

Whether trying to teach someone else, or looking introspectively at ourselves and where we are in our Christianity, the first and most important step is to look at what is believed about God. It is vital that He is established as a viable, interacting, loving, all wise, and all powerful Creator and Friend. People cannot come to God unless they believe...

Heb 11:6

1

6 And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

And, friends, we cannot believe that He is, unless we know...

2

Who is God ?

The Old Testament begins with God. The underlying reality in Gen 1, is not the material universe, but God. He is the power, the force, the intelligence that is the central core of the narrative. Note that, as He is introduced to mankind, He is always viewed as a Person, never a mindless force. He is a Person who plans, chooses, acts, and enjoys His labors. But it is noteworthy that the personage of God does not seem real evident in much of the Old Testament. What I mean by this is that when we read of the warmth of intimate relationship in the Old Testament, while known by many, such as the psalmists, this intimate relationship is not central in each believer's experience of God. God is always seen as faithful, yes, and His love is evident even in the face of the unfaithfulness of the people. He loved His people; acted for them when they were in need, disciplined them when they strayed, guided them spiritually, morally, and socially through the Law. But, yet it still seems as if there is a hesitancy on their part. The Israelites did not seem to easily call God "Father." Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were viewed as the fathers to them.

Ex 6:2-3

3

2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am the Lord; **3** and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them

I can't explain for sure what this means, but it would appear that God was selective or careful in how He allowed man to see him, what He revealed of Himself to Man. As we follow through the scriptures of the Old Testament we see elements of God being shown, His power in His creation. His love in providing for His creation and His chosen people, His faithfulness in the keeping of His promises, these are all aspects of His nature that we see being revealed, but Exodus 6 indicates that there were things that God chose to not reveal until the time He chose came.

We see a different dynamic when we get to the scriptures of the New Testament, there, God reveals Himself not only as a Person but as a Person desiring intimacy. In the Old Testament the dominant image of God is that of power, vengeance, and the source of help, and while the Psalmists speak of His compassion often it is rarely seen that the people look to Him for it. In the New Testament the dominant image is that of...

4

"Father"

He exhibits all the attributes of fatherhood and there is a warmth in His every act that, while present in the Old Testament days, doesn't appear to have been fully realized. This is exactly the point Paul expresses in...

Rom 8:15

5

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

We cry, "Abba, Father". The real impact of this cry is that *Abba* is one of the first words a child uttered as he reached up toward a father who bent down to cuddle him: *Abba* is equivalent to "Daddy"!

So, is God a Person? The answer is a resounding yes, in the strictest understanding of the concept. He is not human, and as such physical, but He has all the attributes and characteristics of persona. And note His description;

- 6
- a) The Sovereign Lord
 - b) The Creator
 - c) The Redeemer
 - d) The King of Hosts
 - e) The Mighty God

All this ... and, not to be trite, but to emphasize the attitude we should have, He is to us, "Daddy." SO...

7

WHO IS GOD?

Look how succinctly Paul tells us about our Father....

Eph 1:3-14

READ

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, **4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love **5** He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, **6** to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. **7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, **8** which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight **9** He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him **10** with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him **11** also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, **12** to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. **13** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, **14** who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

A better discourse on God cannot be found. See what Paul says about God...
He is the one who...

8

- ★ Blesses us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ
- ★ Chose us before the foundation of the world, to be blameless and holy
- ★ In love He predestined His children through Christ, according to His will
- ★ Freely bestowed His grace in Christ
- ★ Sent Christ that we might have redemption through His blood, according to His grace

- 9 ★ Made known His wisdom & insight in the mystery He revealed according to His plan
- ★ Gave us Christ, in whom all things on Earth or in Heaven, are brought together
- ★ Has promised those He has chosen before time an eternal inheritance according to His will
- ★ Seals those who come to Him, with the Holt Spirit of Promise

Who is God? He is the one in whom all blessings and promises are contained. If anyone does not accept the principles put forth by Paul, concerning God, then they don't believe that He is and that He rewards those who seek Him. These principles are at the very root of ones faith. What we believe and trust about God defines the strength of our faith and commitment to obedience. What we accept about what He has done and why He has done it, is the determining factor in whether or not we come to Him on His terms and not our own.

