

LESSON 1

The Holy Bible - the Word of God

Scripture References

Psalm 119:89, 105; Isaiah 40:8; 55:10-11; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-3; II Peter 1:20-21

Introduction

- Bible means “Book.” The Holy Bible, “the Book of books,” is the Word of God, and His final revelation to man. The Bible is divided into two major sections known as the Old Testament and the New Testament. Christ is the dividing figure even as He is in history - B.C. and A.D. “B.C.” stands for “before Christ,” and “A.D.” for the Latin “*ā nō Do mi nī*” which means “in the year of the Lord.” The two sections are further divided into sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. Besides the Holy Bible, God has no new or further revelation since the apostle John penned the last part, the Book of Revelation.
- Scripture is a word used by the Jews to indicate their Sacred Writings, the Old Testament or a portion of it, and by Christians for the Old and New Testaments or a portion of them. Both the singular and plural forms of this word (Scripture and Scriptures) are used to refer to the Holy Bible.
- The names “Old Testament” and “New Testament” were used originally by early Christians to distinguish the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The word “testament” means “covenant.” The Holy Bible contains the Old and New Covenants which the Lord made with His people in the two dispensations (the two different eras - B.C. and A.D.).
- The Old Testament (or Covenant) was made by God with the people of Israel through Moses at Mount Sī’naī, by which the Lord had chosen the nation of Israel as His own people to prepare for the coming of Christ (Ex. 19:3-6; 24:3-8; cf. Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22; 7:37). The New Testament (or Covenant) was made by Christ with His people who are redeemed through His shed blood (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; I Cor. 11:25).
- Most of the O.T. was written in Hebrew language, the language spoken by the people of Israel, with a small portion in *Ārāmā’ī*, the Syrian language. The N.T. was written in Greek, the language used widely by Hēl’lēnist Jews.
- Note: Hellenist Jews were Greek-speaking Jews. During the last three centuries B.C., Greek had become the common language throughout the ancient world. Many Jews who lived outside Jerusalem had adopted Greek as their spoken language. These Jews were called Hellenist Jews, or Grecian Jews (Acts 6:1; 9:29).

The Thirty-nine Books of the Old Testament

- The 39 O.T. books are grouped as follows:
 1. Five books of the Law (of Moses) - Ġē’nēsīs, Ē’xōdūs, Lēvī’ticūs, Nūmbers, Deūte rō’nōmŷ

2. Twelve books of History - Jōsh'ūā, Jūdgēs, Rūth, I and II Să'mūël, I and II Kings, I and II Chrō'nicles, Ęz'rá Nēhēmī'āh, Ęs'ther
3. Five books of Poetry (Wisdom Writings) - Jōb, Psālms, Pro've rbs, Ęcclēšī'ā'stēs, Song of So'l'ōmō'n
4. Five books of the Major Prophets - Ĭsā'īāh, Jērēmī'āh, Lă'mēntā'tions, Ęzē'kiēl, Dă'niēl
5. Five books of the Minor Prophets - Hōšē'ā, Jō'ēl, Ā'mō's, Ōbādī'āh, Jō'nāh, Mī'cāh, Nā'hūm, Hăbă'kkūk, Zēph'ānī'āh, Hă'ggāi, Zēchāī'āh, Māl'āchī

The Twenty-seven Books of the New Testament

- The 27 N.T. books are as follows:
 1. Four Gospels (Biographies of Jesus Christ) - Măt'thew, Mărk, Lūke, Jōhn
 2. One book of the history of the Early Church - the Acts
 3. Thirteen Epistles (Letters) of the Apostle Paul - Rō'măș, I and II Cōrīn'thi'ānș, Gălă'tians, Ęphē'siānș, Phīlīppiānș, Cōlō'siānș, I and II Thēssălō'niānș, I and II Tīmōthŷ, Tītūs, Phīlē'mōn
 4. Eight General Epistles (Letters) - Hēb'rews, Jāmes, I and II Peter, I, II and III John, Jūde
 5. One book of Prophecy - the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation.
- The Old Testament points to Christ, the New Testament begins with Christ.

The Unity of the Bible

- The sixty-six books of the Bible are a library in themselves. They were written over a period of approximately 1,500 years, from the time of Moses to the end of the first century A.D., by a total of about forty different writers. Among them were kings, generals, priests, scribes, farmers, fishermen, a tax-collector, a doctor, etc. These writers were people of different languages, occupations and temperaments. They lived at different periods of history, in different places and had different trainings and experiences. Yet there is a perfect harmony within the Bible.
- The central theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ. The O.T. is an account of the Nation Israel. The N.T. is an account of the Man Jesus. The nation of Israel was founded and nurtured of God through which the Son of God might be brought into the world. In other words, the O.T. is the preparation for the coming of Christ, and in the N.T. Christ is made manifested to the world. God Himself became a Man in Jesus to give us a picture of what kind of Person He is when we look at Jesus, the Son of God. God is like Jesus. Jesus was God Who became flesh and made His dwelling among us (Jn. 1:4); "No one has ever seen God, but the only Son, Who is at the Father's side, has made Him known" (Jn. 1:18).

The Inspiration of the Bible

- The Bible originated in the mind of God, not in the mind of man. The Bible was given to man by inspiration. The word "inspire" means to "breathe or blow upon or into," or to "infuse (life, etc. into)

by breathing.” The apostle Paul said, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17). It is clear that the Holy Spirit inspired the human writers and breathed into them the thoughts and words as they wrote the 66 books of the Bible.

- The O.T. writers were repeatedly instructed to write what the Lord commanded them (Ex. 17:14; 34:27; Num. 33:2; Isa. 8:1; etc.). And the Scripture is filled with such expressions as, “Hear the word of the Lord” (Isa. 1:10; 28:14); “The word of the Lord came to me, saying” (Jer. 1:4); “This is what the Lord said to me” (Jer. 13:1); “This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord” (Jer. 30:1); “the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest” (Eze. 1:3; 6:1; etc.).
- The Lord Jesus and His apostles all acknowledged the O.T. writings as God’s Word written by people who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. They often quoted the words of the O.T. as being the words of God (cf. Isa. 29:13 with Matt. 15:7-9; Isa. 61:1-2 with Lk. 4:18-19; Isa. 65:1-2 with Rom. 10:20; Ps. 104:4 with Heb. 1:7; etc.). Jesus claimed the same absolute authority for His own words as He said in Matt. 24:35, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.” In fact, Jesus Himself was the living Word of God (Jn. 1:1-2, 14, 18). Then in II Peter 3:15-16, the apostle Peter considered Paul’s writings to have equal authority with other Scriptures. The Bible, composed by many authors, over a period of many centuries, yet there is a unity of thought throughout the whole Book; for God Himself directed and dictated the writing of the Bible books. The Bible is the Word of God.
- Now when we say that the Scripture is inspired, we must also remember that each of the writers of the Bible used his own style and language. Some of them were highly educated, others were not. Each had his own nature, training, background and temperament. But all of them were guided by the Holy Spirit to write what God wanted written. All of Scripture has prophetic authority. None of it originated with the will of men. It came about through the will of God, as the apostle Peter declared, “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:20-21).

What Have We Learned Today?

1. We must believe and accept the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God. It was written by many different men, but each of them was breathed by the Holy Spirit. He dictated the book and these men wrote as they were carried by the Holy Spirit. Every book in the Bible is an indispensable part of God’s revelation to man. There is a purpose in every word. God has not put anything in the Bible which ought not to be there. He has left nothing out which ought to be there. The Bible is God’s complete and final revelation to man. The Bible is perfect, authoritative and infallible. The Bible is the Word of God.
2. The Bible reveals the mind of God and the heart of Christ. The Bible is a Book for every person in every age. It speaks to the old and the young, the sinner and the saint. It has a message for every heart. We read its pages to find the way from sin to heaven, to find a balm for our aching hearts, to find comfort in sorrow, to find guidance in trouble. The Bible is our daily spiritual food. Let’s treasure it, read it daily, study it, love it; and most important of all, live it, that our faith may be deeply grounded in the Word of God.

Memory Bible Verses- II Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

LESSON 2

What Kind of Being Is God? - Part I

Introduction

- The writers of the Scriptures made no effort to prove the existence of God; they simply affirmed His existence by declaring, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). All through the Bible we are told that there is a God, that He has existed from the timeless past and will exist for all eternity. He has neither beginning nor end. Abraham called Him the Eternal God (Gen. 21:33). When King David lifted up his eyes and looked upon all the glories and beauties of the universe, his heart burst into a psalm of praise to God, the Author and Creator of it all, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands” (Ps. 19:1).
- Down through all the ages, men longed to know what kind of being God is. Once the apostle Philip asked Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied” (Jn. 14:8). Men want to know how God looks and how He feels toward men and what His attributes (characteristics or qualities) are.

