***The Essence of God

RV83-02***

We are studying Revelation 4:6-11, continuing with the worship in God's throne room. The four living creatures which John sees are praising God day and night for His Holiness. The holiness of God indicates that there is a divine standard for determining good and evil in the universe. God will never compromise His personal integrity or His Holiness, and that's another word for God's holiness: His integrity. He will never compromise His integrity. He will most certainly judge evil. To spend eternity in heaven, one must become therefore compatible with God's holiness through regeneration. Satan's basic tactic in the angelic warfare today is to discredit the fact of God's holiness among the people of the human race. Once you grasp the understanding; once it is a settled conviction; once you know, and know well, that God is a holy person; and, once you understand what divine integrity is, it will be an enormous step forward in your personal Christian life and in your personal conduct.

The reason that we have these fractures (even in the lives of Christians) of personal conduct; personal integrity; and, personal moral standards is because, first of all, we forget the nature of God and His Holiness; and, secondly, we do not have the internal capacity provided by the knowledge of the Word of God. We become sloppy on the intake of doctrine into our souls. Therefore, today Satan promotes the big lie that there is no personal living God whose holiness establishes a standard for condemning sin. Satan promotes the lie that God is instead a universal life force or mind, of which everyone and everything is a part. All share the divine essence. Satan says that there is no personal God out there. There is only your own inner deity, which you are to discover through some process of meditation. The idea of pantheism, which is what this is, that everything is God, means that man himself, therefore, becomes the standard for the judgment of what is right and what is wrong. In fact, since man is God, and since whatever man does, therefore, is the result of God acting, there cannot be something that is to be condemned on one side and approved on the other. It is just two facets of the same life force, both equally received.

**Eastern Mysticism**

That is what makes the religions of the world, particularly Eastern mysticism, so enormously attractive to people, because with one blow, you've removed the problem of sin; you can do anything you want; and, you are prepared to face a God who isn't going to judge you for what you do.

**Pantheism**

The idea of pantheism makes man sovereign rather than God. The religions of Eastern mysticism, which have descended from Hinduism, therefore, present millions of God, including human beings, all of whom are doing their own thing. That expression of "doing your own thing" was coined during the youth rebellion of the 60s. It is an expression which was taken over directly from Hinduism. Hinduism basically teaches, as does all Eastern mysticism, that the thing to do is whatever comes from within yourself: You're God – do your own thing.

The presence of this life force is revealed by psychic phenomena which are performed by Satan's demons – powerful, powerful acts. When people are in meditation, in an altered state of consciousness, either through meditation techniques or through the taking of drugs, they are communicating with powerful forces – powerful beings. They are seeing tremendous things. Even though they may not hear voices, their mind is being communicated with by spirit beings.

**Subjectivity**

Holiness becomes irrelevant if people are progressing upward through various stages of lives to the full realization of their own godhood. So, it doesn't matter what you do, as long as you're progressing upward. The gods who speak with man teach, through the meditation techniques, or through drugs, are demonic beings who are executing Satan's attack upon the true nature of God. That is the primary thing which they communicate. They are seeking to communicate the big lie that God is not a personal being separate from creation. Satan's approach to people in Eastern mysticism, then, is to convince them to follow a totally subjective approach to determining truth. There lies the key to Satan's program. He wants to convince people to follow a subjective approach to determining what is truth. The truth about God thus varies from person to person. Satan teaches that a thing is true only if one feels it is true. At the heart of Satan's program is the reversal of the biblical order, where the mind controls the will and the emotions of the soul. Satan wants the mind to release itself; wipe itself blank; and, put itself in neutral, so that the emotions can move in and take over as the determining factor of what is true and what is not true. Feeling becomes the heart of the system.

**The Charismatic Movement**

That is another evidence that the charismatic movement, which is so shot-through with doctrinal heresies, particularly on the person of God the Holy Spirit, is not a movement of the Spirit of God, but is a movement of the spirit of Satan. It is based exclusively on the experiential element, "What I feel," and consequently, "What I experience." Satan has convinced people that truth, therefore, is subjective, and that it's relative, instead of being objective and absolute as reported in Scripture. With that, Satan has eliminated the authority of the Bible. The subjective approach to truth is closely related to experience rather than reason. The mind has been dethroned as the ultimate guide to reality, and feelings are put in its place. A mystical experience is sought, and the demons are happy to provide it.

