

1/19/20

The Nature Of God
Selected Scriptures

We are continuing with our series on “The God of the Bible and His Attributes”.

As we examine the past and present history of man it reveals the many twisted and distorted views about God, such as the Greek’s concept regarding the nature of their gods, portrayed them as an extension of mortal man, deities that were often more sensual, depraved, deceiving and greedy than man himself.

In the sequel of the the Humanist Manifesto II, “The Secular Humanist Declaration”, 1981 says, “We consider the universe to be a dynamic scene of natural forces that are most effectively understood by scientific inquiry... We find that traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not yet been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitative, Secular humanists... believe that men and women are free and are responsible for their own destinies and that they cannot look toward some transcendent Being for salvation. Clearly anti-God! (A Contemporary Wesleyan theology: Carter: 136)

Any view brought forth by man to communicate God and His nature will always be wrong because it stands apart from the only true revelation of God, the Bible!

So we want to study the nature of God by looking at three aspects regarding the nature of God.

- I.** The erroneous views of the nature of God.
- II.** The Biblical view of the nature of God.
- III.** The Scriptural view of the personal nature of God.

I. The erroneous views of the nature of God.

- A.** There is the erroneous view of Polytheism.
 - 1.** Polytheism is the belief and worship of many gods, all having different powers and authorities.
 - a.** The persons of Adam and Eve knew only one God, called monotheism and after the fall the world corrupted itself into the worship of many gods which is polytheism. Gen, 4:26; 11:4
 - b.** As we stated in our study last week, the Bible denies this; for in Isaiah God says, “I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.” Is. 44:6
 - c.** The first two chapters of Genesis declares loudly that One God created everything, therefore man is not to fear or worship any of the creation as deities.
 - 2.** We have examples in the Old Testament of such practice by the heathen of the land.

- a. God said, “And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.” Ex. 12:12
* The plagues were judgments against the gods they worshipped such as the Nile, frogs, lice, etc.
 - b. The men of Syria said they had lost the battle to Israel due that their gods were the gods of the hills; therefore, they were stronger than they; but they said, “Let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.” 1Kings 20:23
 - d. The contest on Mount Carmel between the prophets of Baal and the prophet of God, Elijah settled Who the One and True God was, Jehovah.
 - e. Dagon, Baal, Molech, Astarte, etc.
3. Examples in New Testament.
- a. Paul saw the many gods and temples, even to the unknown god and told them they were very religious. Acts 17
 - b. They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, birds, fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Rom. 1:23
- B.** Pantheism is another distorted view which has dominated most of India’s religions.
1. Pantheism says that everything is God and does not separate God from nature.

- a. The word comes from two Greek words “all is God” is “monism” in contrast to the Christian view of “monotheism” the belief of one God in three persons.
- b. During the 70’s this philosophy permeated our society and many mixed Biblical truth with lies, such as the “children of God”, “Moonies”, TM, etc.
- c. The New Age movement is revived Hinduism believing in “avatar” an incarnation of God, either as Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva but neatly packaged in Western dress of crystals, spirit guides and chanelers.
- d. Often Pantheism believes in the eternity of matter and spontaneous generation of life which both are refuted by science.
- e. John Denver’s “Rocky Mountain High” spoke of the unity and oneness with nature.
- f. Nature gives evidence of God as creator, but it doesn’t communicate the special revelation of salvation, that comes through Jesus Christ.
- g. Pantheism puts God dependent of creation and subject to its curse.
- h. Christian Science is a form of Pantheism for they say “God is all and all is God.”
- i. Pantheism deifies man by making him part of God, even as Shirley McClain

stood in Malibu on the beach and declared, "I am god".

- j. Pantheists claim Jesus was the first who came to a perfect realization of this great truth when He said, "I and the Father are one."
2. God is the Creator and is separate from His creation.
- a. God is not a tree.
 - b. God is not a mountain.
 - c. God is not the sea.
 - d. God is not the universe.
 - e. God is not limited nor less than His creation.
 - f. God is not dependent but independent of His creation.
 - g. God is greater than His creation, controlling and holding together the creation.
 - h. There is no dualism of good and evil as taught by Persian Zoroastrianism or the Gnostics of the second century.
- * For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Col. 1:16-17

- C. Then you have Materialism that teaches man is simply an animal and is not really responsible for his actions.
- 1. Yet our conscience denies it.
 - 2. Life points to a life source.
 - 3. Design reveals a designer and purpose.
 - 4. The goal of materialism is to destroy morality and to have man live on the animal level through the religion of evolution and humanism.
 - 5. If you came from nothing and are a product of chance and when you die return to nothing, then people have no value and man is not accountable to a Creator for his conduct.
 - 6. Today many have believed this philosophy of life and teach it and live it to their own destruction. 1Tim. 6:3-10
- * "If anyone teaches otherwise, the word of the Lord Jesus Christ implying the relationship between God and man, and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*.

