

# God

by Dr. Manford George Gutzke

The word *GOD* has many meanings. Anything which a man considers to be most important in his life, whose power he thinks is the greatest, and whose favor he would do anything or give anything to win, is properly called his "god." A man may have many gods. When a man worships anything else than the God of the Bible, we say he is worshipping an "idol."

An idol may be attractive or ugly. An idol may be a concrete thing, a mythical character, or a mental ideal. But it is always something a man will serve with all he is or has. Some men worship drink, pleasure, money, power, or even other persons. Whatever or whoever I put first in my heart is a god to me. Sometimes a man will worship himself (2 Thess. 2:4) .

When Christians speak of God, they mean the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the God of the Bible*.

God has different names in the Bible. He is called the "Lord," the "Almighty," the "Lord God," the "Creator," our "Maker," our "Heavenly Father." Sometimes the word "Jehovah" or "Yahweh" is used, but such names have the same meaning as "Lord." The first statement in the Apostles' Creed is still the Christians' faith:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

## GOD IS A SPIRIT

When we say that God is Spirit, we mean He does not have a physical body such as we have. He may have a body, but not like ours. He is not material which can be seen, or heard, or smelled, or tasted, or touched by us. He cannot be measured. He is not so long, so wide, so thick, or so heavy. We should not let ourselves picture God with head, shoulders, arms, and face like our own.

God made the rocks and trees, stars and creatures; but God is not in these things, nor a part of these things. They are His creation. He is their Creator – somewhat like an inventor and his machine.

Men can think of God only in terms of what He does, not what He looks like. He is the invisible God. But He is the Creator, the Giver of life, the Keeper of Israel, the Ruler, the Judge of all the earth, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the eternal Father.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

## GOD IS A PERSON

God does not have a body like ours, so He is not limited to time and space, and He can be anywhere, everywhere, any time, every time, all the time! But He is a *Person*. By this we mean He can think, feel and will to do as He is in Himself.

God understands and knows all things. He sees what is in our hearts better than we do, before we do. He feels joy, sorrow, pleasure, anger as He looks upon us. For example, "God is *angry* with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11). He chooses to act according to His holy, just and wise will. In all things any little child can say "Thou, God, seest me" – "He knoweth the way I take." The Psalmist writes, "I sought the Lord and He heard me" (Ps. 34:4). It is always true that "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

The God of the Bible is a Person in whom we can put our trust and confidence because He knows

about us, cares about us, and intends to do us good.

## THE TRINITY

The idea that God is a Person is not too hard to grasp, because this implies that God in Himself is a Being who is in some way similar to the way a man is. This is confirmed by the Scriptures when they say that God made man in His own image (Gen. 1 :27). The Hebrew word for *image* is the word used for *shadow*. So the Scriptures imply that man was made in the likeness of God – the way a shadow on the grass is in the likeness of the man casting the shadow.

The grass in the shadow is not the same kind of stuff as the man who casts the shadow; but the general shape of the shadow is made up by the shape of the man who casts it. Just as you could look at the shadow and get some true idea of the man, so it would seem that you could look at man and get some true idea of God.

This is not at all to claim that God has any human limitations, or sin, or weakness; nor does it claim that man has in himself any of the holiness, or grace, or power that belongs to God. It does not mean that God has arms, legs, nerves, and muscles like a man. But it does mean that there is a likeness between God in Himself and man in his being.

This truth seems to be involved in the Incarnation. When God manifested Himself in this world so that man could see Him and know Him, He "was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7-8 and Heb. 2:14-18). Apparently, "being found in fashion as a man" enabled Him to show what God is like.

Philip said to the Lord Jesus, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8). Jesus of Nazareth 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 14:9). God is like the Lord Jesus Christ. It has been pointed out that perhaps the most complete word about God in Scripture is Jesus of Nazareth, who is spoken of as "the express image of God" (Heb 1:3).

The Bible further speaks about God as in three persons. The Christian Church has long used the expression "three persons in one Godhead." This idea is called the Trinity and involves the most difficult line of thought in the Scriptures. The human mind finds it almost impossible to conceive three persons in "One."

The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father is One who knows, cares, and wills. God the Son is One who knows, cares, and wills. God the Holy Spirit is One who knows, cares, and wills. Each is a distinct person, and yet the Three are One.

