

WHO IS THE TRUE GOD?

Holy Trinity Sunday

June 7, 2009

God exists in Himself and of Himself. He owes His being to no one. He has no parts. He is single and un-complex in His being.

I said that God is simple and un-complex. By that I mean that the harmony of His being is not the result of a perfect balance of parts, but the absence of parts. What I am leading up to is that, between God's attributes there can never be a contradiction. By that I mean that God does not suspend one attribute to exercise another. In Him, all his attributes are one. God doesn't divide Himself to do a particular thing, but always works in total unity of His being.

Our God is self-existent. He is self-sufficient. He is eternal. He is infinite. He is immutable. He is omniscient. He is all wise. He is omnipotent. He is omnipresent. He is faithful. He is good. He is just. He is merciful. He is gracious. God is love. He is sovereign. God is holy.

God is One and Indivisible. That means that He is never more faithful at one time and less another. He is never more merciful under one set of conditions and less in another; neither does He manifest His love sometimes and His justice other times. He is always as merciful as He is just and He is always as holy as He is love.

This is the point that is at the heart of our current problem in our deliberate or ignorant misunderstanding of God. You see, as we learn more about God, the unregenerate heart will begin to pick and choose. The unregenerate heart will try to play off God against Himself or to pick a favorite attribute of God and ignore or deny the other things that God has revealed about Himself. This causes a person to create a god of his own mind and is an insult to the only true God.

In Scripture, God is likened to various parts of nature such as a whirlwind, a cloud, and a pillar of fire and to such animals as a hen, an eagle, and a lion. God is pictured as a tower, a shield, and a garment. God is described using social roles and activities including creator, potter, shepherd, father, birthing mother, and bridegroom. God is assigned human qualities and responses such as intelligence, will, memory, anger, and forgiveness. God is spoken of as possessing human form, with eyes, arms, and hands, as walking around, and speaking with a voice.

I think it could be demonstrated that almost every heresy that has afflicted the church through the years has arisen from believing things about God that aren't true or from over-emphasizing certain true things in such a way so as to hide or obscure other things that are equally true.

To magnify one attribute of God to the exclusion of another is to go off the road of truth. For instance, the Bible teaches that God is love. Some have interpreted this in such a way as to virtually deny that He is just who the Bible also teaches. Others emphasize the doctrine of God's goodness so far that it is made to contradict His holiness. Others make His compassion cancel out His truth; still others understand His sovereignty in a way that destroys or diminishes His goodness and love.

If we are to have a correct relationship to God, then we must believe everything that He has said about Himself. A person takes a grave responsibility upon themselves when they try to edit out of God's self-revelation features which seem objectionable to them.

There is a little song that is sung these days called. "Our God is an Awesome God." Though God is indeed an awesome God, this generation seems to have lost the meaning of the word.

We sing that we have come into His presence, but have we forgotten, or do we prefer not to remember, that whenever God appeared in an unveiled state to men in Bible times, the results were the same--an overwhelming sense of terror and dismay; a wrenching sensation of sinfulness and guilt?

When God spoke, Abraham stretched himself on the ground to listen. When Moses saw the Lord in the burning bush, he hid his face in fear to look upon God.

When Isaiah saw God, he cried out, "Woe is me," and confessed, "I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips."

Daniel's encounter with God was probably the most dreadful and wonderful of them all. The prophet lifted up his eyes and saw One whose body also was like beryl, and His face as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His arms and His feet like in color to polished brass and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude. "I Daniel alone saw the vision." Afterward he wrote, "...for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground."

Friends, it is an awful thing to come face to face with our Holy God. And yet, in many ways we treat God as if He does not exist. We have made God in our own image, defining God to be what we want Him to be. Let me illustrate:

God becomes a Santa Claus in two ways; 1st making a list of who's naughty and nice and bestowing presents only on the good; and 2nd, as one we approach to get our favorite thing.

God becomes a policeman who patrols our lives to be in wait for when we break the His Law so he can arrest us and condemn us.

God becomes the great Physician that is suppose to heal every disease when we pray to Him. And when our prayers are answered according to His will and not ours, we cry, "Malpractice!"

God becomes a professor with all the answers to life. Yet we disagree with the answers because we know better.

How is God described in your life? Who is the true God? Take a look at p. 319 in the front of the Hymnbook (Athanasian Creed)...Look at Luther's Small Catechism on pp. 321 and following (first two commandments and the three articles of the Apostles' Creed).

In our world there are various views of who is the true God or even if there is a God. However, God's Word is clear. But what about the Jews and the Muslims? Do they worship the true God?

The Jews believe in Yahweh (the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as revealed to Moses as "I AM.") Moses is the great deliverer, delivering God's people out of Egypt and to the promised land. Reject Jesus as the Messiah.

Islam believes in ALLAH (the God of Abraham, Ishmael, and Mohammed.) Mohammed is the great deliverer, delivering the Muslims from oppression into freedom. Reject Jesus as the Son of God.

Christians believe in God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the deliverer, delivering all who believe in Him from sin, death, and the devil. Receive Jesus as Messiah, Lord and Savior, Son of God.

All religions of the world follow the Law for salvation, except Christianity. Christianity is the only religion that receives what God has done for them and not what we have to do for God to gain salvation.

Who is the true God? Are all the other religions of the world and Christianity is wrong? No! The only true God is the triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is no other god. There is no other name under heaven whereby a person is saved except the name of Jesus.

Jesus is the only way of salvation, the only way to eternal life, the only way to the Father. He is the Truth, the Way, and the Life!

Our President asks for tolerance of all religions and has asked that of all nations in his speech in Cairo this week. He has spoken of the three religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, as being equal with Moses for the Jews, Mohammed for the Muslims, and Jesus for the Christians. In so doing, President Obama has denigrated the saving work of Jesus Christ and placed Him on the same ground as Moses and Mohammed.

As Christians, we are intolerant of violence at any level, except for the right to defend one's self or one's nation. As Christians, we are intolerant of those who proclaim salvation in any other name, except to witness to the truth of the saving Gospel to all nations and individuals. As Christians, we lift the cross of Jesus high, boldly profess our faith in Jesus Christ and His resurrection victory, and reach out in love to all people, races, cultures, ethnicity, and gender.

Who is the true God? The Bible says this:

First Corinthians 8:4 proclaims that “there is no God but one.” God Himself declares in Isaiah 45:5, “I am Jehovah, and there is no one else; Besides Me there is no God.” Isaiah 6:8 testifies to the same plurality: “Whom shall I send? Who will go for *Us*?” In Matthew 28:19, where the Lord Jesus charged the eleven apostles to disciple and baptize the nations “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” On one hand, the use of the singular noun “name” in this verse, rather than the plural “names,” denotes that the Three are the one unique God into whom the disciplined nations are baptized. On the other hand, the specific enumeration of all three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—underscores Their mutual distinction.

Without a doubt, the divine Father is God. In Ephesians 1:17 Paul prays to “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,” who is the “one God and Father of all” (Eph. 4:6). The Bible also reveals that the Son is God. Addressing the Son, Hebrews 1:8 states, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” Initially, the Word, who was God, became flesh in the man Jesus (John 1:1,14). Throughout His human living, the man Jesus was the very God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:15-16).

Furthermore, the Spirit is God, as indicated in Acts 5:3-4, where Ananias was told that in deceiving the Holy Spirit, he was lying to God. Yet the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, though distinct, are not three separate Gods. In the words of the Athanasian Creed, “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God.” All Three of the Trinity are eternal. Amen