

Church of God, The Eternal

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Fundamentals of Belief #2 Fundamental 1—Part B; God Is Eternal

**Edited Sermon Transcript
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This afternoon, brethren, we are going to continue in the new series that I began last time I was here. The series on the Fundamentals of Belief of Church of God, the Eternal. If you will remember, there are twenty-six fundamentals of belief. Now, the first twenty of those are verbatim, the original fundamentals as written by the Radio Church of God, supplemented by six additional fundamentals that help address some of the issues that have always been a part of the teachings, but were not put in to writing in the list of fundamentals. Because of the things that have occurred within the church in the last two decades, there were catalysts that became important in the way God's people approached and responded to the truth, so it was important for us to put those things together in writing so there is no doubt for anyone who will read those fundamentals, either within the body or without, to know what we stand for and what we hold dear. That is what the point of those fundamentals of belief is.

So as we begin to go through these fundamentals one by one, ultimately we will get through each one. At the rate that I am going with number one, this could be a very long series. If you will remember, we only got through the very first phrase of the very first fundamental last time. I hope to speed up somewhat on that, but I can already tell you that we are only going to get through about three phrases on fundamental one. So it is going to take me another sermon in order to complete fundamental number one.

With fundamental one we are dealing with God. We are dealing with who and what God is. I do not want to rush through this topic. It is incredibly important for us to understand. It is the foundational thing that we need to understand before we go in to any of the other fundamentals that talk about—the doctrines and that revelation that we received. We must spend enough time so that we have a good understanding of who this Being is that we call God.

Fundamental number one, I will read it for you again:

We believe in ONE GOD, eternally existing in the heavens, who is a Spirit, a personal Being of supreme intelligence, knowledge, love, justice, power, and

authority, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, and the source of life.

That is fundamental number one. Last week we got through a summary of the concept of one God. "We believe in one God." Let's continue this afternoon with the next phrase, "We believe in ONE GOD, eternally existing." So the first characteristic of God that is in our beliefs, we believe in a God who eternally exists. A God that has always been, a God that will always be. Why do we believe in an eternal God? What is our substantiation for the belief in a God who is eternal? First of all, that *YHVH* that we talked about last time, the *YHVH* translated "The Lord" in the Old Testament—that name is nothing more than the three forms of the verb "to be" in the Hebrew, laid one on top of the other. The origin of that word then encompasses the past, the present and the future. The verb "to be," "having been," "is" and "will be" altogether in one. That is what that *YHVH* means. It is a perfect definition of the God that we worship because we believe therefore that He is eternal and the very name expresses very succinctly His status as an eternal Being. Let's see it in Psalms 90:1. Why do we believe that God is eternal—here is one reason. The prayer of Moses, the man of God:

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

What was it that the psalmist said from the prayer of Moses? ". . . even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Next, notice Hebrews 7:1–2:

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.

So here we are talking about a Being called Melchisedec, who was the high priest of God, the very one whom Abraham dealt with. The very one to whom Abraham paid tithes, lest there be anyone who doubts the legitimacy of tithes. Who was this Being? Who was this Melchisedec? We find out He is the king of righteousness; He is also the King of Salem, which is the King of peace. It is none other than the Being who became Jesus Christ. That Melchisedec was the *YHVH*, the *YHVH* of the Old Testament whom Abraham worshipped, whom all the patriarchs worshipped. What does it say about this King of peace? What are we told here that defines this very Being, who was not only the high priest of God, but was also the King and the God who the patriarchs worshipped? Verse 3:

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Here we find further substantiation for our belief in the eternity of the God that we worship. "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." He was that Being that we called the God of the second part, who was with God of the first part from the very beginning in that God family, in that perfect relationship; one God, one family.

Human minds cannot comprehend that eternity that we are speaking of. Our concept of time depends directly upon the relationship of the astrobodies in this solar system orbiting. Everything that we think of in terms of time has to do with the Earth orbiting the sun, so how can we even begin to understand the concept of God and His eternity when the only thing that we can do in our human minds is to put it in perspective by the Earth orbiting the sun. How do we define time prior to the creation, prior to the time which that God family brought into being with that sun, the Earth, and all the other planets in this solar system that we are familiar with? How was time marked before that celestial relationship was established? We can't even grasp what it is. Any attempt to even define eternity and the origin of God—the time that He has been in existence—by the concepts of our own minds is fruitless. There is no way we can even begin to do it because he has no origin. There was no point in time, and there again we use that term, and it is to keep from using the term, time. It is the only one that we know; it is the only thing that we can grab on to. But there is no point when that Being did not exist, when He was not alive. Human minds cannot comprehend that eternity.