**Objectivity**

It is easy for you and me, as Christians, not to appreciate the fact that the Bible is an objective book which presents evidence that took place in time and space, and that God approaches us by reason. It is with the heart (with the reason), the Bible says, that man believes unto righteousness. If it was not for your mentality, you could not go to salvation. It is for that reason that people who are mentally incompetent, and people who are insane, and therefore do not have the key factor of the mind which is necessary for salvation, we assume (just assume) are under the same grace of God that infants are before they have a mind that can rationally approach the gospel and accept the truth.

So, the business of seeking a mystical experience, if that has been your trend, is going to be one that you will find very painful to give up. I've had former members of this church rise up in indignation and ire because they felt, as one man said, that his whole feelings were being squelched, because he was a very emotional type of person. That was the way he reacted. What was right and what was wrong was how he felt. And what he thought about the Lord was how he felt. And what he enjoyed and didn't enjoy of spiritual things was how he felt at the moment. It kept varying and changing. It was not based upon the authoritative structure of the Word of God.

So, when you are dealing with this realm of the subjective in determining truth, just understand that you have opened yourself wide to demonic influence. The Bible is the only source of reliable information, therefore, about the nature of God.

**The One True God**

So, please turn with me to Jude 25, which makes a basic statement about the nature of God. Jude 25 says, "To the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." The word "wise" is not in the Greek Bible. It says, in fact, simply, "To the only God." The Bible emphatically declares here that there is only one God in the universe.

Immediately, this is being countered by Satan through all the religions of the East. Eastern mysticism says that there are millions of gods, not just one God. But Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

In Deuteronomy 4:35, the Scripture says, "Unto you it was shown that you might have known that the Lord, He is God. There is no one else beside Him." Either Eastern mysticism (and Satan's approach through that) is right – that you are gods, and that there are many gods, or else the Bible is right. You can't both be right. Either the Bible is true on this or the Bible is false.

In Isaiah 44, this same principle is reiterated again in Scripture. Isaiah 44:8: "Fear not, neither be afraid. Have not I told you, from that time, and have declared it? You are even My witnesses. Is there a God beside Me? Yeah, there is no God. I know not of any."

Isaiah 45:22 adds: "Look unto Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God. There is none else."

When we get to the New Testament, the same principle is again reiterated. 1 Corinthians 8:4: "As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and there is no other God but one."

Then we have that dramatic statement in James 2:19: "You believe us that there is one God. You do well. The demons also believe and tremble."

While this may seem to be a very self-evident fact to you concerning the only one true God, you must understand that if you are going to fulfill your role as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, the people you're going to be speaking to do not think that today. The American mentality has been extensively poisoned by Eastern mysticism through the youth culture, primarily through the back door of drugs, into the concept that man is God; that man is God incarnate; and, that there is deity within us. This used to be promoted by the liberals. In the early battles of the 1920s between fundamentalism and liberalism, this was one of the great concepts that liberalism brought forth. There was the spark of deity that resides in every one of us. But that wasn't very extensive. Today, the average American, whether he realizes or not, believes that he has a sovereign authority, and that he has the quality of deity himself.

So, it is important that you realize, first of all, that the Bible is very clear on the fact that there is only one God. It's not that you just say, "Well, I am sure. That makes sense to me. That's the way it should be." That's beside the point. First, you start with a book that has never been proven to be in error. Then you can read a statement and say, "We must assume that that is also true." It is being objective (on an objective basis) that we say there is one God. It is not because it makes sense to you, or because you've always believed that.

**The Essence of God**

So, the oneness of God is a point that is well-established in Scripture. This oneness has to do with the essence of God – that God has a singleness of essence. While the Godhead is made up of a Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), each of whom are personalities, and each of whom are persons, they are of one identical essence. So, when you deal with the issue of the nature of God, you have to begin, first of all, with the essence of God. And again, we have to do this on the basis of what Scripture tells us.

