

TEACHING GOAL

To show that God is exalted above all we can know or think.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

Q. What is God?

A. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

S.C. 4; L.C. 7; W.C. of F. II; Savoy 2; Young 9

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Psalm 139

Support Passages: Psalm 90:1-6; I Kings 8:27; Job 11:7-9; Romans 11:33-36; Psalm 147:4-5

BIBLE STORY

Exodus 3:1-15; God is the one who informs us "I am that I am". Moses and the burning bush.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9, ESV)

APPLICATION

The true God who has revealed Himself by His works and word; that most Holy and True Spirit, must be worshipped in accord with His revealed will from the heart.

SUMMARY

The last lesson examined the concept that God is Spirit and therefore a rational, conscious, personal being. Now our attention is turned to those characteristics of God that transcend those of mankind. Not only does God establish Himself as a personal being with whom people may fellowship, whom they can worship and love and to whom they can pray and expect answers, but He is exalted above all that we can know or think. It is the Bible God with whom we fellowship and not the Gods of the Koran, the Pali (Buddhist), the Gathas (Zoroastrianism), etc. All other so called gods are false, and it is a dreadful sin before the True and Living God to worship another in any manner whatsoever. All other gods are different and strange. It is only the Bible that represents a God that is both personal and infinite at once.

In its concept of infinity, the Bible does not present God as nothingness or allness. Faulty concepts of infinity have led some theologians to refuse the concept of the substance of God. Emil Brunner, for example, in speaking of the One the Bible calls the Son of God, writes, "that is, as everything we say about God, a parable. God has no sons just as men have sons."¹ Because many conceive of infinitude as the absence of anything material or substantive, they believe God to be absolutely transcendent. Again many conceive of infinitude as being all inclusive and therefore that God is inclusive of all and in all. That view is Pantheism. Everything is thus made to be God. To avoid these heresies we have been careful to establish God's personality and spirituality.

The Bible concept that God is infinite does not mean that He is nothing, or that He is in everything. It means simply that God is above all that we can know or think. As God is free from all constraints of space, so also is He free from the constraints of time. He is eternal. He has always existed. So has Jesus always existed as He states in John 8:58, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." He is the "I AM", meaning that He is the eternally present being. Moses heard God speak from the bush, "I AM WHO I AM." He wants us to know Him as YAHWEH (Exodus 6:3), which is translated "LORD." The lower case "Lord" translates another word for God, namely, "adonai." Furthermore, His name YAHWEH is closely related to the Hebrew word "ehyeh", which means "I am." He therefore is the eternally present being.

It is no small problem to many theologians that God being eternally in the present is nonetheless rational and intelligent; that He actually thinks and feels. To discuss these modern concepts is beyond the scope of this lesson, but all views in this regard are illogical and unbiblical and God's name is blasphemed if He is made no less than the living, personal God of the Bible and the heart.

James writes, James 1¹⁷ "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." Other scriptures such as Isaiah 14:24, Malachi 3:6, or Numbers 23:19 state the same concept. All instances in Scripture where God

is said to "repent" (e.g. Genesis 6:6-7) mean that God exhibits sorrow or grief. He is a compassionate, personal being. Yet God is not inactive because He does not change. He is not away on business or sleeping. What wicked blasphemy are such statements. He is no less a personal being because He is unchanging or unchangeable.

We must fellowship with so exalted a being while He is longsuffering and near to us. The day soon will come when this Holy Exalted being will judge the world in righteousness.

¹ Emil Brunner, I believe in the Living God, Philadelphia PA, The Westminster Press, 1961, p. 54.