

## THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us" A. W. Tozer - "The Knowledge Of The Holy" Harper and Row Publishers, 1961.

- 1) **GOD IS A LIVING GOD** - "The Living God" is the most common description of God in the Bible. God stands in sharp distinction to all the gods of the nations. The idols of the peoples are *lifeless and senseless* - **Jeremiah 10:5, 10** - "Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good....[10]....But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation."

Idolatry is forbidden as an abomination because *God can't be reduced to a lifeless image* - **Exodus 20:4** - "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."

God is the one who gives life and breath to all creation. He was never given this life from another source. Our worship must be such that fits a living God. All forms that have become *lifeless, mechanical and routinely repetitious* betray the vital, powerful, living presence of our God with us.

- 2) **GOD IS A SPIRIT** - "God is spirit" (**John 4:24**). This means God is *nonmaterial*. He is not a creature of flesh and bones. This also means that He is invisible. Unless He chooses to reveal Himself in some special way He cannot be seen by man. He is the One whom "no man has ever seen or can see" - **1 Timothy 6:16** - "...who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen."
- 3) **GOD IS PERSONAL** - God is a Spirit, but He must never be reduced to a *gas or vapour*. God is described as "**He**" not "**it**". In fact, His personality is the source of ours for we are made in His image. Any reduction of God to a mere *force* or *idea* will not stand up to the light of Scripture. The ultimate revelation of the personhood of God is seen in His revelation in Jesus Christ. Jesus taught us to address God as our Father and depicted His and our relationship to God as children.
- 4) **GOD IS ETERNAL** - He is the "*everlasting God*" who says to Moses: "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'(Exodus 3:14). God lives in the eternal now. There is no temporal progression of past, present and future. Just "I AM". Constant and unchanging. One of the great passages on this theme is **Psalm 102:25-27** - "Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. [26] They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, [27] but you are the same, and your years have no end."
- 5) **GOD IS HOLY** - **Isaiah 43:3** - "For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...." Also, in **Isaiah 6:3** the angels cry "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts." What's important to note here is that, while there are other parts to God's nature, *what Isaiah must grasp in preparation to meet God is His holiness*. Moses confronts the very same thing in **Exodus 3:5** - "Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." True, God is a personal God, but He is not our *equal*. He must never be treated lightly or casually.

The final revelation of God's holiness is seen in the coming of Jesus to die for our sins. God is too holy to ignore them. He can't just *forgive* sin without *punishing sin*. See how Paul explains this in **Romans 3:25-26** - "...whom God put forward (Jesus) as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. [26] It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

- 6) **GOD IS LOVING** - This is true of God in both the Old and New Testaments. Love is why God chose Israel - **Deut. 7:6-8** - "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. [7] It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, [8] but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." This is important to remember because it reminds us that, while the *revelation* of God is progressive, His *character* is not. He is constantly the same in both the Old and New Testaments. Process theology teaches that God is maturing and evolving just as we are. Evangelical thought constantly rejects that faulty premise.

**A.W.Tozer** writes well, "Since mankind was banished from the eastward Garden, none has ever returned to the divine favour except through the sheer goodness of God" Even after the Fall, man has always been the object of God's love and mercy. Somehow, God's reach to us in Christ Jesus precedes the actual events of the Incarnation and the Cross. God didn't suddenly *become* loving and merciful with the New Testament era. **Remember, Jesus was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

Here we are reminded that God's love finds both its *root* and fullest *manifestation* in the death of Jesus Christ. Paul says Jesus died for the "*ungodly*" - **Romans 5:6-8** - "**For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— [8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" Ponder those precious words. This is further evidence that we were loved by Father God even before Christ died for our sins. He died for us while we were *still* ungodly (unjustified by His free grace).

- 7) **GOD IS OMNIPOTENT** - By this we mean God is *all-powerful*. **Jeremiah 32:17** - "**Ah, Lord God! It is you who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.**" It is important, however, to note that God's power is not exercised arbitrarily. *He does not use power to ride over other facets of His nature*. See **Job 8:3** for an example. His power is always used in keeping with his *holiness, love and truthfulness* - "**Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right?**"

Questions like "Could God make a square circle?" or, "Can God create a rock so heavy He can't lift it?" are both meaningless and insulting to the perfect character of a wise and holy God.

- 8) **GOD IS OMNISCIENT** - By that we mean He is *all-knowing*. God knows the future - **Isaiah 42:9** - "**Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.**" He knows the days of our lives before we were born and actually lived any of them - **Psalms 139:4, 16** - "**Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. ....[16]....Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.**" He knows the thoughts and inner workings of our hearts and minds - **Jeremiah 17:10** - "**I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.**"

Because of this, the Psalmist put great stress on purity of life and obedience to God's laws - **Psalms 119:168** - "**I keep your precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before you.** So there is *warning*, but also great *comfort* in this truth. Jesus taught that God's knowledge of the daily needs was so sure and perfect we didn't need to make them a matter of worry - **Matthew 6:32** - "**For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.**" He knows these things fully and constantly. He has never been surprised.

- 9) **GOD IS OMNIPRESENT** - Tozer says, "The word 'present' means *here, close to, next to*, and the prefix 'omni' gives it universality. God is everywhere here, close to everything, next to everyone." How can you say it better than that? Because God is present everywhere, none of life is common. *All becomes sacred*. No hypocrisy or pretense will stand. No thought can be hidden. And, fortunately, no burden goes unnoticed or unshared.

This is the rich joy and jolting reality of knowing and worshipping the God who really is - the God of the Bible.