

# Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775  
Eugene, Oregon 97440

## **Fundamentals of Belief #3 Fundamental 1—Part C; God's Character**

**Edited Sermon Transcript  
Jon W. Brisby; 01-01-00**

This afternoon, brethren, we are going to continue with the series that I started before on The Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, the Eternal. If you will remember, we are still on fundamental number one. I am going to read that fundamental for you:

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.

So if you will recall in the first sermon, we focused completely on the very first phrase which was the topic, "We believe in one God." We went through, to show you, the relationship within the God family and those two Beings—being one God and yet, having two individuals within that divinity—He who became known as the Father, who was God of the first part and He who became known as the Son, who was God of the second part. We saw the relationship of those Beings and how it is possible that two beings yet can be one, totally unified in a single spirit.

Then we focused on the next phrases which said that God is "eternally existing in the heavens." We talked about the eternity of God, what is involved in being an eternal Being "existing in the heavens." We talked about the residence of God in the third heaven, that Being who is a spirit. Also, the distinctions between the flesh and the spirit and the fact that this God is a personal Being, that He created us in His image and therefore, we look physically like that God because He created us in His image. He is a personal Being.

Now we are going to continue with the remainder and to, hopefully, complete fundamental number one. The remaining part of the statement of fundamental number one is basically a description of the character of God. So this afternoon we are going to talk about those attributes—the character of that one God.

We find here, "a personal Being of supreme intelligence [and] knowledge." So let's begin by talking about the intelligence and the knowledge of that Being that we worship and that we call, "God." "A personal Being of supreme intelligence [and] knowledge." Turn

with me first to 1 Samuel 2:1. Here we read the record of the prayer that Hannah, who was Samuel's mother, offered up. Her praise to God. And here is what she said:

AND Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

The God that we serve is not just a divine Being that has no thought, no mind, and no consciousness. Many of the religions of the world today profess a god that is only a spirit, an undefined power, something that they can create in their own image, according to their own thinking and their rationalization. Yet, the God that we serve is a personal Being and He is full of divine knowledge—perfect knowledge.

Job 21:22: We will see what Job had to say about this God. "Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high." Think about the most significant mind of any human being you can think of on this Earth—the highest in intellect, knowledge and intelligence—and whoever that human being is, is also one who was created by this God that we serve.

Now that we have entered what they are calling, "the new millennium" and you have seen all the historical references and the pieces in the media that have been put together about the last century and the last millennium and the questions that have been asked. "Who is the most significant individual of our times that defines the last century and the last thousand years that we have just completed?" You have heard Albert Einstein's name thrown out as one of the most intelligent and one of the most significant personalities and individuals of our time for the things that he contributed and the understanding that he brought within the scientific community. Yet, all the things that Albert Einstein provided was a further glimpse into the laws of God because all of his theory of relativity and of atomic power and all the things that he spoke about, those that he taught, those that he discovered in his scientific endeavors were merely unveiling more of the very truth of the laws that God set in motion that uphold this very Earth and the heavens—all of the powers and the glories that are manifested within the creation of a living God. So men worship, in essence, the brilliance of other men. Those that they find compelling for their intellect and their knowledge and their abilities and yet, the brightest among those men are simply the creation of a much, much higher power.

There is not a single human being, no matter how bright, no matter how intelligent, no matter how accomplished, that can ever be compared, even in the same thought, with the Creator God. Job said it best; "Shall any teach God knowledge? Seeing he judgeth those

that are high." No human being can even compare, and we can compare God to no human being. Proverbs 2:3:

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;  
If you seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

What Being is it that defines what real knowledge, comprehensive knowledge and understanding of intellect is? Who is it that defines that but the very Creator God who we serve? ". . . out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Psalm 147:5. What is the limit of the capacity, of the understanding, of the knowledge, of the intellect of God? "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." There is no limit to the knowledge and the understanding of God. There is no way to even try and define the limits of His power and His glory and of the things that He knows and that He understands. In Romans 11:33, Paul wrote:

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

No, brethren, there is no way that the human mind can even begin to understand the depth of the capacity of the mind of the living God. It is beyond our means.

. . . how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past find out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Where did God get it? Where did God get His capacity and His understanding and His knowledge and His wisdom? There is no other being from whom He received it. He is the origin of knowledge and He is the origin of wisdom and understanding. As we already read in Psalms 47, He has had it infinitely, forever, without beginning and without end. How can we even understand and comprehend it.

Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?  
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Quite a statement. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:" That's the God that we serve. Isaiah 40:12:

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and

weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

No, God is the origin of perfect and comprehensive knowledge, understanding and wisdom and there is no other. 1 Kings 8:39:

Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men). . .

How expansive is the knowledge and understanding of our God? He even knows your very thoughts. Brethren, He knows everything about us. There is not a single thought that enters or crosses your mind that God does not know. How deep then, is the knowledge of the God that we serve? "Whose heart thou knowest." He knows exactly what is in our hearts. We can put on a good show for other people, brethren. We can put on a smile and we can say just the right words. We can do whatever we think we can in order to create an image of what we want others to think that we are, but the God who created us and guides us, and to whom we are responsible to serve, He knows our very hearts. So who are we going to kid? This is a God of knowledge. This is a God of infinite knowledge. This is a God who knows your very thoughts. "Whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men)." Job 42:1:

THEN Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Job understood and he recognized the God that he was serving.

I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

The Being that knew, is the one that created us all. 1 Corinthians 2:6:

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Is that a God of incomprehensible knowledge and understanding? Paul said: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom." And yes, it is wisdom that was hidden from the minds of man. A veil that God placed, intentionally, across the eyes and the hearts so that mankind could not and would not understand the truths of God—His perfect wisdom and His understanding. And yet, only to a few has He revealed it.

So Paul was one of those chosen servants through whom that way, that knowledge, that understanding of the living God began to be opened to those chosen. ". . . even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." It was a plan that He began even before the creation. Even before He put it into motion to create the Earth—let alone the first human beings—yet, already, the very plan, according to His knowledge and His understanding and His will, was already accomplished. This knowledge of God includes foreknowledge. The knowledge of God that we are talking about, the God that we worship includes foreknowledge.

I have already gone through this subject in a recent writing concerning predestination. It is interesting how the very topic of predestination can become a catalyst for misinterpretation of the very nature of God—misinterpretation by those even who once understood the truth and taught and preached it. It was of the minds of those men who were bent towards scholarly interpretation who even many, many years ago began to latch onto this idea about limiting the knowledge of God. To them, they could not conceive of a plan of God in which He actually knew the end from the beginning. Oh, they will say; "Well, we know we can't limit God" and yet, they turn around and do limit God. They will say; "Well, He must have the capacity to have all knowledge, but He must choose not to know certain things." Such reasoning is beyond me.

Fundamentally, it came from a concern over free moral agency because they could not reconcile within themselves how they could be free moral agents—meaning to have the ability to choose between right and wrong—and not have their fate already predetermined, either success or failure, except that somehow God did not already know how things would turn out. They could not deal with the concept of a God that has all knowledge, even future knowledge, so they had to come up with a concept to justify their concept that God chooses not to know.

Acts 15:18: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Is this a God who chooses not to know? Is this a God who has limited knowledge or comprehension of events? "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The term there, from the Greek is, *apo aion*, meaning "from eternity." "Known unto God are all his works from eternity." They get around it by arguing over Greek words. They tell us that the word "from" does not really mean "from," it means "since" because the Greek word *apo*, which is used in many of the scriptures, which talk about predestination and God's foreknowledge of those that he would call and choose, uses the word *apo*. Notice it in Romans 8:28-30:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Mr. Armstrong, very specifically wrote back in 1945, in the original *Plain Truth* article that, "God knew us, by name, thousands of years before we were born." That is what he said. It was even published in the 1957 article—the booklet that was taken directly from that *Plain Truth* article from the 40s. Then lo and behold in 1973 the predestination booklet was reprinted. For the most part it looks exactly the same. The wording is almost the same except that one phrase. That one offset phrase that Mr. Armstrong had in the original in the 1940s was taken out. No longer did it say, ". . . known by name, thousands of years before you were born." You see, there was already an element within the church that did not believe that. The ministry that did not want to believe that God knew us by name even before He set His hand to form the Earth and the heavens.

Mr. Armstrong focused and taught; his purpose for writing that predestination article in the 40s was to show us that we are not called, to either be lost or saved, not predestined already from that time to either be lost or saved, only predestined to be called. It means those that He would call as the firstfruits, given the opportunity now, before the return of Christ, He already knew who you would be. Think about the capacity of the knowledge of the God that we serve. He knew you by name before that creation was even set into motion, could picture exactly what you would look like, what your characteristics and your attributes would be.

