

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
BIBLE SCHOOL FOURTH EDITION
SESSION 3: UNDERSTANDING THE BEING OF GOD PART 1

The bible reveals the nature of God as the only Infinite and Eternal Being, having no beginning and no ending. He is creator and sustainer of all things. He is the Supreme Personal intelligence, and Righteous ruler of the universe. He is life, and therefore, the only source of life. (John 5:26)

Man is natural and cannot know God by wisdom. **“Canst thou by searching find out God?”** (Job 11:7). God is a person and can be known only by revelation. In the Old Testament He revealed Himself to and through His Prophets. In the New Testament He reveals Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3). It reveals him as spirit, unity, and trinity. He is a spirit – a personal, infinite being (John 4:24); He is one – one in substance or nature and incapable of being divided into separate parts (Deut. 6:4); and He is three – eternally existing in three coequal persons (Matt. 28:19; 1 John 5:7; Matthew 3:16-17). While great mystery surrounds God’s nature, it is reassuring to know that our God is above us.

God’s attributes are merely words that we use to describe how God is and how He acts toward us. Among these attributes are love, holiness, constancy, justice, truth, eternity, omniscience (all knowing), omnipresence (all present), and omnipotence (all powerful). The fact that we can grasp and understand this much about God is evidence of God’s desire that all people may know Him.

The word **Father** is variously applied in the Bible. When God is spoken of as the Father of all men, it is as Creator; as the Father of Christ, it expresses an eternal, unique relationship; as the Father of believers, it denotes a relationship established by grace; and as Father of Israel, it means a bond established by covenant. However Father is used, it is a deliberately chosen word to communicate to men one of the primary ways God wants us to conceive of Him.

The Title **Son of God** is one which Jesus never directly applied to Himself, but when others applied it to Him, Jesus willingly accepted it as a claim to his own deity. (John 10: 24-38). Jesus often referred to Himself as “the son,” which was certainly an abbreviation for the son of God. How significant is this term to the Christian? It is very important, because it helps establish some major truths without which we would be left with little evidence that the words of Jesus Christ were actually true. It can be said that as our relationship with the Son of God determines whether we will become Christians, our relationship with the Spirit of God determines what kind of believers we will be.

1. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Hebrews 11:5-6 “**5) By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6) But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**”

The Bible nowhere attempts to prove or argue the existence of God. **“For he that cometh to God must believe that he is.”** (Hebrews 11:6^b) The existence of God is a fact taken for granted by the writers of both the Old and New Testaments. **“In the beginning God”** (Genesis 1:1) and **“In the beginning was the Word”** (John 1:1). The Bible opens in Genesis by announcing the sublime fact of God and His existence. Then in John it reiterates this fact. There are arguments for the existence of God; they are not conclusive but are food for thought.

- A. Universal belief in God comes from within man. It is innate in man and comes from rational intuition.
- B. The argument from “cause and effect.” Everything that began owes its existence to a cause. We have a watch – we must have a watchmaker. We have a building-- we must have a builder. We have a creation—we must have a creator. This creation could not have come into existence without an intelligent, personal creator, any more than the alphabet could produce a book itself without an author.
- C. The argument from anthropology. Man’s moral and intellectual nature argues for a moral and intellectual creator.
- D. The Bible and the Christ that it reveals:
 - 1. His virgin birth,
 - 2. His sinless life,
 - 3. His vicarious death (substitute)
 - 4. his bodily resurrection – all of this and much, much more – argue for the existence of God.

2. THE NATURE OF GOD

1 John 4:8: ***“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”***

There are four definitions of God in the Bible. Since God cannot be defined, they are incomplete. However, they do throw light upon the nature of God. They are:

A. God is love. 1 John 4:7-8. This is the nature of God in His divine compassion.
B. God is light. 1 John 1:5. This is the nature of God in His divine character; in Him there is no darkness.

C. God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:29. This is the nature of God in His divine holiness.

D. God is a Spirit. John 4:24. This is the nature of God in His divine essence.
The attributes of God reveal His nature. Do not think of his attributes as abstract, but as vital mediums through which His holy nature is unveiled – attributes ascribed to Him, such as:

1. Life is ascribed to God (John 5:26)
2. All knowledge is ascribed to God (Psalm 147:5)
3. All power is ascribed to God (Rev. 19:6)
4. Filling the universe with His presence is ascribed to God (Psalm 139:7-10)

God is everywhere present, but He is not in everything. If God were in everything, man could worship any object, and he would be worshipping God. God is a spirit being. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

3. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

The Bible reveals God as a personality. He is called “the living and true God” – One possessing self-consciousness and self-determination. His personality is shown in what He does, such as:

- A.** God loves. John 3:16
- B.** God hates. Proverbs 6:16
- C.** God cares. 1 Peter 5:7

- D. God grieves. **Genesis 6:6**
- E. He has wisdom. **Romans 11:33**
- F. He is faithful. **1 Corinthians 10:13**
- G. He is patient. **2 Peter 3:9**
- H. He gives gifts. **James 1:17**
- I. He is compassionate. **Psalms 116:5**
- J. He bears our burdens. **Psalms 68:19-20** (*Amplified or NIV version*)
- K. He forgives. **1 John 1:9**
- L. He is jealous. **Deuteronomy 4:24**

Only a personality can love, hate, care, and grieve; therefore, God must be a living, eternal, personal being.

