

The Doctrines of Grace

Doctrine 1-The Absolute Sovereignty of God

Part A/Lesson One of Eight

Part A- The Character and Nature Of God

God is Spirit

John 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The God of the Bible is not material or physical. And the implications of this Truth are that:

- ✓ God is not confined by any natural or physical limitations
- ✓ God is not visible and cannot be understood through man- made images

One of the best ways to grasp this Truth is to understand that anything that is physical or visible has limitations, but because God is not physical or visible- He has no such limitations.

Another part of this mystery is that when God chose to insert Himself into the human world and "put on flesh"- it was in Jesus- God the Son- Who was limited in His humanity.

Anthropomorphic References

Periodically in the Bible you will see various references to God's "Eyes" (**Genesis 6:8**) or "Hand" (**Ezekiel 3:22**), and Biblical writers referred to God's "Wings" (**Psalms 17:8**) and "Feathers" (**Psalms 91:4**). What do these references mean? These various references about God are what Theologians call "anthropomorphic," or in other words- they are used only to help our finite human minds comprehend the great incomprehensible God. And they usually convey certain Qualities or Attributes about God that bring a better understanding to us about Who God is and what God will or will not do.

But since God is a Spirit and not physical- none of these references are to be taken literally. God does not have "Eyes" and he certainly doesn't have "Wings".

Visible Appearances of God

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.

The Bible repeatedly teaches that human beings cannot see God. Yet there are references that seem to suggest that some men have indeed seen God. What are we to make of this? Is this a contradiction in the Bible? No. These “visible manifestations of God are best understood as “visions” and *not* as literal and physical appearances.

Ezekiel 1:1

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

God is Creator

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.

The Scriptures declare that everything that exists was made by God. That means that before God made all things- nothing existed except God. The Scriptures teach that all of Creation was *immediately* and *instantaneously* created by a series of Divine miracles by the Creator God. God created *everything* out of *nothing* (**ex nihilo**; Latin “out of nothing”) by a Sovereign and supernatural expression of His Own Will- including everything that is seen, and that which is invisible, and those things that are in Heaven, on the Earth, and those things that are *under* the Earth (hell/demons).

Philippians 2:10

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

We must understand that Creation is not a scientific issue- it is a Theological issue. There is only one Record that we have that tells us how everything came into being and it is not a scientific journal- it is the Holy Bible. And the Bible goes into great detail about how God created all things. We also must remember that Creation has absolutely nothing to do with how things operate now- since they have been created. The one has nothing to do with the other. To analyze how the Universe operates today is good and correct and profitable for us to do. But that operation of all created things has absolutely nothing to do with the series of instantaneous miracles that God performed that brought all things into being.

So it is incorrect to suggest that we do not know how all things came into being- we do. The problem is that an ever increasing amount of people refuse to accept the only Record that describes this event, and they are then left to replace that single Record with amazingly foolish ideas.

We also must understand that it is utterly impossible to accept the Biblical Record of Creation and at the same time accept the tenets of Darwinian Evolution- it just cannot be done in any honest way. One concept must give to the other. Either God instantly made everything out of nothing in six- 24 hour periods, or He didn't. And whether you believe that or not is one issue- but the inescapable fact is that the Biblical Record manifestly says that He did. So either the Bible is true or it is not. And if the Bible Record about Creation is not trustworthy- then we certainly cannot trust what it says about Salvation or anything else. So nothing less than the Inspiration and Sufficiency of Scripture is at stake about this issue.

This Study assumes that the Biblical Record about Creation and Salvation and everything else is true and fully **Inspired** (Gr; theopneustos; God breathed), and therefore is **Inerrant** (*does not* contain any error), **Infallible** (*cannot* contain any error), **Authoritative** (able to convict the heart; bind the conscience, and is the final Rule for Faith and Life), **Relevant** (applicable for our day) and **Eternal** (absolute).

By definition, God existed in His complete and perfect Fullness *prior* to Creation- as nothing can be made by Someone Who does not already exist. And as Creator- God is *entitled* to do with His Creation that which will please Himself.

John 1:3

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1Corinthians 8:6

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Colossians 1:16&17

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Ephesians 1:11

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

As Creator- God is *entitled* to adoration and worship and obedience to Himself by that which He created. Also, by definition, God is *superior* to His Creation in all aspects.

Isaiah 45:5-7

5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though

thou hast not known me:

6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.

7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil (calamity): I the LORD do all these things.

Hebrews 11:3

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

God is Owner

Psalms 95:3-5

3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

Not only did God create everything that is made- He is also the sole Owner of everything that was created.

Man, in his role as *part* of God's Creation, is therefore *not* the owner of *anything*- but God has given Man the authority to be a *Steward* over *portions* of God's Creation- and Man has been commanded to *oversee* those things in accordance with God's Own written Instructions. Man is therefore completely accountable to God for how he manages that which God has entrusted into his stewardship and will be judged accordingly.

2Corinthians 5:9-12

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

So in order to properly understand the God of the Bible and ourselves as His slaves- we need to see God as being the Owner of everything- and we need to see ourselves as being part of what is owned. Therefore we must understand that the demands and the restrictions and the blessings and privileges that God expects from us and has granted to us are nothing more than the rightful and proper *prerogatives* of the Owner.

The great battle exists over this sense of Ownership because our fallen nature seeks to push God from His position of Ownership and replace Him with ourselves. That is not a noble exercise- it is Celestial High Treason; it is the height of pride and arrogance- which is what sin is all about. Seeing God as the rightful Owner of everything- including ourselves- and allowing that Revelation to humble us- brings forth the freedom that we need to worship God in a manner in which He is entitled to be worshipped.

