

GOD!
Message 2

INTRO: Our subject matter for these messages is simply found in this one word: God, with a capital 'G'! In the first message we had an introduction to this very important subject. In this series we are going to deal with these questions: 1 Who is God? 2 What does God want from man?, and 3 What is God like? I plan to answer most of the first question in today's message. I plan to answer the second question in the next message. Then we will spend the rest of our time on this great question: What is God like?

Our subject this morning then is: Who is God? We are to look at three points, leaving one for the next message. First we will consider how we can know there is a God. Second, we will seek to answer how He is revealed. Third, we will look at whom we find revealed as God, and last, in the next message, how we can know the one and only true God personally. Now I know that some of this will be elementary to some of you, yet we have young minds here and there may be those among us who are not even Christians, and then I trust many will listen to these messages on internet or on CD. For these reasons we will give this information here.

I. WHO IS GOD?

A. How We Know There Is A God

Let me give this point especially for young people who might wrestle with whether the God of the Bible truly exists. Is there any way we can be sure there is a God? In the Catechism we have this question: *How can we know that there is a God?* You see, this question was relevant when the Catechism was written in 1733, it was relevant before our Catechism was written, and it is just as relevant today. The Catechism gives three proofs. Does anyone remember any of those? Here is the answer: *Nature, the conscience and the testimony of the Holy Scriptures teach us there is a God.*

Some time ago I sat with a professed atheist on an airplane and discussed whether there was a God. He was a university professor and was busy grading papers so I tried to be polite and not bother him. But when he took a break, and a baby began to cry

beside us I said, "I have always wondered how a person could observe a baby, and still believe there is no God." I could tell from his reaction that this troubled him as well. A man said to me once, "Prove to me there is a God." I reached down and pulled a dandelion head and said, "This should do." Does nature prove there is a God? Turn to Romans 1 (read 18-20).

So there is proof from nature. Then there is proof from the conscience. I understand that Billy Graham, after years of dealing with men all over the world, from cultures of all kinds has said that he views the conscience to be the greatest proof that God exists. And amazingly, when the Bible is obeyed by the guilt laden sinner, the conscience is set free.

One of the oldest accounts in the US Treasury Department is called the *Conscience fund*. It was begun in 1811 with 250\$, and some years ago had already taken in nearly 3 million dollars. You see the conscience operates in the non-Christian as well as in the Christian. You may be here this morning, and your conscience is tormenting you. I would be glad to help anyone in this area. It can torment a person, to the death, sometimes. But oh, the joy and freedom there is in Christ from a troubled conscience.

Then there is proof from the Bible. The Bible takes for granted and never seeks to prove the fact that there is a God. Listen to the first statement in the Bible: **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** Now someone may well say, "It is circular reasoning to say that the Bible proves there is a God." Well, I do a message called, "Ten Proofs That The Bible Is The Word Of God." One of those 10 is Bible prophecy. When I sat with this atheist on the airplane, we discussed the Biblical evidence that there is a God as well and I chose Bible prophecy as that proof. I can tell you this, I had his ear. So, if the Bible can be proved to be the Word of God, then of course, there must be a God!

Then there is proof from reason. Here we use such arguments as the cosmological argument; the teleological argument; the ontological argument and

the moral argument. Listen to this from my notes on the Catechism: "Though we do not rely on rationalistic arguments to prove spiritual truth yet when it falls clearly in line with Biblical teaching we must not deny its use. Various rational arguments have been put forth by theologians over the years. There is first the cosmological argument which says everything begun must have an adequate cause. The world is in existence and must have an adequate cause. Of course there could be no less of a cause than God. The teleological argument says that order and useful arrangement of things imply intelligence and purpose and these do not happen by chance. The ontological argument says that the intuitive idea of a God proves there is a God. Why would all people everywhere have the idea of God if there is no God? The moral reason, the fourth rational argument, argues that man intuitively knows there is right and wrong. You do not have to tell anyone that there is such a thing as right and wrong. So those four proofs that there is a God outweigh by far all other arguments that there is no God, for there are no proofs that there is no God. Surely the Scripture that says, 'The fool has said in his heart there is no God' is correct (Ps. 14:1; 53:1)."

