What The Bible Says About ---

Wednesday, June 24, 2015
Part One

G O D

The discipline of “apologetics” is simply a strong defense of our Christian faith. The Apostle Peter taught firmly that followers of Christ ought to know —
— WHAT they believe and
— WHY they believe it.

1 Peter 3:15  But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

The great Apostle here calls for a reverence and commitment to Christ and the ability to explain one’s faith in Him to anyone who asks. This is “apologetics.” Yes, we accept the Word of God by faith; however, that faith is composed of SUBSTANCE according to Hebrews 11:1. Throughout the Word we are appealed to on the basis of reason and substance. That is a why this study is so vital. Yes, you probably know WHAT you believe, at least basically; but do you know why you believe it?

In this study, the Bible will be the basis upon which all conclusions are reached. What does the Bible say about such issues as:

- God
- The Trinity
- Divine Healing
- Sex
- Water Baptism
- Sanctification
- Etc.

We will begin this series by seeing what the Bible teaches us about GOD HIMSELF. How much do you know about God? TRY THIS: Take a stop watch and see how long you could verbalize about your Heavenly Father in full complete sentences with subjects and verbs WITHOUT REPEATING YOURSELF? Very few Christians could still be speaking after sixty seconds. Check it out for yourself. See how much you know.
I have lived long enough to witness first-hand the “dumbing down” of believers when it comes to their knowledge of God. The marvelous theologian, thinker and writer, A. W. Tozer wrote in his book *Knowledge of the Holy*: “(There is) a condition which has existed in the Church for some years and is steadily growing worse. I refer to the loss of the concept of the majesty from the popular religious mind. The Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshiping men. The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us. A whole new philosophy of the Christian life has resulted from this one basic error in our religious thinking. With our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine Presence. We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence. Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit. The words, “Be still and know that I am God” mean next to nothing to the self-confident, bustling worshiper.

“Without doubt, the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God, and the weightiest word in any language is its word for God.”

Aiden Wilson (A. W.) Tozer ministered in the Christian and Missionary Alliance for over 44 years. Besides pastoring, Tozer wrote 40 books, two of which are regarded as Christian classics: *The Pursuit of God* and *The Knowledge of the Holy*. He was the editor of The Alliance Witness, magazine. He never owned a car preferring to travel by train or bus. He signed away much of his royalties to people in need. He died, much too young, at the age of 66 in 1963.

Idolatry is not just bowing before some idol or fetish or just having a “plastic Jesus” on the dashboard of a car. *The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.*” (Tozer) Idolatry is any concept of God that is untrue to any degree of who God really is. The Apostle Peter admonished us to “sanctify God in our hearts.” (I Peter 3:15) What does that mean? How can we mere mortals sanctify God? The answer to that is so powerful: the only God most people will ever know is the One they see coming from our personal lives. That being the case, the Word instructs us to so live that people see God for Who He truly is - not some aberration.

A most valid question is this: when people see my life, my words, my actions, my disposition, my personality, do they see a reflection of the One True God – or do they see in me some pathetic, inept and carnal phony god? This is why tonight’s study is so incredibly important. Who is God anyway? What do we really know about Him? And how can we live “true to Him” without knowing His real identity.? Again Tozer: *The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate*
her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him. We do the greatest service to
the next generation of Christians by passing on to them undimmed and undiminished
that noble concept of God which we received from our Hebrew and Christian fathers of
generations past.

Here are some very basic questions about God that we followers of Jesus should be able
to discuss with some intelligence:

- Divine attributes - what are they?
- How do we explain the Trinity? Do we have three Gods?
- When we say that God is self-existent, what are we talking about?
- God is immutable. What does that mean?
- How would we define God’s omniscience?
- In light of the world’s status today, how do we defend God’s justice?
- Can anyone explain “the love of God?”
- How would you define God’s holiness?
- The bottom line of all good theology is “the sovereignty of God.” What is that?
- And so very, very much more......

WHAT IS THEOLOGY?

Until the last hundred years or so, theology was considered “the queen” of the sciences.
Why? Because it was a systematic and scholarly study of God Himself. “Theo” means
God and “logy” has to do with knowledge or understanding. So “theology” means
basically THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD....or THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

In all-too-many churches, theology today is a mixture of hazy indefiniteness in regard to
God Himself. We somehow think there is this “need” to be fluid, that our concept of
God is something to be changed with the times or the teaching of some “Johnny-come-
lately” who has a TV smile and smooth vocal delivery. BUT THERE ARE STILL
MANY OF US WHO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE BIBLICAL ISSUES THAT ARE
STABLE AND FIXED!