Exodus 3:13: Here we find an example of this eternal God, defining for Moses exactly what His name is, another name. What was Moses to give to the children of Israel, to tell them who it was that had sent him? Here we find in Exodus 3:13–14, that which God delivered to Moses is a way for most human minds to capture exactly, to the limits of our physical abilities and our mental capacities, or to catalog, that eternity, even as insufficient as it is. Let's read it here:

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

He called himself "I AM." Maybe better than any other name or demarcation that delineates the eternity of God. He is called by a name that simply means, "I am." Not "I was," not "I will be." Even that He is, and always has been, and always shall be. Very simply, "I am." It encompasses everything, there is nothing left out, there is nothing beyond the power of that God. "I AM THAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." This is an eternal God that we are talking about brethren, this is not a Being that was created out of the imaginations of any human being. This is not a being that materialized out of some ether or some substance at some point. This is not a

Being that we can catalog by anything within our own human capability. He is an eternal God who preexists everything and that will certainly continue to live and to rule for all eternity into the future.

John 8:56: Here Jesus Christ again—lest there be any doubt who that Being was who both spoke to Moses, and gave those commandments and those laws, lest there be any doubt yet, on who that Being called "I AM," the *YHVH* was, here Jesus Christ as He walked in the flesh among the apostles—reconfirmed it. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." So here, this man who they could touch and they could feel, claimed right here that Abraham saw Him in his day. You can expect the results, from those that did not believe that He was the Son of God, and how they would respond to this.

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

A confirmation, right there, of exactly who He was. He was telling them, "I am the very same Being, the I AM, who spoke to Moses, the very same Being who was with God of the first part from the beginning." However we classify it to say "a beginning," when there is no beginning for those eternal Beings in that family, here He was confirming once again who He was.

Isaiah 43:10–11: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." This is that same *YHVH*, the God of the Old Testament, who became Jesus Christ.

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 savior.

Here what He said, even within this passage in Isaiah, is a conformation again, looking forward to what He would fulfill in the flesh, being born to become the savior of mankind and here this very eternal God, to Isaiah, was confirming who He was. Verses 11–12:

I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no savior. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

In other words, "Who will prevent it?" "Who will thwart the operation and the purpose of that God?" This is an eternal God of incredible power. There is nothing to

compare to this Being that we worship. We will see that later on, the concept of the power of that Being, but for right now we are talking about the attributes of God as defined in our Fundamentals of Belief, a God that is eternally existing. "We believe in one God, eternally existing."

Next, we want to look at the abode of that God because our fundamental says, "We believe in ONE GOD, eternally existing." Where? "In the heavens." So let's look at that concept. The place that God has made His throne. Where do we find justification for believing that this eternal God dwells in heaven, as opposed to the pagan thought of many religions that see God as this indefinable power, some sort of a misty presence that cannot be defined? We believe in a God, as we will see even yet, who is a personal Being and He does have a place where He dwells. He does have a real throne and it is in heaven. Let's see it first, and we will define what those heavens are, but momentarily let's read a couple of the scriptures that support that belief.

Matthew 6:9: "After this manner therefore pray ye: [Christ's example] Our Father which art in heaven." Here, Jesus Christ tells us exactly where God the Father dwells and where He lives. He lives in a place called "heaven"—wherever that heaven happens to be. It is the place where God resides. Notice it also in Matthew 7:21:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

