and Also as Us

In Isaiah 6:8 God says, “Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *us*?” God speaks of Himself on one hand as *I* and on the other hand as *Us*. This proves that *I* is *Us* and *Us* is *I*; *I* and *Us* are identical. Then, is God singular or plural? If you say He is plural, He says *I*. If you say He is singular, He says *Us*. This is rather mysterious and difficult to understand; so we simply take the scriptural revelation as it is.

Furthermore, Genesis 1:26 says, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” That the only God, in His divine word, speaks of Himself a number of times as *Us* is truly a mystery which is hard for us to understand. Nevertheless, we must believe that it is because of God being the Father, Son, and Spirit.

B. The Matter of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit

The Lord says in Matthew 28:19, “Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The Lord here clearly speaks of Three—the Father, Son, and Spirit. But when He speaks here of the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, the name which is used is in the singular number in the original text. This means that though the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three, yet the name is one. It is really mysterious—one name for Three. This, of course, is what is meant by the expression three-one, or triune.

Is the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as spoken by the Lord here, the name Father, or Son, or Holy Spirit? It is difficult to answer. All we can say is that the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” This name includes the Three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and tells us that God is triune. Although God is only one, yet there is the matter of the Three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

III. THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE SPIRIT COEXISTING SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM ETERNITY TO ETERNITY

A. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit All Being God

1. The Father Being God

Undoubtedly, the Father is God. Many passages in the New Testament speak of God the Father. For example, 1 Peter 1:2 says, “According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Ephesians 1:17 says, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory....”

2. The Son Being God

The Son is also God. Hebrews 1:8 says, “But as to the Son, Your throne, O God....” Here the Son is called God. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

with God, and the Word was God.” The Word must be Christ, the Son. Because the Word is God, the Son also is God. Not only so, Romans 9:5 says, “Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever.” Christ the Son is not only God, but He is over all, God blessed forever.

3. The Spirit Being God

In Acts 5:3-4 we see that the Spirit is God. In verse 3 Peter told Ananias that he had lied to the Spirit; but in the next verse he said that he had lied to God. In these two verses the Holy Spirit equals God. Therefore, the Scriptures clearly reveal to us that all Three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—are God. This does not mean, however, that They are three Gods. We have already seen that the Scriptures tell us clearly and definitely that God is only one. Although there are three—the Father, Son, and Spirit—yet the Three are not three Gods, but one. This is really a mystery! It is unsearchable! But praise the Lord, we can simply receive and enjoy this mysterious One according to what the Scriptures have said!

B. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit All Being Eternal

1. The Father Being Eternal

Isaiah 9:6 contains the expression “the everlasting Father.” According to its literal meaning in Hebrew, this expression may be rendered “the eternal Father.” Hence, the Father is eternal.

2. The Son Being Eternal

The Son also is eternal. Hebrews 1:12 says concerning the Son, “You are the same, and Your years shall not fail.” Hebrews 7:3 also says that the Son has no beginning of days nor end of life, which means that He is eternal.

3. The Spirit Being Eternal

The Spirit also is eternal because Hebrews 9:14 speaks of “the eternal Spirit.” Hence, all Three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—are eternal.

C. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit Coexisting Simultaneously

John 14:16-17 says, “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever; even the Spirit of reality.” In these two verses the Son says that He will pray to the Father that the Father may send the Spirit. Hence, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit exist together at the same time.

In Ephesians 3:14-17 Paul says that he will pray to the Father that He would grant us to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into our inner man, that Christ may make His home in our hearts. In this passage we have the Father, the Spirit, and Christ the Son. All three exist together at the same time. The Scriptures do not say that the Father existed for a period of time, then the Son came; and that after another period of time, the Son no

longer exists but has been replaced by the Spirit. Not one verse says this. This portion of the Word shows that the Father hears the prayer, the Spirit strengthens the saints, and the Son—Christ—makes His home in our hearts. From this we can also see clearly that all Three coexist simultaneously.