If God is Owner- Then We Are Stewards

Since God is the Creator of all things- by default- that means that God is also the rightful Owner of everything that is made- and that also means that Man is *not* the Owner. So if Man is not the owner- what is he? A Steward.

Steward- noun- *a person who manages another's property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another or others.*¹

And we could add that Man is also bound to manage God's Creation according to God's Own very specific written instructions- the Holy Bible. Perhaps a good (but certainly not complete) look at just what a good steward looks like (versus a bad steward) we should turn to the Words of Jesus Himself:

Matthew 25:14-30

14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

¹ Dictionary.com

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

Recap of Lesson One

1. Read **Genesis 1-3** and **Job 38**
2. With whom did God consult and with whom did God cooperate in Creation?

3. What was created on the 1st Day? _____

4. How does that relate to what was created on the 4th Day (**Genesis 1:4-19**)? _____

5. How is the word, "Day" defined in **Genesis 1:5**? _____
6. What was created on the 2nd Day? _____
7. What was created on the 3rd Day? _____
8. What was created on the 5th Day? _____
9. To whom was God speaking in **Genesis 1:26**? _____
10. What does that fact along with the information in **Genesis 1:2** and **John 1:1-4,14** tell you about God? _____
11. From what was Man made? _____
12. How did Man receive Life? _____
13. Is **Genesis** Chapter 2 an entirely other event from **Genesis 1** or is it a more detailed account of **Genesis 2**? _____
14. What is the significance of what God says to Adam in **Genesis 2:18**? _____

15. What does the phrase, "**help meet for him**" (KJV) "**helper fit for him**" (ESV) in **Genesis 2:18** mean? _____
16. From what did God make Woman? _____
17. What is the significance of God making the Woman at a different time and from different material than He made the Man? _____

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18. Who made the serpent (**Genesis 3:1**)? _____
19. What was the *real* issue between Eve and the serpent (**Genesis 3:1**)? _____
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20. What is the difference between what the serpent said in **Genesis 3:1** and **Genesis 3:4**? _____
21. What happened that the woman saw that the forbidden fruit was “**good for food; pleasant to the eyes and desired to make one wise**” in **Genesis 3:6** when she was afraid to even touch it in **Genesis 3:3**? What changed? _____
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22. What does the term, “**gave also unto her husband with her**” (**Genesis 3:6**) mean? _____
23. What was the result of Adam and Eve eating of the forbidden fruit? _____
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24. Who ate the fruit first? _____
25. Correlate that with **1Corinthians 15:22** _____
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26. If God is absolutely Sovereign- *why* did He allow this to happen? If this event was evil and sinful and destructive to the entire human race- and if God hates evil- why did God allow this to happen or was God not able to stop it? What possible “Good” could come from such a terrible event? _____
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27. Now apply your answer to the above question with what you understand about how God’s Sovereignty relates to evil at work in the earth in our day. _____
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28. **Genesis 3:7** says, “**And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked...**” what was the first thing that Adam and Eve did as a result of having their eyes open? _____
29. What is the significance of that? _____
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30. **Genesis 3:8** says, “**And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...**” What was their response to that? _____

31. What reason did Adam give as to why they did that in **Genesis 3:10**? _____

32. What is the significance of that? _____
33. Who did God call out to in **Genesis 3:9**? _____
34. What is the significance of that? _____
35. What was Adam’s response in **Genesis 3:12** to God’s Question in **Genesis 3:11**?

36. What is the significance of that? _____
37. What did the Woman say to God in **Genesis 3:13** as to why she ate the fruit? _____

38. What is the significance of that? _____

39. What is the significance of why God asked Adam and Eve why they ate but He did not ask the serpent why he beguiled Eve? _____

40. What was the Divine Curse on the serpent (**Genesis 3:14&15**)? _____

41. What does the phrase, “**I will put enmity between thee and the woman...**” (**Genesis 3:15a**) mean in terms of God’s Sovereignty? _____

42. What is the significance of the phrase, “**...and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**” (**Genesis 3:15b**)? in terms of God’s Sovereignty? _____

43. What was the Divine Curse on the Woman (**Genesis 3:16**)? _____

44. Explain the phrase, “... **thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.**” (**Genesis 3:16**) in light of **Genesis 4:7**. _____

45. What was the Divine Curse on Adam (**Genesis 3:17-19**)? _____

46. What two things were the *cause* of that Curse (**Genesis 3:17a**)?

1. _____

2. _____

47. What is the significance of what God did in **Genesis 3:21** in light of what Adam and Even did in **Genesis 3:7** and view of God’s Sovereignty? _____

48. To whom was God speaking in **Genesis 3:22**? _____

49. What was the reason given as to why God removed Adam and Eve from the Garden (**Genesis 3:22**)? _____

50. What is the significance of the word “**drove**” (Hebrew; *garas*; *Strongs 1644*) in **Genesis 3:23** in light of God’s Sovereignty and the concept of “Human Free Will”?

51. According to **Hebrews 11:3** how does God’s Word apply to Creation? _____

52. According to John MacArthur what is really at stake over the issue of Darwinian Evolution? _____

53. What does it mean for God to be Owner and us to be Stewards? _____

54. The word that was translated into English as “**servants**” in **Matthew 25** is actually the Greek word, *doulos*, which means: *slave*. Explain the difference between a slave and a servant. _____

55. Describe the events of **Matthew 25** between God and His slaves in light of God's Sovereignty and the concept of "Human Free Will" _____

56. Describe the events of **Matthew 25** between God and His slaves in light of God's Sovereignty and the concept of "Human Free *Responsibility*" _____

57. To what are God's slaves held accountable? _____