God Is Known through Revelation

- The pagan worship false gods, demons and evil spirits. They have created their own gods, images of false gods, male and female, high and low. But these molten or carved images are not gods; they are only idols of gold and silver, wood and stone, fashioned by men’s own hands. The Bible says, “These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens” (Jer. 10:11). And surely they who worship idols shall perish with them.
- The true God, the God Who made the heavens and the earth, can be known only through revelation. The Bible shows us that God reveals Himself to men through the following channels:
 1. The physical universe (Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:19-20)
 2. The human soul or conscience (Rom. 2:14-15);
 3. The Written Word, the Holy Bible (Ps. 119:18,105; II Tim. 3:16)
 4. The Living Word, Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:14,18; 14:9; He. 1:1-4)

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

God Is a Spirit

The Lord Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). This means that God has no body, no physical form; He is not visible to the human eyes (Ex. 3:4-6; 33:18-23), but He revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:14,18; 14:9). When the Bible speaks of the “arm of the Lord” or the “hand of God” or the “eyes of the Lord,” etc., the writers simply used human expressions to describe God. Such expressions should not be understood literally.

God Is a Person

- Now to say that God is Spirit, it does not mean that God is only an impersonal or invisible force or power or an abstract principle. The Bible does teach that God is a living Person. He is a personal God. Although without a physical body, God has yet personality. He is seen throughout the Bible as a Person Who is a rational and intelligent and moral being. He is a God with Whom we can communicate, in Whom we can trust. He is a God Who loves (Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:7-21). He hates sin

(Prove. 6:16-19) and grieves (Gen. 6:6). He provides our needs (Matt. 6:31-33) and cares about us (I Pet. 5:6-7).

- Since God is a Spirit, He is a free Person. He is not confined or bound by the laws of the universe which He created. He is active in this physical universe. He is above all, pervading all and living in us all (Ps. 147:8-9; Acts 17:24-28; Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:17), but He never acts contrary to His character (Ps. 89:34).

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

God is Holy

- The word “holy” means “to separate” or “to set apart.” God is holy because He is separated from all men, and indeed from all created things (Ps. 99:3; Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). He exists apart from all else and rules over all (Ps. 22:3; Rev. 15:3-4). There is no one holy like the Lord (I Sam. 2:2). God is majestic in holiness (Ex. 15:11). Holiness is the most comprehensive of all God’s attributes. It is God’s very being. He is holy in all ways.
- Since God is holy, He is free from all moral impurity or sin, and is therefore morally perfect. In the presence of the holy God, man is deeply conscious of his sin and unworthiness. In Isaiah 6:1-5, the prophet saw God sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and heard the seraphim (angels) singing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.” Immediately Isaiah hid his face and cried out, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” If we could catch a real vision of the holiness of God today, we would all prostrate ourselves before Him and cry out, “Unclean! unclean!”
- Now God’s holiness is the standard of ethical purity by which His creatures must measure themselves. His holiness is the standard of our life and conduct. God said to the people of Israel, “Be holy because, I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7; 21:8). The apostle Peter also said to us, “But just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy” (I Pet. 1:15-16).

God is Eternal

- The Bible speaks of God as the eternal God or everlasting God (I Chron. 16:36; Ps. 90:2; 106:48; etc.). His existence cannot be measure according to time, for with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day (II Peter 3:8). The heavens and the earth have been here for a long time, but God was here before their time. Moses the man of God in his prayer told us, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God” (Ps. 90:1-2). As Creator, He brought the world into being, even before “the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy” (Job 38:4-7); and one day He will bring the world to its end in accordance with His plan and purpose.
- God is eternal. Before the mountains were brought forth, He was; and after the earth is crumbled into the dust, He will still live. He always was, He always is, and He always will be, from everlasting to everlasting. Yes, God is eternal. He is completely self-existent. There was never a time when He did

not exist. He was not created. The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth” (Isa. 40:28).

- Man lives in time. He is conscious of what is past and what is present, but he does not know what lies ahead. By contrast God, being the eternal One and the Creator of all things, is not limited in any way by time. He sees the whole of time as eternally present before Him. “I am the Āl’phā and the Ōmē’gā the Beginning and the Ending of all things,” says the Lord God, “Who is, and Who was, Who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8).

What Have We Learned Today?

1. The writers of Scriptures did not argue for the existence of God, they simply assumed His existence. The Bible says, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, their deeds are evil; there is no one who does good” (Ps. 14:1). That is the reason why fools don’t want God; they love sin and darkness rather than God and truth (Jn. 3:19-20). Their fate is sealed by their own unbelief (Jn. 3:18).
2. God is only known through revelation. There are general ways and special ways in which God has revealed Himself. The revelation of God through nature (Ps. 19:1-6; Acts 14:16-17; Rom. 1:18-20) and human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15; cf. Matt. 27:3-4) is called general revelation. The revelation of God through the Scriptures (Ps. 119:18, 105; II Tim. 3:16) and Jesus Christ is called special revelation. And Jesus Christ the Son of God is the One and only complete revelation of the true God. Jesus showed in His life the kind of being that God is (Jn. 1:14, 18; 14:9; Heb. 1:1-4). Anyone wants to know God must come to Jesus Christ Who says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6); “Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9).

Memory Bible Verses - Psalm 90:1-2, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.”

LESSON 3 What Kind of Being Is God? - Part II

God Is Omnipotent

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pōtěnce (n.) is used by Bible scholars to refer to God’s all-inclusive power. Although this word is not found in the Bible, the Scriptures clearly teach that God is the Almighty One. In Genesis 17:1, God said to Abraham, “... I am God Almighty; walk before Me and be blameless.” There are many places in both the Old and New Testaments where God revealed Himself as “the Almighty” or “the Lord Almighty” (Ex. 6:3; Ruth 1:20; Job 5:17; Ps. 68:14; Isa. 13:6; II Cor. 6:18 and many more).

- God is the all-powerful Lord who can do whatever He wants to. But His unlimited power is controlled by His moral character. He cannot do anything contrary to His own holy nature. For example, though “nothing is impossible with God” (Mk. 10:27; Lk. 1:37; 18:27), it is impossible for God to lie (Num. 23:19; I Sam. 15:29; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18), and He never wants to do wrong and never tempts anyone else to do it (Jas. 1:13).
- The infinite or unlimited power of God is shown in connection with His work of creation (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20), His work of sustaining and upholding the world (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), the redemption of mankind (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 1:16), the conversion of sinners (I Tim. 1:15-16), and the working of miracles, including His power of healing the sick and raising the dead and so on.
- God is all-powerful. He controls history and nations (Ps. 2:1-12). The prophet Isaiah told us, “Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; He weighs the islands as though they were fine dust” (Isa. 40:15). Though God lives in high and holy place, yet He also lives with people who are humble and contrite in spirit (Isa. 57:15).

- God is omnipotent. He possesses absolute authority. He controls all events, small and great, directing them towards the goals according to His plans (Ps. 135:6; Isa. 46:9-11). We read in Ephesians 1:11 that God works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will. And in Romans 8:28, we are told that “all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”
- God is the absolute authority, yet He has given us freedom to make our own decisions. But the Almighty God does expect us to obey Him, and He holds us responsible for what we do. God declared in Deuteronomy 30:19-20, “... I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For the Lord is your life...”

God Is Omniscient

- Omniscient (adj. - pronounced ōmńĩ'shěnt) means “knowing all things” or “having infinite knowledge.” Omniscience (n. - ōmńĩ'shens) is a theological term that refers to God’s perfect knowledge and wisdom. The Bible teaches that God is the all-knowing Lord. “Nothing in all the world is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid open before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13). God is the Lord Who knows our thoughts from afar. He is familiar with all our ways, knowing our words even before they are on our tongues (Ps. 139:1-4).
- God is the all-knowing Lord. He knows from all time past what is happening and what will happen on through eternity. He knows the end from the beginning as He declared in Isa. 46:10, “From the beginning I told you what would happen in the end. A long time ago I told you things that have not yet happened.”
- God is omniscient Who foretold the events of the future, including the virgin birth and vicarious death and resurrection of His Son (Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; Mic. 5:2; Isa. 53:1-12; Ps. 16:8-11), and the Second Coming of Christ at the end of this age (Isa.2:2-4; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; etc.), when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 11:15b).

God Is Omnipresent

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ṽprě'sěnce (n.) tells us that He is not limited by space or time. As the Creator and Sustainer of the world, God is present everywhere at the same time and all the time (Isa. 66:1; Amos 9:2; Acts 17:24-28). King David in Psalm 139:7-10 tells about God's omnipotence in a most vivid way: "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; If I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me..." There is no limits to God's knowledge or presence. His omnipresence fills all creation. He declared in Jeremiah 23:23-24, "Am I only a God nearby, and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?"

- God's omnipresence also means that He is with His redeemed children at all times; and we take comfort in knowing the blessings of walking with Him in every trial and circumstance of life. God says to us in Isaiah 43:1-3, "... Fear not, for I have redeemed you: I have called you by mane: you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

God Is Changeless

- Everything in creation changes, but God, the Creator of heaven and earth, never changes. He declared through the prophet Mă'łăchī, "For I the Lord do not change" (Mal. 3:6). We must not think of God in terms of human personality, which is often so unstable and unsteady. The Bible teaches that God is unchanging and unchangeable. This means that He is perfect in every way and in every thing. His knowledge, wisdom, love, righteousness, justice, truth, etc. always remain the same; God can neither increase nor decrease them, because He possesses these attributes or characteristics in perfection.
- Because God is changeless, His dealings with His creatures are always consistent. His love is steadfast and constant toward those who love Him. His wrath is a fixed attitude toward sin. God declared in Exodus 20:5-6, "... for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments." Again God said in I Samuel 2:30, "I will honor those who honor Me, but despise those who despise Me." James 1:17 tells us that God does not change like shifting shadows." We may rest assured that God's unchangeable nature guarantees that whatever He does is right, wise and true.

