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# THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXVI ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 20, 2002

## The One and The Only

JEHOVAH, The God of the Bible Is Not  
The god That All Worship

Admittedly, the title is completely politically incorrect.

I only allow myself to use such "narrow-minded," "inflammatory," "unenlightened," "extremist," "anti-Semitic," "hateful," "insular," "bigoted," "obscurantist," "prejudiced," "intolerant," "opinionated," "doctrinaire," "insensitive," "religion-phobic," "offensive," radical-fundamentalism sophistry because the statement is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It may be unpopular to say so in the open-minded, tolerant, fair, inclusive, anti-JEHOVAH-of-the-Bible, and free-thinking united America of post 9/11/2001. It may be unpalatable to statesmen, politicians, and educators. It may be unpronounceable by theologians, clerics, and philosophers. It may be unimaginable among the informational elite (once called newsmen and editorial writers) and within the entertainment community (now includes Hollywood, Television, Madison and Fifth Avenues, and "Christian Television"). Nonetheless, truth it was, is, and ever shall be.

I acknowledge that the statement is rather unpolished, entirely simplistic, and slightly rough. Cosmetically, it is a failure. Aesthetically, it does not "fit in." Visually, it is harsh. It is, I confess, quite bare, and devoid of sophisticated, polished, decorative

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# this and that

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Religion falls into two broad categories: salvation by works or salvation by grace. Every religion, past or present, teaches either a system of achievement or an acceptance through faith. All the religions of the world, except one are based upon works. One or the other is true to the exclusion of the other. Salvation is the gift given by God and received by the individual through faith or salvation is the reward/response obtained from God through a bartering system of works (deeds, sacraments, actions, steps, conditions, stipulations, basic principles, etc.). Biblical Christianity is the only (as in unique and exclusive) religion that is "by grace through faith." I use the title "Biblical Christianity" to distinguish between

pseudo-Christianity and authentic Christianity. Not all groups of Christendom are indeed "Biblical Christianity" in source, teaching, or practice. A brief inspection of Mead's "Handbook of Denominations" will prove that premise beyond doubt.

For twenty centuries, Baptists and others have accepted torture and death rather than accept the premise that baptism or anything else has a part in salvation. I assure my readers that the faith once delivered to the saints is no more popular today than it was in centuries past. To the fallen and

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lost human race, "a system" is far more satisfying than mere faith. To accept than "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" is, to many, insulting and degrading.

This brings me to a dangerous trend popular within both pseudo-Christians and contemporary Bible believers—the systematizing of Christianity. Popular teachers are providing systems that assure blessing from God. Seminars, conferences, institutes, and programs advertise the means to bring Almighty God under a contract to supply what the individual wants. All are selling a system. Each system is different; no system is permanently settled because all systems are constantly revised and expanded. When the participant does not find the success promised the seller has two options: (1) the user did not fully implement the system and (2) the user needs an additional module, session, tapes, or books.

This month's message is the first antidote to this poison. There are no new revelations; we have the "one and only" Truth, forever settled in heaven, and once for all delivered to the saints.

—Pastor Manley

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God is unchanging because He is unchangeable. He is perfection.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

The last statement is a solemn, but precious, truth. The sons of Jacob would have been consumed, if God were changeable. What a comfort that truth should be to us. Because He is unchangeable, His mercy, His grace, His love are just as evident as His anger, His judgment. God does not change.

Since God does not change, truth cannot change. If the following verses were ever true, then they are true today, and will be true in eternity.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 5:23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

1 John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Therefore, though the politically correct may cringe, I must write that: All roads do not led to Heaven.

All gods are not simply different names for the same god.

All religions are not equal.

And, I must unequivocally declare that JEHOVAH, the God of the Bible is not the god that all worship.

One question remains: Whom do you worship?

—Pastor Manley

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attractiveness. It lacks a pleasing covering. It lacks a pretty coating. It is plain, stark, purely natural truth. Unlike brass or wood, unvarnished truth always remains unchangeable and always retains its luster. It neither ages nor dulls and never deteriorates.

