



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

“The Trinity and the Angelic Hosts”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] ...and study Thy word. We thank Thee for all that it reveals to us concerning him, and we pray that the Holy Spirit, through whom the word has come to us, may be our teacher and instructor. And may our hearts be open so that we not only hear, but understand and then do the things that we find herein. We commit our class to Thee and each one. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now for those of you who may be here tonight for the first time, we are studying God's plan of the ages and have been studying, up to this point, some introductory matters, primarily the Doctrine of Revelation, the Doctrine of Inspiration, and the Doctrine of Illumination. And we have been pointing out that God has spoken to men and that his revelation is contained in a number of sources, such as nature, conscious, history, but that his primary revelation to man is in the Bible. For it is in the Bible, the word of God, that we find that which meets our needs as men who are sinners. And the Bible reveals to us the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we also spent a night studying inspiration. And this, of course, is a study of the method whereby God's revelation has come to us. The Bible has come to us, we

saw, through holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible. And he used human men, or men, human beings, to write holy Scripture. So that the Bible is, preeminently, the word of God inspired of God. It is a product of God.

And then last time we studied the Doctrine of Illumination, which has to do with the understanding of the revelation that God has given to us by means of inspiration. And we saw that the study of the Bible, or the understanding of holy Scripture, is dependent upon a right relationship to the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the Bible. And we were looking specifically at certain types of men. Now I had only talked about the natural man last time, so I want to finish this discussion and tonight go on and say a few words about God himself, and as he subsists in Trinitarian form.

So here four kinds of men, and we were looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 14, so let's take our Bibles again and turn to this passage. And I will review, just briefly, what we said for those of you who are here tonight for the first time. We hope, of course, it will not be the last time that you are here. We will try not to scare you, try to make you feel at home, and try to make you feel that you can understand the things that we are talking about here each week. 1 Corinthians 2:14, now remember in this passage, as we said last time, Paul is writing to the church at Corinthian, and he is explaining to them how God has given us divine wisdom, and that this divine wisdom is not understood in the way that human wisdom is understood.

In the 9th verse, for example, he wrote, “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.” So that divine truth is not understood as we understand human truth. If we wanted to be a doctor or a lawyer or a business man, we must study and, generally speaking, we follow the same methodology regardless of what profession we may be in training for. We study and by dint of our faculties for understanding, our

reading, and our mental capacities, we're able to grasp things, and then on the basis of this, we pass our course and begin our work as a lawyer or whatever it may be.

In spiritual things, understanding of God's word is only partially through such methodology. To understand spiritual things we need a certain capacity which we do not have naturally. As Paul says, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The Bible, having been written by the Holy Spirit, demands for its understanding the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. And naturally speaking, we do not have the Holy Spirit. For, as we shall see when we study in the beginning of Genesis, man has fallen. He has lost his relationship to God. The Holy Spirit does not indwell men, and so we cannot understand divine truth because we do not possess the Holy Spirit. So in order to understand divine truth, we must be born again, and God must give us that which we do not have naturally, the Holy Spirit, so that we may understand his word. I illustrated this in a number of different ways last time just trying to point out that the faculty for understanding Scripture. We do not have naturally, so here, the natural man.

Now we looked back at Jude verse 19, and we saw that the natural man is the man who does not have the spirit. He is the non-Christian. He is the, as Paul would put it, the man who is not saved. Now, when we use the term “saved,” we are using it in the sense of being a Christian. This is a biblical term. Sometimes I think in our 20th century, we do not like to use these terms. We think that this is below us. At least, this has been my experience in the past. But “saved” is a good biblical term and used by the writers of Scripture, as well as, our Lord himself. It means that we have become a Christian. We have been delivered from sin, and thus, we are saved. That's the essential meaning of the word.

Now, the natural man is the unsaved, or the non-Christian man, and Paul states that he does not receive, “the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” So, this is the first kind of man. This is the type of man that we all are naturally. If we were to go through life and not come to know Jesus Christ as Savior, we would go through life as natural men.

Now, remember, this term is not to be used as it is used ordinarily today. We think of a natural man as a man who is not awkward. But natural means without the spirit. So this is the first type of man. He is the man who needs the Holy Spirit. He is the man who cannot understand the Bible.

Now Paul continues here in the 15th verse of 1 Corinthians 2, “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ. And I, brethren.”