This distinction is indicated by the Scriptures. They strongly imply that God the Father manifests Himself especially in heaven, God the Son manifested Himself on earth as Jesus of Nazareth, and God the Holy Spirit manifests Himself especially in the church in the spiritual experience of believers.

It should always be kept in mind that each of the three Persons in the Trinity is God. The church has learned to say they are each equally God: equal in power, equal in glory, and equal in might. Each is equal to the others and is entitled to the same worship, the same devotion, the same trust and faith.

From the Scriptures we may deduce that God the Father functions as the *executive director*; God the Son functions as the *activator*, the performer, the doer; God the Holy Spirit functions in bringing the will of God into realization so far as actual human experience is concerned. It is stated that the Father sends the Son; the Son serves the Father and sends the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit shows the things of the Lord Jesus Christ to believers honoring the Father. The distinctions between the functions of these three Persons are not always specifically spelled out in Scripture. All three work together as One, and yet these distinctions are definitely implied.

Although there is no absolute statement in the Bible that God is three Persons and yet one God, the idea is plainly there. The three Persons in the Godhead are mentioned as distinct from each other at the baptism

of Jesus of Nazareth (Matt. 3:16-17). The Lord Jesus gave His disciples explicit instructions to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28: 19). *Holy Ghost* is another expression for *Holy Spirit*. When Paul gave his apostolic blessing, he said, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). Such Scripture verses as these cannot be understood to mean anything else than the existence of three distinct Persons in the Godhead.

While the doctrine of the Trinity names three distinct Persons, the unity in God is real and basic. The Scriptures say, "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). The "one" used in this statement is not the numerical digit "1" in the number series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. It is the "One" used to refer to a state of unity. The Bible says about husband and wife, "And they twain shall be *one* flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Thus when a man and a woman marry, they become unified as "*one* flesh." Yet each still has his own body and her own body. When the Tower of Babel was being built, God said, "Behold, the people is one" (Gen. 11:6). The people is plural, but they were knit together into *one* unit. This is the meaning of the "one" used in the Scripture – "The Lord our God is one Lord." God is a unified Being.

Unity in function is even more clearly set forth when Paul writes, "I have planted, Apollos watered." And he goes on to say, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one" (1 Cor. 3: 6-8). Paul is one man, and Apollos is another man. In what sense then can Paul and Apollos be "one"? Obviously, they are one in performance and intention. In this sense we can think of God as *One*: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit working as one performing unit. These Three are One in performance in the way in which Paul and Apollos are one, when the first plants and the second waters in the raising of the one crop.

The same idea is brought out in Galatians 3: 28 when Paul writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for *ye* are all *one* in Christ Jesus." Paul means to say *many* are *one* in unity in Christ Jesus.

Again, in John 17: 22 the Lord is praying, "That they may be one even as we are one." The Lord Jesus Christ on earth is talking to the Father in heaven. He is saying "and *we* two are *one* that they may be one" – meaning that they (believers) may be united, that they may come together in *one* communion.

Christians do not believe in three Gods, but in one God who exists in three persons.\*

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you an. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).

\* This belief in a God who is three and yet one should not be referred to as "tri-theism," which would teach the essential separateness of the three Persons. The early Church fathers judged this view to be out of accord with Scripture and condemned it as error. Orthodox Christian thought rejects "tri-theism" but embraces the term "Trinity" when attempting to describe the distinctions of Persons within the Godhead without doing violence to the essential unity in God Himself.

## GOD IS INFINITE

It is important in trying to understand what the Bible teaches about God to remember that He is held to be infinite. This is related to the fact that He is Spirit and so does not have a physical body like men. With human beings on earth, two or more persons cannot be in exactly the same place at the same time. In the spirit, however, two or more can be in exactly the same place at the same time.

This is because spirit has no spatial dimensions. So with God there is no limit – large or small. He is *infinite*. Thus the three Persons of the Godhead can be in one place at one time.

Luke 24 records the appearance of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ in a room where the doors were closed. He did nothing like this before His resurrection. The fact that this was done after the resurrection

implies that His body was changed from what it was prior to His resurrection. After His resurrection He had a body, but the "stuff" of which it was composed was different. His body was now "spiritual" (I Cor. 15:44). In this *spiritual* body, He could appear and disappear at will. This is the form – so far as we know – of the Spirit, for which there is no limitation as to space.

*Infinite* simply means having no limit or end. God is immeasurably great in extent and duration. The important point here is that nothing is too big for God; nor is anything too small for God.

