

One God and Father - Exodus 34:1-9

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Well over 80% of people in our country and around the world believe in God in some way shape or form. Virtually every religion holds a belief in some sort of spiritual power or being that is transcendent. While it is a good thing that the majority of people do believe in the reality of God, as Christians we must ask, which god? Is spiritual belief in some kind of higher power sufficient? While the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD did not directly address this question, the church had been struggling with the definition and understanding of God from the launch of Christianity.

On the one side, Christianity was birthed out of the monotheism of Judaism and the Hebrews Scriptures. Believe it or not, the entire story of the Old Testament is about a single ethnic and cultural people who believed in a single deity against the backdrop of a world that believed in many different gods. The nations around Israel always believed in sun gods, moon gods, crop gods, rain gods, and fertility gods. Furthermore, the universal belief was that a nation's gods gave the king and armies their strength, so if a nation conquered and enslaved another people the ultimate reason was because their god was stronger than the god of the other nation. In this world the True and Living God revealed Himself to Israel, calling them to reject the polytheistic spirituality of the surrounding nations and embrace Yahweh, the True God. Israel was to be different than the nations because they worshiped a different God, and through their worship they were revealing the insufficiency and non-existence of the other gods. Yet, Israel failed miserably, consistently seeking to mix the worship of Yahweh into the worship of other gods. Yahweh was no tribal deity, He was maker of heaven and earth and ruler of the nations. Yet, they treated Him as a tribal deity, and as a result God removed the blessings of His covenant and gave them over to the nations. By the time of the New Testament Jewish rulers and leaders understood this and had become radical monotheists. And out of this time Christianity was birthed, and Christians began worshiping Jesus. For Jews this meant that they were becoming polytheistic.

On the other hand, the cultural petri dish from which Christianity grew and spread was the Greco-Roman culture, who like other nations embraced a myriad of gods and goddesses. In this world the early Christians were renounced as atheists because they would not worship Zeus or Jupiter alongside of Yahweh or Jesus. More strikingly, they would not enter into the worship of the Caesar as divine, make sacrifices and offer incense to the gods for him, nor call Caesar Lord. They had one God and one Lord. So they suffered greatly for their radical monotheism, their belief that there is only one God and all other gods are false. What may have been the cruelest and deadliest persecution of Jesus-followers broke out just two decades before the Council of Nicaea under the rule of Emperor Diocletian, with hundreds around the Empire dying daily for their unwillingness to offer incense and sacrifices to Caesar. Meanwhile, some from the early Christian movement sought ways to embrace Christianity while mixing it in with Greco-Roman religion and philosophy. These false teachers found ways to add Jesus to the pantheon and shape his identity around the dominant culture. These views were rightly rejected well before Nicaea.

So as this group of church leaders gathered in 325 AD they already held to a radical monotheism, that there is "One God and Father almighty." It was not sufficient to believe in any deity or spirituality. The path to redemption was by way of knowledge of the One True and Living God. This God has made Himself known, but it is through the Hebrew Scriptures that He most clearly revealed Himself. As they council of Nicaea debated the divine nature of Jesus, they knew they were not moving in the direction of polytheism, or any belief that

God the Father, Son, and Spirit actually made up three Gods. They were radical monotheists, believing that Yahweh alone is God. And there is no passage that better explains His glory and character than the exchange between Yahweh and Moses in Exodus 34. He is the God who is compassion, mercy, grace, patience, and full of steadfast love and faithfulness. This is not what He does, this is who He is. Yahweh is the perfect Father. But He is also the transcendent ruler of the universe and nations. There is no salvation outside of this God, because when the dust settles, all other gods are human creations in the attempt to gain power and take the right of being god from the only God. People form gods in their image who give them what they want. But these gods cannot deliver, they cannot save, because they are not true and real.

So it is a good thing to be spiritual in that it can set people on the right path. But it is not sufficient without coming to know the God revealed in Scripture. Because He alone rules all, yet comes near to know and save us.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Exodus 30	Exodus 31	Exodus 32	Exodus 33	Exodus 34	Exodus 35	Exodus 36

Reading from this past week's sermon: Exodus 34:1-9

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 104

Family Worship

Song - *God So Loved*

<https://youtu.be/jasoo3UDSwY?feature=shared>

Gospel Project

Unit: A Troubled Kingdom

Story: Elijah Confronted Ahab

Big Picture Question: How many gods are there?

Answer: There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

Scripture: 1 Kings 18-19

New City Catechism

Question 39: With what attitude should we pray?

Answer: With love, perseverance, and gratefulness

Verse: Philippians 4:6

Exodus 34:1-9

- How would you respond to someone who says they believe in God and spirituality, but not in any true religion?
- Who is God and how would you describe Him?
- What does it mean that God is revealed as Father? How does the character of God revealed in Exodus 34 explain this title?
- How does the reality that God is the transcendent one who is almighty give us hope in the midst of our questions, struggles, suffering, and even persecution?

Prayer

*Pray that we would rightly believe in the One True and Living God and by doing so would worship Him fully with our lips and lives.

*Pray for our Leadership 222 and Gospel Classes.