

## LESSON 8

### GREAT BIBLE THEMES

#### ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD

In our last lesson we noticed the teaching of the Bible that Jesus was "God with us". Thus we find in Jesus our best and possibly most complete idea of the Creator of the universe and his attitude toward the many problems of life. This study was only a brief introduction and should challenge each of us to continue searching the life of Christ in order to know more about God.

As we think back over these lessons on the nature of the Creator we will be impressed with His power, His holiness, and His love for our welfare. Is there, however, any aspect of His nature that we have hardly mentioned? There is at least one, and we want to use it as the basis for our study today. Before reading further, see if you can anticipate the topic we are going to suggest. We cannot get the Bible picture of God without an earnest study of this phase of His character. Some would want to say that this idea of God contradicts some of the characteristics we have already noticed. Have you guessed it? Notice the questions below which give us an outline of today's lesson.

1. We see God's love in sending Jesus to bless the world, but would God "require" us to heed His message?
2. Jesus manifested a deep concern for the future of the Jewish nation that rejected him. Why?
3. What great calamity came upon them about 70 A.D.? Why?
4. We have used the term "severity of God" a number of times. What other terms could we use to give the same meaning?

## LET US LOOK TO THE BIBLE FOR OUR ANSWERS

Let us begin our study by looking up a prophecy given by Moses some fifteen hundred (1,500) years before Christ. This prophecy is found in Deuteronomy 18:18-19, and definitely refers to Christ and his work. "I (God) will raise them up a Prophet (Christ) from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses) and will

\_\_\_\_\_ ; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ unto my words which he shall speak in my name, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_." Moffatt translated this last expression, "I myself will make him answer for it." This prophecy clearly states that Christ was to speak God's message to the people. Did he expect people to heed that message? Will God hold people responsible to Him for not heeding it? Does this teach that God will really "\_\_\_\_\_ of him", or as the rendering of Moffatt reads, God will "make him \_\_\_\_\_"? Can we truly understand God today without a knowledge of this aspect of His nature. Does the fact that "God is love" contradict the teaching that He will require us to heed Christ's message? Or is the latter an indication of His love? This last question will require a great deal of thought if you are to see what is involved in it. Let us approach it from this viewpoint: Christ died for the sins of the world, thus making salvation possible for all who heed his message. Could God be a God of love and not require us to heed that message wherein is salvation.

This same aspect of God's nature is set forth in Romans 11:20-22. Let us notice first, however, that Paul is here discussing the fact that the Jews had been cut off from God because of unbelief and the Gentiles had been brought to God because of their faith. "Well; because of \_\_\_\_\_ they (the Jews) were broken off and thou (the Gentiles) standest by \_\_\_\_\_. Be not highminded, but fear; For if God \_\_\_\_\_ the natural branches, take heed lest He also \_\_\_\_\_ Behold therefore the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of God: on them which fell; \_\_\_\_\_ but toward thee, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_: otherwise thou also shalt be \_\_\_\_\_." Notice Paul wanted his readers to, "Behold the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of God." God's goodness is toward those who believe in Jesus and who continue in his goodness. His severity is toward those who do not believe. Notice, too, these expressions "God spared not" and "take heed lest He also spare not thee". Most of our study has emphasized God's goodness, but we also need to notice his severity.

Notice the portion of each of the following references which emphasizes this aspect of God's nature.

Matthew 25:41, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, \_\_\_\_\_ from me, ye \_\_\_\_\_, into \_\_\_\_\_, prepared for the \_\_\_\_\_."

1 Peter 4:18, "And if the \_\_\_\_\_, where shall the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ appear?"

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in \_\_\_\_\_ on them that \_\_\_\_\_ and that \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

There are many other passages throughout the entire Bible that teach us to behold the severity of God. We are not attempting in this lesson to give a complete discussion of how to attain eternal salvation. Some excellent points on this subject are given, however.

There are many examples in the Bible that could be given to illustrate what we have said so far today. There is one that may be more outstanding than any other, however. That is the example of the Jewish nation and the punishment it received because it rejected Jesus and his message for them. Jesus was concerned about their fate and referred to it a number of times. We have noticed the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem as recorded in Matthew 23:37. Jesus would have blessed and cared for these people but they would not. The next verse says, "Behold, your house is left \_\_\_\_\_."

This last term means forsaken, deserted, left alone, laid waste, in a ruinous condition, lonely, or deprived of inhabitants. This may refer primarily to the temple which was their house of worship, but it is equally true of the Jewish nation. Jesus knew the desolation and misery that was to come upon them all because of

the severity of God in dealing with the unfaithfulness and unbelief of this group of people.

