

## THEOLOGY PROPER (28)

- (Way #1)- He is identified as the Holy Spirit (Mt.28:19)
- (Way #2)- He is identified as the Spirit of Holiness (Rom. 1:4).
- (Way #3)- He is identified as the Spirit of God (Rom.8:9; I Cor.2:14).
- (Way #4)- He is identified as the Holy Spirit of God (Eph.4:30).
- (Way #5)- He is identified as the Spirit of Truth (John 16: 13),
- (Way #6)- He is identified as the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil.1:19).
- (Way #7)- He is identified as the Spirit of God's Son (Gal.4:6).
- (Way #8)- He is identified as the Spirit of the LORD (Lk.4:18).
- (Way #9)- He is identified as the Spirit of the Lord (Acts 8:39)
- (Way #10)-He is identified as the Spirit of Grace (Heb.10:29).
- (Way #11)- He is identified as the Holy Spirit of Promise (Eph.1:13).
- (Way #12)- He is identified as the Spirit of Adoption (Rom.8:15).

When all of the names, titles, epithets of God are studied and combined, one is able to better grasp the Person, the Work, the Attributes and even the Being of God. Names must be analyzed according to the context, but an understanding of these things promotes a faith that is stable, secure and accurate.

**(Revelatory Way #4)-** God reveals Himself through Miraculous Demonstrations.

God reveals certain things about Himself through a variety of special, miraculous acts. These types of things are clearly designed to teach man much about the Character and power of God. Although a complete study of miracles is not the intent of this section, a few examples demonstrate this point:

Example #1- The Bible opens with Genesis 1, which reveals a creative power of speech which has never been, nor will ever be equaled (Gen.1:1,3,6,9,11,14-15). Obviously the opening chapter of God's word is designed to demonstrate the tremendous power of God's word. Every word of Genesis should be carefully examined for it is the first book which gives us information about God.

Example #2- A passage such as Exodus 14:13-30- God parts the Sea and destroys the Egyptians who are chasing His people- not only reveals the miraculous power of God, but we see the Divine care and plan that God has for Israel. We also learn by this miracle how God is faithful to His Word and promises(Gen.15:18).

Example #3- A passage like Ephesians 2:1-6 teaches us much about the miraculous spiritual creative power of God to transform a believer from death unto life.

We must remember that miracles of God are specifically given to make some kind of statement , about God. Miracles are not performed at all times in the Bible, but when they are, they must be carefully studied to determine the precise purpose and meaning of the miracle.

## THEOLOGY PROPER (29)

**(Revelatory Way #5)-** God reveals Himself through Human Beings.

It is clearly stated in Genesis 1:26-27 that there are some similarities between God and men which do not exist in animals. It is therefore legitimate to think in terms of being able to understand something about God in looking at human beings. It must be immediately admitted that God is Infinite and we are finite; God is Holy and we are sinful; God is Perfect and we are imperfect. However, having admitted these realities, it must also be admitted that there is some type of corresponding resemblance between God and man. It stands to reason that we may learn something about God through human beings.

We also know that God gives gifts to the church and that the building up of God's people comes through the utilization of those gifts (i.e. Eph.4:11-12). Therefore, it may be concluded that God will reveal things about Himself as God's people are instructed by those truly gifted by God. Furthermore, we know that it is possible for believers to reveal the love of God to others in such a way that a mature portrait of God's love is evidenced (i.e. I John 4:11-12).

These Biblical facts clearly lead us to conclude that God does reveal things about Himself through other humans. Dr. Chafer said:

"It is true but little can be known of all that God is, but it is not true that God is so different from man that no proper conception of God is possible. ... The point at issue is that God with no common emphasis asserts that there is a correspondence between Himself and man. Upon the principle which this affirmation publishes, man is justified in tracing the divine characteristics from the pattern, though incomplete, which his own being supplies. ... It therefore follows that the tracing of this similitude is to be restricted to the immaterial part of man." (Vol.1, p. 181).

Since God is a Spirit (i.e. John 4:24), it stands to reason that the things we will be able to learn about God in ourselves will not be the material, but the immaterial. It will not be concerning the physical, but the spiritual.

**(Revelatory Way #6)-** God reveals Himself through Divine Attributes.

This subject will be fully discussed later in this study. It will suffice for now to say **that Divine Attributes are those specific characteristics and qualities which constitute the essence of God. The Attributes of God are that which make God, God.** God's attributes are peculiar to God Himself. They are intrinsic to Him.

One illustration may be seen in Proverbs 15:3. In this verse we are taught that God can see everything- at all places and at all times. Through a careful study of the Attributes of God, we learn a great deal about God.

