



“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”
Matthew 5:48.

Jesus Speaks About God

Lesson Aim: to better understand the character of our God.

L80. Date: October 1970. **Text:** Matthew 5:33-35, 43-48.

Topic: God: Nature of.

INTRODUCTION

The nature of God determines all that Jesus did and taught. It is evident that what God is determines how He acts and what He demands of men.

The God of Jesus is the God of the Old Testament scriptures. Jesus did not begin a new doctrine. He simply developed what had been revealed so many years before. But the interpretation which Jesus put on that former revelation was so different from what Jewish teachers had traditionally placed on it that what He said was called “the gospel (good news) of God!”

Jesus' teaching was always popular. It was made to appeal and apply to the common man, his needs and ability to comprehend. Therefore, Jesus never set out a systematic doctrine of any subject. Especially, He did not set forth a systematic statement of the doctrine of God. Men would not have understood it if He had done so.

Therefore, any outline of the teaching of Jesus is somewhat arbitrary. The following comments on His doctrine of God has been gleaned from the tone or intimation underlying His teachings rather than from a specific statement. Jesus nowhere says, for instance, “God is a father.” But His repeated references to “My Father” and when speaking to believers to “your Father” makes it clear He viewed God as a Father. He nowhere says, “God is gracious.” But His teachings of how God deals graciously with the unworthy shows the truth that He is a God of grace. But Jesus did say enough about God to make clear to us who He is, what He is like, and what He expects of

us.

The aim of this study is “to better understand the character of our God.” If this aim is realized, blessed consequences will be experienced in your life. Pursue the study with earnest concern.

EXPOSITION

I. THE GOD AND THE GODS

Jesus lived in a generation which recognized the existence of many gods. The Jews were about the only people on earth (except the Christians) who believed in only one God. The pagans believed their gods were grudging, unknown and unknowable, detached from the World which they ruled through daimons, and were gods without love.

The Jews were much more enlightened. Through the Old Testament revelation they had the truth about God available. But in those generations between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New, they had grown away from God. They looked upon Him as unapproachable, transcendent, and unpredictable since He was accountable to no one. They even ceased to call the name of their God. Today no one knows the pronunciation the ancient Hebrews used for the JHVH name of their God.

Into this situation, Jesus came with a message of what God is like. He told of a God who is filled with selfless love, self-revealing, and involved in the human situation. He invited men to come to that God in whom they would find forgiveness. He assured us that God was seeking those who did not come to Him, not for the purpose of punishment but to woo and win them. Most important of all, He pictured God as a Father who provides in love and redeems in grace.

Thus it is evident why the teachings of Jesus were so different. Beside the Jewish conception of a God who is remote and transcendent and beside the Gentile conception of gods who were uninterested, grudging and unloving, Jesus set the doctrine of the true God who is a Father. Indeed, this was a gospel (good news) about God!

II. GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

1. God is creator of the universe. Jesus makes that very clear. He said of mankind, **“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female,”** Mark 10:6. Hence, He is the creator of human beings. Mark 13:19 goes even further to declare God created all things which exist—all

creation is His handiwork. The sun is “His sun” and the rain is also His rain, Matthew 5:45. Whether things in heaven or on earth, whether visible or invisible, all things came from His creative hand. See Colossians 1:16.

2. God is immanent in His creation. Both Jews and pagans held that God had little, if anything, to do with the daily operation of the universe or the affairs of men. Jesus declared this to be untrue. In Matthew 6:25-30 the Father is pictured as clothing the lilies and feeding the birds, and providing for His children as well. Yes, He is involved in the affairs of His creation.

Nothing escapes His attention and care. Not even a little sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge and concern, Matthew 10:29-31. And such detail of concern is manifest over His children that the hairs of their head are numbered. What we call “the laws of nature” are nothing more than the active expression of God's will in His creation. He is here; He knows; He cares; He provides.

3. God is sovereign over His creation. Heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool, Matthew 5:34-35. He causes the sun to shine and determines where the rain will fall, Matthew 5:45. He is “Lord of heaven and earth,” Matthew 11:25. He can do what He pleases: “. . . **With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible,**” Mark 10:27. He works the laws of nature for the good of His children.

The pagans believed the gods were dependent upon the creation for their existence and welfare. Some even equated their gods with creation—rock, tree, wind, or a planet in the heavens. Jesus said it was not so. God created all and is sovereign over what He has made. At one time He existed in His fullness without a creation and can do so again.

