

An Overview of the.....

**GOD
OF
HEAVEN**

12 Lessons

Prepared by:
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2004

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Lesson One

“Origin of the Idea of God”

Introduction

1. The Apostle Paul began his preaching to the Greeks with the existence of God understood.
 - a) Acts 17:22-31
 - b) This is how the Bible, itself, begins as well (Gen. 1:1).
2. It is interesting to note:
 - a) The Scriptures do not attempt to prove the existence of God.
 - b) They just declare that “God is.”
 - c) In fact, all preaching has to begin with this assumption.
3. Why?
 - a) Look at Paul’s sermon to the Athenians in Acts 17.
 - b) They had already arrived at the concept of a higher being, but were mixed up about His true nature.
 - c) So, Paul spends some time to clarify His nature (verses 24-29).
4. The nature of God is constantly re-affirmed and illustrated throughout Scripture.
5. Let’s look at little closer at Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill.

Discussion

I. WHERE DID THE ATHENIANS GET THE CONCEPT OF DEITY?

A. It must have been an evident fact to them.

- 1) But what had been evident to them had been clouded by their sinfulness.
- 2) Paul quoted one of their poets: ***“For we are also His offspring.”***
- 3) Their origination of Deity had been degraded into many gods represented by idols.
- 4) Paul then tried to correct their false views of God:
 - a) ***“Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.”*** (V. 29)
 - b) Someone has suggested: *“Preaching only revives to life and clarifies what is already in the heart of each man....belief in a supreme being.”*

B. This degradation of God is strongly pointed out in Romans 1:18-32.

- 1) God’s wrath is poured out upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.
- 2) Why?
 - a) Because they suppress the truth;
 - b) They rejected the true knowledge of God.
 - c) They are without excuse concerning the knowledge of God.
 - d) They refuse to glorify God.
 - e) They are unthankful for what God has done for them.
 - f) They changed the glory of God into an image of corruptible things.
- 3) What man could understand about the True God of Heaven, they gave up.
- 4) They made a choice to turn and worship created things, rather than the Creator.

II. PAUL SAID MANKIND WAS WITHOUT EXCUSE FOR THEIR DISTORTION OF GOD.

A. God's wrath upon them was just!

- 1) They could know, but they refused to accept the obvious!
- 2) The problem was not in not knowing, but their rebellious spirit.
- 3) They chose to give up the true knowledge of God.

B. Paul dealt with a very crucial question here.

- 1) "Can man come to a knowledge of God without Divine Revelation?"
- 2) Paul said that he could! ***"That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them."***
- 3) Their condemnation by God has to assume they could know!

III. WHAT ARE SOME EVIDENCES OF SUCH?

A. There is universal attestation to such a FACT!

- 1) The vast majority of mankind has recognized the existence of a Superior Being.
 - a) Granted that some men do deny the existence of God.
 - b) But so do some deny the existence of the Sun, because they are blind.
- 2) World religions, with their one or more gods, attest to such.
- 3) Even well-known "Atheist" have admitted some kind of belief in a Supreme Being.
 - a) Charles Darwin: *"In my most extreme fluctuations, I have never been an atheist, in the sense of denying the existence of a God."*
- 4) The book of Job is a classic example of such belief in God among the Gentile world.

B. But man's own heart is irrefutable evidence of this fact.

- 1) Man is incurably religious.
 - a) Hypocritical though he may be.
 - b) Yet, he is religious, nevertheless.
- 2) His capability to conceive and believe in God argues the fact.
- 3) But when man looks within, he is forced to look without and upward.
 - a) He sees his own finiteness and dependence.
 - b) He is forced to conclude the existence of an infinite Being that is independent and to whom he is responsible.
 - c) We are finite in comparison to the infinite.
- 4) Every way man turns, within or without, there is God! (Ps. 139:8-10)
- 5) Man cannot get away from the concept of God.
 - a) He is bombarded on every hand with the mass of evidence of God's existence.
 - b) Man's own make-up, as well as the world about him, continually reminds him there is a God in Heaven! (Ps. 19:1-3)
- 6) No wonder the Psalmists could say with confidence: ***"The fool has said in his heart, there is no God."*** (Ps. 14:1)

Conclusion

1. If Paul's pronouncement of God's wrath upon the Gentile world was just, then:
 - a) That same wrath is upon the world still today.
 - b) For the same reason.
2. Paul said they were without excuse and therefore condemned.
 - a) They could know God from within and without.
 - b) They chose to give up that knowledge.
 - c) How much more could mankind today know God, and are therefore without excuse.
3. Today, we have a Divine Revelation to more fully confirm the concepts of our hearts.
 - a) It can also clarify the true nature of God.
 - b) So, man is without excuse today as well.
4. And, if men desire to give up this knowledge of God:
 - a) God will give them up to follow after:
 - Their own lust;
 - Their own foolish & darkened hearts;
 - Their own reprobate minds.
 - b) And suffer the judgment and wrath of God.
5. Paul, in both Romans and Acts, has given warning of God's just wrath to come upon those who give up this knowledge of the true God of Heaven.
6. But, we even have a greater ability to know God.
 - a) Jesus came down from the Father to reveal Him unto us.
 - b) Jesus is "God in the flesh." (John 1:1-2, 14)
 - c) What more does man need?

Lesson Two

“Reasons for Believing in God”

Introduction

1. Man’s most profound question is the question of the existence of God!
 - a) Such determines man’s responsibility.
 - b) His salvation and eternal destiny is involved.
 - c) His moral and social behavior is involved.
 - d) His happiness here and now, as well as eternally.
2. Unbelief takes various forms:
 - a) **Atheism**—“No God”—To deny God’s existence.
 - b) **Skeptic (Agnostic)**—“Not Know”—Doubts God’s existence or affirms there is no way to know.
 - c) **Materialists**—Does not need God—the universe can run without Him.
 - d) **Infidel**—Unbelief in Christianity and the God of the Bible.
3. In what sense can we know God exists?
 - a) Not by our five senses?
 - He cannot be detected and tested like physical things.
 - Examples:
 - a) Ideas that cannot be picked up by forceps.
 - b) Feelings cannot be photographed.
 - c) Love cannot be X-rayed.
 - d) Moral obligation cannot be weighed by physical standards of weights.
 - b) God must be detected by the perceiving mind.
 - The formulation and compiling of knowledge.
 - Evaluating the evidences.
 - Reasonable conclusions to be drawn.
 - We then have a good foundation for believing in Him.
4. The following are some lines of reasoning that have been given for believing in God.

Discussion

I. THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNIVERSE REQUIRES AN EXPLANATION

A. Rom. 1:20-21; Ps. 19:1-3

- 1) Albert Einstein—*“The observing of the harmony of nature and natural law reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.”*

B. Is it reasonable and logical to say that God created all things?

- 1) Choice:
 - a) Either God created all things.
 - b) Or, the universe is eternal.
- 2) But a basic law of Science says: *“The universe is like a clock which is running down.”*
 - a) Someone had to wind it up.

- b) The “Someone’s” power has to be self-motivating, self-existent.
- 3) Our minds can logically attribute that to God, not matter.
- 4) It is illogical to attribute such to matter!

II. MORAL CONCEPTS OF RIGHT & WRONG REQUIRE AN EXPLANATION

A. We are faced with two choices:

- 1) Man has evolved.
 - a) His moral standards have evolved with him.
 - b) No one man can set the standards.
 - c) Each is a law unto himself.
- 2) God created man and gave man an understanding of right and wrong.

B. Let’s notice some things about morality:

- 1) All men draw lines between good and bad.
- 2) Lines are not exactly in the same places, but they are there in general.
- 3) God and evil exists to all men.
- 4) Man is convinced that he is obligated—that sense of duty exist—a sense of ought or ought not.
- 5) Man often justifies doing wrong in order to bring about good.
- 6) Man has the power to respond to moral law.
- 7) Moral potentialities are great within his life.