You may say, "I wouldn't want to bother God about this; it is so little." The truth is that God is smaller than that. He is *infinitely* small. Or you may say, "I wouldn't want to bring this before the Lord; it is such a big thing." The truth is that God is bigger than that. He is *infinitely* big. In other words, the whole matter of size or amount simply does not apply when we are talking about God. Nothing can possibly be too big or too small.

Because God is infinite, His judgment is not affected by size. Consider honesty. It would be dishonest to steal a thousand dollars. It would also be dishonest to steal one cent. In the eyes of God, it is just as dishonest to take a pin as an automobile. Humanly speaking, this is not the case. Men are inclined to judge by the amount of money involved, while God is not.

God is concerned about the principle of the thing – the attitude. And in addition, God is able to give full and complete attention to everything, any time, ( anywhere, without becoming weary .He is infinitely great, infinitely strong, infinitely wise, infinitely good, infinitely merciful.

*Omnipresent* is closely allied with *infinite*. *Omni* means "all" and *present* means "he is here." When we say God is omnipresent, we mean He is here and there, everywhere and anywhere. Paul quoted a great poet as telling the truth when he said, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17: 28) .

The Scriptures record a man's saying that when he goes up into heaven, down to the lowest hell, to the islands of the sea, to the crowded streets of the city, into some forest, or into a mountain cave – he will find God there. It would be impossible to go any place God is not!

Although it is true to say that God is everywhere and anywhere, it must be noted that He is not everywhere in the same sense. There is a very definite sense in which heaven is His home. The Lord prayed, "Our Father, which art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9).

One can be in God's presence anywhere, although the Scriptures say He dwells in heaven. Heaven is not a locality. Heaven is not a place north of something, east of somewhere, up or down from some place. Perhaps, in a real sense, heaven is where God is.

Certainly believers are seated in the heavens while they are here in this world. The Lord Jesus said, " And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13) .Wherever heaven is located, it is a place. Christ said to His disciples when He was leaving them, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a *place* for you" (John 14:1-2).

There is a sense in which God is in heaven in a way He is not in other places. But He is *omnipresent* and His presence can be felt in every place.

The Apostles' Creed begins by stating, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." *Omnipotence* is the characteristic of God which is called here "almighty" and is also part of being *infinite*. He is so almighty, so powerful that He is able to do anything.

The New Testament emphasizes that nothing is impossible with God (Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:2; Luke 18:27). All nature is subject to Him. Storms, earthquakes, events – as they happen – are under His control. All men are subject to Him. They do not all do what He wants them to do, but He has His hand over their limits. They can go only so far and no farther. They can live only so long and no longer. God has fixed "the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17: 26) .He is Almighty God over men.

The angels do His will. They cannot do anything He does not permit them to do. Satan is subject to His will. Although Satan does not do what God wants him to do, he cannot go beyond what God allows Him to do.

The Bible says that God is infinitely powerful but exercises His power according to His will (Eph. 1:11). God is holy, just, and good; and He will not do anything contrary to His nature. To realize that God is *all-powerful* and yet *altogether* good helps us in the vital matter of prayer. To say that God is almighty does not mean that men should go to Him to ask anything and everything as it may please them. God will not act in a way that is contrary to His infinite wisdom and love. He is infinitely wise and will not do a foolish thing. He has infinite love and will not do a hateful thing. If a man asks God to do something that is not in His will – even though it might be argued that he *could* do it – there is a certain sense in which that argument would not be true.

When I was in high school, someone talked to me about God's omnipotence. I was puzzled by this, because I doubted it at that time. The question came up: "Can God make a five-year-old steer in a minute?" That bothered me. I thought about it a long time; I decided He could not.

When we speak of a five-year-old steer, it is implied that God made him in five years. God would not violate His own dealings with things. He would not make a five-year-old steer in a minute; He would make him in five years!

Once – when I needed money – I was depending upon the Lord to provide it. The question then came up: could He make dollar bills grow on trees? Then I realized He makes trees, and He makes leaves grow on trees. That is consistent with God. He is not going to do anything foolish.

He makes dollar bills come out of printing presses, and He makes leaves grow on trees. He may induce the woodsman to cut down the trees and ship them to the sawmill so that he receives money for his labor – and then move him to give the money. But God does not make money grow on trees.

God is infinite in wisdom, goodness and strength.

"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5).

## GOD IS ETERNAL

The word *eternal* points to something that we cannot fully understand.

