

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Prayer meeting/Bible study

Date 11th January 2023

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles, Ps/Hymns, 1, Read John 4:23-26 Text John 4:24

Series The Doctrine of God series (5) Title God is Spirit

In John chapter 4 the Lord Jesus, on His way to Jerusalem, must needs go through Samaria.

The reason being there was a woman of Samaria who must be confronted, and convicted about her sin and then be converted by faith alone in the promised Messiah, who is Christ Himself.

In conversation with this samaritan woman the Saviour speaks of worship to God.

Now it was evident there was division among the Jews and Samaritans as they had no dealing with one another.

That division or distinction had to do with the matter of the worship by both groups.

It is clear by the verses that the Samaritans worshipped in an entirely different manner from the Jews.

In **2 Kings 17:29** the Samaritans had founded their own system of worship, which was a mixture of heathenism and Judaism.

They worshipped many false gods as well as Jehovah.

In speaking with the Samaritan woman, Christ's clarified what true worship is and who is to be worshipped.

Christ said in **verse 22** “ **Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship...**” The woman was ignorant of who God is, and the true way to worship Him, and how to approach and find acceptance with Him.

Christ said in **verse 24** *God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.*

The original reading of these words is, **God is spirit**, the meaning is to emphasis God is not a spirit among other spirits, rather He is the creator of all, and superior to all His creation.

He must be worshiped through His own appointed way, by Faith in Jesus life, death and resurrection.

Redemption accomplished by Christ's life & death, then Redemption Accepted by Christ's resurrection.

Such redemptive truths must be applied to believing sinner.

In continuing in the study of the doctrine of God or theology proper, we come to consider the Spirituality of God, or God is as Spirit.

Such words are quoted in our worship in public prayer and no doubt even in private prayer, we acknowledge God is a spirit.

Therefore, as we worship God, we must seek to understand what is meant by the words God is Spirit?

I FIRST, GOD IS IMMORTAL.

1 Timothy 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible..." **1 Timothy 6:16** "Who only hath immortality,

The word **immortal** means *deathlessness, state of no death*. It describes the state of not being subject to death, that which will never die.

God is eternal, imperishable, and incorruptible. He is the source of all life. He will never know death, decay, or loss of strength. God's immortality is true eternity. His immortality is from eternity to eternity.

God has no beginning or end.

Whereas mankind has a beginning and an ending.

We are mortal and all must die physically.

There is a misunderstanding and often argued that since God is immortal and incapable of death, and Jesus is God, but Jesus died, then surely Jesus is not God or God is not immortal.

However, this is misunderstood and misapplied but clearly answered by scripture.

In order for the redemption of sinners, **it was necessary for the absolute spirit to assume a human form.** The eternal Son of God could only become capable of death through the incarnation, taking human flesh unto Himself.

Christ the eternal Son of God, was eternally one with the Father and dwelt with the father in eternity.

He who **Isaiah 9:6** calls *the everlasting Father*, and who **Micha 5:2** states *who goings have been from of old from everlasting*, carried out His eternal covenant of grace to save and restore fallen men and woman back to God, by taking to Himself a true humanity.

Therefore, it **was necessary for the absolute spirit to take human nature.**

John 1:1 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* **Verse 14** *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Hebrews 10:5 “...but a body hast thou prepared me: **Col 1:14-15** “*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: ¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God...*: Christ the eternal Son of God was not created, rather He is existed from all eternity.

(He said in **John 8:58** “*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*”.)

God cannot not die, Deity cannot die, but in taking a human nature He could die. Since man had sinned, therefore it is man who must pay the penalty of sin.

Christ in His humanity did not lose His deity, rather He took unto Himself what He did not previously have, a human nature.

Therefore, He is the Godman, both God and man, two distinct natures in one person forever. As related to both, He is the only one qualified to save sinners.

Christ’s death, and resurrection guarantees, believers at His return their glorious resurrection and be forever with the Lord, as **1 Cor 15:51-53** assures, “...we **shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**”

II SECOND, GOD IS IMMATERIAL.

Another word that is often used is **incorporeal**.

When we say God is immaterial we mean God is without human features, He is without body and soul, meaning God is absolute spirit.

Our Lord said to His disciples after His resurrection in **Luke 24:39** “ **Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself, handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.**

There are differences of opinions among men with regard to the design of man, some say man is **bi-parte** that is **body and soul**, and others say man is **tri-parte** **body, soul and spirit**.

I would not get caught up or lose sleep over the issues, they do not to effect salvation, but what I want you to grasp is man is both **physical or material and spiritual**.

We are not absolute spirit. However, God is absolute Spirit. He is immaterial.

Now this confuses many, because the bible speaks in a manner that attributes bodily parts to God. **Deuteronomy 33:27** speaks of **His arms**. **Prov 15:3** **His eyes**, **2 Kings 19:16** **His ear**. **Psalm 18:9** **His feet**, **Psalm 8:3** **His fingers**, **Num 11:23** **His hand**, **Isaiah 58:14** **His mouth**.

These features are called **anthro-po-morphic expressions**.