From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

- D.** The last is deism which professes the existence of a personal God, who created the world, but then withdrew himself and left it to govern itself by natural law.
1. It is also called theistic evolution.
 2. Deism denies special revelation, miracles, and providence and that all truth about God can be discovered by reason, the Bible is just a book on the principles of natural religion.
 3. The Scriptures declare that God is transcendent beyond our reach, understanding and knowledge, but they equally teach that His presence or immanence is in the world active in the affairs of man and reaching man for salvation.

- a. For in Him we live, and move and have our being...Acts 17:28
 - b. God sent His Son into the world. Jn. 1:14
 - c. Holy Spirit Father was sent from the Father. Jn. 15:26
3. The Age Of Reason in the eighteenth century produced much deism and deist.
- a. God was reasoned away.
 - b. Man became his own god.
 - c. Voltaire and Thomas Paine were Deists.
 - d. The father of deism is Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, 1581-1648.

These are some of the erroneous views of the nature of God!

II. The Biblical views of the nature of God.

- A.** God is a Spirit, God has nothing corporal, visible substance, or bodily form, he is Spirit. Jn. 4:24
1. Jesus stood in the midst of the disciples and affirmed what spirit is. Lk. 24:37-39
 - * “But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

- a. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Col. 1:15
 - b. Paul says, “Unto the King, invisible, the only wise God.” 1Tim. 1:17
 - c. Hebrews says Moses endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Heb. 11:27
2. Take note that God being Spirit, then His worship by nature is to be in spirit and truth.
- a. Spirit refers to who we really are, the real person God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life and made him a living soul.
 - * As Christians we have been born-again or regenerated and made alive by God’s Spirit. Eph. 2:1-2
 - b. Truth refers to the Word of God, the revelation of Himself which reveals what He will honor and accept.
 - c. Jesus told the woman at the well it was of necessity, people “must” worship God in Spirit and in truth. He can accept no other form of worship.
3. Old Testament sacrifices were till the time of reformation. Heb. 9:10
- a. He is not localized to a certain place.
 - * “The heavens and heaven of heavens cannot contain him, he is infinite, man is finite.” 2Chron. 2:6
 - b. Peter tells us that the believer as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, to

- offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1Pet. 2:5
 - c. Only by the Spirit of God can we know God or about God for our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. 1Cor. 2:12, 6:19
 - d. Too many worship God in emotionalism and feeling instead of “spirit and truth”.
4. What is meant when the Bible says that God created man in his own image? Gen. 1:27
- a. Likeness amplifies and specifies the meaning of image so as not to make man another Like God, but a creation and faithful representative of God on earth. (Theology Word Book O.T.)
 - b. An intellectual likeness able to understand, think and reason for He gave man dominion over the earth and the animals by naming them. Gen. 1:28, 2:19; Ps. 8:5-8
 - c. A moral-likness for everything God made was very good. Gen. 1:31
 - d. A spiritual likeness, a living soul to be in fellowship with God. Gen. 2:7, 3:8
 - e. A potential for immortality, “The day you eat, you shall surely die.” Gen. 2:16-17
 - f. A potential of choice and free will “Every tree you may eat... not eat.” Gen. 2:16-17

5. What does the New Testament say about the regenerated person?
- a. Paul says that the believer is said to be renewed in **knowledge after the image** of him that created him. Col. 3:10
 - b. Paul says that the believer is exhorted to put on the new man, which after God, is created in **righteousness and true holiness**. Eph. 4:23-24
 - c. In the image and likeness of God means not in body or visible likeness, but in intellectual and moral likeness, knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, which the rest of creation is void of in capacity. Ps. 8:4-9

