

How Real Is God to Us? . . .

... and How Important Is This Reality to Bring Us Through Trials?

A Study Outline

- I. The importance of vision
 - A. A clear picture gives better understanding on any issue.
 - B. Without a vision of our destiny — which is to become God — we indeed will perish (Prov. 29:18).
- II. What is the reality of our Father and Jesus Christ?
 - A. They are spirit — unseen, in a different dimension (John 4:24; Luke 24:36-37) — but can manifest themselves as physical at will.
 - B. Christ's appearance is awesome (Rev. 1:13-15), as is the Father's (Dan. 7:9).
 - C. While the appearance of our Father and Christ are awesome, more awesome yet are their inner natures, their character.
 1. Yahweh Elohim is pictured as full of mercy, grace, patience, goodness, truth, and forgiveness, while opposing iniquity (Ex. 34:5-7). He loves us and cares for us deeply (I Peter 5:7).
 2. These qualities are identical with those given by Jesus Christ in Galatians 5:22-23 and elsewhere.
 3. Thus, He blesses those who obey Him and His laws, and curses those who abhor Him and his commandments (Lev. 26:1-4, 14-17).
- III. Examples of people who recognized God as real, understood Him, performed His will, and were delivered with His mighty hand.
 - A. **Joseph**
 1. Joseph was the favorite of his father Jacob, and dreamed in two instances of his parents and brothers bowing down to him; therefore his brothers hated him (Gen. 37:4, 8, 11).
 2. Because of this hatred, his brothers sold him to Ishmaelite traders who brought him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, captain of the Pharaoh's secret service (Gen. 39:1).
 3. As Joseph obeyed the Eternal and served Potiphar with dedication, he was given charge of the entire house (Gen. 39:2-4), and God even blessed all that was in the house and in Potiphar's fields as well (v. 5).
 4. Potiphar's wife sought to seduce him ... which was actually Satan's plot to compromise and destroy Joseph so that Israel would in turn remain in Palestine and be destroyed during the seven years of drought. Joseph resisted, but was falsely accused by the woman of attempted rape and sent to the king's prison (Gen. 39:7-20).
 5. Yet, even in prison God gave him favor, for he was a selfless servant wherever he went (Gen. 39:21-23).
 6. Eventually he was called to interpret the Pharaoh's dream, and was elevated to second in command in the entire country, allowing him to prepare for the terrible seven years of drought by storing away grain and foodstuffs during seven abundant years (Gen. 41:37-

45).

7. During the drought years Jacob's sons came to Egypt to buy food, and eventually Jacob himself came and all of the family to live there, preserving them all in the land of Goshen (Gen 42:1-11). Note verses 7 and 8:

"And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me here, but God, and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all of the land of Egypt."

8. Joseph knew God's character and the need to obey Him through all sorts of trials:
 - a. The scorn of his brothers
 - b. Being sold on a slave block
 - c. Refusing to participate in sexual immorality
 - d. Being falsely accused of the heinous crime of rape
 - e. Living in a prison for many long months
9. By knowing God's goodness through his own obedience, Joseph persevered through all adversity and was set on high within even a Gentile system, and ended up saving the entire nation of Israel by being God's instrument.

B. Job

1. Job was "... perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1), who had tremendous wealth. Yet, he lost nearly all of his physical wealth, with God's approval (Job 1:12-19).
2. Yet, he blessed his Creator in the process (Job 1:20-22).

"Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped, and said, 'Naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord'. In all this Job sinned not, or charged God foolishly."
3. Later, God allowed Satan to afflict Job's body so he was in utter misery (Job 2:7-9). Yet, Job told his wife,

"What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God and we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:10).
4. In the end the Eternal restored to Job double what he had before, and gave him seven sons and three daughters ... and he lived to be 140, seeing four generations of descendants (Job 42:10-17).
5. Throughout his trials Job never doubted the goodness of his Creator through his adversities, and was willing to die if necessary if that was God's plan for him. Physical riches were not essential for his life in God's plan, but even so he was blessed with riches.

C. Abraham

1. Abraham left the country where he grew up to travel to a place that he did not know, to ultimately inherit that land for his descendants (Heb. 11:8-9).
2. He knew that there was an inheritance in the New Jerusalem far better than the world on earth he was experiencing (Heb. 11:10).

IV. A person cannot know God unless he has the spirit of God.

- A. You cannot have God's spirit unless you are called by the Father (John 6:44), and you have been predestined to be given that spirit from "before the *foundation* of the world" (Eph. 1:4-5).

foundation (Strong 2602) = *kataboie*, “a deposition or founding; looking back to past eternity”; see also John 17:24 and I Peter 1:20.

- B. You are not the Father’s son unless you have His spirit (Rom. 8:7-15).
- C. God reveals His secrets to us through His spirit (I Cor. 2:9-12).
- D. Paul asked new converts if they had received the holy spirit, showing its crucial importance to believers (Acts 19:1-6).

V. A person cannot know God unless he experiences suffering.

- A. We are guaranteed suffering and pain when we are called.
- B. We must suffer with Christ since we are joint heirs with Him (Rom. 8:16-23).
- C. Christ suffered as an example for us to suffer likewise (I Peter 2:19-24).
- D. Pain automatically brings with it humility, a requirement if we are to live in the Father’s presence (Isa. 66:2).
- E. Compare this with the world’s (Satan’s) prescription for life: suppress pain with drugs (*pharmacaia*). See Rev. 18:23, which indicates the nations were deceived by *sorceries* (Strong 5331 = *pharmakeia*, “medication”. In sorcery the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the provision of various charms, amulets, etc., professedly designed to keep the patient from the attention and power of devils, but actually to impress the patient with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer.).

VI. What does truly “knowing God” mean to us today?

- A. It is the same for us as for all people of God throughout history: **every moment of our life is committed to Him because He lives in us through His spirit**. We walk after the spirit, not after the flesh! (Heb. 8:10-12; John 15:1-7).
 - 1. What we think ... where everything else we do comes from (II Cor. 10:3-5)
 - 2. What we say (Matt. 12:34)
 - 3. What we do ... to be servants of our Father through serving others (Matt. 7:12; 25:34-40)
 - 4. What we hear (Isa. 33:14-15)
 - 5. We practice true love for our brethren and fellow man, giving and not requiring anything in return (I Cor. 13:13; Luke 6:35-38)
- B. Practicing the way of the spirit within us expresses the true character of God (Gal. 5:22-25).

VII. In the end, having God as the real, powerful, omnipotent One living in us will bring us through every trial.

- A. We must be willing to sacrifice **everything** for His sake, moving forward as He leads, not knowing where He is leading us in this world ... like Israel followed the cloud in the wilderness. We are truly *sojourners* in this world (I Peter 1:17; Strong 3940 = *paroikia*, “having a foreign residence”).
- B. Knowing God does not mean we will not have trials like Job or Joseph, but we can be absolutely sure that whatever we receive from Him is for our good (Rom. 8:28; II Cor. 12:7-10; Heb. 12:6; Ps. 34:17-20). Remember that God will not allow us to go through a trial that is too rigorous for us to bear (I Cor. 10:13).
- C. Ultimately we will reap great blessings ...
 - 1. ... in this life in the flesh: life abundant (John 10:10).
 - 2. ... in the coming life in the spirit: life eternal.

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