C. If a moral realm exists, then certain things must follow:

- 1) Man has the power to choose between good and bad.
- 2) There is no real moral justice in this life (all would admit).
- 3) There must be a just Judge that someday will render perfect justice.

D. Bible teaching:

- 1) Man can choose his master (Romans 6:16-18).
- 2) This life is not the end (1 Corinthians 15).
- 3) God will judge all men fairly someday (Romans 2:16).

E. The belief that morality comes from God is not:

- 1) Childish, nor a shallow form of escapism.
- 2) It is not unreasonable, nor against the evidences under consideration.

F. Such belief actually elevates man.

- 1) It causes him to be creative—thoughtful—respectful of dignity of others and to recognize community responsibility.
- 2) It serves as a strong standard and guide for the individual, the home, the community, and the nation.

III. A LACK OF EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ATHEISM MAKES BELIEF IN GOD MUCH MORE REASONABLE.

A. Atheists strongly criticize Christians for assuming that God exists.

B. Look at some of the insuperable difficulties that Atheists have:

- 1) They assume that matter is eternal.
- 2) They assume that the universe exists as a result of chance, not orderly creation.
- 3) They assume matter produced living organisms.
 - a) That non-living created the living.
 - b) That non-conscious created the conscious.

- c) That non-religious created the religious.
 - d) That non-rational created the rational.
 - e) That non-moral created the moral.
 - f) That non-hearing created the hearing.
 - g) That non-speaking created the speaking.
 - h) That non-feeling created the feeling.
- 4) The Atheists actually believes in a “miracle-working creator,” but refuses to call him God!
 - a) His creator is dead matter, which created in the past, but not now.
 - b) Which concept cannot be explained in terms of present day laws.
 - c) And it cannot be proven with evidences.
 - 5) He must assume that our orderly and beautiful universe came into being:
 - a) By chance, not design.
 - b) That the human body (with all its detailed and unexplainable workings) came into existence by chance.
 - c) That the small things of nature exist by chance.
 - d) That the make-up of the atom, etc., all happened by chance.
 - e) That the cycles of nature in all her glory—all by chance.

C. But through God’s great creative power:

- 1) All becomes reasonable.
- 2) But without Him—these are just a few of the great assumptions the atheists call upon us to believe and accept because he said so!

Conclusion

1. In addition to many other evidences that could be given are the personal reasons for believing.
2. It is obviously the safer course to pursue.
 - a) If there is a God:
 - We must come to know Him and obey Him.
 - There will be a day of Judgment.
 - There will be punishment and reward.
 - b) I want to be ready for that Day.
 - c) If there is no God, I haven’t really lost anything worthwhile by believing & obeying.
3. The Atheists has nothing to offer to answer all the perplexing questions of life—he only has greater doubt.
4. The Christian life is by far the greater way of living over what atheists have to offer.
 - a) It is greater and better.
 - b) It produces the most happiness, peace, and contentment for this life.
 - c) It motivates man to accomplish the most good for all mankind.
 - d) It offers hope after this life is over—atheists offer nothing.
5. Do you believe that God exists—what have you done about it?

Lesson Three

“God versus gods”

Introduction

1. We go to Museums that display past history and we see large Idols.
 - a) We are told that people actually worshipped such things.
 - b) Our first reaction might be:
 - How ridiculous and superstitious!
 - We have grown up, we are enlightened, we don't bow down before such.
 - We no longer have problems with such things.
2. But are we enlightened?
3. Have we ridded the land of Idolatry?
4. Have we really learned what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24).
5. Before looking at the great characteristics of the True God of Heaven, we want to look at what gods man has come up with. (**Gods versus the True God of Heaven**).

Discussion

I. WHAT IS IDOLATRY?

A. EIDOLON—“An image, likeness.....whatever represents the form of an object, either real or imaginary.....(1) the image of a heathen god, or (2) a false god.” (Thayer)

- 1) The root word “EIDO” emphasizes that which is seen or experienced with the five senses.
- 2) “That which represents the unseen God.”

B. General efforts at defining:

- 1) “*Whatever thy heart clings to and relies on, that is properly thy god.*” (Martin Luther).
- 2) “*It is the giving of our supreme affection to creature-objects.*”
- 3) “*Worship of forces and forms of nature, of ancestors, of deified heroes, of symbols or personified attributes, of partial and degraded conceptions of the one living God, or fading traditions of His worship.*”
- 4) “*The idol takes the place of God, sits on his throne, defiles his temple, usurps his Name and authority and worship.*”
- 5) “*Anything that takes first place, pre-eminent position, or occupies that place in our hearts that belongs to God.*”
- 6) “*Whatever stands between us and seeking first the kingdom of God.*”

C. Thus, Idolatry seems to be possible in three different areas:

- 1) An actual idol—Giving divine or worshipful attributes to something material.
- 2) God in 2nd place—Allowing persons or things to take 1st place in our hearts.
- 3) Unworthy concepts of God—dethroning God, bringing Him down to man's level.

II. GIVING DIVINE OR WORSHIPFUL ATTRIBUTES TO SOMETHING MATERIAL

A. Scriptures that warn against such: Deut. 4:15-19; Exo. 20:4-5; Acts 17:29

B. Image worship is a corruption of the worship of the True God of Heaven.

- 1) At first, the image is a mere physical representation of the invisible God.

- 2) They do not worship the idol itself, but the unseen power of which the idol is a symbol.
- 3) Later, it becomes deified itself—as something sacred.
- 4) Israel and corrupt Christianity both illustrate this truth.
 - a) Israel:
 - God never manifested Himself in some form that could be imitated.
 - Images were used by Israel to represent the invisible God whom they worshipped.
 - These images became sacred to them.
 - At Mt. Sinai, they heard God, saw Him manifested in various ways by His power.
 - Yet, they made a molten calf to worship.
 - b) Corrupt Christianity:
 - At first, they worshipped in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24).
 - Their message was “turn from dumb idols to the living God.” (1 Thess. 1:8-9).
 - Within 400 years, the corrupt church was worshipping: “Saints,” “Virgin Mary,” “The Host,” “Relics,” “Images.”
 - When Mohammed drew the sword against Idolatry, he reckoned Christians among the Idolaters.
 - Corrupt Christianity still has much of such today!

C. Why image worship?

- 1) Man seems to want to worship something he can see.
- 2) If he worships the gods he has made, it gives him a sense of superior feeling.
- 3) Elaborate ritual, ceremonies, and costumes appeals to man.
- 4) Family concepts of the gods like father, mother, son, daughter.
- 5) Sensual sins connected with worship of gods—salved the conscience.
- 6) An appeal to the mysterious—secret orders, initiations, ceremonies.
- 7) Identifying gods with crops, cattle, necessities, birth, sex, etc.
- 8) Most of it—making God like man!

D. Such is strongly condemned in Scripture!

- 1) Every kind of denunciation that could be given against such.
- 2) Every kind of punishment came as judgment upon them for such.
- 3) Every prophet preached with vehemence against them.
- 4) Finally, Israel & Judah carried into captivity because of such.

III. ALLOWING PERSONS OR THINGS TO TAKE 1ST PLACE IN OUR HEARTS

A. Scriptures: Matthew 22:37-38; Luke 14:26; Matthew 6:33

B. God will be first, or not at all, in man’s heart!

- 1) When we allow any person or thing to take pre-eminence before God—that becomes our god!
- 2) Notice:
 - a) Not everything loved becomes an idol!
 - b) God doesn’t want us to love Him and no one else.
 - c) But God wants claim to first place—the throne within our heart.