4. THE GRACE OF GOD

Grace is the love and mercy of God in action. Mercy shows us where we came from, which was negative, and love is positive; both together mean grace. To show mercy in love is grace. God showed mercy in love when He sent His Son to bear our sin in His own body on the cross - **John 3:16**

- A. The grace of God saves forever: **John 3:16; Romans 8:38-39**
- B. The grace of God is unconditional; that is, we are not saved on the condition that we “hold out unto the end” or that we “fail not” or that we “do our best.” We are saved by the grace of God, ***apart from works***.
- C. The grace of God is sufficient: **2 Cor. 12:9**
- D. The grace of God makes no discrimination: **Revelation 22:17**
- E. The grace of God justifies: **Romans 3:23-24**

F. The grace of God makes every believer an heir – **Titus 3:7**

G. The grace of God teaches the believer how to live: **Titus 2:11-12** - The grace of God is nothing less than the unlimited love of God expressed in the gift of His Son, our Savior. It is the undeserved love of God toward sinners.

5. THE TRINITY OF GOD

How Does the Bible Teach the Doctrine of the Trinity?

By the Trinity of God, we mean His tri-personal existence as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three distinct persons in one God.

A. The Father is recognized as God – (**1 Peter 1:2**) and is all the fullness of the Godhead invisible (**John 1:18**)

B. The Son is recognized As God (**Hebrews 1:8**) and is all of the fullness of the Godhead manifested in the flesh (**John 1:14**)

C. The Holy Spirit is recognized as God (**Acts 5:3, 4**) and is all the fullness of the Godhead acting upon man, convicting him of sin (**John 16:7-14**) and guiding the believer into all truth (**John 16:12-15**)

The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicit in the Old Testament, but is rather implied, ***“and God said, “Let US (Elohim) make man in our image”*** (**Genesis 1:26**)

The doctrine of the Trinity is revealed in the New Testament. In **Matthew 3:16, 17**, we have Christ being baptized in water, the Father speaking from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descending as a dove. We are to baptize in ***the “name (not names) of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”*** (**Matthew 28:19**)

From the Second Century to our present age, many people have found the biblical doctrine of the Trinity hard to understand. The doctrine of the Trinity recognizes that God is one God, co-existing in three distinct Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In our material existence, the concept that God is One God, yet exists as three distinct persons, is foreign to us. However, the doctrine of the Godhead (Trinity) is without questions revealed in God's word.

The biblical term "Godhead" (theiotes) is used three times in Scripture, **Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9.**

The word "Trinity," which is the theological word Christians use to refer to the Godhead, is not found in Scripture.

"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:29).

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20)

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9)

The doctrine states that the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, consists of three distinct Persons, yet these three are one God. There are many arguments espoused by those that deny the Trinity, but the most prevalent is: **How can God be One God and at the same time be three Persons?**

The problem with that question is that it is based in ignorance of what God has said about Himself. The Bible, the Word of God, plainly states the plurality of God and that God is One God. To accept His Word means to believe what God has revealed.

The truth of the Trinity is a revealed truth that is established in the credibility of God Himself. In **Matthew 28:19-20**, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission, stating that they were to teach and baptize in the individual names of the Godhead.

Matthew 28:19-20: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Further **1 John 5:7** states: ***"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."***

The fact God did not inspire the writers of Scripture to use the modern word "Trinity" does imply that it is not a biblical truth. However, there are many words and phrases that Christians use to express biblical doctrines that are not found in the Bible.

One is the word "rapture." This word also is not found in Scripture, but the phrase "shall be caught up" (harpagēsometha) is used in **1 Thessalonians 4:17** and means to "catch away" or in Latin "rapiēmur" meaning to be snatched away.

In fact, the word "Bible" is also not found in the Scriptures. Would we dismiss the existence of the Bible because the word is not found in Scripture? Those that deny the Trinity also deny the Godhead. They argue that it is physically impossible for three distinct persons to be only one.

This teaching will show that they are both right and wrong. They are right in the sense that it is impossible for us to explain how this can be a reality in our physical/material world. But they are wrong in denying that God is a Triune God from a spiritual aspect.

The approach of this session will be first to authenticate the biblical doctrine by presenting biblical statements attesting to this truth.

