

Who is God II ?

This is the second lesson of a two lesson series on, **1** In our discussion this morning we looked at God as the creator of everything. We talked about the fact that if we are to have a relationship with Him we must believe that He is and that He will reward the faithful and obedient believers. We briefly discussed how that God revealed Himself to man in the Old Testament directly. He brought the Israelites out of Egypt with the use of miracles, He led them with pillars of cloud and fire, He parted the Red Sea for them to cross, and He helped them in their battles to take the land of Canaan, but it wasn't until Christ came that the whole of God was opened and revealed to man through Him. That is where we left the lesson this morning, talking about the concept of *INCARNATION*, the idea of becoming physical and then the ultimate transition into immortality. We were talking about Christ, who chose to leave the Spiritual realm of Heaven and His deity to become God incarnate, flesh and blood, that is what we saw in

Heb 2:14

2

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;

What a wonderful gift of love that God gave to man. God, the Father, who sent His only begotten Son. God, the Son, who gave all that He had, sacrificing both His humanity and his Deity for a mankind that had time after time rejected God, and God the Spirit, who bears witness of the Love of God manifested incarnate, in the flesh.

Phil 2:5-7

3

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Old Testament history provides many evidences of God's concern for His people. But the ultimate evidence of God's willingness to become involved in the human condition is His Incarnation. Paul states a confession of faith that became a mantra of the early church in...

1 Tim 3:16

4

16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:
He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Jesus often spoke of His coming from the Father and returning to the Father. The clear teaching of the New Testament is that the Son existed as God from all eternity with the Father. In an inconceivable act of self-emptying, Christ set aside His prerogatives as God, and entered the world He had created - as a Baby. To accomplish His work, His plan of salvation, God became man, God had to become man, joining with His creation.

It's clear from Scripture that there was and is a distinctive purpose behind the Incarnation of Christ. The central goal was to accomplish redemption. Jesus lived a sinless life and died a sacrificial death of atonement for our sins. Yet there were other purposes as well. For the first time, God was seen in the world as a part of the world. Jesus' life and actions express the person of God in ways no words could have.

John 14:8-9

5

8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." **9** Jesus said to

him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

His life defines holiness. His compassion explains love. His patience opens our eyes to God's love toward you and me. Most of all, the Incarnation tells us that God cares enough to become involved. He does not stand back, urging us on from a safe vantage point. He does not set unreasonable laws and demand obedience, He gives us the choice. He stripped Himself of His glory and, accepting the form of a Man, humbled Himself even to death.

Once and for all, the Incarnation decides the question, "What does God really think about me?" Is He a policeman, looking for crimes to punish? Or a nagging parent, always finding fault? Is He an impersonal force, oblivious to insignificant me as He crushes mankind beneath the steamroller of history? Is God an idealist, who in His concern to restructure society ignores the individual? Or is He so caught up in Himself that He demands we cringe before Him, caring only that we offer fearful praise?

6

What does God think of us?

To God we are not criminals, we're not naughty children, not insects, not pawns in some grand game, not "nothings." To God, we are special, the objects of His love and concern. Rather than demanding service from us, God set aside His robes of glory and became our Servant. Rather than demand full payment from us for sin, He gave His own life to pay the penalty for our sin. God became Man to tell us - and show us - how much He loves us.

John 15:12-13

7

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

The death of Christ on Calvary was the climax of His life on earth. It was an event equaled in significance only by the Resurrection. The New Testament illustrates His death as an atoning sacrifice.

1 John 4:10

8

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Atonement means to pay the price that is necessary to accomplish reparation. If I hit someone else's car in a parking lot, my atonement is the price I pay to have the car repaired.

In the Old Testament, sacrifice played a central role in Israel's spiritual experience. Immediately after God gave the Law, He instituted the sacrificial system, the blood of the sacrificial animal, offered on the altar, made atonement, or covering, for sin. Sin was not removed, but it was covered. God was then free to act in grace toward those He loved even though their characters and actions cried out for judgment. The question, "How can a holy God deal kindly with sinful man?" is answered in the Old Testament by sacrifice?

Lev 17:11

9

11 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'

This is the point of using blood sacrifice; A life for a Life.