Truth requires no sugared coating. Truth needs no sweetened covering. Truth necessitates no saccharine shell. "A little bit of sugar, may make the medicine go down," but any (and every) additive alters truth. Truth altered is error alleged. The laws of mathematics are not applicable in the realm of truth. Truth endures neither multiplication nor division. Truth never survives either subtraction or addition. Truth cannot not be factored or fractionalized.

Truth is never measured in percentages nor metered with qualifications. Truth has no disclaimers. Entirety wants nothing. Purity has neither surplus nor lack. Wholeness disappears with more or less. Perfection can accept no more and can loose not any. Truth is entire, pure, whole, and perfect. Any deviation in the slightest in even one of these qualities and that which laid claim to be truth may be unhesitatingly identified as but a counterfeit, a substitute, a sham, a fraud, a fake, a phony, an imitation.

Truth is truth--singular, complete, unique, exclusive, and absolute. Error is error even when allegedly salted with "an element of truth." Truth has no elements, no components, no ingredients; truth is wholeness. Truth sliced is truth slaughtered. A particle of truth severed from the body of truth cannot survive the separation. Such dead particles cannot revive dead error. The eternal law is that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" not "a little truth sanctifeth the whole lump." Evil and truth work with exactly opposite methodology. Evil begins small, spreads sporadically, finally contaminating all. Truth convicts, regenerates, transforming all. The philosophy that it is acceptable to tolerate error so that truth will finally triumph is faulty in its concept.

Truth is self-supporting, self-sustaining, and self-sufficient. Men may say "the truth lies between," but truth stands apart and alone. One or another cause or person "may not survive the truth," but truth survives all exposure and

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thrives on openness. Freedom requires the constant vigilance of defense; but truth needs no help, no assistance, and no defense. Truth is eternal. Truth commands no protection, demands no support, and requires no maintenance. Truth stands; truth endures; truth is "whate'er betide."

It is worthy of serious consideration to realize that the believer is not instructed by the word of God to "defend the faith." The command is the exact opposite—not to defend, though surely not to surrender, but to actively engage error in conflict.

Jude 3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The believer is given a sword, ordered to put on the whole armor, and to "earnestly contend for the faith." The sword is for combat, for offense, for contending. A warrior whose mission in life is to defend his sword from attack has already lost the battle. The sword is not a defensive weapon; the sword does not require protection. Christians have become so concerned with the perceived need of "contending without being contentious" that they fear the offense of confrontation with the enemy and fail to engage the battle. A soldier unable to bear the sight of blood, whether his own or that of others, is useful only as a decoration. There is no place in the battle zone for decorative soldiers; there is, however, a strong demand for soldiers worthy of decoration. One does not get to parade grounds without passing through the battlegrounds. The point on the sword is not intended nor is it at all suitable for use as a knitting needle. It thrusts and parries, slices and dices, all quite well, but it does not stitch or pearl very well. The two-edged sword is a weapon and has no safe side.

The contemporary motivation to shape truth to make it appealing, to season truth to make it appetizing, and to style

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we have seen evil. 16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. 17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

When we pray "Lord, have mercy on me," we are in actuality asking God to repent, to change His way of looking on us, of His way of dealing with us, of His way of considering us, and to bring us under grace and remove us from wrath. When we pray for forgiveness of sin, we are asking God to repent, to see us no longer as sinners, but as repentant ones. When we pray for salvation, we are asking God to repent—to look no longer on us as enemies but as His children. God does not change—He is the Unchangeable Unchanging One—we are the ones who must change.

None of these changes, not one, has anything whatsoever to do with a change in the nature or character of God (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17). Indeed, each example verifies—reveals as fact or reinforces the revelation—of the nature and the character of God. That character and nature is always shown to be unchangeable. Perfection is complete and it is final. There is no surplus to subtract and no shortage to secure, thus there is no "other" to obtain or to achieve. Perfection can not be added to nor taken from. (Consider Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18,19 in this light.)

