

—The Lord Our God—

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The Greatness of Our God

It is good to remind ourselves of the following attributes that mark God's divine greatness.

- He is omnipresent, being present in every place at all times. No other spirit being can be in two places at the same time.
- He is omnipotent, being completely unlimited in the exercise of all natural or supernatural power.
- He is omniscient, possessing infinite understanding and insight of all things including complete universal knowledge of every physical and spiritual realm.
- He is the one and only creator, not only of the inanimate universe but also of all living creatures, of all angelic beings and of man who He created in His own image. Man can fashion objects out of existing materials, but God created all things out of nothing by speaking them into existence. He upholds all that He has created by the word of His power.
- All of the above could be true of an impersonal god who was aloof from His creation. However, our God loves all that He has created. We have been made in His image so that He could love and have fellowship with us. When Adam broke relationship with Him through sin, God personally came to earth, and taking our sins upon Himself, He paid the price for their judgment by dying in our place on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:19). He has promised to come and indwell through His Spirit all who repent of their sins and seek forgiveness and reunion with Him through the new birth. God's greatness therefore is also seen within the context of His character. He is perfect in love, holiness and righteousness. He is full of mercy, compassion, grace, loving kindness and truth. He is slow to anger but He is also perfect in His ministry of justice. He will only abide where true righteousness exists, and He will judge all unrepented sin.

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

The Oneness of God

The oneness of God is a primary focus in Old Testament theology.

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

The same emphasis appears in New Testament theology as well.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hop;e of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

The question arises, “How does one explain the oneness of God in light of references to the plurality of God in scripture (i.e. let *Us* make man in *Our* likeness), and in light of the different revelations by which He has manifested His Person to mankind?

Part of the answer lies in recognizing our human limitation to only comprehend what is bounded in time and space. We live in a different dimension than God does. Apart from revelation and faith in His word, we are forever limited to only what can be perceived through our physical senses. However, God is not confined or constrained by time, space or geography. The key, therefore, is to recognize the unique spiritual nature of God’s being. Our God is (a) Spirit.

God is (a) Sprit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

One might ask the question, “How else could God be omnipresent or be able to manifest His person in different ways unless He was spirit?” Consider, for example, the role of Jesus in sending the Holy Spirit to indwell, to help and to transform those who become His people, while He remains seated on His throne in heaven.

And I (Jesus) will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me. (John 15:26)

Although Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to abide in believers, yet this indwelling presence of God is Jesus Christ Himself!

. . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . . (Ephesians 3:17)

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith . . . do you not recognize . . . that Jesus Christ is in you . . . unless indeed you fail the test. (2 Corinthians 13:5)

. . . and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, “Abba! Father!” (Galatians 4:6)

So also it is written . . . the last Adam (Jesus) became a life-giving Spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45)

There is only one Spirit of God, not two or three! It is this Holy Spirit who constitutes the oneness of God. He convicts of sin and reveals truth. He bears witness of and glorifies the Son; He is the agent of God’s power, to reveal and bring into the lives of believers the character and nature of God. He is the divine life within the body of Christ and is the only basis for unity between believers.

That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in;unity. (John 17:21,23)

The phrases, “I in them—Thou in Me—I in Thee—that they may be in Us,” are only possible because God is Spirit. This is something we must accept by faith, for it is beyond the ability of human comprehension. He is within us to help us do and become that which our Father has commanded. The Holy Spirit is a person who can be easily offended. As the dove of God, He alone can replace pride and rebellion with humility and meekness. Only if He abides within one, can that person please God. It is He alone who brings forth the character of God and the anointing that accomplishes all ministry in the church. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are the only ingredients of true righteousness (Galatians 5:22).

The Fatherhood of God

To the nation of Israel, God was generally viewed in an impersonal way. The people knew about Him through His deeds and commandments but they had little personal relationship with Him. Obviously, Moses, David and Abraham were exceptions. To the people, He was a great God who was afar off. On the other hand, they viewed themselves as people of importance because God had chosen them from among all nations on earth to represent Him. They did not properly appreciate the great commitment required of them nor did they understand the fellowship He desired with them. They did not realize that God sought an intimate family relationship with them, one in which His glory and fatherhood would be revealed through them to the rest of mankind.

By His own nature, God is a Father whether or not He had earthly sons. It was only when He sent forth His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, into the earth, that believers, for the first time, could understand that God was their Father and that He had deep heart love for them. His word to them was that there could be no sons of God apart from the Father of spirits bringing them forth by a spiritual birth.

This was accomplished through His love and mercy when He sent His Son into the world to die for the sins of men. Those who would respond to His offer of forgiveness and grace were born into His family. Thus, Jesus, the only begotten Son of God is the basis for all other sons!

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Christ Jesus to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6)

The greatest of all experiences in the Christian faith is the new birth by which we can intimately know God as our Father. Our communion with Him is based on His redeeming love within the context of discipline to transform us into the image of Jesus.

The difficulties, problems and persecutions we face are opportunities for change that are allowed into our lives by our Father to turn us more to Him. He not only wishes to change us into His likeness by such things, but to do so as a Father who loves and comforts us, a friend who helps us, and as a source of power enabling us to overcome. The goal of this process is to build an intimate son-Father relationship between us and Him.

The Will of God

Since there is one God there can only be one will in the Godhead. This is the will of the Father. The essence of all that Jesus taught and did, pointed to the will and person of His Father. In fact, the central purpose in His ministry was to reveal the Father. This is especially evident in the scripture record of Matthew, chapters 5, 6 and 7.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:38, 40)

The objective in teaching His disciples how to pray and relate to God was to reveal the kingdom and will of the Father to them.

