

## God Is Spirit

Intro: In our study of God's attributes, we have surmised that there is perhaps no more taxing a subject than probing the mystery of God. We concluded last week that the only way we as human beings can get to know God is for Him to reveal Himself to us. God has revealed Himself to mankind through **general revelation: creation and conscience**; and **special revelation: He revealed Himself personally to numerous Old Testament saints—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and numerous prophets, through the Bible, and in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ.** God's ultimate revelation to man was provided through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The writer to the Hebrews informs us in the first chapter of Hebrews, verses **1-3**, "God, after He spoke to the Fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature." Jesus came to reveal the Father to us.

The eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ, left heavens glory at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and took on flesh through the virgin conception so that He might reveal God the Father to us (Phil. 2:5-11; John 1:18). Jesus revealed one of the most basic and yet profound truths about God found anywhere in the Bible, **God is Spirit** (John 4:24).

Look with me this morning at Jesus' revelation of the essential characteristic of God: **He is Spirit.**

### I. God Is Spirit: Jesus' Revelation To The Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-26)

John chapter four provides the background for our study. During the opening days of His ministry, Jesus was forced to leave Judea to avoid a conflict with the Pharisees. Jesus and His disciples had been baptizing converts in the Jordan River, and John the Baptist was also baptizing nearby in Aenon, near Salim (John 3:22-23). News of the numerous conversions and baptisms came to the attention of the Pharisees. We read in **chapter 4, verse 1**—The Lord Jesus, knowing that the Pharisees had heard about His making and baptizing more disciple than John, actually His disciple were doing the baptizing; in any event, **v. 3**—He left Judea and departed again into Galilee to avoid a premature conflict with the Pharisees.

What is very interesting here is that rather than taking the usual route, which Jews of His day would have taken; namely, to avoid contact with the Samaritans Jews would cross the Jordan river at Jericho, travel north along the east side of the river until they reached the Sea of Galilee then they would cross back over into Galilee. Jesus said He *must* pass through Samaria (v. 4). His forceful declaration silenced any apparent objections by His disciples.

v. 5—So He came to the Samaritan city of Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob’s well was there.

Jesus’ reason for passing through Samaria now comes to light. Being wearied from His journey, He sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour of the day, 12 noon according to Jewish time (v. 6). A Samaritan woman from the city of Sychar came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink” (v. 7). The woman was surprised that Jesus being a Jew would ask her, a Samaritan, for a drink, seeing as how the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans (v. 9).

Jesus eventually introduced Himself to her as the Messiah, and offered to give her living water = eternal life, if she would believe in Him. The woman responded by bringing up the age-old dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans over the place where God is to be worshipped (v. 20). The Samaritans worshipped God at the temple they had built on Mount Gerizim, and the Jews worshipped God at the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus answered her in v. 20— “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers” (John 4:21-23).

It was at that point in the conversation that Jesus revealed something about God which had never been clearly stated before. The truth was apparent from what had been revealed in the Old Testament, but it had never been put into plain words. “God is Spirit,” Jesus declared, “and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Spirit occurs first in Greek for emphasis, and there is no article before the word spirit, emphasizing the essence of God’s nature. The sentence reads literally, “**Absolutely Spirit in His essence is God.**” Jesus was saying, that true worship takes place in the spiritual realm. The day was coming and

already was because of Christ's presence, when worship of God would no longer be restricted to the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus set us free from all elaborate ceremonial systems of worship, so that believers now worship God in spirit and according to truth. Paul explained in **Romans 8:9**—"You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

But what, you may ask, does Jesus mean, that God is Spirit? Whereas biblical revelation teaches the reality of spiritual beings, angels, Satan, and demons, the statement that God is Spirit describes His essential nature. **God is Spirit.** The Bible teaches that as Spirit, God is an invisible, personal, living and active being.

