

A STUDY OF GOD AND HIS NATURE
Outline for "First Principles Class"
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INTRODUCTION:

1. What do you know about God?
2. In the last lesson we discussed the Names of God.
3. These names were descriptive of God and His nature.
4. In this lesson let us look at the nature of God.

I. GOD IS SPIRIT.

- A. The Messiah informed the woman at Jacob's well (John 4:24), this truth was revealed by Deity Himself. God is not flesh and blood, as man is (Luke 24:39); Christ related this while yet in the flesh, when the eleven "supposed that they had seen a spirit" (Luke 24:37).
- B. The Godhead exists in the metaphysical realm, not the physical.
 1. Since God cannot be seen some would foolishly try to deny the existence of God (Psa. 14:1; 53:1).
 2. Others not content just to think it in their hearts, come right out with the denial of Deity, spouting their atheism far and wide.
 3. Things in the spirit real cannot be perceived by taste, smell, sound, sight and feel.
 4. One must see the unseen by faith (Heb. 11:1), which is based upon evidence, inspired testimony (Rom. 10:17).
 - a. What is evidence?
 - b. The word translated evidence *elengchos* means "conviction." Implies not merely the charge on the basis of which one is convicted, but also the manifestation of the truth of that charge. This word is translated evidence only here (Heb. 11:1) and reproof (II Tim. 3:16).

II. GOD IS INVISIBLE.

- A. The Hebrews at Sinai (Deut. 4:15-19).
- B. Moses was warned by God (Ex. 33:20).
- C. John 1:18
- D. Rom. 1:20
- E. Since "God is not a man,...Neither the son of man,..." but rather invisible, how appropriate that He is sometimes described in anthropomorphic terms.
 1. We read of the finger (Ex. 31:18), the hand (Ex. 33:22), the face (Ex. 33:23), the eyes, the ears (Psa. 34:15), the mouth (Deut. 8:3), the breath (Isa. 59:19) of Jehovah God.
 2. Taking into consideration the limitations of man to perceive things related to the infinite, invisible Godhead, and the tendency of man naturally to relate things to the material realm, God utilized analogies.
 3. He did not intend to say that God had literal hands, feet, etc. as does man; He was in the metaphorical, analogical sense comparing the power and works of the Eternal Spirit to the material things to which we can relate and which we experience.
 4. How many have experienced the hand of a loving father, mother, and spouse in the time of sorrow, fear, and or sickness?
 5. Ezra 8:22
 6. Just as God's hand bespeaks His comfort, guidance, and support, so His finger represents His authority and power and His eye represents His constant presence and knowledge of our every need.

III. GOD IS HOLY.

- A. "Holy and reverend is his name" (Psa. 111:9) thus all His works "are done in truth and uprightness" (Psa. 111:8).
- B. "The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, Just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4).
- C. He rewards man according to man's righteousness (Psa. 18:20-26; 97:2; 89:14).
- D. God is the "Holy Father" (John 17:11); thus the sins of man stand in contrast to the righteousness of God (Matt. 7:11; Luke 11:13).
- E. Men are to hallow the name of God, because of His holiness (Matt. 6:9), and they are to seek to become like God in morality (Matt. 5:48).
- F. The Lord can in no wise look upon or be in the presence of sin (Hab. 1:13; Isa. 59:1,2).

IV. GOD IS JUST.

- A. Jehovah God is perfect in justice; that is, the Lord is infinite in meeting out to a person that which he is entitled, without partiality, whether blessing or punishment.
- B. If Job would presume to run the Universe, he would have to be able to reward the righteous and punish the wicked without respect of persons (Job 40:6-14; Acts 10:34,35).
- C. Abraham asked a question (Gen. 18:25).
- D. Solomon understood the goodness and severity of God (I Kings 8:32). Paul wrote of the goodness and severity of God – Rom. 11:22).
- E. Because of His very nature, even God Himself cannot overlook sin; it must be punished (Ex. 23:6,7).
- F. Nahum warned (Nahum 1:2,3).
- G. For God to overlook, pass over, even one unrequited (unpaid for, unpunished) sin would be to cease to be the holy, righteous God. He takes no delight in the punishment of the wicked, but He must fulfill His infinite sense of justice (II Peter 3:9).
- H. For God not to demand purity and to punish wickedness would be to abandon His infinite holiness – that would be tantamount to failing to be God. Apart from an atonement, God cannot forgive the transgressor!

