

The Unknown God

Ray Wooten

God has given man many opportunities to know Him. He created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden. But, Adam transgressed and lost access to God. However, he still knew God and undoubtedly passed on to his progeny at least the knowledge of God's existence. He did not pass on the legacy of obedience to God.

Because of this, ensuing generations, except for the few individuals to whom God revealed Himself, have had only a superficial knowledge of God. There has been no depth of understanding of God among the majority of mankind. Even our brightest, most educated people do not know God's plan and purpose for man. They don't know the nature of God because they were totally cut off from more than a cursory acquaintance with God.

The purpose of this article is to explore some of the scriptures that show clearly and with certainty God is the Father and Jesus Christ is His Son, i.e. His first begotten and first born Son, the first of many born Sons or Children. I hope to show: a) the bible answers about the pagan philosophers who did not know God, b) the bible facts about the Nature of God, c) why Jesus had to be God in the flesh.

Let's begin where the apostle Paul began when he encountered the primary philosophers, theologians and academicians of his era.

PAUL PREACHES GOSPEL TO GENTILES

The apostle Paul had the unique responsibility of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the gentile world. The opposition and hostility that he experienced from the pagan idol worshippers was extreme. However, the opportunity to introduce the Messiah and Savior of all mankind to people who had never had any knowledge of the True and Living God and His Son, Jesus Christ would make the experience of facing such hostility of no great significance. He encountered many who wanted to kill him, but, he continued to tell about Jesus, the Son of God, and salvation through His supreme sacrifice and resurrection.

In most places where Paul preached there were a few people whom God had selected and drawn to His dear Son. Athens was different. This is where most of the Greek scholars and philosophers taught their philosophy and mythology, etc. Paul was deeply moved by their ignorance of the True and only God.

Acts 17:16, "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.

18 And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities," -- because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?"

20 "For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean."

21 (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.)

22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you."

28 "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, "for we also are His children.'

29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,

31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." NASV

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MAN

Paul knew God's original purpose for man and he knew that purpose had never changed. Gen 1:26, "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." NASV

GOD'S CHILDREN AFTER HIS KIND

We find here that man has been created in God's image, however, that creation is not completed. It was only begun in Eden. The Saints will rise in God's Likeness at the resurrection of the Saints when we will finally be "born from above" to be just like our Heavenly Father. We will be born Children of God. This is the theme of the entire bible. God is creating His very own children who will become "just like Him." I know this seems impossible, but this is what the bible proclaims from Genesis through Revelation.

Notice: 1 John 3:1-2, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." NASV

Consider for just a moment what that time will be like for God, our Father. Thousands, even millions of Sons will be born, not only in His image, but, "in His Likeness", or "after His Kind."

Those of you who have children have experienced just an inkling of what it will be like for God. I say this because there will be no concern about world conditions, how the children will turn out, whether they will become sick and die, etc. God's Children will have His Character and Nature which will include eternal life. It is "mind-boggling", but, this is what God's Word proclaims.

Try to recall what it was like when your child was born. No other experience is quite like that. My wife and I have four children and each one is so very special and unique, yet there is a common thread that runs through our family. This is the way God's Family will be. Each will be unique in his place within the family, yet part of the common thread that runs through God's overall Family.

CREATION SHOWS GOD'S NATURE

Notice: Rom 1:18-20, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and Divine Nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." NASV

Did you see that? God's Nature is exemplified and clearly shown by creation. How does creation work? It works through procreation. Each species within nature creates "after its own kind." Procreation in nature shows that is what God is doing with man. God is reproducing Himself through man. Gen 1:26.

JESUS WAS FIRSTBORN OF MANY BROTHERS

Jesus the Christ is the Son of God. As such, He is a member of the Family of God. The bible also says that "He is the firstborn of many brothers," i.e. who are also members of God's Family.

Rom 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." KJV

Col 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." KJV

One of the first things Jesus taught was that man is given the power through the Holy Spirit to become, in fact, Sons of God.

John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" KJV

This is not metaphor, this is fact. It has been God's plan and purpose for man all along and it still is His Divine purpose. Unfortunately, as it was true in Athens in the first century A.D., it is true today, This God, Jesus Christ, is still virtually unknown. Sure, many know He exists and know something about Him, but, they don't know Him as the first born Son of God who is preparing for many other brothers to be born into that very same Family, the Family of God. Do you know Him? Or, is He unknown to you?

JESUS, THE UNKNOWN GOD TO SOME

Some preachers and religious teachers, even within the Church of God, have decided to use the theological definitions of religious terminology to form their belief system. They have decided that God is just one person and that, therefore, Jesus, the Word (Logos), John 1:1, is not God, but, is a created being. They encourage their readers and followers to accept such terms as monotheism, polytheism, trinitarianism, binitarianism, pantheism, etc. etc. to determine what we should believe about the only True God of the Bible. For example, "if there is a Father and a Son who are members of the Family of God, that would be polytheism." So, the logic is "Jesus can't be God"; "therefore God is not creating His Family by reproducing Himself." Is this wise? Can one actually determine the nature of God by using the definitions of words that express the ideas of theologians who don't even accept the bible as the text book for what they believe? To them the bible is just another "reference book" that describes a God who calls Himself by numerous names. But theology, per se, does not accept the authority of the bible, the Holy Spirit, which agrees with the bible, salvation by faith or any number of absolute biblical doctrines. Theology as an academic study is merely the study of gods.