So it is a place that Christ referred to as "heaven," where that Father resides. But what heaven is He referring to? Is it the heaven that is mentioned in the first and second chapters of Genesis? Well, let's turn to it and read. Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." Here we find a summary statement after the creation of the heavens and the earth. What is this that is referred to as "the heavens"? Is this the heaven that Jesus Christ was talking about when He said that His Father was in heaven? Well how can that be? Common sense will tell you that if God has always existed, if He is eternal, and you know at some point in time that only that which can be marked by a few thousand years, at least the re-creation of the Earth, that there was a creation of the heavens and the Earth. But if there was a point in time when those heavens and the Earth came into being for the first time then how can that be a place that could have been the abode of an eternal God who has always existed? Certainly, this is not the same "heavens" that define the abode of God. The very word in Genesis 2:1 for "heavens" is the Hebrew word, *shamayim*. It means to be lofty, disguise, alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve. That's the definition of this Hebrew word which defines exactly what it was that was created at the time spoken of in Genesis. We are talking about the very atmosphere around the Earth as well as that which is involved in what we call the second heaven, where the planets and the stars move in the way that God has ordained within this galaxy called the Milky Way that we are

familiar with, as well as all the other galaxies and all that is within reach of man to understand and comprehend.

So we send out spacecraft and we send out all manner of vessels, unmanned spacecraft, in order to try and document this universe that we live in, to try and probe the very furthest extent that we can reach. That which we can't reach physically with cameras, we try to determine through very powerful telescopes to try and look into these other galaxies or we analyze the light that is projected from the stars billions and billions of miles away in an attempt to try and catalog and define the universe. Those things are done by individuals who really, for the most part, do not believe in an eternal God that created them. They look instead to try and find other life on other planets that they believe might have come about in the same way they believe life on this Earth came about, through an evolutionary process out of nothingness, and they won't find it.

So man is fascinated by the heavenly bodies and with that universe that they can't see, attempting to define it, to catalog it—to gain all knowledge. But even that—with all the capabilities that man has developed with technology and the fascinating things that they have learned and put together—can never reach that heaven that Christ talked about as "the abode of the Heavenly Father," because that heaven is what we have always referred to as the third heaven. The third heaven is the place that God reigns with His throne and that can never be reached or touched or even imagined by weak human beings. All that we can see or hopefully catalog falls within that realm that we call the second heaven—the realm of the stars and the planets.

So we have, as the church always taught, three specific references to heaven in the bible. In some cases the word heaven refers to the very atmosphere around the Earth, and without having the time to go through it, some of the confusion that has been generated centers around misinterpreting the word, heaven.

For when, as one example you're familiar with, Elijah was taken up into the heavens, that was strictly and specifically a reference to this very atmosphere around the Earth, not that he was taken up unto the throne of God in the third heaven.

John 3:12: More that Jesus Christ reveals. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" So here, Christ is showing even in the very physical things that He was providing, that could be verified, and yet those people had a hard time believing or accepting them. So He says; "If you can't even understand the things that I have provided for you that are physical, how can you begin to understand the things that are spiritual that you can't see?"

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven . . .

What heaven is this speaking of? Obviously, we are not talking about the heaven, the physical atmosphere that surrounds this planet because we have certainly gone in our jet planes and our rocket ships, not only through this Earth's atmosphere, but into that which is called the second heaven. We landed a man on the moon. Those men were in that which we call the second heaven, outside of the atmosphere of this Earth.

"No man hath ascended up to heaven." So what heaven is it that Jesus Christ is speaking of here? "But he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Here we are talking about the habitation of the throne of God, the third heaven which is beyond the reach of man. "The Son of man which is in heaven." So here we find out that not only the Father has His throne in this third heaven, but that this is exactly where God of the second part, who became Jesus Christ, dwelled as well. Christ, therefore, is in heaven, as we will see. He is also said to be with the Father on His throne. So we know that they are together. Let's notice it in Revelation 3:21:

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Where then is Jesus Christ, who died, was resurrected and ascended? He ascended even to the very throne of the Father where He sits with Him on His right hand. "And am set down with my Father in his throne." Those two Beings who make up the God family now, the Father and the Son, who were together as God of the first part and God of the second part, even from eternity, were together in that heaven, on that throne and even now are together on that throne. God's throne is, therefore, in that heaven. Let's notice a scripture that tells us how Christ got to that throne.