Now, this is something that we must learn right here, and it is this, in the Bible verse divisions and chapter divisions were made in comparatively modern times. Chapter divisions were not made until long after the writing of the New Testament. The New Testament was written with no verse division, no chapter division. In the earliest manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, occasionally, little spaces are found when the author is moving to another thought. But, generally speaking, it is one continuous text, so that chapter divisions and verse divisions are uninspired. They were made by men, and frequently they were made incorrectly. So here this, I think, is a case where we have one that is made somewhat incorrectly because we tend to disconnect chapter 3 with chapter 2.

So Paul now continues in chapter 3 verse 1, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” Now, let’s stop here for just a moment, I want you to notice that expression, Paul speaking to the Corinthians, “I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.” Now this is the second class of man, the carnal man. Now if you’ll read on, he will say in the next

verse, “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are (still or) yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

Now here twice, Paul has stated that the Corinthians are carnal. In the first case, he says, in verse 1, that they were carnal when he spoke to them. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk.” In other words, Paul says when I came to Corinthian, and I preached the gospel to you, and you were converted, you moved from a natural man into the family of God. I could not speak to you as unto spiritual men. Here is the other class of man, which we had in chapter 2 verse 15. “I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual,” men. I had to speak to you as to carnal men.

Now what does he mean by this? Well, now we saw last time that the natural man is the man who is dominated by the soul. In fact, that Greek word translated natural is the word that means literally, “soulish.” It is a word derived from the soul, the emotions. That part of a man which has to do with himself, his self. So that the soulish man is the self centered man, the natural man. The carnal man is a different type of man. This word carnal, the English word comes from a Latin word *carnis* which means “flesh” if you remember your Latin. And you know that chili con carne means “chili with meat,” because it means “flesh.”

Now in the Greek this is also a word that is related to the word flesh, so that the carnal man is a man who is identified with the flesh in certain ways. Now I’m going to give you a very fine distinction, and don’t worry if you don’t get it completely at this point. But Paul’s words, which are translated in the English text here by “carnal” in verse 1 and “carnal” in verse 3, are slightly different Greek words. They both come from the word “flesh,” but they mean slightly different things. When he states in verse 1, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal,” he uses a Greek word which means “fleshen,” that is “of the flesh.” “I speak to you, or I spoke to you as

those who were of the flesh.” He spoke to them as babes; he defines it in Christ, little babies. Or you see becoming a Christian and growing up as a Christian is like being born again and like growing up as a child.

We don't like to hear this because it is somewhat humbling you know to realize that we must be born again and then we must grow up as little children again in spiritual things even though we may be adults physically, but it is true. So Paul says in verse 1 here that when I was with you and you had received my message and you had become Christians I couldn't speak to you as to a spiritual man I had to speak to you as if you were babies, babies in Christ.

Now mind you the carnal man is a Christian because Paul says, “But as onto carnal even as onto babes in Christ.” They were in Christ. They weren't Christians furthermore he calls them brethren in that verse, “And I brethren could not speak onto you as onto spiritual.” So it is possible for a believer to be a carnal believer, to be a babe in Christ he is a carnal weak man. Just as a little baby when born is weak and needs the help of mother and father to survive, needs to be fed, needs to be cared for, so every Christian the moment that he is born again is a babe in Christ.

Now you may be a babe in the sense of a young person. You may receive Christ as your savior when you're just a little child. My daughter became a Christian when she was four years old. To this day she still remembers the time when I was talking with her along the Live Oak Avenue we were walking together. And she was just a little thing by my side. And I remember asking her and thinking that well you know you can't lose any opportunities with your own children, if you can't win them you can't win anybody. And so I remember speaking with Grace along Live Oak Avenue and asking her was she a Christian has she ever received Christ as her savior? Of course she grew up in an atmosphere of hearing the truth, but she never had it seemed really received Christ as her Savior because she turned to me and said, “Daddy no I have not received Christ as Savior.” And so I talked to her and I said, “Do understand Grace that the lord Jesus was

the Son of God and that he came to die for your sins?” And she said, “Yes.” And I said “Would you like to become a Christian would you like to know that your sins are forgiven, and that you will have everlasting life, and that you will spend eternity with the Lord Jesus. And that he will be with you throughout your whole life.” And she said, “Yes daddy.” And so I said, “Would you just like to receive the Lord Jesus right now?” And right on Live Oak Avenue near Haskell, she just bowed her head and there she received the Lord as Savior. And I didn’t think, I must confess, too much about it because knowing that children’s decisions frequently are not too genuine and we parents can push them a little. It was about five or six or seven years later when I was talking with my daughter again about these things, and I knew she had become a Christian then but I asked her, “Grace when did you become a Christian?” And she said, “Daddy don’t you remember that day on Live Oak when you talked to me?” So you see, she as a babe four years old, she had become a babe in Christ.

