

1. GOD IS YOUR FATHER

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

This lesson is designed to show why people should worship Jehovah God and why it is harmful to worship idols. This lesson also points to Jesus as the One who can lead people to God.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN THIS LESSON

ACTS: a book in the New Testament that tells what Jesus' Apostles did after Jesus was taken up into heaven.

APOSTLES: the men who were selected by Jesus and sent out by Him to Tell the world the good news.

CORINTHIANS: two long letters in the New Testament, which were written by the apostle Paul to the church in the city of Corinth in Greece.

GENESIS: the first book of the Bible.

JEREMIAH: a prophet who lived many years before Jesus and who wrote one of the books of the Old Testament.

JOHN: Jesus' apostle, who wrote several of the books of the New Testament.

NEW TESTAMENT: the part of the Bible, which tells

about Jesus and His church.

OLD TESTAMENT: the part of the Bible, which tells how God dealt with the Jewish people.

PAUL: Jesus' apostle, who wrote most of the books of the New Testament.

PETER: Jesus' apostle, who was a leader among the apostles and who wrote two of the books of the New Testament.

PSALMS: a book of the Old Testament, containing 150 songs.

RIGHTEOUSNESS: the attribute of doing things that are good and just.

ROMANS: a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the church in the city of Rome.

GOD IS YOUR FATHER

God created you. He also made the land, the ocean, the sky, and everything that exists (Genesis Chapter 1). The first man whom God made was called “Adam.” The wife whom God made for Adam (Genesis 2:22) was called “Eve”(Genesis 3:20).

Although Adam knew God and spoke with Him, Adam’s descendants soon forgot God. There was no excuse for them to have forgotten God. He had given them many proofs of His presence and of His goodness. In order to see something of His glory, all they had to do was to look up at the moon and the stars in the sky at night (Psalm 19:1). Both the night and the day tell of God (Psalm 19:2).

It is possible for you to know that God exists. You can know this by observing the natural world (Romans 1:20). Yet by observing the natural world only, you might draw false conclusions about the nature of God. You might not know that He is a loving Father. That is why it was necessary for someone to come into the world in order to show you what God is like.

HOW PEOPLE IN ASIA MINOR CAME TO KNOW ABOUT GOD

When the Apostle Paul went to Lystra, a town in a part of the world known today as Turkey, Paul found a cripple man there, who had never walked. When Paul noticed that the cripple was paying close attention to his (Paul’s) message about Jesus, Paul said to him, “Stand up on your feet!” The man immediately stood up, and he began to leap

and walk with joy. The people of Lystra saw the miracle that Paul did, and they shouted, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men” (Acts 14:11)! They thought that Barnabas was the Greek god Zeus and Paul was Hermes. So a priest of Zeus brought oxen and wreaths and started to make sacrifices to Barnabas and Paul; but Barnabas and Paul ran among the people and cried out,

“Men, why are you doing these things?
We also are men
with the same nature as you,
and preach to you that you should turn
from these vain things to the living God.”
Acts 14:15

Then Paul told the people of Lystra that God is the one, who had created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. Paul also told them that in times past God had allowed all nations to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16), but that the time had come for them to recognize the true God and obey Him. Paul also told the people of Lystra that God had not left Himself without witness, but that He had done many good things for people. Paul pointed out that God had given them rain from heaven, fruitful seasons, and had filled them with food and gladness (Acts 14:17).

WHAT PAUL TOLD THE PEOPLE OF ATHENS

After the Apostle Paul had visited several Greek cities to tell them about Jesus, he came to the city of Athens. The people of Athens were always anxious to hear something new. So they took Paul to a hill, on which their court met, in order to hear what he had to say. There, Paul made a speech. In his speech, he told the Athenians that he had noticed in their city an altar that bore the inscription: “To an unknown god.” Regarding the unknown god, Paul said,

“Therefore,
the one whom you worship
without knowing,
Him I proclaim to you.”
Acts 17:23

Paul then proceeded to speak to them about the God, whom they did not know. He said that this God is Lord of the heavens and the earth and that He had made all things. Paul also said that God does not live in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24). He said that God should not be worshipped with men’s hands as though He needs anything (such as food); for God is Himself the one who gives life to all (Acts 17:25). What God desires, Paul said, is for all people everywhere to seek after Him and to find Him. Paul assured the Athenians that God is not far from any of them, since every person lives and moves in God (Acts 17:27-28). Paul warned the people of Athens not to think of God as if He were an image of gold, of silver, or of stone, which some craftsman had made. Paul said that in times past God had overlooked people’s ignorance but that, now, He commanded all men everywhere to repent. Paul concluded his remarks by saying that God had appointed a

day on which He would judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He had raised from the dead, namely Jesus (Acts 17:29-31).

