

Doctrinal Outlines

WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?

I. Introduction

- A. "Everyone knows His name," observed one wise man, speaking about God, "but no one seems to know Him!"
- B. True words, those. And ironic words, too. For in a modern world packed with Bibles of every translation and description, and even having the Word of God on computer, millions have indeed heard God's name. But precious few seem to know much about the living God!
- C. What a pity. But we need not -- we must not -- remain in ignorance of this absolutely foundational principle of Christianity. We simply must know who the real God is and what He is like.

II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. The Bible clearly reveals God's nature, to those who will listen and believe. God is the eternal, supreme Creator.
- B. He is one God, but at present a Family of two beings, the Father and Son, who are alike as the loving, kind, merciful rulers of all reality, and who have opened their Family to all those humans who will be saved.

III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Of course, the religionists of this world would not quickly agree with this definition.
- B. The non-Christian world has images of God -- or of "gods" -- that cover virtually every possible (or, rather, impossible) conception.
- C. Some view God as an animal-like creature, or as the sun, or like a man but with six arms. Others think god is "everywhere," meaning He is in water or sand or the wind.
- D. Still others think of Him only as a force, a great beginning power that has no personality, form or shape.

- E. Even Christians argue among themselves. Usually, though, in Christian circles, believers think God is a trinity -- a three-in-one God that they admit is a "mystery."
- F. Further, they believe that this trinity is closed, that none shall ever enter within this sacred triumvirate of the God-realm.
- G. Some, especially those who fancy themselves as cosmopolitan and educated, don't believe God exists at all, or if He did, that He is now dead!
- H. Which, if any, of these ideas is correct?

IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. Probably the place to begin is with God's composition. We, of course, are human -- that is, mortal and made of the elements.
- B. It is not so with God, for Scripture plainly says that "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24, Authorized Version).
- C. We know from other verses that beings composed of spirit, including angels, for example, are on a higher level of existence than we, and that such spirit is not limited by the physical laws of nature to which humans are bound (John 3:5-8, Deuteronomy 4:12).
- D. But, although composed of spirit like the angels, God is not a mere angel. No, He is in a class, quite literally, by Himself: "To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord Himself is God; there is none other besides Him" (Deuteronomy 4:35).
- E. And not only is God in a class by Himself, but He is higher in rank than all other things, since He is the Creator of all things, and it follows that the creator is above the creation.
- F. Notice this very point, made by the author of Hebrews: "He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:3-4).
- G. Time and again God confirms He is the only God, and a God above all else:
 1. "I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me" (Isaiah 45:5).
 2. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last" (Revelation 1:11).

- H. Besides being a spirit, the only God and above all else, we find that God is both eternal (having no beginning or ending) and immortal (will live forever).
1. Deuteronomy 33:27 -- God is called "eternal."
 2. Deuteronomy 32:39-40 -- "Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. For I lift My hand to heaven, and say, 'As I live forever....'"
- I. Of course, it is natural for humans to want to see God or, if we cannot, to at least know what He looks like. Unless we can see at least a mental image of God, we cannot feel we know Him. Yet Scripture, contrary to the beliefs of many, says plainly and pointedly, "No one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18).
- J. Clearly, the prospect of seeing God in the flesh is nonexistent. But we are not left in darkness, for the very one who said no one has seen God, the apostle John, also said in the same verse, "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He [Jesus Christ] has declared Him."
- K. One way Jesus declared the Father was through Jesus' very presence on earth as a visible person. In response to Philip's request that He "show us the Father," Jesus said: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:8-9).
- L. We know from this verse and many others (such as Genesis 1:27) that the Father resembles human form, although He (like Jesus Christ, pictured in Revelation 1:13-16) is glorified in flaming brilliance, with hair white as snow, "eyes like a flame of fire," with "feet...like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace," and His face "like the sun shining in its strength."
- M. God is no rock or fish, no washed-out, pale stone statue dead on an altar, without any life whatsoever except for moss clinging to it through the centuries. He is like the sun, while retaining the general features found in humans.
- N. Yet, such a powerful, brilliant, eternal, immortal, omnipotent being would be but a terror to us all if such a one were evil and wicked, a spiritual despot who wreaked havoc through the universe and only made

humans to torment or to provide entertainment for His own fiendish schemes.

O. But our God is not such a God. No, He is the very opposite of that worrisome picture, so much so, that John, unable to find stronger words to describe God's goodness, says, merely, "God is love" (I John 4:8).

~~P.~~ Love, then -- and love is an outgoing concern for others -- is God's greatest single attribute, His greatest quality.

Q. Yet it is not God's only character quality, for, as the Bible shows, He is also full of "joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," the fruits of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

R. And even that is not all, for it would require many more pages to quote verse after verse describing all God's attributes -- God's loving forgiveness and mercy, His power, His zeal, His eternal, positive, immortal, immutable, unstoppable greatness!

~~S.~~ Yes, our God is a good God, filled only with desire to do good for us. He would never hurt us. No, He would die before He hurt you, and, in fact, He has. Read about it in John 3:16!

T. In the face of such great news about God, it's hard to imagine what could be said further. But the best is yet to come. And that best is this: God is a Family -- a Family you can enter as a full member and child!

U. The fact that God is Family should not have eluded so many professing Christians for so long. The Scriptures abound with references to God the Father and God the Son. Yet most have simply chosen the plain meaning of these verses and instead interpret such words as merely symbolic.

V. A great block to understanding that God is a Family is found in the common misconceptions about the Holy Spirit (misnamed "Holy Ghost") being a person. Such a nonbiblical belief must be handled in detail elsewhere, but suffice it to say that such a belief chokes out the truth about the God Family by:

1. adding a third person to the Godhead who has no assigned role as Father or Son, and hence does not fit the Family scheme (and thus diverts one's understanding from it) as revealed in the Bible,

2. and creates the familiar closed trinity that so many Christians believe in.

W. Such a belief contradicts the greatest truth of God, that you and I can enter the God Family as full members, on the God level and thus very God ourselves, under the authority of the Father and Son. This incredible truth is the plain teaching of God's Word (John 1:11, 12, II Corinthians 6:17, 18, Galatians 4:5-7, Romans 8:14-17, I Corinthians 15:35-55, John 17:20-26).

X. For more information on this vital subject, read "Just What Is the Holy Spirit?," The Incredible Human Potential and Your Awesome Future -- How Religion Deceives You.

V. Key Verses

Although this is a large subject, it helps comprehension to remember, or even memorize, a few key verses:

- A. John 4:24 shows God is a spirit being.
- B. Isaiah 45:5 shows God is the only God.
- C. John 1:18 reveals that no one has seen God, but that the Son has declared Him.
- D. Revelation 1:13-16 describes God's glorified body that shines with tremendous brilliance.
- E. John 1:11-12 conveys the astounding truth that we can enter the God Family.

VI. Conclusion

Yes, this world knows God's name, but does not know Him. But those who will hear and believe the simple, but exciting truths that flood from His Word can know both His name and who and what He is!