Why is theology so important to you and me? Because there is created within us not only
a need to know certain things but to understand how they relate to us personally. James
Orr wrote, the human mind is not content with fragmentary knowledge, but tends
constantly to rise from facts to laws, from laws to higher laws, from these to the highest
generalizations possible. The Christian View of God and the World / Eerdmans Publ / p. 6

The attack on theology emanating from secular universities, colleges and some seminaries
is saturated with atheism, agnosticism and sarcasm. The media joins so many times to
discredit the faith of our fathers. Those without deep roots are impressed by the big
words and jaunty attitudes and succumb to a non-biblical world in confusion and despair.
If they knew the Word and basic theology they would recognize the secular attacks for
what they really are - just so much hot air and nonsense.

God has blessed us humans with the ability to REASON. Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and
let us reason together, saith the Lord.... “Reason” is the capacity for knowing truth.
Reason should lead us TO God, not away from Him.

WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?

1. God is “Spirit”

John 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in
truth.

Luke 24:39 .... a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Stated by Jesus
just after His resurrection from the dead.

Yet scriptures teach that God has hands (Isaiah 65:2); feet (Genesis 3:8); eyes (I Kings
8:29 and 2 Chron. 16:9); ears (Nehemiah 1:6). These are human organs and scripture
uses them to describe God to us in ways that we can somehow comprehend his
“aliveness” and uniqueness to us.

2. God is Invisible

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; God appeared to the people of
Israel, according to Deuteronomy 4:15-19) they none of them saw “any manner of form.”
The Apostle Paul often referred to Him as “the invisible God (Romans 1:20; Col. 1:15
and I Tim. 1:17). It could be said that people saw some kind of reflection of His glory
but never face-to-face.

3. God is a Person

Scriptures refer to God’s:

- Sensibility Genesis 6:6 Ps 103:8-13 John 3:16
- Will or Volition Genesis 3:15 John 6:38
Scriptures tell us about God's:

- **Speaking**  Genesis 1:3
- **Seeing**  Genesis 11:5
- **Hearing**  Ps.94:9
- **Change of mind**  (Or repenting that He had made man)  Genesis 6:6
- **Anger**  Deuteronomy 1:37
- **Jealous**  Ex. 20:5
- **Compassion**  Ps 111:4

4. **God is Alive**

He is called “the living God” in Joshua 3:10, I Sam. 17:26, Ps. 84:2, Matthew 16:16 and I Thessalonians 1:9. Life implies feeling, power, activity.

Further, God is THE SOURCE OF ALL LIFE – plant, animal, human, spiritual and eternal. What a contrast in the idols of pagans; those idols are dead.

5. **God is “Self-existent”**

You and I exist only because of the physical union of our parents. But God was not - is not - dependent upon anything outside of Himself for existence. Thomas Aquinas said, “God is the first cause, Himself uncaused.” His very name, “I am that I am,” affirms this. This is a tough one for us mortals to comprehend.

6. **God’s Immensity**

God is not limited by space. Just the opposite – all space is dependent upon Him!

Psalm 139:7  *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*  U. S. Astronaut Colonel James Irwin reported, “I felt God’s presence when I walked on the moon.” Isaiah 66:1  *Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*

7. **God is without beginning or ending - He is THE CAUSE of time.**

He is without beginning or ending. Now we are dealing with eternity, which we usually think of in terms of future. However, it also involves the past. Although, in truth, when we speak of eternity there is no past or future - it just always “is.” Psalm 90:2  *Before
the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the
world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Isaiah 57:15 For thus
saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in
the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to
revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

God is free from all succession of time. (To put it simply, God does not wear a watch!)
Eternity for God is one NOW. God is THE CAUSE of time: John 1:3 All things were
made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

8. God is omniscient.

Dr. Henry Thiessen (Lectures in Systematic Theology) put it like this: God knows
Himself and all other things, whether they be actual or merely possible, whether they
be past, present or future, and that He knows them perfectly and from all eternity. He
knows things immediately, simultaneously, exhaustively and truly. Page 124

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not
I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. [25] I have heard what the prophets said,
that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. Psalm
147:5 Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.
Hebrews 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all
things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Years ago, my late friend Ira Stanphill wrote the lyrics for this song:

Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand /
But I know Who holds tomorrow and I know Who holds my hand!

