

God Is Immaterial

October 7, 2012 ~ “Christian Materialism #1” ~ Heb 11.1-6

Introductory Story

- ❖ III: Professor challenges God to knock him down ~ 1st day of philosophy class
 - ✧ After several minutes professor falls from platform ~ former Seal did it
 - ✧ “God’s busy ... in Iraq ~ He sent me to answer your request”
 - ◆ I enjoyed this joke probably more than I should have
 - Read Prov 24.17-18 ~ “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls. . .”
- ❖ God understands & commends our desire for justice ~ but insists on forbearance
 - ✧ Read Prov 25.21-22 ~ “If your enemy is . . . you will heap coals. . .”
 - ◆ This enemy is one who hates God and seeks your harm (*lies, cheats, steals*)
- ❖ I want to highlight two truths about this story . . .
 1. Note that the sailor in this story proves what the professor seeks
 - ◆ Heb 11.1b ~ “. . . faith is . . . the evidence of things not seen.”
 - The faith of this sailor is evidence of the unseen
 - Imagine story as true ~ What did this former Seal risk by this act?
 - 1) bad grade ~ 2) expulsion ~ 3) charges for assault
 2. God also says the professor has all the proof he needs
 - ◆ Read Rom 1.18-21a ~ “... what may be known of God .. God has shown to them”

The Title of This Message is “God is Immaterial”

- ❖ I chose the word immaterial for both of its definitions
 1. “of no real importance; inconsequential”
 2. “not formed of matter; spiritual; incorporeal” ~ “lacking material form or substance”
 - The story illustrates both of these points . . .
- ❖ Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well “God is Spirit” (John 4.24)
 - ✧ “What does this mean?” ~ He’s invisible to us ~ as is all the spiritual realm
 - ◆ But I should say “ordinarily” invisible to us ~ there are exceptions . . .
- ❖ The 4th question of WSC is “What is God?”
 - ✧ “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth”
 - ◆ There are 38 unique Bible references given to support this statement . . .

Xition: The Greatness of God . . .

The Greatness of God

- ❖ God can only convey His greatness to us via our world ~ our reality & senses
 - ✧ This is referred to as condescension ~ God condescends to us
- ❖ The Attributes of God are how we historically have defined His “otherness”
 - ✧ Attributes are said to be communicable or incommunicable
 - ✧ Three of God’s “so-called” incommunicable attributes are these
 - ◆ Omni-science
 - ◆ Omni-presence
 - ◆ Omni-potence
- ❖ Let’s review all 3 in the context of **Psalm 139**

The Omniscience of God ~ Ps 139.1-6

- ❖ God knows everything / past ~ present ~ future
 - ✧ v2 ~ “You understand my thoughts afar off” ~ thoughts
 - ✧ v4 ~ “You know the words on my tongue” ~ words / intents
 - ✧ v5 ~ “You have laid Your hand upon me” ~ actions
 - ✧ Acts 15.18 ~ “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.”

The Omnipresence of God ~ Ps 139.7-12

- ❖ God is everywhere and sees everything
 - ✧ v8 ~ “God is in Heaven and Hell”
 - ✧ v9 ~ “God is beyond the sea”
 - ✧ v12 ~ “Darkness does not hinder God’s vision”

The Omnipotence of God ~ Ps 139.13-16

- ❖ God has unlimited power ~ He can do anything (*consistent with His holy character*)
 - ✧ v13 ~ “God formed our bodies” ~ body
 - ✧ v15 ~ “We were formed in a secret place” ~ spirit
 - ✧ v16 ~ “God predestined our futures before we were born” ~ plans
 - ✧ Read Dan 4.34-36 c/Nebuchadnezzar’s praise of God

Xition: Today’s message is the 1st in a theme . . .

1st in a Theme ~ “**Christian Materialism**” or “**Addressing Matter in a Godly Manner**”

- ✧ I recently watched a Rocky & Bullwinkle show so I have multiple titles
- ❖ This series will be about living in this material world
- ❖ It may seem odd to start a message on materialism with immaterialism
 - ✧ But our material world was created by our Immaterial God (Jesus)
 - ✧ And our material world is sustained by our Immaterial God (Jesus)
 - ◇ **Read John 1.1-3** ~ “*In the beginning was the Word . . . that was made.*”
 - ◇ **Read Col 1.15-16** ~ “*He is the image . . . through Him and for Him.*”
- ❖ God created matter ~ His Word is filled with instructions concerning it
 - ✧ Matter is not a temporary phase of our existence ~ it is our existence
 - ✧ We were created material beings ~ We will forever be material beings

