

## God Is Spirit

### God Is Spirit

“God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

As we consider the question, “Who is God?” Jesus’ answer in John 4:24 is relevant. God is not a man (Number 23:19). God is something fundamentally different. We may characterize human existence (at least partly) as physical or earthy for it was out of the dust of the ground that God created man (Genesis 2:7). God, however, was not formed by such processes; God was not created, but exists from all eternity (Isaiah 57:15). As such, God’s existence is something metaphysical. God stands above and is prior to the creation. The physical world cannot stand in such a relationship to itself so as to be above and prior to itself. Moreover, concepts of God that do not preclude the physical world as aboriginal are not sufficient to describe God’s existence. God must be something other. Jesus therefore says, “God is Spirit.”

But for God to be something other raises questions. Is God so radically different from man that a relationship is impossible? Some have so concluded. The Bible tells us, however, that God created man “in His image” (Genesis 1:27). There is placed upon man the stamp of the divine and there is something about man that is at least similar to God in such a way that a relationship is possible. This is the spiritual side of man. Just as God is a spirit, so also man, while having a physical component is also spirit. James 2:26 says “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Human persons are both body and spirit.

The story of the thief on the cross illustrates God’s deep desire for a relationship with man. Jesus said to this him, “Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus’ body went to the tomb as did the thief’s. What, then, constituted their relationship subsequent to death? In what way could Jesus be said to be “with” the thief, “today”? It was due to the relationship of spirit to spirit: man’s spirit in relationship to God’s Spirit in the spiritual realm.

It follows, then, that we must cultivate a spiritual relationship with God, Who is Spirit. Our worship of God must be in **spirit** and in **truth** – concepts themselves that

are ultimately non-physical. Our earthly life viewed as the Patriarch's so viewed it – a pilgrimage (Hebrews 11:10-16). This does not imply irresponsibility to and in this life (as some charge and as others adopt), for while a pilgrimage entails a necessary end point, the journey itself is of significant spiritual value. Only on this journey do we encounter the opportunity for moral development and personal responsibility. This opportunity is a **present** reality to which we must give heed and upon which our ongoing relationship with God depends. Spiritual growth is a lifelong process and it is from such growth that our ultimate character is shaped and molded in preparation for eternal life (2 Peter 1:1-11).

Peter's promise of partaking of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) and John's exhortation that we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2), motivate us to live personally responsible, pure, and holy lives right now so that ultimate fellowship with God, who is Spirit, may one day be consummated. God's spiritual existence and the promise of eternal fellowship with Him on that level are the bases for our hope and the motivation for our living lives of faithfulness in the here and now.