- d) Whatever stands first in our estimation is our god.
- 3) Thus, to love parents, children, friends, relatives, husband, wife, or even self more than God...such is idolatry!
- 4) If a choice ever has to be made between God, a person, or self—we must chose God.
- 5) This is especially true with self.
 - a) Personal opinion—what I believe comes before what God says!
 - b) Personal desire—What I want comes before what God wants.
 - c) Self-justification—“I’m never wrong!”

C. Things become a real problem as well!

- 1) Various terms that illustrate this:
 - a) Covetousness (Col. 3:5). God is shut from the heart by desires, plans, calculations which have money for their object. They so occupy the heart that there is no room for God
 - b) Sensual pleasure (Prov. 6:24-26). To idolize the body of a woman and put one’s soul in peril for fleeting moments of pleasure.
 - c) Amusement (Luke 8:14). We become so caught up in it that we shut God out. We have no time left to tend to serious spiritual duties, to instruct the unlearned, to console the afflicted, to visit the poor and needy. Nor, time for prayer, study, or worship ourselves.
 - d) Power, Position, Honor (Matthew 6:1-2, etc.). People will do almost anything to gain such.
- 2) Which God will you be worshipping Sunday?
 - THE GOD OF EASE? “I had a very hard week. Sunday is the only day that I can rest.”
 - THE GOD OF MAMMON? “I just must work on Sunday to make ends meet. I just cannot take off for worship.”
 - THE GOD OF POPULARITY? “I had company Sunday and I just had to stay home and entertain them, else they would have been offended.”
 - THE GOD OF RECREATION? “This is the only day I can be with my family. I like to take them to the park and spend some time with them.”
 - THE GOD OF SELF-PRIDE? “I am not going to church because they just don’t treat me right. They just ignore me.”
 - THE GOD OF HEAVEN? “I love God and His Son. Therefore, I will be present for Bible study and worship whether convenient or not. I will give liberally of my time, talent, and money to the cause of Christ. I know I must in this way prove the sincerity of my love for God and His Son.”

Conclusion

- 1. Most of us have little problem with images, relics, etc.
- 2. Our problems come more in allowing persons or things to take first place in our hearts.
- 3. But idolatry is still very much with us—just open your eyes to the truth.
- 4. Do we have one or more idols that we need to put away....so we can truly serve the true God?

Lesson Four

“God is Spirit”

Introduction

1. Man’s greatest challenge in life is to come to know God (John 4:19-26).
 - a) This attitude is expressed in Scripture: Ps. 42:1-2; 46:1, 7; 63:1-3.
 - b) Reasons: John 17:3; 2 Thess. 1:8-9
2. Many recognize the FACT of God’s existence!
 - a) But they fail to pay homage due Him.
 - They are not willing to give Him proper place in their lives.
 - They do not give Him Reverence, Allegiance, Trust, or Love that He so richly deserves. (Jere. 2:32).
 - b) Others do not have serious thoughts about God and their responsibilities to Him.
 - They exchange their little knowledge of God into gods of their own making. (Romans 1:23).
 - God becomes subservient to them, not them to God.
3. There are grave dangers of having an inferior knowledge of God:
 - a) We tend to lower God to our level.
 - b) Our worship will become low, ignoble, unworthy of God.
 - c) Our moral practices will be lowered.
 - d) Our spiritual life will be shallow.
4. Let’s see what is involved in seeing God as Spirit!

Discussion

I. THIS IMPLIES THAT GOD IS NOT MATTER!

A. Scripture statements: John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17

B. God is not matter!

- 1) Spirit is not a refined form of matter.
- 2) It is immaterial & invisible to the human eye.
- 3) Unless spirit takes on a form of matter, it cannot be seen by man.
- 4) Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:50
- 5) God is not a SUPERMAN—He is not man at all!

C. Thus, no one actually knows what Spirit is.

- 1) The idea can be conceived of, but only received by faith.
- 2) For some reason, man cannot see God and live: John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16; Exo. 33:20-23.
- 3) Moses could not see spirit, so God had to manifest (materialize) some of His glory for Moses to experience.

D. Possibly, when man is changed, he can see God and live.

- 1) I John 3:2; Heb. 12:14; 1 Cor. 15:44; Phil. 3:21

E. What about passages that speak of God like a man?

- 1) These are called “Anthropo-Morphisms.”
 - a) Speaking of God in terms of man: Arms, Hands, Eyes, Mouth, Feet, etc
 - b) These are purely accommodative for man’s benefit.

- 2) There are too many passages that show that God cannot be material (Isa. 66:1; 1 Kgs. 8:27, etc.)
- 3) Scriptures speak about man being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27).
 - a) Need to be careful, because man is obviously not a replica of God.
 - b) Not in physical image, but in a spiritual sense.
- 4) It is when we try to imagine what God is like that we run into trouble.
 - a) If we visualize God in a physical form—He is not that!
 - b) He created all things, so He is not what He has created.
 - c) We can end up with an idol, which is an unworthy concept of God.

II. THIS IMPLIES THAT GOD IS A LIVING AND PERSONAL BEING.

A. God is a living Being.

- 1) Jere. 10:10; 1 Thess. 1:9
- 2) God is not dead, he continues to exist as He has always existed—and always will exist.
- 3) He is the ever existing One.

B. God is a personal Being.

- 1) He is not impersonal.
- 2) He has the power of self-consciousness (He is aware of Himself & His acts).
- 3) He has the power of self-determination (He is not controlled by environment, but can voluntarily act or change his actions).
- 4) Look at the contrast between man & animals:
 - a) An animal has consciousness, but cannot evaluate acts as man can.
 - b) This is the reason for terms—animals are things—man is human.
 - c) We identify God in terms of human beings, not animals.
- 5) But God's self-consciousness & self-determination are infinite as compared to man.

III. SOME OBSERVATIONS:

A. God is a Spirit:

- 1) Spirit is superior to matter.
- 2) Therefore, Spirit preceded & created matter. (Ps. 90:2)

B. Man is spirit & flesh:

- 1) Man should be more concerned about the spiritual man than the physical man.
- 2) Rom. 8:5-6

C. God, as a pure Spirit, is not dependant upon matter for His existence.

- 1) God can exist apart from the universe.
- 2) But, the universe cannot exist apart from God
- 3) Heb. 1:2-3)

D. God, as a Spirit, deserves to be worshipped primarily by man's spirit.

- 1) Jn. 4:24
- 2) The outward forms are important only as God prescribes the way we are to express the adoration of our hearts.
- 3) Outward forms, without the heart, are meaningless & worthless.

Conclusion

1. One of the great values of Christ to us—reassurance of God’s existence and that He truly cares. (John 1:1, 14; 14:7)
2. The history of mankind reveals:
 - a) People never rise above their religions.
 - b) That no religion is greater than it’s idea of God.
 - c) Their worship is either PURE or BASE—depending upon their high or low view of God’s nature.
3. Our desire and ability to worship and serve God depends upon:
 - a) Our recognition of His true Nature;
 - b) Our having lofty, majestic, reverent, correct views of God.
4. John 4:24

Lesson Five

“God is An Infinite Spirit”

Introduction

1. God is Spirit, but more, He is an Infinite Spirit!
2. There are spirit-beings that God has created: Angels.
 - a) But, they are not infinite beings.
 - b) In contrast, they are finite and God is infinite.
3. Psalm 102:24-28:
 - a) “Your years are throughout all generations”
 - b) “Of old you laid the foundations of the earth”
 - c) “They will perish, but you will endure”
 - d) “They will wax old and change, but you will remain the same.”
 - e) Your years shall have no end.”
4. Let’s see what is involved in the concept: God is an Infinite Spirit!

