

# God Is...

By Clint Buck

- Love**
- Light**
- Spirit**
- A consuming fire**
- All of the above**

When we ask this question about God, we do so within the context of what the Bible has to say about Him. Certainly God is not limited to mere human definitions, nor can His essence be encapsulated within the framework of our language. There are aspects about God that perhaps we shall never know, but in His word we find certain descriptions of Him and His character. It is in His word that we find what God has chosen to reveal of Himself. It is not within the intellectual grasp of humans to comprehend God as He is portrayed in the Bible, except the Holy Spirit enlighten their eyes unto the truths contained therein. This is being written in response to the great discrimination being manifest in most evangelical circles concerning the character of God. It is against those who constantly trumpet the love of God and never proclaim the fact that He is also a consuming fire. It is also written with the intent of informing some about God's character and attributes as shown in the scripture.

I claim no special powers of interpretation, but I do see that the whole counsel of God is not being preached or taught in most Christian circles today. Most look into the Bible to seek confirmation of what they believe, and they are unwilling to have their perceptions changed or to conform their life-styles and bring them into obedience to the word of God. I seek to condemn no one, for I am no one's judge; but there is One who shall judge, and that is Whom I seek to proclaim. You will not find all there is to know of

God within the confines of this article, that is not my intent. The intent is to call attention to those attributes of God that are being ignored for the sake of tickling the ears of those who attend churches or have an interest in God's word.

## **God is love**

You see this all the time on church signs, and it is true. We find evidence of it in I John 4:8, "*He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.*" The other side of this is found in vs. 16 of I John 4, "*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.*" We see the one who does not love because he does not know God, and we see the one who dwells in love because God indwells him. We speak here of sacrificial love, not lust, not the friendship kind of love, but the kind of love that would cause one to lay down his life for another.

Now, I know you have seen "John 3:16" in many different places. It seems to be the most often quoted scripture from the Bible.

I want to warn you here: read no further if you are not a thinking person. If you are comfortable in your "Christianity" and do not want to learn anything new, stop here. If you are unwilling to explore the possibility that what you have been taught may not be right, then you can stop here. Be aware also that if you read further, you will be held responsible concerning the truthfulness of what is said. That is, if it is the truth and you did not believe, you are responsible. But you are also responsible regarding knowing the truth for yourself, and not take another's word for it. I

encourage any who read this to investigate the scripture, pray for wisdom, and seek the will of God in all that is written.

Now, John 3:16 is true, "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*"

Most will say this means God loved the world, or the earth, and made provision that anyone who believes shall be saved, but they do not speak of those who do not believe. But why take one verse from context and try to understand the whole of God's purpose from one verse? It seems to me that if the intent of John 3:16 is as others say it is, then the same intent shall carry through the entire book of John. Does it? Let's look.

"*Even the Spirit of truth; whom **the world cannot receive**, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" -- John 14:17 (emphasis added). Did you catch this? The world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth. It does not have the ability to do so.

"I pray for them: *I pray **not for the world**, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.* -- John 17:9 (emphasis added). Did you get this? The context of John 17 is Jesus praying to God the Father. Jesus states that He prays for them, that is, the disciples, but then He states, "*I pray not for the world.*" Why does He say that? Does it appear that the popular definition of the intent of John 3:16 is in agreement with what is recorded in John 14:17 and 17:9? If it is the intent of Jesus to save the world, why can't the world receive the Spirit of Truth, and why wasn't Jesus praying for the world?

For your further consideration, there are three Greek words that are translated "world" in the King James Bible. One of the words "*aion*", relates to ages; another "*kosmos*" relates to the created universe or orderly arrangement, and the third, "*oikoumene*" means "the inhabited earth". Which do you think is used in John 3:16? If you think the way most Christians think, you would think it is the word meaning the inhabited earth. It is not. It is the word "kosmos". You say, "Big deal, it proves nothing." But here is another point: to see the obvious intent of the whole book of John and then dismiss it's message is to sacrifice intellectual and spiritual honesty on the bloody altar of "easy believeism" and convenience of thought.

There is more convincing proof in John's gospel. Consider: "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*" -- John 6:37. "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" -- John 6:44. None come to Christ apart from God's drawing them. If we, by honest observation, see that many depart from this life not believing or confessing Christ, we must conclude that, they have not been drawn unto Christ by the Father.

Further, we see that the disciples did not choose Christ; "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you....*" -- John 15:16. Also, "*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*" -- John 15:19. Does Jesus choose everyone? If so, who in the world is left to hate the followers of Jesus?

Eternal life is given to as many as were given to Christ by God the Father. John 17:2. I think many confuse God's love with His grace. God's grace stays His hand of judgment until the appointed time, even though all of humanity is worthy of it now. But because God is presently staying His hand does not mean that the Day of Judgment will not come, for surely it will. Even God's providence can be mistaken for His love. It is providence that feeds the sparrow and the eagle, as well as humanity. But consider that God's love, in its recipients, is an active, living principle, behaving in a manner that is in keeping with the character of God. Truly, God is love, and those who know God dwell in love; but it is not the kind of love that is being portrayed by most churches and preachers. Love is but one of many of God's characteristics.

