

Abundant Life Lesson 5 - The Godhead

Introduction

Who is God? What can we know about Him? These are questions that every person must answer for themselves. The Word of God tells us that when we begin to study God, we must start by understanding who Jesus Christ really is according to scripture:

Col 2:8-9 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ESV

Col 2:8-9 Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said. 9 For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; TLB

We are warned to not follow "man's traditions" or "philosophies" but to base our doctrine on the Word of God and to remember that "in Christ dwells ALL of God in a human body." Therefore any teaching of God that does not make Jesus Christ the supreme God come in flesh is errant. Jesus is more than just the Son and more than just a man, but He was ALL of God come in flesh:

1 Tim 3:16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. ESV

"Manifest" means to "be made visible." Jesus Christ was God made visible in the flesh.

Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ESV (Emphasis mine)

God purchased the church with "his own blood!" Who died on the cross and shed His blood for us? Jesus Christ! So to begin our study of God, we must realize that Jesus Christ is more than just one member of a trinity or a host of gods, but that Jesus Christ is God made flesh. Everything that God is, was, and will be was in Jesus Christ according to Colossians 2:9. This is why the prophet Isaiah foretold about Jesus with these words:

Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ESV (Emphasis mine)

The son to be born would be called "Mighty God" or "the mighty God" and "the everlasting Father!" Jesus could be called those things because "all of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily."

Names and Titles of God

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There is a difference between a title and a name. For example, I am an associate pastor and a husband, but those are not my names. There are *thousands of titles* for God in the Bible such as "healer, savior, father, deliverer, friend, brother, etc...". There were also many specific names of God given in scripture. As the Bible progresses, God revealed more of Himself to man and the later names reflected a better understanding of God. Here is a basic overview of the names of God along with a representative verse and it's meaning:

1. The "El" names - These are the "generic" names of God and can be used to denote the true God, or a false god such as an idol or a human claiming to be a god.

Eloah - singular - Nehemiah 9:17 - means "god."
Elohim - plural - Exodus 7:1 - means "a powerful god."
Elah - Aramaic version of Eloah - Daniel 2:18
El - singular - means "almighty."

As God revealed more of Himself to man, the "El" names were not sufficient to describe Him, so God began to be known by the "Compound El" names.

El-Shaddai - The Almighty God - Genesis 17:1
El-Elyon - The Most High God - Genesis 14:18
El-Roiy - The God of Sight or The God that Sees All - Genesis 16:13
El-Olam - The Everlasting God - Genesis 21:33

Notice that "Eloah" is singular and "Elohim" is plural. In the Hebrew language, plurality can mean "more than one," or it can also be used to mean "majesty or rank." This is called by scholars the "plural of majesty." Even in modern languages other than Hebrew, there are plurals of majesty found. For example, in the German army, it is proper to reply to a commanding officer with the equivalent of "Yes sirs" even though there may only be one officer before you. The plural means respect to the officers rank. Some people teach that the plurality of some of the names of God in the Hebrew show that there must be a plurality in the Godhead, but even learned Trinitarian scholars do not believe this. To quote *Smith's Bible Dictionary; 1st Edition*:

The plural form of Elohim has given rise to much discussion. The fanciful idea, that it refers to a TRINITY of persons in the Godhead, hardly finds support among scholars. It is referred to as the plurality of majesty, or the sum of all powers displayed by God, or it denotes the fullness of His divine strength. . . . (pgs 212-213).

2. The "Master" names - These were names applied to God that represents the fact that He is ruler of all.

Adon - means "ruler or master" - Joshua 3:11
Adonai - has an implied possession in the meaning and thus means "my lord/master" - Genesis 15:2

3. Jehovah - This is the name that God revealed Himself as to Moses under the Law. It literally means "He is" and refers to the fact that God is self-sufficient. When God

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referred to Himself by this name, He called Himself "I am" (Exodus 3:14). "Yahweh" is the Hebrew version of "Jehovah" so "Jehovah, I AM, and Yahweh" are all the same name, the name by which man was saved under the Law of Moses.

The name "Jehovah" did not fully reveal all of God's glory either and so God began to reveal Himself through "compound Jehovah names."

Jehovah-jireh - the Lord will see and provide - Genesis 22:14.

Jehovah-rapha - the Lord that heals - Exodus 15:26.