Discussion

I. GOD IS INFINITE IN CONTRAST TO THE FINITE

A. Synonyms:

- 1) Unbounded, unlimited, immeasurable, endless, inexhaustible, etc.
- 2) We speak of “unlimited space,” “inexhaustible energy,” etc.
- 3) This is not the same as speaking of an infinite God.
- 4) In fact, the Universe is a FINITE expression of an INFINITE GOD.
- 5) Ps. 145:3

B. Only One Being can be Infinite.

- 1) The very concept is comparing the finite to the infinite.
 - a) All other beings are finite in comparison.
 - b) The Universe is finite, because it has been created by God.
- 2) Only the Creator is infinite.
- 3) To have two beings called infinite is a misuse of the concept. (Isa. 46:9)

C. The Infinite is not made up of many finites.

- 1) This is called PAN-THEISM.
 - a) PAN—“all”
 - b) THEISM—“God”
 - c) “The sum of all finite things is God” (Wrong)
 - d) “God is the summation of all He has created.” (Wrong)
- 2) No number of finite things can fully reveal the Infinite God.
 - a) All things depend upon Him, but they are not God.
 - b) Acts 17:28
 - c) Our very being, existence, as well as all things....depend upon Him!
 - d) All are sustained by His Power, but such is not God.
 - e) God existed before all things were created.
 - f) Thus, created things cannot be God, nor sum up God.
 - g) The sum of the finites does not make up the Infinite!

D. The Infinite is ONE (unified) in His Nature.

- 1) His attributes are not in opposition to one another.
- 2) ***“Behold, the goodness & severity of God.”***
- 3) Such are in perfect harmony and accord with one another.
- 4) The Love of God must not be put in opposition to His wrath.
- 5) The Mercy of God must not be put in opposition to His Justice.
- 6) All are in complete harmony one with the other.
- 7) We don’t need different gods to explain differences in God’s nature.
 - a) This is what heathenism did.
 - b) No one God satisfied the concept of perfection in their minds.
 - c) So they had many gods to try to fathom the Infiniteness of God.
- 8) But one True God encompasses them all. (1 Thess. 1:9)
 - a) Not gods that are dead....but a living God.
 - b) Not gods that are false....but the one true God.
- 9) He is perfect, complete—in complete harmony with Himself.

II. INFINITENESS MEANS GOD IS UNLIMITED AS OPPOSED TO BEING LIMITED

A. God is unlimited in His Knowledge & Understanding. (Ps. 147:5)

- 1) No limit can be placed on His understanding.
 - a) He is all-knowing, omniscience—to know all.
- 2) There is nothing beyond the compass of God’s understanding. (Heb. 4:13)
- 3) His understanding embraces all there is to know: Past, Present, and Future.

B. God is unlimited in His Power. (Luke 1:37)

- 1) There is absoluteness of Power with God.
- 2) Absoluteness in Authority, Sovereignty, Lordship over all.
- 3) He is God Almighty (Rev. 19:6).
- 4) Omnipotent—all Powerful—the Almighty. (2 Cor. 6:18)

C. God is unlimited in His Presence. (Jere. 23:24)

- 1) God is not limited by nor to this Universe.
- 2) He is everywhere at once (Omni-presence).
- 3) He existed before this Universe.

D. God is not limited in is Existence. (Ps. 90:1-2)

- 1) God is not a created being, but the Creator.
- 2) He had no beginning...nor an ending. (Exo. 3:14)
 - a) “I am that I am”—the ever-existing One.
 - b) “Jehovah (Yehouweh)—the ever-existing One—the Eternal One.
- 3) Man is dependant upon God for his existence.
- 4) But God depends upon no one for His Existence.
- 5) It is God’s Nature...to Be!

III. INFINITENESS MEANS GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE AS OPPOSED TO BEING CHANGEABLE.

A. It means that God is perpetually the same!

- 1) Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Jas. 1:17
- 2) The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament—no difference!

- 3) ***God is subject to no change in His Being, Attributes, Determinations, or His Counsels.***
- 4) All created things constantly change, but God cannot!
- 5) What He was, He still is, and will always BE!

B. God is perfect absolutely.

- 1) He cannot be changed for the better.
- 2) There is no need for change... cannot be improved upon.
 - a) He cannot increase or decrease.
 - b) He cannot progress or go backwards.
 - c) He cannot contract or expand.
- 3) There is an absolute constancy in the Divine Nature.

Conclusion

1. The infiniteness of God gives:
 - a) To the Righteous—great hope & assurance, for God will do what He says.
 - b) To the Unrighteous—the assurance of doom & disaster, for God will do what He says.
 - c) Ezek. 8:18
2. God's infiniteness destroys all hope for the disobedient that God will be more lenient than what His Word says.
3. We do not have to perish—we can change—come to repentance!

Lesson Six

“God is a Perfect Spirit”

Introduction

1. God is not only Spirit, but He is also an Infinite and Perfect Spirit.
2. These lessons are designed to give us a greater understanding of the God we have chosen to serve.
3. God told the Israelites that their destruction was coming because they had rejected the knowledge of the One True and Living God (Hos. 4:6-9).
4. Because they rejected the knowledge of the True God, they turned to false gods.
5. To be ignorant of God can be eternally dangerous.
6. God is said to be a Perfect Spirit!

Discussion

I. GOD IS A PERFECT SPIRIT

A. He is the IDEAL, the perfect One.

- 1) In Quantity—absolutely complete.
- 2) In Quality—par excellence.
- 3) Deut. 32:26; Dan. 2:47; 2 Sam. 22:31; Deut. 32:4; Matt. 5:48

B. God’s perfection:

- 1) Deals with His works and His will.
- 2) But also deals with His moral Attributes.

II. GOD IS TRUTH ABSOLUTE

A. He is the only true God.

- 1) Jere. 10:10; 1 John 5:20
- 2) There is only one true God—all others are false gods.

B. He speaks and does only what is true.

- 1) Rev. 15:3; Ps. 119:142, 151; Rev. 19:2
- 2) Whatever God does, whatever He says, is always truth.
- 3) One reason is—He possesses all knowledge of what is True. (Deut. 32:4).

C. God’s very being is Truth

- 1) God’s Being is eternally the same and He is Truth portrayed.
 - a) He not only speaks truth, but is the source of truth—He is Truth.
 - b) He is Truth in Being...not just Truth in expression.
- 2) God is Absolute Truth.
 - a) There is no truth beyond Him.
 - b) He is the object of all knowledge.
 - c) All truth among men has as its foundation—the Divine Being of God.
 - Mathematical, Logical, Moral, Religious.
 - No man can say, “I am Truth.”
 - We can only say, “I speak the truth” (at all times????)
 - But God can say, “I am Truth.” (Jn. 14:6)
- 3) God knows, wills, and speaks truth because He is Truth.

III. GOD IS LOVE ABSOLUTE

A. *God is not only a God of Love, but He is Love (1 John 4:8, 16).*

B. *God's love must be expressed (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10).*

- 1) God's love desires to impart Himself to his creatures.
- 2) Its purpose is for the happiness and wellbeing of others.
- 3) A desire to possess us for our own good.

C. *This love is distinguished by two Greek words:*

- 1) **PHILEO**—a) This is an emotional affection that is natural.
b) Not something commanded, but proceeds from impulse.
c) John 11:36
- 2) **AGAPE**—a) Rational & Benevolent affection.
b) Springs from deliberate choice.
c) John 3:16 (Deliberate choice, not deserving).
d) Deut. 7:7-8
- 3) God loves, not for what He can get, but what He can give.
- 4) It is rational, voluntary, grounded in perfect reason—deliberate choice!

D. *This love involves subordination.*

- 1) It does not necessarily submit to the emotional impulse.
- 2) It submits to a higher Law... Truth & Righteousness.
- 3) His love is for the good of all men, not just a few.
- 4) His love is sincere, true love.
- 5) The Golden Rule does not bind us to give to others what they ask for—but for what is best for them (Rom. 15:2).
- 6) God's love is not indulgent, but designed for the good of His creatures.