What Have We Learned Today?

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pōtēnce) and divine nature. The lofty mountains, the vast oceans and the starry hosts of heaven all reminds us that God made them and is sovereign over them (Ps. 19:1-6). In Jeremiah 32:17, the prophet said, “Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and stretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You.” The angel Gabriel assured Mary, after informing her of her privilege of bearing the Son of God as a virgin, “For nothing is impossible with God” (Lk. 1:37).

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scient. Omnipresence (n.) means God is present everywhere. He is present as Lord in all creation and no one can hide from Him (Ps. 139:7-12). Omniscience (n.) means God knows everything, and this includes the knowledge not only of things that actually happen, but also of things which might happen. He knows our innermost thoughts and all the days of our future. Remember: Our God is almighty, all-knowing and ever-present. If you are a true child of God, He is with you all the time. He shares your joy and your sorrow. He knows your needs and He is able to save and keep you forever.

Memory Bible Verse - Jeremiah 32:17, “Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and stretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You.”

LESSON 4

What Kind of Being Is God? - Part III

God Is Righteous and Just

- Throughout the Bible, righteousness and justice are closely related to each other. Both words have to do with character and conduct, both are concerned with doing right or being right in the sight of God.
- Righteousness is a characteristic of God, expressing the rightness of all that He is and does. It is also used to represent whatever is pleasing to God. In Psalm 11:7, David declared, “For the Lord is righteous, He loves justice; the upright (the godly) shall see His face” (cf. Matt. 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20). God is holy. He is separated from evil and opposed to sin. Hebrews 1:9 tells us that the Lord loves righteousness and hates wickedness. Holiness refers to God’s moral excellence and perfection. The Bible often speaks of God’s moral holiness as His righteousness or justice. “The Lord Almighty will be exalted by His justice, and the holy God will show Himself holy by His righteousness (Isa. 5:16).
- God is perfect in both righteousness and justice; in fact He is the source of all righteousness and justice. Moses told us in Deuteronomy 32:4, “He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God Who does no wrong. He is upright and just.” Being both righteous and just, God demands His people to do what is right by proper behavior and moral conduct. In Micah 6:8 we are told, “He has shown you, O man, what is good, what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”
- God’s righteousness or justice is mainly expressed in His dealings with men. God is no respecter of person. He does not show favoritism or partiality. He is fair and impartial in His treatment of all people. Peter said in Acts 10:34-35, “Truly I realize that God shows no favoritism but in every nation any one who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.”
- God is just toward those who love Him and obey His commandments; He is just to punish the rebellious and impenitent. In other word, God rewards righteousness and punishes sin according to His justice. Moses said, “Know therefore that the Lord you God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and obey His commands. But those who hate Him He will repay to their face by destruction; He will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate Him” (Deut. 7:9-10).
- Moreover, righteousness is used to describe the right relationship into which men are brought with God when they believe in Christ (Rom. 1:17). Believers are made righteous in Christ, that is to say, they become in Christ all that God requires them to be. The apostle Paul told us in II Corinthians 5:21, “God made Him (Christ) Who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (cf. I Cor. 1:30). Remember: We can never improve ourselves to a standard of behavior that will please or satisfy God. Isaiah told us in his book 64:6, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;...” Only by pure grace God declares us righteous when we accept Jesus as our Savior and believe in His saving work which He has accomplished upon the cross.

God Is Love

- Many people think that God is a hard-faced tyrant Who looks with displeasure upon His creatures, Who sends us to hell if we break certain rules, or if we don’t do our duties. This is absolutely wrong. God loves us and cares about us. If we are punished for our sins, it is not God’s fault. It is ours.

- The Bible declares that God is love (I Jn. 4:8, 16). Love is the highest characteristic of God, the one attribute in which all others harmoniously blend. The gracious love of God toward men, even sinful men is clearly told in both the Old and New Testaments. In Ezekiel 33:11 we read, “as surely as I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why should you die?” And the apostle Peter said that God is patient with men; for He does not want anyone to perish, but that everyone should come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9).
- God loves the world as a whole (Jn. 3:16). His love for His creatures is mainly shown in two ways: (1) God loves the world by supplying all our needs. The Lord Jesus said that God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt. 5:45). The apostle Paul declared in Acts 14:17 that “God has shown His kindness by giving people rain from heaven and crops in their season; He provides them with plenty of food and fill their hearts with gladness.” God’s love is also evident in the bestowal upon man the manifold gifts of life, health, comforts, friends and loved ones, etc. (2) God’s love is supremely manifested in the redemption of sinful man through His Son Christ Jesus. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16).
- John 3:16 has been called “The Gospel in a nutshell” or “God’s Gospel in one sentence.” Every child in Sunday School knows this verse by heart; and if everyone in the world believed in and acted upon this truth, the world would be transformed and all of us would be on the way to heaven. This verse doesn’t say that “God loved” but that “God SO loved” Love knows no bounds. No water can quench it, no tongue can explain it. You can’t love anyone without giving of self. God loved and He gave. He gave, not the cattle upon a thousand hills, not the gold and silver and precious stones of the world, not houses and lands. He gave something worth infinite more than anything in the world. He gave His only Son up for the redemption of the world.
- God is holy, righteous and just. He hates sin and punished those who sin against Him. On the other hand God is love; He wants to save sinners. Since He is a righteous God, He cannot ignore sin; He must deal with sin. At the same time, because He is God of love, He provided a way of salvation, so that sinners would not suffer the punishment themselves. He has done this by becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ and bearing the punishment Himself on the cross. Paul wrote in Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” John told us, “This is love: not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (I Jn. 4:10).
- Remember: God is righteous yet loving. Both His righteousness and love exist in perfect harmony. Because He loves, He acts righteously and justly; and since His righteous demands against sin are met in the person of Jesus Christ, He freely forgives us out of His love. All of this is made possible only because of what Jesus has done in His suffering and death on sinners’ behalf. The holy and righteous God Who is sinners’ Judge is also sinners’ Savior.

What Have We Learned Today?

1. Since Adam’s Fall in the Garden of Eden, all of us have become inherently sinful and unrighteous in the sight of God. Paul said in Rom. 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But God graciously declares us righteous (guiltless) when we put our faith in Christ and His atoning work. Remember: We can never make ourselves righteous by our own good works or being good. God sees us righteous only because of our identification by faith with His Son.
2. Though our righteous deeds and good works cannot save us, once we are saved our lives should be full of righteous deeds and good works to prove that we are truly saved and that we belong to God. Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

Memory Bible Verse - I John 4:10, “This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

Assignment for Lesson 4
What Kind of Being Is God? - Part III

Scripture Readings: Genesis 18:20-33; Ezekiel 33:11; John 3:16-21; Ephesians 2:8-10; II Peter 3:9; I John 4:9-10

1. Look up the word “righteous” in the dictionary and see what it means.

2. Is God a righteous and just God?
(Genesis 18:20-33; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 11:7; Isaiah 5:16; Jeremiah 12:1; John 17:25; II Timothy 4:8; Revelation 16:5, 7)

3. Can we make ourselves righteous or good before God?
(Psalm 14:2-3; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-12)

4. How can we become righteous before God?
(Isaiah 53:6; Roman 3:21-26; II Corinthians 5:20-21; I John 4:9-10)

Bible Memory Verse: I John 4:10

LESSON 5

Who Is Jesus Christ? - Part I

Introduction

- Christianity is Christ. Everything about Christianity is determined by the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christianity owes its life and character in every detail to Christ. But Who is this Jesus Christ? Who is this One Who claims the attention of all the world? Who is this Man Who has such an abiding influence in the history of the world?
- To understand who Jesus was and what He accomplished we must study the four Gospels which provide most of the information concerning His life and work. All four Gospel writers present Jesus as God and Man, the Lord and Savior of the world.

He Existed Before the World Began

- In John 1:1-2 we read, “In the beginning was the Word (Christ), and the Word (Christ) was with God, and the Word (Christ) was God. He was with God in the beginning.” The first three words in John’s Gospel are the same as the first three words in the Book of Genesis. Here John simply tells us that Jesus Christ existed in the beginning of this universe, that He is co-existent with the Father, that He lived with God and that He was God. John also tells us that “Through Him all things were made; nothing was made without Him” (Jn. 1:3).
- So we know that Jesus Christ is eternal God. He did not become the Son of God at His birth. He was and is the eternal Son of God, co-eternal with the Father. Jesus affirmed this when the Jews challenged Him about His age. “You are not fifty years old,” the Jews said to Him, “and You claimed that You have seen Abraham!” And Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am” (Jn. 8:57-58)! And in John 16:28, Jesus claimed that He came from the Father. He also said in His prayer, “Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began” (Jn. 17:5).