III. GOD AND MANKIND

1. God made man. In discussing divorce, Jesus said, “. . . **Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,**” Matthew 19:4. Such a casual reference to God's creation of mankind infers that He expected it to be commonly believed among the hearers. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus accepted the account of creation as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2.

2. God loves man. When Jesus said, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. . .” (John 3:16), He was speaking of the world of mankind. This means that God loves man even though he is a sinful person. He is ready to forgive in love; hence He draws sinners to Jesus (John 6:44) and rejoices when they come, Luke 15:7. Even the outcast and despised are welcome (Luke 18:10) and none are rejected when they come

in repentance and faith, John 6:37.

God desires to enter into a personal fellowship with redeemed men. He is “seeking” men to worship Him in spirit and in truth, John 4:23. He delights to give an answer to their petitions, Matthew 7:7-11. It is “good pleasure” to give because He is a Father, Luke 12:32. What love!

3. God is a father to believing men. Jesus stressed the fatherhood of God. His emphasis was not on paternity (mere giving of life) but on true fatherhood (intimate fellowship and love). This was no commonplace fact with Jesus. It was of great significance to Him. Observe that he rarely spoke of God as Father (only four times in Mark) and then only to those who could understand the spiritual implications involved in that concept.

He declared that God was His Father. No one knew the Father like He did. Nor could anyone ever really know the Father unless the Son revealed Him, Matthew 11:27.

But God is also the Father of those who receive Jesus as personal Saviour. When they pray they address Him as “Our Father,” Matthew 6:8-9. They are assured that His will is for their protection and safety, Matthew 18:14. Believers approach God in prayer as they would approach a Father and in fatherly love He ministers to each child daily bread, forgiveness protection and deliverance.

4. God is a King. As King, God, is sovereign in His kingdom. (See Matthew 4:17; 5:3; 12:28; Luke 12:32; 16:16; 17; 21; et. al.) The Kingdom of God is simply the reign of God. This is a present reality which will reach its consummation when Jesus comes the second time.

As sovereign ruler, God is judge over all men. He has power not only to kill but to cast into hell, Luke 12:5. He has the right to demand fruit to His glory of each person and to discipline in judgment those who do not honor Him, Luke 13:69. When the Kingdom of God comes in power then His authority of judgment will be manifest for all to see, Mark 9:1.

As king and judge, God is sovereign over all things. He alone is worthy of worship; He bows the knee to none other, Matthew 4:10. He is greater than Jesus, His Son, John 14:28; 5:19. He is the source and giver of life, John 5:26. He brings sinners to repentance by drawing them to Jesus, John 6:44. Yes, He is sovereign over all. This means you and I owe our utmost allegiance to Him and should render most unhesitating obedience to Him.

IV. GOD AND HIS SON

1. God the Father bears to Jesus a relationship described as “Father and Son.” Jesus did not become a Son by His birth to Mary. He was eternally the

Son of God. Neither does this use of terms mean that the Father created the Son nor that the Son was born by some supernatural procreation. The three persons of the divine trinity have been eternally existent as Father, Son and Spirit. That we might understand their relationship, these terms are described as illustration for us. The Father and the Son are one essence. The glory of the Son was “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,” John 1:14. The Son is “the brightness of His (the Father's) glory, and the express image of His person,” Hebrews 1:3. Jesus could truthfully say, **“I and my Father are one,”** John 10:30.

Hence it could be said that the Son revealed the Father. **“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,”** John 1:18. When Philip requested of Jesus, **“... Lord, show us the Father...”** Jesus replied, **“... Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...”** John 14:8-9.

And yet, the Son was subordinate to the Father during His earthly ministry. He repeatedly stated that He was sent by the Father, John 3:16-17. He declared that His words were the words which the Father gave Him to speak, John 17:8. He said the works He did were not His works, but the works of the Father, John 9:6; 4:34; 5:19. He even announced that the life He lives was given by the Father, John 6:57. In everything He was subordinate to the Father. **“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience...”** Hebrews. 5:8. Think about it! This is a miracle of grace!

CONCLUSION

God was real to Jesus. This reality was not of a doctrinal proposition, but a personal fellowship. Jesus enjoyed extraordinary intimacy with God and told His disciples that they could enter into this relationship also. He called God by the title of “Abba, Father,” Mark 14:36. And we can call Him by the same title, Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6. This is the “gospel (good news) of God” which He came to deliver to men. It makes one love God the more to know Him the better, doesn't it?

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the doctrine of God important?
2. What did the pagans believe about their gods?
3. How did the Jews look upon the Lord God?
4. What is God's relationship to the universe?

5. What is God's relationship to mankind?