E. *His love is governed by His Righteousness.*

- 1) God's love must conform to God's righteousness, not contrary to it.
- 2) His love is expressed within the bounds of Righteousness.
a) He cannot love and be unrighteous in the act.
b) In all His loving acts, He never acted unrighteous (Ps. 11:7).
- 3) Thus, God loves righteousness, and hates wickedness (Ps. 45:7)
a) God can love all mankind, but also provide a way of salvation for sinful man that is according to righteousness.
b) But He cannot save all mankind out of love, for then He would love wickedness.

F. *God's love seems to involve suffering. (Gen. 6:6).*

- 1) God is not only grieved at man's sins, but His love yearns to save them.
- 2) But He can only save them through an atonement for sin—His Son!
- 3) Love rejoices even in pain when it brings good to those beloved (Heb. 12:2).

IV. GOD IS HOLY ABSOLUTE

A. *One of the strong assertions about God....He is holy (Isa. 30:12; 6:3).*

B. *God's being is Holiness.*

- 1) It is not a matter that God wills to be Holy.
- 2) It is the very Being of God, Himself.
- 3) God cannot do evil, but neither can He condone evil.

C. Thus, God's very Being is the source and standard of Holiness.

- 1) He has no sin....never has....never will.
- 2) There is a total absence of moral Stain.
- 3) He is the PERSONIFICATION of all Moral Good.

D. God is not under Law, nor Above Law, but He is Law.

- 1) His being & his will eternally conforms to one another
- 2) His Nature, His actions, His being are the basis of Righteousness.
- 3) When man sins, we sin against God, Himself.
- 4) Thus, our challenge... ***"Be ye holy in all manner of behavior; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."***

Conclusion

1. A worthy challenge to all mankind: ***"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is Perfect."***
 - a) Perfect in our expressing of Love.
 - b) Perfect in our expressing and living Truth.
 - c) Perfect in Moral Excellence—right living.
2. To truly know God is to love Him and obey Him....which leads to Eternal Life.

Lesson Seven

“God is a Triune Spirit”Introduction

1. God’s existence is not argued in Scripture because the evidence is overwhelming:
 - a) Ps. 19:1; 14:1; Rom. 1:20
 - b) Men are without excuse for not believing in His existence.
2. The big emphasis of Scripture is to reveal His Nature—His Character.
 - a) Even with the help of Revelation, we are limited in our ability to full comprehend.
 - b) God’s very Nature makes it impossible for mere man to fully grasp Him.
3. The purpose of these lessons is to help to grasp what God has revealed about Himself in His Word.
4. This lesson will look at the Triune Nature of God.

Discussion**I. GOD IS REVEALED TO US AS “One God.”*****A. Scripture:***

- 1) Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6; Exo. 20:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6
- 2) The monotheistic emphasis in both Old & New Testaments is overwhelming.
- 3) There is but “one” God, the true & living God, who is Lord of Creation.

B. In what sense is God ONE?

- 1) The word “one” has more than one concept connected with it.
 - a) Deut. 6:4—**“The Lord our God is one (ECHOD) Lord.”**
 - b) Gen. 2:24—**“They shall be one (ECHOD) flesh.”**
 - c) Gen. 41:25-26—**“The dream of Pharaoh is one (ECHOD).”**
- 2) Observations:
 - a) Man & woman do not become one person, but a composite unity.
 - b) It is very possible that this is the use of the word in regards to God.
- 3) Old Testament indications of such:
 - a) Gen. 1:1—**“In the beginning God (ELOHIM) created (BARA)...”**
 - **Elohim** is plural.
 - **Bara** is singular.
 - b) Plural pronouns:
 - Gen. 1:26—**“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”**
 - Gen. 3:22—**“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us.”**
 - Gen. 11:7; Isa. 6:8
 - Many other indications.
- 4) New Testament indications of such:
 - a) Jesus repeats the emphasis of Old Testament (Mark 12:29).
 - b) Jesus claimed to be God (John 10:30; 8:58).
 - c) Jesus is identified as Deity (Matt. 1:23; Isa. 9:6; Phil. 2:5-8)

- 5) The Holy Spirit is also portrayed as Deity: (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Heb. 9:14).
- 6) And...the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are identified together (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).
 - a) All on the same footing.
 - b) All evidence points to God as being a COMPOSITE UNITY.
 - c) One God—yet made up of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 7) Wrong concepts:
 - a) The Father is the only Eternal One...God.
 - b) The Son and the Holy Spirit are created by the Father.
 - c) Christ & the Holy Spirit cannot be called God in the same sense as the Father is God.
 - d) But neither is there three distinct gods: Father, Son, & Holy Spirit.

II. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE TRIUNITY OF GOD

A. Statement of conclusions:

- 1) God is ONE.
- 2) But the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
- 3) There are not three gods, but One God.
- 4) There are three personalities that compose Deity (One God).

B. Clarification of the term “personality.:

- 1) The Bible does not use the term “Person” with reference to God.
- 2) It does use personal pronouns: He, Us, etc.
- 3) We use it to identify them in terms we can comprehend.
- 4) God is not 3 separate & distinct persons like: Peter, Paul or John.
- 5) God is ONE, but presented to us as three-fold in Nature.

C. Further clarification:

- 1) The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father, but they are both One God.
- 2) The Son is not the Holy Spirit, nor is the Holy Spirit the Son, but they are both One God.
- 3) Etc.
- 4) The Bible does not use the term “Trinity,” “Triune,” or “Tri-Unity” with reference to God.
- 5) It is a concept we can grasp, but not fully understand.

D. Illustrations that may help:

- 1) **Time** is made up of Past, Present, and Future.
 - a) It takes all three to make up time.
 - b) Without any one, there is no time.
 - c) Yet, each one is time.
- 2) **Space** is made up of Length, Height, Depth.
 - a) It takes all three to make up Space.
 - b) Without any one, there is no space.
 - c) Yet, each one is space.

- 3) **Man** is made up of Body, Soul, and Spirit (1 Thess. 5:23).
 - a) It takes all three to make up man.
 - b) Without any one, man would not be man.
 - c) Yet, each one is man.

E. In a similar sense:

- 1) God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (It takes all three to make up God).
- 2) Yet, each one is God!

Conclusion

1. God is a Composite Unity—One God, but presented to us in three personalities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. God is complete in Himself:
 - a) Never lonesome.
 - b) What is love in isolation?
 - c) Has full resource within Himself.
3. God is in complete harmony with Himself—so should His people be as well.
 - a) One mind (Phil. 1:27).
 - b) Many members, but one body (Rom. 12:5).

Lesson Eight

“The Faithfulness of God”

Introduction

1. Revelation 19:6-11 pictures Jesus sitting on a white horse and characterized as “Faithful and True.”
 - a) This is one of the great attributes of God—faithfulness!
 - b) All his attributes mesh together.
 - c) He is unified in His Being, His Attributes, His Nature.
2. We can make a grave mistake about God by over-emphasizing one attribute to the neglect of another.
 - a) God is Love, but He also is Just in His actions.
 - b) God is Good, but He also is Holy in His actions.
 - c) God is Compassionate, but He also upholds His Truth by His actions.
3. We must not “edit out” those attributes that we find objectionable.
 - a) Such is a grave presumption on our part.
 - b) All that God is must agree with what He does.
4. This lesson will emphasize God’s immutability—His faithfulness!

Discussion

I. GOD IS IMMUTABLE

A. God is perpetually the same!

- 1) He is subject to no change in His Being, Attributes, or Determinations.
- 2) This is a reason why God is compared to a Rock! (Deut. 32:4)
 - a) All creatures are subject to change, but God is not.
 - b) All things change around Him, but God is permanent. (Jas. 1:17).