1 Cor 8:5-6

10

5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

Paul emphasizes his point here. It is God that is the source of everything we see. He is the creator of all things all things he created are for Him. But note the continuation of his statement, that it is only through Christ that we can exist for God. Therein is the true nature of God revealed, He gave us the opportunity to exist, but it must be through Christ...

John 3:16

11

16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

God reveals His love for man by giving man the only thing that could possibly give man the chance to exist eternally with his creator, the blood of Christ Jesus.

Now, having gone to some effort to emphasize the persona of God, the next point almost seems to fly in the face of that argument.

There are numerous indications in the Old Testament that the one God of Israel is a unity of Persons. In...

Gen 1:26

12

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;

Our image, not my. God describes Himself as a plurality. Even that great statement of affirmation given Israel in...

Deut 6:4

13

4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

The word translated "One" is a term used for "a cluster of, or composed of many, like grapes."

The New Testament expands the hint of plurality by revealing the three Personas who make up the Trinity. There is the Father. There is the Son. And there is the Holy Spirit. Each distinct, yet together One, and all the attributes of persona are applied to each as individuals as well as to the one.

Neither the Old nor New Testament attempts to explain how three can be one. Instead they simply affirm...

That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are One...

John 1:1-4

14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. **4** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 10:30

15

30 "I and the Father are one."

The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son...

John 15:26

16

26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,

that Each is a personality distinct from the other, while one with the others

John 16:13-15

17

13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. **14** "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose *it* to you. **15** "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose *it* to you.

I would love to be able to tell you that I fully understand this plurality / singularity. I would be lying. I don't. This is a mystery that I have found no analogy that can come close to explaining. Not the concept or idea that leans toward "modalism" which we have talked about before, which is the idea that the One, the Godhead, simply expresses Himself in three aspects or modes, neither does a definition that robs the Son and Spirit of their full deity, making them no better than glorified angels. All three personages are described as being separate with their own personas as well as being described as one. The Trinity is an unavoidable truth in the New Testament. An explanation of that mystery is just something that we will have to wait until we can ask God in person.

As difficult as it is to understand the concept of the Trinity of God, our next point makes far more sense, while at the same time expressing the absolute depth of God's Love for man and, His great desire to have a deep relationship with each and every one of His creation.

Scholars term this idea, INCARNATION, the idea being, that something which is not physical or of the physical world becomes physical. Christ is Deity. He is of the Spiritual realm and was incarnated when He was born of a woman and became flesh. This is what it means to be reincarnated, or to have another physical body after one dies.

1 Cor 15:50-55

18

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. **53** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

Paul describes for us the process of this "reincarnation," if you will. Our bodies are physical and because of that they decay and die. A mortal body cannot be a part of an eternal inheritance that is promised by God. For existence to continue eternally, our bodies must become eternal, immortal. The love of God is manifested again that not only has He provided for man the avenue to receive the eternally reward but He provides the eternal body that will be able to enjoy that reward.

Note what God did for man...

Heb 2:14

19

14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Satan had a power over death that had to be broken so God incarnate, Jesus, died so that He could take that power from Satan, the Devil. And note what John says...

John 15:12-13

20

13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

If the greatest love is manifested in the sacrifice of ones life, what does it say about the love that Christ exhibited when He gave up His deity to become flesh and blood to give mankind the opportunity to break the hold that Satan, to render Satan powerless.

If there were no other reason than that, to come to God through the sacrifice of Christ because of the love God shows, remember our reading in Eph. 1 and everything that God has done for us.

Tonight we are going to continue this discussion about God.

Remember, God wants His creation to be saved, to exist with Him eternally...

Acts 17:30

21

30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,

So, because God wants His creation to be with Him, He gave man the way to be saved.

Rom 10:17 Hear

Heb 11:6 Believe

Acts 2:38 Repent

Acts 8:36-37 Confess

Acts 2:38 Baptism

The only question is whether or not we want to be with Him eternally.