Jehovah-nissi - the Lord our banner (ie... He'll fight our battles) - Exodus 17:15.

Jehovah-m'kaddesh - the Lord that sanctifies - Exodus 31:13.

Jehovah-shalom - the Lord our peace - Judges 6:24.

Jehovah-saboath - the Lord of Hosts - I Samuel 1:3.

Jehovah-elyon - the Lord most High - Psalm 7:17.

Jehovah-raah - the Lord my shepherd - Psalm 23:1.

Jehovah-hoseenu - the Lord our maker - Psalm 95:6.

Jehovah-tsidkenu - the Lord our righteousness - Jeremiah 23:6.

Jehovah-shammah - the Lord is present - Ezekiel 48:35.

4. Jesus - This the name of God by which men are saved under Grace. It was finally a name that represented everything that God was and is!

Matt 1:23-25 Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. ESV

Jesus would be called "God with us!" The name "Jesus" literally means "Jehovah has become salvation." The name of Jesus is the highest name of God that has ever or will ever be given:

Phil 2:9-10 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ESV

The name of Jesus is a higher name than any in heaven or in earth because it is the revealed name of everything that God is! When you call upon Jesus, you are calling upon every title, office, and ability that God has! Jesus is more than the name of the son in a trinity, but is the revealed name of God by which we are saved (Acts 4:12).

How Many Gods are There?

Hundreds of times, the scriptures declare that there is only ONE God. The ONLY number associated with the person of God in scripture is one.

Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ESV

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This is the most important passage to the Jewish people.

Isa 44:6-8 Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. 7 Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. 8 Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any." ESV

Isa 45:21-22 Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. 22 "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. ESV

Eph 4:6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ESV

James 2:19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ESV

For more examples, see Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7; 32:39; 2 Samuel 7:22; I Chronicles 17:20; Psalms 71:22; 86:10; Isaiah 1:4; 5:19; 5:24; 37:16; 42:8; 44:24; 45:6; 46:9; 48:11; Zechariah 14:9; Malachi 2:10; Romans 3:30; I Corinthians 8:4; 8:6; Galatians 3:20; I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:20; 5:7; Revelation 4:2.

Jesus is the One God of the Old Testament

There are many examples of scriptural proofs that Jesus Christ is the one God of the Old Testament. For example, Micah 5:2 says that the ruler who has been in existence "from everlasting" would be born in Bethlehem. We just read in Isaiah where Jehovah God said that He was the only one who has ever been, so it is obvious that Jesus is that true God. Here is a few specific examples and then we will give you list to explore on your own:

Isa 35:4-6 Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ESV

Isaiah prophesied that the ONE God of the Israelites would come and save them, not another. He went on to prophesy that when God came "THEN" the blind, deaf, lame and dumb people would all receive healing. In whose ministry were all of these things fulfilled? Jesus Himself claimed to the fulfillment of this scripture:

Luke 7:22 And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear,

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the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ESV

Let's look at another simple example:

Isa 40:3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ESV

The prophet Isaiah also prophesied that when Jehovah (LORD) would come, there would first come someone preparing the way for Him as a voice crying "in the wilderness."

Matt 3:1-3 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" ESV

Matthew wrote that John the Baptist preached in the wilderness of Judea that he was the one "crying in the wilderness" and the one who had come to "prepare the way of the Jehovah (LORD)!" Jesus was Jehovah God come to save His people!

Jesus perfectly fulfilled the compound Jehovah names. If Jesus is Jehovah, then He must be the One God of the Old Testament. Even this list is not comprehensive but is a fair representation of the scriptural text:

Jehovah is . . .

Almighty - Genesis 17:1
I AM - Exodus 3:14-16
Rock - Psalm 18:2; 28:1
Horn of Salvation - Psalm 18:2
Shepherd - Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:10-11

King of Glory - Psalm 24:7-10
Light - Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 60:19
Salvation - Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 12:2
Lord of Lords - Psalm 136:3
Holy One - Isaiah 12:6
Lawgiver - Isaiah 33:22

Judge - Isaiah 33:22
First and Last - Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12
Only Savior - Isaiah 43:11; 45:21; 60:16
Giver of Spiritual Water - Isaiah 44:3; 55:1
King of Israel - Isaiah 44:6
Only Creator - Isaiah 44:24; 45:8; 48:13

Only Just God - Isaiah 45:21
Redeemer - Isaiah 54:5; 60:16

Jesus is . . .

