

"There is No God But One"

1 Cor. 8:4-6

Celebrating the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly

Chapter 8 is a part of the larger section that runs from chapter 8 through chapter 10. The entire passage is dealing with issues of liberty. The larger outline for chapter 8 looks like this.

- I. The foundational truth in approaching areas of disagreement within the local body of Christ (vv. 1-3).
- II. The theological truth in approaching areas of disagreement within the local body of Christ (vv. 4-7a).
- III. The relational truth in approaching areas of disagreement within the local body of Christ (vv. 7b-13).

Our intent in this study is to see the majesty of God. I would like to suggest three reasons as to why this study on God is significant.

First, our knowledge of God's plan is founded on this doctrine. (Bosma, p. 44). One's view of God might even be thought of as supplying the whole framework within which one's theology is constructed and life is lived. (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 263).

Second, knowledge of God should deepen our relationship with Him, which in turn increases our desire to know more about Him. (Ryrie, Basic Theo., p. 26).

Third, "To the degree [that] we truly comprehend what God is like, we will respond to Him in worship." (Donald S. Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life [Colorado Springs, Col.: NavPress, 1991], p. 82.)

Instead of talking about food, Paul provides for his readers a statement on biblical monotheism. It is impossible for us to sound out the depth of what Paul is saying in these three short verses, but we would do well to stop and consider the ideas presented.

I would like our study this morning to ask and answer four basic questions as it relates to who God is.

- I. Who is God?

The Bible presents the concept of Deity as being **singular** (there is only one [Deut. 6:4; 1 Tim. 2:5] and **personal** (He cares for you [John 3:16]).

- II. What is God?

The Bible has much to say about what God is. There are several descriptive truths that help us to identify what God is.

Continued on the other side...

- A. God Is Spirit (John 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17)
- B. God Is Living (1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 4:10 [contrast this with Jer. 10:10, 11; John 5:26])
- C. God Is Intelligent (Isa. 46:10)
- D. God Is Purposeful (Isa. 14:26-27; Eph. 3:11; Judges 14:1-4)
- E. God Is Active (John 5:17; Phil. 2:13)

III. How does God reveal Himself?

If I were to ask you what God is like how would you go about describing Him? God reveals Himself in the expression of His attributes. Friend, there is none like our God. None. This is the God of whom Paul speaks. He wants us to see Him in all of His singular, unadulterated, majestic greatness. This is our God.

We are not adequately awed by God because we cannot process the information sufficiently.

But consider with me the Taj Mahal or The Great Wall of China. The Great Wall of China was constructed during the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644). Altogether, the wall winds for 1400 miles across northern China and has an average height of 23 ft. It is the only man-made feature naturally visible from space. To view these items is to take one's breath away at their inconceivability. Their sheer weight and enormity causes us to step back in awe. Yet God says these things are but whispers of His ways; they are but the hem of His garment. If this is impressive, you should see Me.

IV. What is my relationship to this God?

- A. From God are all things, thus we exist for Him (1 Cor. 8:6a)
- B. By God are all things, thus we exist through Him (1 Cor. 8:6b)

The source of our existence is emphasized. Our existence is rooted squarely in God's activity. The means of our existence is also noted. Our existence is by means of God's activity. He is both the source and the sustainer of our existence. He is both cause and continuance of our existence.

Before Paul ever addresses the issues confronting all fellowships, he seeks to put it all into perspective. First, love builds up. Second, there is no God but one and we exist for Him and through Him. If we were to lay a hold of these simple but profound truths, our fellowship would be transformed.