

Title: What Is God

Object: Picture of Universe

Scripture: “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”
(Hebrews 11:3 ESV)

Westminster Shorter Catechism for Children

Questions – 9 to 11

Today I wanted to talk with you about “What is God?” The Bible talks about God having human traits like a head, eyes, ears and hands. This helps us understand God, but the Bible also teaches God does not have a body like people but is Spirit. What this means is God is not confined to the limits of a human body, but God is everywhere. So God is here and He is all the way around to other side of the world. He is here on earth and He is out in the universe among the stars. God is everywhere!

Go made everything, absolutely everything - stars, planets, mountains, rivers, birds, animals and people from nothing. When your mom makes dinner she starts with meats, vegetables and gains. Then she puts them together to make wonderful tasting meals and hopefully dessert. Can you imagine if you mom had to make a delicious meal from nothing – no meat or flour or veggies?

Let me ask you, “Can you see God?” We cannot see God because He does not have a human body, but He is Spirit and because He is Spirit He can be everywhere in the universe at the same time. Even though we cannot see God – He sees us and knows us and even knows our every thought. Can you imagine God can hear and

know what everybody is doing and thinking – there are over 6 billion people in the world! I have a problem listening to 2 or 3 people at the same time. God is amazing!

God made people – you and I in His image. What this meaning people – you and I are the only creation of God that He gave the ability to learn, think and reason. He gave us the ability to read to learn more about Him so that we can be more like Him by knowing right from wrong, and being able to build and make things from what He has created. Like your dad building shelves to hold books and things in your house and your mom making great meals. God also placed people over the animals. We are responsible for the animals here on earth. This means we take care of them and we also use them for our benefit – like raising cows to give us milk and cheese and steak.

So you can see God has given people a lot to do. First, we are to live to honor Him for He is the Creator of everything. To know God and bring Him glory we need to study the Bible and live as it teaches us. Then we are to manage the earth that He has given for us to use and enjoy. We are to do this until Jesus returns. Do you think you can grow to know more about God from the Bible and live as it teaches? I know you can and your dad and mom will help you and so will all the people here at Canyon Bible Church.

Dear Father in heaven, You have given us the special privilege of being made in your image and even though we cannot see You we know You are everywhere and You are with us this morning. Helps know you better, help us live as you teach and help us honor You with our lives. Give us the courage to tell others about Jesus. Amen.



Children's Moment

February 22, 2015

Title: Who Is God

Object: Picture of Universe

Scripture: “The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

Westminster Shorter Catechism for Children

Questions – 6 to 8

Let’s look at the verse up on the screen, it says, “The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” This is very important to understand. How many gods does our verse this morning say there are? You are right - just One. The world says there are many gods and all sorts and types of gods and people even believe that people are gods. The Bible tells us that there is only one God and we can find out about Him and grow to understand who He is in the Bible.

In the Bible, God teaches us what we should place in our hearts and that we should love His teachings. Do your dad and mom read the Bible to you? What is your favorite story?

The next verse says that your dad and mom and the grown ups of Canyon Bible Church are to teach you the truths and treasures of the Bible. They will help you make good decisions and live for the glory of God. God is amazing, so I want to live for His glory – How about you?

Now here is something that used to be hard for me to understand – there is only one God, but He lets us know Him as 3 persons. Did you know that? Can any of you tell me the names of the 3 personalities of God? You are right again - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Can you tell me the name of God the Son? All of you are so very smart, you are right – it is Jesus.

Jesus, the Son of God, helps us live for God by giving us the gift of God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in our hearts. Yesterday we baptized 2 people to show the world that they have believed in Jesus as the Son of God. They were baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is my prayer that Jesus will call you to God the Father.

Let's pray – Dear heavenly Father we so thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus, to the earth that we might be called Your children and live for Your glory. We lift up the children of our families to You and pray for their salvation. Help us remember that in all things of this life – good or difficult – we are to praise You and live for Your glory. Amen!

Greater Works

The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is filled with promises. I haven't taken the time to count them, but some people have. I guess it depends on how you define a "promise," but I have seen numbers in the thousands. Pastor and author Herbert Lockyer wrote over 50 Christian books. One of his titles was *All the Promises of the Bible* and it lists 8,000 promises. It is hard to imagine so many.