V. GOD IS MERCIFUL.

- A. How could God's mercy be freely given?
- B. Justice required that sin be punished. The man that sins should die (Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:4,20).
- C. Christ made possible God's grace and mercy.
- D. Noah found grace (Gen. 6:8).
- E. Lot and his family were shown mercy by God (Gen. 19:16).
- F. There are many other verses dealing with God being merciful (Ex. 34:6; Deut. 4:31; Neh. 9:31; Psa. 103:8; 116:5; Jer. 3:12; Luke 6:36; Heb. 2:17; 8:12).
- G. God is the God of mercy (Psa. 13:5; 25:7,10; 57:10; 59:17; 103:11,17; 106:1; 107:1; 108:4; 136:1-26; 145:8; Matt. 5:7; Luke 1:50,78; Rom. 9:16; 11:32; 15:9; Eph. 2:4; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:3).
- H. God is rich in grace (Eph. 2:5-9; Col. 1:6).
- I. One takes advantage of God's mercy and grace by being obedience to the gospel of Christ (Titus 2:11,12; Rom. 12:1,2; 6:16-18).

VI. GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT.

- A. The child's question "Who made God?" is a perfectly natural and proper question, but the true answer is perhaps not such as the child would expect.
- B. Jesus said (John 5:26).
- C. God is the source of all that lives (Acts 17:24,25; Rom. 11:36; II Peter 3:1-9; John 1:1ff).

VII. GOD IS ETERNAL.

- A. Since God's existence had no beginning, He will have no ending. He always was, always is, and always will be.
- B. It is not possible for man to properly portray the eternity of God.
- C. The Scriptures often refer to God as being eternal (Deut. 33:27; Psa. 9:7; 90:1,2; 102:12; 146:10; Jer. 10:10; Lam. 5:19; Dan. 6:26; I Tim. 1:17).
- D. Since God is eternal and since all life comes from Him it follows that He is the author of eternal life (John 3:16; Heb. 5:8,9).

VIII. GOD IS INFINITE.

- A. God is infinite in His presence – He is Omnipresent. As eternity affirms that God is not limited to time, so omnipresence affirms that God is not limited to space. As God is not temporal, so also He is not local in the sense of being confined to any one particular place (I Kings 8:27; Psa. 139:7-10; Prov. 15:3; Jer. 23:23,24; Acts 17:24-26).
- B. God is infinite in His knowledge – He is Omniscient (II Chron. 16:9; Psa. 119:168; 139:1,2; Dan. 2:22; Isa. 55:8,9).
- C. God is infinite in His power – He is omnipotent (Job 36:5; 42:2; Psa. 146:5,6; Jer. 32:17; Dan. 4:35).

IX. GOD IS IMMUTABLE.

- A. The immutability of God certainly needs no proof, after one recognizes that He is self-existence, eternal and infinite.
- B. God cannot err and cannot change because of His moral attributes (Num. 23:19; Psa. 33:11; 102:25-27; Mal. 3:6; Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:8; James 1:17; Eph. 3:8-11).

X. GOD IS ONE.

- A. The Godhood is one in substance, in thought, in purpose, and in work; there are not three Gods (Deut. 6:4; Ex. 20:3; James 2:19; I Cor. 8:4).
 - 1. Three times the term Godhead is found in the KJV (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9).
 - 2. There is but one divine nature. Thus, we must not have a divided allegiance, as did the idol worshippers, who worshipped many gods.
 - 3. With God it is an undivided reverence and devotion, or it is no devotion (Matt. 12:30; Mark 12:28-31; Rom. 3:30).
- B. Whereas there is but one divinity, or Godhood, the Godhead exists as three persons (there is but one humanity, or manhood, but man is composed of many persons). The three persons in the Godhood are God, Christ and the Holy Spirit; each of these persons is possessed of one and the same deity, or divine nature as the other two.
 - 1. The word God found in Genesis 1:1 is the plural form Elohim which reflects a plurality working as a singular unit in creation.
 - 2. Plural pronouns such as us and our are used by Moses in Genesis (1:26; 3:22,23; 11:7) show that the Godhead is composed of three persons. Isaiah wrote (Isa. 6:8).
 - 3. References to the Angel of Jehovah show the Godhead to embrace a threefold personality (16:2-13; 22:11,16; 31:11,13; Ex. 3:2-5; Judges 13:20-22).
- C. All three persons are included in the annunciation of Christ's birth (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18-25).
- D. All three are seen at Christ's baptismal scene (Matt. 3:16,17).
- E. Each of the three members of the Godhead is called God.
 - 1. The first member of the Godhood is God (Psa. 89:26; John 6:27; Gal. 1:3; I Cor. 8:6).
 - 2. The second member of the Godhead is called God (John 1:1; Rom. 9:5; I John 5:20; John 1:14,18; 3:16; Heb. 1:1-3).
 - 3. The third member of the God head is called God. He is the Spirit of God (Matt.

