

BASIC BIBLE PRINCIPLES

GOD

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

“God That made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:24-28).

How can we know God?

Although the order and design of the world can encourage belief in a Creator, we can only know God through His revelation of Himself and His ways. This revelation is in the Bible, which clearly claims to have been authored by Him through faithful men (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; Heb. 1:1,2). In it we find His revelation of His nature, His character, His mind and His purpose. The superiority of all His ways and thoughts over those of men is to be expected and is stated: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8,9; see too 1 Cor. 1:25-29).

His nature

God reveals Himself as the Supreme Being, Who has always existed, immortal, of infinite power, wisdom and understanding (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15; Ps. 90:1-3; 145:3; 147:5; Isa. 45:5,18). He is declared to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the giver of life to all that lives (Gen. 1:1; Jer. 10:7,10-12; Acts 14:15; 17:24). Not only does He create life, but He sustains it, and when He deems fit He will take life away (Ps. 104; Deut. 32:39; Acts 17:25,28).

His character

God declared His character particularly to Moses: “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty . . .” (Ex. 34:6,7). His character is seen in His dealings with mankind, particularly with the nation of Israel.

God’s work with the nation of Israel illustrates His kindness and longsuffering, but also His intolerance of sin and rebellion against His ways (Ps. 103:8-13; Hab. 1:13; Deut. 4:24). Paul describes these two aspects of the Almighty’s character as “the goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22).

God's character is fully revealed in the birth, life, death, resurrection and ministry of His Son Jesus, the Christ. His longsuffering, His love and His righteousness are displayed in the provision of Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for sin and the example of the kind of life that men and women should lead: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them . . ." (2 Cor. 5:19; cf. Jno. 3:16; 1 Jno. 4:7,8,16). However, His righteous judgements will also be carried out on those who reject His ways (2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rev. 11:18; Heb. 10:30,31).

His mind and purpose

He has made all things for His pleasure (Rev. 4:11). This pleasure is realised in the outworking of His purpose, which is that "as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD" (Num. 14:21; cf. Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14). This will be achieved through people who have believed His promises and obeyed His commandments. Such will allow the Word of God to influence their lives so that they are "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29).

As the Creator, God is, in a sense, the Father of all mankind (Acts 17:29), but the position of the children of God is reserved for those who have believed Him. He has from the time of Adam, when His righteousness condemned Adam to death for sin, made His laws and commandments available. Those who obeyed them were counted as 'sons of God' who looked for a day when they should be raised from the dead, share the promised Divine nature and have fellowship with God (Jno. 8:56; Heb. 11:19).

God's selection of Abraham led to the choice of Israel as His people, from which nation He raised His Son Jesus, in fulfilment of promises about the seed who was coming. Jesus, born by the action of the power of God, the Holy Spirit, on the virgin Mary, is the "only begotten of the Father . . . full of grace and truth" (Jno. 1:14). Through Him God has provided redemption from sin, and brought into being a new creation of His children, who are being redeemed from this present world to be revealed as the sons of God when Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom upon the earth. God's judgements have been committed to the Son, who will "put down all rule and all authority and power . . . that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28; cf. Ps. 8:6; Ps. 2).

The One to Whom all glory is due

The wisdom and graciousness of God are evident in the arrangements He has made to fill the earth with His glory manifested in believers "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Understanding this great work of salvation evokes praise and wonder.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36).

". . . to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude v. 25).

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