So, only a fool denies the fact of God's existence. But let us question now how He is revealed.

B. How He Is Revealed

1. Through The World Book

Well, He is revealed first through what I will call the 'world book'. That is not a set of encyclopedia books. It is creation I am talking about. Turn with me to Psalm 19 (read 1-4a). We mentioned earlier that nature proves there is a God. Now we find that nature reveals the glory of God. It shows us what He is like. Listen to Romans 1:18-20 again: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being

understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..." So, God is revealed to us through what I have called here the 'world book'.

But the 'world book' falls short of revealing God entirely. What cannot be determined from the 'world book' is **who** God is. The world book is called in theological terms, 'general revelation'. It reveals God in general. But to know who of the hundreds of thousands of gods that are worshipped by man is the true God, if He is truly only one, requires special revelation. I have called this the 'Word book'. That of course is the Bible, the greatest treasure on earth, and a treasure from heaven, from Almighty God!

2. Through The Word Book

It is in the Bible that we find out who the true God is. Here we find out who He is and what He is like and why He made us and how He wants us to live. The Bible is the single greatest treasure we have on earth, and its origin is in heaven.

I cannot spend much time here but this morning there are some copies of the message I did a number of years ago, "Is The Bible The Word Of God". You may pick those up after the message. What I want to do in this section on the Word book is read several writings by unknown authors which I edited and put together into one reading. It will give you a sense of the value of the Word book, or the Bible. I have called it, "A Tribute to the Bible." If you would like a copy of this if you sign up where the CD's are I will make a copy for you for next Sunday.

A TRIBUTE TO THE BIBLE
Arranged and edited
by Pastor Phil Schlamp
from four readings by unknown authors
for the glory of God
in appreciation to Him for the wonderful gift
of the Word of God

I am the Bible.
I am God's wonderful library.
I am always -- and above all -- the truth.
To the weary pilgrim, I am a good strong Staff.
To the one who sits in black gloom, I am the glorious Light.
To those who stoop beneath heavy burdens, I am sweet Rest.
To him who has lost his way, I am a safe Guide.
To those who have been hurt by sin, I am healing Balm.
To the discouraged, I whisper a glad message of Hope.
To those who are distressed by the storms of life, I am an anchor sure and steadfast.
To those who suffer in lonely solitude, I am as a cool, soft Hand resting upon a fevered brow.
O child of man, to best defend me, just use me!

I am --

The charter of all true liberty.
The forerunner of civilization.
The moulder of institutions and governments.
The fashioner of law.
The secret of national progress.
The guide of history.
The ornament and mainspring of literature.
The friend of science.
The inspiration of philosophies.
The textbook of ethics.
The light of intellect.
The answer to the deepest human heart hungerings.
The soul of all strong heart life.
The illuminator of darkness.
The foe of oppression.
The uprooter of sin.
The regulator of all high and worthy standards.
The comfort in sorrow.
The strength in weakness.
The pathway in perplexity.
The escape from temptation.
The steadier in the day of power.
The embodiment of all lofty ideals.
The begetter of life.
The promise of the future.
The star of death's night.
The revealer of God.

And, somehow it seems that no matter how much you describe this book, yet it remains indescribable!.

Generation follows generation -- yet it lives.
Nations rise and nations fall -- yet it lives.
Kings, dictators, presidents come and go -- yet it lives.
Hated, despised, cursed, -- yet it lives.
Doubted, suspected, criticized -- yet it lives.
Condemned by atheists -- yet it lives.
Scoffed at by scorners -- yet it lives.
Exaggerated by fanatics -- yet it lives.
Misconstrued and misstated -- yet it lives.
Ranted and raved about -- yet it lives.
Yet it lives -- as a lamp to our feet.
Yet it lives -- as a light to our path.
Yet it lives -- as the gate to Heaven.
It lives -- as a standard for childhood.
It lives -- as a guide for youth.
It lives -- as an inspiration for the mature.
-- as a comfort for the aged.
-- as food for the hungry.
-- as water for the thirsty.
-- as rest for the weary.
-- as light for the heathen.
-- as salvation for the sinner,
and -- as grace for the Christian.