Those who hate that concept do so because they believe, and here is their principle: "If God knew who we would become, then He would have to be the author of every sin that might have been in our ancestry." There is all the likelihood in the world that all of us, with all the lineage of our ancestors, all the way back to those original families in the tribes of Israel, somewhere are the product of adultery and those relationships that were not considered bound marriages by God. So the idea is; if God knew it, He had to be the author of it. You can't have knowledge without being the one that made it come to pass. They cannot understand or accept the idea that God, in His infinite knowledge and His wisdom, can play forward and see what would happen, by the use of our free moral agency and the free moral agency of our ancestors, the choices that we would make, the marriages of the unions that would occur, and the way that gene pool would pull together to actually create us into the human beings with the DNA, the characteristics that we have. That is beyond the capacity of them to understand, to accept.

So instead, they spend their time massaging Greek words in an attempt to try and show that God really doesn't have, or doesn't choose to have, that level of knowledge. So they submit, what I call, "the *aorist* red herring." The *aorist* red herring attempts to tell us that in Romans 8:28 we can't really say that the knowledge of God and His calling happened way back before the creation of the world because it is all in the *aorist* tense. *Aorist*, in the Greek, is the tense unlike anything in the English. It shows no reference to time and it expresses fact without reference to time. Therefore, because it is in *aorist* tense it has no reference to time and we can draw no conclusions about when that foreknowledge occurred.

They say that the word "for" does not mean "for," it means "since." Therefore, it wasn't that God knew us before the foundation of the world, they want to stick the word "since" in there and say, "since the foundation of the world" is just a benchmark in time, and that sometime after that He began to call people, and to know them. Thus taking away anything significant about the knowledge of God.

The problem, brethren, is that there is one particular scripture in the Bible that uses the word "from" and it is not the word *apo*—which can be interpreted either way, *from* or *since*. It is Ephesians 1:4, turn with me. "According as he hath chosen us in him. . ." When? ". . . before the foundation of the world." Now here is a real problem scripture for them you see, because that word is not the word *apo*, it is the word *pro*. *Pro* in the Greek means "before"—only "before", and nothing but "before." When was it then that God chose us? When did He know us? "Before." Literally, "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." The arguments are so convoluted they really go out on a limb concerning Revelation 17. Let's look at it just briefly, then we want to move on. Revelation 17:8:

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

So here, you see, is a problem scripture. It says here, very plainly, "they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world."

So if there were some people whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, it means, by implication, there must have been people whose names were, by contrast, written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. How do they argue around that? Well, again the word "from," they say, is the word *apo*. Therefore, "from" doesn't mean "from." It is like a former President, I guess—good at claiming that the word "is" doesn't mean "is."

The other thing they say is that it is not our "names" that were known from the foundation of the world, but that the antecedent is only the book of life. So they are saying, instead of reading it as the *names* that were known from the foundation of the world, it is only the *book of life* that was known from the foundation of the world. But Ephesians 1:4 is the one they can't get around because that says, "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." So you can with confidence, brethren, take every other scripture that uses that word "from," whether it is *apo* or whether it is *pro* and know that it means "from."

The other thing is that those words in Romans 8:28–30—the words "foreknow" and the word "predestinate"—we're told, do not give reference to time because of the aorist tense, avoiding the very fact that the word has its own time reference. The word "foreknow" is the word from the Greek, *proginosco*. It means to know beforehand. Now, I don't care whether you say, *proginosco* in the past tense, the aorist tense, the present tense or the future tense. What does *proginosco* mean? It means to know beforehand. The word beforehand tells you a time reference. It tells us there was knowledge and the knowledge preceded whatever it was that was going to occur.

It is the same with the word predestinate. It is the Greek word, *prooriso*. It means to determine before. There was a determination that happened in time prior to something else. It is a case where we do not need the tense of the word to tell us the order in which things occurred. I use the example of the word *prejudice*. *Prejudice*, in itself gives you a time order. The word *prejudice* means, to make a conclusion in mind before the facts are all in evidence. It gives you a time reference within the definition of the very verb. Prejudice means to prejudge. First, comes the judgment, the decision in mind and then afterward comes the revelation of the facts. What came first—the facts or the judgment? The definition of the verb *prejudice* tells you the judging came first and then the facts. So I don't care whether it was a judge who was prejudiced, is prejudiced or will be prejudiced, we see the order. First came the judging then came the facts.

That's why I tell you, brethren, that the aorist tense argument which I first heard back in the early 90s, is a red herring. They attempt to sweep all of the facts under the rug when the tense is shown within the very definitions of the verbs that are used, especially the form of the word *pro* and the word "from" in Ephesians 1:4. And they try to dismiss it all.