Now in my case it was different I was 25 years old when I became a Christian. I had already grown up in Sunday school. I had left home and then heard the Gospel, and I was converted. But I too was a babe in Christ though I was 25 years old, so I was carnal and I was weak I was not able to take the strong meat of the word just like a little baby. When a baby is born you wouldn’t find one of these doctors prescribing charcoal broil steak the next morning even though they might have the money to pay for it. You know that babies must be fed by milk. And so spiritually babies in Christ must be fed by milk this means that we cannot you see bring the strong teaching of the word of God to simple believers in the Lord Jesus. So frequently our teaching and our preaching goes way over the head of our audience because our audiences today have so many babes in them. Well now Paul in the third verse modifies his words he says, “ I have fed you with milk and not with meat for hither to you are not able to bear it neither yet now are you able.”

Now this is a startling thing you see because it has been some time since Paul brought the Corinthians to faith and Christ. And now he says you are still not able to bear anything but the milk, for ye are still carnal. Now this is very abnormal, but let me say just a word about this Greek word in verse 3 here he uses again a word that is closely related to the word flesh, but it is different. Instead of being the word that means simply of the material of the flesh he uses a word that mean characterized by flesh. So when he states in verse 3 the fair carnal he states it in a condemnatory fashion. You are still carnal now that is not natural that is not right. It is perfectly right for a person when he is born again as a Christian to be babe, but to stay a babe that's wrong. That is unnatural. That is just as unnatural as a baby born, which does not grow to adulthood physically.

Now we speak of a child, and we all have known of these unfortunate occurrences, we speak of a child, which is born and does not grow up as a retarded child. Now it is very possible for us to be retarded spiritually. We may be born again, receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior. Take the meat of the Word. But then because we do not develop our spiritual health, we become carnal in a willful sense we refuse to go on in spiritual things. Thus we are retarded Christian, and so often today are audiences are filled with true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ but they are extremely retarded. In fact in many of our audiences we have true believers in the Lord Jesus, who almost as we express it, morons spiritually. They do not know anything much at all about God's work.

Now all of these things Paul here mentions in this passage. So we have the natural man who is the non-Christian. Then we have the carnal man, who we divide into two categories, carnal weak. There is nothing wrong being weak as a babe, but then if we stay in this state then we are carnal in a willful sense. And Paul describes them “For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions are you not carnal and walk as men.” And finally the 4th class of men Chapter 2 verse 15 as well as in chapter 3 verse 1 “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things yet he himself is judged of no man.”

Now as you probably can guess from reading this word spiritual this term spiritual is derived from the word for Spirit, the pneumatic hose man, is the man who possesses the *pneuma*. And is subservient to the *pneuma*, the Spirit. The spiritual man is the one who is dominated by the Spirit the Holy Spirit. The carnal men are men who are dominated by the flesh. The natural man is the man who is dominated by the soul.

Now we all are natural men naturally. All of us either are or have been natural men. We all have been at one time or another carnal in the weak sense. And we all hope or should hope to be spiritual men, men who are dominated by the spirit. Now I am not going to ask you what you are. I won't even ask you to hold up your hands, but it is very important it is imperative that as we study these things in this class that you ask yourself constantly, “Where do I stand with respect to these things that he's talking about?” I am not going to try to evangelize you in the sense of an evangelist. In this class I don't want to embarrass you. I want you to keep coming. I want you to hear the word. This will do more for you than anything else. But it will not do what it should do for you if you do not make the practical application. Occasionally I will stick you a little bit, with the pin you know, and make you think about these things because you must think about these things. It is extremely important.

Well, now let's just say a brief word about what each one of these men need. Well the natural man who does not possess the Holy Spirit who has not believed in the Lord Jesus it is obvious that the thing that he needs is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for him. For the moment that he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he receives the Holy Spirit. This is part of our salvation. We are given a new nature we are given the Holy Spirit himself who comes to dwell in our hearts. So the natural man needs to be born again and having been born again he has new life. Then he is a babe in Christ. And he may grow. He may feed upon the word of God. If you had been having difficulty understanding what I am saying, now don't blame it altogether on this because it is obvious I may not be teaching you as you ought to be taught. But it is just possible if

you are having great difficulty understanding what I am talking about, it is just possible it's because you do not have the Holy Spirit; who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. So your need then is to believe in the Lord Jesus. For in believing in him you receive the Holy Spirit. You become a Christian. You are saved.