B. God is unapproachable by man.

1. God told Moses, “You can not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” Ex. 32:20
* God is so holy and pure that man in his present state, saved or not saved, could not endure such presence.
2. God dwells in the light which no man can approach unto; who no man hath seen, nor can see. 1Tim. 6:16
3. God is said to be a consuming fire. Heb. 12:29
 - a. Isaiah said, “Woe is me, I am undone...” Is. 6:5

- b. Peter said, “depart from me for I am a sinner.” Lk. 5:8

C. God has manifested himself in visible forms.

1. These are called theophanies, some visible manifestation to give evidence of the presence of God in the Old Testament.
 - a. Remember God has no physical likeness, for God is Spirit. Jn. 4:24; Col. 1:15
* Though God is often described in anthropomorphic terms to reveal the actions of God.
 - b. Abraham saw a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between the sacrifice. Gen. 15:17
 - c. In the burning bush to Moses. Ex. 3:2
 - d. God led his people by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Ex. 40:38
2. God has manifested himself in Christophanies, appearances of Christ prior to the New Testament incarnation.
 - a. John tells us, “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him.” Jn. 1:18
 - 1) That means every time God appeared in a human form in the Old Testament it was not the Father, but the Son.
 - 2) The Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar. Gen. 16:9, 10; 22:11-12

- * Take note that the Angel of the Lord is identified with God in verse twelve.
- 3) Abraham was visited by three strangers, two were angels that went unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other is God who spared Lot. Gen. 18
 - 4) In Judges He appeared to Gideon. Judges 6
 - 5) In Judges again Manoah, Samson's father asks for the Angel of the Lord's name and he said, it is secret, the word is Wonderful. Judges 13
* Isaiah one of the prophetic names of the Christ-child was wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Is. 9:6
 - 6) Isaiah six says he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Is. 6:1
* John tells us that Isaiah saw and spoke of Christ. Jn. 12:41
 - 7) Jesus said, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." Jn. 8:56
* The Jews said, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"
- b. So when the Bible says that men saw God it must be interpreted by the understanding in the Scriptures.

- 1) We are told that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders saw God. Ex. 24:10
 - 2) We are told that Moses saw God's back part or after glow. Ex. 33:24
 - 3) These recorded events mean they saw a theophany, some visible manifestation of God to give evidence of His presence, but certainly not God Himself for no man can see God and live.
 - 4) The Bible uses anthropomorphic terms that are human qualities to describe God's actions, yet it does not mean that God has hands, eyes or a body!
- D. God's nature of spirit is seen by his abhorrence of physical images to represent God.
1. The explicit details of God's creation in Genesis are to simply communicate that He is the Creator and everything is the product of Himself and no aspect of the creation should be worshipped or feared.
 - a. "And *take heed*, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the **stars**, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage." Deut. 4:19

- b. Two times it is recorded in the ten commandments or on giving the ten words not to make any images or likeness in heaven above, earth beneath or in the waters. Ex. 20:4; Deut. 5:8
 - c. God can not be duplicated in any form.
 - d. God calls this idolatry and all the prophets denounced it.
2. The principle is throughout the Scriptures.
- a. “He cuts down cedars for himself, And takes the cypress and the oak; He secures *it* for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes *it*. Then it shall be for a man to burn, For he will take some of it and **warm** himself; Yes, he kindles *it* and bakes bread; Indeed he makes a god and worships *it*; He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.” Is. 44:14-15
 - b. Ezekiel is told by God to speak to the men of Israel who were seeking God having set idols in their of hearts and that He would answer them according to their idols. Ezk. 14:2-4
 - c. Romans speaks of the unwillingness to retain God the change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corrutable man—and birds and four-footed beast and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness, in lusts of their hearts, to

- dishonor their bodies among themselves....so God gave them up to vile passions, and a debased or reprobate minds. Rom. 1:23-28
3. Jeremiah has much to say about idolatry.
- a. He says, “But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol *is* a worthless doctrine.” Jer. 10:8
 - b. He says, “Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; For his molded image *is* falsehood, And *there is* no breath in them..” Jer. 10:14
 - c. He says, “Saying to a tree, ‘You *are* my father,’ And to a stone, ‘You gave birth to me.’ For they have turned *their* back to Me, and not *their* face. But in the time of their trouble They will say, ‘Arise and save us.’” Jer. 2:27
 - d. God declares, “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, *And* hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water.” Jer. 2:13
4. The Scriptures are clear that no idolater will inherit the kingdom of God.
- a. Moses declared it in Deuteronomy. Deut. 4:15-19
 - * “Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst

of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that *is* on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that *is* in the water beneath the earth. And *take heed*, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.