He Is a Divine Person

- His divinity is shown by His birth. Jesus was born of a virgin mother, without a human father. He was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and there has never been another birth like this. His birth shows that God is not subject to any human limitations. God in Jeremiah 32:27 declared, “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for Me?”
- His divinity is shown by His sinless life. Jesus came into the world of men as the holiest and purest Man ever born. All the men and women of the world, with the exception of Adam and Eve, were born with inherent evil. King David said in Psalm 51:5, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” But Jesus was born without inherent or practiced sin. Peter testifies that Christ committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth (I Pet. 2:22). The writer of Hebrews says that He was tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). No one could convince or convict this Man Jesus among men of sin. We must bow before Jesus’ matchless life and say with the Roman Governor Pilate, “I find in Him no fault at all” (Lk. 23:4,14,22).
- His divinity is shown by His own claims. He claimed the prerogatives and authority of God. He said He had the authority on earth to forgive sins (Mk. 2:10). He claimed to be the Judge of the world; He said He would one day come on the clouds of heaven, sitting at the right hand of God to judge the

world (Mk. 14:62). He also said in John 5:22-23, "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

- As a divine Person, He performed mighty miracles. The Bible records at least thirty-five great miracles which He performed. He made the blind see and the lame walk. He cleansed the leper and raised the dead. He cast out demons and stilled the storms. His life was filled with wonderful things which had never been done before or since, all because the power of heaven was His. Nicodemus said to Him in John 3:2, "We know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these miraculous signs that You do unless God is with Him."
- As God He accepted the worship of men, which is due to God alone. He once healed a man born blind, and the man worshipped Him (Jn. 9:1-7, 35-38). The doubting Thomas saw the Risen Lord and fell at His feet and declared in awe, "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:24-28)! In John 14:9 Jesus said to the apostle Philip, "... He who has seen Me has seen the Father..." Here Jesus was simply saying, "I am God uncovered; I am God in the flesh. I have come down to earth that men might see and know the God of heaven."

He Possesses Attributes (Characteristics) of God

- Christ is omni'potent or all-powerful. While He was upon the earth, He demonstrated this power by healing the sick (Matt. 8:14-17; Mk. 3:10; etc.), cleansing the leper (Matt. 8:2-3; Lk. 17:12-14), raising the dead (Lk. 7:11-15; 8:49-55; Jn. 11:38-44), casting out evil spirits and performing many other mighty miracles.
- Christ is omni'scient or all-knowing. He knew, as only God could know. He knew all the secrets of man's heart (Mk. 2:8; Jn. 2:25).
- Christ is omnipre'sent. He is at all places at the same time. He says He will be in the midst of us whenever two or three are gathered in His name (Matt. 18:19-20). He promised to be with His disciples to the end of this age (Matt. 28:20).
- Christ never changes. Hebrews 13:8 tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. The world changes and decays, but Jesus Christ remains unchanged. He does not change; otherwise, He would not be perfect. We can know Him with certainty. He is always the same God Who loves, saves and forgives.
- The Lord Jesus possessed every characteristic of God. He was God in the flesh. The apostle John testifies concerning the Lord Jesus, "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14).

What Have We Learned Today?

1. The Lord Jesus did not become the Son of God at His birth. He existed before He was born. He was there in the beginning with God (Jn. 1:1-2). The apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:17, "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." One day Jesus said to the Jews, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am" (Jn. 8:58). Abraham had been dead for nearly 2,000 years before Jesus' time, yet He claimed He was in existence before Abraham. Here He was telling us that He was not a mere man. He is one with God Who existed eternally. But when He became a man, He bent down low to come into the world to seek and save lost sinners. Oh, let us thank God for the wonderful Savior we have!

2. Though the Lord Jesus had no beginning, but as a human being He had a beginning when He was born as a baby in Bethlehem through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. Though He had no human father (Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus), He was nevertheless a real Man. But He was not an ordinary person Whom God adopted as His Son, but a unique Person Who was the eternal Son of God. This is hard to understand and we must believe what the Bible tells us. More will be discussed later.

Memory Bible Verses - John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made."

LESSON 6

Who Is Jesus Christ? - Part II

The Humanity of Christ

- The Lord Jesus was not only fully God but also fully man. Though He was supernaturally and miraculously conceived, He was born a baby. We read in Luke 2:7, “And Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son... and laid Him in a manger,…” The most wonderful thing is that in Jesus, God became a Man and lived a fully human life. The apostle Paul declared in Colossians 2:9, “For in Christ all the fullness of Deity (or the fullness of divine nature) lives in a human body.”
- As a real man, Jesus possessed the characteristics of a human being. He was hungry (Matt. 4:2; 21:18), He was thirsty (Jn. 19:28), He grew tired from traveling (Jn. 4:6), He needed rest and sleep (Matt. 8:23-24), He showed deep compassion on the helpless crowds (Matt. 9:36), He wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus (Jn. 11:35), He got angry with those who defiled the Temple of God (Matt. 21:12-13), He experienced deep sorrow and desired the sympathetic company of His disciples during His time of spiritual conflict in Gethsemane, the night before His crucifixion (Matt. 26:36-45); and He died and was buried. The Lord Jesus had a physical body and a real human nature. He lived a fully human life with one most important exception - He was born without sin and lived a sinless life.

The Union of Deity and Humanity in Christ

- The Lord Jesus Christ had existed as the eternal Son of God, yet He willingly sacrificed His supreme glory of heaven and became human, to make God known to man and to die for sinners. In His incarnation (that is, in His coming into the world as a human being) the eternal Son of God took to Himself a genuine human nature, in addition to His eternal divine nature. This was done through the miraculous virgin birth. In the incarnation Jesus became God-Man, possessing all the essential characteristics of both the divine and human nature. He was not half man and half God. He was fully God and fully man. The capacity of Jesus to reveal God to man and to bring salvation to the world totally depends upon His being fully God and fully man at the same time. “For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross” (Col. 1:19-20).
- Our human minds cannot comprehend how Jesus can be both fully God and fully man at the same time. The apostle Paul declares in I Timothy 3:16 that the great mystery of our religion is “God appeared in the flesh.” And the Apostle John warns us that anyone denies that Jesus has come in the flesh is the spirit of the antichrist (I Jn. 4:2-3). We must believe what the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ was one Person with two natures, divine and human, that He was fully God and fully Man.

Reasons Why Jesus Became a Man

- (1) He became a Man to reveal God to men and bring God near to us. Down through the ages, men had groped in darkness. “Where is God and what is He like? We wish to see Him. Show us the Father and we will be satisfied” (Jn. 14:8). Now that prayer was answered when God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. The apostle John tells us, “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, Who is in the bosom, that is, in the intimate presence, of the Father, He has made Him known” (Jn. 1:18). “The One Who existed from the beginning was with us here on earth. We have seen Him and touched Him” (I Jn. 1:1). Although God is high and exalted, He came all the way from heaven’s glory to earth’s shame to be near to us. No longer is He far away where we can’t see Him or touch Him. He is truly “Immanuel,” which means, “God with us” (Matt. 1:23).

- In John 1:14 we read, “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” This really means that God “tabernacled” among men. As the people of Israel wandered through the wilderness toward the Promised Land, God was with them all the way, dwelling symbolically in a tabernacle in the midst of His people. In like manner as we journey through this world we are not alone. He came down to live with us. He lived with His people in the flesh for thirty-three years; now He lives with us through His Spirit.
- (2) He became a Man that He might understand our problems and sympathize with our weaknesses. God could have sent His Son to the earth full grown. But instead He let Him be born of a virgin mother and be brought up as a normal child. The divine became the human that He might go through all the experiences of men, that He could then understand us and sympathize with us. We have a Savior Who lived as a Man among men. He had all desires and temptations and sorrows common to men. He walked where we walk, hurt where we hurt, cried where we cry, suffered where we suffer. And so, when we come to Him in time of need, He does not scold us or shake His head in disgust. He is sympathetic and He understands. The writer of the Hebrews tells us that Jesus did not come as an angel but as a human being. And it was necessary for Jesus to be like us, so that He might become a merciful (sympathetic) and faithful High Priest to make atonement for the sins of His people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted. He is able to help those who are tempted (Heb. 2:16-18). Again we are told in Hebrews 4:15-16 that our High Priest Jesus is able to understand and sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin. Let us then come before the throne of God with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
- (3) He became a Man to set an example for us. The apostle Peter tells us, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth” (I Peter 2:21-22). Now if Jesus walked among us as an angel, we could never have copied Him. But He came as a Man. He walked through the world as a perfect Man, setting an example for us, that we should follow in His steps. “O to be like Thee! Blessed Redeemer, This is my constant longing and prayer; gladly forfeit all of earth’s treasures, Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear - full of compassion, loving, forgiving, tender and kind, helping the helpless, cheering the fainting, seeking the wandering sinner to find!...” We know that we will never be just like Him, but God help us to try to be more like Jesus than we are.
- (4) He became a Man so that He could die for us. The apostle Paul tells us that we all have sinned; there is no one righteous, not even one (Rom. 3:10; 5:12). Every person in this world is a sinner by nature and by practice. We all have sinned in thought, word and deed. God is holy and righteous; He cannot ignore sin. He declares in Ezekiel (18:4,20) that “the soul that sins shall die.” As a result of our sin, we all fall under judgment of God, and the penalty of sin is spiritual death (separation from God) and eternal suffering in the Lake of Fire, that is, hell (Rev. 19:20; 21:8; cf Matt. 25:41). But God in His great love and mercy has provided deliverance through His Son. Jesus bore the penalty of sin and died on the cross in sinners’ stead. In I Peter 2:24 we read, “Christ Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.”
- Yes, the Word became flesh; God became Man, the most wonderful Man Who ever lived. He came all the way from heaven’s glory to earth’s shame. He came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10) and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). He suffered and died for one reason only - He loved you and me!