Now in the carnal category there are two categories. The carnal man who has just been born again and who is weak, a babe in Christ, well he needs just what you might expect a babe physically to need. What does a babe physically need? Well a babe physically needs milk, needs to feed, and so the carnal, weak believer the new believer in Christ needs to study the word of God. This is his food as Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 2 “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that he may grow onto salvation or grow thereby.” So here the weak Christian, who has just become a Christian and who has not disobeyed the Lord, why he needs to grow in the Word.

Now that is what you are doing as you are coming to this class, and I am feeding you. Now of course ultimately you should become strong enough so you can say, “Dr. Johnson can feed some babes, but I am strong now I can feed myself.” After all most of us reach that stage physically don't we? Would it be a terrible thing if I had to feed Dr. Howard his food you know that would be very unnatural. So we should grow to the place where each of ourselves can feed ourselves in the Bible. But in the early stages you must be fed and of course there is a sense in which as long as we're in the flesh we do need teachers to teach us more of the Word. But we ought to be able to feed ourselves from the holy Scriptures. You should be able to get along without me.

Now that is the idea you should get to the place where you can study the Word and you can feed on it. And learn the truths that will help you in your daily life so that you may glorify God. Without being fed like a baby.

Now if you are a believer who is a carnal believer because you have willfully disobeyed the Lord and have not been willing to grow, then you need not only to turn again to the Word, but you need also to confess your sin. You see in the Bible we have

this wonderful provision as Christian, 1 John 1:9. Let's turn over to that. I think that it is a good text for you as Christians to be well acquainted with. I have a wonderful in Houston who is pastor of the Baracka [phonetic] Church. His name is Bob Feeney. This is one of his favorite texts. And Bob always speaks of this verse 1 John 1:9 as the “rebound and keep moving verse”

Now he means by that this, when we are Christians we have been born again and we begin to walk as a Christian sooner or later we displease the Lord. We commit sin, if not in deed, in thought. No Christian ever fails to commit sin. There is no such thing as a Christian who does not commit sin. They do not exist. A woman once came to G. Campbell Morgan one time and said, “Do you know, Dr. Morgan, I have not sinned since I became a Christian.” And Dr. Morgan said, “My, that’s a wonderful record. You must be awfully proud of that.” She said, “I certainly am.” And with that she lost her twelve-year record, you see.

We are only deceived if we think that as Christians we do not sin. We do sin as Christians, and so we need to know what to do when we have sinned, and 1 John 1:9 tells us. If we, we Christians, if we confess our sins he is faithful and just. He is faithful because he has promised to do so. And he is just. How can he be just in forgiving sin? Sin must be punished. Well he is just because Jesus Christ has died for that sin on the cross at Calvary. All sin past, present, and future was on our Lord Jesus at the cross. So he has faithful and just, just because Christ has died for it, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So when we fall as Bob likes to say we confess our sin, and then we rebound. We are on our feet again, and then we go on as Christians forgetting the sin that we have committed and moving on as the Lord leads and directs us. So, the carnal willful man, who is guilty of these sins of which Paul speaks here, and others, “Whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions are you not carnal and walk as men.” The carnal willful man needs to confess his sin and then to feed on the word. It’s just like a little child who is sick.

Now when the child is healthy it needs to be fed that's the carnal weak believer, by illustration. But when a child becomes sick, it doesn't do any good frequently to feed it good food. It needs what? Medicine, medicine, and so the medicine of the spirit life is confession of sin. Then when the child is well, then he may feed as he normally feeds. Well, now when a carnal weak believer has been fed and fed and fed, and he has grown, and grown and grown, soon he becomes just as a child becomes, what? An adult, an adult.

Now, an adult is in the natural life, the epitome. When we become adults then we are responsible. We carry out God's rather, we do, but we are to do as adults. This is the aim of growing up to become an adult, so in the spiritual life, the aim is for us to grow up and become spiritual strong mature believers in the Lord Jesus.