Pray, then in this way—our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

Jesus made it abundantly clear that He had not come to earth in an exercise of His own personal will. He was sent by His Father, and He came to only do and

speak that which had been given to Him by His Father. He constantly referred to His Father's will as the basis for what He taught, as well as all His acts of mercy, power or judgment (John 4:34). He was guided by the Spirit of His Father within Him.

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. (John 14:10)

The climax of His submission is expressed by His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane.

. . . My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt. (Matthew 26:39)

The relationship between Jesus and His Father reveals a Godhead with diversity, headship, oneness and unity (1 Corinthians 11:3).

The Fulness of God

The fulness of God can have no meaning to us apart from God revealing Himself within the dimensions of our human comprehension. He dwells in a glory and light that no mortal could ever approach. God had to become a man in order to fully reveal Himself to us. This was precisely the heart of our Lord's ministry on earth: to reveal the Father so that men could come to know and relate to Him. The mercy and compassion that Jesus exhibited in delivering the sick, the demon oppressed and those in bondage to sin expressed the heart and love of His Father. God so loved His creation that He came to earth in order to redeem and save it from death and judgment. The epitome of His love is the sacrificial death and agony He endured on the cross as our Savior. Thus, John the beloved disciple, writes:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained (revealed) Him. (John 1:18)

Jesus asked this question:

Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father . . . (John 14:9)

The glory and fulness of God resides in the Lord Jesus; this fulness is God's revelation of Himself to mankind. One cannot honor the Father apart from honoring the Son (John 5:23).

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power . . . (Hebrews 1:3)

And He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and

on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him. (Colossians 1:15-19)

Believers can understand the fulness of God only to the extent that they come to a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom *are hidden* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The Authority of God

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ. He, in turn, delegates authority, as He sees fit, to angels, to members of His body and to earthly leaders and governments (Matthew 28:18)

This authority was invested in Jesus because He had humbled Himself as a bondservant, and laid down His life in death on the cross to do the will of His Father.

*And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is **above every name**. (Philippians 2:8-9)*

The name of the Lord represents and endorses His authority! For this reason, His name is the only authority to act for those whom the Lord calls into His service.

And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all **in the name of the Lord Jesus** . . . (Colossians 3:17)*

Thus, as believers, we are to use the authority of His name to heal the sick, to preach the gospel, to ordain ministries, to baptize converts, to pray and intercede and whatever else is involved in spiritual service. His name is not to be viewed as a magic formula; it is the privilege of authority extended to those who serve Him, who as members of His body, glorify God through words and deeds done in His name.

. . . And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

The significance of His name with respect to authority is evident when one considers these words: "the Lord Jesus Christ."

- The Lord: our God

- Jesus: This is the English equivalent of the Hebrew word “Joshua,” which means, “Jehovah is salvation.” Thus, Jesus is the name of the Son and also of the Father.

. . . *Holy Father, keep them in **Thy name, the name which Thou has given Me**, that they may be one, even as We are. (John 17:11)*

- Christ: Jesus is the only complete bodily representation of the Holy Spirit. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and He received the Holy Spirit without measure for His ministry on earth.

Thus “the Lord Jesus Christ” is the one and only name given to the church as that which encompasses all authority of the Godhead. Just as the power of God is resident in the Holy Spirit, so also is the authority of God resident in the person, name and word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Purpose of God

God is not willing that anyone should perish, for He desires every man to be saved. He hates all evil, and in the end He will judge the devil, fallen angels, and all who love evil and reject the gospel. However, none of these things by themselves are the purpose of God.

What is the purpose of God? Many believers would say that it is to save sinners. This comes out of a mind-set which views the Bible primarily as a record of man’s salvation from sin. A consequence of such thinking is to see ourselves and our needs as the central theme of the Bible rather than the purpose of God. The Bible, first of all, is God’s declaration of what He will accomplish for Himself. Since we are a part of His purpose, our spiritual needs are indeed important. However, it is Christ, not man, who is central and preeminent in the purpose of God. He has chosen to bring forth an eternal order of life in a kingdom, one in which all things in heaven and upon earth are headed up in Christ.

He (God) made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him (Christ) with a view to an administration suitable for the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up (heading up) of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will. (Ephesians 1:9-11)

All who believe in Him are offered an inheritance in this kingdom to come. Grace and mercy is extended to us, so that in our generation we may enter into that streams of events initiated by God over the centuries which will one day consummate in the completion of His purpose. Therefore, our priority is to understand His purpose and to discover and give ourselves to the call He has placed on us. All that He brings or allows into our life experiences are designed to bring us to a place of completeness in Him (Philippians 3:10-15).

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Before the world was made, God purposed to bring forth sons, created in His image with whom He could have fellowship. These would be believers whose hearts were totally given to do His will, who would serve and love Him. They would overcome temptations of evil and the flesh to become sons seeking only to do His will. In and through His sons, the Lord will reveal His glory to all of creation. They will inherit a place where they will rule with the Lord Jesus in His kingdom over all creation.

... for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him . . . (2 timothy 2:11-12)

God has expressed this purpose three different ways in scripture.

- As a company of sons who have become conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus (Romans 8:28-30)
- As the bride for His Son (Revelation 19:7-9)
- As the city, or dwelling place where He will forever rest and reign among men on earth (Revelation 21;1-3)

Many will be redeemed by His blood and bear His image in the resurrection. They will have a place in His kingdom. However, it will be those who overcome, whose hearts are wholly centered in the Lord Jesus Himself who make up this company that God has purposed from the beginning of time to reign with Him and with whom He will share His glory (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Romans 8:16-19; Revelation 2:26-28, 3:12, 21:7, 22:3-5).

How marvelous is the Lord, our God!

The grace of the lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, (2 Corinthians 13:14)

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