Almighty - Revelation 1:8
I AM - John 8:58
Rock - I Corinthians 10:4
Horn of Salvation - Luke 1:69
Good Shepherd - John 10:11; Great Shepherd - Hebrews 13:20; Chief Shepherd - I Peter 5:4
Lord of Glory - I Corinthians 2:8
Light - John 1:4-9; 8:12
Only Salvation - Acts 4:10-12
Lord of Lords - Revelation 19:16
Holy One - Acts 2:27
Testator of the First Covenant
ie... Giver of the Law - Hebrews 9:14-17
Judge - Micah 5:1; Acts 10:42
First and Last - Revelation 1:8; 22:13
Savior - Titus 2:13; 3:6
Giver of Living Water - John 4:10-14; 7:38-39
King of Israel - John 1:49
Creator of Everything - John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10
Just One - Acts 7:52
Redeemer - Galatians 3:13; Revelation 5:9

Jehovah Compound and meaning

Jesus is our . . .

New Testament Scripture

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Jehovah-jireh (provider)	Provider	Hebrews 10:10-12
Jehovah-rapha (healer)	Healer	James 5:14-15
Jehovah-nissi (banner, victory)	Victory	I Corinthians 15:57
Jehovah-m'kaddesh (sanctifier)	Sanctifier	Ephesians 5:26
Jehovah-shalom (peace)	Peace	John 14:27
Jehovah-sabaoth (Lord of hosts)	Lord of Hosts	James 5:4-7
Jehovah-elyon (Most High)	Most High	Luke 1:32, 76, 78
Jehovah-raah (shepherd)	Shepherd	John 10:11
Jehovah-hoseenu (maker)	Maker	John 1:3
Jehovah-tsidkenu (righteousness)	Righteousness	I Corinthians 1:30
Jehovah-shammah (present)	Ever Present One	Matthew 28:20

Without a doubt, Jesus is the ONE Jehovah God of the Old Testament! This is why Thomas fell to his knees with these words:

John 20:28-29 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." **ESV**

Jesus is the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost

The titles of "Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost" refer to three roles or manifestations of the ONE God.

Father - emphasizes God's roles as Creator, Father of angels, Father of born-again believers, and Father of the humanity of Jesus Christ. It always refers to the invisible Spirit of God.

Son - refers to both the humanity of Jesus Christ, and the flesh that God became for the purpose of man's salvation.

Holy Ghost - emphasizes God's active power in the world and among men and refers to His work of regenerating a believer to a new life through the infilling of the Spirit. It always refers God's ability to anoint, baptize, fill, bless, and indwell human lives.

Of course, these are not the only titles of God and nowhere in scripture are we commanded to limit God to only these three titles or elevate these three titles to a special place of prominence.

This explains why the disciples of Jesus obeyed Matthew 28:19 by always baptizing "in the name of Jesus" (see Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; I Corinthians 1:12-13).

Jesus is the Father (He is human form of the invisible Spirit of God):

John 10:30-33 I and the Father are one." **31** The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. **32** Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the

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Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" 33 The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." ESV

John 14:8-9 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ESV

Col 1:14-15 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ESV

The Father is the Holy Spirit.

Eph 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ESV

1. John 3:16 says that God is the Father of Jesus, yet Matthew 1:18-20 and Luke 1:35 tell us that the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary and she conceived. Whoever causes conception to take place is the father, so the Father and the Holy Ghost must be different terms for the same God!
2. God the Father raised up Jesus from the dead in Acts 2:24 and Ephesians 1:17-20, yet Romans 8:11 says that the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead!
3. The prophet Joel prophesied that Jehovah would “pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” in Joel 2:27-29, yet Peter said the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of this scripture in Acts 2:1-4, 16-18. The Holy Ghost must be the Jehovah God of the Old Testament!
4. The Holy Spirit fills the life of a Christian in John 14:17 and Acts 4:31, yet the Spirit of the Father fills hearts in Ephesians 3:14-16 and the Father lives within us in John 14:23.
5. The Holy Ghost is our Comforter in John 14:26, yet God the Father is the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulations in II Corinthians 1:3-4!
6. The Spirit sanctifies us in I Peter 1:2, yet the Father sanctifies us in Jude 1.
7. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God in II Timothy 3:16, yet the Old Testament prophets were moved by the Holy Ghost in II Peter 1:21.
8. Paul states that our bodies are the temples of God in I Corinthians 3:16-17, then tells us that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost in I Corinthians 6:19.
9. The Spirit of the Father will give us words to say in time of persecution in Matthew 10:20, yet Mark 13:11 states that the Holy Ghost will do so.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus

1. Jesus will raise the believer from death in John 6:40, yet the Spirit will quicken (bring life to)

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the dead in Romans 8:11.

