

University Heights Church of Christ

BULLETIN

November 23, 2008

The True and Living God

According to Genesis 1 in the beginning the true and living God created the heaven and the earth and everything in them. This true and living God has all of the knowledge and power that it takes to do that. The planning and power of the true and living God is evident in everything that humankind has ever been able to discover. When everything is known it turns out that everything has a purpose and everything serves its purpose and that every individual purpose interacts with every other individual purpose so that all are actually part of an unimaginably complex and tightly connected interactive whole. A woolly worm is not just a woolly worm. It is a contributing member of an interactive woolly worm environment that is part of an interconnected ecology that acts as one. All of that, every part, and every part of every part, follow individual complex programs. Those individual programs work together for the propagation of the whole set of systems. Reefs become islands and new reefs form to become new islands so that there are always places for reef dwellers and places for island dwellers. The living God described in the Holy Bible is responsible for the whole show.

But if there is an all powerful, all knowing God responsible for the heaven and the earth would not the all powerful, all knowing God do a better job of design and execution? Why all of the pain, suffering and waste?

Humankind has the ability to use intelligence to understand complex instructions and ideas and make choices based on foreseeable consequences. Humankind has the ability to make choices that are harmful. Human beings have the ability to do things that every society calls wrong, passes laws against and punishes in an attempt to keep them from happening. If God created humankind with the ability to understand right and wrong and to choose to do either, what was God's purpose? If God knows so much why did God not create humankind with no ability to ever do wrong?

The Holy Bible reveals that God desires to be served by human beings that, of their own will, choose to serve God because God is God and it is right to serve God and they want to do right. The Holy Bible reveals that God expects servants of God to serve God faithfully in sickness, in health, in prosperity, in poverty, in good times and in evil times until death. In producing the Holy Bible God has gone to great lengths to make humankind understand the wishes of God and why we as humans in flesh on earth should obey the wishes of God above all else.

Adam and his wife Eve were placed in the garden with only one simple restriction to observe. The devil was there to make them understand that they could, if they chose, disobey God. They both chose to disobey God; Eve because she was lied to and Adam for whatever reason he had. Because of their wrong choice they and their descendents were separated from God, the garden and all of the blessings that they had enjoyed there.

Among the descendents of Adam and Eve there were those who chose to obey God and those who chose not to obey God. Disobeying God proved to be highly popular among humans. It came to a point that there were only eight human beings on earth that were still willing to obey God. The rest filled the earth with violence and ungodliness.

In order to cleanse the earth and give future generations some enlightening things to consider in choosing their own behavior, God buried it all in mud and silt, saving only the contents of a large waterproof wooden box that God had instructed the faithful to build and take shelter in. There is nothing unreasonable about any of that and no logical reason to believe that it did not happen as recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. Evidence indicates that everything recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures up to the dividing of the languages in **Genesis 11** is part of the commonly held memory of every ancient society that has left records.

After clearly demonstrating by the flood that **God does intend to be willingly obeyed**, because God is God and it is right to obey God and the obedient want to do right, God chose Abraham and Abraham's descendents through his son Isaac as a lineage by which to bring a Savior to the earth.

All of the Hebrew Scriptures focus mainly on God's dealings with the descendents of Abraham through Isaac. Those long preserved scriptures prove that God is God and that God has a plan by which every person that is willing to obey God can be redeemed to God. The Hebrew Scriptures are God's instruction manual of how we must respond to God and to God's revealed will if we expect to be saved from the inevitable punishment that will come to those who exercise their free will **to disobey God**. We must know what is written about how to please God. We must learn from the experiences of the Jews under the Law of Moses how both Jews and Gentiles under the New Covenant must behave toward God and toward God's will.

In Egypt the Jews enjoyed great blessings until the Egyptians exercised their free will to do wrong and brought the Jews into bondage.

God sent Moses to Pharaoh to explain that it was time for the Jews to leave. It would have cost Egypt a lot to let the Jews leave but it was the will of the true and living God that it be done. Because of that, it was right to do and regardless of the cost Pharaoh should have done it. It is always cheaper in the end to obey God. Pharaoh refused repeatedly to obey God. Egypt was destroyed and the Jews went to the land God had promised to Abraham and his descendents through Isaac.

On arriving at the Promised Land most of the Jews were afraid and refused to go in and take the land. God turned the Jews back into the wilderness where all of the faithless died. Their children took the land and were blessed as long as they obeyed God. When they failed to obey God they suffered. They suffered a lot because they disobeyed God a lot. When under pressure they mended their ways God delivered them. Each time they again turned away from God. Because of their departures the form of government was changed, the nation was divided and as parts of the nation began to be carried into bondage the Jews began to lose the land.

God sent them prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others whose messages of warning are preserved in the Hebrew scriptures. The Jews refused to heed the warnings of God. Because they refused to heed Jerusalem was destroyed and Judea became an empty wasteland for seventy years. When they repented the faithful were allowed to return, rebuild and reestablish worship in Judea according to the law that God had given to them through Moses. Even as the time was approaching for the coming of the eternal kingdom of God and the long awaited Messiah the Jews were again turning away from God.

This time God sent a prophet named John who called upon them to repent. Most of the leaders refused to obey John's inspired message.

God sent Jesus of Nazareth to preach, work miracles, live a sinless life, die an innocent death and give God's New Covenant of eternal salvation to the world. Every prophecy and every symbol of the Messiah, preserved in the Hebrew Scriptures, points to Jesus of Nazareth and to the first century AD. Jesus of Nazareth, by living a sinless life and dying an innocent death, became the true sacrifice of which every sacrifice under the Law of Moses had been a prophetic symbol. Jesus of Nazareth can be recognized as the Messiah because Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled every qualification given in the Hebrew Scriptures as a means by which to recognize the Messiah.