ACT: Unbelievers Deify the Material World

- ❖ Enemies of God elevate the material world beyond what is right & proper
 - ✧ Today even irreligious secular men worship the earth via their actions
 - ◇ They so long for meaning in their empty lives they seize upon causes
 - ✧ Radical Environmentalism has all the hallmarks of a religion
 - ◇ Priests in the form of scientists who zealously champion the cause
 - ◇ A sacred canon of scientific studies jealously protected against corruption
 - ◇ Sacraments instituted by the priests for the laity to fulfill such as:
 - conserving, reducing emissions, minimizing carbon footprints, recycling
 - ◇ EPA is High Priest meting out death to rebellious citizens and businesses
 - ◇ Unbelievers that question them are criticized, ostracized & destroyed

REACT: Believers Denigrate Material World

- ❖ Christians can react to this by denigrating the material world
- ❖ God declared creation good 7 times in **Gen 1** ~ (*last time very good*)
 - ✧ light, seas, trees, sun, moon & stars, fish & birds, animals, man
- ❖ God’s children were made stewards of God’s creation
 - ✧ And we still are . . .
 - ✧ **Read Gen 1.28** ~ “*Be fruitful and multiply . . .*”

Xition: Let’s Discuss Seeing Our Immaterial God

Do We Really See God?

- ❖ “Do we see God or do we not?” ~ “Have we seen God or have we not?”
- ❖ John wrote in **John 1.18** and **1 John 4.12** “No one has seen God at any time.”
- ❖ Yet he wrote in **3 John 1.11** “He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.”
 - ✧ Here “seeing God” appears to be a required element of faith
 - ✧ We believers please God because we see God
- ❖ I believe we see deeper into this “seeing” in **Rom 1.20** (*read earlier*)
 - ✧ “since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen.”
 - ◆ Note that His attributes are not just understood ~ but seen . . .

A Brief History of Seeing God

- ❖ Once upon a time man did see God / he walked with God . . .
 - ✧ **Gen 4.3-4** ~ God was with man in the Garden ~ even after the Fall
 - ✧ **Gen 4.9** ~ God talked personally with Cain after the murder of Abel
 - ✧ **Gen 4.26** ~ Men began to call on the name of the Lord
 - ◆ God appears to have stopped walking freely with mankind
 - ✧ **Gen 5.24** ~ God walked with Enoch and took him to be with Him Heaven
- ❖ After this time men don't normally see God (*or see into the Spiritual realm*)
 - ✧ **2 Kings 2** ~ But Elisha saw Elijah taken up into heaven by a chariot of fire
 - ✧ **2 Kings 6** ~ Elisha opened his servant's eyes to see the fiery chariots and horses
 - ✧ **Dan 3** ~ King Nebuchadnezzar saw the 4th man in the fire with S, M & A
 - ✧ **Dan 5** ~ King Belshazzar saw the hand writing on the wall in his palace
 - ✧ Transfiguration of Christ ~ Voice of God coming from Heaven
 - ✧ Many others ~ just listing some examples . . .
- ❖ But with Jesus ~ All of this has wonderfully changed . . .

John 1.1-2 ~ “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. . .”

Xition: Jesus was Immanuel Of Isaiah 7 ~ “God With Us”

Jesus became the God-man

- ❖ “**God is 3 Persons in 1**” ~ Paul uses the term Godhead in **Rom 1.20 & Col 2.9**
 - ✧ Each Person of the Trinity is called God in Scripture
 - ✧ The Trinity is a mystery to us ~ We use words to explain ~ not understand
 - ✧ Jesus was wholly Spirit then became flesh in His incarnation
 - ◆ His divine and human natures remain separate and distinct
 - ◆ Jl Packer says in “*Knowing God*” that in Jesus we have 2 mysteries in 1 . . .
- ❖ Man was created as flesh and then given the spirit of life
 - ✧ **Gen 2.7** ~ “**And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.**”
- ❖ Jesus was incarnate, is now incarnate and will remain incarnate forever
 - ✧ Paul wrote in **Phil 3.20-21a** “. . . our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body. . .”

Next week we'll go into greater detail on Man ~ on our unique role in creation

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be Glory and Majesty,
Dominion and Power,
Both now and forever.
Amen.