3:16). When Satan filled Ananias' heart to lie to the Holy Spirit he did not lie unto men but unto God (Acts 5:3,4).

F. Several other references concerning that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit comprise the Godhead:

1. (Matt. 28:18-20).
2. Christ was raised up by God to sit on God's right hand (Acts 2:30-35).
3. The benediction of Paul states (II Cor. 13:14).
4. God said of Christ (Matt. 17:5).
5. Christ declared (John 16:28).
6. "The Father loveth the Son" (John 3:35), the Son "kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (John 15:10), and the Son prayed to the Father (John 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever"); the Father sent the Son (John 10:36), and both the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:7).
7. Both God and Christ bear witness of Christ, the Messiah; at the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word was/is to be established (if Christ and God were but one person, the witness would have been inadequate (John 5:30-37).

G. Each person of the Godhead has work to do.

1. In creation, all three persons in the Godhead had a role to fulfill.
 - a. God was the great architect, planner, purposer (Jer. 51:15; Psa. 29:4; 33:6; 148:5; Gen. 1:26).
 - b. Christ (second member of the Godhead) was the agent, or contractor, executor through whom creation took place (Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1-14; I Cor. 8:5,6; Col. 1:14-17).
 - c. The Holy Spirit was the finisher and organizer (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Psa. 104:30).
2. Each had a specific role to fulfill also in the scheme of redemption, the spiritual realm.
 - a. God planned for man's salvation (I Cor. 2:7; Rom. 8:28-30; Zech. 6:12,13; Isa. 28:16; John 3:14-17; Eph. 1:3-5; Rom. 5:8; II Tim. 1:9; Eph. 3:10,11).
 - b. Christ humbly submitted to God's plan and vicariously suffered and died to make possible man's redemption (John 6:38, 51; 10:17,18; Matt. 26:26-28,38-42; Heb. 2:9; 9:14; 10:5-18; 12:2).
 - c. The Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed the Word, setting into motion the law of Christ by which obedience through God's grace we are saved (John 14:15-18,25,26; 16:13-15; Acts 1:4-8; Mark 16:17-20; Acts 2:1-18, 32-38; Matt. 16:18-20; Heb. 2:3,4).
 - 1) The Holy Spirit does not work directly separate and apart from the Word of God on an individual heart.
 - 2) The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to reach the human heart.
 - 3) The Scriptures teach that in conviction and conversion of sinners and in leading those who are converted in their Christian duties, the Holy Spirit operates (exercises influence) upon the human heart (mind) only through the written (or quoted) word of God today.
 - 4) This was thru earthen vessels during the time of the apostles (II Cor. 4:7).
 - 5) The Holy Spirit works thru teaching (John 6:44,45); the word of truth (James 1:18,21,22); He gives light by the word (Psa. 119:105; 130); By the word He begets (I Peter 1:23); He purifies by the word (I Peter 1:22); He quickens by the word (Heb. 4:12; Psa. 119:50); He cleanses by the word (John 15:3); He gives faith by the word (Rom. 10:17); He sanctifies by the

word (John); He purifies hearts by the word (Acts 15:7-9); He convicts by the word (Titus 1:9); He saves by the word (James 1:21; Acts 11:14); He reconciles to Christ by the word (II Cor. 5:18-21); He makes free by the word (John 8:32); He converts by the word (Psa. 19:7); He gives understanding through the word (Psa. 119:130; Eph. 3:4).