THEME OF THE BIBLE

If one accepts the theological definition of God they must necessarily reject many plain biblical facts about God. The very premise and theme of the entire bible is shown in Gen 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The entire bible and work that God is doing on this earth revolves around this one fact that God is creating man after His, God's, own kind. How do I know this?

Rom 1:18-20, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" KJV

Do you really see what Paul is stating here? He is stating that creation, by procreation, is showing that God's nature is that of procreation. In other words, God is procreating Himself and Gen 1:26 shows that He is doing this by creating Himself in man. Would you rather believe what the bible says about God or listen to what men who consider the God of the bible just one of many gods? I trust that your preference will be to accept the clear teachings of the bible without regard as to what others say about God.

GOD IS A FAMILY

The primary God of the bible is the one who created all that is created including man. He is also the one who communicates with man and the one that connects man with the Father who is above Him in authority. The very introduction of this God in Genesis 1:1, shows Him as Elohim. This is a word that implies a plurality, much like the word, team, unit, company or family. It does not matter if theologians and pseudo-Christians, as well as pseudo-intellectuals say "this is polytheism". What matters is what the bible says. If we don't accept the bible as God's official text book then we might just as well throw out the God of the bible which is God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son, and forget that He is "full of Grace and Truth." Then we become as pagans always have, i.e. worshippers of false gods whether they be singular or plural.

There are many scriptures in the bible that proclaim Christ as God. However, since this is a cooperative effort and the theme of this issue of TCB is to proclaim this awesome truth, I will just refer you to a few of them in this article. I encourage you to carefully read and study all of the articles in this issue.

Notice: Hebrews 1:

Heb 1:1, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,"

All was not revealed to each prophet: one received one portion of revelation, another, a different portion. Each only knew in part; but Messiah combined and realized all (1 Cor 13:12). Why? Because, He is God!

The Old Testament revelations were fragmentary in substance and manifold in form. The very multitude of prophets shows they prophesied only in part. In Christ the revelation of God is not in separated colors: He, the pure light, unites in His one person the whole spectrum (Heb 1:3). Why? Because, He is God!

The Son is the last and highest manifestation of God (Matt 21:34, 37): not merely a measure, as in the prophets, but the fullness of the Spirit of God dwelt in Him bodily (John 1:16; 3:34; Col 2:9). If the Jews boast of their prophets, Jesus is the object and fulfillment of all prophecy (Rev 19:10), and of the law (John 1:17; 5:46). Why? Because, He is God!

V2So, the Father "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, (Greek, 'IN (His) Son'), whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" By his Son, (John 14:10): the true 'prophet' of God.
'His majesty is set forth:

1. Absolutely, by "Son," and by three glorious predicates, "Whom He hath appointed," "by whom also He made the worlds," "who ... sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Thus His course is described from the beginning of all things down to the goal (Heb 1:2-3).
2. Relatively, in comparison with the angels, Heb 1:4: the confirmation follows; the name "Son" is proved at Heb 1:5; the "heirship," Heb 1:6-9; the "making the worlds," Heb 1:10-12; the "sitting at the right hand" of God, Heb 1:13-14. His heirship follows His sonship, and preceded His making the worlds (Prov 8:22-23; Eph 3:11). As the first begotten, He is heir of the universe (Heb 1:6), which He made instrumentally, Heb 11:3, where "by the word of God" answers to "by whom" (the Son of God) here (John 1:3). Christ was "appointed" (in God's eternal counsel) to creation as an office; the universe so created was assigned to Him as a kingdom. He is "heir of all things" by right of creation, and especially by redemption. The promise to Abraham, that he should be heir of the world, had its fulfillment, and will have it more fully, in Christ (Rom 4:13; Gal 3:16; 4:7). (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

He not only appointed His Son heir of all things before creation, but He also made by Him the worlds. Why? Because, He is God.

V3, "Who being (= by pre-existent and essential being) the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person ('of His substantial essence.'), and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

"Brightness of his glory", = the effulgence of His glory. 'Light of (from) light'. 'The sun is never seen without effulgence, nor the Father without the Son' (Theophylact). It is because He is the brightness, etc., and because He upholds, etc., that He sat down on the right hand, etc. It was a return to His divine glory (John 6:62; 17:5: cf. 'Wisdom,' vii. 25, 26). (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

The Son of God is a Person; for He has the word (Bengel). His word is God's word. The word" is the utterance which comes from His (the Son's) power, and gives expression to it (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

V5, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? Father and Son are familial terms. God's Son is on the same life plane as the Father. V6 and again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him.

Did you catch that? “And let all the angels of God worship him.” The Bible plainly tells us that only God may be worshipped.

Matt 4:10, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” .KJV

EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

There are many other scriptures that prove conclusively that Jesus is God and we should worship Him. But for this time I want to cover just one more point, i.e. the meaning of Emmanuel.

Isa 7:14, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. KJV

The name Emmanuel is another proof that Jesus is God. Matthew gives the definition of the name when he quotes the above verse.

Matt 1:23, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” . KJV

God with us is another way of stating the obvious.

John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. V2 the same was in the beginning with God.”

V14, “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.” KJV

Isa 9:6-7, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. V7, of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” KJV

1 Tim 3:16-4:1

16And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. KJV

Let us cast aside the false teachings of academic theology and let us believe what the bible teaches about this God who is the Creator, Savior, Lord, Priest, etc. of man, Jesus, the Christ. Let us come to really know the “Author of our salvation.” Let us praise and worship Him, Why? Because, He is GOD!