Anthropomorphic expressions are used to explain features or characteristics of God by using human description in order to help our finite, limited understanding of who God is in His **power, love, favour, mercy and how God works**, to bless and encourage our hearts.

Such expressions do not mean that God possesses physical features such as hands, eyes, feet He is Spirit. He is immaterial.

We look to Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh. Christ said Himself I and my father are one. To see Christ is to see the Father,

To see God's works, look to the person of Christ for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

III THIRD, GOD IS INVISIBLE.

1 Timothy 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible..." **1 Timothy 6:16** "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

(The phrase **dwelling in the light** means **unapproachable light**. It reveals the glory, light and majesty of God, that sinful man cannot approach the presence of God. Such holiness would cause sinful man to perish. Therefore, God is invisible.)

In reference to fallen man, we live by sight.

We can see our physical features, but we cannot see our spirit or soul as it is invisible. We understand at death the soul leaves the body, but again it is unseen.

This is clearly seen in the death of Rachel while she was in hard labour, giving birth to her son. **Genesis 35:18**, "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni." When Christ died on the cross, **Luke 23:46** "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost."

God is Spirit He is invisible. However, fallen man has made a visible image of that which is invisible in order to worship.

The Samaritans had formed their own imagination of what God looked like and created idols to worship.

Paul stated of unbelievers in **Romans 1:21-23** “...**became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.**”

When Paul went to Athens in Greece, he found in **Acts 17:23-25** “...**an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. ²⁴ 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; ²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;**

That is why God has commanded in **Exodus 20:4-5** **Thou shalt have no other gods before me. ⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them:** “

To make an image of God who is Spirit, is to break God's law.

But men answer they need something visible to worship to feel it's reality, as seeing is believing.

However, there are certain things that we cannot see but they are real. We cannot touch or see pain but its real.

Therefore, one who is absolute Spirit, the invisible God has made Himself visible in the person of Christ, as He answered Philip's question in **John 14:8** ***shew us the father***, **verse 9** ***"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;"***

One who is Spirit, invisible, who **dwells in unapproachable light**, chose to reveal Himself to sinners in **2 Cor 4** as the light of the Gospel.

Therefore, believer, Peter taught in **1 Peter 1:8** ***"Whom having not seen, ye love;*** We see God through Christ, we love and worship God through Christ.

One day, **1 John 3:2** ***"...when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.***

IV FOURTH GOD IS INFINITE

Psalm 139:7 ***"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"***

John 1:18 ***"No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."***

(Deut 4:12 ***And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.)***

God's spirituality is infinite, uncontained, unembodied in the sense that God cannot be limited or confined to a body.

Nothing can hinder or limit God, but in relation to other spirit beings which He created, they are limited.

A man's spirit or soul is embodied meaning that it is confined to that body in which it dwells. We have limitations.

The same is true of angelic spirits which at times appeared in visible form.

Since the angelic spirit was confined to an body, such a state teaches that the angel is a finite spirit, limited and confined to a particular location.

Only God is absolute Spirit. Spiritual beings such as angels were created by God and for God. They are finite, and limited.

But this is not the case in relation to the spirituality of God. He is present in all places. He is not limited to one place.

When Solomon was preparing to build a house for the Lord to dwell he said in **2 Chronicles 2:6** ***But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him?***

Also think of Christ after His birth, when speaking to Nicodemus upon earth. The incarnation did not confine the eternal Son of God, to the physical limitations of a body **John 3:13** ***“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*** Present upon earth and heaven.

That's why He is able to draw along side God's people here in England and America at the same time.

While I'm at Church and you are in listen from your house, He draws near even at the same time. These verses reveal this fact that as a spirit being God is infinite, unlimited,

uncontained you cannot box God in. He is the uncontained God.

Now that is mind blowing, it hurts our limited minds, but it is a glorious truth revealed, we are called upon by faith to believe this truth revealed.

He is incomprehensible, we will never fully grasp all there is to know about God. God is spirit, our finite mind will never fully comprehend the infinite God.

V FIFTH GOD IS INDIVISIBLE

Another term often used is simplicity. God's indivisibility teaches He cannot be divided, or separated.

The indivisibility and ***simplicity*** of God also teaches that there can be no distinction, separation between His divine nature or essence, and His divine attributes or perfections.

(God is everywhere present meaning in every place is all of God's being.)

Shorter Catechism Q.4, What is God? Answer: "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."

For our finite, limited minds, we break down, divide or separate objects, definitions, titles and headings to help process its meaning.

Yet God cannot be broken down or divided.

This means perfections have not been added to Him. He cannot be improved. He is not God plus His perfections. He is

not more of one perfection and less of another perfection. His perfections are interconnected.

In other words, God is love, but we cannot say His justice is a lesser perfection than love. He is eternally, infinitely, unchangeable love and holy.

We can never say He is more faithful than He is just. We cannot divide, mix and match God, place His perfections into different levels.

Every attribute is identical with God's being.

To worship God in truth is to worship Him as He has revealed Himself through the sinless person and substitutional death of His dear Son.