H. Since the Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead He has attributes.

1. He has a mind (Rom. 8:27).
2. He has a will (Acts 16:7).
3. He speaks (I Tim. 4:1).
4. He has knowledge (I Cor. 2:10,11).
5. He searches (I Cor. 2:10,11).
6. He helps (Rom. 8:26).
7. He strives with man (Gen. 6:3).
8. He dwells (I Cor. 3:16).
9. He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30).
10. He can love (Rom. 15:30).
11. He can be despised (Heb. 10:29).
12. He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).
13. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3,4).
14. He can testify (John 15:26).
15. He can teach (John 14:26).
16. He can guide (John 16:13,14).
17. He can lead (Acts 16:6,7).
18. He can command, call and send (Acts 13:2-4).

XI. DOES THE GODHEAD DWELL IN MAN?

A. Many errors now inundate us relative to this concept and especially when men contend for a direct impact of the Godhead upon the human heart.

B. The Godhead influences us solely through the Word of God but some contend for a direct impact upon human hearts separate and apart from the word of God. The especially do this with the Holy Spirit.

C. There is little or no controversy relative to the Godhead's indwelling a child of God, but the how or the mode takes a different route.

1. Is the indwelling a personal, actual, literal, bodily and direct dwelling or the Holy Spirit representing the other two as some declare?
2. Is the indwelling of all three by the marvelous means by God's Word?

D. Is the indwelling of the Godhead in a child of God fact or fiction?

1. A young man was once asked by a skeptic about this God in whom he believed as touching whether He is big or little. The young man said "He is so big and great that the Universe cannot contain Him and yet so small that He can dwell in my heart." His Bible told him there was such an indwelling and he accepted it.
2. The indwelling of the Godhead in a child of God is fact not fiction (John 14:23; 17:21; II Cor. 6:16).

E. Who are the recipients of this indwelling?

1. Those who hate Deity and refuse any reverence toward the Word of God enjoy no indwelling from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. Transgressors who abide not in the doctrine of Christ do not have the Father (II John 9-11).
3. There are three classes of people in the world (safe, sinners [children of Satan], and saved [children of God]).
4. Salvation is limited to those who have obeyed the gospel and are continuing to walk in the light (Rom. 6:16-18; I John 1:7-10).
5. Redemption, reconciliation, justification, sanctification and sonship are all in the realm of light or truth. Surely those who have never been saved, redeemed,

reconciled, justified, sanctified or made the sons and daughters of God cannot have Him who is of too pure an eye to behold evil.

6. Jesus declared dynamically that He and the Father would come and abide with those who love Him and keep His words (John 14:23). Those who love God will keep His commandments (John 14:15).

F. Does God the Father indwell the child of God?

1. Several Scriptures answer affirmatively (John 14:23; II Cor. 6:16; I John 4:15).
2. All these Scriptures affirm a fact; they do not establish a mode or manner of the indwelling.
 - a. This is an obvious point missed totally by those who are so confident that a literal, personal and actual indwelling of the First Person is set forth.
 - b. They beg the question in such or assume they have proved what they have not established at all!
3. How does He so indwell?
 - a. If He is in us bodily, literally, actually, literally, personally and directly, why do we pray "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9)?
 - b. Jesus was here on earth when He issued this Model prayer for His disciples.
 - c. The Father was with Him and in Him as stated in John 17:21. Yet Jesus taught them to pray to the Father in Heaven – not Father "Who is in Me!"
 - d. The Father was in Jesus yet He spoke of coming from the Father and His return to the Father at the time of His amazing ascension (John 7:29; 14:28; 20:17; Dan. 7:13,14).
 - e. God the Father indwells His child by His Words and Will as they move and mold that child to become more and more like God, Christ and the Spirit of Holiness.

G. Does Christ indwell the child of God?

1. YES (John 14:23; 17:21; Col. 1:27).
2. These verses affirm a fact; they do not establish a mode or manner.
3. How does He so indwell?
 - a. Christ indwells the child of God through the word (Eph. 3:17; Rom. 10:17).
 - b. Where is Christ now? He is on the right hand of God (Acts 2:33; 7:55; Heb. 1:3; I John 2:1,2).
 - c. Yes, Christ indwells the child of God through the Word of God.

H. Does the Holy Spirit indwell the child of God?

1. YES! (Rom. 8:9,11; Gal. 4:6).
2. But as with the Father and the Son these verses assert a fact – not a manner or mode of indwelling.
3. How does the Holy Spirit indwell a child of God? It is through the Word of God that the Holy Spirit indwells the child of God.