I've preached on some of those promises before, especially some of the promises made by Jesus:

- "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10:10)
- "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28)
- "Because I live, you also will live" (Jn. 14:28)
- "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8)

I am far short of preaching on 8000 promises – I guess it will depend on how long the Lord give me here on earth to see how close I come.

Maybe the most astonishing promise of them all is the one we read today from John 14:12, Jesus promises, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father." The disciples are greatly distressed by the events of the evening and Jesus now makes this statement. Did He do so to comfort and encourage them? If Jesus meant what He said here, this is truly the greatest of promises for the disciples and for all who believe in Him, including you and I. Jesus had healed the sick, cast out demons, calmed the sea and raised the dead. No one had ever

done miracles like these and we do not see miracles like these today. So what did Jesus mean? If He is God then everything He said has to be true. What did He mean? What does the Bible and history show concerning this promise? If this promise is true what does it mean for you and I today?

Lets go to God in prayer for spiritual wisdom as we work this morning to understand this great promise.

Greater Works – Two Approaches

If we accept what verse 12 says as true then there are only two approaches I can think of that one can take. The first is the miracles of Jesus.

Works of Miracles

If Jesus was referring to miracles then there are limits to what He was saying because we do not see these miracles today. This limit can be imposed by verse 12 saying, “**he who believes in Me**” or “faith.” This promise is only true for those who have true faith in Jesus. When a person, who claims they are called by God to do these special miracles and they attempt to heal someone if the person is not healed it is because of the sick person’s lack of faith – not because of some fault of the healer. There is a lack of miracles today or they are at least in short supply. So, if Jesus is speaking of physical miracles then the obvious problem is Christians today do not believe enough or deeply enough. Our faith is lacking. But Jesus did NOT say, “Anyone ‘**who believes in Me**’ with sufficient faith or intense faith.” Jesus simply said “**he who believes in Me**” which would include all believers. So why are you and I not doing miracles that are greater than Jesus did?

Works of the Apostles

Some would argue that Jesus is speaking here to the Apostles only. After all they did do miracles after Jesus ascended into heaven and did these miracles in His name. They would argue that this promise was fulfilled by the apostles and is complete. After Jesus returned to heaven we read in Acts, “**They (believers in Jesus – His church) were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching (the apostles were teaching what Jesus had taught them and all the things the Holy Spirit brought back into their memories) and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.** (Acts 2:42) This is what the church should look like and this is the goal for Canyon Bible. Concerning miracles the next verse says, “**Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs (miracles) were taking place through the apostles.**” (Acts 2:43) The verse verifies that the Apostles performed miracles in the name of Jesus. Then in Hebrews it says, “**God also testifying with them (believers or the church), both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.**” (Hebrews 2:4) The gift of miracles was given to the Apostles only would be the argument of many. There is truth in both that the Apostles did miracles and that God gives gifts by the Holy Spirit as He wills. However, I see no evidence that the Apostles did miracles greater than those of Jesus. This line of thought or position does not hold water and the answer must lay in a different direction.

Greater Works – Spiritual

We know from the scriptures that God’s knowledge and view of the past, present and future; is only dimly seen by people. No person is great when compared to God. So when Jesus said, “**greater works (what works is Jesus referring to?) than these he will do.**” Why would we consider miracles that which defines greatness?

This is the thought of human ego. Phillips Brooks, the 19th century pastor of Boston's Trinity Church and best remembered as the writer of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" said, "It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything." Brooks well understood the meaning of 1 Peter 4:11, "Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is **speaking the utterances of God**; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is **servicing by the strength which God supplies**; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Can anyone tell me what Peter meant by "**speaking the utterances of God**?" Miracles are for the glory of God and have little to do with the person God has chosen to deliver His signs and wonders.

In Luke chapter 10 Jesus had sent out the 70 and they now return from their successful preaching mission. "The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He (*Jesus*) said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. **Nevertheless do not rejoice in this**, that the spirits are subject to you, **but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.**" (Luke 10:17-20) Here in this exchange we see that Jesus explicitly weighted the value of physical miracles in comparison to spiritual miracles – the spiritual miracle of people having passed out of spiritual death into salvation. Jesus gave His preference to the spiritual and said, "**rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.**" Jesus does not waiver or change for He is God, therefore does this not then shed light as to His meaning in our study this morning of John 14:12, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.**" I believe it does.