God is unchanging because He is independent, the Uncaused Cause. God is. We change because we are dependent. We have needs. We have potential for good or for bad. We cannot exist in and of ourselves, we must have: air, water, food, life (1 Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality), and learning—we must learn by experience or by example or by edict. He knows. (We experiment. We use trial and error.)

God has not changed in the past. God did not change when He created what is out of what was not. When man sinned, God did not change. God did not change when He gave the Law at Mount Sinai. When He sent His Son into this world as the Lamb of God, God did not change. And, the Son did not change when He came in the flesh (Hebrews 13:8). God has not changed in the past and will not change in the future.

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on a different, a "changed" basis. In every single usage of the word repentance as regards God, the word's use has to do with the relationship of God with His creation—and always is a response to the specific action(s) of humanity, whether individually or in a collective grouping.

Repentance, when used with regard to God, has nothing to do with any alteration in the character, the nature, or the essence of God. It has to do with a change in standing—it is our standing that is changed, not His. The issue is whether we stand in opposition to the person and will of God or stand in submission to His person and will.

In fact, we depend on God 'repenting' for our salvation.

Psalm 90 1 LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. 3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. 4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. 5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. 6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. 7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. 8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. 9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. 10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. 11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. 12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. 13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. 14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. 15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein

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truth to make it accommodating is satanic in origin, carnal in delivery, and temporary in results. Conciliation is compromise whatever the apparent visible results. Compromise is the beggarly attempt to reduce the risk of exposure and to increase the possibility of acceptance. The first of these two excuses is cowardice and the second treason. No authority is delegated by the God Who gave the word for anyone to modify a single line of the communication entrusted: it was once delivered. To assume the possession of such right is presumptive arrogance unworthy of a messenger of the KING. Manipulation of the message by the messenger is manifestly malfeasance.

To entice with guile for the purpose of deceit is to make the Gospel of none effect.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

12-14 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Preaching a Gospel of "none effect" convicts none, regenerates none, and transforms none. It is not that the Gospel is rendered ineffective: it has none effect. It is the uncertain sound, though it be most pleasant to the ears, of sounding brass and tinkling cym-

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bals. It may have the power to excite, to captivate, to attract, even to ensnare; but such is "accepting another gospel" that is "preaching another Jesus" while "receiving another spirit." A convert convinced by the wisdom of men will be the pathetic captive tossed by every wind of doctrine and the perpetual hostage carried by all the tides of emotion, always subject to the sleight of men, whose cunning craftiness prepares the way for the seducing spirits and the doctrine of devils.

Sometime about the 1960's, the ungodly precept of packaging the Gospel so that it might be presented as if it were being "sold" in the same fashion as marketing an insurance policy or offering a new home became the accepted principle of proper preaching. Preachers were encouraged to become good "salesmen for Jesus." (Pastors, at the same time, became executives with an office and abandoned the pastor's study; but that is another article.) To become good salesmen, preachers were sent to the books of Napoleon Hill, Dale Carnegie, Maxwell Maltz, and a host of other anti-Christian or secular sources to learn how to "sell Jesus"—something the apostles clearly never attempted. This "sales practice" was advocated by "good men" and therein was the danger—error spread by bad men is as easily avoided as is a savory steak served on a garbage can lid, but error advocated by good men, though it will always be only a seasoned, garnished slice of cadaver becomes hypnotically appetizingly appealing on its silver platter. The "ignorant" preaching of pre-1950's unenlightened pastors had produced a nation that stood up against a (backslidden Baptist) President and prevented the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican. By the 1980's, such "a selling job" had been accomplished that the (Moral Majority) President appointed one. The world knows less of the Gospel today than it did before preachers began "learning how to use worldly principles to reach the world."

The effort to remove the offense of the Gospel in order to give it universal appeal strikes at the very heart of the Gospel, which is sent as a sword on the earth (Matthew 10:34). Preachers tried to make their message pleasingly palatable and philosophically popular. To accomplish this, they sheathed the sword and wielded carnal wisdom in its place. The insurmountable problem

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tament use the word 'repent' in connection with God Himself and that is to say that He does not repent. A reason for this difference is very real. The Hebrew and the Greek words are not precise synonyms. The Hebrew has a different flavor than the Greek. It requires only an inquiring mind to discover this; this truth is not held in reserve for a Hebrew scholar.