Another reference which shows the deep concern of Jesus over these rebellious people is given in Luke 23:28. Jesus had been mocked by those who had refused to give him a just trial and had carried his own cross as far as he could. He noticed a group of women weeping over him and he said, “. . . Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not \_\_\_\_\_, but weep \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.” Jesus said that the time was coming when they could cry for the mountains to fall on them so that they would not have to endure the misery and agony that was to come to Jerusalem. Notice also Luke 21:20-22, “And when he shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the \_\_\_\_\_.” Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out: and let not them that are in the country enter thereinto. For these be the \_\_\_\_\_ that all things which were written may be fulfilled.

The prophets had told of this time. For one detailed prophecy read **Deuteronomy 28:49-57, The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: and he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed**

**thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: so that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.**

**(AKJV)** Here are some of the things foretold. A fierce nation would come to besiege and destroy. Verse 58 gives a reason for such a calamity. "If thou wilt \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ all the words of this law that  
 are written in this book, that thou \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_,  
 \_\_\_\_\_, THE LORD THY GOD."

These prophecies and the statements of Christ give us a good description of Jerusalem under Titus about 70 A.D. The Romans first laid siege to the city, but withdrew to Caesarea. This was the signal Christ had given for his people to flee from the city in all haste. The misery of the siege that followed is given by the Jewish historian Josephus. About 1,100,000 died of famine, pestilence, or other causes, and 90,000 were taken captive. As you read the following account from Josephus, Book VI, chapter III (Josephus wrote between 70 and 95 A.D.), remember that it came upon them because they had spurned the love of God and His Son whom He had sent to bless them. Truly, behold the severity of God!

“Now of those that perished by famine in the city, the number was prodigious, and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable; for if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did anywhere appear, a war was commenced presently, and the dearest friends fell a fighting with one another about it, snatching from each other the most miserable supports of life. Nor would men believe that those who were dying had no food, but the robbers would search them when they were expiring, lest any should have concealed food in their bosoms, and counterfeited dying; nay, these robbers gaped for want, and ran about stumbling and staggering along like mad dogs, and reeling against the doors of the houses like drunken men; they would also, in the great distress they were in, rush into the very same houses two or three times in one and the same day. Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable, that it obliged them to chew everything while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them; nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes; and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed; the very wisps of old hay became food to some, and some gathered

up fibers, and sold a very small weight of them for four Attic (drachmae). But why do I describe the shameless impudence that the famine brought on men in their eating inanimate things, while I am going to relate a matter of fact like to which no history related, either among the Greeks or Barbarians? It is horrible to speak of it, and incredible when heard. I had indeed willingly omitted this calamity of ours, that I might not seem to deliver what is so portentous to posterity, but that I have innumerable witnesses to it in my own age; and besides, my country would have had little reason to thank me for suppressing the miseries that she underwent at this time." Josephus then relates some of the worst horrors of this terrible siege. The things that came to pass had been foretold in the prophecy we noticed from Deuteronomy. We shall not burden you with the gruesome details he relates.

Is it a wonder then that Jesus expressed so much concern about his people? Does this account make more meaningful his declaration: "Behold, your house is left to you \_\_\_\_\_?" No wonder he told the women who were weeping for him to weep for themselves and the calamities that should come upon them. Jesus knew that the unbelief of the Jewish nation made these things certain because he understood the nature of God who rules the universe. Do you suppose that there is a tendency to overlook this aspect of His nature? Would each of us do well to stop to consider it seriously? Could it be over emphasized? Of course, anyone of the characteristics may receive emphasis to the neglect of others.

## TEST

1. The Jewish historian referred to in this lesson was: (a) Titus, (b) Luke, (c) Josephus, (d) Caesar. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The prophecy found in Deuteronomy 18 concerning Christ (does, does not) teach that God will require men to hearken to Christ's teaching. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is there an escape for us if we neglect the great salvation Jesus brought? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
4. God allowed this great calamity to come upon the city of Jerusalem because: (a) of their disobedience, (b) He hated them, (c) He could do nothing about it, (d) Christ had not yet come. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Jesus (did, did not) foretell of the destruction of Jerusalem.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. The characteristic of God's nature we noticed in today's lesson was: (a) His love, (b) His omniscience, (c) His goodness, (c) His severity. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Divine vengeance will be taken upon all who know not God, and who \_\_\_\_\_ not the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:8) (Insert the correct word.
8. People now may be cut off from God as the Jewish nation was cut off from God: (a) when they teach that justification is by obedience as well as by faith, (b) when they do not continue in His goodness, (c) when they teach that the old

covenant is not in force now, (d) when they teach and believe that the written word of God is God's complete revealed word. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Christ spoke words that God placed in his mouth. (True or False) \_\_\_\_\_

10. The \_\_\_\_\_ had been cut off from \_\_\_\_\_ because of \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ had been brought to \_\_\_\_\_ because of their \_\_\_\_\_.

**Score:** 10 points for each correct answer \_\_\_\_\_

Correct answers to questions in Lesson number 7:

1. (c)
2. (b)
3. (false)
4. (true)
5. (a)
6. (yes)
7. (false)
8. (was)
9. (yes)
10. (d)

List below others who wish to take this course.