

LESSON II

G O D

Preparation

Gen. 17:entire

Gen. 22:entire

Markers

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| 1. Gen. 1:1 | 16. I John 4:8 |
| 2. Gen. 2:1 | 17. I John 4:12 |
| 3. Ex. 6:2, 3 | 18. II Cor. 4:18 |
| 4. Gen. 17:1, 2 | 19. John 3:8 |
| 5. Hebr. 11:19 | 20. Jer. 29:11 |
| 6. Gen. 22:13 | 21. Ps. 40:17 |
| 7. Gen. 1:2 | 22. Hab. I:13 |
| 8. Gen. 41:38 | 23. Ezek. 18:1-3 |
| 9. John 4:24 | 24. Rom. 3:8 |
| 10. Deut. 30:20 | 25. Jer. 17:10 |
| 11. Ps. 36:9 | 26. Matt. 6:8 |
| 12. Lev. 26:11 | 27. I Cor. 3:20 |
| 13. Deut. 32:4 | 28. Luke 12:2 |
| 14. Lev. 24:12 | 29. I Cor. 2:9, 10 |
| 15. Mark 12:30, 31 | |

Lesson II

GOD

The subject of the Bible is God. The central theme of the Bible is the victory of good over evil and the appearing of the Christ. It depicts how the fortunes of man change with his varying concept of Deity and his obedience to this concept. It is of transcendent consequence to the solution of the problems of existence that man reach the proper concept of God, his nature, attributes and qualities and learn how to apply them in human experience.

(1) The book of Genesis is composed of several documents of which the most important are the Elohist and Jehovistic documents. In the first, God is called Elohim (Gen. 1:1) and this is the term translated "God" in the first chapter of Genesis.

In the second verse of this chapter, God is called Spirit; hence it is Spirit who creates in this first account of creation.

Elohim is the term which signifies God who is Spirit. It is a plural word and contains the implication of the trinity and of a God who is the creator of both man and woman as given in the first chapter of Genesis. El signifies strength and Elohim means the strong one.

(2) In Genesis 2:1 we read, "Thus the heaven and earth were finished, and all the host of them." According to this, the account of creation was complete. We find, however, a second account of creation given in the second chapter of Genesis beginning with the word "But" in the

sixth verse. In this account man begins from dust and the Lord God that created him is called Jehovah. This term "Jehovah" is generally translated Lord God and is the Jewish national name of God. The exact original of Lord God is Jehovah Elohim or Jehovah God. Jehovah was originally JHVH and the name was not supposed to be spoken aloud because of its sacred nature. It subsequently was used in magical practices. The original concept of God as Spirit had given way to a tribal deity with human qualities. This development of the concept of God as a tribal deity was probably due to the influence of the various pagan nations where the Hebrews dwelled. There are evidences of several documents antecedent to the book of Genesis as we have it. The use of the two terms for God implies the existence of at least two of these sources.

(3) The great contrast between the terms Elohim and Jehovah is signaled by the thunderous statement in Exodus 6:2,3 "and God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am the Lord—And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." This leaves no question as to who is the true God. It indicates that the concept of God has fallen from that held in Abraham's time to that held in Moses' time.

(4) Abraham was the first person in the Bible to whom God revealed himself as "Almighty" (Gen. 17:1, 2). The term "Almighty" as a name for God was appropriate to the event about to occur in the life of Abraham and Sarah. Abraham had had a child, Ishmael, by his wife Hagar, the bondwoman, but he had been promised to be the father of many nations and this was to be by a son born to his wife Sarah. Both he and Sarah were very old and this seemed an impossibility. The word "Almighty" is a translation of El Shaddai.* The word "El" is the same as

* See the Scofield Reference Bible, Oxford University Press, 1917, Gen. 17 note.

El in Elohim signifying strength and thus means the male or indicates God as Father. The word "Shaddai" comes from shad meaning breast and means breasted and signifies the female or indicates God as Mother. Thus, the primary meaning of El Shaddai translated Almighty is Father-Mother. This was a most appropriate revelation to Abraham and Sarah, as it meant that God is the true creator rather than man and is the source and substance of man and the universe and supplies strength and nourishment to his creation.

It should be understood that the Hebrews were not the first people to discover God as having male and female powers and to be the creator and nourisher of man. Many civilizations had long before ascribed such powers to various deities. The Egyptians had various gods of fertility, agriculture and so forth, and the cross found on monuments in Egypt represented the union of male and female principles.

In China nature was considered to consist of Yang, the male principle, and Yin, the female principle. These united to form the third principle, Life.

Following the revelation of God as Father and Mother, it became evident to Abraham and Sarah that if God is the creator, then they could have a child.

