

TEACHING GOAL

To show that the Lord of Hosts is sovereign over all.

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: Romans 9:6-29

Support Passages: Nahum 1:1-8; I John 4:7-21; Lamentations 3:22-23; I Samuel 2:1-10; Psalm 99:9; Genesis 17:1-2; Psalm 115:1-8

BIBLE STORY

Acts 14:1-18; Paul and Barnabas are mistaken for Gods. So inanely foolish was their idolatry of the apostles that Paul and Barnabas tore their robes and showed the nature of the True god to their would-be worshippers.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him." (Nahum 1:7, ESV)

APPLICATION

To escape the wrath of the sovereign, just God, we must repent and believe on the perfect exhibit of His love - His Christ!

SUMMARY

This lesson on the nature of God deals with those attributes that are possessed by men to some small degree. Wisdom or knowledge, for example, is present in mankind but it is small and finite compared to the wisdom of God which is infinite eternal and unchangeable. In animals other than man, these attributes are not present at all. Animals have no wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Intuition or instinct are not related to the attributes of God but are derived from the genetics of the particular species of animal. A newborn baby does not have to be taught to suckle because this ability is given to it biologically by means of its genes. The attributes of God that are present in mankind are the properties of the soul and are not biologically obtained. Furthermore, these attributes are also present in the souls of men in heaven and they are found in angels. Among animals, human beings alone are able to conceive of abstractions and of God, not because their brains are larger or more developed than other animals (they are in fact smaller than some other animals) but because they have souls. It is a feature of immortality that the Christian will enjoy an environment of absolute wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Now we have some concept of the nature of these attributes for we possess them to some degree. Yet, as they apply to God they are quite different. Consider wisdom or knowledge. We may have knowledge of a future event which is probable to occur because, based on a pattern of such things occurring in the past we are able to reason that such things will come to pass again. We are able to predict based on a study of the past. Even so, the prediction may not come to pass. With God, His prediction of the future is sure to happen not merely because He knows the past, and of course He knows the past just as He knows all things, but because He causes the future event to take place.

God is all-powerful. A person repents from sin and believes on Christ, not because God merely knew of this future event, and of course He does because He knows all things, but because God caused his conversion to occur. People repent because God has "mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." On one He has mercy; another He hardens. From the same lump of clay one vessel is made for wrath and another for glory. Therefore, an event is perfectly predictable, to God only, because God brings it to pass. His knowledge is causative, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. The knowledge of mankind, though it be a small measure of God's knowledge, is none of these. Thus we may argue similarly concerning all of God's attributes. Mankind has a measure of holiness but they are sinners. God has no sin. Our power is limited to human capabilities, and we cannot create from nothing. Mankind do not exhibit undeserved love. We love God because He first loved us. A baby is loved because of who it is, because in that sense it deserves love. God "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" in

spite of its undeserving iniquity. God's truth is never relative. It is never contingent on other things such as the abilities or social behavior of mankind.

"Sovereignty is not a property of God's nature, but it is a prerogative"¹ that arises from His exalted and perfect being. Because He is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all His attributes, He exercises sovereignty in all of them. He works all things to the praise of the glory of His grace. "He does what He wills with His own."² Dr. Charles Hodge puts it this way: God's people, "rejoice that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; that neither necessity, nor chance, nor the folly of man, nor the malice of Satan controls the sequence of events in all their issues. Infinite wisdom, love and power, belong to Him, our great God and Savior, into whose hands all power in heaven and earth has been committed."³

¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965, p440
² Ibid. p. 441
³ Ibid. p. 441