

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Who Art Thou Lord? No 2.

25th March 2003

The Invisible God

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4,24 RSV.

One of the problems that men of this world have is that God is spirit. We cannot see Him, cannot measure Him, cannot contain Him. But men and women who are the children of the Spirit are those who comprehend Him, and in the spirit acknowledge Him as God. This is worship in the spirit. It is in this spirit that Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908) penned these words of sheer adoration:

Immortal, invisible God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above,
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all live Thou givest- to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish, as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish but naught changeth Thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
Tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee!

As God is spirit, it may help to first understand what God is not. After His resurrection Jesus said *"A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having."* Luke 24.39. Jesus was saying that He was man (See also 1 Timothy 2.5, Revelation 1.13 etc). But God is spirit. He is not a spirit, one of many. Angels, holy or disobedient, are created spirits, see Hebrews 1.14, but God is spirit, pure spirit. He does not depend on created matter (or even created spirit), nor is He of necessity related to matter. Matter is the stuff of His creation, not His environment.

As God is Spirit, we see that:

God is Life *"...the LORD is the true God, he is the living God.."*

Jeremiah 10.10. Fifteen times this title 'the Living God' is used in the Old Testament and fifteen times in the New. Jesus as the image of the Father also has the attribute of life. *"For as the Father has life in himself; so has he given to the Son to have life in himself;"* John 5.26

and it is by this life of God in Christ Jesus that mortal men may see and know God Himself. John 1.18.

Jesus is God's demonstration and exhibition of Himself. See Jesus, see God. John 14.9.

No one can define life adequately, but when we look at the characteristics of life as we understand it, we begin to better understand the nature of life:

Life gives us awareness
Life gives us communication
Life gives us continuance
Life gives us hope
Life gives us intelligence
Life gives us more life

But all of these qualities of human life are failing, because we are. They have limits because of our mortality. We are a dying race, born into Adam's sin and into Adam's death. Because of this, our use of this comparison breaks down. God is immortal, or not subject to death. Perfection is also one of His attributes, and an attribute of His life.

To go just a little deeper, God is not alive. Being alive, or not alive (dead), is a quality of mortal beings. But God is life. As such he is the source of all life, the sustainer of life and the end or object of life. As the eternal God, His life *is* eternal life.

(A thought question: What is the

difference between eternal life and everlasting life?)

As God is Spirit, we see that:

God is Personal.

The inward part of personality is self consciousness, and there are three ascending levels, that of animals, man and God. See Exodus 3.14a. The expressive part of personality is in the mind, the emotions and the will. For example, see Romans 11.34 & 1 Corinthians 2.16, 1 John 3.16 & Ephesians 4.30 and 1 Thessalonians 5.18.

We know God's personality because we recognise these expressions of personality in ourselves, in that we have been created morally in God's image and likeness, Genesis 1.26, However we cannot know God personally, but that He has revealed Himself to us by His Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2.11 His Spirit is in all those who are his through Christ Jesus our Lord.

How can we appreciate God? A small girl was asked at the dinner table by a skeptic, "How can you believe in God when you cannot see Him?" She reached over and took a teaspoon full of sugar and stirred it into a glass of water. "How can you tell there is sugar in this water when you cannot see it?" she asked. "Well, I can taste it," he replied. "Then that's how I believe in God!" We invite you to sample the goodness of our God. *"O taste and see that the LORD is good! Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!"* Psalm 34.8

Bibliography: Strong A H, Systematic Theology 1907 Twentieth Edition 1958

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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