The birth of Isaac when Sarah was ninety proved how the higher concept of God as Almighty overcame material laws relative to creation. Sarah and Abraham had laughed when told she would have a son, but the concept of God as creator or the real Father and Mother ceased to be a laughing matter when it was proved that God's law supersedes mortal beliefs. Thus it was shown that God is Life and the source of Life and matter is not. Abraham had gained such a sense of God as Life that when called upon to sacrifice Isaac upon the altar because of the sacrificial concepts of that period, he took the necessary steps to carry out the sacrifice "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead," as we read in

- (5) Hebrews 11:19. Here we see Abraham symbolizing God who “spared not His own Son” (Rom. 8:32) and Isaac symbolizing Jesus “obedient unto death” (Phil 2:5-8).* An angel of the Lord stayed his hand and a ram was provided for the sacrifice instead (Gen. 22:13). The ram or male lamb symbolized Jesus, the Lamb of God who was to make the supreme sacrifice two thousands years later to show mortals the proper way out of evil. The improved sense of creation in the birth of Isaac foreshadowed the virgin birth of Jesus accomplished when it was seen that God is the only creator of man, for God is both Father and Mother, El Shaddai, or Almighty.
- (6) The terms, Elohim, Jehovah, etc., name but do not define God. Some sense of the meaning is gained by a study of the derivations of the terms.

In order to enlarge upon the meaning of the terms, the Hebrews used various compound terms:

Jehovah—Elohim	The Lord God	Gen. 2:7
Jehovah—jireh	The Lord will provide	Gen. 22:13, 14
Jehovah—rapha	The Lord that healeth	Ex. 15:26
Jehovah—nissi	The Lord our banner	Ex. 17:18-15
Jehovah—shalom	The Lord our peace	Judge 6:24
Jehovah—raah	The Lord my shepherd	Ps. 23
Jehovah—tsidkenu	The Lord our right- eousness	Jer. 23:6
Jehovah—shammah	The Lord is present	Ezek. 48:35

The use of such terms attached attributes to God and these attributes tended to be human rather than divine. Gradually Deity became humanized. The very term Jehovah-Elohim was a humanization of the term Elohim. Thus man’s view of God fell.

God’s view of himself, however, was quite different. God did not leave himself undefined. He provided other

* Scofield, Gen. 22 note.

names for himself which defined himself without the use of modifiers. These other names are synonyms for God.

We may ask, How do synonymous terms for something differ? Why have synonyms? A synonym may name or it may explain. The terms God, Deity, Elohim name but do not explain. A dictionary tells us that synonyms are words having the same general sense but which differ in application. In early times most names were used to describe the nature of an object or idea.

Let us now consider some terms by which God both names and explains himself from his viewpoint, and then we shall see how a dictionary will show how they differ in application.

The first term God (Elohim) applies to himself, namely, Spirit, appears in the second verse in the Bible.

Bible Names for God

- (7) *Spirit.* Gen. 1:2—And the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
- (8) Gen. 41:38—And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?
- (9) John 4:24—God is Spirit . . .
- (10) *Life.* Deut. 30:20—That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him—for he is thy life and the length of thy days. Also Ps. 36:9.
- (11)
- (12) *Soul.* Lev. 26:11—And I will set my tabernacle among you—and my soul shall not abhor you.
Also Job. 23:13;
Job. 12:9, 10;
Isa. 42:1;
Matt. 12:18.
- (13) *Truth.* Deut. 32:4—He is the Rock, his work is perfect

—for all his ways are judgement—a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Also Ps. 31:5;

Ps. 119:142.

- (14) *Mind.* Lev. 24:12—And they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be shewed them.

Also Job. 23:13.

Since the five foregoing terms for God may all be found in the first five books of the Bible, or the books of Moses, it is evident that Moses was acquainted with five names or synonyms for God.

- (15) *Love.* To Jesus was revealed the sixth name for God. This name is Love. He taught that God is Love and his ministry was a living demonstration of love. In Mark 12:30 he said, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment and the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

- (16) John the beloved apostle said (I John 4:8), “He that loveth not knoweth not God—for God is love.”

The name of something is usually intended to express its nature. These six names for God, found in the Bible, express the nature of God from God’s viewpoint.

With the aid of a dictionary we can easily discover how the foregoing names differ in application.

Spirit

Dict.: Animating or vital principle, energy, incorporeal being, substance, the seat of action, the active power of Deity.