Now, Paul calls this man a spiritual man. He also calls him a mature man back in chapter 2 in verse 6. “How be it (Paul says.) We speak wisdom among them that are perfect.” Now, that is a word that does not mean in the Bible ever. It does not mean perfect in the sense of no flaw whatsoever. It's obvious that no one of us is ever that. This word in the Greek as well as in the Hebrew means mature. Grown to maturity. “How be it we speak wisdom among them that are mature. He will define it then as spiritual. The man who is dominated by the spirit is the mature believer. So here are four types of men, natural men, carnal weak men, carnal willful men, spiritual men. And the analogy with human life is perfect in every instance.

Here is the man who has not been born, natural man. Here is the man who has been born, but he is weak, a new Christian, a babe in Christ. Here is one who has been a Christian for some time, but instead of growing, he's retarded. He is like those who are retarded physically, and here is the full-grown adult.

Now, then understanding the Bible is very closely related to these things. This man what can he understand? He cannot understand anything. The Bible is foolishness to him. That's what Paul says, 1 Corinthians 2:14. The Bible is foolishness to him. He

doesn't have the spirit. This is why so many people read the Bible and say, “It makes no sense to me.” I have had so many people tell me that. “I have tried to read the Bible, but it's just beyond me.” The reason is they don't have the spirit.

Now, then the carnal willful man is also limited. He can only take the milk. He cannot take the meat, the strong meat, because he is unhealthy, but the spiritual man as Paul says, “Judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. That is he has the capacity to understand all of the truth. The deep things of the word of God he is able to understand. Suppose I were to talk to you tonight about the Melcheizedek priesthood of Christ. Well, maybe some of you would go out and say, “Well, that was way over my head. I know I am a Christian, but that was way over my head.” Well, it is possible for it to be. I can well remember when this was way over my head, because I was a carnal weak believer, and needed the milk of the Word. I couldn't understand the meat of the Word. When we have become adults by feeding on the milk, then we become able to take the strong meat of the Word. Now, you are to make the application and to decide into which of these categories you fall. I will not do that.

Now, I want tonight, in the remainder of our time, to talk to you about God himself, as he exists in the Trinity. Now, this is important as a beginning for our studies in God's plan of the ages, because we are going to start out in the Bible. And in the first verse of the Bible it says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” And the natural question for us to ask is, “Who is God? What is he like? What do we know about God? How does he exist? Just what is God like?”

I heard an amusing story of a little girl, who was in a store, a department store, and she was in the section where they had a lot of games and books and also some little books that they could open up and draw in, and one of the clerks went down the aisle and he noticed a little girl, and she had one of the books open and she was drawing in that is, and he was greatly disturbs. And he said, “What are you doing?” And she said, “I am drawing a picture of God.” He said, “A picture of God. How do you know what

God looks like?" And she said, "I don't. That's why I am drawing the picture of him, to find out what he looks like." [Laughter]

Now, that's a natural question for us to ask, what is God like. So let's turn now to the first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now, notice the word, God. And then turn over to the 26th verse of this first chapter and let's read here, "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 fowls of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth over the earth."

Now, this is an amazing thing. In the first verse of the Bible we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And then in the 26th verse, when Moses describes the creation of man, he says, that God said, "Let us." Us, plural. Now, we would have expected him to say, "Let me make man in my image, after my likeness." But instead "Let us make man."

Now, this cannot be angelic being. There is no mention of angelic beings at this point, and furthermore the image must be one image. This is God and yet God speaks of himself here as a plurality. What is God like? This first verse by the way is a very interesting verse. It's a very simple statement isn't it? "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And yet it is a statement that denies the eternity of matter or materialism. There was a time when matter did not exist. This verse is a denial of atheism. The fool hath said, in his heart, there is no God, but God says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This is the denial of polytheism. "In the beginning God." Whatever we may say about us, there can be no denial of the fact that God may refer to himself in the singular. It does not say, "In the beginning gods created the heavens, and the earth." This is the denial of pantheism, for there is a distinction between God and matter. They are not the same. This is the denial of agnosticism too, for an effect must have a cause. An object that has been created must have a creator, and so we cannot logically be agnostics in the light of this text. It is also the denial of

fatalism that every thing came into existence by chance. The Bible says that, “God created the heavens and the earth.” And it is also the of course the denial of evolution that there has been in the beginning an eternal becoming.