SHOULD IMAGES BE WORSHIPPED?

The first people, who started making images of God made them, no doubt, to help them think about the various aspects of God's nature. As time went by, however, the images turned out to be a hindrance in thinking about God, rather than a help; for many worshippers came to think of the images, not as mere representations of what God is like, but as being gods themselves.

When people started worshipping images, they stopped thinking about God as being the one, who gives them food, money, and children. They began to think that the images gave them these things. This false concept was passed down from one generation to the next. As a consequence, many people do not glorify God and give Him thanks. The reverence that should be shown to Him alone is shown to images. For this reason, the hearts of some people have been darkened (Romans 1:21) so that they think of God as being like an animal (Romans 1:23). This is very harmful, for although animals have some admirable characteristics, they also have many characteristics that should not be imitated by men and women. Therefore, many people have been led into sin by worshipping animals (Romans 1:24-25).

DON'T BE AFRAID OF IDOLS

Idols are the work of man's hands (Jeremiah 10:3,9). They do not breathe and they cannot speak. Since they cannot walk, they have to be carried about (Jeremiah 10:5). In fact, they can do nothing either good or bad. That is why no one should be afraid of them. Idols can neither bless nor harm a person (Jeremiah 10:5).

DON'T SACRIFICE TO DEMONS

When people sacrifice to idols, however, they are actually sacrificing to demons (1 Corinthians 10:20). God is a jealous God (1 Corinthians 10:22). We should have nothing to do with demons (1 Corinthians 10:20). No one should have communion with demons and also partake of the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 10:21).

HOW CAN PEOPLE BE LED BACK TO GOD?

Jesus is the only one, who can reconcile us to God (2 Corinthians 5:18). He is the one only one, who shows what God is like. Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

GOD IS FATHER

When Jesus was on earth, He continually spoke of God as "Father." Although it was not entirely new to refer to God as "Father," the emphasis that Jesus placed on the fatherhood of God was new.

WHAT A GOOD FATHER IS LIKE

A good father loves his children and looks after them. He is concerned about their safety, health, and welfare. He provides clothing and shelter for them and gives them food. More importantly, he sees to it that his children are properly taught.

All of these things God does for you. Not only does He take care of your physical needs, but He also made provisions for your spiritual welfare. He did this by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world to die for your sins (John 3:16). He has nothing greater to give to you than His Son. Therefore, this is the greatest possible expression of His love. Since God has given His Son for you, you can no longer doubt God's love for you. (Romans 5:8).

WORKSHEETS

After you have read Lesson Number One and looked up all the references in the Bible, please read the following statements. As you read them, please pay attention to whether or not the statements are true. If you decide that a statement is true, please write a “T” before it. If you find a statement is false, please write an “F” before it.

- ___ 1. God is the one, who created the world.
- ___ 2. Both night and day speak of God.
- ___ 3. One cannot find proofs in the world that God exists.
- ___ 4. The apostle Paul allowed himself to be worshipped as if he were a god.
- ___ 5. God lives in temples made with hands.
- ___ 6. God is not far from anyone.
- ___ 7. God raised up Jesus from the dead.
- ___ 8. When people worship idols, they are actually worshipping demons.
- ___ 9. Jesus showed us what God is like.
- ___ 10. God loves you.

Please, read the following passages in your Bible and fill in the missing words. The quotations are from the New King James Bible.

Psalm 19:1

“The heavens declare ____ ____ ____; and the firmament shows ____ ____.”

Acts 14:17

“Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us ____ ____ ____ and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with ____ and ____.”

Acts 17: 24-25

“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in ____ ____ _____. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, since He gives to all ____, ____, _____. ”

Romans 6:8

“Now if we died with Christ, we _____ that we shall also ____ with Him.”

Please, answer the following questions by writing a short paragraph about each:

1. Has God treated you in a way you think a father should treat his child? Please state your reasons.

2. Do you think it is permissible to worship God and idols too? Give reasons for your answer.