## THEOLOGY PROPER (30)

**(Revelatory Way #7)** - God reveals Himself through Jesus Christ.

The Bible is very clear that God reveals Himself through His Son. Several N.T. passages establish this reality: Mt.1:23; Jn.1:14-18; Col.2:9; I John 1:1-2. These are just a few of the many passages that establish that God revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Ultimately if we are to know God as He has revealed Himself, every book of the Bible must be studied. A partial search of Scripture will leave one with a partial perspective and concept of God. However, a full search of Scripture will leave one with a full concept of God.

The wise believer will prayerfully purpose to know God biblically, theologically and personally and will then purpose to demonstrate and defend this knowledge practically.

**QUESTION #8** - Is it possible to define God?

For years theologians and Biblical scholars have wrestled with this question. Certainly we would conclude that if a definition requires a recognition and representation of all of its parts, then it is impossible to define God. By virtue of the fact that God is characterized as Infinite, no concrete definition formed by those finite could ever give a comprehensive and exhausted definition. A definition is further complicated by the fact that some theologians differ as to their classification of attributes, making it difficult form an accepted definition.

Dr. Louis Berkhof writes: "It is quite evident that the Being of God does not admit to any scientific definition. ...At most only an analytical-descriptive definition is possible." (p.41)

On the other hand it must be realized that definitions do not require a total knowledge to be accurate. In its grass-roots form, a definition is "a set of words explaining the meaning" of something. (Webster, p.252)

For example, if a man or woman were asked to define himself or herself, there would be no definition that would scientifically cover everything, for everything about a man or woman is not yet known. However, if a man were to say- he is a male, who has all of the qualifications and attributes necessary to be classified as a male, his definition would not be wrong, even though it would be incomplete.

When we realize that God has revealed Himself in such a variety of ways, we can assume that God expects us to grasp as much about Him as possible. His names, attributes and miracles, for example, are given for this purpose. **Based on this we may conclude that although God can never be completely defined, He may be accurately described.** Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that it is possible to, in a certain sense, define God. But as Dr. Chafer said: "A true Biblical definition of God will be secured only as an induction of all the Scripture is secured." (Vol.1, p.188)

## THEOLOGY PROPER (31)

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, a theological work which is the combined efforts of several scholars, gives this definition: "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." (Thiessen, p.54)

Perhaps the most comprehensive and Biblical definition of God occurs in the full Westminster Confession of Faith. This confession was the theological belief of several Biblical leaders who finally completed it in December 1646. It was a statement made to combat the errors of Arminianism, Roman Catholicism and sectarianism. It is considered to be the most influential doctrinal statement to influence the English speaking world. Because it has stood the test of time and scholarship, we cite it here: (Cited from Chafer, Vol. 1, pp. 188-189)

"I. There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, and upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them.

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternal proceeding from the Father and the Son."

### **QUESTION #9 - Is God a Person?**

Another way to ask this question is- "Does God possess a personality that would enable Him to be classified as a real Person?" As we have already stated, Genesis 1:26-27 does permit us to conclude that there is a certain similarity between God and man. We may assume that qualities exist in God and in man that do not exist in animals. We know that the greatest distinction between man and animals is not so much the physical because in many ways animals are physically superior to human beings. The greatest distinction lies in the immaterial. Man has a personality that far surpasses even the highest level of animal species.

## THEOLOGY PROPER (32)

According to the testimony of God the Son, God the Father is a Spirit(John 4:24). This leads us to conclude that the similarity between God and man will not be found in the physical composition of a person, rather in the personality of a person. **We may legitimately conclude that God does have a personality and therefore may be classified as a person; something the Scriptures certainly support.** It is certainly true that the personality of God will be Divine, but it is also true that the personality of God will be real.

When we search the Scriptures we see that God as all the factors that are demanded in a real personality: 1) God has an Intellect; 2) God has Emotions; 3) God has a Will.

**Real Personality Factor #1-** God has an Intellect.

(Observation #1)- The intellect of God is Systematic. Gen.1; Jer.29:11; Rom.3:26

(Observation #2)- The intellect of God is Infinite. Ps.147:5; Rom.11:33-34

(Observation #3)- The intellect of God is Relational. Prov.2:5-6; Acts 15:18

By virtue of the fact that God's intellect has the ability to personally relate to people and to impart actual knowledge to them, we know He is a real Person. Although one may make observations about an animal, personal instruction does not come from an animal, it comes from a person.

**Real Personality Factor #2-** God has Emotions.

(Observation #1)- God can emotionally Hate. Prov.6:16-19

(Observation #2)- God can emotionally Love. Mal.1:2-3; John 3:16; I John 4:16

**Real Personality Factor #3-** God has a Will.

(Observation #1)- God's uses His will to do what He Pleases. Ps.115:3; 135:6

(Observation #2)- God uses His will to do what He Purposes. Is.46:10; Prov. 16:4

(Observation #3)- God uses His will working Everywhere. Prov.16:9; 20:24; Dan.4:35

(Observation #4)- God uses His will in Salvation. James 1:18

We conclude Go is an actual Person and He possesses personality to the infinite, ultimate level.