The Books of Acts does records physical miracles, but the emphasis is on the mighty works of conversion. Jesus spends over three years with the disciples and gains other believers and after His resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples and “After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time...” (1 Corinthians 15:6) During His time of ministry on earth Jesus saw a few hundred come to believe in Him as the Christ. Then we move forward about 50 days after His death and resurrection and Peter and the disciples stand up on the day of Pentecost. The third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit comes upon them and they witness of Jesus with power from God. Please turn in your bibles to Acts chapter 2 and follow along with me as I read selected verses. Can any of the children or young adults tell which book of the Bible comes before Acts and which comes after? I would like to read the entire chapter 2, but will not allow this. Now reading from Acts 2:1, “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.” Skip down to verse 4.

4 “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was **hearing them speak in his own language.**”

14 “But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: ‘Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.’”

32 “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father

the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”

36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified. **37** Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ **38** Peter *said* to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** **39** For the promise is for you and your children and **for all who are far off**, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.’”

41 “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”

Peter and the other disciples preached a crucified and risen Christ, and what happened? Three thousand people believed! More people came to salvation through Jesus and by the preaching of the gospel that day than the entire 3 years of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Jesus began His church with the efforts of eleven men, commanding them to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and 300 years later Christianity had closed nearly all the temples of the heathen Roman Empire and the number of converts were now in the millions. This is what verse 12 is saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father.” The eleven believed in Jesus as the Christ and they did greater works, spiritual works than Jesus by preaching the gospel of Christ. Jesus went to be with the Father in heaven and charged the eleven and those that they brought to believing faith by the power of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Word to continue the works of the church until Jesus’ returns. Do you understand that as the generations of

faithful Christians shared the gospel, seeing people come to faith by the power of the Holy Spirit and this pattern has been repeated until you became one of Christ's followers? Paul made the command of the Lord clear for those he wrote in Rome and clear for us today, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" (Romans 10:14-15) I want you to look at end of verse 14 where we read, "how will they hear without a preacher?" At first look it would appear that the attitude of the American church of leaving the preaching of the gospel to the professionals or ordained ministers is how the church is to operate. However, this is not so.

The Greek word translated as preacher is κηρύσσω *kēryssō* meaning to proclaim or preach the gospel. It has nothing to do with being an ordained minister. It is the calling of every believer, every Christian. This meaning is supported by what we read in Acts 8 where the Holy Spirit sent Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Queen Candace. The eunuch was reading from Isaiah and Philip asks him do you understand what you are reading? The Ethiopian replied, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31) Every Christian is called to guide seekers through the Word of God. This is the process of Romans 10. First, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?" Every Christian can tell others of Christ by sharing their testimony. People cannot argue with your testimony – it is the story of your salvation, of how God called you out of spiritual death into spiritual life and how you became a new creation – born again. Second, "how will they hear

without a preacher?” As we just saw every Christian is called to proclaim or preach the “good news” or gospel of Jesus as the Christ, Savior and Lord. In order to do this you need to study and meditate on the Word of God, memorize scripture so that we may “preach or proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” (2 Timothy 4:2) This is what we are called to do - this is what the lost need. The question is, are we obedient to the calling of God? Paul continues in Romans saying, “How will they preach unless they are sent?” The answer is that God called you out of darkness into His light for this very purpose – that you may live for His glory and living for God’s glory includes being sent by God into the lost world to preach and proclaim His gospel of salvation. And whether the world blesses or hates you it is clear that the Lord will bless you, “Just as it is written, ‘HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!’ ” Both in our John verse where it says, “greater works” and here in Romans “GOOD THINGS” or works it is not the miracles of healing, raising the dead, but the miracle of the spiritual work of the Holy Spirit using believers in the salvation process.