How did He get to heaven? How did He get to God's throne? Hebrews 4:14 tells us: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens . . ." The word "into" is actually more appropriately translated in the Greek the word "through." It really should read: Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed through the heavens. Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

To tell you that the process of His ascension after His death, burial and resurrection was that He passed in spirit form through the very atmosphere of the first heaven of this Earth, through the celestial heaven (the second heaven), passed through those two heavens, those barriers that limit man, into the third heaven where He was reunited with His Father on His throne. God's throne is in heaven. Notice it again in Psalms 11:4.

The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

That God therefore, we have confirmed, sits on a throne in that heaven which is out of the reach of mankind. Let's notice a description of that throne. Just to give us a picture of what that very habitation of that Eternal God family is. Let's look at it in Revelation 4. I'm just going to read through chapter 4 because it gives probably one of the best pictures for us to understand, even with the limits of our human minds, the awesome manifestation of God upon His throne in heaven.

Revelation 4—the Apostle John speaking as he was given this revelation from Jesus Christ:

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne [talking about the very throne of God]. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne . . .

Notice all the detail we are given about that throne.

. . . and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment . . .

So there are twenty-four beings that sit on thrones around the throne of God.

. . . four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.

Think about what that might look like. We can't even begin to imagine it. Whether that's describing the floor or some surface that surrounds that throne and to think about what a crystal sea of glass would look like.

. . . there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [more appropriately translated as "living creatures"] full of eyes before and behind. And the first [creature] was like a lion, and the second [creature] like a calf, and the third [creature] had a face as a man, and the fourth [creature] was like a flying eagle.

These are the very creatures that God created, angelic beings that worship at His throne in that third heaven.

And the four creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Proclaiming, those beings, the eternity of that God that they worship at that throne.

And when those [creatures] give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

What kind of respect and worship is going on even at this very moment at that throne of God among those faithful beings—those creatures, those heavenly angels who were created, who did not revolt, who did not follow Lucifer into idolatry and rebellion, but chose to be faithful and to serve the All-Living God? And they worship at that throne in the third heaven, and fall down before Him continually. If you read more in the book of Revelation, you will find how often those beings continually proclaim and praise that living God, those Beings in the God family that sit upon that throne.

This is what's involved when we say, as a fundamental of belief of the Church of God, the Eternal; "We believe in one God, eternally existing in the heavens." These are the things that we should picture in our minds. These are the things that we should think about when we think about what that God is and the power that He holds, and that He wields and uses to carry out His master plan, even concerning earthly creatures, these human beings. Keep it in mind.

"We believe in one God, eternally existing in the heavens who is a Spirit"—the next concept that we want to analyze. This God that we worship is a spirit. Acts 17:29:

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead [or the divinity] is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

It sounds like a simple statement, one that we can easily take for granted. Well, of course we know that God is not like we are. But how many times do human beings in the way that they act and behave, and the decisions that they make, prove that their very orientation is to put God down upon our level and to treat Him as if He is no different than

we are? Take it seriously, brethren, for it is true. We are the offspring of God—His creation for a purpose. ". . . we ought not to think that the [divinity] is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device." He is a spiritual Being, everlasting and ever living—He is a spirit. Let's look at some of the attributes of that Spirit.

Genesis 1:1: The very first reference in the Bible, at the time of the re-creation of the Earth. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void" [*tohuw* and *bohuw* in the Hebrew]. It had become in this condition, after it's initial creation as a perfect abode, destroyed by Satan and his demons. This then, at the beginning of the story, is the re-creation of that; when God prepared it then, for mankind:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The very first reference we have of God as a Spirit. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." John 4:23: Why do we believe that God is a Spirit? John 4:23–24 tells us the substantiation of our belief.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit . . .

There we find it. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

There is a distinction, brethren, between the spiritual and the physical. God, as a spirit Being, is on a plane that we cannot begin to touch. He created us in the flesh. A barrier exists between the flesh and the spirit which we cannot pass except by His divine intervention to grant us His Holy Spirit, for we have an opportunity, by His miraculous intervention, to cross that void. That spirit realm is even more real, by comparison, than that which we know in the flesh—that which we can see and that which we can put our hands on and verify. Lest we forget, there are powerful spirit beings that God has created, even those who have rejected Him and who now seek our own destruction. They are real too. That Satan, that Devil and his army already having lost their hope for a reward, are seeking now, to destroy us, but that we will get to in future fundamentals as well.