Second Corinthians 13:14 says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Here it mentions the grace of Christ the Son, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. All Three exist together at the same time.

Therefore, we do not believe that the Father ceased to exist and was replaced by the Son, then after another period of time the Son was replaced by the Spirit. We believe that the Three—Father, Son, and Spirit—are eternal and co-existent.

IV. THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE SPIRIT COINHERING AND BEING INSEPARABLE

The relationship among the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of the Trinity is not only that they simultaneously coexist, but, even more, that they indwell one another mutually. Coexistence means to exist together at the same time. Coinherence, as applied to the Trinity, means that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are in one another and thus exist together.

The Scriptures clearly indicate that when the Son comes, the Father comes with Him; similarly, when the Spirit comes, both the Son and the Father come with Him. Furthermore, when the Son comes, the Father does not come with Him outwardly; rather, the Father comes with Him inwardly and subjectively.

John 6:46 says, “Except Him who is from God, He has seen the Father.” The word “from” in the original language carries the sense of “from with.” The Son not only comes from the Father, but He comes from with the Father.

John 5:43 says, “I have come in the name of My Father.” The Son’s coming in the name of the Father equals the Father’s coming. This proves that when the Son comes, the Father comes.

John 14:10 says, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.” This indicates that the Father does not come with the Son outwardly; rather, He comes in the Son.

Hence, the Son can testify saying, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

John 15:26 says, “But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality who proceeds from the Father....” The second “from” is also “from with” in the sense of the Greek. When the Spirit comes, He also comes from with the Father.

John 14:26 says, “The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name.” The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, will be sent by the Father in the Son’s name. The Holy Spirit’s coming in the Son’s name equals the Son’s coming. This proves that when the Holy Spirit comes, the Son comes.

Furthermore, John 8:29 says, “He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone.” Luke 4:1 also says, “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit....” These verses prove that when the Son is living on earth, both the Father and the Spirit are with Him; the Three are inseparable.

The Triune God has never been separated. When One moves, the other Two also move with Him. When One is sent, the other Two also come with Him. When the Son comes, He comes in the name of the Father; when He comes, the Father comes. When the Spirit is sent, He is sent in the name of the Son; His being sent is the Son’s being sent. Hence, the Son’s coming is the Father’s coming, and the Spirit’s being sent is the Son’s being sent. The Three—the Father, Son, and Spirit—are one. They cannot be separated for eternity.

V. THE THREE—THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE SPIRIT—BEING ONE

A. The Son Being the Father

Isaiah 9:6 says, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...and his name shall be called...The mighty God, The everlasting Father.” In this verse, the mighty God matches the child, and the everlasting Father matches the Son. Yes, He is a child, yet He is the mighty God. The child who was born in the manger of Bethlehem was the mighty God. Just as the child and the mighty God are one, so also the Son and the everlasting Father are one. The Son is the eternal Father. It is indeed difficult to fully explain this matter, yet the Scriptures have said so. Unto us a son is given and his name shall be called everlasting Father. Does this not plainly say that the Son is the Father? If the Son is not the Father, how could the Son be called the Father? If we acknowledge that the child of which this verse speaks is the mighty God, then we must also acknowledge that the Son of which this verse speaks is also the everlasting Father; otherwise, we are not believing the clearly stated revelation of the Scriptures. But we do deeply believe that according to the words here, the Lord Jesus who became the child is the mighty God; and the Lord Jesus who is the Son is also the eternal Father. Our Lord is the Son, and He is also the Father.

John 14:7-11 says, “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and henceforth you know Him and have seen Him. Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father and it suffices us. Jesus said to him, Am I so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How is it that you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words which I speak to you, I do not speak from Myself; but the Father who abides in Me, He does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me.” In these verses the Lord clearly reveals to us the mystery that He and the Father are one. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him; when He speaks, it is the Father who works; when men see Him, they see the Father; when they know Him, they know the Father, because He is the Father; He and the Father are one (John 10:30).

