

THE DIVINE TRINITY

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 1:1-14.

LESSON 432 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Hebrews 1:1-14 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
3 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;
4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
6 And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.
7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.
8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom.
9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are

Bible References:

Notes:

"GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

"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 1:1-3).

Divine Majesty

What a sublime subject with which to open this Epistle -- the revelation of God to man! He is the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory. God, in the New Testament, revealed Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the thought with which this Book opens. We have here, therefore, the better revelation. The Law could never completely reveal God. But Jesus Christ can; He is the perfect revelation of God.

Frequently in Jesus' ministry upon earth that Majesty would shine forth with such radiance that it awed those who stood before Him. When the soldiers were sent to take Jesus they fell backward as they were struck with awe by the very majesty of His presence.

When Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into the Mount of Transfiguration, they had a view of that glory. He had previously said that some of them should not see death until they should see the Son of Man coming in His glory. Eight days later they went up to the mount and He was transfigured before them. That was the glory of the only-begotten of the Father -- full of grace and truth. Here is a description of Jesus which has all the attributes ascribed to God Himself.

The antichrist shall be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. Jesus will come in great glory at that time with all the holy angels in attendance.

Jesus, the Creator

Jesus was the Creator and the worlds were made by the word of His power. Not only that, He sustains them. They were not only created by Him, but they were created for Him as is brought out here. We get a glimpse of Jesus Christ in the opening of this Epistle which gives us a little hint of who that Man of Galilee was who once trod this earth, who "came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Paul takes up the fact that Jesus was made much better than the angels. The angels were all created beings; Jesus was not. He was with the Father from the very beginning, from all eternity -- John too brings that out. He said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit

the works of thine hands:

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

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"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13,14).

We have set forth here how Jesus Christ is exalted above all creation. You can begin to see how the dispensation in which we live outshines the Old Dispensation as the rising sun outshines the stars of night. As the sun rises the stars disappear; and as the glory of this dispensation burst upon the earth the glory of the old began to fade away.

The Trinity

There is a doctrine preached today denying the Trinity -- the three Persons in the Godhead. One Old Testament prophecy after another, in its application in the New Testament, brings out definitely the Second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, separate from the Father; and there are other passages that are directly attributed to the Holy Spirit and which give Him personality also. We have abundant Scriptural grounds for our stand, which we have taken concerning the Trinity. It is being fiercely denied in these days.

"Trinity", is a Latin word which means "threefold" or "three-in-one." It was applied to the Godhead because of the fact that the Scriptures reveal three Persons in the Godhead.

Divine Personality

A person is one who has power to think, to speak, and to act. Webster's definition is: "A being characterised by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense." God has all those powers. If the Son speaks to the Father and the Father speaks to the Son we may classify them both as persons.

In these latter days we have a philosophy on one hand that is dispensing with the personality, not only of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but of God Himself. Many of the philosophies and much of Modernism are founded upon it. They believe God to be simply an all-pervading power, something like electricity. Electricity is a power, but there is no personality to it. Electricity has no power to think or act in a rational way.

The Father and Son

It is necessary for us to know our Scriptural grounds for these great fundamental teachings of the Bible, to know positively where we stand, and to be able to give an answer. In the 5th verse of Hebrews 1, we have a reference to 2nd Samuel 7:14:

". . . I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."

That is clearly Messianic and has the approval of the New Testament upon it. Again in Hebrews 1:10-12:

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

"They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

"And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

All this is attributed to Jesus Christ. Here He is called "God" -- coequal with the Father in every respect.

In Psalm 102 you will find where the quotation is taken from. We have the authority of the New Testament in attributing it to Jesus Christ. Psalm 110 is also mentioned in Hebrews 1:13:

"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Here we find the conversation between the two, the Father

and the Son: "The LORD said unto my Lord, . . ." Not only is that quoted in our Epistle to the Hebrews, but Jesus Himself took up this Psalm in Matthew 22:41-44

Jesus, in speaking to these unbelieving Pharisees, was going back into the Scriptures that they themselves professed to believe, to show that the Messiah was the Son of the living God in addition to being the Son of David.

You see how perfectly throughout the Old Testament the Sonship of Jesus Christ, as the Second Person of the Trinity, is established without doubt where the Son speaks to the Father and the Father to the Son; not only in one place, but in a number of places. All of it has the stamp of approval of the New Testament.