B. God has neither evolved, grown, or improved. (Mal. 3:6)

- 1) He cannot change for the better or worse—He is Perfect!
- 2) Exodus 3:14—***“I am that I am....”***
- 3) His Power cannot grow less, nor His glory fade!
- 4) All that God is now, He always has been and always will be.

C. He was not a different God under the Old Testament.

- 1) He never changes—His attitude toward sin remains the same.
- 2) Men change, but God does not.
 - a) We change from bad to good, hopefully.
 - b) Or, we may change from good to bad.
 - c) Or, we may mature in our character.
- 3) Men change because:
 - a) We are unable to foresee the future to anticipate things.
 - b) We are unable to carry out our plans or promises at times.
- 4) The Law of change belongs to a fallen world.
- 5) But God has no reason to change (Job 23:13).
- 6) God is the ROCK that stands fast in the midst of change.

II. GOD IS FAITHFUL

A. Because God does not change, He can then be faithful.

- 1) Deut. 7:9; 2 Thess. 3:3; Heb. 10:23
- 2) Men are not faithful at times, but God is always faithful.
- 3) Men are unfaithful because:
 - a) Of his desire for other things;
 - b) Of his fear of what might happen to him;
 - c) Of his weakness of character;
 - d) Of his loss of interest;
 - e) Of the strong influences from without.
- 4) None of these affect God.
- 5) Unfaithfulness is an outstanding sin of man.
 - a) His word is often not good.
 - b) Marital infidelity reflects this unfaithfulness concept.
 - c) Preachers of righteousness are not faithful to their calling at times.
 - d) Many do not live up to their profession of Faith in Christ in the church.
- 6) There is only ONE who is truly faithful in all things—God! ***“Faith and True is His Name.”***

III. WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL?

A. God’s faithfulness means His Word is True...His promises are sure!

- 1) What He has promised, He will do.
 - a) He never forgets, nor fails, nor falters, or forfeits His Word.
 - b) Num. 23:19
- 2) Why should God lie to man—He can do whatever He wishes to do.
 - a) He doesn’t need to lie, like man seems feel the need to do.
 - b) Gen. 8:22

B. God’s faithfulness means that His actions towards His people are dependable.

- 1) He has allowed temptations to come our way, but He will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. (1 Cor. 10:13).
- 2) He even brings discipline into our lives for our good. (Heb. 12:7-11).
- 3) God’s actions toward us are for our good (Hos. 5:15; Ps. 89:32-33).

IV. VALUES TO US TODAY

A. It separates the creature from the Creator.

- 1) We came from nothing and would return to nothing without God.
- 2) No one of us can sustain himself a single moment without God.
- 3) Our very existence every moment depends upon His faithfulness. (Acts 17:28)
- 4) Realization of this helps us to see our proper place before a faithful God.

B. Human nature cannot be relied upon, but God can.

- 1) Ultimately, humans will fail us, for man is unstable at best.
- 2) But not God, we can put our trust in Him for He never fails.
- 3) He is the Rock upon which we can put our trust.

C. This helps us to deal with worry & murmuring.

- 1) God will fulfill His promise, so stop worrying (Matt. 6:33).
 - a) ***“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”***
 - b) ***“I will in no wise fail thee.”***
- 2) God knows what is best for us.
 - a) We need to accept this and stop murmuring.
 - b) We need to show we believe in God’s faithfulness.
- 3) God is honored:
 - a) When we undergo trials & tribulations successfully.
 - b) When we hold good thoughts about Him during such.
 - c) We vindicate His wisdom & justice towards us.
 - d) We vindicate His love for us (1 Peter 4:19).
 - e) Quote: *“The sooner we resign ourselves into the faithful hands of God, the sooner we will be satisfied with His providential care in our lives.”*

D. Our hope for the future greatly depends upon God’s faithfulness.

- 1) God holds out the reward of a Resurrection unto Eternal Life.
- 2) The truthfulness of that promise depends upon His faithfulness.
- 3) If God is faithful, Heaven is surely there awaiting the faithful.

Conclusion

1. Why are you and I still a Christian?
 - a) Because we believe God is faithful to His Word.
 - b) Without that assurance, we would have no reason to be a Christian.
2. Why is it that people do not become a Christian?
 - a) Is it because they do not believe in the promises of God?
 - b) Is it because they do not believe in His threat of eternal damnation (Ezek. 8:18).
3. Will God really reward the faithful and punish the disobedient?
4. This is a crucial issue for us all!

Lesson Nine

“The Goodness of God”***Introduction***

1. The Psalmist is overwhelmed with God’s goodness (Ps. 107:1-9).
 - a) He sees it on every hand—all about him.
 - b) He calls for the obvious—Praise God for His goodness.
2. Until we see what he saw, we will not praise rightfully our Creator.
3. This lesson is designed to help us appreciate the goodness of God.

Discussion**I. THE GOODNESS OF GOD DEFINED*****A. Only One is really good in the absolute....God!*** (Matt. 19:17)

- 1) His goodness is self-derived:
 - a) He is not dependant upon others for His goodness.
 - b) The cause of His goodness is within Himself. (Ps. 119:68)
 - c) Man’s goodness is derived.
- 2) His goodness is infinite.
 - a) There is no one or no thing that can limit His goodness.
 - b) It is unending.
- 3) His goodness is perfect.
 - a) It cannot be improved upon.
 - b) Only He is perfect goodness.
- 4) His goodness is eternal.
 - a) Ps. 52:1
 - b) He has always been good and always will be.
- 5) Goodness is His very Nature.

B. It deals with His actions.

- 1) God is not only good, but He does good also (Ps. 119:68).
- 2) God is not only morally perfect, but His actions are perfect also.
- 3) God’s goodness is seen in His creation (Gen. 1:31)
 - a) God’s whole creation reflects His goodness.
 - b) Man is able to exclaim with the Psalmist: ***“I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.”***
 - c) Everything about our make-up attests to God’s goodness.
 - d) This goodness is seen in all His creatures (Ps. 145:15-16; 136:25; 33:5).
- 4) God’s goodness is seen in how He has dealt with sinful man.
 - a) God’s justice could have rightfully deprived man of every blessing, every comfort, and every pleasure.
 - b) But His goodness ushered in a mixed approach—Mercy & Judgment.
 - c) With all the evils of mankind, God’s goodness greatly shines forth.
 - There are generally more days of health than sickness & pain.
 - There is more creature-happiness than creature-misery.
 - Even our sorrows can be dealt with by God’s goodness.

d) But God's goodness shines forth greater in the redeeming love of Jesus.

- Luke 2:14
- It sent Jesus to live among men as a man, and let Him die in our place so we could live.
- We certainly didn't deserve this, but God is good.

II. HOW SHOULD THIS AFFECT MY LIFE?

A. I should praise God for His goodness.

- 1) The more I perceive His goodness, the more I should praise Him (Ps. 107:8).
- 2) Gratitude is a JUST DUE back to God for His great goodness.
- 3) And yet, so many lightly esteem His goodness (Rom. 2:4).

B. Let the goodness of God win my heart and trust.

- 1) The goodness of God appeals to man's heart (Nah. 1:7).
- 2) Let His goodness bring me to my knees in deep gratitude.

C. We should strive to be good because God is good.

- 1) Only God is good in the absolute, but man can be good in his sphere.
- 2) Acts 11:24; Tit. 2:5
- 3) We are admonished to cleave to that which is good (Rom. 12:9).
- 4) We are to do good, work good, follow the good (Rom. 13:3; 2:10; 1 Thess. 5:15)
- 5) We are to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

D. Need to realize that only those who do good can know God.

- 1) For one to claim he knows God as Father, but does evil, he is a liar.
- 2) The reason is obvious—children of God do good (3 John 11).