When the Bible says God is *eternal*, it is saying that – with God – there are no yesterdays or tomorrows. As far as God is concerned, there is no passing of time. God is not old. Things are not a thousand years old to God. Everything is "right now" with God. People sometimes speak of eternity as "the Everlasting Now."

*Eternal* also means that – with God – there is no beginning and no end. When we speak of something with no beginning or ending, it is almost impossible to grasp the idea. God always was, He is, and He will always be. God was before time began. When time ends, He still will be. All this goes beyond our human understanding. That is one reason that the name God revealed to Moses was "Jehovah."

The word we translate as "Jehovah" is really *Yahweh*. The word *Yahweh* is a form of the Hebrew verb *to be*. When Moses asked God what he should call Him, God said, "I am that I am" (Ex. 3:14). Some say that what God really told Moses is, "I am, I am becoming, I am being." We might say also that God is telling us, "I am being your Saviour, I am being your Protector, I am being your Father."

He is the *Living God*. God is our Eternal Contemporary in the sense that He is right here-involved all the time in everything that is going on. Psalm 102:27 states, "But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." He is "The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). He is never young and never old.

Because God is eternal and everlasting, He is *unchangeable*. Another word for that is *immutable*. In Malachi 3:6 we read, "For I am the Lord, I change not." Someone might say this makes God a "static" Being. Oh, no! Static means "not moving." No one would say that God is not moving. God is a living

Being, but God is unchangeable in that He does not change direction. He does not change His character, nor does He change His manner.

He is always faithful. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. 121:4) .James 1:17 says, "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," God is not strong one day, weak the next; alert one day, and indifferent the next. God is steadfast, regular, and consistent.

Men are often afflicted with the sense of uncertainty and fickleness. Some days they are anxious; other days they are careless. Sometimes men are interested and concerned. Then again they are indifferent. But God is not like that. His attention does not shift. He started out to do us good. He intends to do us good. He will not fail or be discouraged in doing us good.

God is what He is, and He is always the same. He does not change. In 1 Samuel 15:29, we read these words, "For he is not a man, that he should repent." This leads to a question of understanding what is meant when the Bible says that God repented. For instance, in the days of Noah, when God saw how man was sinning, the Bible reports "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth" (Gen. 6:6). When Nineveh had sinned, God told Jonah that in forty days that city would be destroyed. Jonah preached this message to the city, and the Ninevites changed their ways. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (Jon. 3:10) .The way these records read, it does seem that God changes His ways. But this is more apparent than real.

Consider a very simple illustration. Suppose a man is on a train coming to a railroad station. As the train approaches, the station may be to the north of it. Then, as the train goes on, the station is to the south. Did the station act in a fickle manner? Did it move around? First, it was north; and then, it was to the south of the train. Yet the station had not moved. It was the train that moved. And so it may be with God.

God is angry with the wicked every day; yet He will comfort the broken heart. When a man sins, God is angry with him. But when the sinner listens to God, comes to Him, yields to Him – then God is merciful. Does this mean God changed His ways? Has God become fickle in the matter, or did the man change his ways? Then God would act differently to be consistent in His attitude toward man.

While the sinner was opposed to God, he was on God's anger side! When the sinner turned to Him, he was on God's mercy side; yet God was really always the same. The sinner was the one who changed. And in every instance where the Bible says, "God repent- ed," or implies that He changed His mind, you will find that the people had changed their ways.

When God created the world, He looked on it and said it was very good. But when He saw, just before the flood, all the sin of man, He said it was very bad. Had God changed His mind? No, but the people had changed their ways! In this way we can under- stand how God can be eternally consistent in Himself, and yet deal in various ways with men in differing situations. God is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

When little children ask, "Who made God?" – tell them the truth. "Nobody!" The little child says, "I don't understand." Adults don't understand either because the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. He always was. He always will be. He is the Eternal God.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

## GOD IS HOLY

One of the central ideas which the Bible reveals about God is that God is holy. The word *holy* is used with reference to God so much that it is scarcely ever questioned. But what does it mean to say, "God is holy"? Many people have the feeling that to be holy means not to do anything wrong. In a negative way, that may be true; but what does it really mean? When it is said that God is holy, reference is being made to His character. There is nothing crooked about God. He is not two-faced. God is genuine, sincere, depend-

able.