- b. Moses records it in the book of Numbers. Num. 12:5-8

* “Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, *I*, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He *is* faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark

sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?”

- c. Paul tells the Corinthians, “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an **idolater**, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.” 1Cor. 5:11
- d. Paul tells the Ephesians, “For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an **idolater**, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” Eph 5:5
- * Idolatry is not a step towards God but a turning away from God!

This is the Biblical views of the nature of God!

III. The Scriptural view of the personal nature of God.

- A. God’s personal nature is evident in salvation for relationship.
1. Jesus prayed to the Father, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” Jn. 17:3
 2. He came down from heaven, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only

begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jn. 1:1, 14

- a. The Incarnation was the answer to Isaiah’s prayer, “Oh, that God would rent the heavens! That You would come down!” Is. 64:1a-b
- 3. He reveals Himself, He can not be discovered by mere intellect.
 - a. Paul says, “Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” 1Cor. 1:20-24
 - b. Paul again says, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” 1Cor. 2:7-8

- c. Jesus said, “For the Son of Man has come to **save** that which was lost.” Matt. 18:11
- d. Jesus said, “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to **reveal Him**.” Lk. 10:22
- e. Jesus standing outside the church knocks on the door of man’s hearts to reveal Himself and if anyone opens the door He will come in tot their lives. Rev. 3:20
- 4. His coming includes all of mankind.
 - a. Whosoever shall believe in Him. Jn. 3:16
 - b. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2Pet. 3:9
- B. God deals with us as individuals when we need comfort and strength.
 - 1. Paul says he is the God of all comfort who comforted them in all their tribulation. 2Cor. 1:3-4
 - 2. Paul says he can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens him. Phil. 4:13
 - 3. Paul was told by the Lord Jesus that His grace was sufficient for his thorn in the flesh. For His strength is made perfect in weakness. 2Cor. 12:9

4. Peter tells us that we are to commit ourselves to God in sufferings as unto a faithful Creator. 1Pet. 4:19

C. God's personal nature is seen in his names.

1. The title for God "Elohim" represents the Creator who has a purpose and goal for what He created.
2. The name Yahweh appears in all capital letters "LORD" is His covenant name to Moses.
 - a. It comes from the verb, "to be", He will be all and anything we allow Him to be, touching the past, present and future.
 - b. The pronunciation is believed to be "Yahweh" from the consonant YHWH called the tetragrammaton, due to the fact that it is impossible to pronounce it because it has no vowels.
 - c. The name of God was so revered that they did not write or pronounce it.
3. The phrase "I am that I am" is a verb forms the becoming one, whatever our need may be.
4. The title "Adonai" represented by "Lord" has the idea of master, controller to rule over a person's life.
5. The word "Father" is used for that relationship the family of God that comes as one accepts Christ as Savior becoming joint—heirs with Christ.

6. The name "Yahweh-rapha" means the Lord that heals. Ex. 15:26
7. Yahweh -shalom", means the Lord our peace." Judges 6:24
8. "Yahweh -Raah", means the Lord my Shepherd. Ps. 23:1
9. "Yahweh -Tsedkenu", means the Lord our righteousness. Jer. 23:6
10. "Yahweh -Shammah", means the Lord is there. Ezk. 44:35

- D. God desires you to know the nature of God so that you might know Him in a personal way.
1. The place to go is the Bible, the Bible alone reveals the truth about God!
 2. God is not the creation but the One who created all things and is greater than His creation.
 3. God created you in His image and likeness but Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden and therefore God sent His Son Jesus to die for the sins of the world in order that man might be saved and have a personal relationship with Him. Jn. 3:16
 4. He wants to be everything you need!

This is the Scriptural view of the personal nature of God!

Illustration

Robert Jastro, head of Gardner Institute of Naza said, “I am an agnostic, but the facts of science have show, “In the beginning God”.

Conclusion

These three aspects regarding the nature of God should help each of us to walk with God according to the truth of the Scriptures.

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- II.** The Biblical view of the nature of God!
- III.** The Scriptural view of the personal nature of God!