

In the HOUSE *of the* LORD

LESSON #5 – THREE PERSONS



In the first lesson we examined that God is Triune – three separate persons, yet one distinct God. In this lesson we take a closer look at each person of the Trinity and how they each play a part in our life, faith, and ultimate salvation.

THE FATHER – CREATOR, PRESERVER

How did the universe come into existence?

Read Genesis 1:1 - 2:3. What did God use to create everything?



What does it mean that Adam was created in God's image? (For help, consider Ephesians 4:24. "... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.")

Genesis 1:31. What was God's declaration concerning all which He had created?

Read Genesis 2:4-9, 15-25. When God had created everything else, He simply spoke and it happened. In contrast, how does God create the first man, Adam? What does that immediately teach us about human beings?

God then created Eve to be a companion to Adam. He created man and woman to be together. What does that teach us about God's gift of marriage?

How long did it take God to create all things? How do you know that these were normal, 24-hour days? (You can also refer back to Genesis 1.)

- Exodus 20:8-11 *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

Why don't we accept the evolutionary theories about the origin of the universe or the origin of species on planet Earth?

- 2 Peter 3:5-6 *But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.*
- 1 Timothy 6:20-21 *Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge,²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.*
- Hebrews 11:3 *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

What is the danger of believing in the theory of evolution?

<u>Creation and Evolution Compared</u>	Creation	Evolution
Time	Six Days	Billions of Years
Method	God's Word and Decree	Chance or Accident
Man's Status	A Special Creation	A Superior Animal
Man's Purpose	Serve and Honor God	Survive? Serve Self?
Man's Responsibility	Thank and Obey God	None

How does God continue to care for His creation?

What are some natural and supernatural ways God provides for His people?

- Psalm 104:14 *He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate-- bringing forth food from the earth:*
- Genesis 8:22 *"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."*
- Genesis 9:3 *Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.*
- 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 *For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.¹² Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.*
- Read John 6:3-13 and/or Exodus 16:1-17:7.
- Matthew 19:26 *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*
- Psalm 91:10-11 *No harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;*
- Hebrews 1:14 *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*
- Revelation 5:11 *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.*

What promise does our heavenly Father make concerning our preservation as His dear children?

- Psalm 91:9-10 *If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge--¹⁰ then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.*
- Genesis 50:20 *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

- Romans 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*
- Hebrews 12:10 *Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*

Applying God's creation and preservation to life issues.

The Bible says that "sin entered the world and death through sin" (Romans 5:12). Tragically, we live in an age and culture where death is being called good and life is called evil. Death is being described as the answer and life is described as the problem.

Let's see what God has to say about beginning and end of life issues.

From where does all human life begin?

- Genesis 2:7 *The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*
- Acts 17:25 *And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.*
- Psalm 139:13-14 *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

If all life begins with God, who alone has the right to end life?

- Deuteronomy 32:39 *There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life.*
- Psalm 90:3 *You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men."*
- Exodus 4:11 *The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"*
- Exodus 20:13 *You shall not murder.*

What do these Bible verses teach us about ending someone's life through abortion and euthanasia?

What about the very difficult decisions that must be made about a loved one who is on life support?

- Psalm 31:15 *My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.*
- Job 12:12 *Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?*

What about a loved one who is suffering due to illness or accident?

- Romans 8:22-23 *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*
- John 9:3 *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."*
- Romans 5:3 *Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.*
- Romans 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

What about capital punishment?

- Genesis 9:6 *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.*
- Romans 13:4 *For he [the governing authority] is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Apostles' Creed, which you studied in the first lesson, is a summary of what we believe about the Triune God. Martin Luther, in his Small Catechism, divides the Creed into three articles based on each of the three persons of the Triune God. Everything that we believe is related to these three persons. So the First Article, about God the Father, explains creation – how God created everything in the universe. The Second Article, about the Son, explains redemption – how Jesus paid the price to free us from our sins, death and the devil. The Third Article, about the Holy Spirit, explains sanctification – how the Holy Spirit brings us to saving faith and keeps us in that Christian faith.

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God made me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.

And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil.

All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.

THE SON – TRUE GOD, TRUE MAN, REDEEMER, JUDGE



What does the Bible show you so that you know Jesus is truly a man?

- 1 Timothy 2:5 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*
- Hebrews 2:14 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity.*
- Matthew 26:2 *As you know, the Passover is two days away-- and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.*
- Galatians 4:4 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman.*
- Luke 2:12 *You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.*
- Luke 2:40 *The child grew and became strong.*
- Luke 24:39 *Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.*
- Matthew 26:38 *Then [Jesus] said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."*
- Matthew 4:2 *After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.*
- Mark 4:38 *Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.*
- John 11:35 *Jesus wept.*
- John 19:28 *Jesus said, "I am thirsty."*

What does the Bible show you so that you know Jesus is God?

- Matthew 1:23 *The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him "Immanuel" -- which means, "God with us."*
- Luke 2:11 *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*
- John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

- John 1:2 *He was with God in the beginning.*
- Hebrews 13:8 *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*
- Matthew 28:18 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*
- John 21:17 [*Peter*] *said, "Lord, you know all things."*

- John 2:1-11 (Jesus changed water into wine.)
- Luke 5:17-26 (Jesus healed a paralyzed man.)
- Matthew 8:23-27 (Jesus calmed a furious storm.)
- John 11:38-44 (Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.)
- Matthew 28:6-7 (Jesus Himself rose from the dead.)

Why does it matter so much that Jesus is both, fully (not partially)?

- Hebrews 4:15 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.*
- Mark 15:37 *With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.*
- Hebrews 2:14 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil--¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

In order to live under God's Law and in order to be able to die, Jesus had to be true man.