The English word *holy* is closely related to the idea of being whole. One hundred cents is a whole dollar. Three feet is a whole yard. God is absolutely everything He sets Himself out to be. The essence of God is truth. God, in His holiness, is without any reservations or restrictions. He is totally dedicated to His plan, not half-hearted about anything. If He takes in hand to do something, He will see it through.

The Bible says that God is benevolent. This means that He wills to do good to His creatures. He will advance welfare, sustain life, and make things more agreeable. It is part of God's holiness to be that way. He is not selfish; He is not holding back something for Himself, nor is He careless. "He that keepeth thee shall not slumber" (Ps. 121:3).

God is faithful at all times. Man may falter; God will not. Man may somehow deteriorate in his attitude and intention to obey. God never deteriorates in His attitude and intention to bless. This is the nature of God.

Men speak much of the love of God. He is altogether, entirely, and totally committed to the purpose that He will do good to His people. In so doing, God is fair at all times. "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). There is singleness of heart and sincerity about Him. At no time does He favor one and not the other. He can be trusted in the dark. He invites men to put their trust in Him because He is dependable. He is holy.

How ignorant a person is when he criticizes God! Things happen to a man in a certain way on a given day, and he finds fault. Maybe he doesn't realize it, but what he has done is to criticize God. He has said that God did not play fairly. That is a slander on the holiness of God. He has said that God did not care about him. That is a slander on the love of God. He may have the feeling that God did worse with him than He did with someone else. That is a slander on the justice of God. This is why it is so important to understand that God is holy in all His dealings with men.

*Merciful* is a helpful word at this point. It is to the glory of God that He is merciful. It is our salvation that He is merciful. The greatest hope any human being can have is that the Judge of all the earth, Almighty God, is a God of mercy. He delights to show mercy, especially to the repentant. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51: 17). The Bible indicates that the Lord is interested in the poor (Matt. 11 :5; Luke 4: 18; J as. 2: 5). He is also interested in the weak, and is merciful toward them.

There will be times when we will wonder whether God is compassionate toward the poor, the weak, and the helpless. Why did He ever make them? God has arranged conditions that will challenge the mercy of men. The Rich Young Ruler was advised by Jesus to ". . . give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21). God would have men to be merciful. If you never met a person who was weaker, there would be no challenge to mercy. If you never met anyone who was helpless, there would be no chance to show mercy.

God surrounds you with people who – compared to you – are poor and weak and helpless. Thus He challenges you to act with mercy toward them the way *He* acts toward such unfortunate persons. We are to show mercy to people the way God shows mercy.

It is written, "He maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5 : 45). Our Lord said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Believers are to be kind to their enemies and "do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" ( Matt. 5 : 44). Certainly God is this way at all times in dealing with us. God is holy and merciful.

"The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Ps. 145:17).

## GOD IS JUDGE

God is spoken of in Genesis as "judge of all the earth" (Gen. 18:25). Deuteronomy 32:36 states, "For the Lord shall judge his people." This really means that God cares about His creation.

The Bible teaches that God created the world and all things in it, and He is vitally interested in the creatures He has made. For that reason, He provides all they need for living.

God did not create man as an experiment to see how man would come out. He made man in His own image. He planned to provide for every need that man had. He gave him air to breathe, water to drink, and sunshine to keep him warm. Man was to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over every living thing" (Gen. 1:28). God provided for man; and man was to be responsible to God. Since man failed to live up to his opportunity, it was necessary for God to exercise judgment over him.

God judges all things that He makes. It can be seen that He judges animals and trees, since some of them live and some of them die.

The outstanding illustration in the Old Testament of God as Creator and Judge is the one shown to the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 18:2-4). Jeremiah was taken to a potter's shop where he saw the potter take the clay on his wheel and turn it to make a certain vessel. If it suited him, he kept it. If the vessel did not suit him, he crushed it and made it over again. The potter was both creator and judge. In such a sense this is a true figure of God.

It is easy for the human mind and spirit to feel offended that God would treat human beings as the potter treated the clay. If this kind of feeling is examined, it may be noted that it is generated by a sense of pride. The Scriptures say, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20). That is being impudent. God made man, He keeps man, and He is the Judge approving or disapproving man's conduct. This is fair enough.

So far as man has any capacity to judge his own actions, he becomes responsible. This means he can be called to account for his actions. God judges a man's conduct by the choices he makes.

