

The Immensity of God

‘Okay, Religion 101. Here are three fundamental truths about religion, which will help you relate to the religious diversity of this world. First, most Jews don’t recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Second, Protestants don’t recognize the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. And third, and most important, Baptists don’t recognize each other at the bar on Saturday nights.’

But that isn’t all we don’t recognize. Probably the most important thing most people don’t recognize is God Himself. Each of us has a personal conception of God. “Personal” because we each fashion our own idea of God. To the extent that we have consumed The Bible, our idea of God will be that much more or less accurate, or close to the truth. Not only our concept of God, but our understanding and reaction to everything in life is filtered by our experiences in life. Hearing “Father God”, people unconsciously apply to their understanding of God the experiences they had or didn’t with their own earthly fathers. Without the Bible’s truth in their minds, most people have a terribly warped, distorted view of Father God. Which is just the way the devil likes it.

But the Bible itself exhorts and commands us over and over again to *know* God in Christ Jesus, ever better. What if we never have a chance to meet someone in person, let alone live with

them for years on end, how would we ever get to “know” them as a person, who they really are? What if the person is someone who lived and died long before we were even born? How would you aim to understand them better? Well, you would search for anything that had been written and recorded about that person. Better yet, you would look for things that person spoke themselves, in the first person. Which is exactly what we have in the Holy Bible. The many words contained in this most holy and important of all books are God’s Words, and His self-revelation to us; to anyone who seeks to understand Him and Who He is.

Intellectually, that is, in our minds, we know that God is infinite (limitless), omnipresent (everywhere present), omnipotent (all powerful), and omniscient (all knowing). Yet those concepts, by their very nature are so far above what we know and experience as human beings as to be essentially incomprehensible to us. We are not infinite, rather we’re limited; not omnipresent but can only be in one place at a time; not omnipotent but find our strength hardly adequate to simply carry us through from one day to the next; not omniscient but rather find ourselves wondering about the simplest things that we simply cannot fathom. Despite all that, at the same time, we somehow find it within ourselves to imagine that we can be so much greater than the reality of our everyday lives attest; that we can aspire to deity ourselves. Why, some religions even insist that we will become gods, or that, collectively, as a human race all together, we are God. Well, God

has said in His Holy Bible in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that “He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end”. So hard-wired within us is the understanding of an infinity of time, and with that we can postulate eternities, infinities of other things. Which is to say that because of this, we can contemplate the very existence of God Himself. Conversely, without God having planted eternity in our hearts, we could never even conceive of Him at all.

Despite all that, our default imaginings fall back on a conception of God limited by our own human experiences. Which is a major reason why the many deities in Greek mythology were so similar to human beings except for having supernatural powers of one sort or other. But the One and Only Living Real God is so vastly more than us; more than we could and will ever be. For He is God. Consider the few statements about Himself that are found today’s readings. Psalm 147:4-5 reads: “He counts the stars and calls them all by name. How great is our Lord! His power is absolute! His understanding is beyond comprehension!” Or the extended passages in Isaiah 40, starting with verses 12-13: “Who else has held the oceans in His hand? [Those would be pretty big hands!] Who has measured off the heavens with His fingers? [Even bigger fingers, attached to an immense hand, way bigger than the entire universe!] Who else knows the weight of the earth or has weighed the mountains and hills on a scale? Who is able to advise the Spirit of the Lord? Who knows enough to give Him

advice or teach Him?” Verse 15: “He picks up the whole earth as though it were a grain of sand”. Verse 22: “God sits above the circle of the earth. [He looks down on the orbit of the earth around the sun, propelling it round and round!] The people below seem like grasshoppers to Him!” Verse 26: “Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of His great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing”. Finally, verse 28: “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of His understanding”.

In just today’s readings, we’re told He created all the stars and has named each and every one of them. With our modern high-powered land and space-based telescopes, we have identified enormous numbers of stars. Current estimates say there are 300 sextillion stars. Fifty years ago, before the Hubble telescope and digital imaging, it was estimated that there were “only” 40 sextillion stars. That’s 40, followed by 21 zeroes. Many current English dictionaries contain approximately 500,000 words. If we replaced all those words with the names of stars, just the estimated number from 50 years ago, would take 80 quadrillion dictionaries, which is 80 followed by a mere 16 zeroes. But here’s something more comprehensible. Most of us have cell phones and data plans. The phones have internal memory storage numbered in gigabytes, which is 1 billion bytes. Each byte is actually 8 bits

of data, but we needn't get into that. Since gigabytes are too small a unit, we'll have to go bigger. Terabytes are 1 trillion bytes. Petabytes are 1 quadrillion bytes. (It's estimated that the human brain can store $2\frac{1}{2}$ petabytes of data; that's only about 3,750,000 CDs.) Exabytes are 1 quintillion bytes. Zettabytes are 1 sextillion bytes, or 1 followed by 21 zeroes. So in other words, the current estimate of 300 sextillion stars in numbers of computer data bytes would be 300 zettabytes. But while that is truly an unimaginable number, it pales in comparison to something far smaller. It's now estimated that 1 gram of our body's DNA contains 490 exabytes of data, or 490 billion trillion, or 490 quintillion. Which means that the current number of stars in the universe equals approximately $1\frac{1}{3}$ pounds of our DNA, which is less than a quarter of the DNA in our bodies (5.732 lbs/average male)! Speaking of DNA, each of our body's paltry 37.2 trillion cells contains a little over 7 feet of DNA, which means that all the DNA in our bodies would reach from the earth to the sun. Five hundred thirty times! Looks like God made us quite simple beings! NOT!!

God is truly immense. Bigger than the entire universe, or multiverse. Bigger than anything we can imagine. At the same time, He is smaller than the smallest thing we can now measure or even imagine. Talk about omnipresence, truly Christ Jesus is both outside and inside of all creation simultaneously, for Colossians 1:17 says: "[Christ] existed before anything else, and He holds all creation together", and the next chapter verse 19 de-

clares “For [Christ] holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments”. So can you see how true Christ Jesus was when He said in Matthew 28:20 that “I am with you always, even to the end of the age”!

As unfathomable the number of stars are, and that God has named every one, they are as nothing compared to each of our body’s DNA, which is at least 5 times greater! And if not a hair of our heads falls without the permission and knowledge of Father God, then He is closer to us than even we are to ourselves! So, people, arm yourselves with these facts, continuously. Let Holy Spirit indwell you so that you can truly *know* God, and feel Him urging you to do or say this or that, to go here or there, as you live your daily life. Psalm 91:1 tells us, “Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty”. Verses 9-10 promise us: “If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home”. For God Himself announces in verses 14-15: “I will rescue those who love Me. I will protect those who trust in My name. When they call on Me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble”. Folks, it looks like things will be getting difficult for true Christians in America for a while before they get better and explode in glory. But no matter how bleak things may look, remember Lord Jesus’ promise in Matthew 16:18: “I will build My church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it”! We will win. Every time! For God is big. Really big!