B. The Son (the Last Adam) Becoming the Life-giving Spirit

First Corinthians 15:45 states, “The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.” The last Adam, of course, is the incarnated Lord Jesus, and the life-giving Spirit, of course, is the Holy Spirit. There can never be another life-giving Spirit besides the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this verse also tells us clearly that the Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit. The Lord was made flesh and became the last Adam, and later, after death and resurrection, He became the life-giving Spirit. The words spoken by the Lord in John 14:16-20 also confirm this point. Here the Lord tells us that He will pass through death and resurrection to become another Comforter, that is, the Spirit of reality, who will come to abide with us and dwell in us. In verse 17, the Lord says that the Spirit of reality “abides with you and shall be in you.” Then in verse 18 He says, “I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you.” Over thirty years ago in Shanghai, when Brother Watchman Nee was explaining this passage to us, he pointed out emphatically that He (the Spirit of reality, or the Holy Spirit) in verse 17 is I (the Lord) in verse 18. The Lord said in effect, “When He comes I come. He is I; I am He.” The Holy Spirit is the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit. Also, in verse 17 the Lord says, “The Spirit of reality...shall be in you,” and then in verse 20 He says, “I in you.” This also proves that the Holy Spirit who is in us is the Lord who died and rose and now lives in us.

C. The Lord (the Son) Being the Spirit

Second Corinthians 3:17 says, “And the Lord is the Spirit.” The “Lord” spoken of here, of course, is the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit, of course, is the Holy Spirit. Does this not clearly and definitely tell us that the Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit? Our Lord is the Holy Spirit. He is the Father, and He is also the Spirit. He is everything!

VI. THE REASON FOR GOD BEING TRIUNE

Second Corinthians 13:14 says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Here three things are mentioned: grace, love, and fellowship. This sets forth the reason why God is triune: it is thus that He can dispense Himself into us, work Himself into us for us to enjoy, and be our all. The love of God, that is, the love of the Father, is the source. The grace of Christ, that is, the grace of the Son, is the flowing out of the love of the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the flowing into us of the grace of the Son, together with the love of the Father, for us to enjoy. This can be confirmed by our experience. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit within us is the transmitting of the grace of the Son into us. And the grace of the Son within us is simply the practical tasting and enjoying of the love of the Father. The love of the Father is the source, the grace of the Son is the expression, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the transmission, transmitting the grace of the Son, with the love of the Father, into us. The result is that everything that is of the Three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—becomes the enjoyment within us. You have the fellowship of the Holy Spirit within you, and the more you live in this fellowship, the more you will have of the grace of Christ; then, the more you have of the grace of Christ, the more you will enjoy the love of God. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit brings the grace of Christ, and in the grace of Christ there is the love of God. Therefore, the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and

the fellowship of the Holy Spirit are not three different things, but three aspects of one thing for us to possess and enjoy. Likewise, the Father, Son, and Spirit are not three Gods but one God with the aspect of three for us to possess and enjoy.

SUMMARY

God is the Triune God. The one, unique God has the aspect of three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all God and are eternal, coexistent, coinherent, and inseparable. To the believers, the Father is the source, the Son is the manifestation, and the Spirit is God reaching and entering into them. Thus, the Triune God is dispensed into their being to be their life, enjoyment, and complete supply.

QUESTIONS

1. Give three verses to prove that God is only one.
2. Enumerate the Bible passages to explain the matter of God having the aspect of three—the Father, Son, and Spirit.
3. Cite one verse each to prove that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit all are God.
4. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit all are eternal. Substantiate this by citing Bible verses.
5. Give two verses to prove that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexist simultaneously.
6. Use John 14:26 and 15:26 to prove that the Father, Son, and Spirit cannot be separated.
7. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one. Which verse says that the Son is the Father? Which verse says that the Son is the Spirit?