

The Basics of Christianity

Finding the True God

Genesis 1:26-27

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Genesis 1:26-27 (NASB95)

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INTRODUCTION:

We are continuing with "The Basics of Christianity" series.

Previously, we have looked at the major religions of the world and went through a systematic methodology in order to separate truth from error. In the end Christianity stood apart from all other religions.

Next we learned that we can know that there is a God by looking at His creation, the laws of nature, and our ability to know good from evil by our conscience. At this point we may not know who this God is but we know that there had to be a creator. This is one of the ways in which the true God revealed Himself to mankind. Knowing that there had to be a Creator, rules out Atheism (there is no God) and Agnosticism (the existence of God cannot be known with certainty).

Then we looked at the possibility that the Bible that we have today is actually the inspired Word of God. Based upon the **internal evidence** of fulfilled prophecy and coherency of message and **external evidence** containing places that have been archeologically proven to have existed and accurate historical accounts and the **impact** that it has made upon the lives of people, we concluded that it had to be the "inspired word of God" that it claims to be.

With this behind us, we are now going to look at the gods of the different major religions and try to identify the TRUE God who created the universe and mankind.

The first group of religions are the "pantheistic religions" such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism (Jane' ism).

Buddhism

Buddhists do not believe in a God or Gods. The focus in Buddhism is on personal spiritual enlightenment and to gain a deep insight into the true nature of life. Buddhists try to follow the path of the Buddha to attain a state of nirvana, which is the final goal of Buddhism.

Hinduism

Hinduism is known to be "a family of religions" since it has no single founder or scripture and no commonly agreed set of teachings. Instead, the religion has developed through different philosophies over time and Hindus worship different representations of gods and goddesses.

Jainism

The Jain religion does not have any Gods or spiritual beings but teaches its followers to care about the universe by leading lives of harmlessness. Self-help is one of the main principles of Jainism.

All pantheistic religions believe that the universe is God and is eternal. By examining creation, we know that there had to be a Creator. Thus they are worshipping creation instead of the Creator thus the pantheistic religions can be ruled out.

Once Atheism, Agnosticism, and pantheistic religions are ruled out, it only leaves three major religions standing. That is Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Islam

Muslims believe that there is only one God and that is Allah. They believe that Allah sent a number of Prophets to earth in order to teach mankind how to live. Prophets of God include Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and it is believed that the final prophet was Muhammad.

Judaism

Judaism is the religion of the Old Testament. They do not believe that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. They believe that there is only one God who cannot be subdivided into different persons, unlike in Christianity.

Islam and Judaism both claim that the New Testament of the Bible is untrue in what it claims and both deny that Jesus was God in human form.

We know that God had to exist based upon His creation. In order to know the **true God**, it was necessary for God to reveal Himself to mankind. And He did that by sending His Son to live among us and teach us about the Creator. God preserved what Jesus taught us through His disciples and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the Bible that we have today. Based upon the conclusion that we have made that the Bible has to be the inspired word of God this rules out Islam and Judaism.

So with that let's look at God's Word this morning in an effort to find the True God.

ILLUSTRATION:

Howard Carter was the archeologist who discovered Tutankhamun's (TOO TAN COM' MONS) tomb, which was designated KV62 in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt.

On November 26th, 1922, the team had reached the doorway of the tomb. Carter made a "tiny breach in the top left hand corner" of the doorway with a chisel his grandmother had given him for his 17th birthday. He was able to peer in by the light of a candle and see that many of the gold and ebony treasures were still in place. As he was peeking in through the breach, he was asked "Can you see anything?", Carter replied with the famous words: **"Yes, wonderful things!"**

Humans are inquisitive. We often wonder, how did we get here? Scientists have spent lifetimes looking at the world around them and the heavens above them and tried to unravel the clues to our existence.

When we peek into God's Word we learn WONDERFUL THINGS that we could never know from our own human knowledge. We soon realize that the Bible contains "gold and ebony treasures", not in material form, but in "**revelations**" as to our existence and of our Creator and why we are here.

Yes, wonderful things!

This morning, I would like to peek into God's "Time Capsule" and see His "**gold and ebony treasures**"!

All Stand and Read Scripture

Genesis 1:26-27 (NASB95)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Keep this passage open, we will be referring back to it shortly.

Prayer

BODY:

I. The Tri-Unity of God.

As Judaism believes, many scriptures make it clear that there is only ONE God!

Isaiah 44:6 (NASB95)

⁶ "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:
I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

Isaiah 45:5a (NASB95)

⁵ "I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.

So there is one God, but the scriptures make it clear that God consists as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is first revealed from our opening scripture from Genesis 1:26. God said,

"Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, according to **OUR** likeness."

Note....: There is only **ONE** image, and there is only **ONE** likeness -Singular, But the **Plural** is also used - "Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, according to **OUR** likeness".

