

Sermon Outline October 16, 2016

"God is Spirit" John 4:24

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24 NKJ)

I. *What does it mean that God is Spirit?*

1. *First it means that God is immaterial –*

This description speaks to what God is not, what we might say He does not have, in that He does not have a body –

"God is a Spirit; that is, he hath nothing corporeal, no mixture of matter, not a visible substance, a bodily form." Stephen Charnock

A. *This brings up a question, if God has no body, if He is not physical, why does Scripture describe Him as having body parts?*

For instance – He is described as having an arm or arms –

"Therefore say to the children of Israel: `I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. (Exodus 6:6 NKJ)

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? (Isaiah 53:1 NKJ)

He is also described as having eyes and ears –

"The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry." (Psalm 34:15 NKJ)

Jesus speaks of His finger –

"But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Luke 11:20 NKJ)

ANTHROPOMORPHISM Words which describe God as if He had human features. They occur wherever Scripture mentions God's arm, ear, or other body parts. These descriptions are not to be taken literally because God is Spirit (John 4:24). Scripture uses anthropomorphisms frequently in poetic and prophetic literature, but they may occur elsewhere as well. One common anthropomorphism speaks of God's arm. This is usually related to His power to judge or to save. In Exod.

6:6 God says that He will redeem Israel from the Egyptians "with an outstretched arm and with great judgments" (NKJV). This pictures God reaching. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10 NKJ) out to bring plagues on Egypt. Moses, after the deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea, praises God saying that fear of the Lord will fall upon people "because of the greatness of Your arm" (Exod. 15:16 NKJV; cp. Ps. 77:15). Additional passages promise that the arm of the Lord will be strong or victorious (Isa. 40:10; 48:14) and will execute judgment (Isa. 51:5).

Sometimes the Lord's hand is also said to rescue Israel (Exod. 15:16; Deut. 5:15; 11:2–4; 26:8). Psalm 44:1–3 describes how the hand of the Lord and His arm drove the nations out before Israel when they came into the land. Again the words refer to God's actions (breaking down the walls of Jericho, making the sun stand still, etc.) leading to the conquest of Canaan. The hand or arm of the Lord is elsewhere described as having rescued His people or as routing God's enemies (Pss. 89:10; 98:1; 136:11–12).

God's ear is also mentioned often in Scripture. In the Psalms God is implored to incline His ear to the psalmist's prayer (Pss. 17:1, 6; 31:2; 39:12; 55:1; 71:2; 86:1, 6; 88:2; etc.), meaning He is asked to listen closely. One important passage in Isaiah combines His ear, hand, and face: "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor is his ear heavy that it cannot hear, but your sins have hidden His face" (Isa. 59:1–2 NKJV).

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2. *These things tell us that while god is immaterial, He is ABLE, God is an ABLE Spirit –*

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,²⁵ To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25 NKJ)

A. *I say this because in our popular culture, when we think of spirits, one of the things we think of is ghosts, and we typically think of ghosts as limited due to their lack of a body.*

B. *However God is not limited at all. The truth is our bodies limit us.*

C. *God is a creative Spirit, He is the Creator and is able to create with His Word –*

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. (Hebrews 11:3 NKJ)

3. *While God is Spirit, God is a Personal Spirit, even tri-personal –*

He is MORE not less than what we are –

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8 NKJ)

One of the great errors of our popular culture is to think because God is Spirit that He is somehow not a He, a person, but rather a force, more like electricity... a force of nature ...

II. *How is God different than other spirits? All other spirits, whether angels or demons or the spirit or soul of a human being are all limited, they are creatures –*

1. *Some are very powerful –*

Then the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses-- all dead. (Isaiah 37:36 NKJ)

2. *They fight spiritual battles –*

Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words."¹³ "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. (Daniel 10:12-13 NKJ)

3. *However they are limited, the prince of Persia, a spiritual probably demonic being, had his own realm of rule, but God is an unlimited, all powerful Spirit –*

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against

the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:10-12 NKJ)

4. *No other spirit is infinite, eternal, unchangeable, all powerful, all-knowing, or Holy like God!*

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10 NKJ)

III. *How are we to relate to God as a Spirit –*

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24 NKJ)

1. *This is what Jesus is talking with the Samaritan woman about:*

A. *Spiritual worship –*

"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:⁸ "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. (Matthew 15:7-8 NKJ)

Spiritual worship is more than singing a song. A church could pay an unbelieving atheist to sing a hymn and that person may sing beautifully because of a trained voice, or for a large pay check; however this person would not please God! God wants our hearts!

B. *Spirit and TRUTH – In John 4:24 Jesus is not talking about truth opposite of falsehood (though that is important) what Jesus is speaking about in John 4:24 is truth over against shadows and types –*

- *Old Testament believers offered up lambs, we worship the Lamb of God in Christ!*
- *Old Testament believers prayed toward the Temple in Jerusalem, we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit –*

2. *We need to set our minds toward heavenly, spiritual realities – for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17 NKJ)*
We must seek even Jesus (Who came in the flesh) for spiritual reasons – Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."²⁷ "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." (John 6:26-27 NKJ)

Arnold Brevick