What Have We Learned Today?

1. In Exodus 33:20 God told Moses, “You cannot see My face, for no one may see Me and live.” God is high and exalted (Isa. 6:1) and lives in light so bright that no human being can approach Him (I Tim.

6:16). But thank God. He has come to us in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, born of a virgin mother, is truly “Immanuel” which means, “God with us.”

2. Jesus was fully God and fully Man at the same time. His human and divine natures existed together - complete, united and inseparable. Because He was God, He was able to forgive and save sinners, and because He was Man, He was able to take our place in dying for us. In I Timothy 2:5-6 we read, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all men.” God is on one side and all the people on other side, and Jesus the God-Man, is between them to bring them together, by dying on the cross for all mankind. What a wonderful Savior we have in Jesus Christ!

Memory Bible Verses - I Timothy 2:5-6, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all men.”

Assignment for Lesson 6 Who Is Jesus Christ? - Part II

Scripture Readings: Matthew 1:18-23; 20:28; Luke 1:26-36; 19:10; John 1:1-3, 14-36; Acts 2:22-24; Romans 1:1-5; II Corinthians 5:20-21; Galatians 4:4-5; I Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16; I Peter 2:24; 3:18

1. The word “Immanuel” means “God with us.” But how could God be with us since He dwells in heaven, high and exalted?
(Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-37; John 1:1-2,14; 14:6-10; Galatians 4:4; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3)

2. The Scripture indicated that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully Man (not half God and half man) at the same time. Can you tell what took place at the incarnation?
(Note Incarnation means that God became flesh by taking upon Himself human form.)
(Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-37; 2:4-7,21,41-52; John 1:1-3; 14-18; I John 1:1; Galatians 4:4; Acts 2:22-24; Colossians 1:19-20; 2:9)

3. Give a few reasons why it was necessary for God to become man?
(Matthew 1:18-21; 20:28; Luke 19:10; Galatians 4:4-5; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:17-18; 4:14-16; I Peter 2:21-25; I Timothy 2:5-6 and others)

4. We read in I Timothy 2:5-6 that Christ Jesus is our Mediator. According to the Bible, a mediator is a go-between who can stand between sinful men and a holy God, and somehow bring man back to God. How was Jesus Christ qualified to be our Mediator?
(John 1:1-4, 14-18, 29-36; 14:6-11; Romans 1:1-5; II Corinthians 5:20-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16; I Peter 2:24; 3:18)

Bible Memory Verses: I Timothy 2:5-6

LESSON 7

Who Is Jesus Christ? - Part III

The Life of Jesus

- In John 1:1-2 we read, “In the beginning was the Word (Christ), and the Word (Christ) was with God, and the Word (Christ) was God. He was with God in the beginning.” This means that the Lord Jesus is the eternal Son of God and that He lived with God from all eternity past. He was coexistent, coequal and coeternal with God the Father.
- Then there came a time when God decided to send His Son down into the world to bring man back to Him. He did not send Him as a full-grown man, but He permitted Him to be born as an infant and to be brought up as a normal child in order that He might go through all of the experiences, hardship, sorrows, troubles and temptations of mankind. Thus, having endured these things, He would be able to sympathize with our trials and weaknesses. Jesus went through all of these things, but His life was different in just one way - there was no sin in it. He was tempted but never fell. He remained pure and spotless, and lived a perfect life. He set an example for all of us to follow. He preached great sermons and performed mighty miracles. He was loving, caring, compassionate, merciful and gracious. His life was full of wonderful and beautiful things. Through the earthly life of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, we can know what God is like, how He thinks and how He acts. Jesus said, “Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9).

The Death of Jesus

- Although great and wonderful are the incarnation and the unique life of Jesus, they are not in themselves sufficient to save sinful mankind. For we are not saved by His birth, nor by His perfect life, nor by His example, nor by His teaching, but by His sacrificial death on our behalf. Salvation is through His death to make atonement for our sins. The incarnate Son of God had to die in sinners’ stead to satisfy a holy and righteous God. The Lord Jesus was born to die.
- Again, let us remember that the Lord Jesus did not come just to live, or to teach great lessons, or to set a good example. He came into the world for one purpose - to seek and save the lost and to give His life as a ransom for many (Lk. 19:10; Matt. 20:28). He came into the world to die. He was born to die. If He had come just to live or to teach or to set a good example, if that were all there was to the Gospel story, we would all be lost forever in our sins, without hope and without a Savior. But He came to die, to die in our place, to shed His precious blood to wash away our sins. He died that you and I might live.
- When we see Jesus hanging on a cruel Roman cross, we see God on the cross. The Creator of heaven and earth was being sacrificed for His creation, suffering and dying for His erring children; it was God on the cross pleading with sinners to forsake their wicked ways, to repent of their sins, and to receive His forgiveness and mercies. Can we do anything but come and fall before Jesus our Savior and wash His feet with our tears?

The Resurrection of Jesus

- Jesus did not die for His own sins, for He had no sin, He died for sinful mankind according to God’s plan of salvation. After His death, He was buried on the same day (Matt. 27:45-61). But death could not hold the body of Him Who made the heavens and the earth. The One Who raised others from the grave could not be conquered by death. And on that first Easter Sunday, the third day after He was

crucified and buried, He burst the bonds of death and the grave and came back to live forevermore (Matt. 28:1-15; Mk. 16:1-20; Lk. 24:1-11; Jn. 20:1-18).

- The apostle Paul described the importance of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus in his first letter to the Corinthians. He said that if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain and you are still in your sins (I Cor. 15:14, 17); and if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (I Cor. 15:32). If Christ did not rise from the dead, Christianity is no better than any other pagan religions; and a dead man would never be able to save us.
- But the fact is that Christ did actually rise from the dead. His resurrection proved many things. It proved that He was the Son of God. It proved that everything He said or every claim He made was true. It proved that He had all power in heaven and in earth. If He had the power to break the bonds of death and grave, He has the power to save us. And His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. In John 11:25 Christ declared, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.” And in John 14:19 He said, “Because I live, you also will live.”
- Again, let us remember that the resurrection of Christ not only assures us that He is God, but that we have a living Savior. It takes a living Savior to save us when we are lost, to comfort us when we are sad, to strengthen us when we are weak, and to take us home to heaven when we die. And our glorious hope is that His resurrection assures us that we will also be resurrected after our death to live forever in His presence. Yes, all believers can look forward to a future resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ. It will be an entirely new order of existence in God’s presence where sin and death have no more power, where the sunshine of His love forever shines, and where we shall never grow old (I Cor. 15:20-26, 50-58; I Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 22:1-5).

The Nature of the Resurrection Body

- The resurrection of Christ was not a resurrection of “influence” or “spirit.” It was a physical, bodily resurrection. This means that Jesus rose from the dead with a real body. After His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples a number of times and proved in many ways that He was alive. The apostles saw the Risen Lord during the forty days. He spoke to them about the things of the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Luke recorded that the disciple, on first seeing Jesus after His resurrection, thought they were seeing a spirit (ghost) and were startled and terrified. So Jesus said to them, “Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me. You can see that I have a living body; a ghost does not have a body like this.” Then the Lord took a piece of broiled fish and ate it before them (Lk. 24:36-43). A few days later, He said to doubting Thomas, “Put your finger in the nailprints in My hands and put your hand in My pierced side. Stop your doubting, and believe” (Jn. 20:24-28)! His resurrection body was clearly identified with the same which was crucified and buried.
- Then again, we must understand that His resurrection body was not simply a dead body (corpse) brought back to life. It was a glorified “spiritual” body which was not subject to normal limitations. He could pass through closed doors (Jn. 20:19); and He could appear and disappear at will (Matt. 28:9; Lk. 24:13-31; Jn. 20:19-28; etc.). And all believers will one day inherit this glorified body at His Second Coming (I Cor. 15:35-58; I Thess. 4:13-18; I Jn. 3:2).
- Christ’s resurrection tells us one more important thing, namely, the future resurrection of all men. In John 5:28-29 Jesus declared, “... a time is coming when all who are in the graves shall hear My voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”

What Have We Learned Today?

1. For more than 33 years Jesus, the Son of God, lived in a world filled with sin and sorrow. We often speak as if the sufferings of Christ were limited to His final days when He was tortured and crucified, but this is not true. His whole life was a life of suffering. As the Creator, He became a humble man and lived a lowly life among the creatures. It was the life of the sinless One in a sin-cursed world. Satan assaulted Him, His people rejected Him and His enemies persecuted Him. The sufferings of His soul were even more intense than His body, especially as He felt the burden of the sin of the world resting heavily upon Him - surely, He was “a Man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering” (Isa. 53:3).
2. Christ arose from the dead with a glorified spiritual body. He has become the very first to rise of all who sleep the sleep of death (I Cor. 15:20-23). We, children of God, have a living hope. Jesus will come again, and the dead in Christ will be raised (I Thess. 4:13-18), and we will have glorified bodies just like Christ’s body (I Jn. 3:2).