## II. God As Spirit Is An Invisible, Personal, And Living And Active Being

### A. He is invisible (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; John 1:18)

As we all know, a spirit is invisible. A spirit cannot be seen. God first appeared to Moses in a burning bush. Paul called God "the invisible God" (Col 1:15), and "the King eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Tim. 1:17). John was emphatic in his declaration that "no man has seen God at any time" (John 1:18). According to the biblical record God did in fact appear to numerous Old Testament saints. However, these visible manifestations of God were carried out by the Angel of the LORD, who is identified in every instance as the pre-incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. The Angel of LORD visited Abraham (Gen. 18), and Jacob is said to have wrestled with the Angel of LORD (Gen. 32:24).

We learn from the prophet Elisha that there is a spiritual dimension or reality all around us, which because of our present fallen condition, we cannot see. In **2 Kings 6** we read that the king of Aram sent his troops to Dothan to capture Elisha the prophet because he was disclosing his troop movements to the King of Israel. **2 Kings 6:15-17**—Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" **16** So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." **17** Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Elisha apparently was able to see into the spiritual realm, and asked God to reveal His spiritual forces to his servant. You and I are commanded to walk by faith and not by physical sight. Apart from faith it is impossible to please God. The only way we can grow in our faith is to spend time in God's holy presence through prayer and meditation in His Word.

Not only is God as Spirit invisible, we learn secondly that He is personal.

#### B. He is personal (Josh. 3:10)

The Bible presents God as a divine Spirit who possesses the basic characteristics of personality—intellect, emotions, and will. He is both a God who acts freely, demonstrating self-determination, and a God who accomplishes His own sovereign purposes. God is never portrayed as a distant impersonal spirit, but always as a loving and concerned Person. He fellowshiped with Adam and Eve in the Garden prior to their fall into sin. And He graciously provided the means for their redemption from sin, and restoration to fellowship with Himself (Gen. 3:15-20). The entire Old Testament record is the story of God graciously providing for His rebellious and sinful people. Likewise, the coming of Jesus Christ in the New Testament provided redemption from sin and death to any and all who believe in Him.

The fact that God is a living personality is good news, because we can get to know Him personally and communicate with Him freely. If He were an inanimate object or an impersonal force there would be no hope of a personal relationship with Him.

Alright, we have seen that God as Spirit is invisible and possesses personality, finally we see that he is the living and active God.

#### C. He is living and active (1 Thess. 1:9)

The Bible presents God as the living and active God who thinks, feels, and acts. The scriptures are explicit on this point. In fact, the phrase, *the living God*, appears in every section of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In contrast to the lifeless idols fashioned by men, the God of the Bible actively creates, sustains, covenants with His people, preserves Messiah's line of descent through the Tribe of Judah, calls prophet after prophet to proclaim

His Word to His rebellious people, sends His eternal Son Jesus Christ into the world through the virgin conception, provides His sinless Son as the atoning sacrifice for sin to satisfy His own righteousness, raised Christ from the dead, establishes His Church—comprised of Spirit-filled believers, and will ultimately judge all men justly, and establish His eternal Kingdom. Paul commended the Thessalonian believers for having “turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God” (1 Thess. 1:9).

Conclusion: We have considered what Jesus meant by His assertion that **God is Spirit**. As spiritual beings occupying physical bodies, believers worship God in spirit and according to truth. A study of God’s attributes, which describe the essential characteristics of His divine nature, is possible because He has chosen to reveal Himself to us. The Bible describes the divine Spirit as an invisible, personal, living and acting being.

### Application

Since God is a living Person, begin to talk with Him throughout the day. Share every detail of your daily life with Him—your joys, sorrows, victories, defeats, problems, pleasures, fears, frustrations, etc.

Once again, knowledge of God begins with reception of His Son Jesus Christ as your personal Savior from sin and death. We receive Jesus by placing our faith in Him as the Son of God who came to die for our sin. Any investigation into the nature and Person of God begins with receiving Christ into your life. If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior would you invite Him into your life this morning?

Christian are you spending quality time with God everyday in prayer and the study of His Word? Are you actively looking for opportunities to serve God and His Church?

### Closing Prayer:

Next week, Lord willing, we will conclude our study of God’s attributes with an examination of the Trinity. The fact that God is One essence who subsists in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.