



God, Man & Salvation

Erhard H Hermann

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God

While the whole Bible reveals the person and character of God, we would like to look at the basic essence here without doing a "Systematic Theology" type of article that is hundreds of pages long. The character and attributes of God are seen throughout the Bible and serve to illumine the text references given. We also need to remember Jesus' words:

" 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

Based on this, we need to first understand who God is and what it means to love Him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:2-3)

Without knowing God's commandments and keeping them, we cannot love God and others. God has revealed Himself as the Triune God, meaning that there is only one God that exists in three persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

- God created everything that has been created. Gen 1:1-2:3, Act 17:24-28, Neh 9:6, Ex 20:11, Isa 45:18, Jer 32:17.
- God is all powerful, there is no one like Him. Isa 46:9, Jer 32:17, Job 42:2, Isa 48:12, Ro 11:36, Rev 1:8, 22:13.
- God is all knowing. Ro 11:33-34, 1 Jn 3:20, Heb 4:12-13.
- God is present everywhere. Jer 23:23-24, Ps 139:1-12.
- God does not change. Jas 1:17, Mal 3:6, Ps 102:25-27.
- God is just and righteous. Deu 32:4, Isa 45:21-22, Ps 89:14, Deu 10:17-18.
- God is Holy (separate, pure). 1 Sa 2:2, Rev 4:8.
- God is Love. 1 Jn 4:8-10, 1 Co 13:11, Jn 3:16, Rom 5:8, Gal 2:20, 1 Jn 4:16.
- God is Merciful. Tit 3:4-7, 1 Pe 1:3, Eph 1:6-7, Mic 7:18, Ps 86:15.
- God is eternal. He is the Alpha and Omega (beginning and end) Rev 1:8, 21:6, 22:13.
- God is everlasting. Gen 21:33.

God is Triune

Here is a concept that may be somewhat difficult for us to understand, but one that is clearly taught in Scripture.

- The first thing that is established is that there is only one God. Deu 6:4, Deu 4:35-36, Isa 44:6, Mar 12:29-32, 1 Co 8:4-6.
- The second is that there is God the Father. Jn 1:18, 6:27, 6:46, 20:17, Rom 1:17, 15:6, 1 Co 8:6, 2 Co 11:31, Php 2:11, Col 3:17, Tit 1:4, 1 Pe 1:2.

- The third that is established is that Jesus is also God. (Jn 1:1-3, 10, 14, 17:5, 10:30-33, 20:28, Rom 9:5, Col 1:17, Php 2:6, Tit 2:13-14, Rev 1:17-18). Jesus is fully God and fully man. Luke traces his genealogy right back to Adam. John 1:14 states that the “Word became flesh”. 2 Jn 1:7 states that those who do not acknowledge Jesus coming in the flesh are deceivers. 1 Jn 4:2.
- Finally, God the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. (Mat 28:19, 1 Co 12:3-4, Php 3:3, 1 Co 3:16, Heb 9:14, Act 5:3-4, Ps 51:11, Gen 1:2, 2 Pe 1:20-21). Just as Jesus is the Word, the Holy Spirit is the Author of the Scriptures. (2 Pe 1:21). The Holy Spirit is the “Helper” (Jn 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7) that is sent from God the Father and God the Son to teach, help and indwell the believers.

Scriptures

- Scripture is from God through the Holy Spirit.
But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.* (2 Peter 1:20-21), 2 Ti 3:15-16.
- Scripture is authoritative. Jesus and the New Testament writers viewed the Scriptures as true and authoritative. Jn 10:35, 2 Ti 3:16, Heb 4:12, Mat. 21:42; 22:29; 26:54,56; Mark 12:10,24; 14:49; 15:28; Luke 4:21; 24:27,32,45; John 2:22; 5:39; 7:38,42; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24,28,36,37; 20:9; Acts 1:16; 8:32,35; 17:2,11; 18:24,28; Rom. 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1Co. 15:3,4; Gal. 3:8,22; 4:30; 1Ti. 4:13; 5:18; Jas. 2:8,23; 4:5; 1Pe. 2:6; 2Pe. 1:20; 3:16; Act 1:16-20, Act 2:16-35, Act 3:22-25, Act 4:11, Act 4:24-26, Acts 7:1-53, Act 8:27-35, Act 13:15-41, Act 15:14-18, Act 17:2-3, Act 18:24-28, Ro 1:2, Ro 5:14, Ro 10:11-21, Ro 11:2-10, Ro 11:26-27, Ro 12:19-20, Ro 13:8-10, Ro 14:11, 1 Co 1:19, 1 Co 2:9, 1 Co 9:9, 1 Co 14:21, 2 Co 9:9, 2 Co 11:3, Gal 3:8, Gal 5:14, Eph 5:31
- Peter already considered Paul’s writings Scripture. 2 Pe 3:16