One reason those who deny the Trinity do so is the Bible clearly teaches monotheism, meaning that God is One God. (**Deut. 4:35-36, 6:4**)

"Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire." (**Deuteronomy 4:35-36**)

"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:" (**Deuteronomy 6:5-6**)

1 John 5:7 says, ***"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."***

Some Bible critics have stated that this passage is not authentic because it is not found in some older manuscripts. This verse is found in mss, 61, 88mg, 629, 634mg, 636mg, omega 110, 429mg, 221, and 2318) along with two lectionaries (60, 173) and four fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, and Jerome mention it. However, the biblical doctrine of the Trinity does not rest on one verse of Scripture but is found throughout the Old and New Testaments. These verses accurately state the doctrine of the Trinity that God is One God in three Persons.

"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." (**Isaiah 44:6**)

“I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.” (Isaiah 43:11)

The Scriptures unmistakably refer to the plurality of God in that He as exists in Three Persons.

This session will present a practical explanation of the doctrine in human terms. Overwhelmingly, the Bible teaches the Trinitarian concept of one God existing as three persons.

- A. The Bible does not teach polytheism, which says that there are three separate Gods called the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- B. Nor does the Bible say God is one person who took three forms or that the God the Father became the Son, who then became the Holy Spirit, as is taught by some false churches.
- C. The Bible does not teach that God is only one person or that Jesus is not God, but only God's procreated son.
- D. The word of God does not teach that Jesus was created. The Bible specifically states that God is Spirit and was never a man.

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19)

“And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.” (1 Samuel 15:29)

- E. The Bible further plainly states that Jesus Christ, being God, is eternal, as is the Father. The Apostle John states clearly that Jesus, the Word, was with God in the beginning of the Universe.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:1-4)

Jesus Himself plainly refers to eternity.

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

F. Arianism is the heretical teaching of Arius (AD 250–336), a Christian presbyter from Alexandria, Egypt. He taught that Jesus did not always exist but was created by God the Father.

G. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. In the following verse the term Alpha and Omega are defined by God Himself by the phrase ***“the beginning and the end”*** (verse 8) and ***“the first and the last”*** (verse 11).

“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... Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.” (Revelation 1:8, 11)

“And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”
(Revelation 21:6) ***“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”*** (Revelation 22:13)

Passages in the Old Testament that Teach Plurality in the Oneness of God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 ***“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD”*** The Bible, in this verse, emphatically states there is only one God.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Mark 12:29). Literally, the verse says, ***“Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our Elohim is a united Jehovah.”***

The Bible is the inerrant inspired Word of God, and this statement can only be understood in that God is telling us He is One God. (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21). Yet, this does not mean that within the Godhead there is not a plurality. Scripturally, plurality means, that God is One God existing in three distinct Persons.

The Hebrew word for “one” is Echad and “stresses unity while recognizing diversity with that oneness.” This same word is used in Genesis 2:24:

Genesis 2:24 ***“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one (Echad) flesh.”***

Therefore, God says that two individuals, Adam, and Eve, were one flesh.

Exodus 24:3 states "*. . . All the people answered with one (Echad) voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.*"

Note that all the people, which were a great multitude, replied with one voice. There are many other instances where the word is used to show the oneness of many individuals. In other words, the Hebrew word Echad allows for plurality within oneness, allowing God, who is emphatically described as one God, to be three Persons who are One God. Even creation implies the doctrine of the Trinity.

In creation, we have space, matter, and time in one creation. In space, we have length, breadth, and height in one space. In matter, we have energy, motion, and phenomena in one substance. In time, we have past, present, and future at one time. In man, we have spirit, soul, and body, in one man (**I Thess. 5:23**).

In the Holy Trinity, we have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one God. The following chart shows some of the many passages in the Bible from which the doctrine of the Trinity is derived. Note that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all called God, and all have the same attributes, which are attributes that only God has.

THE TRIUNE GODHEAD PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE

	FATHER	SON	HOLY SPIRIT
Called God	Phil. 1:2	John 1:1,14; Col. 2:9	Acts 5:3-4
Creator	Isa. 64:8; 44:24	John 1:3	Gen. 1:2
Resurrects	1 Thess. 1:10	John 2:19, 10:17	Rom. 8:11
Indwells	2 Cor. 6:16	Col. 1:27	John 14:17
Everywhere	1 Kings 8:27	Matt. 28:20	Psa. 139:7-10
All knowing	1 John 3:20	John 16:30; 21:17	1 Cor. 2:10-11
Sanctifies	1 Thess. 5:23	Heb. 2:11	1 Pet. 1:2
Life giver	Gen. 2:7; John 5:21	John 1:3; 5:21	2 Cor. 3:6,8
Fellowship	1 John 1:3	1 Cor. 1:9	2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1
Eternal	Psa. 90:2	Micah 5:1-2	Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14
A Will	Luke 22:42	Luke 22:42	1 Cor. 12:11
Speaks	Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22	Luke 5:20; 7:48	Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2
Love	John 3:16	Eph. 5: 25	Rom. 15:30