

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

A. W. Tozer has wisely observed, "The idolatrous heart assumes that God is other than He is and substitutes for the one true God one made after its own likeness. . . . A God begotten in the shadows of a fallen heart will quite naturally be no true likeness of the true God." Because of the accuracy of this statement, we must conscientiously derive our concept of God from what He has said about Himself. Only then can we be certain that we have avoided mere personal inclinations or the thoughts of others, however sincerely held or communicated.

As an aid to the English Bible student, it should be remembered that in Old Testament scriptures the King James translators have rendered the Hebrew "Elohim" as "God" and the Hebrew "Jehovah" as "LORD." To illustrate, the King James Version of Exodus 6:2 reads, "And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am the LORD." The Hebrew actually states, "And Elohim spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am Jehovah." "Elohim" and "Jehovah" are two names for the same God. Our Old Testament quotations in this study will reproduce the King James system of capitalization and include the Hebrew wording in brackets.

1. THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUE GOD.

- a. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah], and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God [Elohim] formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD [Jehovah]; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:10,11).
- b. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).
- c. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD [Jehovah] our God [Elohim] is one LORD [Jehovah]" (Deuteronomy 6:4).
- d. "I am the LORD [Jehovah]: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42:8).
- e. "Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah] the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts; I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God [Elohim]. . . . Is there a God [Elohim] beside me? yea, there is no God [Elohim]; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:6,8).
- f. "I am the LORD [Jehovah], and there is none else, there is no God [Elohim] beside me" (Isaiah 45:5)

- g. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God [Elohim], and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22).
- h. "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God. . ." (Romans 3:29,30).
- i. "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God and there is none other but he" (Mark 12:32).
- j. ". . .We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God. . ." (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

2. GOD IS A TRI-UNITY.

- a. Within the nature of the one true God there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Surpassing human comprehension, this is the great God presented to us in the Bible. It is to be expected that finite creatures cannot fully understand an infinite God whom we are to worship because of His vast superiority. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" (Romans 11:33,34). "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD [Jehovah]. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8,9).
- b. Tri-unity is seen in the following verse which employs one name but three persons. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).
- c. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each referred to as God in the Bible, but nowhere are these three referred to as Gods. There is one God and He is a Tri-unity or Trinity.
 - (1) ". . .He received from God the Father honour and glory. . ." (2 Peter 1:17).
 - (2) "And Thomas answered and said unto him [Christ], My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).
 - (3) "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3,4).
 - (4) ". . .God is one" (Galatians 3:20).

3. GOD IS INFINITE SPIRIT.

- a. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
- b. Explaining the nature of spirit, Jesus said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).
- c. Because the nature of the trinitarian God is spirit, no one has ever seen Him, but Christ took upon Himself a human body to reveal God to us. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).
- d. "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:20).
- e. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17).
- f. "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:16).
- g. Christ is said to be ". . .the image of the invisible God. . ." (Colossians 1:15).
- h. Apart from Jesus Christ's acquisition of a body, the Biblical God is not to be conceived of as a man.
 - (1) ". . .I am God [Elohim], and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee. . ." (Hosea 11:9).
 - (2) ". . .Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee. . ." (Psalm 50:21).
 - (3) "God [Elohim] is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man. . ." (Numbers 23:19).
 - (4) ". . .He is not a man as I am. . ." (Job 9:32).
 - (5) Paul writes disapprovingly of those who ". . .changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man. . ." and "Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the

creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up. . ." (Romans 1:23,25,26).

- i. Scriptures which seem to speak of God in bodily terms must not be interpreted in opposition to the clear truths just mentioned.
 - (1) In some cases, those who "saw God" were actually viewing something other than what it appeared to be. Of Moses it is written, ". . .and the similitude of the LORD [Jehovah] shall he behold. . ." (Numbers 12:8). A "similitude" was not the same as physical reality.
 - (2) At other times the language of Scripture is to be taken figuratively. For example, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. . ." (Psalm 91:4).
- j. Because God is spirit, He is not limited to one place at a time. He is an infinite spirit who is always everywhere present.
 - (1) "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Psalm 139:7,8).
 - (2) "Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah], The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" (Isaiah 66:1).
 - (3) "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD [Jehovah]. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD [Jehovah]" (Jeremiah 23:24).
 - (4) ". . .Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. . ." (1 Kings 8:27).

4. GOD IS ETERNAL.

- a. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God [Elohim]" (Psalm 90:2).
- b. "And God [Elohim] said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14).
- c. "For I am the LORD [Jehovah], I change not. . ." (Malachi 3:6).

- d. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).
- e. From these references we learn that God never began, He has never undergone any changes, and will never vary.
 - (1) One important application of this principal is that the relationships within the Trinity are also eternal. Specifically, the Father-Son relationship between God the Father and God the Son has always existed.
 - (2) "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

5. GOD IS SOVEREIGN.

- a. "With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" (Isaiah 40:14).
- b. ". . .He doeth whatsoever pleaseth him" (Ecclesiastes 8:3).
- c. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).
- d. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35).
- e. ". . .Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory. . ." (Ephesians 1:11,12).

6. GOD IS HOLY.

- a. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD [Jehovah] sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:1-3).
- b. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

- c. ". . .God cannot be tempted with evil. . ." (James 1:13).
- d. The perfect righteousness of our holy God is from eternity past to eternity future. It is not possible that He has ever sinned. Therefore, God has never died or been resurrected, though Christ in His humanity submitted to substitutionary death, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. . ." (1 Peter 3:18)
- e. The holiness of God bars sinful man from His presence apart from Biblical salvation.
 - (1) "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13).
 - (2) "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

CONCLUSION

Identification and acceptance of the one true God is literally a matter of life and death. There is no salvation in false gods who do not even exist except in the deceived hearts of their sincere worshippers. It is imperative that we reject every unbiblical notion about the matchless God of heaven. Our eternal welfare hangs in the balance. Our Savior Himself said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

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