In Jesus of Nazareth and in the church for which Jesus died the all powerful and all knowing God is gathering together those human beings that are willing, in spite of the cost, to obey God of their own free will, because God is God and it is right to obey God and they wish more than anything else to do right. To God be the glory for the eternal salvation in which every repentant, obedient believer may share, both Jew and Gentile.

Remember To Pray For

Dallis and Alma Isaacs the parents of Sharon Nations who are moving to KY for health reasons

Francis Nations mother of Marc Nations suffering with heart problems

Bill Baker

Mary Jane Frost

Melanie Bilye

Rick Shamas

Bonnie Wells

Sarah Phillips

David Alford

Carol Bach

Marian Lyda

Edith Tirey

Waldine Childress

Jeanette Lindsey

Lucy Hale

Pamela Clayton

Ella Wells, and her family

Lorene Pagan

Freddie Ward

David and Chessie Harwell

Donna Caldwell

Mabel Greene

Tony Tyree

Ruth Brundige

Cindy Miller

Christie Ellis

Shirley Lewis

Brady Gibbons

Gail Hunter

Larry Flannery

Donnie Joseph

Cheryl Spear

Lanny Hiller

Charity and Abdiel Pallafox

Helen Stephens

Chris Handshoe

Jeffrey Howerton

Addison Pervine

Carl Stripplehoff

Tom Kemp

Freda Blakey

Psalms 40: 8 *"I delight to do your will, O my God: yes, your law [is] within my heart."*

Can any do God's will
Without knowing the Bible?

There are many ways to do many things but there is only one way to be saved from sin

Against much adversity and opposition Ezra had good success in doing God's will. Ezra had a method that every child of God who uses it will profit by.

Ezra 7: 10 *"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do [it], and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."*

Thoughts

Proverbs 4:23 *"Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it [are] the issues of life"*

The heart is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. That is not surprising since the Bible deals with humans and the heart is the most human characteristic of humankind. It is in the heart that we humans think, to our good or to our hurt.

As a person thinks in his or her heart, so is that person according to **Proverbs 23:7**. The devil had to steal Eve's heart from God before he could steal Eve. The devil had to make Eve think against God to her own hurt before the devil could persuade her to act to her own hurt by disobeying God. Eve disobeyed God because of the untrue thoughts that the devil planted in her heart. Each of us disobeys God because of the untrue thoughts that the devil constantly plants in our hearts. It is no wonder that the Bible tells us to keep our hearts with all diligence. Out of our hearts truly come the issues of life. One of the first moves in keeping the heart is to determine to speak the truth. A lying tongue is the mortal enemy of a well kept heart because it substitutes hypocrisy and lies for the genuine reformation of thinking that must take place for a human heart to be kept where it must be in order to please God. So, step number one, in heart preservation, is to stop lying to self and to others. Only the truth will make us free. Double talk and deception will keep us groping in the dark enslaved to the devil.

Proverbs 4: 24 *"Put away from you a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from you."*

The second step in heart preservation is to keep our attention focused in the direction in which we are actually moving. The devil's demonstrated intent is to move us to anywhere except where God desires for us to be. We must keep our attention focused on the fact that we are here to demonstrate our determination, against all opposition, clever persuasion or alluring distractions, to obey God's revealed will.

Proverbs 4:25 *"Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you."*

The next move in heart preservation is to think about where each foot is placed in every step on the path that we are following and where each step puts us in relationship to our intended purpose of obeying God's revealed will.

Proverbs 4:26 *"Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established."*

A further step in heart preservation is to keep only to the path God has given us to follow. Regardless of the excuses given for why we should turn aside to one thing or another we must not ever be lured into turning aside from the road that God has in his revealed will laid out before us. We must not let our feet be moved in any evil pursuit.

Proverbs 4:27 *"Turn not to the right hand or to the left: remove your foot from evil."*

We must devote every corner of our heart to loving God. We can do that because we do control our heart.

Mark 12: 30 *"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this [is] the first commandment."*

Notes

There will be a meeting of the teachers today at 4:00PM

There will be an informational meeting today at 4:30PM

Christians are commanded to love:

Their enemies **Matthew 5:43**

Their neighbor as themselves **Matthew 19:19**

The Lord **Matthew 22:37**

Their wives **Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19**

One another **1Thessalonians 4:9; 1Peter 1:22; 1John 3:11; 1John 4:7**

The coming of Jesus Christ **2Timothy 4:8**

The brotherhood **1Peter 2:17**

These are all commands to love with a love that Peter would not, in **John 21:15-18** admit that he had for Jesus. We can ponder that at great length. Jesus asked, "do you love me?" (Agapao in the Greek in which the New Testament was written) Peter answered, "Yes I love you." (Phileo in Greek) Jesus asked the same thing again and received the same answer. When Jesus asked the third time Jesus used the same word Peter had used in his answers as if to emphasize the difference in Jesus' questions and Peter's answers. It makes one wonder if Peter was avoiding the word "agapao" and if so why?

Schedule of Services

Sunday Morning

Bible Classes 9:45 AM

Worship Service 10:45 AM

Sunday Evening

Worship Service 6:00 PM

Wednesday Evening

Bible Studies (all ages) 7:30 PM

Monthly Song Service

First Friday each month 7:30 PM

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**COME STUDY THE BIBLE
AND WORSHIP WITH US**

HELP GOD'S WORD GROW

LEARN IT • OBEY IT • TEACH IT