Some Implications

- Since God created everything there is, He is the only one that can make laws or judge. As God is holy and just, He will not allow sin (disobedience) to go unpunished.
- There is no way for us to atone or make payment for our sin.
- In his mercy and love, God allowed his son Jesus to be the sacrificial lamb for all of man’s sin (past, present and future) by dying on the cross.
- In order to love and obey God, we must study and obey His Word.

Man

- Man was made in the image of God, whereas all the other creatures were not. Gen 1:26-27, 5:1, 9:6, Jam 3:9, 1 Co 15:39, Gen 2:7.
- Man is of the earth, a physical being. He was made from dust. Gen 2:7.

- Man is a spiritual being. Gen 2:7, Ecc 12:7, Act 7:59, Jas 2:26, Luk 20:36, Heb 9:27, Ro 2:7, 1 Co 15:50-53.
- Man was given dominion over creation. Gen 1:26-28.
- We can see that God gave man a free will as he was able to choose whether or not he would obey God's command. If there were no free will, then there would be place for judgement and punishment. Gen 3:1-7, Ro 9:21-23.
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God and as a result, were condemned. Gen 3:1-24.
- This transgression led to what is called "original sin" and its effect on all mankind. Ro 5:12-19, 3:23. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- In light of all this, all mankind deserves God's judgment and no one is able to pay the penalty.
- "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44)
- God does not want anyone to perish. 2 Pe 3:9, Mat 18:14

Salvation

The definition of salvation according to Thayer's Greek Definitions is

1. deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation
 - a. deliverance from the molestation of enemies
 - b. in an ethical sense, that which concludes to the souls safety or salvation
1. of messianic salvation
2. salvation as the present possession of all true Christians
3. future salvation, the sum of benefits and blessings which the Christians, redeemed from all earthly ills, will enjoy after the visible return of Christ from heaven in the consummated and eternal kingdom of God.

We can see that there is a range of meanings to the word ranging from deliverance of some temporal issue to the deliverance from God's judgement which then provides eternal life. This discussion will focus on salvation leading to eternal life.

Peter in his sermon in Acts says:

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

It is quite clear here that salvation refers to eternal salvation from judgement. Act 16:17, Ro 1:16, 10:10, 2 Ti 2:10, 3:15, Heb 1:14, 5:9, 1 Pe 1:8-10.

Salvation is by faith not works. (Ro 3:28, Ro 5:2, Ro 9:32, Gal 2:16, 3:11, Eph 2:8). True faith results in works that are pleasing to God. Jas 2:14-24, Jn 15:2.

Jesus sums up the salvation message:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:16-18).

The Apostle Paul explains:

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. (Romans 5:8-9).

Jesus gives us the assurance that no one is able to take away our eternal life:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. (John 10:27-29).

Paul affirms this in Romans:

What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39).

Conclusion

There is only one God that is all-powerful, all-knowing, present everywhere and that is eternal. He made man in His image and gave him dominion over his physical creation. God gave man a free will and commands for him to obey. Man disobeyed and was put under judgement. There is no way that man can work to pay the penalty for his disobedience. God provided the sacrifice to pay for man's sin in the form of His own son, Jesus. Now, man is free to accept this payment

for his disobedience or reject it. Acceptance of this gift results in eternal life, rejection results in eternal damnation.

All that is required to obtain eternal life is to acknowledge and repent of our evil ways and accept the payment by faith. In this we have the knowledge and assurance that we do have eternal life and that nothing can separate us from God.