I. God the Father, Christ the Son and The Holy Spirit indwells in the child of God through the word of God (Eph. 3:17; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 5:18,19; Col. 3:16).

XII. THERE ARE SOME THINGS GOD DOES NOT KNOW.

- A. God does not know a responsible person that is sinless (Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:22; I John 1:7-10; Isa. 53:6). God knows only three groups, classes of people (safe, sinners and saints (saved)).
- B. God does not know a sinner He does not want saved.
 1. God calls all to salvation (Isa. 1:18; Ezek. 18:32; I Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11; II Thess. 2:14).
 2. God proposes salvation for all (Gen. 3:15; John 3:16; 15:3; Luke 19:10; II Peter 3:9).
- C. God does not know a responsible person for which Christ did not die (Heb. 10:1,4; 9:12; 2:9; Matt. 26:28; Titus 2:14; I Tim. 2:3-6).
- D. God does not know a responsible person going to heaven that was not saved on earth.

1. Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1,2; I Peter 3:12).
 2. Not all are going to be saved (Matt. 7:13,14; 7:21).
 3. There will be no second chance (Heb. 9:27; Luke 16:19-31).
- E. God does not know a saved man out of Christ, out of the Lord's church.
1. Redemption is in Christ (Eph. 1:3,7).
 2. What must one do to be saved to be in Christ (Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:26,27; I Cor. 12:13).
 3. To be in Christ is to be in His church the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18,19; John 3:5; Eph. 1:22,23; I Cor. 12:27).
 4. There is not a saved person in any denomination.
- F. God does not know a soul that will escape the judgment (Acts 17:30,31; Heb. 10:27; Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31-46; Eccl. 12:14; Rev. 20:12,13).
- G. God does not know a better time for sinners to obey the Gospel of Christ than now.
1. Never a better time. Yesterday is history, tomorrow is uncertain, today is now.
 2. Why today (Matt. 24:42-44; II Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:15).

XIII. IS IT POSSIBLE TO KNOW GOD? YES!

XIV. IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW GOD?

- A. God says that knowing Him is more important than wisdom, might or riches (Jer. 9:23,24).
- B. One's eternal life depends upon knowing God (John 17:3).
- C. Knowing God is the key to knowing from whence we came, who we are, whom we ought to be like, how we ought to live, and for what we can hope in this life, and beyond.

XV. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KNOW GOD?

- A. The word know has different meaning depending upon its context.
1. I know who the President of the United States is, but I do not know the President of the United States.
 2. A race car driver might say of a certain vehicle "I know this car," meaning, not that he is merely aware of its existence, but rather, that he knows how the car handles.
 3. Similarly, there is a difference between knowing that God exists and knowing about His nature and attributes.
 4. It should be apparent that knowing God begins with believing the truth about God as it is revealed in Holy Scripture.
- B. One might know that God exists and know of His nature and character and still not know God (James 2:19; Mark 1:24 the demon knew who Jesus was but did not know Jesus.)
- C. An investigation of several passages where the word "know" occurs indicates what is involved in truly knowing God (I Chron. 28:9; Jer. 24:7; Gal. 4:7-9; Heb. 8:10-12; I John 2:3-5).
- D. The following facts stand out from a study of these passages:
1. Knowing God is equivalent to seeking the one true God and serving Him with a willing and penitent heart
 2. Knowing God is equivalent to having our sins and iniquities forgiven by obeying the commandments of God
 3. Those who know God are those who are His sons and daughters, heirs of God through Christ.

E. Titus 1:16

XVI. WHAT ARE THE REWARDS OF KNOWING GOD?

- A. One who knows God will reap the reward of eternal life (John 17:3).
- B. The people that know God will be strong (Dan. 11:32).
- C. The people that know God will be known by God (Ex. 33:17; John 10:14,27).

XVII. GOD HAS NOT PROMISED

- A. To accept our excuses (Luke 14:16-24).
- B. To give us another day to live (James 4:13-14).
- C. To save us outside the church (Eph. 5:23; Acts 2:47).
- D. To give us another chance (II Cor. 6:2).
- E. To hear a sinner's prayer (John 9:31; Prov. 15:8,29; Jer. 7:16; 11:14; Lam. 3:44; Isa. 59:1,2; I Peter 3:12).
- F. A life free from hardships (II Tim. 3:12; I Peter 4).