

LESSON SIX

GOD IS ONE PERSON

A. GOD IS ONE PERSON:

Scriptural Reference:

"... Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person..." (Hebrews 1:3).

There is a difference of understanding in the definition of the word "person." Some understand person to mean the body or appearance, the visible expression. If we accept this definition then clearly the Father is not a person for He is Spirit.

On the other hand, others understand person to be associated with personality, individuality, self-consciousness, self-determination, etc. If we accept this definition then the Father is a person. However, this still will not make two or three persons in the Godhead. There is only one God, and only one personality of Deity. This personality is the one and same whether seen as Jehovah in the Old Testament or as Jesus in the New Testament.

The Scriptural reference given, Hebrews 1:3, is the only place in the Bible that the word "person" is given when referring to the Godhead or Deity. In the Greek this Scripture reads, "the expression of his substance." In the Amplified New Testament we read, "He is the perfect imprint and very image of (God's) nature."

The conclusion is that the word "person" is not actually a proper word to use when referring to Deity, but rather we should use the terms, "substance, nature, being, etc."

B. GOD HAS PERSONALITY:

Scriptural Reference:

"And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

It is very important that we have a clear understanding on this truth for if we go wrong here, it will definitely lead to further misunderstanding. It is very easy to miss the true revelation and to turn to one extreme or the other. We should pray that the Lord will enable us to remain solidly established in the very center of revealed Truth.

In both the Old Testament and New Testament man is able to have fellowship with God. Man is able to talk to God and have communion with His Maker. We must never think of God as being just an impersonal force or influence. He is a personal God who loved us and manifested Himself in flesh to die for us. As such He has personality but He is still one God, one Divine Being.

A man cannot talk to an impersonal force such as sunlight, warmth, gravity, mother nature, etc., but he can talk to his wife, his child and his father. Not only can he talk to them but there can

also be a communion and a fellowship because they are living beings, individuals with minds and hearts of their own.

This truth must be clearly understood when the personal pronouns are used. The personal pronoun "He" should always be used, never neuter pronoun "It." This is also true when speaking of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:2 we find the neuter pronoun "it," but this is referring to the wind that filled the entire house. It is correct to refer to the experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost as "it" but when we receive the Holy Ghost into our hearts, we receive "Him."

However, there are not three "He's" in the Godhead. When the personal pronoun is used, we are referring to our one and only God, whether revealed to us in Creation, manifested to us in Redemption, or coming into our hearts in Regeneration.

C. MAN IS BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT, BUT ONE PERSON:

Scriptural References:

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (I John 5:7).

The titles Father, Son and Holy Ghost are freely used in the Scriptures, but this fact does not make three persons or three Gods. The Bible declares that Father, Son and the Holy Ghost is one person, bearing the one Name, "JESUS."

To understand this truth let us consider man. He is spirit, soul and body; but he is one person and bears one name. The three titles do not make three persons anymore than body, soul, and spirit, make three persons. In Colossians 1:3 we read these words, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." Please note: "God and the Father." Here are two titles placed together. Does this make two persons?

D. GOD MANIFESTED HIMSELF IN THE FLESH:

Scriptural References:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Timothy 3:16).

I Timothy 3:16 is one of the key verses that can only be understood by revelation, and yet must be understood if we are to grasp an understanding of the Godhead. The Amplified New Testament reads, "He (God) was made visible in human flesh."

In the past God has manifested Himself in many ways to man. In creation, on Mt. Sinai, in the Theophanies, in the Tabernacle, God manifested Himself in a measure to man and man was able to have a certain knowledge of God. However, in the one Scripture that speaks of God being

manifested, we have the greatest knowledge of God ever given for in the incarnation Christ is the express image of the invisible God. (Hebrews 1:3).

On this thought let us quote from Adam Clarke's Commentary on this note on John 17:6:

"A little of the Divine nature was known by the works of creation, a little more was known by the Mosaic revelation; but the full manifestation of God, His nature, and His attributes, came only through the revelation of Christ."

In this regard let us always quote Scripture correctly:

1. "The Word was made flesh." (John 1:14).
2. "God was manifest in the flesh." (I Timothy 3:16).

It was the LOGOS, which was made, flesh: God was manifest in the flesh. There is an important difference in these two statements, which we shall see as we continue our studies.

E. THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS:

The mystery of godliness is God manifesting Himself in flesh; the mystery of iniquity (II Thessalonians 2:7) is flesh manifesting itself as God. These are contrasted in the Scriptures and man has his choice. If he does not accept the mystery of godliness, he will be compelled to accept the mystery of iniquity.

F. THE LOGOS IS DEITY EXPRESSED:

Scriptural Reference:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

"Word" is translated from the Greek "LOGOS." This Greek word "Logos" means not only the expression of an inward thought but also the thought itself. This word might be better left not translated but for the sake of understanding we might attempt to define the meaning of "Logos." We might say that the meaning of LOGOS is DEITY EXPRESSED. In other words the "Logos" is the expression of the invisible God. The Scofield Bible says, "Deity told out."

Just as a man's thinking and expression of that thinking cannot be separated from the man himself and is in essence part of his very being, not another person, so it is with God. The Scripture written by the apostle under inspiration to safeguard against the error of another person clearly states, THE LOGOS WAS GOD.

G. JESUS CHRIST POSSESSES A DUAL NATURE:

Jesus Christ in the incarnation possessed a dual nature: divinity and humanity. Note well that Jesus Christ was not two persons, nor did He possess two personalities. But He was God-man, the Word-incarnate, God manifested in flesh. As a human being He was the Son; as God He was the Father. As the Son many times He spoke and acted as a man; as the Father many times He spoke and acted as God. Once this truth is understood the door is open to a clear understanding of just who Jesus really is: THE MIGHTY GOD IN CHRIST: JEHOVAH-SAVIOUR.

H. JESUS CHRIST IS NOT THE ETERNAL SON:

Scriptural References:

"...The glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:4).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16).

"...Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Acts 13:33).

The "eternal Son" theory is not Scriptural. It came as the result of the Trinitarian theory and teaches a second person in the Godhead. Jesus Christ in the flesh was the begotten Son. (John 3:16). The words "begotten" and "eternal" mean the very opposite and contradict each other.

Let us quote from Adam Clarke's Commentary on this note on Acts 13:33, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

"The human nature of our blessed Lord was begotten by the energy of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the blessed virgin; for as to his Divine nature, which is allowed to be God, it could neither be created nor begotten...the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is absolutely irreconcilable to reason, and contradictory to itself. Eternity is that which has had no beginning, nor stands with any reference to time: Son supposes time, generation, and father; and time also antecedent to such generation: therefore the rational conjunction of these two terms, Son and eternity, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and opposite ideas."

Also quoting from Adam Clarke on Luke 1:35:

"...the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is, in my opinion, anti-scriptural, and highly dangerous...This doctrine of the eternal Sonship destroys the deity of Christ...This doctrine of the eternal Sonship, I must and do consider as an awful heresy."

COURSE: BIBLE DOCTRINE I

LESSON SIX

SELF HELP TEST

- A. Explain the meaning of the "personality of God."
- B. Explain the difference in meaning (if any) expressed in John 1:14 and I Timothy 3:16.
- C. Prove by referring to Scriptures that the "Eternal Son" theory is false.

If you wish to obtain your AIS Bible and Theology Certificate or work toward your B.A. Degree from Indiana Bible College, complete this Self-Help Test as completely as possible and return it to: AIS, P.O. Box 47917 Indianapolis, IN 46247 or email it to: ais@apostolic.edu or fax it to: (317) 781-7700.