What an incredible book! Where can one go to find another book like it? In Isaiah 40:25 God says, "To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" The answer is, "There is no one like you and there is none Your equal!" And to what book shall we liken the Bible? What book might be its equal?" And the answer is, "There is none to compare it to!"

To know it is to love it.
To love it is to accept it.
To accept it means life eternal.

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of the believer. Yes, it contains light to direct you, food to sustain you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter.

It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure.
Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its decisions are immutable.
Christ is its grand subject, our good is its design, the glory of God, its end.
Read it to be wise; believe it to be safe; practice it to be holy.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

It is given you in life; it will be opened at the Judgment, and be remembered forever more.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

It is "the Word of God which shall stand forever."

My dear believer friend, will you READ it? Will you HEED it? And will you SEED it? For the child of God is to KNOW it in his head, STOW it in his heart, SHOW it in his life, And SOW it in the world.

Hallelujah; thank You Lord for Your infallible, indispensable, inexorable, incomprehensible, indescribable, and indestructible Book, the Bible! Amen, and amen!

C. Whom We Find Revealed

So we have looked at how God is revealed, and that is through the world book and the Word book. Let us now see Whom we find revealed in these two great books.

1. Negatively

As we consider whom we find revealed in the world book and the word book; in natural revelation and divine revelation, I want to deal with it negatively and positively. That is, first we will look at what people believe, but this is not who is revealed. You see, here, where we live we are very sheltered from all kinds of false views, but the world is loaded with false views. By far the greatest number of people who live do not know the one true God. They believe very strange things about God. I am indebted to my daughter Noreen for her research on most of the *isms* and false gods I mention here.

There is atheism which means simply that there is no God. Then there is materialism, of which secularism is a branch. In this thinking God does not exist. The only thing that matters is material things. All that matters is what is good for man. Agnosticism says there is a God but you cannot know Him. Pantheism, says everything that exists is God. This is the belief of the first nations people. Pragmatism, an American philosophy, is not concerned with truth. It is

primarily concerned with whether it works. If it works it is good. This thinking is the core of today's fast growing seeker friendly church and promoted in such books as *The Purpose Driven Life* or *The Purpose Driven Church* etc... It is not concerned with truth but with experience and what is good for me.

Then there is existentialism which rejects propositional truth and is a direct enemy of the One true God. Idealism and personalism says that the 'self' or 'personhood', whether divine or human is the ultimate reality. The divine self and human self are the same. Such is the view of Hindu Vedantinism. Deism and theism say there is one supreme spiritual. There is one supreme Being, but you cannot know Him.

Hinduism teaches reincarnation. If you are bad you might come back in another life as a dog. Buddhists strive to attain spiritual enlightenment. You do not have compassion on the suffering. They have been bad in another life. Let them die. Who cares? They have it coming. The Muslims? Well, Allah is their one God. He is the Abaser, the Humiliator, the Subtle one, the Forceful one; the Taker of Life; the Creator of the harmful. He saves whom he wills and condemns whom he wills. In their books you can read about how to beat your wife without leaving visible marks. To quote John Ashcroft, "Islam is a religion in which Allah demands you to send your son to die for him; in Christianity, God sent His Son to die for you.

Islam is a 'bloody' religion. It's sacred writings are filled with commands to shed the blood of infidels, and infidels are such as believe in Christ. An internet article says that in the past 1400 years 270 million non Muslims have been murdered by them. Mohammed, the prophet of the Muslims for Allah has said, "Three things corrupt prayer: Women, dogs and donkeys." And again, "Woman is a vile beast," and yet again, "I think that women were created for nothing but evil." And still again, "The woman has two things

to cover her: the grave and marriage." Which is better according to Muhammed? The grave!