1 Corinthians 15:44–46. We will see a description of the difference between the flesh and the spirit:

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; and the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. [So we

will see, that second Adam was the one who became Jesus Christ]. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

The entire plan of salvation, brethren, centers around God's determination to create physical beings—very limited in capacity by design, flesh that is corruptible and dies. There is no inherent life in that which we are, like the first great lie that Satan told to that couple in the Garden of Eden—that they already had life inherent. Well, they didn't, and we don't because God created us flesh and He put us in that barrier of the natural, preventing us from having anything to do with the spiritual or being able to cross that plane into the spiritual realm that God dwells in. "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

For those that can qualify and prove that they will love God, that they can put on perfect character, put on the nature of Jesus Christ, there is that opportunity then to bridge that gap into the spiritual. Verse 47–48:

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

Just so that we understand it, we are talking about two different realms as God has designed and created it, and He is of the spiritual realm—He is a Spirit. Notice then Psalms 99:9. We are seeing that God is a Spirit. What else do we know about God? "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy." This God who is a Spirit is also said to be holy. That means He is of pure heart and without sin, He is righteous, He is perfect. We will pursue more of those descriptions later concerning the characteristics of God, but recognize that He is holy.

1 Samuel 2:2: "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God." This is a holy Being that we are talking about. He is a Spirit and He is holy. Therefore, God is a Spirit, He is holy, He is the personification of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a third person, the Holy Spirit is the power that God uses to do His work. The Holy Spirit is encompassed within the very Being of God because He Himself, both the Father and the Son, are Holy Spirits. One of our fundamentals speaks specifically about the Holy Spirit, so I will save a lot of comments about that for then. This is just to set the stage as we are defining the very character and the Being and the attributes of that God that we worship. Ephesians 4:4–6:

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One god and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Did you notice, brethren, "one body, and one Spirit?" The singularity of that Spirit is that which is shared in the God family by the Father and the Son—those two, who are themselves, those Holy Spirits. Two Beings, and yet sharing the unanimity, the oneness that comes from a single spirit, a single orientation, a harmonious and unified mind. Who is it then, in their concept of God, that will justify division among those who claim to be led by the Holy Spirit of God? Who is it that can justify in their own minds the concept of the called of God being separate—not walking harmoniously together, not being unified in that singularity of spirit and that mind of God? Anyone who claims this concept of "separate, but equal" accuses God of having a divided mind and denies the very Being of the God that we worship and that we love. It cannot be, brethren.

We spent so much time on this concept of the oneness of God and the very character and the attributes of God because it flavors everything that we believe on every other doctrine, as we will go through it in this series on the fundamentals. If we do not get it right now, if we do not understand the totality of the fullness of what that God represents, and what it means to be unified with a singleness of spirit of mind, then we cannot comprehend, let alone begin to obey all of the other doctrines that are part of this belief that we were given as revelation.

"There is one body, and one Spirit." Anytime you do not find oneness and unity, it means there is a distinction between the uses of the Spirit. Either one is using the Spirit and the other is not, or maybe neither of them is using the Spirit. But where you find division and separation, you do not find unanimity of the use of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God creates oneness, even as the Father and the Son are one and there is no other option.

So we believe in one God, eternally existing in the heavens, who is a Spirit, who also is a personal Being. That is the final concept we are going to talk about this afternoon because the next part of the belief says; "a personal Being of supreme intelligence, knowledge" and goes on with a long list of characteristics that define that God. I'm going to stop with the concept of a personal being. Let's look at what it means to be a personal being. This God that we worship, what do we mean, a personal Being?

Many religions of the world believe in a God that cannot be defined, a God that does not have a face, a God that does not have a presence, an image or anything that can be defined. The occult world and all the pagan religions share in common this false sense of a God as an ethereal, indefinable being. Their greatest hope for achieving their ultimate spiritual realization is to be merged into a God of nothingness, having no form, having no presence, totally indefinable. So first, when we say, "We believe in a God who is a personal Being," we are making the statement that our God can be measured and defined, as He has *given* us the ability. He has attributes, He has characteristics. What are those characteristics that make Him a personal Being?

