

LESSON 1

EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. Different concepts

Reading : Job 38

Memory verses : Job 11:7,8

Theme : *To learn that belief in God is not contrary to principles of science and logic*

Introduction: Have you ever encountered people who do not believe in God? What are the arguments which they bring up against the existence of God? Have you felt that they have seriously studied about God or what the Bible teaches on the subject? When we closely observe those people who claim that they are rationalists or atheists, we will realize that they really have no logic in their thinking and are ignorant about matters concerning God. Some take pride in claiming that they do not believe in God and do not read or study the Bible. Hence a serious study must be undertaken on the topic of the existence of God.

VARIOUS CONCEPTS ABOUT GOD:

Man has held differing points of view about God from time immemorial. Thoughts concerning God are related to the Greek word "Theos" and the Latin word "Deus". Some popular concepts are Theism or Deism, Atheism, Agnosticism, Scepticism and Naturalism. We shall briefly discuss these topics.

1. **Theism:** Theists believe that God exists. Among them, some believe in one God (Monotheism) and some have belief in many Gods (polytheism). Among the polytheists, some groups of people, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, believe that separate Gods and Goddesses control different aspects of life and worship them in that manner. Some believe that a separate God controls each different race. Philistines had Dagon and Moab had Chemosh.

Such a belief is known as henotheism. Polytheism deny that god is almighty, all-knowing and eternal. Jews and Christians are monotheists. Islam also follows the same thought.

2. **Atheism:** Atheists say that there is no creator behind this universe and things which cannot be felt by the five senses need not be believed. Their contention is that god is created by man in his own image and not the other way round. Atheism has come up from materialism. Materialists claim that matter has somehow formed itself into the universe. But as this view did not seem to be logical to Karl Marx, he formed his own theory called 'Dialectical Materialism, basing it on Darwin's evolution theory. But the theory of evolution has not been proved scientifically, nor will it be ever possible to do so. It is said that even Darwin accepted the hollowness of his theory towards the end of his life. We shall be dealing with evolution in another lesson. The arguments of the atheists are contrary to scientific or logical thinking. Those who claim that any particular object does not exist should be able to test every thing at all places at the same time. That will be possible only if they are all powerful, all knowing and omnipresent. How can a man with his limitations claim that God does not exist? To say that all the animate and inanimate objects in the universe came into being by themselves is against scientific principle that nothing happens without a cause. When we see the wonderful order that prevails in nature, is it not illogical to say that there is no intelligence working behind that order? If the things which are not felt by the five senses are not real, such attributes like love, goodness, faith, etc. must also be unreal. Although electricity cannot be seen by our eyes, it is very much real. We see its effects when it flows into a light bulb or a machine. Similarly, although God cannot be seen by our physical eyes, those who are in relationship with Him can experience the good effects resulting from the same (Psa.34:8).
3. **Agnosticism :** Agnostics are not bothered whether God exists or not. There need not be any thinking or action about the matter as far as they are concerned. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India was of this opinion. Ingersol was an agnostic, who also denied the existence of God. It is foolish, indeed to be concerned solely with temporary things without being mindful of substantial matters concerning God and eternity. "Although they claim to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22, Psa.14:1).

4. **Scepticism:** Sceptics have doubts about everything in the universe. As they ponder about things, doubts keep increasing. They cannot believe in anything nor do they have any definite opinion about anything. They are in despair having failed in their attempt to understand the truths about God and the universe through their own wisdom. It is impossible to comprehend the eternal God through man's wisdom and efforts (Job 11:7,8). Man has become blind, deaf and dead because of sin. His doubts can be cleared only by obtaining remission of sins through Jesus Christ and by receiving the true revelation of God.
5. **Naturalism:** Naturalists believe that nature itself is God which creates, controls and rules everything including man. It is illogical in this modern age when man is in the process of conquering the universe, to think that nature is controlling and ruling over man. The heart of man is constantly yearning for fellowship with superior person. Nature cannot take the place of God. Worship of nature leads man to moral degradation (Rom. 1:21-32).
6. **Principle of advoidam :** People with this view cannot see God as different from man or nature. God is in everything, they say. In other words, "I am god". But according to Bible, the sinful nature of man prevents goodness from dwelling inside him. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature (Rom. 7:18) "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23) This truth is visible everywhere in the word. So it cannot be true to say: "I am God and every one is God". Every individual must be born again and put on the new man created to be like God (Eph. 4:22-24).

We have thus far seen some concept regarding God. All beings in this universe are creatures of the almighty God, who cannot be comprehended by our own effort and wisdom. But if we confess our nothingness and sinful nature to God, He will grant us his revelation the happiness and inner satisfaction of divine fellowship with Him. What is your experience?

Questions:

1. What are the main concepts about god ?
2. Define monotheism, polytheism and henotheism.

3. What is atheism? what are basic argument of atheists?
4. Prove that atheism is contrary to scientific principles and logic.
5. Define agnosticism and scepticism and say why they are not acceptable.
6. Define naturalism and advoidam. Prove that they are meaningless.