Then go to India. Here there are 44 million missing women due to what they believe about God. Besides all these, there are what we call the cults. Cults are those that claim the Bible is God's Word, but they twist it to make their own religion. An example of this is Mormonism, to whom Jesus and Satan are brothers. Not only that, but in their religion people can become gods. And women? Well, they don't amount to much at all.

Such are some of the major views regarding the existence or the non existence of God. Is it not interesting that the highest name of God, Jehovah or Yahwey; the God of the Bible simply means *He exists*? And let me remind you of this very important fact that it is what we believe about God that ultimately determines all we are and do and become. That is why John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." It is believing that is so important. It is what one believes that ultimately determines everything. What we believe is the vital center of all of life.

And so, in these messages, we want to look at some of what the Bible teaches us about God. When you get to know the God of the Bible, a loving God; a merciful God; a God who cares and gives; a God who is just and honorable and truthful, and then you study what all the *isms* in the world teach, a picture so dark and of such sharp, stark contrast appears that one wonders why all the world is not committed to Jesus Christ. Instead of darkness, there is light. Instead of fear there is faith. Instead of hate there is love. The difference between truth and error and the true God and all the false is immensely vast, and yet the devil has duped by far the majority of mankind to listen to his voice. If you are here this morning and you are of age and you are not saved, you are listening to his voice. I spent

too much of my life listening to him and still fail to recognize his voice at times.

2. Positively

So, when we look at the world book, nature; what kind of God do we find? We find a God of order. A creative God. A God who cares. A God who provides. Whom do we find revealed as God in all that exists around us? Not a bad God but a good God! And when we come to the Bible, what kind of God do we find? Well, in this series we will try the impossible and that is to describe this wonderful God! I have called the Bible the Word book and we have no hesitation to say it is the inspired, divine book, given by God Almighty Himself. The world book, nature and creation, and the Word book agree perfectly in whom they reveal; only the Word book reveals much more about His character than the world book.

In speaking to the Galatians, in chapter 4:8, Paul writes, "But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods..." First Paul acknowledges that since the Galatians had been saved, they had come to know God. But before they knew God, they worshipped gods who are not gods by nature. What does that mean? Well, you can dress a human being like a dog or a horse, but by nature that human being dressed like a dog or horse will still act like human beings. We, as humans, can change what we look like, but we cannot change what we are. By nature we are human beings. You can graft a branch from one kind of tree into another, but by nature it is still what it was before. Jeremiah says that we can no more change what we are than the leopard can change his spots, or the Barak Obama can change his skin color (Jer. 13:23). By nature we are humans, but there is only one true God by nature.

Again, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, 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, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*"

And so, from the world book one must acknowledge from all of what one sees in creation that God is incredibly powerful. Who could hang the earth on nothing? Who could set in motion the universe with its stars and planets and have everything continue to exist as it is? A simple look at creation reveals a God of incredible wisdom and power and strength. The cause must always be greater than that which is caused and a look at the universe shows this.

But in all of natural revelation, though we learn many of the attributes of God, we come short of much very important truth. We do not know who this God is. We do not know that He has a Son and that this God is made up of three Persons and that He created man for His glory and that man can be redeemed from his sin by the blood of Christ etc... In all of this revelation, nothing is told us about how we can be saved and sanctified and where we go after death. All of this is revealed, not in the world book, but the Word book, the Bible. We will not take more time of this here, because under our last point, "What is God like?" we will consider some of what is revealed in the Bible about God.

CONCL: Our subject this morning has been: Who is God? We have considered three of four points. First, how do we know there is a God? Well, nature, conscience and the Bible tell us so. Second, how is God revealed? Well, both general and special revelation reveal Him to us. Third, whom do we find revealed as God? Jahwey God, Jehovah God? The God revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The only one and true God. The only One who is God by His very nature, His very being!

In the next message we want to answer the fourth and last question in this point, How can we know God? One of our modern day writers has written a book called, "The God You Can Know." Such is our God. Such is the true God. Such is

not the case with all other so called gods. The most privileged person in all the world is the saved Bible believer!