Conclusion

1. God is good to man.
 - a) It is seen all around us.
 - b) He richly provides for man's welfare through His goodness, even though most men do not serve Him.
2. God has shown His goodness to man primarily through His Son.
 - a) By not punishing man for his sins right away, but is longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9)
 - b) By giving us time to repent.
 - c) By giving us opportunity to be saved....forgiven of our sins.
3. A most important question was asked by Paul: ***“Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering?”***
4. Have we allowed the ***“goodness of God to lead us to repentance?”***
5. God's goodness is shown by His willingness to Forgive when we obey.

Lesson Ten

“The Severity of God”Introduction

1. In Romans 11:1-22, Paul is showing:
 - a) That the Jews were cut off as God's people because of unbelief.
 - b) That the Gentiles were grafted in as God's people because of belief.
2. But, he also warns: ***“Behold the goodness and severity of God.”***
 - a) Severity towards the Jews in cutting them off.
 - b) Goodness towards the Gentiles for grafting them in.
 - c) But if the Jews turn & believe, God will extend His goodness to them again.
 - d) And if the Gentiles do not continue faithful to God, He will be severe to them.
3. It should be obvious from these verses:
 - a) That the Nature of God is both goodness and severity.
 - b) He is God who rewards the obedient and punishes those who deserve such.
4. In this lesson we want to draw a contrast between these two attributes of God

Discussion**I. IT IS CRITICAL THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A ONE-SIDED VIEW OF GOD.*****A. If we only see His goodness:***

- 1) Danger of our hearts being lulled into indifference & disobedience.
- 2) 2 Pet. 1:10—***“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”***

B. If we only see His severity:

- 1) Our hearts will despair of finding favor with God.
- 2) Isa. 55:6-7—***“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”***

3) Illustration

- a) Bible class teacher wrote on blackboard: ***“The Lord is good to all.”***
- b) She asked the children to repeat it.
- c) One little fellow refused.
- d) When the teacher asked “Why?”:
- e) ***“Because it is not true, God is not good to all. He is not good to me & my father & mother. He has taken my little brother away; and father & mother are home crying about it.”***
- f) The teacher explained that God has taken his little brother to a better home in heaven & would take all of them there to if they would have an obedient faith in God.
- g) ***“Oh, I’ll go and tell my parents the good news.”***

C. The Severity of God helps us to see our need of fearing God & keeping His commandments.

- 1) Eccl. 12:13—***“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”***

2) Heb. 10:26-31

D. *The Goodness of God helps us to be assured of His love, forgiveness, and promised rewards.*

1) 2 Pet. 3:9—"*...God is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"

2) 1 John 3:1-3

3) 2 Peter 1:2-4

II. GOD HAS GIVEN US SUFFICIENT EXAMPLES OF HIS GOODNESS & SEVERITY

A. *This is one of the prime reasons for studying the Old Testament.*

1) 1 Cor. 10:11—"*Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*"

2) We should profit by their examples & God's actions.

3) We should not doubt the goodness nor the severity of God.

B. *Examples to illustrate:*

1) Adam & Eve:

a) Made them in His own image.

b) Provided everything man needed.

c) Gave him dominion over all the earth.

d) Walked & talked with them.

e) But they disobeyed Him.

f) And God punished them—drove them out of the garden.

2) Noah & family:

a) Because of Noah's right living:

- God appeared to him

- Warned him of the coming destruction of the world.

- Show him how to escape it.

b) Upon his obedience, God saved Noah & His family.

c) His severity was shown by the total destruction of every human on the earth.

d) Because of their sin & wickedness.

3) Lot & family:

a) Lot's righteous soul was vexed with wickedness of Sodom.

b) God sent angels to warn him of the coming destruction.

c) Lot and his two daughters were saved from destruction by God's goodness.

d) But his wife was turned into a pillar of salt because of her disobedience.

e) And the people of these cities were consumed with fire from heaven.

f) Behold, the goodness & severity of God.

C. *Even the New Testament has such examples.*

1) Ananias & Sapphira received the forgiveness of God upon their obedience to the gospel. (Acts 5:1-11)

2) But, when they both conspired to lie to the Holy Spirit, God struck them both dead, one after the other.

D. God has reminded us of His longsuffering to the disobedient.

- 1) Rom. 2:4—"**Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**"
- 2) But then He adds: "**But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.**"
- 3) He is warning us not to try to take advantage of His goodness by continuing in disobedience—For the day of Wrath will come!

E. God's goodness to mankind has been shown in multitude of ways:

- 1) He makes the sun and rain to fall upon the just & unjust alike. (Matt. 5:45)
- 2) To the disobedient, He has:
 - a) Provided a Savior & Redeemer in the giving of His own Son;
 - b) He pleads with man to turn from his evil ways so He can save them.
 - c) Ezek. 33:11—"**I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die...**"
 - d) He has even sent out His Ambassadors to plead for our souls. (2 Cor. 5:18-21)

F. But the day of His longsuffering & goodness will come to an end.

- 1) 2 Pet. 3:9-12; 2 Thess. 1:7-9
- 2) He has warned us that a day of judgment is coming. (Acts 17:30-31)
- 3) He has given examples of His wrath to impress us.
- 4) He has given a Law not to be ignored or trampled on.
- 5) He has sent a Law-giver not to be insulted & rejected.
- 6) Such will not be done without justified punishment.
- 7) In the words of inspiration: "**knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...**"(2 Cor. 5:11)

Conclusion

1. If we are not prepared for death to overtake us:
 - a) We need not expect mercy....for there will be none in that great day.
 - b) We need not think we shall escape His severity.....for it will come in full force.
2. Why wait—Turn now and accept God's goodness while you can.
 - a) Deliver your soul from the threat of God's severity.
 - b) Turn now while His goodness & mercy lingers...

Lesson Eleven

“The Names of God”

Introduction

1. Two passages that emphasize the importance of knowing God are: (John 17:3; 6:45).
 - a) We need to be taught and learn of God so we can come to Jesus.
 - b) We need to know the only true God to have eternal life through Jesus.
2. Corrupt views of God can lead to corrupt worship, service, and obedience to God.
 - a) What one believes about God influences all else in his religious life.
 - b) Correct religious beliefs and practices are dependant upon correct knowledge of God.
 - c) These lessons in this series is trying to do something about this.
3. Statements from others who have come to this realization:
 - a) *“The low view of God entertained almost universally among those who profess to be Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us.”*
 - b) *“It is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our inward attitudes right while our idea of God is erroneous or inadequate.”*
 - c) *“If we are to bring back spiritual power to our lives, we must begin to think of God more nearly as He is.”*
 - d) *“...no people have ever risen above its religion...no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God.”*
 - e) *“Worship is pure or base as the worshippers entertain high or low thoughts of God.”*
 - f) *“I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to an imperfect and ignoble thought about God.”*
 - g) *“Among the sins to which the human heart is prone, hardly any other is more hateful to God than idolatry, for idolatry is at the bottom a libel on His character.”*
 - h) *“The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God.”*
4. Some misconceptions of God to illustrate:
 - a) If we think of God as only a loving, merciful God, then punishment for sin becomes unbelievable.
 - b) If we think of God as only a wrathful, vengeful God, there is no motivation to really serve Him.
 - c) If we think of God as one who must conform to the demands of the human will, then God must fit the mold of every individual.
 - d) We need to be greatly concerned about our concepts & understandings of God that they are correct according to His revelation.
5. This lesson is on the Names of God which helps to demonstrate or illustrate the true nature of God.

Discussion

I. NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. *El*—A General term prevalent among ancient peoples.

- 1) Carries with it the idea of Power, Authority, Greatness, etc.