- Psalm 49:7 *No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him.*
- 1 John 2:2 *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*
- 1 Peter 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*
- John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

In order for His life and death to count for everyone, Jesus had to be true God.



Food for thought

If God had been interested in saving the elephants of this world, he would have sent his Son Jesus and had him take on the form of an elephant. While such a thought is absolutely ridiculous it does, nonetheless, show us why Jesus needed to take on a human nature, being born of a woman. He did it to be our substitute in every way.

As our substitute, Jesus lived for us that perfectly sinless life which God demands we live, but simply can't. While on this earth Jesus did not sin one time against the law of God. We call this Jesus' "**active obedience**". This is what Jesus actively did for us.

Secondly, as our substitute, Jesus died an innocent death on the cross. He allowed himself to be killed. This we call his "**passive obedience**". This is what he allowed people to do to him. Being free of sins himself, he was able to carry the sins of the world—including yours and mine—on his shoulders.

If you ask people what Jesus had to do to forgive the sins of the world, they will say, "*He had to die on the cross.*" Their answer is only half right. Yes, Jesus had to die on the cross. But before that, he also had to live a sinless life. We need to remember that both his perfect life and his innocent death were necessary for him to be our perfect substitute.

The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed all have their own particular histories and unique emphases. Yet, all three are stained with the blood of martyrs. Christians throughout the ages have stood and confessed these creeds as true statements of the Christian faith. Countless Christians died defending these biblical truths.

These creeds did not come out of nowhere but were hammered out because of the great controversies of the early church. The majority of these controversies were on the nature of Jesus. To put it simply, some said that Jesus was not completely man; some said that Jesus was not completely God; and then there were the defenders of the truth who proclaimed that Jesus is both true God and true man.

These defenders precisely confessed the truth as the Bible teaches. The church is concerned with accurately identifying Christ because He is at the heart of the Gospel. If Christ is not completely true man, then He was not truly tempted and His perfect life and sacrifice are a fraud. If Christ is not completely true God, then He does not have the power to save us. If He is not the God-man, then our salvation is not real.

So that we never forget their battles; so that we never fall into those errors again; and so that we may properly profess our faith; we recite these confessions every Sunday.

THE SECOND ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

THE SPIRIT – SANCTIFIER



How is the Holy Spirit's work described?

- 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14 *But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 1 Peter 2:9 *You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*
- 1 Corinthians 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- 1 Corinthians 1:2 *To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23 *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Any person can mouth the words "Jesus is Lord." But what is the apostle Paul's point in the next verse?

- 1 Corinthians 12:3 *Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*

Why do we need the Holy Spirit to do this work of bringing us to faith? What is the problem with each of us by nature?

- Ephesians 2:1 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*
- Romans 8:7 *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*
- Genesis 6:5 *The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*

What means does the Holy Spirit use call us to faith in Christ?

- Romans 10:17 *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*
- 2 Timothy 3:15 *From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*
- Acts 2:38 *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
- Matthew 26:26-28 *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."²⁷ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

How does the Bible picture the miracle the Holy Spirit works in us to bring us to faith by the Gospel?

- 1 Peter 2:25 *For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*
- Acts 3:19 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.*
- Psalm 51:13 *Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.*

- John 3:3-6 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*
- Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,*
- 1 Peter 1:23 *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*
- Ephesians 2:4-5 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved.*
- Colossians 2:13 *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,*

There are many things that God asks us to believe that may seem illogical or even foolishness. Give some examples of things that God teaches that seem impossible, yet you believe in them because of the faith the Holy Spirit has placed in your heart.

- 1 Corinthians 2:14 *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

What has the Holy Spirit given us so we can grow in our personal relationship with Him (sanctification)?

- 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 *From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Romans 6:4, 13 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 *The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

Where can I find all these "tools" or "means" that the Holy Spirit has given us so we can grow in our personal relationship with Him (sanctification)?

- Hebrews 10:24 *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Upon hearing the Word read and preached, the congregation unites in one voice to speak a summary of the Christian faith as contained in one of the ancient Creeds. The Creeds signify our allegiance to Christian doctrine and unite us with over 2,000 years of Christian history.

The repetition of the Creeds equips us for public witness by grounding our confession and congregation in the fundamentals of our Christian faith.

THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers. On the Last Day he will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

Closing Prayer

A hymn that teaches the faith: Christian Worship #177 – “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest”

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest, And make our hearts your place of rest;
Come with your grace and heav'nly aid, And fill the hearts which you have made.

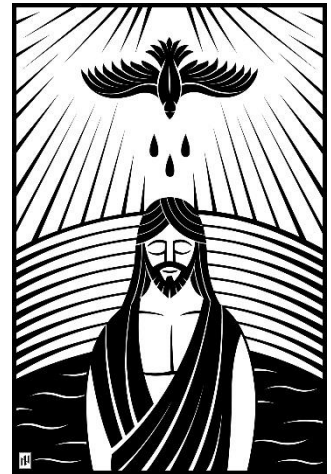
To you, the Counselor, we cry, To you, the gift of God most high;
The fount of life, the fire of love, The soul's anointing from above.

Your light to ev'ry thought impart, And shed your love in ev'ry heart;
The weakness of our mortal state With deathless might invigorate.

Drive far away our wily foe, And your abiding peace bestow;
If you are our protecting guide, No evil can with us abide.

Teach us to know the Father, Son, And you, from both, as Three in One
That we your name may ever bless And in our lives the truth confess.

Praise we the Father and the Son And Holy Spirit, with them One,
And may the Son on us bestow The gifts that from the Spirit flow!



WHAT IS
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