

Don't Put God in a Box



You've probably heard the joke about the Atheist and the Christian? It's perhaps a funny and safe way to openly talk about God. But jokes aside... let's talk about "God".

How do you, in your mind's eye, see God? Is your view based on what you've heard, or read, or on close personal investigation?

You see, lots of people have lots of different views about God. Some say, for example, that God is in every leaf and in every tree. Others say that God is just a myth, a virus of the mind, and dangerous for our children's development.

There are gods that come with different names and personalities. The Jews believe in the God of Abraham and Moses. A number of Christian theologians say that God is a trinity. Moslems look to Allah. If you look further into other religions, you'll find a whole host of gods. If you do a "Google" search on the internet for "gods" or "goddesses", then the mind starts to boggle even further.

So it's little surprise that many choose to put God out of their minds altogether.

"Out of sight and out of mind" might sound okay, but is it a safe bet?

The Oldest Testimony

The oldest and most published document in our known history is the Holy Bible. It's a

document, spanning thousands of years, that tells of a Creator God having made us in His own "image and likeness".

It tells of a God who has set certain laws into motion in the universe, and a God who, in abiding by those laws, is prepared to enter our physical realm, and redeem us from the "penalty of that law".

The Bible is also a "testimony" of eye witness accounts, and woven within its pages are milestones that tell us who we are, how we got here and what we might expect in the future. And, right at the heart of this book, is the God who becomes a human as Jesus Christ. In fact, we count this year as 2010 – based on the believed date of His birth.

Big Questions

I suppose the question we should be asking, as we explore this "God" question, is what does God say about Himself? How does He want to be known? And, are we prepared to accept what He does say?

This isn't easy by any step of the imagination. For example, God says:

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9)

Have you ever gone out on a dark, starry night, and pondered just how small we are here on earth? How our galaxy is filled with millions of suns? And that our galaxy is just one among the billions of known galaxies in a seemingly endless universe?

In our time and space continuum, in what we understand about human consciousness, we have a sense of time and place, a beginning and an end.

But ask where God comes from, and God simply says, "I AM."

Our inability to understand this is further

compounded when God says that every hair on our head is numbered!

God says He's not far or distant. He also says that He's an ever-present help for those who will accept Him into their lives.

God further explains that the peoples of this world don't understand God because they have accepted a "blindness" so they can't "see" Him – at least for now.

Of the peoples of His day, Jesus said:

"For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them." (Matthew 13:15)

Jesus also said: *"Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."* (Matthew 7:14)

Wow, what a telling statement!

The Scientific Method

The risk we face, from our small, earthly perspective, is that we like to try to measure and quantify everything.

It's called the scientific method, and while that may be fine in the laboratory, or peering at distant suns or galaxies, it doesn't work with God.

God tells us certain things in scripture, and then just asks us to believe Him. And that is, I think, where the problem exists.

For example, in the third and fourth centuries, certain theologians in the Christian tradition felt it necessary to quantify God – perhaps to make it easier for the common person to understand.

Thus, councils were convened to discuss "the nature of God", and today we have what has become the Trinity doctrine: that God is three divine and co-equal persons.

Interestingly, did you know that this isn't strictly a Biblical teaching, but a human attempt formulated to help us "understand God"? What it does, unfortunately, is fall short of its stated objective. If you like, it again limits God; it puts "God in a box".

God is bigger than anything we can quantify, and anything beyond His specific revelation isn't worth considering.

Many theologians attest that the Trinity concept is largely a mystery, an incomplete and therefore flawed attempt to understand God.

I suppose we'd do well to remember the words of scripture that says: *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever..."* (Deuteronomy 29:29)

What did they believe?

So when you begin to ponder things about God, the best place perhaps to start is with the very men who lived and walked and talked with Jesus – His disciples.

What did they believe, and what did they understand about God?

They certainly understood the Oneness of God, and yet, they also understood that God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son, are ONE, and more than that, that we too are invited into that "Oneness"!

They also understood the metaphor of marriage, for example, an unity between a husband and a wife that mirrors the oneness between God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Years later, in writing to various emerging church groups,

the disciples sent greetings with the familiar words that summed up their understanding of God. This is their testimony, and our evidence:

"Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Biggest Question

The biggest question we could ever ask is whether or not God exists? Far from being a joke or a trivia question on a TV games show, the answer to this is literally a matter of life and death.

I encourage you to find out about God, and know for certain who He is – this weekend, this Saturday, at a local church near you.

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