- 2) Descriptive terms are added to this for emphasis about God's Nature:
 - a) **El Shaddai**—God Almighty. Majestic stability, strong refuge, pillar that is unmoved.
 - b) **El Elyon**—Most High God. His quality as the Exalted One in the universe.
 - c) **El Olam**—The Eternal God. His eternal duration, agelessness, perpetuity.
 - d) **El Roi**—God who sees. All-seeing, God of sight.
 - e) **El Kadosh**—Holy God. Above all sin, pure, sinless, perfection.
 - f) **El Gibhor**—Mighty God.
 - g) **El Abhir**—Mighty God
 - h) **El Kanna**—Jealous God (God of righteous zeal) demands exclusive devotion.
 - i) **El Tsedeq**—Righteous God (God's fidelity, a keeper of covenants).
 - j) **El Tsur**—God is a rock, fortress, shield.
 - k) **El Tsebhaoth**—God of Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts) controller over all created agencies and beings.

B. Elohim—Plural form of El, but has a singular verb or adjective.

- 1) Used only by Hebrews—the most frequent noun for God in the Old Testament.
- 2) The Term would suggest:
 - a) Diversity and richness within Deity
 - b) Infer a unique quality of God's Being
 - c) Usually used to point out the concept of the Trinity.
- 3) It stresses God's governance of the world and mankind in general.

C. Adhonai—Translated Master or Lord.

- 1) It emphasizes God's rulership over all.
- 2) But also, it denotes the more personal relationship with God and His people.
- 3) It infers obligations and duties on the part of man.

D. JHVH (Hehovah or Yahveh)—The more personal name of Deity.

- 1) It identifies God more as a person or personality.
- 2) It is the name by which God's people could enter into personal Covenant relationship.
- 3) The name developed so much significance among the Jews:
 - a) Scribes had superstitious fear of even pronouncing it.
 - b) When writing, they would substitute another name for God.
 - c) They would use Adhonai instead of Jehovah.
- 4) Some feel that this name took on a Redemptive significance.
- 5) Use of this name in prophecies are identified with Christ in the New Testament.
- 6) Meaning of the term:
 - a) Possibly identified with God's statement to Moses.
 - b) **"What name shall I say sent me?"**
 - c) **"I am that I am."**
 - d) The One, True God, Self-Existent, and Self-Sufficient.
 - e) The One who is the cause and ground of all things.

- f) The One who is faithful to His promises, and constant in His relationship to His people.
- g) Jesus used the expression, “*Before Abraham was, I am,*” to identify Himself.

II. NAMES OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. *Theos***—Corresponds to El and Elohim in the Old Testament (God, Deity)
 - 1) It expresses essential Deity.
 - 2) The emphasis is upon self-sufficiency, self-determination, and absolute righteousness.
 - 3) It is the general term for Deity.
- B. *Kurios***—Lord (Master, Ruler, King, etc.)
 - 1) Corresponds to Adhonai and Jehovah.
 - 2) It is a more personal concept and relationship with obligations and duties.
 - 3) It is applied equally to the Father and the Son.
- C. *Terms used with God to give more emphasis to God’s Nature.***
 - 1) Almighty
 - 2) Highest
 - 3) Holy
 - 4) Potentate, King of kings, Lord of lords.
 - 5) Shepherd
 - 6) Father
 - a) This term is most significant.
 - b) It becomes the very personal term applied to God over His children.
 - c) He is portrayed as a loving heavenly Father.

Conclusion

- 1. We are warned to hold the Name of God in high respect, honor, and reverence. (Exo. 20:7; Deut. 28:58; Ps. 72:19; Lev. 19:12)
- 2. We need to hold God’s name in the deepest of reverence and respect in our Words, our Hearts, and our Deeds!
 - a) Ps. 8:1
 - b) Let’s truly come to know Him by Name and offer the sincere worship He is due.

Lesson Twelve

“Awe in the Presence of God”Introduction

1. Illustrate:
 - a) We had a very good friend in Kansas City, Mo., when we lived there that was a converted Jew who came from Russia.
 - b) We named our son after him, Stephen Eckstein.
 - c) His father was an orthodox scribe in Russia.
 - d) He told me that when his father would be making copies of the Word of God and come to the name of God—he would try to show great respect.
 - They would put new pens into their writing instruments.
 - They would take a bath and changed clothes.
2. To us—this seems like misguided zeal.
3. But at the same time, it was trying to show special awe for the name of God.
4. The Psalmist is calling upon the world to tremble at the greatness of what God has done:
 - a) When He delivered Jacob out of Egypt—the sea walled up and let them thru.
 - b) The mountains and hills became subservient to them—giving needed water.
 - c) The River Jordan opened up for them. (Ps. 114:1-8)
5. Man is called upon many times to keep silence before the great & mighty God of heaven.
 - a) Hab. 2:20—***“The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.”***
 - b) Zech. 2:13—***“Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation.”***
 - c) Ps. 89:7—***“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”***
 - d) Ps. 111:9—***“...holy and reverend is His name.”***
 - e) **Silence** in God's presence shows a **sense of Awe, Reverence, and Respectfulness.**
6. We do not expect the world to have such a respect for God—Though they should.
7. But it should be expected of the **people of God.**

Discussion**I. AN EXAMPLE OF GOD'S PEOPLE LOSING RESPECT FOR GOD.*****A. Judah drifted far from God.***

- 1) They had turned their hearts and lives from Him and His Word.
- 2) They went deeper and deeper into sin that brought their destruction.
- 3) However—not all were slain—but carried captive to Babylon.
- 4) God later allowed them to return to their homeland.
- 5) Hopefully, with a return to their former reverence & respect for God.

B. Nehemiah illustrates this attitude.

- 1) Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6
- 2) The people wept when they heard the words of the Lord. (v. 9)
- 3) When they showed reverence for God's Law, they show reverence to the God who gave the Law.
- 4) They had learned well the need for proper reverence.

C. Illustrate the difference between respect & terror.

- 1) Israel rejoiced to hear the Word of the Lord.
- 2) Felix, Governor of Judea, had a sense of terror at hearing the Word of the Lord.
- 3) Acts 24:24-25

II. WAYS WE SHOW REVERENCE FOR GOD:**A. Our attitude toward His Word.**

- 1) An unwillingness to listen to God shows a lack of respect.
- 2) Acts 17:11—*"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."*
- 3) They showed a respectful listening to a message supposedly from God.
- 4) But even some at Thessalonica revered God.
 - a) 1 Thess. 2:13—*"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."*

B. Our attitude towards the name of God.

- 1) Exo. 20:7—*"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."*
- 2) Rev. 11:18—*"The nations were angry, and your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that you should reward your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."*
- 3) God's name must not be used lightly—without proper respect.
- 4) When His name is upon our lips—it is to be with reverence.
- 5) We need to honor & respect His name.

C. Our worshipful adoration & praise of God!

- 1) Rev. 15:3-4
- 2) Rev. 5:13
- 3) John 4:24—*"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God in spirit and in truth."*
- 4) Sincere worship & praise of God shows reverence for God.
 - a) It needs to come from a heart full of gratitude.
 - b) From a humble heart, realizing our smallness before God.
 - c) That comes from an overwhelmed heart at the greatness of God.

D. Our obedient spirit.

- 1) It is not enough to be in silent respect in the presence of God.
- 2) But God needs to be heard, believed and obeyed, as well!
- 3) Matt. 7:21—*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."*
- 4) It is a spirit of desiring to do the Will of God to show our respect for Him.
- 5) A desire to do exactly what He commands—not what I like.

Conclusion

1. We laugh at a commercial that was used some time ago about—E. F. Hutton.
 - a) *"When E. F. Hutton speaks, people listen..."*
 - b) They had respect for what he had to say about investments.
2. But what we are talking about now is not a laughing matter.
 - a) Jehovah God of heaven has spoken.
 - b) Let all the earth keep silence and listen to what He has to say.
 - c) Let all the earth tremble before Him and Reverence His Name.
 - d) Let all flesh become obedient unto Him who has made all things.
3. What is your attitude towards God?
4. No greater respect can be shown to God than to accept His Son as Lord & Master of our lives.