Memory Bible Verses - I John 3:2-3, “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is.”

LESSON 8

Who Is Jesus Christ? - Part IV

The Ascension of Christ

- After Christ rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples over a period of forty days. Besides giving them further instructions about the things of the kingdom of God, He proved to them in many ways that He was alive (Acts 1:3). And He showed them that although His resurrection body was real, it was a glorified spiritual body. He could make Himself visible or invisible as He wished (Lk. 24:31,36-43; Jn. 20:19,26-27).
- At the end of the 40 days after Easter, the Risen Christ finally parted from His disciples. Since His miraculous birth in Bethlehem, Christ, the incarnate Son of God, had lived physically among men for more than 33 years. Now His earthly ministry ceased with His ascension into heaven. Luke, both in his Gospel and in his record of the early church, the Acts of the Apostles, tells us about Jesus' ascension at the Mount of Olives (about a mile east of Jerusalem): "When He led them out to the vicinity of Bethany (a small village on the Mount of Olives), He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven" (Lk. 24:50-51; cf. Acts 1:9-12).

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

- In Acts 1:6-8, we read that when the apostles were all together, they asked the Lord Jesus, "Lord, are You going to free us (from Rome) and restore the kingdom to Israel now?" Jesus replied, "The Father sets those dates and times. These things are not for you to know. But the Holy Spirit will come upon you; then you will receive power; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The disciples were common, ordinary men, but they had a mighty experience - they had seen Jesus rise up from dead. And He had told them to go to tell the Gospel story to all nations (Matt. 28:16-20), but He knew they were not capable of doing this within themselves, and so He promised them extra power - power from heaven.
- The promise of the Holy Spirit can be traced back to John the Baptist who told the people in Matthew 3:11, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but He Who is coming after me is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." In the second chapter of the Acts we see the disciples receiving the Holy Spirit; in the remaining chapters of the book we see how the early disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit and brought the Gospel story of Jesus throughout the entire Roman world.

The Promise of His Second Coming

- We are told in Acts 1:9-11 that after the Lord Jesus finished speaking to the apostles, while they were looking upon Him, suddenly a cloud came down and surrounded Him, and they saw Him ascend into heaven on the bosom of the cloud. As He disappeared beyond the blue the disciples looked on in open-mouthed amazement. Then two white-robed heavenly messengers (angels) stood by them and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, Who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven." Here we are told very plainly that the Lord Jesus is coming back again. He went up into heaven in His resurrection body on a cloud, and one day He will come back with His glorified body on a cloud. The apostle John tells us in Revelation 1:7, "Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him"

- The truth of our Lord's return occupies a large place in the Bible. The prophets of the Old Testament talked more about the Second Coming of the Messiah than they did about the first. In the New Testament alone it is mentioned over 300 times - one out of every twenty-five verses speaks of this blessed hope. There is much to be discussed on this subject.

The Significance of the Ascension of Christ

- The ascension was the necessary completion of Jesus' death and resurrection. He came to die for our sins; and He rose again for our justification, that is, He was raised from the dead to make us right with God (Rom. 4:25). He had laid aside His heavenly glory when He humbled Himself to assume our humanity. Then He carried our humanity with Him to heaven. Now He sits at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32-35); from whence He governs the universe as King of heaven and earth, as Paul declares in Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God has exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father." His heavenly reign at the right hand of God will last until His Second Coming when He will return to the earth as the reigning Messiah, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.
- The ascension of Christ marked a new phase of His ministry. He is now before God as our Mediator (I Tim. 2:5). A mediator is a go-between who mediates between two parties to produce peace by removing disagreement. Christ mediates between God and man through His death on the cross (see Heb. 9:15; 12:24).
- In heaven Christ also acts as our Helper or Defender (or Advocate). The apostle John says in I John 2:1, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you may not violate God's law and sin; but if any one should sin, we have One Who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." We are living in a sinful world, and inevitably we sometimes do fall into sin. God hates sin. Sin spoils our sweet fellowship with God. Sin separates God and man. We need a defense lawyer to intervene in our behalf. In Jesus we have a heavenly Defender Who, when we confess our sins, pleads our case before the merciful God and asks God's forgiveness on the basis of His precious blood which He shed on Calvary's cross, then I John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
- In heaven Christ has become our heavenly High Priest, making intercession for all believers before God. In O.T. times the high priest represented his people before God, making atonement for them and interceding with God in their behalf. Hebrews 7:24-25 tell us that "because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them."
- Intercession is an important aspect of prayer in which we pray for the needs of others rather than for our own (I Tim. 2:1). Jesus Christ as our High Priest and Advocate, "now appears for us in God's presence. On the grounds of His sacrifice on their behalf, He continually claims every spiritual benefit for them, obtains forgiveness for their sins, and make their worship and service acceptable to God (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 13:15; I Jn. 2:1). "Since we have a heavenly High Priest Who sympathizes with our weaknesses, let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16).
- The Lord Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us in heaven. In John 14:2-3, He told His disciples that He was going back to heaven to prepare a place for them. And He promised, "I will come back and take you to be with Me" Here Jesus speaks of that wonderful day when He comes again to take us home in heaven to be with Him forever. Yes, the Lord is coming for His own. "He's coming soon, He's coming soon; With joy we welcome His returning; It may be morn, it may be night or noon; We know He's coming soon."

What Have We Learned Today?

1. Forty days after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus parted from His disciples and went back to heaven. The marvelous fact is that though Christ was millions of light years away from where they were, He still remained near. He said to His disciples in Matt. 18:20, “For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.” And after He rose from the dead, He appeared one day to His disciples in Galilee and gave them the Great commission to go and make disciples of all nations... Then He added a promise, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:16-20). Now He doesn’t promise to be with us if we walk the ways of sin and worldliness, but as we do His will and carry out His command to evangelize the world. Jesus is in Heaven now, interceding for us, and His Spirit is here in the hearts of every redeemed believer. We are to live for Him and serve Him and someday He is coming back for us.
2. Finally, let us remember that the ascension of Christ is the pledge of His Second Coming: “This same Jesus, Who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The Lord Jesus will return to earth in bodily form just as He ascended into heaven.

Memory Bible Verses - Philippians 2:9-11, “Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

LESSON 9

God the Trinity

Scripture References

- Genesis 1:1-27; Exodus 20:1-3; Numbers 6:22-26; Deuteronomy 5:6-7; 6:4-5; Isaiah 6:1-3; 45:5-6,21-23; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:18-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 14:15-17,25-26; 15:26; 16:7-14; II Corinthians 13:14

Introduction

- God is one, but He exists as a Trinity. The word “Trinity” means “threefold.” It is a theological term to denote the unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, as three Persons in one Godhead. The Scriptures consistently teach that God is one, but He exists as the Triune God. The word ‘Triune’ is an adjective form of the noun ‘Trinity’ which means ‘three in one.’
- The doctrine of the Trinity, which is basic in the Christian religion, cannot be fathomed by human reason. It is an article of faith. We must either accept it with a humble and believing heart, or reject it altogether. It is not like a problem in arithmetic which can be analyzed. But because of our salvation is linked with our knowledge of and belief in this doctrine, we must make sure that we understand what the Bible says about it, and state the Biblical teaching correctly.

The Trinity in the Old Testament

- In the Old Testament God revealed Himself as ONE to the people of Israel. In the Ten Commandments given by God to His people, He declared, first of all, “I am the Lord your God,... You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:1-3). Then in Deuteronomy 6:4 Moses, the man of God, said, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” The emphasis in the Old Testament is on the oneness of God. This was important because Israel lived among nations that had many false gods and fallen into idolatry; they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:18-25).
- Although the doctrine of the Trinity is not plainly expressed in the O.T., yet there is ample evidence to prove that God is a Triune God. In the very first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1:26, we hear the Triune God in conference, saying, “Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness...” Why did God use US and OUR in speaking of Himself here? God does not play with words. When He used the plural (US and OUR), it was for a good reason; it shows that more than one person is involved; for here God is speaking to God - the Trinity is involved. Then in the following verse (v.27) we read, “So God created man in HIS own image, in the image of God HE created him, male and female HE created them.” In this verse God used both the singular personal pronoun (He) and the singular possessive adjective (His) to show His oneness of the Trinity.
- Then in Isaiah 6:23, we hear the seraphs, the celestial beings, sing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.” Here the Triple “holy” indicates the Trinity.
- In the Book of Numbers, 6:24-26, God commanded Aaron the high priest to bless the people with the triple blessing: “The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.” The triple blessing represents the Trinity.
- What is more, the Hebrew Old Testament uses the name for “GOD” in the plural form. The word “GOD” in English was translated from the Hebrew word “ĒLŌ HÍM” which occurs in the O.T. over

2,000 times. ELOHIM is plural in form, but is singular in construction, used with a singular verb or adjective. For example, God told His people in Exodus 20:5, “You shall not bow down to idols or worship them; for I (not “We”), Jehovah (the Lord) your Elohim (God) am (not “are”) a jealous Elohim (God).” The original plural form of God’s name “ELOHIM” gives evidence of the Trinity.