Heb 10:3-4

10

3 But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year. **4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

The writer here points out that the blood of sacrificial animals was not able to remove sin, only to cover it. Why is that? An animal makes has no choice in the matter. Its life is taken, not given, and as an animal it cannot sin or live righteously so the shedding of its blood can't save a man from sin. As death is the necessary and essential outcome of sin, only the death of a perfect sacrifice can pay the price for sin. That was God's plan from before time, that was the mystery throughout Old Testament times...

11

How would God redeem man ?

Rom 6:23

12

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Even God could not set aside this necessity; between darkness and light, holiness and sin, death and life, there can be no compromise. The issue of sin, and the penalty for it, must be faced and resolved.

Therein is the significance of the sacrifice of Christ. His was the perfect sacrifice in that only in the sacrifice of one who had no fault, and therefore no penance to be paid for His own sin, could the price be paid for the sins of others.

Rom 3:24-26

13

25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26* for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The Old Testament yearly sacrifices were, in effect, a fore running of Calvary. The repeated lessons, teaching that only death could provide a remedy for sin, looked forward to that once-for-all death of God's Son.

Heb 9:11-12

14

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; **12** and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

The wonder of the love of God and what He has done for us is revealed not only in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also in the fact that God has not left man to his own devices, but has provided for him...

John 14:16-17

15

16 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; **17** that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

Jesus left the Spiritual realm and came into humanity to break the power of sin and death that Satan had and make eternal life available to all mankind. And the New Testament reveals that God continues to be involved and that the Holy Spirit lives in the renewed personality of the one who chooses to trust Jesus.

This is one of the great contrasts between the Old and New Testaments. God has always yearned for an intimate relationship with His creation. Through the Old Law He pointed out the way of holiness, and He held the door open through sacrifice. Yet the relationship was never as close as it

could have been. There were those who believed, trusted, accepted, and responded to the mediating Word of the Law, but besides those few, there was not the immediate personal relationship, the intimacy of children with their father.

In the Mosaic seen in the Old Testament, it was an external guide to holy living. It was on the outside pointing the way for faithful living and it stood as a testimony against unbelief. When and where there was failure in relationship to the Law, sacrifice was available to restore fellowship. Yet in Old Testament times there was a veil hung between the Holy of Holies, that place in the temple where God's presence dwelt, and the worshipers who were outside.

When Jesus offered His sacrifice, that veil was torn from top to bottom to signify that the way to God was now open. Both the Law and its worship revealed God's desire to have fellowship with man. Yet both also spoke of a barrier that held God back from the depth of intimacy He desired. After Jesus' resurrection, God acted to initiate a closer relationship. God, the Holy Spirit, came to take up residence within the personality of the believer.

The presence of the Holy Spirit within us is the basis for a change both in the Law and in worship. Paul said that the Law was in force until...

Gal 3:23-24

16

23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. **24** Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us to Christ*, that we may be justified by faith.

Now that Christ has died, our response to the Spirit within replaces the external rule of Law. The Old Testament foretold this change. Looking forward to a time when the New Covenant would replace the Mosaic, Jeremiah spoke of God's promise:

Jer 31:33

17

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

The pathway of righteousness that the Law described is now, in the person of the Holy Spirit, engraved within us. God's own love of righteousness grows within us as we come to know Him better and we learn to follow the leading of His Spirit within, the implanted word of God.

God's involvement with individuals in each believer's daily life, is hinted at in the Old Testament. But the fullness of that reality is revealed in the New.

Many Christians fail to grasp God's total involvement with us. But it is vital to the Christians understanding that they do! When the Christian grasps the idea of God's total involvement with them then they know that *We are never alone; never cut off from God's presence.*

Phil 4:7

18

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This peace that a relationship with God through Christ according to the scriptures is a consuming thing. When God's Word becomes the standard that we live by and live in, then we understand and have a confidence of receiving the reward He has promised. In every time of need, whether for mercy because we have failed, or for grace to help when we are challenged beyond our abilities, we have the fullness of God Himself within.

1 John 4:15-17

19

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17** By this, love is

perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

Through His Word, God continues to reach into our lives. Paul, expressed the wonder of it all in praising God...

Eph 3:20-21

20

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, *21* to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Who is God? He is the one who;

21



Created man...



Gave His word to guide man...



Became man to pay the price required for man's sin...



Overcame Satan, when He broke the bond of death in His Resurrection...



Sent His Spirit to guide man into all righteousness...



Has reserved a place in Heaven for those who choose to come to Him...



Will return to take His own home to Heaven...

22

Who is God?

He is the one who loves you, in spite of your sin.