You might be interested in a quotation that one of Cal Tech’s geochemists made a few years back. In 1953, Professor Harrison Brown of Cal Tech said, “Latest research seems to indicate that the known universe is all of one piece created all at one time as indicated in the Book of Genesis.” Isn’t that an amazing statement for one of our outstanding scientists?

There is an old story about Kepler the famous astronomer. He had a friend who was an atheist, did not believe in God and Kepler had spoken with him a number of times. He was a genuine Christian man. And it disturbed him that this man did not believe in the existence of God. They had talked about the planets and about the sun, and so on because that was Kepler's work, so finally he determined to experiment with the man, and so he made a little model of the sun, and the planets moving about it, and he invited his friend over. And his friend came in the room, so the story said, and looked at that and said, “Ah.” With delight. “That’s an interesting thing. Who made it?” And Kepler said somewhat carelessly, “Why no one made it. It made itself.” And he said, oh come on you know someone made it.” He said, “Now, here is an interesting thing. Here is a very weak and frail model of this glorious universe about us, and you look at it and you say, who made it? Now, how much more are we to say with regard to the universe itself with all the glories of nature, who made it?”

Well, this text then is a denial of all of these things. I don’t think that we can be Christians in the final analysis, and be evolutionary in our thinking, because you see ultimately we must come back to the truth of Genesis 1:1. Lots of people have difficulty with miracles in the Bible. I have run across some who have amazingly had difficulties with the miracles our Lord performed, and are willing to grant the significance of the opening verse of Genesis. But this is holy inconsistent. If a man can grasp and believe

Genesis 1:1 then everything else in the Bible can be believed. This is a miracle that is just as much a miracle as anything else. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” If we can believe that then, everything else in the Bible is thoroughly credible, and I can believe this and this is why I can believe other things in the word of God. But what is God like?

Now lets just very quickly look at some things that the Bible has to say about God. Now I am going to ask you to look at a few verses in the Bible now. And first of all, the Bible recognizes three persons as God, three persons as God. Now don't form your opinions before we look at these texts and before we look at all of these things, but the Bible recognizes three persons as God. First of all, I want you to turn with me to John chapter 6 verse 27. John 6 verse 27, that's the New Testament you know, Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John. Those of you who have visited tonight now next time when you come you want to be sure and bring your Bibles because you must look at these things for yourself. This is page 1122 in the Scofield addition of the King James Version. Page 1122, John 6:27.

Now let me just read these texts. Do we all have it? John 6:27, “Labor not for the meat which perishes but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life which the son of man shall give unto you for him hath God the Father sealed.”

Now I want you only to notice the expression God the Father. So the Father is God, God the Father. Now let's look back at John chapter 1 and verse 1, John 1:1. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”

Now look at verse 14, “And the word was made flesh and brought among us.” The word is the biblical term that John uses to describe Jesus Christ. And he says that he who was made flesh and brought among us was God. So here in John 6, we have read the God the Father is God, here we read that God the Son is God.

Now I want you to turn with me now to the next book in the Bible, the book of Acts chapter five. Of course God's Spirit is called the Spirit of God, and if he is the Spirit

of God, God’s own spirit he must of necessity be God. But here I think you will see in this story, this incident that Luke describes that he equates the Spirit to with God.

Now let’s read beginning at verse 1. You know the story of Ananias and Sapphira perhaps. Remember Barnabas had come and had given some money, had laid it at the Apostle’s feet, and this money had been given to the local church. They had shared Barnabas’ possessions. This was not communism of course this was voluntary.

Now it’s perfectly all right for people to share if they want to share, but when they tell him he must share that’s another matter. That’s a horse of a different color entirely. So don’t think that this is any support whatsoever for Communism, it is not. But a certain man named Ananias with Sapphira his wife sold the possession and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it. And brought a certain part and laid it at the Apostles feet, but Peter said, “Ananias why does Satan fill thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?”

Now notice, “Why does Satan fill thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” You see Barnabas sold the property and brought all the money in. They had sold their property and brought some money in, by hypocrisy suggesting to the congregation that they had brought all. But it wasn’t all. They had kept back some. So, “Why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and keep back part of the price of the land? Why else does it remain? Was it not thy known and after it was sold was it not in thine own power. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Though has not lied unto men but unto God.”

Now in the 3rd verse he has said, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” In the 4th verse he has said, “You have lied to God.” Now it is obvious in Luke’s mind the Holy Spirit is God. So here we have a remarkable thing. The Bible says that the Father is God. The Bible says that a person whom it calls the Son or the Word that he is God, and the Bible says that the Holy Spirit is God.