The Trinity in the New Testament

- Our understanding of the Trinity comes largely from the New Testament. In Matthew 3:13-15, we see Jesus baptized in the water at the Jordan River by John the Baptist; then in vv.16-17 we read: As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of water. At that moment heaven was opened, and John saw the Spirit of God coming down on Jesus like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, Whom I love; with Whom I am well pleased.” Here the Father speaks from heaven, the Son is baptized in the water of the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descends upon Him from heaven - a perfect picture of the Trinity.
- Again, in II Corinthians 13:14, we have the apostle Paul’s benediction: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Here the Trinity is clearly stated. Many pastors use this benediction to bless the congregation at the end of worship services.
- The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is most distinctly expressed in the words of the Lord Jesus in the Great Commission. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus says to His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the NAME of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Note here: Jesus mentions three persons, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, yet He used the singular word NAME, not the plural word NAMES; for He says, “baptizing them in the NAME of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The word NAME is singular form indicates the oneness of the Triune God.
- Also in John 15:26, Jesus says to His disciples, “When the Counselor (the Holy Spirit) comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who goes out from the Father, He will tell you all about Me.” In this verse three Persons are mentioned, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:15-17; 16:7-14).

One God, Three Persons

- There are numerous references to this three-in-one and one-in-three God throughout the Bible. All the New Testament books speak of this Triune God except James and III John. One of our favorite hymns expressed this truth in these words: “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee. Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty! God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!”
- The word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible, but it represents a truth that is there. God exists in three Persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yet they are not three Gods, but three Persons in one Godhead. The Bible teaches that the only true God is the Triune God, for He says, “I am the Lord your God,... You shall not have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:1-3).

What Have We Learned Today?

1. The Bible teaches that the only true God is the Triune God, one God in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Leave out any of these three Persons and your God is incomplete. Each of these three Persons is different, yet they are very similar. The Father is our original Creator and daily

Provider. The Son is our Redeemer Who made atonement for our sins; He also rules the world and guides the Church. The Holy Spirit is our Counselor or Comforter or Sanctifier, Who brings us to faith in Jesus. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; yet there are not three Gods, but one God. All this will remain a mystery to us this side of eternity till we see Him in heaven; then all will be clear. It is only natural that our great, almighty, all-wise God should be far beyond our understanding. If He were like us, He would not be God; He would be as small and as limited as we are. Just as we are in our existence and intelligence are far greater than anything we create, so God in His power and wisdom is far greater beyond our existence and understanding. After all, how can we the creatures, expect to fully understand the Creator?

2. The importance of this doctrine of the Trinity may be seen in this, that no one can be saved unless he believes this Biblical truth. If you don't believe in the Triune God, the co-existence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of Godhead, then you have a different God from what the Bible reveals to us; and your God is not the true God; and you lose the one true God, you lose your hope of eternal salvation.

Memory Bible Verses - John 14:15-17, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you."

Assignment for Lesson 9 God the Trinity

Scripture Readings: Genesis 1:1-27; Exodus 20:1-3; Numbers 6:22-26; Deuteronomy 5:6-7; 6:4-5; Isaiah 6:1-3; 45:5-6,21-23; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:18-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 14:15-17,25-26; 15:26; 16:7-14; II Corinthians 13:14

1. Look up the words “Trinity” and “Triune” in the dictionary, and find out what they mean. Consult a Bible dictionary, if available.
2. Read the following passages: Genesis 1:26-27; Isaiah 6:3, Numbers 6:24-26. Do these Old Testament Scriptures tell you something about the God Trinity, the Triune God?
3. Can you prove the Trinity (the three-in-one God) from the New Testament?
(Matthew 3:13-17; 28:18-20; John 14:15-17; 15:26; 16:7-14; II Corinthians 13:14)
4. Does the “Trinity” or the “Triune God” mean three different Gods? How many Gods do we have?
(Exodus 20:1-3; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6,20-23)

Memory Bible Verses: John 14:15-17

LESSON 10

God the Holy Spirit - Part I

Scripture References

- Genesis 1:1-2,26-27; Job 33:1-4; Isaiah 61:1-2; Matthew 12:30-32; 28:17-20; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 4:16-21; John 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 5:1-11; Romans 8:26-27; I Corinthians 2:6-14; 12:4-11; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30-32; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 10:28-31; I Peter 1:1-2; II Peter 1:19-21

Introduction

- Unfortunately the least understood Person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. When I was a young boy, I often heard my pastor mention the name of the Holy Spirit; I had no idea what he was talking about, and Who the Holy Spirit was. I am afraid that there are many so-called Christians like that today. The Holy Spirit has remained the unknown God to them. Most Christians know God the Father. He created the world, guides the destinies of men and nations; and He rules over all and He is in and above all things. They know what is meant when they hear about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They know that He was born in Bethlehem, that He lived in this world over 33 years, that He preached and taught and healed, that He died on the cross, that He rose from the dead, that He ascended up on high and that He is coming again. But I fear that the average Christian knows very little about God the Holy Spirit.
- Teaching concerning the Holy Spirit has been much neglected and distorted. Yet the Holy Spirit is most vitally and intimately involved in our daily Christian life. Knowledge of and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit brings us strength, power, joy, and hope, and enables us to live an abundant life as Jesus promised (Jn. 10:10). Neglecting the Holy Spirit, through indifference and ignorance, brings us spiritual poverty, and causes us to lead a fruitless Christian life.

The Holy Spirit Is God, the Third Person of the Trinity

- The Bible teaches that there is only one God, and this God has always existed in a Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Our understanding of the Holy Spirit depends on our knowledge of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity (the Triune God). Though we speak of the Holy Spirit as the third Person, He is equated with the Father and the Son. When we baptize a person, we baptize him “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (see Matt. 28:19). When we pronounce the benediction we say, “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (see II Cor. 13:14). Association of the Holy Spirit with the other two Persons of the Trinity are also found in I Peter 1:1-2 and Jude 20-21. The Holy Spirit is mentioned along with the Father and the Son because He is God, the third Person of the Trinity.
- The Holy Spirit is shown to be God by His work in the creation of the universe and man. We read in Genesis 1:1-2, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the SPIRIT of God was hovering over the waters.” Then in verse 26 we hear the Triune God say, “Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness.” In the above Scriptures the Holy Spirit is included in the Trinity. Job tells us in his book 33:4, “The SPIRIT of God has made me....” Only God can create and Job’s words testify that the Holy Spirit is God.

- The Holy Spirit is shown to be God by His work in inspiring the prophets. In Isaiah 61:1 the prophet declares, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor.” The prophet Ezekiel says, “The SPIRIT came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard Him speaking to me “ (Eze. 2:2). The apostle Peter also tells us, “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the HOLY SPIRIT” (II Peter 1:19-21). It was God the Holy Spirit Who inspired the writing of the Bible. Moses wrote the first Five Books of the Law, but the Holy Spirit moved his hand. Isaiah and Jeremiah and others wrote the Old Testament prophecies, but they wrote only as they were inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT. The apostle Paul tells us, “All Scripture is God-breathed (inspired by the Holy Spirit) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16-17).
- The Holy Spirit is shown to be God by the divine attributes (characteristics) He possesses. In Hebrews 9:14, He is called “the eternal Spirit.” He is òmní’pòtènt (all-powerful), òmní’scient (knowing all things), and òmní’prě’sěnt (everywhere present); and He is holy. These attributes or characteristics belong to God only, and the Holy Spirit possesses them all because He is God.

The Holy Spirit Is a Person

- We are never to speak of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal “it.” The Holy Spirit is not something flowing from God. He is a Person just as the Father and the Son are Persons. If the Holy Spirit is merely an influence, the Bible would not mention Him along with the Father and the Son. We know that the Father and the Son are Persons; therefore, we know that the Holy Spirit is also a Person. They are three Persons in One Godhead.
- A person usually has three essential characteristics, namely, knowledge (or intelligence), emotions, and will; and the Holy Spirit possesses all of them. (1) The Holy Spirit has KNOWLEDGE. The apostle Paul says in I Cor. 2:10, “But God has shown us these things through the (Holy) Spirit. The (Holy) Spirit KNOWS all things, even deep secrets of God.” In Romans 8:27, the apostle Paul also talks about “the mind” of the Holy Spirit. (2) The Holy Spirit has EMOTIONS. First, He can be blasphemed against. The Lord Jesus warns us that whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come” (Mk. 3:28-29). Secondly, He can be lied to and put to test. In Acts.5:1-11, we read that the hearts of Ānānī’ās and his wife Sāpphī’rā were filled with Satan; they both lied to the Holy Spirit and put Him to test; they were punished and struck dead before the Lord. Thirdly, He can grieved. In Ephesians 4:30 the apostle Paul admonishes us not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Lastly, He can be insulted. In Hebrews 10:29-31 we read, “How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?... It’s is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the Lord.” (3) The Holy Spirit has WILL. We are told in I Corinthians 12:11 that it is the Holy Spirit Who distributes spiritual gifts to us as He determines (wills). Now we know that the Holy Spirit is a Person because He possesses similar characteristics as persons do.
- The Holy Spirit is shown to be a Person by the fact that He acts like a person. He TEACHES Christians all things and REMINDS them of everything Jesus has said to His disciples (Jn. 14:26); He TESTIFIES about Jesus (Jn. 15:26), He CONVICTS the world of guilt (Jn. 16:8), and He HELPS us in our weakness and INERCEDES (PRAYS) for us (Rom. 8:26).
- In summary, the Holy Spirit is a Person just as Jesus is a Person. He is God just as the Father is God, even though He shows not Himself visibly to man. Jesus is not here in the flesh today, but the Holy Spirit is here taking His place. He is a Person, and He is God; and He is the third Person of the Trinity.