## **God is Light**

*"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." -- John 1:5.*

Here, we begin to see another side of God, so to speak. We think of light as that which illuminates and as being the opposite of darkness. So it is with God. Except God shine in our lives, we walk in darkness and know not what we stumble over. Further, the Bible speaks of that light in the spiritual sense. Apart from the indwelling of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit, there is no light, no illumination into spiritual matters whatsoever. *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them...But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light "* -- Ephesians 5:11 & 13. The word "reprov'd" can also be understood to mean "exposed". The light exposes darkness, but also those things done in darkness. We note here that the witness of believing Christians is to also expose those things done in darkness. The exposing of the evil done in darkness can never be done by

passive, silent behavior on the part of cowardly Christians. Darkness is an active evil, so light should also be an active good, manifest for the purpose of exposing evil. Another strong motivation for the Christian to expose evil is the love of righteousness. Psalm 97:10, "*Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*"

*"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."* -- Proverbs 8:13. It is alarming how much evil pervades American culture, and equally alarming is the silence of God's people. Evil is not only not to be tolerated, but hated. Regardless of what they want to call it, evil is still evil; perversion is not normalcy. In exposing evil for what it is, the Christian needs to be ready for the vile threats from those who practice it, and we need to understand that they are going to act according to their nature. Do not fear him who is able only to destroy the body, but fear Him Who has the power to cast both body and soul into hell. In Christian circles, we seem to have too many who want some sort of religious high, or some experience to gratify self or indulge self. Too many who are willing to lift up their voices in praise to God and too few who are willing to lift their voices and rail against evil and those who practice it. We have too many standing in the pews, and not enough standing in the gap. We seem to want to make Christianity acceptable to the world, but the Master said that the friend of the world was the enemy of God. Christians ought to be such a voice against evil that they become intolerable to the world. The world killed Jesus Christ because He was intolerable to them, why doesn't the world find us likewise?

**God is Spirit**

*"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* -- John 4:24.

The first thing this means, to me anyway, is that God is not some neat little package you can store in your mind somewhere, Who conforms to all your conceptions of Him, and does as you ask. I see this verse as being imperative and exclusive. Imperative in that the worship of God is based on His own requirements; that is, if you worship Him, it must be done a certain way, a way He has defined, *"in spirit and in truth."* There are two aspects to this: worship of God must be done in spirit. I take this to mean that, true worship of God is rendered unto Him only by those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God...The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."* -- Romans 8:14,16. The indwelling Spirit of God leads us to worship Him in spirit. Spirit is not bound by flesh or matter and, can move without constraint or restriction beyond the three dimensions of our universe: time, space, and matter. No worship to God is rendered apart from the spirit.

The second aspect to this imperative is the worship of God in truth. What is truth? That is the same question Pilate asked Jesus Christ. The word of God is truth. John 17:17. Now here is a point I will not labor over; you will view the Bible as being either inspired of God or written by men and subject to error and contradiction. The Bible was written by men under superintendence from God as is said in 2 Peter 1:21 concerning the Old Testament writings, *"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* So in the Bible, men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. If you believe the Bible to be the word of God, read on. If not, stop here, no sense wasting any more of your time. I said this verse was also exclusive, and so it is. Excluded are all who try to worship apart from

these requirements. Any act of worship not rendered within the scope of these requirements, *"in spirit and in truth,"* is not true worship. Remember, God defines what worship is truly worship, and what is counterfeit. There were times in the Old Testament when Israel went through the motions of bringing offerings to God's altar and doing those things they were accustomed to doing; but, God rejects their offerings because their motive for bringing them was false, and their hearts were not right with God. So people often go through the motions of worship; but there is no substance, and God does not receive it if it is not done in spirit and in truth.

## **God is a consuming fire**

*"Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or any likeness of anything, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee. For the Lord God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."* -- Deuteronomy 4:23-24,

This is given to Israel because it is a warning against transgressing the first commandment, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* --Exodus 20:3. In conjunction with that subject, the Lord went on to explain, *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."* -- Exodus 20:4. To condense: Don't make an image or likeness of anything. Let me ask the impartial reader, do you see any religious images around from time to time? Any likenesses of anything? Do you see them in churches? In churches who profess Christianity and a love for God and His word? Given the specific prohibition in Exodus 20:4 about making any image of anything, why is it that the images are found in churches?



Now you are saying, "That's the Old Testament and we are not under it anymore." So I refer you to Hebrews 12:29, "*For our God is a consuming fire.*" This verse is given in the context of serving God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. The fact, that God is spoken of as a consuming fire, relates to His holiness. The justice of God comes from His holiness. Because God is holy, God is just. So if we would be holy, we must also be just, and the only way that happens is that God justifies His people. Justification, or being cleared of all guilt, is a gift of God given to those who are foreknown of God. Romans 8:29-30.

As God is light and in Him is no darkness, so God is Holy and in Him is no evil. Light and holiness are the antithesis of darkness and evil. What will God do regarding the judgment of those whose sins haven't been forgiven? Will He ignore the sins and the sinners, or will He punish the transgressors and evildoers? The Bible says that God cannot lie, and He cannot deny Himself. God is holy, and holiness demands justice. Therefore, sins and sinners will receive their just rewards from a Holy God.

*"And whosoever was not found written in the book life was cast into the lake of fire." -- Revelation 20:15. God is balanced, and I mean that as He is gracious, so is He holy; as He forgives, so He also executes judgment. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." -- Jude 14-15.*

God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them into hell. He spared not the old world but destroyed it with a flood. He spared not Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their perversion and ungodliness, so neither shall He spare any who deserve judgment for He is holy, and justice demands a verdict. As God is balanced, so also is His word, and His word should be brought forth in a balanced way. Not only is He love, but He is also light, spirit, and a consuming fire. If you are a Church Goer, have you been getting balanced messages about these aspects of God?

It is a responsibility of every preacher to preach the whole counsel of God regardless of the likes or dislikes of his listeners. His primary obligation is to God and His word, and if he is not faithful in that, he will probably not be faithful in other things. *"Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* - II Timothy 4:2-4.

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