

Additional notes for teachers:

Many of the notes comprise deeper matters which have arisen in the course of preparation of the Students Notes. Other material has been appended for the purpose of providing background, explanations or interesting detail.

Lesson 2: THE TRINITY UNSCRIPTURAL

The doctrine of the Trinity first took root amongst Christendom in about the third century A.D. In examining this error a serious source of confusion to some is the way the word “God” is used in the Bible. It is not used only of the Creator, who is ONE, as many Scriptures teach, but also used for His representatives.

Consider the following references:

1. “Thou (Moses) shall be to him instead of God” (Exod. 4:16)
2. “See, I have made thee (Moses) a God to Pharaoh” (Exod. 7:1) – The R.S.V. uses a capital “G”).
3. “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way ... Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him” (Exod. 23:20-24).
4. “The house of David shall be as God” (Zech. 12:8)

In (1) and (2) above, a mortal man is elevated to the status of “God” because he represented God to man.

In (3) an angel acts with all the authority of God.

In (4) the immortalised brethren of Christ – the possessors of the “everlasting covenant” of David (Isa. 55:3) are described. Those then immortalised are said to be “as God” (i.e. His representatives) because they will possess “the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2) the nature of God (II Pet. 1:4) the Name of God (Rev. 3:12).

This was the case with the risen and glorified Lord Jesus. Thomas declared, “My Lord and my God”. The words of Thomas do not mean that Christ was the second person of a trinity, but the representative of God on earth.

Christ himself testified to this truth. The Jews misunderstood his words, and thought that he was claiming to be God (John 10:33). (Gentiles make the same mistake today). But Christ referred the Jews to their own law and pointed out that “those to whom the word of God came were called gods”, even though they were mortals.

The Lord Jesus was referring to the leaders of Israel, men who governed the nation on God’s behalf, and with His authority. They were called “gods” because they represented God on earth (Psa. 82:6-7; II Chron. 19:6; Deut. 19:17).

TEACHING METHODS

1. Point out the absolute need to find out about God from the Bible – no other source is sufficient.
2. Dwell on the doctrinal aspect of God as One as this is such a basic tenet of belief and understanding.
3. Explain that there are different applications of the word “God” in the Bible.
4. Highlight the mighty Creator as a loving Father, to be worshipped and adored by all His children.