What Have We Learned Today?

1. Often Christians speak of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal power or influence. They know very little about the Holy Spirit. Yet the Holy Spirit is as much God as God the Father and God the Son. The Bible teaches that They are always co-equal. The church baptizes people “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” as commanded by Jesus (Matt. 28:19). Pastors use Paul’s words to bless the congregation at the end of a worship service: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (II Cor. 13:14). The Holy Spirit is connected with God the Father and God the Son, because He is also a Person and He is God, the third Person of the Trinity (the Triune God). This is hard to comprehend, but we must accept what the Bible teaches.
2. It is very important to know Who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. Unlike the Son, the Holy Spirit did not become flesh, but He is still a Person, possessing knowledge, feelings (emotions), and desires (will). It is precious to know this sweet Holy Spirit as a Person and to feel Him in our heart. He is our dear Friend even as Jesus is our Friend. Let us learn more about Him as we continue to study the Word of God.

Memory Bible Verses: Mark 3:28-29, “I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”

Assignment for Lesson 10 God the Holy Spirit - Part I

Scripture Readings: Matthew 12:30-32; 28:17-20; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 4:16-21; John 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 5:1-11; Romans 8:26-27; I Corinthians 2:6-14; 12:4-11; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30-32; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 10:28-31; I Peter 1:1-2; II Peter 1:19-21

1. Read the following Scriptures in the New Testament: Matthew 28:18-20; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:1-2; Jude 20-21.

How is it that the Holy Spirit is mentioned along with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son?

2. Can you prove that the Holy Spirit is God? (Genesis 1:1-2;26-27; Job 33:1-4; Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14)

3. A person has knowledge or intelligence, emotions or feelings, and will (decision-making power). Can you prove that the Holy Spirit is also a Person, possessing similar characteristics as persons do? (Matthew 12:30-32; Mark 3:28-30; John 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 5:1-11; Romans 8:26-27; I Corinthians 2:9-11; 12:4-11; Hebrews 10:29-31)

4. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit as your personal Friend even as Jesus is your personal Friend?

Memory Bible Verses: Mark 3:28-29

LESSON 11

God the Holy Spirit - Part II

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

- The Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) shared in the work of creation with God the Father and God the Son. Gen. 1:2 tells us “Now the earth was without form and an empty waste, and darkness was over the surface of the deep. The Spirit of God was hovering (moving) over the face of the waters” (cf. Jn. 1:1-3). Job 33:4 says, “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (cf. Gen. 1:26;2:7; Jn. 1:4).
- Note: the breath of life (breath of God) is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit used in the Old Testament.
- The Holy Spirit equips people for service. Here are a few examples: (1) Joseph became prime minister of Egypt because Pharaoh the King recognized that the Spirit of God was in him (Gen. 41:38-40). By the Spirit, Joseph ruled the nation wisely and well for Pharaoh. (2) Moses and the seventy elders were enabled with the power of leadership by the Spirit (Num. 11:16-17:25). (3) Joshua was prepared by the Spirit to succeed Moses (Num. 27:18-23). (4) David was anointed with oil (another symbol of the Holy Spirit) by Samuel to be the chosen king of Israel, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power (I Sam. 16:1,12-13). (5) Daniel was given wisdom by the Spirit to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams (Dan. 4:8-18; cf. 2:24-36; 5:11-12).
- Old Testament prophets who received God’s messages and passed them on to the people of Israel did so through the activity of God’s Spirit. II Chron. 24:20 tells us the Spirit of God came upon the prophet Zêchârî’âh, and he said to the people, “This is what God says: ‘Why do you disobey the Lord’s commands? You will not prosper....’” The prophet Isaiah declared, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor....” (Isa. 61:1). Again, the prophet Zechariah wrote in his book, Zech. 7:12, “They (the people) made their hearts as hard as rock and would not listen to the law or the words that the Lord Almighty has sent by His Holy Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry.”
- In the Book of Judges, we are told that the Spirit of God came upon judges and warriors to deliver Israel from its adversaries. In Judges 3:7-11, we read that the Spirit of the Lord came upon ôth’níël (Caleb’s nephew), and he became Israel’s judge and saved his people from their enemies. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gíd’ēôn, and he conquered his nation’s foes (Judges 6:34 ff.). Again, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah (jěf’tâh), and he delivered Israel from its oppressors (Judges 11:29-33). The best known judge was Samson (să’msûn) who received superhuman strength when the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. He first tore apart a roaring young lion with his bare hands (Judges 14:5-6); then he killed thirty men (14:19); later he slew 1,000 Philistines with a jawbone of a donkey (15:14-16).
- As we read these fascinating stories, we noticed that during the Old Testament times when the Spirit came upon certain people for specific purposes in this manner, He did not necessarily transform their moral characters. For instance, though the Spirit came mightily upon Samson several times, he lived a rather loose life; he was captured by the Philistines and tortured; and finally he died a violent death (Judges 16:1-31).

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Lord Jesus

- The Holy Spirit brought about the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus. The Angel of the Lord (Gāb'riēl) told both Joseph and Mary that the Baby to be born was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20; Lk. 1:35).
- The Lord Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit in some special way at the time of His baptism in the Jordan River - the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and lighted upon Him like a dove (Matt. 3:16-17; Mk. 1:9-11; Lk. 3:21-22). Then the Lord Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert where He fasted forty days and forty nights; then He was tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13).
- Note: Satan's purpose in the temptation was to make Christ sin so as to thwart God's plan for man's redemption by disqualifying our Lord to be Savior of the world. But the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the test in order to prove Christ's sinlessness and thus a worthy Savior.
- In fact our Lord was filled with the Holy Spirit from His mother's womb and all through His entire life. In Acts 10:38 Peter says, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him."

The Holy Spirit of the New Testament

- Before the Lord Jesus went back to heaven He said to His disciples, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor that He may remain with you forever - the Spirit of Truth... I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (Jn. 14:15-18). Jesus repeated the promise that the Holy Spirit would come to take His place, to lead them in the paths of righteousness (Jn. 15:26; 16:7-11). Just before Christ ascended to heaven, He said to His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
- In Acts 1:3-5 we read that after His crucifixion (and resurrection), Jesus showed Himself to His disciples and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, and gave them command not to leave Jerusalem until they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16).
- Ten days after Christ's ascension, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came. It was a day of power and glory. All the waiting disciples in that upper room were baptized with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages they did not know, for the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. Then Peter preached and 3,000 souls were saved and baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-41).
- Note: The word "Pentecost" means "the fiftieth day." It was the Jewish harvest feast that was celebrated fifty days after Passover. Pentecost is significant in the New Testament because on that day God sent the Holy Spirit into the world to take Christ's place and the church was born.
- During Old Testament times the Holy Spirit only came upon certain selected people for specific purposes. With the coming of Jesus, a new era has begun. Since the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has come to live in the hearts of every born-again Christian forever (Jn. 14:15-16).

What Have We Learned Today?

1. The Holy Spirit of the Lord (the Holy Spirit) had come upon certain selected people, such as prophets, priests, judges and kings during Old Testament time; and then He would leave them as He willed. Apparently the Holy Spirit did not come upon all O.T. believers. About 800 years before

Christ, the prophet Jō'el looked to a future day when the gifts of the Holy Spirit would come to all believers, old and young, men and women (Joel 2:28-29). In Acts 2:14-21, the apostle Peter declared that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit poured out upon all believers.

2. Since the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has come to dwell within every true believer forever as the Lord Jesus promised (Jn. 14:15-17). So God's Word assures us that the Holy Spirit is with us and lives within us, that He will never leave us. Let's live our lives as God's people should live, that we may please the Holy Spirit in everything we do, not to grieve Him (Eph. 4:30).

Memory Bible Verse: Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Assignment for Lesson 11 God the Holy Spirit - Part II

Scripture Readings: Genesis 1:1-31; II Chronicles 24:20; Nehemiah 9:30; Zechariah 7:12; Acts 2:1-42; Ephesians 4:30

1. How did the Spirit of God share in the work of creation?
(Genesis 1:1-31, note vv.26-27, 2:7; Job 33:4)
Note: the breath of life or the breath of God is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit used in the Old Testament.
2. For what purposes did the Spirit of God come upon certain judges?
(Judges 3:7-11; 6:34 ff.; 11:29-33; 14:5-6, 19; 15:14-16)
3. What did Jesus promise regarding the Holy Spirit?
(John 14:15-17, 25-26; 16:12-15)
4. What happened on the day of Pentecost? (Acts 2:1-47)

Memory Bible Verse: Acts 1:8

Studies of Great Bible Doctrines

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