2. The Spirit raised Christ from the dead in Romans 8:9-11, yet Jesus Christ said that He would raise Himself from the dead in John 2:19-21.
3. In John 14:16, the Father would send another Comforter, the Holy Ghost, yet two verses later in John 14:18, Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." In verse 17 Jesus told His disciples that He was "with them," but that He would soon be "in them." Jesus explained the difference in John 16:7 when he stated that He had to go away or else the Comforter would not come. After Jesus went away in the Flesh at the ascension, He came back in Spirit form to live INSIDE of His disciples on the Day of Pentecost!
4. The Holy Ghost abides in the hearts of Christians in John 14:16, yet Jesus promised that He would abide with His followers to the end of the world in Matthew 28:20.
5. Believers are filled with the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:4, 38, yet it is Christ who dwells in us in Colossians 1:27.
6. Paul told the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 3:16-17 that by having the Spirit in the inner man, we have Christ in our hearts.
7. In Ephesians 5:26, Christ sanctifies the church, yet in I Peter 1:2 the Spirit does.
8. The Spirit is our intercessor in Romans 8:26, yet in Hebrews 7:25, Jesus is our intercessor.

The Trinity is a Tradition Invented by Man

We cannot use scriptures to prove a "trinity" because the trinity did not come from the pages of the Word of God, but rather from the blending of philosophy, pagan worship, and Christianity into a "universal" religion in the fourth century that would later become the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, the concept of "three in one" was not accepted until toward the end of the 3rd century in church councils that took place over 300 years after the time of Christ. These councils were the efforts of a non-believing emperor, Constantine, to force a universal system of beliefs in his kingdom. The theological decisions were based not upon scripture, but upon "finding a happy medium for all beliefs." The Early Apostolic Church of the book of Acts did not believe in a trinity but simply believed that Jesus was the one God of the Old Testament and that the Holy Spirit was His Spirit living within them. Here are some quotes from eminent Bible scholars (most are Trinitarians) which show that even the learned scholars admit that the trinity is a later invention by man:

Jaroslav Pelikan in *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol. 1 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*:

You are not entitled to the beliefs you cherish about such things as the Holy Trinity without a sense of what you owe to those who have worked this out for you. To circumvent Saint Athanasius on the assumption that if you put me alone in a room with the New Testament, I will come up with the doctrine of the Trinity, is naive. . . . The dogma of the Trinity . . . was hammered out during the third quarter of the fourth century. (pgs 210-211)

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Jaroslav Pelikan in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*:

When one does speak of an unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origins to, say, the last quadrant of the fourth century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma "one God in three Persons" became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought. . . . The formulation "one God in three Persons" was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith, prior to the end of the fourth century. (under "Trinity, Holy")

W. Fulton in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*:

At first the Christian faith was not Trinitarian. . . . It was not so in the apostolic and sub-apostolic ages, as reflected in the NT and other early Christian writings. Nor was it so even in the age of the Christian apologists. And even Tertullian, who founded the nomenclature of the orthodox doctrine, knew as little of an ontological Trinity as did the apologists . . . (see article, "Trinity")

John Baillie in *The Library of Christian Classics*:

The assertion that the Trinity is the distinctively Christian idea of God is seriously misleading. . . . What is true is that from the third century onwards the distinctively Christian idea of God began to fit itself into a trinitarian mould. This mould was adopted and adapted from Hellenistic (ie. . Greek) philosophy . . . (The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Theology, pg 185)

The concept of the trinity was introduced due to the failure of many religious leaders to heed and obey the warning of Colossians 2:8-9. One of the many hurdles that you must overcome in your walk with God is to decide who you will believe: the Word of God or the traditions of men. In this lesson, we have given scripture after scripture defining who God is and they explicitly declare "God is one" and His name is Jesus!