

LESSON 4

GOD, THE SUPREME BEING

Scripture Texts: Exodus 20:2-3; Isaiah 45:5; 1 Corinthians 8:5-6; Ephesians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Hebrews 12:9



In this lesson we turn our study to the most important of all subjects that mankind can give attention to. If there is a God—and no one should dare to dismiss this belief lightly—it is most important that we know all we can learn about Him and understand our duties regarding our relation to Him.

The doctrine of God lies at the very center of Christian existence. There can be no such things as morals, salvation, worship, Christian conduct, and church relations without a conception of the true God. People have many ideas about God. Some of these will be discussed in a future lesson. For this lesson we look to the Bible to learn what it has to say to us about God.

MEMORY VERSE: *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

John 4:24

Can We Know God?

Almost everyone in the world has some idea of God. Some ideas are based on imagination and some on fact. The Christian bases his ideas of God on the fact that God is an infinite Being. It is not possible to describe an infinite Being. All definitions are built on the basis of comparison, but with whom and with what shall we compare God? The best we can do is to point out wherein He is like us and wherein He differs from us. The very idea of infinitude defies description. Everything with which we have to do in this world is finite. We measure time in days and hours but we have no scale with which to measure eternity—infinite existence. We measure distance in miles and light-years but we cannot begin to measure infinite space. It is difficult to conceive a trillion of anything, but impossible to conceive of infinity. An accurate description of God must be made in celestial language for no human tongue can describe Him.

Nature and reason are sources from which one can learn about God. But all such knowledge will not bring us into a close relationship or fellowship with Him. The Bible is our chief source of knowledge of God. Through its revelation it gives us a picture of God, increasing in clearness until we find Him fully revealed in Christ. To know Christ fully is to know God fully. We are responsible for everything God teaches us about Himself.

There Is Only One God

The very nature of God requires that He have no rival in Isaiah 45:5. There is no being that is not subject to His will. God, in His Word, refuses to acknowledge any other gods. Such is the belief of all Christians today. Nothing can be taken from Him and nothing can be added to Him. If this could be done, He would cease to be complete and would cease to be the eternal, self-existing, and perfect Being.

God is a Spirit. We can know His personality, His feelings, His desires, and His fellowship but never His physical form. In giving the Ten Commandments, God asserted His claim as the only God and called upon the children of Israel to worship Him only in Exodus 20:2-3. The Bible sometimes seems to give recognition to other

gods, but they are always regarded as inferior beings, unworthy of our respect or worship. Paul, speaking for the Christians of his day, ignored such gods, refusing to give them any respect or consideration in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

God is more than a principle or an ideal, as some would identify Him. One does not pray to a principle or worship an ideal. Only persons are capable of being worshiped. God is a Spirit—a Person. There is an essential likeness between God and the spirit of man who is created in God's image. God changes not. The power of life belongs to Him. He is not the "I was" or the "I shall be," but the eternal, self-existent "I AM." He announced His name to Moses as "I AM." In these words He laid claim to independent self-existence—a greater claim than man can make.

God Is Eternal

God is the high and holy One who inhabits eternity. Eternity is of unending duration, without beginning and without ending. Time and eternity cannot be compared, because they are quite different. We divide time into three parts—past, present, and future. But the past is gone forever and no longer exists. The future has not yet come into being. We have only the present, which is a narrow line where past and future meet. And yet on this narrow line all thinking, planning, and acting takes place. We experience only the present, and how brief it is!

But with God all is present and known to Him. He knows no past and future, for with Him all is the eternal now. God is not growing older, nor is eternity. Eternity is changeless and so is God.

JUST A THOUGHT

"Remember that everyone who got where he is had to start from where he was."