In verse 12 Jesus says, “he who believes in Me.” What else could this possible mean? Other than - every believer in Jesus is called by Him to do greater miracles by proclaiming His gospel of salvation. We have already talked about what it means to give your testimony and you are to know the scriptures to guide people. In addition there is the proclaiming of the gospel of Christ by changed lives – lives lived serving others with compassion – feeding the hungry, clothing the poor and loving the unlovable. How, as redeemed sinners can we hope to fulfill this command? Let me speak about how we can and will fulfill this promise.

Greater Works – Four Conditions

As believers we can fulfill the promise of Jesus in John 14:12. This promise is a thrilling promise because it applies to each one of us personally. You can do great works and even greater works than our Lord Jesus! We will fulfill Jesus' promise if we are truly His disciples. In order to live out this promise of Christ there are four conditions. To fulfill Jesus' promise and the blessings He also promises and enjoy life to the fullest we need to -

Faith

First, and foremost we must have faith, we must believe in our mind, our heart and the depths of our soul. Jesus begins verse 12 with, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me.”** Jesus is saying, what follows is for believers and believers only. This does NOT mean you believe that Jesus was an actual person who lived in time and history, but you believe He is God incarnate, God the Son and the Savior of all who are reconciled back to God. Is Jesus your Savior? Have you let go of presumed right to trust in your own strength and abilities? Without this deep and abiding faith in who Jesus is – none of the promises of God the Father and God the Son can be true for you.

Prayer

Second, we must, must pray! We will look at prayer next Lord's Day in more detail, if He tarries. God gives great promises concerning prayer. Do you ask God specifically for those who are in your life that need to be saved by Christ? Joyce prayed for me for eleven years. God answered her prayers and I praise both God and Joyce that they did not give up on me. Do you pray for God to answer your prayers – answer in His will and not yours? Are you faithful to pray for those you

know are lost until they are saved or have drawn their last breath? My family was unbelievers and Joyce's were Catholic and it was only after her parents had died that we began to discover that on her father's side of the family there were strong Christians who had been praying for us while we lived in Papua New Guinea, praying for our ministry in Pakistan and Sudan. I have to tell you when you are living, working and doing ministry in difficult places and you feel the prayer coverage of the saints calling out to God on your behalf it is something you will never forget – it is something that convinces you beyond a shadow of doubt concerning the power of prayer.

I also want to be honest not all prayers are answered quickly or in the way we hoped. We must believe Christ will answer at the right time in His way; which is the right way. So first we must believe in Jesus as the Christ and secondly we must pray if you want to be used by God and do greater works. This is followed by obedience.

Obedience

For those whose life has been marked by Christ obedience is one of the signs of our faith. Jesus says it simply in verse 15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” Isn't interesting is this short sentence that love of Christ and keeping His commandments go hand-in-hand. If we do not keep His commandments then we really do not love Him, at least not in the true sense of heart, mind and soul. Joyce and I did not work in Pakistan and other countries because they were beautiful, we were sent by the Lord for the people – people who suffered from illiteracy, poverty and disease. 80% of missionaries working throughout the world are located in the moderate climates and beautiful places of the world – not were it is bitter cold or hot, not were the sand blows and not in hot

steaming jungles. When you give your life to Christ you must go where He directs, which could be right where you are. But no matter where you are, the question is, will you be obedient to share the gospel? This is the greater work.

Empowerment

Finally, in order to live by faith, pray effectively and be obedient one must be empowered by God the Holy Spirit. The world does know and is not able to see the Holy Spirit for they are spiritually dead. You will know Him if He has indwelt you, possessed you. We cannot believe without the Spirit, we are spiritually dead without the Spirit. We cannot hope to love Christ or communicate with God through prayer without the Spirit. Jesus, God incarnate, could not either. In verse 10 Jesus said, **“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.”** Even Jesus could not speak on His own initiative. The Spirit of **the Father abiding in Me does His works.”** Jesus was completely surrendered to the will of the Father and the Father worked great things through Him. How can we possibly hope to participate in the greater works that God wants us to do if we do not surrender to His Spirit?

Believe, have faith, pray, surrender, be obedient and allow the Holy Spirit rule your heart and you will do greater work than Jesus while He walked this earth. We are nothing without Christ and yet, **“I (We) can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”** (Philippians 4:13) The choice is yours – what will you chose? I chose the great things of God.