The following is from Strong's Concordance.

5162. nacham, naw-kham'; a prim. root; prop. to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication. to be sorry, i.e. (in a favorable sense) to pity, console, or (reflex.) rue; or (in an unfavorable sense) to avenge (oneself):--comfort (self), ease [one's self], repent (-er, -ing, self).

Check these references for yourself. The same Hebrew word underlies the translation in Psalm 23:4 comfort; Isaiah 40:1 comfort; Genesis 5:29 comfort; and Genesis 6:6 repent. Context is therefore of utmost importance in understanding the use of the word 'repentance' in any passage of the Old Testament..

Our English use of the word repent is generally in keeping with the more "theological" usage of the word in the New Testament. We use the word in the following ways: "to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life," "to feel regret or contrition," "to change one's mind." The following is from Strong's Concordance.

3340. metaneo, met-an-o-eh'-o; from G3326 and G3539; to think differently or [sic] afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally to feel compunction):--repent.

In Scripture, where God is said to repent, a change of mind is not in view, nor is a feeling for having done wrong. God changes neither His belief system nor His standards of conduct. He does not "think differently afterward." In every discussion of the repentance of God, a course of human action is cited that results in a change in how God and the person or persons involved interact. Each time it is a response to an action of an individual or a nation that either (1) violated a precise provision that God established to regulate the conduct of those involved and thereby allows God to then change His manner of dealing with that person or persons or (2) responded favorably to a promise that God offered and therefore God will deal with that person or persons

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that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. 24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

The Lord Jesus anchors my salvation and yours to the permanency, the preservation, and the unchangeableness of His words. Only an unchangeable God can guarantee the perpetuity of His words. Therefore, the only issue becomes very simply, "Has God changed? Will God change? Is God changeable?"

I remind you that Bible doctrine is simply the statements that Scripture itself makes while theology is the human attempt to place those teachings in a logical or sequential system. Theology certainly has value; however, we shall waste no time in uncertain feeble attempts to isolate or to categorize the attributes of God. We shall instead study the revelation that God has given of them. I contend that it is impossible to isolate any of the attributes of God. They are not single isolated notes, but a chord. Strike one and they all sound. One cannot isolate the perfections. It is so simple a fact that it is easily overlooked; for God to be unchangeable means that He is unchangeable in each and in all aspects of His nature and character. He is unchangeable in holiness, eternity, goodness, mercy, love, grace, infinity, will, power, knowledge, and, in all of His other attributes.

We need to be specific on what we mean when we speak of changeableness. The Bible speaks of apparent changes that are associated with God. For instance, no one can dispute that the Old Testament uses the term "repent" in connection with God Himself. No one can argue that a different "original" word is used when it speaks of humanity, because that is not so—the same Hebrew (as English) word is used in reference both to humanity and to God. It is important to note that only once does the New Tes-

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with using broadmindedness as a weapon is that it lacks a cutting edge. Broadmindedness is so shallow that it is in reality only narrow-mindedness turned sideways.

Popularity does not establish truth. Popular vote does not institute truth. Popular practice or acceptance does not modify truth. Pollsters have no ability to find truth. Scientists do not discover truth. Researchers do not reveal truth. Philosophers do not reason truth. Ethicists do not define truth. Laws of government do not make truth. Religionists—clerics (priests, rabbis, imans, bishops, cardinals, evangelists, vicars, rectors, reverends, missionaries, monks, pastors, preachers, holy men, shamen, witchdoctors, or national/field representatives) and theologians (cloistered, tenured, or self-described)—gathered (or represented) in or as councils, districts, denominations, associations, fellowships, congresses, and convocations, or serving on (or sitting as) assemblies, boards, committees, or commissions do not determine truth by majority vote or minority control.