God knows what men think and how men feel when they do things. The Bible says that when God completed His creative acts on the first day, He saw "that it was good" (Gen. 1:4). On the second day, He saw that it was "good," and so on for six days. The word good shows He appraised it, and evaluated it. What He had made coincided with what He had in mind; and so it was *good*.

God judges all His works and His creature, man, who was made in His image. In the days before the flood, God saw that the thoughts of men's hearts were only evil continually. "It grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6). This language seems to imply that God was sorry He had made man, who was not doing what He had planned for man to do.

The Bible teaches that God can and will do as He pleases when He judges what He has made. We do not know all He has in mind, and so we cannot always understand what He does. But we can be sure "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." God condemns sin and will destroy the wicked. This is the reason man feels guilty when he does wrong. The judgment of God is according to the truth about man's actions. And the man who sins, feels God will judge him.

"Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25).

## GOD IS SAVIOUR — REDEEMER

In our study we have seen God as Creator, Keeper, and Judge. In fairness, justice, and truth – God deals with man as he is. Because of the sin of man, death entered the world (1 Cor. 15:21-22). Now comes the good news; God is also our Saviour (Isa. 63:16). He is not only almighty, just, holy, and true, but He is merciful. God is merciful and gracious even as He judges the sinner. There is a loving kindness about God. He can and will save man. As the hymn writer has stated it:

There is a wideness in God's mercy,



Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in his justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

In saving man, God does more than redeem him from his folly and wrongdoing. He *changes* him! This is the whole idea in God's plan of salvation. Man tried to live as a natural human being and failed. God now offers to give man an opportunity to unite with Him – that is, to let God live His life in man. God will make His own power, even His eternal life, available to men because of His own grace and mercy. He will save man, but in His own way. Man must yield himself to God and let God change him. That is what God does through Christ Jesus.

Suppose a young lad is going to swim across a lake. While he is swimming, he gets cramps. He is about to drown. A man comes along in a boat, pulls him in, and takes him across the lake. The man does not take him out of the water just to revive him, and then put him back in the water to swim the rest of the way across the lake. He takes him out of the water, revives him and transports him safely to the other side of the lake. This is an illustration of what God does for man when He saves him.

God is our Redeemer; He is merciful and kind. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. 103:13) . "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ( John 3:16) . God will pardon us, He will redeem us, He will deliver us from bondage. God will save us from sin because He is our Salvation.

This is the meaning of the name Jesus. God will save us. God saves us by changing us, through His grace, into His children. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him (Christ)" (Heb. 7:25).

## GOD IS FATHER

When the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray, He said, "Our Father which art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). Of all the names given to God in the Bible, no doubt the most familiar is Father. Throughout the New Testament the word *Father* is used for God, even as Jesus is called His "only begotten Son." Jesus said, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27).

The Bible uses the word father in its most essential meaning; a father is the one who begets the child. This is especially true when we speak of the Lord Jesus as the Son of God. Paul calls God "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 11:31; Eph. 1:3; Col. 1:3) .In the Old Testament, God is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and also the God of Moses, the God of Elijah, and the God of David. He is called in the New Testament "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," because our Lord was identified as the "only begotten Son of the Father" (John 1:14) while living on earth. Jesus in His human nature is the one who reveals God as Father, as the Begetter, and as the Source of Life.

When we are born again, our Father is a Heavenly Father. When I was born the first time, I had an earthly father; my first birth was physical. When I was born again, my second birth was spiritual; in this way, I have a Heavenly Father. I was begotten in my first birth by the will of man. In the second birth, I was begotten by the Word of God and the will of God; and this was done through the person of Jesus Christ.

While the Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, all Christians are the adopted children of God. Christians do not call God "Father" because He is their provider, but because He is the true Father of those who believe and are born again. God the Father regenerates believers as they are born again of His Spirit.

It is quite true that God is a provider. He provides for all the people in the world, and mankind should be grateful for what God does. The Bible reveals God as the Creator and as the Keeper of life. He is the

Provider of man's needs, and He is the Judge of man's conduct. He is also the Saviour from the consequence of sin. In all this, He is "like a Father." However, to become the spiritual children of God we must be begotten by Him through Jesus Christ. The Apostle John wrote, "But as many as received him (the Lord Jesus Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). We are "born again" into this new relationship with God. In this way He *becomes* truly our *Father*.

God wants all human beings to have the opportunity to enter the family of God. They can become the children of God through faith. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1).

It is the wonderful truth of the Gospel that salvation brings believers into this relationship with God, in which they are *children of God* and He is their *Father*.