Then you see **Singular** God in verse 27 created man after His image.

²⁷ God created man in His own image,

Jesus made several references to the fact that He was God.

John 10:30 (NASB95)

³⁰ I and the Father are one."

It is only by understanding the tri-unity of God that we can understand John in the opening of his Gospel.

John 1:1-3 (NASB95)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

The word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible. However, all through the Bible, God is presented as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is not three gods, but three persons in the one and only God. Here are some key verses expressing the concept of the Trinity.

Paul concluded his second letter to the Corinthians with the following verse:

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NASB95)

¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

The nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can be seen clearly at the **baptism of Jesus**.

Mark 1:9-11 (NASB95)

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; ¹¹ and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

God is three persons (The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit). Each person is divine, yet there is only **one** God. The concept of the Trinityis a difficult..... yet an essential conceptof the faith.

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NASB95)

¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

Although we cannot comprehend exactly how God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit can be one, we can be certain that God is One because it is clearly stated in His Word.

II. The Character of God.

God always was. He has no beginning, and He will have no end. He does not exist in time. He exists independent of time and space. Those things are created for us. After all that has been prophesied is fulfilled and God creates a new heavens and new earth, there will no longer be any need for time, because we who have responded to His call will all be glorified, and will have entered into eternity with Him, and we too will transcend time and space. **Another concept I can't quite get my brain around.**

Another character of God is that He is a spirit.

John 4:24 (NASB95)

²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus confirms to us that spirits do not have physical attributes.

Luke 24:39 (NASB95)

³⁹ See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, **for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.**”

So God is invisible, at least to the eye of flesh.

John 1:18 (NASB95)

¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

There are three terms that are used to describe God.

He is **Omnipresent**, meaning He is everywhere at once and there is nowhere that He is not.

He is **Omniscient**, meaning He knows all things and there is nothing He does not know.

He is **Omnipotent**, meaning He is all powerful. He is able to do whatever He wills.

God is holy, God is righteous, God is good, God is truth, in the most complete and perfect sense of all those terms.

That is not by any means an exhaustive study of the general knowledge of God and His essence and attributes, but if you can get just an inkling from these things, of the immensity and eternal nature of God, it should cause us to worship Him and want to please Him. More importantly, we should love God because He first loved us.

III. The God of Love.

We know that He loves, and time does not permit, nor am I inclined to try and list all the passages of scripture that talk about His love. John says “**God is Love**” and that pretty much covers it.

But let me give you just a couple of reminders.

John 3:16-17 (NASB95)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

God loved us so much that He was willing to send His Son to earth to die on the cross for our sins. He is also patient toward us and wants us to come to Him.

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB95)

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

He created man to love Him and worship Him, because He knows that the only eternal good, the only everlasting benefit for men is in the God-given, God-enabled worship and adoration of their Creator.

When Jesus was on the cross, He prayed **“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”** He wasn’t just talking about the Roman soldiers with the hammers or the Jewish religious leaders who plotted and instigated His crucifixion.

He was asking His Father to offer forgiveness to Adam’s race; the entire race of mankind who, having broken relationship with their Creator and taken up arms against Him, had thereby become blind and deaf and stupid concerning anything apart from this world and their own selfish ambitions and lusts, in anything pertaining to God or heaven, no longer had any clue what they were really all about.

And as He was praying that prayer, He was pouring out the blood that would satisfy justice and purchase the pardon He sought for us ~ and the Father extended His forgiveness in answer to that prayer.

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple tore from top to bottom; the veil that covered the Holy of Holies and the mercy seat; this occurred in order to tell us that God is now available to everyone! We no longer have to go through a high priest.

The unimaginable, uncreated Master, Creator, and God of eternity wants a love relationship with His creation, and has stopped at nothing to gain it back; **even the sacrifice of His only begotten Son.**

In the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, God the Father forever erased the need to wonder what He is like, where He is, what He expects, what He offers, whether He cares, whether He cares for me.

He transcended time and space and took on a form we could understand and relate to. In essence He said, **“Hi, I’m God, and if you will come with Me, I have such wondrous things to show you, you cannot even imagine them until I make you like Me. Oh, and by the way, I love you and I will blot out all your sins and wipe away all your tears.”**

CONCLUSION:

Look at Jesus and see the Father. He is real, and He is a person with feelings, and He wants you to know His ways. He wants you to know and love Him.

He wants you to love Him more than a friend, more than a lover, more than anything or anyone. He wants you to love Him so much that He can at any moment say, “Do this for Me”, and you will rush to do His will because it is your delight to serve the One you Love.

How do we do that?

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NASB95)

⁴“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Put God first in everything you do and say, He deserves no less! Don’t be afraid of Him. Love Him. Know His ways, and **be amazed.**

Who is God? The more important question is, ‘Who is God to you?’

He Is Lord!