Appendix

Spiritual Beings

Spiritual beings are mentioned throughout the Scriptures. They are created beings Col 1:16 as they were created through and for Christ. It is most likely that they were created at the beginning of day one of creation since God specifically says that He finished the work of creation by the 7th day. (Gen 2:2, Ex 20:11, Job 38:4-7). Here we will briefly look at them.

Cherubim

We first meet them in Genesis when man was driven out of the garden of Eden to guard the garden. (Gen 3:24). The next mention of them relates to figures of Cherubim being made for the tabernacle – both to be facing each other on the mercy seat and on the material that the tabernacle was made of. (Exo 26:1, 26:31, 36:8 etc.). Later, Solomon made images and carvings of them as he built the temple. (1 Ki 6:23, 27, 29, 32). Ezekiel sees them in his visions. (Eze 10:1-11:22). From these verses, we can determine that they were powerful spiritual beings.

Seraphim

Isaiah describes another type of spiritual being called Seraphim. (Isa 6:1-7). They had six wings each and stood above God. Considering that they stood above the God, they must also be quite powerful spiritual beings.

Angels

Angels appear throughout the Scriptures. We meet them in the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen 18:1-19:22). The writer of Hebrews says that: [Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?](#) (Hebrews 1:14). They take on physical bodies at times as they appear to people. (for example, the angels that saved Lot and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah). (Also, Lk 1:26, Jn 20:12). It also appears that angels are assigned to people. (Mat 18:10). There are different ranks, for example, Michael is referred to as “one of the chief princes” (Dan 10:13, 10:21, 12:1, Jud 1:9), Gabriel says ["I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God"](#) (Luke 1:19)

Angel of the LORD

In the Old Testament we read several times of “The angel of the LORD”. The context in some of these indicates that this refers to Jesus prior to his coming to earth in the New Testament. For example. In the account of the burning bush, (Ex 3:2-7), it is quite obvious that the “Angel of the LORD is God. It starts with “The angel of the LORD calling Moses and then switches to saying that it is God talking to him and that the ground that he is standing on is “holy ground”.

We also meet Him in Joshua 5 and 6. Here He is called the “captain of the host of the LORD” (Jos 5:14). Joshua is then commanded to take off his sandals since he is standing on holy ground. In Jos 6:2 we see that “The LORD said to Joshua” indicating that it was the LORD that was called the “captain of the host of the LORD”. Compare this with Revelation 19:11-14 where Jesus leading the “armies that are in heaven”. Paul writes in 1 Co 10:4 that Jesus was the spiritual rock that was following them alluding to Ex 14:19. There are other instances where we see the “Angel of the LORD” referring to Jesus.

Living Creatures

In Revelation 4:6-9, 5:6-14, 6:1-6, 7:11, 14:3, 15:7, 19:4 we have mention of four living creatures. They must again be quite powerful beings and it appears a primary activity for them was worshipping God.

24 Elders

In Revelation 4:4, 4:10, 5:8, 11:16, 19:4 we read of the twenty-four elders with crowns that were on twenty-four thrones. These also seem to primarily worship God.

Satan

Satan is the chief of the evil spirits. Revelation 12:9, 20:2 refer to him as the “serpent of old”, “the devil” and “Satan”. This ties the deceiving serpent in Genesis 3:1-5 directly to “devil” and “Satan”. Ezekiel 28:12-15 appears to refer to Satan as well as the king of Tyre. He is called the “anointed cherub” who was in the garden of God in Eden and was blameless when first created. Satan would have rebelled between day seven of creation when everything was “very good” and when he deceived Eve in Genesis 3:1-5. The final end of Satan and his followers will be the lake of fire. Rev 20:10-15, 2 Pe 2:4, Jud 1:6,

Demons

Demons are angels that rebelled against God with Satan. They are also called unclean or evil spirits. Jesus cast out many of these that were working against and in people. These also appear to be organized into ranks to a certain degree, for example, Daniel 10:13, 10:20 refer to the prince of Persia opposing Gabriel. Also, Paul writes in Ephesians 6:11-12 about different spiritual forces.