Truth is eternal, revealed by JEHOVAH. A commonly accepted heresy is that "all truth is God's truth." That statement will often receive an "amen" from a congregation, audience, viewer, or listener even when the "amen-er" is then astounded by having "amen-ed." "Wherever and however and by whomever truth is found, it is God's truth." While this slogan has a sound of validity, it lacks the substance of authenticity. The heretical error that is involved is the failure to define first what the source of truth is to be. This allows the propagator of the desired deviation to focus the attention of families on a practice or principal gained from Freud. Secular wickedness gleaned from the septic tank of Freud can never be sufficiently sanitized, purified, and "fragrantized" to make it godly advice; let alone truth. An open (truthful) declaration of the source of such alleged "truth" would compel any honest believers listening to such drivel to look elsewhere for help. Thus, the deceit of "all truth is God's truth" is used to capture the beguiled soul. The Christian is the patsy for the subtle shaman, the seller of "the magic solution." A Baptist who would refuse to countenance the spiritual advice of an atheistic counselor is Mr. or Mrs. Will B. Gullible, eager to swallow the same advice from a fellow believer with a title. "Oh, but we must

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use truth where we find it" and if Freud or another source gives us truth, we must be prepared to use it. The Holy Spirit recorded otherwise:

James 3:11-12 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

"No fountain" is to be understood as "no fountain." One does not draw godly truth from ungodly wells. Truth and error do not flow from the same spring.

Subtlety is not identified within the fruit of the Spirit—it is indeed a spiritual fruit, but not that fruit flowing from the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Subtlety is the mark of Satan.

Two plus two equaled four when God made the world out of nothing. Two plus two equaled four when Adam counted the trees. Noah used two plus two equals four when he ushered the animals aboard the Ark. Solomon, wise though he was, was compelled to use two plus two equals four when he counted his wives. Peter, Andrew, James, and John—two plus two equaled four when the LORD Jesus assembled His disciples. Judas, foolish as was he, received the thirty pieces on the basis of two plus two equals four. There is no nation on earth that refuses to accept that two plus two equals four and no action of humanity, individually or collectively, will ever alter two plus two equaling four. No cohort of Satan or even the old Serpent himself can make void two plus two equaling four. There is no angel in heaven who can make two plus two do anything but equal four. When the great angel stands upon the sea and upon the earth to declare "that there should be time no longer," two plus two will still equal four. After the sky rolls up like a scroll, after the heavens and the earth are passed away, on the new earth, in the new Heaven, and in New Jerusalem, two plus two will still equal four. When you receive, you might desire two plus two to be five and, when you owe, you might will two plus two to be three, but two plus two will ever be four because two plus two will never be either five nor three.

Therefore, I unhesitatingly and intentionally write that "JEHOVAH, the God of the Bible is not the god that all worship." That proclamation is true. Every declaration otherwise is false.

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[The words received did the convincing.]

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

[Holding the word results in the hatred of the world.]

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

[If I have not the very words that god gave to his son then I do not have 'truth' and I do not have a potential for being sanctified. I would have no hope of heaven.]

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

[If you do not have the words of the apostles then you have no basis on which to believe that this prayer is for you. The Lord Jesus prayed for those who have "their word."]

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me,

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concerning the nature and character of God, it will be because God reveals it to us and not because we discover it through our own efforts.

We have a Bible; this is the revelation of God. It is true and faithful and it is trustworthy and safe. Some may think that I bear on this too much. If you do, then you are the very one for whom I am doing this. This is a truth never to be surrendered. Either we have the very words of Almighty God in this Book or else we have nothing worth holding.

John 17 These words spake Jesus,

[Did he or did he not speak these words? If He did the Book is true, if He did not the "book" is lying.]

and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

[This work is finished before the cross. Eternal life hangs on this finished work just as much as it does on the finished work on Calvary.]

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. 6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

[Thy word—the word of the Father.]

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;

[The words (notice the 's') which Thou gavest Me, those are the words that I have given unto them, the work I finished.]

and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

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That sentence is truth. Any statement to the contrary is a lie. The opposite of that avowal is currently advocated by spokespersons from the highest national leadership to the local pulpits. Regardless of its tumultuous repetition and its thunderous reception, the tranquil suggestion that all gods are one god is a lie. To have so many "Christian" people allow the error of such consequences to go unchallenged is incontrovertible proof that preachers have not taught their people Who the God of the Bible is. To have imans, rabbis, bishops, and pastors praying together is good politics, but it is damnable heresy. Those who participate may have indeed prayed to the same god—but it was not to the God of the Bible, Jehovah. All religions do not pray to the same god. Specifically, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are not "sister" faiths. They do not spring from the same parentage.