Now we could know if we went only this far that Unitarianism is not Christian. Whatever we may say about Unitarianism, and I'm, not trying to attack Unitarians, but we can say this it is not Christian doctrine. Some years ago a friend of mine worked for the YMCA in New Jersey, and it so happened that this YMCA lost a good bit of its Christian testimony, and it was only just a nice club type of thing as unfortunately the YMCA's are in most of the cities today. They do not have the strong Christian emphasis that they had when they began. Though they are wonderful organizations as far as the community help is concerned.

Well, it so happened that there were some strong Christians in this YMCA and the YMCA came into the hands, its directors its local directors, fell into the hands of some who were Unitarian and doctrine, and these Christians who were associated in it were very much disturbed because this YMCA was effectively witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ. So they took it to court. And in a very interesting decision the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey, in the light of the Testimony given in the light of the fact that the board of governors is in the hand of Unitarians, it is quite obvious that it is not in the hands of Christians, and it went on record saying that Unitarianism was not Christian. Because from the beginning the doctrine that characterized Christianity was the Doctrine of the Trinity. It was basic to Christianity, and so they turned the control of that local Y over to the Christians. So this is not something that is just biblical it is also from the standpoint of law recognized.

Now let me go on read three more passages. The Bible recognizes three persons as eternal, Jeremiah 10:10. Jeremiah 10:10. The Bible recognizes three as God. The Bible recognizes three as eternal Jeremiah 10:10. Now that is on page 783 in the Scofield addition of the King James Version. Remember to use your index if you do not know where the book of Jeremiah is. It is nothing to be ashamed of if you do not know where Jeremiah is. You can be a wonderful Christian and not know where Jeremiah is.

[Laughter] I know many men who are preaching the Word and are a little uncertain

where the Minor Prophets are. They know they are there, and they can find them in a hurry, but they have forgotten what which they memorized in Sunday school. Jeremiah 10:10, “But the Lord is the true God. He is the living God and an everlasting King. The Lord is everlasting.”

Now so we have here the Father or the Lord is everlasting in John 1:1, we read, “In the beginning was the Word.” And the word “was” is a word that means continuous existence in past time. “In the beginning the Word was.” When God created the heavens and the earth the sun had been in existence for ages upon ages previous to that. He is eternal, the eternal Son. And also of course the Spirit is eternal. The writer of the Epistles of the Hebrews speaks about the eternal Spirit. Hebrews chapter 9 verse 14. I am not going to look at that text but Jeremiah 10:10 says, “The Father is eternal.” John 1:1 says that the Son is eternal. Hebrews chapter 9 verse 14, as well as other text, say that Spirit is eternal. So here we have three that are recognized as God, three who are recognized as eternal.

Now the Bible also reveals that these three are distinct persons, distinct persons. For example John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.” Here is the Father, God, and here is the Son. They are distinct. The Father gave the Son. So the Father is distinct from the Son. In John 14 verse 16, we have all three mentioned, and here they are distinct John 14 verses 16 and 17. Notice these verses John 14, that’s page 1136, page 1136.

Now John 14:16 and 17. Do you all have it? The Lord Jesus is speaking, this is the upper room discourse and he says, “I (Now you can see the Son is distinct,) I will pray the Father (You see the Son prays to the Father the two are distinct.) and he shall give you another comforter (In other words, I will pray the Father and the Father will give you a comforter, another comforter, not me but another like me, an advocate.) that he may abide with you forever even, the Spirit of truth.” So you see the Lord Jesus has prayed the Father. He has said, “I prayed to the Father and the Father will give you the

Spirit.” So here we have the three as distinct persons. So what we have said so far is, there are three persons who are God. These three persons are eternal, and these three persons are distinct. They are distinct persons.

Now at this point you might say, “Well Dr. Johnson, then we must have three Gods.” No we do not have three Gods. Let’s turn back to the Old Testament, Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4. Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4. Here is the great *shemia yisrael*.

Now if you were a Jew in the audience tonight, and I was to say something to you about the *shemia yisrael*, you would recognize that this is the foundation of Judaism, the unity of God. This is their basic doctrine. And here it is Deuteronomy 6:4, “Here all Israel the Lord our God is one Lord, one Lord.” In other words, there is just one God. But we have said there are three persons who are God. That is true there are three persons who are eternal. That’s true. There are three who are separate from one another, three distinct persons. That’s true, but only one God.