Plurality of Names

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

That word translated God here is "Elohim" in Hebrew, and it is in the plural form. It is the form almost invariably used throughout the Bible. The "him" gives the word the plural form. That is the way the Hebrew plurals were formed. In the very name itself the plurality in the Godhead is expressed. But, strange to say, the plural subject "Elohim," uses the singular verb "created." According to the rules of grammar, that would not be correct, but it is perfectly theological because while "Elohim" expresses the plurality of agents, the word "create" expresses the unity of action: that they all act as one. Here we have the plurality in one.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, . . ." (Genesis 1:26). ("Let us" is plural form.)

Again in Genesis 3:22:

"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, . . ." (Plural form again).

Then Genesis 11:7. This is when they had built the Tower of Babel.

"Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (There you have the plural again).

Three Personalities

After Jesus came out of the wilderness He went up to Nazareth, His home town. On the Sabbath Day He went into the synagogue and opened the Scriptures and read from Isaiah, the 61st chapter, 1st verse:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; . . ."

He had gone into the wilderness to His temptation immediately after His baptism. That anointing that was prophesied by Isaiah: "The LORD hath anointed me," was fulfilled in His baptism. That anointing was for service. We might turn to it briefly in Matthew 3:

"And Jesus, when he was baptised, 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:

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16, 17).

There you have Jesus present in bodily form, the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father from Heaven. The

Father has never been revealed to mortal eyes; but Jesus has, and so has the Holy Ghost upon this particular occasion. There you have the Trinity -- all Three Persons.

The great event of the anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ was the Spirit coming upon Him. He began His ministry at the time of His baptism. It was declared authoritatively by God's voice from Heaven. We have abundant grounds for our doctrine of three Persons in the Godhead. We also have the Trinity in the baptismal 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 Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost was named in the baptismal formula. His presence was there at the baptism of Jesus Christ. We have the personal pronoun "I," then "Him," or "He", and "Thou" all applied to the Holy Spirit.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, [We will find in the succeeding verses that that means the Holy Spirit] that he may abide with you for ever; [Notice that pronoun "he" applied to the Comforter]

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16,17).

We cannot call that a figure of speech where it is used so consistently. The writer has definitely applied to this member of the Trinity the personal pronoun. Let us drop to the 26th verse:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, [Here the Comforter who is spoken of through the New Testament is definitely identified with the Holy Ghost] whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost is also capable of being grieved. Paul gives us the injunction, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God" (Ephesians 4:30). A substance or an emanation, as some define the Holy Ghost, cannot be grieved, but the Holy Ghost can; and that endows Him with further personality.

He had power to command and power to dispatch or send the disciples.

"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 13:4).

This was when Paul and the disciples were on one of their missionary journeys. You can see that the Holy Ghost was directing their course. It is also indicated in Scripture that He is an intelligent being. Turn to I Corinthians 2:9-11:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

That attributes personality. A substance or radiance does not search in the sense that is stated here.

"For what man knoweth the thing of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the

things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

We see there that knowledge is attributed to the Spirit. And finally in Acts 13:2:

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

There the Holy Ghost is speaking, and we have the personal pronoun 'I.'

Suppose you were on neutral ground concerning the Bible -- did not know very much about it and you knew nothing about the Trinity, but you had gone over these Scriptures; what would be your conclusion? Would it not be that this one spoken of is a person? There are three Persons -- personality is attributed to each of them.

This therefore is our ground for saying that there are three Persons in the Godhead, irrespective of what may be the philosophical differences that so many seem to have concerning this doctrine. We are not concerned with philosophies; what we are concerned with is what the Word of God teaches us. We have definitely settled here that it teaches us the personality of the Godhead.

One God

While we are definitely taught in Scripture that there are three Persons in the Godhead, we are just as definitely taught the unity of the Godhead -- that is, that God is one. Here is where the stumbling-block has come in. There is a mystery in the Trinity that we cannot solve. There are plenty of other mysteries for that matter. We are not trying to solve them. We are only trying to take what the Bible teaches. It definitely teaches three Persons, but it just as definitely teaches that there is one God; therefore there must be a difference in the unity from what there is in the personality. Let us turn to Hebrews 1:3.

"Who [that is Jesus] being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, . . .
"

Jesus is the express image of the Father. Jesus said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). But He did not say that He was the Father; He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Why? Because the Son is the express image of the Father. A difference is brought out. In John 1:1 it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, . . ." That is, the Son was with the Father. Then immediately follows, ". . . and the Word was God." So that in one sense He was with God and in another sense He was God. In personality He was with God, but in divine nature He was God. Therefore in essence or divine nature God is one, but in personality the Godhead is three. That is just about as far as we can go with it. There is no use to try to philosophise and reason the thing out. That is how so many heresies have been brought into the world. We simply take the plain statement of what the Word says. It ought not be difficult to accept.