Such argumentation is an attempt to limit the knowledge of God. Before anyone believes that it is a small issue and that predestination is not a large issue, one way or another, when you think about it in its full context, brethren, what would Satan rather do except to convince us that we are not as special as we were always taught in the church? Special for what reason, because we are inherently anything? No, because God called us. Satan is the one that would love for us to believe that there was nothing special about us even in the minds of God. He did not know us that far in advance, maybe He only knew us right before we were born. Maybe He selected and decided to use you and to call you to the

knowledge of the truth, maybe right before you were born. How different is that from what we understood when we believed what Mr. Armstrong originally taught? That God knew everyone who He would call as the firstfruits before the foundation of the world.

What is the significance of your calling then? No matter what your life has been like, no matter how long it was before He actually called you: after you were born, whether you grew up in the church, whether you were called as an adult, as a young adult, or even older, farther along in life, how significant is your calling if you understand and truly believe that God knew you by name before the foundation of the world was laid? Then what kind of obligation does that place upon us, as those chosen selected children, in order to apply ourselves in preparing for His Second Coming? Don't let anyone convince you that God doesn't know or that He has, or chooses to have, limited knowledge.

Yes, He is personal Being of supreme intelligence and knowledge. What else is that God? "A personal Being of supreme intelligence, knowledge [and] love." He is a God of love. I could spend many, many sermons just going through the very concept of love and the characteristic of God called love. We are just going to hit some of the high points, though, because I do want to finish this one today. 1 John 4:8:

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

God is love. How often do you hear that from the people of the world who are deceived and do not understand or have a relationship with that God and they struggle in mind to understand? In spite of their New Year's celebrations and their hope for the prospects of the benefits of a new year and a new millennium, how long is it going to be before they find out that it is the same old world? They are in their same old circumstances, the same unfulfilling roles that they play day after day, facing the horror of the penalties of sin that are rampant upon this world under the auspices of Satan, the Devil and their own human natures.

They continue to hope for something better, but sooner or later they come back to question, "Why are all these terrible things extant in the world today if there is a God?" "If there really is a God, why do children starve?" "Why are children abused?" "Why are people murdered?" "Why are whole civilizations decimated by war, by corruption and by famine and pestilence, by earthquakes, and by all of these catastrophes on the Earth, if there is a God?" They begin to question, "Why does He allow it?" In that state, see, if they believe there is still a God then they begin to doubt the character of that God and they certainly begin to doubt the love of that God. When they don't understand the purpose and the plan of a perfect God, then they have no choice in their human rationalization and their thinking, but to call into question the concepts of God and love.

If you have been called to the knowledge of the truth and you understand, you have an opportunity to understand the capacity of what that godly character is and understand the reality of what the Apostle John said, "God is love." It is not just a trite statement. It is not just something to read quickly and pass over. It is the summation of everything that is within the character of that Being that we serve. "God is love."

John 3:16—a scripture quoted by millions of people upon the Earth that call themselves Christians and have their faith in that Being that they call Jesus Christ. That Being they have no idea of, no knowledge of in spite of their use of the name. You can even see it on television and sporting events. Look at your television, how many times in the stands in the stadiums do you see someone holding up a sign: "John 3:16" and think they are being a witness for the Lord. They don't understand it.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

What is the purpose of that Being? What is His mission? Why was this Earth and the heavens created? Why did He bring all of these laws into being? It is because God is re-creating himself, expanding His own family, His own spiritual family. He wants to share all of His power and His glory with an expansive family. So He created the blueprint for this creation, even the creation of our carnal natures. The very same nature within Satan, the Devil, He put within us because it is necessary for us to prove that we will love Him as much as He loves us.

In order to have beings that will ultimately have the kind of character that can be trusted to last for all eternity, faithfully in the unity and the singleness of mind currently shared by the Father and the Son, human beings have to be tried. That character doesn't just happen; it cannot just manifest itself out of nothing, it comes by trial. The very experiences of this world, all of the horror and the pain and the suffering that are extant today on the face of this Earth are the result of the perfect execution of God's plan whereby we are proving that we cannot be happy and successful and have joy and peace outside of the perfect laws of God.