Now lets turn to a passage in the New Testament. Mathew chapter 28, Mathew chapter 28. Now the Lord Jesus, here in the last chapter of Mathew, this is page 1044 is giving what has been called the great commission now it is not the greatest commission. The greatest commission of course is when our Lord was commissioned to come to earth, but this is commonly called the great commission. Just like we call the Lords prayer, the model prayer, in Mathew chapter 6. It is not the Lords prayer in one sense. The Lord’s Prayer is the prayer he prayed in John 17. This prayer he never prayed, and no disciple ever prayed it either, as far as the Bible is concerned. It was a model prayer. But this has been called the great commission. Have you found it now? I say all of these things in this thing you know, just to give you a little time to find the passages. [Laughter] Mathew chapter 28 now in verse 18, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye there for and teach all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”

Now do you notice this, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, three persons. But did you notice that he said “in the name” not names. He did not say baptize them in the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He said “in the name of” and recognizes in this that God is one in essence. There is one God, who subsists in three persons. Christians are not polytheists. They are monotheists. They believe in one God, but they believe that this God subsists in three persons.

Now don't tell me to explain this to you or to illustrate it to you so that you will thoroughly understand it. Why, listen if you could understand the Trinity thoroughly you would be God. Only God can understand the Trinity. This is his basic nature. Don't be surprised if you cannot understand the Trinity. If we could understand all about God, we would be gods ourselves. We would have omniscience, which is the property of deity.

Now men have tried of course to manufacture things like this. We have all, when we were children, we have read about mermaids, part fish, part woman. We have read about, what is the animal that has the body of a horse and the head of a man? A Centaur, suppose to inhabit the plains of Northern Greece in Thessaly.

Now when man attempts to arrive at something like the Trinity, he blunders into these grotesque absurdities of a Centaur, an impossible thing physically or a mermaid. Physiologists tell us that we can never, in our imagination, do anything more than rearrange known things. But the Trinity is absolutely unique and the fact that it is unique is one of the evidences of its divine origin. So the Bible teaches us then that there is one God, who eternally subsists in plurality of persons. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, three persons. No less no more, and yet one God.

Now there are lots of attempts to illustrate the Trinity. Take an egg. It has a shell its has a white it has a yoke, but it is only one egg. But this is only a faint and actually imperfect illustration of the Trinity. All illustrations of the Trinity stumble over the fact of tri-personality. They cannot explain it, so I am not going to try to clutter up

your mind with human illustrations, which can never really explain the Trinity. Luther, when he was confronted by man who said, "But reason cannot except the Trinity said," *muloeair teacate en ecclesiae*. Which he meant, in which of course was the Latin for 1 Corinthians chapter 14, "Let the woman keep the silent in the church." And what he meant by that was, reason is not to dictate in matters that concern revelation. Revelation, or God's, truth is higher than reason. Reason stands under revelation because reason is touched with sin.

Well, why a Trinity? Why is it necessary that we have a Trinity? Well God is a God of love isn't he? We read that in the New Testament. You don't read it anywhere else. The gods of the heathen are not gods of love. If you go back, beyond Christian teaching, you will never find any God who is a God of love. This is a biblical truth. When men say to you if they are not Christians, "Oh, but God is a God of love." You can say, "Where did you get that?" Well he would have to say ultimately, "I got it from the Bible." "Well then why don't you get some other things from the Bible too you see." God is love and a loving God must have an object, and so even in the very nature of God it is necessary that there be an object that there be plurality in the Godhead, and also if God is to reveal himself there must be another person who will reveal the father. So there is need for an object. There is need for a revealer of God. Of course there is need for redemption, and so the Father is the one who initiated the plan of redemption the Son came and died for men's sins, and the Holy Spirit of God takes our minds and causes us to see that Christ died for us and causes us to believe in him and thus become Christians or believers in Jesus Christ. Well our time is up we must stop lets close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father we thank Thee and praise Thee for the gospel of Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that Thou are the Trinity in unity, one God, who subsists in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, the blessed Trinity. We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast

“The Trinity and the Angelic Hosts” by S. Lewis Johnson
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

been pleased to reveal Thy self to us through Jesus Christ, and to draw us to Thee. May,
Lord, the light of the Word shine brightly in our hearts. For Christ's sake. Amen.