First, we can say it is the fact that He created us to look like Him. How can we know what God looks like? Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ." So why do we say, "God looks like us"? More appropriate to say, "We look like God." That is not arrogance, brethren, that is exactly what God revealed in His Holy Scripture. Because of the fact—as we will see as we go through these fundamentals and the plan of salvation—He created us with the hope and the opportunity to become members of His God family, to share that holy realm with the Father and with the Son. Therefore, because of the expectation of our hope of salvation, He even created us, although earthly and fleshly, in His very image—to look like He looks. Can you even comprehend that very concept?

Revelation 1:13: Can we certify that God actually looks like we do, or that more accurately; we look like God? Let's see a description of all the physical attributes of God and the way that He looks. "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man . . ." There is that Being, that Jesus Christ, who was the *YHVH* of the Old Testament. ". . . one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot . . ." So He is clothed. ". . . and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head [notice He has a head and hair] and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow . . ." Here is a description of the God that you worship and that you serve.

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

We recognize the power and the brightness of our own sun, don't we? We can see it and we know enough to recognize that there is incredible power of illumination that comes from that star. Enough so that it would put our eyes out if we stared at it. That is exactly the power that He compares Himself to in this revelation to the Apostle John.

Think about the God that we worship in terms of His physical attributes because we just saw, He does have a head, He has hair, He has eyes, He has feet, He has a voice, He has hands, and He has a mouth. All of the things that we have, He had them first. This is the way that God family looked, what those Beings looked like from eternity. We only received our bodies to look like Him, since the beginning of this creation. We didn't come first, brethren, He came first and always has been. The very bodies that you have were fashioned after the likeness of God.

Is He a personal Being? You better believe it! Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen . . ." So first, they are called invisible, that entire spiritual realm is invisible to us. Were it not through His revelation in myriad

ways, we would have no comprehension, whatsoever, of the things that are contained in that spiritual realm. And yet, we are told here, by the inspired scripture:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and [divinity]; so that they are without excuse.

The very creation of this Earth and everything in the Earth, the very creation of mankind was a way that God used to reveal Himself to mankind. Because He created us to look like Him, even though we cannot see the Spirit yet, it is a revelation; it is a statement of God to mankind of what He looks like. All of the things that are part of this world, according to His creation, reveal something about that spirit world.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made . . .

We even know what some of the angelic beings look like because of the description in Revelation, chapter 4, that described one as looking like a bird and others that look like other animals and creatures that we find on this Earth, and yet, they were made in the likeness of beings that serve at the very throne of God. John 1:18:

No man hath seen God at any time [That is referring to God of the first part who became the Father]. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Turning over to John 14:8–10:

Phillip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it suffieth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Christ was the further revelation of the very Father, in His flesh as He walked on this Earth—part of that gospel that He brought to reveal the Father to those who would believe. And He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"—lest there be any doubt that this Father is a personal Being. Was Jesus Christ a personal Being? Was He manifested as a personal Being with power and with ability and with a message? Then so as was Christ, so is the Father.

John 17:3–5. The prayer that Christ offered up to His Father before His torture, His crucifixion and His death. Here He said:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

This Being had possessed a spiritual body, a personal Being, with the Father in power and glory, on that throne in that spiritual realm. He came willingly as a sacrifice for mankind, became born in the flesh. Divested Himself of His divinity, became flesh, and yet, in that flesh was the very revelation of the Father through the things that He did, the things that He said and even His very presence, as He looked.

That Being, that human being divinely inspired, having fulfilled His mission, returned to the Father, and after that resurrection, was given the fulfillment of that which He asked from the Father. We already saw in Revelation that He does sit again at the throne in the third heaven with His Father, upon that throne as a powerful Being. We have read the description in Revelation 1 of what He looks like in that glorified fashion. We know, therefore, that God heard His prayer and fulfilled His request to give to Him again that glory.

These are very personal Beings. These are Beings within this God family who have revealed themselves to us as one God, who have allowed us to understand through the preservation of the Scripture, through the revelation, through chosen servants, that we are dealing with a single God family, that we are dealing with eternal Beings, and that we are dealing with Beings who live in that third heaven, beyond the reach of mankind. These Beings are Spirit and they are personal Beings.

Next time, we are going to look at the characteristics of that Being, the character of that one God.