Human beings cannot really learn that lesson unless they go through it. The world does not understand that there is a purpose and there is a reason for the suffering going on right now. I guarantee you when Christ returns and He begins to rule with that rod of iron and establishes the very government of God on this Earth, mankind will be softened to learn. Their minds will be opened to hear the voice of their Creator and will be able to see the difference between the ways of man and rebellion versus the ways of God. It is all very necessary, brethren. If the ultimate result of it is the spiritual birth of millions and millions

of beings added to the very family of God, to have that eternal relationship with the Father and the Son—if that's the ultimate result of this entire trial on this Earth, is it not a perfect manifestation of the love of God? Yes, it is.

Deuteronomy 7:7: "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people." It is not how He chose ancient Israel and, brethren, He didn't choose any of us because we were special or better than anyone else on this Earth. So, brethren, each one of us were taken directly out of our state of servitude as bondmen in Israel. Prior to our calling and prior to the revelation of truth and our acceptance of that Way, that is exactly where we were, just like those ancient ancestors—in absolute bondage, bondage of mind, bondage of heart, bound by our own natural desires, the lusts, the idolatry, every evil, every natural tendency bound up in the hearts of men. That's who we were serving.

It was because of the perfect love of God that He chose each one of you for a purpose now. John 15:9: What is the opportunity that we have being of those selected few called in this day and age—in the last days? "As the Father hath loved me. . ." Here is Jesus Christ, prior to His crucifixion, in that trial that He endured, and yet what was His prayer and His admonition in the final teaching? "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you."

What do we call the love between the Father and the Son? How do we categorize it? How deeply do you think they love one another? How do we assess the unity of the mind between Father and Son in the divinity? What do we think that level of love is between those two Beings? "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." Now can you comprehend that level of love being offered to each one of you? The very same depth of the love that exists between the Father and the Son, and that is the way He loves you.

. . . so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

The world attempts to create their own paradise and their own utopia—pursuing their own imaginations, their own laws, their own concepts and their own principles. Yet, they will never succeed because outside of the love of God, which includes a respect for the very commandments that He gave to us as a priceless gift, there will be no success.

If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Why cannot the world understand or grasp the concept of the love of God? Because they have no respect for the very commandments which point to and show and demonstrate by their execution the love of that Father.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Is this a God who wants us to suffer? Is this a God who cares little for us, who separated Himself from us, who, without consideration or care or concern, allows us to have difficulties and trials and problems? Not if we believe what Jesus Christ said.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

He wants us to be full of joy; He wants us to be full of the best things. John 17:20. The prayer of Jesus Christ to His Father:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:

There is the love of God, brethren—the desire of that Divinity to share the perfection of love with those whom he has chosen.

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.

One of the greatest proofs of God's love is in the opportunity to demonstrate the power and the work of God on this Earth. But all of these groups, especially those that were part of the parent body, who once believed the same things we believe, are all out trying to do their works. So they think the proof of being the servants of God is to get on the radio and the television and to go out and do their proselytizing around the world. How pathetic it is because they have abandoned the commandments, which we already read in John 15, is the definition of the love of God. Keeping the commandments is the way we prove we love God. Here, in John 17:21:

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.

What is the best way to witness for the work? It is for us to have unity in this body. The most prolific example that any one of us could show to be lights, to be examples, to prove that we are the people of God, that we are that faithful remnant, is to exhibit the love of God, even in our unity one with another.

. . . they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

What is it that God wants us to have? Unity, oneness, singleness of purpose, grounded in the very love of God, which is the foundation of the truth and the commandments. The priceless revelation that He gave and delivered to a chosen servant in the last days. It is that revelation, brethren, the responding to that way of life which gave us an opportunity to have a relationship with God through His calling. That is the way of life that defines the love of God and He wants us to have that relationship with Him. That relationship depends on us accepting the confines of what God has defined as His love and understanding our relationship with the commandments including that commandment to love one another.

The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, 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.

We can find and discover what the true depth of the love of God is if we are willing to sacrifice ourselves, brethren. If we are willing to sacrifice our own thoughts, if we are willing to put away those things that cause division, holding onto the truth, holding onto those things that are spiritual, holding onto those things which God revealed and not letting anything else separate us. By that which we show, one to another, we are showing love for God and we are showing that we believe that God is a God of love.

If we do not obey the commandments, including those that show love for God and love for our fellow man and especially for our brothers in the church, then we are definitely making a statement concerning our opinion on God's love. He is a God of love. So many more things could be said. In the future we will address it.

