

L LORD

OF HEAVEN & EARTH:

*LESSONS ON THE NATURE AND CHARACTER
OF THE GOD OF SCRIPTURE*

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LORD OF HEAVEN & EARTH: Lesson Notes

****Class participants can prepare for each session by reading through the lesson notes and being prepared to discuss the Thought Questions in class****

LESSONS

1. TOTHEPRAISEOFHISGLORY

A lesson on Christian theology as a basis for praise to God

2. ETERNAL POWER & DIVINE NATURE

A lesson on the results and limitations of recognizing God in nature

3. MAKER OF HEAVEN & EARTH

A lesson on the identity of God revealed in the act of creation

4. HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

A lesson on the transcendent nature of God

5. THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A lesson on the immanent character of God

6. HOW LONG, O LORD?

A lesson on God and the problem of evil

7. THE GOD OF ISRAEL

A lesson on the story of Yahweh, Israel, and the blessing of the world

8. GOD WITH US

A lesson on the incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth

9. FATHER, SON & SPIRIT

A lesson on the Trinity revealed in salvation

10. ALPHA & OMEGA

A lesson on the God who makes all things new

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LESSON 10: ALPHA & OMEGA – The God who makes all things new

- ❖ Just as God is revealed in history through Jesus and Scripture, the knowledge of God will be complete at the end of time, when God acts decisively in Christ again to complete the redemption of his creation.
- ❖ Both Now and Not Yet
 - The New Testament considers the Kingdom of God to be accomplishing something new that has happened in the world. The Christian church, as the agents for that Kingdom, are a 'new creation' in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17)
 - God's work in the world today is one of INAUGURATED ESCHATOLOGY – a term which expresses the idea that the future salvation God will bring is already 'inaugurated' and being accomplished in the present.
 - Jesus' resurrection is the signpost that future new creation is arrived now. He is the 'first-fruits' of the eventual bodily resurrection of all of God's people. Thus, Christians marked out as united to Christ's death and resurrection in baptism now 'walk in newness of life.' (Rom. 6:4)
 - Likewise, God's Holy Spirit is the manifestation of a new age in which God calls all people to himself. (Acts 2) Further, the Spirit dwells in the lives of Christians to bear fruit for godly behavior (Gal. 5) and to guarantee the future inheritance of eternal life (Eph. 1)
 - Both of these signals are born out of the Triune God, and have links back to seeing the new humanity as the new image-bearers of God, reflecting his glory to the world
- ❖ The Day of the Lord
 - Gods' final return to earth will involve taking account of all human life.
 - What the OT prophets called 'The Day of the Lord,' when Yahweh would return to exact judgment on his enemies, is carried out the New Testament by Jesus in his 'second coming' to pronounce sentence on all mankind.
 - The NT contains several images of final punishment, including the destruction of the earth by fire (2 Pet. 3), Gehenna/Hell (several of Jesus teachings/parables) and the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21)
 - While there is a plethora of warnings of God's judgment in Christ, the NT also highlights God's LONG-SUFFERING – that he delays judgment, that all humans might come to repentance
- ❖ New Heavens and New Earth
 - Scripture pictures the Christian's final destination of 'Heaven' as an apocalyptic event of new creation, involving:
 - The resurrection of the body to be made like Jesus (Phil. 3:21)
 - The restoration of all things (Acts 3:21)
 - New Heavens and New Earth (2 Pet. 3:13)
 - The most vivid picture of this is from Revelation 21 & 22 in which the New Jerusalem comes from Heaven so that God may dwell among humanity:
 - In this place, there is no Temple, because God is the Temple
 - There is no Sun or Moon, because God is the light
 - The Tree of Life is there to preserve eternity for God's children

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❖ In Praise of God

- Romans 8: 18-25 / Revelation 21:1-7

❖ Thought Questions

- What are some aspects of the Christian life that express the tension between salvation as a present reality, but also a future expectation?
- When it comes to Hell, some believe that it is outside of God's character to allow eternal suffering, even of those who reject God, and so believe that ultimately all people will be saved, even perhaps from out of Hell. What is this belief trying to affirm? What are the problems with this view?
- What part of the description of the New Heavens and New Earth in Revelation 21 & 22 resonates most with you as a symbol of hope? Why?