We must have a return to doctrinal teaching if our children and children's children are even to have opportunity to hear the Gospel. Forget relevance—proclaim truth. Throw away the techniques and return to the basics. File the jokes and the illustrations and preach the word. The place to start is with the doctrine of God.

Theologians define God by describing Him in terms of His "attributes." These are the qualities of His nature and His character that designate, that differentiate, that distinguish the Creator from His creation and that describe, that define, that determine the "Who" and the what that God is. In any book of theology, several pages will be devoted to the particular author's view as to how to classify these attributes for study. Generally, there will be a separation of personal attributes (those that describe God Himself) and of moral attributes (those that describe His activities). The choice of where or how to list a particular attribute will vary from author to author. Men have debated through the centuries over which attribute is primary, and how the other attributes, those that are therefore subordinate to the primary attribute, are to be arranged. If one is the primary attribute, all other must be less than primary and therefore subordinate. Personally, I do not view the attributes as divisible. They inseparably interweave one with another. To be certain, to study them is, of necessity, to focus first on one and then another, but it will always be in a con-

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tinuous overlapping.

There is a difference between doctrine and theology. Doctrine is simply the teachings of the Scripture. Theology is the attempt to systematize those teachings in such a fashion as to make it logical to the minds of humanity. This is why one best understand the bias of a given theologian before he/she begins to read his/her theology. When practiced by believers, there is a valid purpose to theology—all honest varieties of theology—systematic, practical, dogmatic, pastoral, etc. When practiced by a false teacher theology is damning.

Whether we can logically systematize the truths of Scripture or not does not affect the truth of Scripture in the least. Scripture is the revelation of God; therefore, it is correct and true even if you and I can neither understand it nor reconcile it with other Scripture. Truth is an absolute and needs no reconciliation. Either truth is accepted or it is rejected.

Instead of the word "attributes," the old writers used a loftier language. They spoke of the "perfections" of God, the "excellencies" of God, the "virtues" of God. I like that procedure or methodology best. I believe we will begin to understand those qualities that comprise the character and the nature of God if we view them as His perfections, His excellencies, His virtues. That mind-set instantly places us on the proper level. To consider God is to consider One Who is perfect. That perfection is an absolute.

We humans are at a serious disadvantage when we come to the study of the character and nature of God. We are prone to approach it as we would any other study: however, we cannot approach the study of the character and nature of God as we would botany, astronomy, agriculture, electronics, carpentry, or cooking. We are approaching perfections, excellencies, and virtues. We are not able, therefore, to use approximations, averages, proximate causes, tendencies, or potentials. We cannot analyze the "content" or examine the "components" of God to arrive at a classification for God. God is known only by revelation—His revelation.

Additionally, it is a human tendency to describe ourselves and everything else in physical, tangible, material terms—because that is our experience. Our life is largely involved with elements

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that are physical, tangible, material factors. All things physical, tangible, material may be measured—they have height, length, width, weight, and are time bounded. They had a past, have a present, and either have or do not have a future. We cannot reduce God to a mere physical, tangible, material existence. God is transcendent; He is beyond the confines of the physical, the tangible, the material.

Scripture establishes that (1) God is a person, (2) that He is spirit and not physical, and (3) that He is eternal.

As to the first, Scripture makes it certain that God is a person, not a force, nor a principle.

Psalm 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;

Isaiah 40:21-22 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

Concerning the second, the Lord Jesus Himself declared:

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

As to the third, God had no beginning and He shall have no ending. He created time; He is not a creature of time.

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms:

Isaiah 43:10-11 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

In that context, all the standard terms and measurements that we use to describe or to define a person are useless in the study of the person of God. If we are to understand anything

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