Let's continue on. The fundamental of belief number one also says He is "a personal Being of supreme intelligence, knowledge, love and justice." The God you serve, brethren, is not a God who takes bribes. He is not a God who shows partiality in His decision-making. He is a perfectly righteous God. He is a God of justice. Notice it with me in Deuteronomy 10:17:

For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

No, this God, for all His power and His might and His abilities, is also a God of perfect character and that character includes a sense of justice. ". . . a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward." No, He is not interested in bribes, He is not interested in showing partiality or favoritism to any human beings, He is perfect in His analysis and His decision-making in righteous judgment. Job 37:22:

Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

How much more honorable would this world be if we had righteous judges, if we had men in office and governments who were committed to the very concept of justice? Yet, we recognize, because men are defective in character, all of those things are usually done for selfish gain.

I was mentioning earlier to someone that in my last trip to the Philippines, the Philippine people seem to live with what they recognize as necessary evils of government corruption. So it is in many governments, all governments around the world. They have polls of the people to ask them which government divisions do they think are the most corrupt? They listed the top 10 in reverse order and the most corrupt. On this one radio program I heard while I was there, they said it was the Department of Transportation. They are the division that is responsible for making the roads. The man who was on the radio said, "All these millions of pesos that are involved in the construction and these contracts, and you usually see one man out on the job site, and what is he doing—sweeping?" He said, "Where are all the men that we paid for that are supposed to be building this new road to relieve the traffic congestion? There's one man out there and all he is doing is sweeping." So the Filipinos have a perception of the corruption in their own government and recognize that many of those offices are filled by men who are just there filling their own pockets. Where is the justice?

How can we expect, living under the governments of men, to receive justice? No, the author of justice is the Creator God and it is only through His government and the execution of His will. When Jesus Christ returns, that's when we will get to see what real justice is all about. Psalm 9:7:

But the Lord shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

No, He is a perfect and a righteous God. He is Truth and He is a just God.

The last part of the fundamental of belief number one says, ". . . 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's what that character of the God we serve, is. ". . . power and authority, the Creator of the heavens and the Earth and all that in them is and the source of life."

I could take ten sermons to divide those concepts up. Instead, I want to just give you a couple of scriptures that I think will synoptically cover and demonstrate the character of that God. First, Proverbs 3:19:

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

He is the Creator God. He is the author, He is the owner—the possessor of all that exists. Let's read it in Isaiah 40:15. Now to try and catalog the God that we serve.

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

*Vanity*—meaning nothingness, emptiness. What greatness do we think that we see when we see the power exhibited by nations on this Earth—even that which is considered the greatest military power on the face of this Earth, our own country, the United States of America? So we see the demonstrations of military might, power and technology and we have seen the demonstrations of power in men of other nations and armies that go to war and we think there is power there and there is might there—that this is something of substance and something significant. Yet, God said, "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."

He doesn't even consider them. They are inconsequential to the Creator, God. They have nothing to compare to the power and the might of the God that created the heavens and the Earth. Verse 18: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?"

Job 38:1: Here, at the end of the book, we find God's final answer to Job after He had tried him and humbled him so that Job finally was able to approach God in meekness and humility with an open mind to receive His instruction. I wonder brethren, how often do we beat our heads against the brick wall because we are so convinced of our own concepts and we are sure we have to be right? Therefore, we also defy God. Finally, Job came to be humbled and to recognize what he really was in comparison to that God. Here is what God said to him:

THEN the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man: for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place?

What human being, or even concept of human minds, can compare to the God with such power that He controls the seas? He controls the very rising of the sun. When we see the very manifestations of that creation, day by day, brethren, do we stop and think and recognize and remember the power that is associated with the Being that we call the Creator God? Are we sure, are we absolutely sure, that in our daily lives, in the concepts of our own minds, that we too are not holding idols, even before that Creator God? How confident are we in the way that we approach that Being we call God?

Psalm 104: We are going to read the whole psalm. Probably one of the best succinct descriptions, poetically, of the power of that Being who did lay the foundation of the Earth and created all the things that are in it—who holds the very power of all within His hands, who is the source of life.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with

the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies. He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.

That is the God that we believe in. That is the Being that we consider the Father and the Son and the divinity that we call God. That is the Being that is eternal, a spirit Being, a personal Being of power and of might, a Being of love, knowledge and justice, who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that exists—the source of life. The God who called you, brethren, every single one of you, for a special purpose—a God who we have an opportunity to share eternity with if we will only love His way. If we will only value the very revelation that He gave to us as a gift and use this time that we have remaining to serve Him—the Great God.