

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE

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LESSON 15 • The Father and the SonWEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPERGenesis 48-50, 1 Peter 1-3
Isaiah 45

Once, when Jesus was praying to His Father, He used these words, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent" (John, chapter 17, verse 3).

We must therefore know God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. Eternal life depends upon this knowledge.

And how else can we learn about God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, but by reading the Bible? It is impossible for us to know anything about God, unless we study the message which He Himself has given us.

God Himself has said,

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith 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, chapter 55, verses 8-9).

One God and Father of all

What can we learn from the Bible about God? The apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy, speaks of Him as, "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (I Timothy, chapter 6, verses 15-16).

If the Bible told us only of the power and holiness of God, we should certainly fear Him; but we might find it difficult to love Him. But God has shown us that He is also kind and merciful.

When Moses was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness, he became discouraged by the difficulties he had had to face; and to help him carry on, he prayed to God, saying, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory."

We can read about this in Exodus, chapter 33, verse 17-23, and then in chapter 34, verse 6-7, where God revealed Himself to Moses in these words: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

When we think about God's goodness, we may well say with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name" (Psalm 103, verse 1).

The Son of God

Right from the beginning, God planned to send His Son to be our Saviour. There are many prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament, such as the one in Isaiah, chapter 7, verse 14, where we read, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

Immanuel means, "God with us", and God is here promising to send His own Son.

And so it came to pass. As the apostle Paul says, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians, chapter 4, verse 4).

Before His birth, the angel said unto His mother, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke, chapter 1, verse 35).

Before He began His work of preaching, Jesus was baptised in the River of Jordan. At this time, God gave Him the Holy Spirit, which meant that He had unlimited power; and God said to Him, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark, chapter 1, verse 11).

The nature of Christ

Because Jesus was born of a woman, He had a nature just like ours. In Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 17, we read, "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren."

Of course, Jesus was like us before His resurrection. After the resurrection, He was given a powerful immortal body.

Because Jesus was the Son of God, His character was perfect, even when He possessed a weak human nature.

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A wrong idea

Many people have neglected the Bible teaching about God, and so they have come to believe in something which they call "the Trinity". They tell us that God consist of three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, all equal with each other. (We shall be considering the Holy Ghost, or more correctly, the Holy Spirit, in the next lesson.)

The word "Trinity" and the phrase "God the Son" do not occur in the Bible. Indeed, the whole idea is opposed to Bible teaching. In the same way that a son can never be equal with his father, so Jesus can never be equal with God. He never claimed to be, but depended on His Father for all things. He said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do" (John, chapter 5, verse 19).

It is true that Jesus once said, "I and My Father are one" (John, chapter 10, verse 30).

But we also speak of being at one with a person if we agree perfectly with him.

In this sense, Jesus was also one with His disciples, for He prays in John, chapter 17, verse 21 that, "...they (the disciples) all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."

Turn to I Corinthians, chapter 15, and read verses 24-28. Notice particularly verse 28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

This verse tells us that, even at the end of His 1,000-year reign on earth, Jesus will be subject to His Father; and God alone will be all in all.

Where did belief in the Trinity come from?

The early Christians didn't believe in the Trinity. They believe what the Bible taught - that there is "...one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (I Timothy, chapter 2, verse 5).

It was not until over 300 years after Jesus was born that Christians began to believe in "the Trinity"; and this belief was based, not on the Bible, but on the ideas of the Ancient Greeks, who knew nothing of the one true God.

The true belief of the First Christians

In the "Apostles' Creed", which was put together about 100 years after Jesus went up into heaven, and which sets out the beliefs of the early Christians, we read, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

This is the true teaching of the Bible.

Summary

1. There is only one God.
2. God is not "three-in-one". The doctrine of the Trinity is not in the Bible.
3. Jesus Christ is not God; He is the Son of God.
4. Jesus is a man, but He is far, far greater than any other man.
5. His birth was a great miracle, because His mother was a virgin. His only father was God Almighty.