Great song built on a great truth: GOD KNOWS THE FUTURE. You and I don't.
God foreknew the future long before creation. He knew:

• the various evil courses Israel would take in generations to come. Deut. 31:20-21
  For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their
  fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled
  themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve
  them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. [21] And it shall come to pass,
  when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify
  against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of
their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swere.

the human administration of a man named Cyrus. Isaiah 44:26-28 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: [27] That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: [28] That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

the coming of Messiah. Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

the fact of Jesus’ crucifixion. Rev. 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

And I could add page after page of those things God knew acons prior to their occurrence.

9. God is omnipotent - all powerful.

That needs to be qualified: God can do anything He chooses - as long as it is consistent with His divine nature. Therefore, there are some things He cannot - or will not - do such as:

- Look upon sin Habakkuk 1:13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

- Lie Hebrews 6:18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie,

- Commit sin James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:
I want to include a few other of the many scriptures that teach the omnipotence of God:

Genesis 17:1    And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Job 42:2     I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withheld from thee.

Jeremiah 32:17    Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

Jesus Himself testified in Matthew 19:26     With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

TO THE CHRISTIAN THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD IS A SOURCE OF COMFORT AND HOPE. BUT TO THE UNBELIEVER, SO MIGHTY A GOD IS EVER A WARNING AND A SOURCE OF FEAR. HE RIGHTLY TREMBLES AT THE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS NAME AND WORD. Psalm 99:1    The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

10. God is Immutable.

That means that He is unchangeable. God cannot get better since He is already perfect. For that same reason He cannot get worse. He can never be wiser, more holy, more just, more merciful, more truthful - etc. His plans and purposes do not - cannot - change.

James 1:17    Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Malachi 3:6    For I am the Lord, I change not;

11. God is Holy

When the great Old Testament prophet Isaiah had a vision of God in the great Jerusalem Temple, his reaction was breathtakingly strong: Isaiah 6:5    Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.  Again Tozer:
That expresses the feeling of every person who has discovered himself or herself under human disguises and has been confronted with an inward sight of the holy whiteness that is God. Unless we have seen ourselves as God sees us, we are not likely to be much disturbed over conditions around us as long as they do not get so far out of hand as to threaten our comfortable way of life. We have learned to live with unholliness and have come to look upon it as the natural and expected thing. We are not disappointed that we do not find all truth in our teachers of faith, fulness in our politicians or complete honesty in our merchants or full trustworthiness in our friends.

Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. His holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. The natural man is blind to it. Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He IS that standard.

Since God’s first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation, God must destroy whatever would destroy it. When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from irreparable moral collapse He is said to be angry. EVERY WRATHFUL JUDGMENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD HAS BEEN A HOLY ACT OF PRESERVATION.

Every person should clearly understand that:

1. There is a chasm between God and the sinner. Habakkuk 1:13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

2. We cannot approach God on the basis of our own morality or worthiness; it must be through the merits of someone else - and that “someone” is Jesus. Romans 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Ephes. 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

3. We approach God - not jauntily, but with reverence and Godly fear: Hebrews 12:28-29 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: [29] For our God is a consuming fire. God not “your buddy”; He is your God! How desperately this generation needs a right view of God and of sin!

12. God is righteous and just.

We know so little about real justice in this life. Courts and authorities do the best they
can in criminal and domestic issues - or whatever challenges they face. But they are still but human and sometimes grave mistakes are made. God makes no mistakes whatsoever. A song from my youth has this lyric:

Someday He'll make it clear to me /
Someday when I His face shall see /
Someday from sin I shall be free
For someday I will understand.

Until then we live in an imperfect world.

13. God is Love.

This is not some emotional catharsis through which the Creator sometimes journeys. It is rather a rational and voluntary affection. God loves us for many reasons. 2 Cor. 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

14. God is Merciful.

We define this as God's benevolence and goodness manifested to those who are in dire straits or distress. Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.... To whom does He reveal such mercy? Luke 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. Since there seems to be so precious little fear of God in this generation, one has to wonder how long can God extend mercy.

There is much more to study about God. Time forbids that extension tonight. But we will continue two weeks from tonight and include a STUDY OF THE TRINITY.

Next week we celebrate America on the church grounds and continue our new series on Wednesday night, July 8.