



18 LESSON CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Lesson 12

GOD THE CREATOR

God has always existed:

“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (Psalm 90:2)

The first words of the Bible are, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”*. It is easier to believe that God has always existed, than to believe that this earth, with its amazing variety of plants and animals, came into being by a long-continued series of fortunate accidents. The Bible declares that God is infinitely wise, powerful and good, and that He created the world for a definite purpose.

“They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9)

“He who created the heaven . . . who fashioned and made the earth . . . he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited.” (Isaiah 45:18)

God created the world so that in the end He might reveal himself to mankind, and that men should accept Him as their Creator, and give Him glory. Nothing and no one can prevent this happening. This revelation of God is first of all through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will soon return to reign. With him will be those faithful ones whom he has raised from the dead, who will reign with him on the earth. The mortal population of the earth will all at last believe that God does exist, and will enjoy the blessing of perfect government.

*“Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ **The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.**” (Isaiah 2:3)*

Paul tells us that when Christ returns, he will reign on earth until he has subdued all God’s enemies, all who oppose the will of God. This will include the final enemy, death. Then Christ will hand over the restored world to his Father, and the final age of the world will begin, when God will be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

God will be revealed to those from every age of man, who have become His children through baptism into the Name of Jesus Christ, and they will live for ever in His presence.

*“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God . . . **There will be no more death . . . for the old order of things has passed away.**” (Revelation 21:3,4)*

One God

We have already explained that the God of the Bible is not a Trinity of three co-equal Persons. When He first revealed himself to his chosen people, His prophet Moses declared, *“Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one”* (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Jews were never taught that God is a Trinity, and to this day they find it impossible to accept.

As always, the New Testament agrees with the Old. In a prayer to his Father, Jesus said, *“Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”* (John 17:3). Note the distinction between God and Jesus Christ. The same distinction is found in the words of Paul: *“For us there is but **one God** (Greek Theos), **the Father**, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but **one Lord** (Greek Kurios), **Jesus Christ**, through whom all things came and through whom we live”* (1 Corinthians 8:6). Clearly the original sense makes a distinction between the descriptive titles of the Father and the Son. In some languages the same word is used for *Theos* and *Kurios*. Unfortunately this confuses the sense of the original Greek. We have already (Lesson 11) quoted the key passage: *“There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”* (1 Timothy 2:5)

We see that the Bible clearly distinguishes between God the Father, who created the universe, and his Son, Jesus Christ, who was born on this earth and who was raised from the dead by the power of God:

“God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that is above every name.”
(Philippians 2:9)

God gives, the Son receives. As a Father God loves His Son and rewards him.

In the letter to the Hebrews the writer underlines the fact that Jesus is now raised to the highest position, not because he is eternally God the Son, but because he lived a perfect life:

“But about the Son he says, ‘You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.’” (Hebrews 1:9)

A God of love

Though God is slow to anger, it is true that He is severe towards those who oppose and defy Him, and we find this in both the Old and the New Testaments:

“The wicked will perish, the Lord’s enemies will be like the beauty of the fields, and they will vanish — vanish like smoke.” (Psalm 37:20)

“. . . unless you repent, you too will all perish.” (Luke 13:3)

Note: The fate of the wicked is to perish, not to suffer eternal torment. In such passages as Matthew 5:22, *“But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of the fire of hell”*, the word ‘hell’ in the Greek is ‘gehenna’. Gehenna was a place outside the walls of Jerusalem, where fires were kept constantly burning, and where rubbish, and the dead bodies of criminals were burnt up. It became a symbol of complete destruction, not of torment.

But He is above all a God of love:

“He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

And from the Old Testament:

“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger for ever; . . . As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.” (Psalm 103:8-14)

Those who approach God with reverence and humility are never turned away.

“The Lord your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him.” (2 Chronicles 30:9)

“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” (Isaiah 66:2)

God is love (1 John 4:8). We can understand God best if we simply look at Jesus. He said, *“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father”* (John 14:9). In other words, Jesus, the Son of God, shows us perfectly what the character of God is like.

Summary

There is only one God, and He himself is One. He created the earth, and has a purpose with it and with mankind. The next stage of this purpose will be fulfilled at the return of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom He glorified, but who is not His equal. God will finally reveal himself to his people, to whom He will give eternal life.

The goodness and severity of God are spoken of in both Old and New Testaments.

Questions

M1 *What is the purpose of God with regard to the earth and mankind?*

M2 *What does the Bible say about the character of God?*