Gen. 1:2—“The Spirit of God moved . . .”

activity
energy
substance

Life

Deut. 30:20—"He is thy life and the length of thy days."

eternality

Soul

Dict.: an individual, distinct from body, but often used in connection with body; the sensitive principle in man; spiritual power.

individuality
spiritual sense

Truth

Ps. 119:142—"Thy law is the truth."

law

Mind

(20) Dict.: intellect, thought, reason, the faculty of memory.
Jer. 29:11—"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you . . ."
Rev. 17:9—"And here is the mind which hath wisdom."

intelligence
wisdom
memory
thinking
knowing

Love

Rom. 13:10—"Love is the fulfilling of the law." Love expresses infinite giving.

The very idea of God implies the existence of a supreme being who is infinite in power. Since infinite power can only be possessed by one, there can only be

one infinite or one God. If this God is Mind, then there can be only one Mind. If this God is Spirit, then there can be only one Spirit. The success of the Hebrews must be attributed to their realization of the fact early in their history that there is only one God. This fact is embodied in the First Commandment. This fact obeyed, separated them from all others. It was the failure of others to have one all-powerful God and that God, Spirit, that was the root of pagan failure in matters of religion.

If man is to be Godlike, he must prove it by reflecting the attributes of God. What are some of these attributes as revealed by the Bible?

<i>Mercy</i>	Ps. 136 entire	Deut. 4:30, 31 Ps. 86:4, 5
<i>Justice</i>	Job. 37:23 Ps. 98:6-9	Deut. 32:3, 4 Matt. 5:44, 45
<i>Wisdom</i>	Prov. 3:19-21 Dan. 2:20	Ps. 104:24 Rom. 11:33
<i>Understanding</i>	Prov. 2:6 Isa. 40:28	Isa. 29:16 Jer. 51:15
<i>Goodness</i>	Ps. 145:7 Nahum 1:7	Matt. 9:17 Ps. 34:8 Ps. 33:5
<i>Righteousness</i>	Ps. 145:7, 17 Ps. 119:137	Ps. 48: 10
<i>Grace</i>	Ps. 84:11 Titus 2:11	II Cor. 1:12 Eph. 2:4-8
<i>Love</i>	I John 4:16 Jer. 31:3	Deut. 7-8 John 3:16
<i>Compassion</i>	Ex. 3:7 Micah 7:18, 19 Deut. 30:3	Jer. 12:14, 15
<i>Forgiveness</i>	Ps. 103:1-3 I John 1:9	Matt. 6:14
<i>Gentleness</i>	Ps. 18:35	Isa. 40:11

<i>Greatness</i>	Deut. 3:24 Ps. 95:3	Ps. 77:13 Ps. 145:3
<i>Holiness</i>	Ex. 15:11 Rev. 15:4	Ps. 99:9 Isa. 6:3
<i>Immutability</i>	Ps. 102:27 Hebrew 1:12	Mal. 3:6 James 1:17
<i>Impartiality</i>	Job. 34:18 Rom. 10:12	Matt. 5:45
<i>Omnipotence</i>	Job. 42:2 Isa. 43:13	Ps. 115:3 Matt. 19:26 Luke 1:37
<i>Omnipresence</i>	Deut. 4:39 Jer. 23:24	Isa. 66:1 Acts 17:27
<i>Omniscience</i>	Job. 31:4 Ps. 147:5	Job. 34:21 Hebrew 4:13
<i>Perfection</i>	Deut. 32:4 Eccl. 3:14	Ps. 18:30 Matt. 5:48

In reflecting God's qualities and attributes man must manifest good human qualities. What are some of these qualities as revealed by the Bible?

<i>Faith</i>	Hebr. 11:1-40 I Sam 17:37	Matt. 17:20 II Chron. 20:12
<i>Honesty</i>	Lev. 19:35,36 Rom. 12:17	Prov. 11:1 Rom. 13:8
<i>Industry</i>	Prov. 6:6 Prov. 13:11	Prov. 10:5 Prov. 20:13
<i>Integrity</i>	I Kings 13:7-10	II Kings 12:15
<i>Hope</i>	Rom. 8:22-25 I Peter 3:15-17	Rom. 15:4 I John 3:1-3
<i>Compassion</i>	Ex. 2:6 Luke 10:33,34 Acts 28:1,2	II Chron. 28:15 Acts 16:25-34

<i>Meekness</i>	Luke 6:29 James 1:21 Num. 12:3	Gal. 5:22,23 I Peter 3:4 Matt. 11:29
<i>Forbearance</i>	Eph. 4:1-3	Col. 3:9-14
<i>Temperance</i>	Luke 21:23 Titus 2:1-4	I Cor. 9:24-27 James 1:26,27
<i>Love</i>	I Peter 1:22 John 13:1 I John 4:16	I Thess. 3:12 John 15:13
<i>Purity</i>	Ps. 24:3,4 I Peter 1:22	Matt. 5:8 James 1:27
<i>Holiness</i>	Lev. 11:45 Hebr. 12:14	II Cor. 7:1 II Peter 3:10, 11
<i>Patience</i>	Luke 21:19 Hebr. 10:35-37	James 1:2-4

God is the subject of the Bible. By being acquainted with the names and nature of God and with his qualities and attributes, we are enabled to reflect these qualities and, in turn, manifest good human qualities. To the degree that we do this shall we be found proving our understanding of God's nature. The good human qualities mediate between God and man. Jesus manifested qualities which made him the Mediator. In Hebrews 12:24 we read, "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." Christ is an eternal mediator. The whole problem of existence consists of gaining an understanding of God and his spiritual creation and putting this knowledge into practice.

- (17) God is Spirit. Can Spirit be seen humanly? In I John 4:12, we read, "No man hath seen God at any time."
- (18) Why is this? In II Cor. 4:18, we read, "While we look not at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen—for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal." This clearly explains that spiritual things cannot be seen by temporal or material means.

- (19) In John 3:8 it says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth—so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." This is a fine comparison and is made even clearer when one discovers that the word for wind is "pneuma" and that this also the word translated "Spirit." Thus we learn that Spirit is like the wind, invisible, but it can be felt and its effects seen. No one denies the existence of wind. Then why question the existence of God just because he cannot be seen? We have learned that God is omnipotent. Indeed, he is infinite power itself. No one asks to see 100 kilowatts or 100 horsepower. We do all kinds of things by means of electricity and yet who can say he has seen it?

God is Spirit but he is also Mind. This means that omnipotent power is mental, exists as Mind. We speak of intelligence and even humanly discuss it at great length, even think to measure it, yet no one has seen it. Why? Because it is mental not physical. Since God is Mind, he must be the substance which thinks. Indeed, being infinite and therefore the only Mind, he must be the only thinker.

- (20) In Jer. 29:11, we read, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

- (21) In Ps. 40:17, we read, "But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me—thou art my help and my deliverer."

The word for "God" and the word for "good" are the same in many languages. Throughout the Bible the theme is the triumph of good, God, over evil.

- (22) Does God know evil? In Hab. 1:13 we read "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." It is evident that God, being infinitely good, cannot know or countenance the real existence of evil. Being good, God cannot create or transmit his supposed opposite. In Ezekiel 18:1-3 we read, "The word

of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel; saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel." Then evil inheritances have no basis in God.

(24) A common view held by some, although seldom admitted, is that the end justifies the means. This is used to justify the commission of crimes on the basis that the ultimate intent is good. This is used to justify destruction of one's enemies, murder for refusal to accept conversion and the like. Such a view is based on a false concept of God. This is the Jehovah God that loves and hates. If God hates, then man reflecting God would hate. The root of this error is the false concept of God. God, who is Love, cannot hate. And man reflecting Love cannot do else but love. The false doctrine that the end justifies the means receives a rebuke from Paul when he says in Romans 3:8, "Let us do evil that good may come? Whose damnation is just."

Since God is omniscient and infinite, this must extend to the divine vision. There can be nothing of good which is unknown to God and nothing of evil which cannot be uncovered and eliminated by His infinite goodness.

(25) In Jer. 17:10 we read, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." In Matt. 6:8
(26) we read, "Be ye not therefore like unto them—for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." In I Cor. 3:20 we read, "And again, the Lord
(27) knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."
(28) In Luke 12:2 we read, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid, that shall not be known."

(29) In I Cor. 2:9,10 we read, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into

the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit—for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

The Bible gives us six names for God, namely, Mind, Spirit, Soul, Life, Truth and Love. As discussed, another name used is Elohim, meaning strength or omnipotence; which is a plural word leading to the thought embraced in the term El Shaddai, which means strength and breasted, or implies God to be Father and Mother and is translated “Almighty.” Another term, translated “Lord,” was Jehovah, the Jewish tribal God, and various combinations of this with other words were employed.

Some of the attributes of God are mercy, justice, wisdom, understanding, goodness, righteousness, grace, love, compassion, forgiveness, gentleness, greatness, holiness, immutability, impartiality, omnipotence, omnipresence omniscience, and perfection. The attributes are to be reflected by man.

Some of the human qualities which man should manifest are faith, honesty, industry, integrity, hope, compassion, meekness, forbearance, temperance, love, purity, and holiness. In proportion as man expresses those qualities which constitute his real selfhood will he be found in the divine likeness. This is the task before man and in the degree that he fulfills his part will he receive the power of God and thus manifest in some degree the omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience of Deity.