**God is Sovereign**

What is God like? The first thing is that God is sovereign. That is a very critical, vital factor. God has a will. That will is eternal; it is infinite; and, and it is self-determining. Again, the Bible is full of statements concerning this. For example, Daniel 4:35 says, "And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him who lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation." Nebuchadnezzar found this out after running around the countryside for seven years, living as if he were an animal, because he had gone insane, and because he had exhausted himself as a god. He picked up the Babylonian mystery concept that preceded the Hindu concept about the deity in man, and God said, "I'm going to show you who is really sovereign." If you are God, then you are absolutely in charge, and nobody's will can override your will. For seven years, Nebuchadnezzar was insane. He ran around eating grass like an animal. When he came to his senses, and he came out of that insanity, he said, "I know now who is sovereign."

In Deuteronomy 4:39, Moses said, "Know, therefore, this day, and consider in your heart that the Lord, He is God, in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, and there is none else." That is saying that He, and He alone, is the sovereign deity.

1 Chronicles 29:12: "Both riches and honor come to You. You reign over all, and in Your hand is power and might. And in Your hand, it is to make great and to give strength unto all." Here's David's description of the Almighty power of God, because He is the sovereign God.

Job 9:12 also stresses that God is sovereign: "Behold, He takes away (speaking of God). Who can hinder Him? Who will say unto Him, 'What are you doing?'" Yet, the arrogance of man is doing exactly that. It is challenging God, and saying, "Where do You get off doing what You're doing?"

In Psalm 47:2, the psalmist says, "For the Lord Most High is awe-inspiring. He is a Great King over all the earth." Of course, that's what the idea of sovereignty means – that God is the Supreme King.

Psalm 83:18: "That men may know that You, whose name alone is the Lord, are the Most High over all the earth."

Psalm 93:1: "The Lord reigns. He is clothed with majesty. The Lord is clothed with strength. Wherefore He has girded Himself, for the world also has established that it cannot be moved."

Then Psalm 135:6 again has this same declaration: "Whatever the Lord pleased, that He did, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all the deep places." If you are sovereign then you can do as you please. Satan is telling man that he is sovereign, and therefore, he can do as he pleases. That's the point of Scripture. You and I are not sovereign, therefore we cannot do as we please.

Let's look at one more verse in the New Testament. Acts 17:24 says, "God, who made the world and all things in it, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands." So, God is the supreme and absolute ruler of the universe.

Hebrews 6:13: "For when God made promises to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself." Because God is absolute ruler, He had to take an oath by Himself.

The thing that the Bible makes clear to us is that God is not accountable to anybody else. In Psalm 115:3, therefore, we read, "But our God is in the heavens. He has done whatever He has pleased." So, God makes decisions. God makes policies. He sets up principles as his divine volition pleases.

We stress the sovereignty of God because a thing is not sovereign. A thing is not sovereign. What is sovereign is supreme. If God is nothing but a life principle (a force), then that is not sovereign. However, a personality who is omnipotent – that person is sovereign.

So, first of all, what is the nature of God? The nature of the God of the Bible, in contrast to the God of Eastern mysticism, is a God who is sovereign.

**God is Righteous**

Along with that, a second principle is that God is righteous. This means that God is absolutely perfect. In Psalm 145:17, the psalmist says, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His words." God, because He is righteous, is absolute perfection. Man has only relative righteousness. He compares himself against other people. When you leave it up to man to decide how he should be accepted, relative to going to heaven or hell, the religions of the world always come up with the concept of matching one person against another person. That is the whole concept of reincarnation in Eastern mysticism. And again, I hope you understand that the idea of coming back in other life forms is extremely widespread in our society.

One of the greatest generals we had in American military history was George Patton. George Patton believed in reincarnation, and he read the Bible every day. In all likelihood, by all evidence we have, he was a born-again man. Yet, he had picked up the idea that he had come back from a previous life. He would stand on a battlefield in parts of the world and say, "I've been here before, I was killed here, and I'm back here again in another life."

The idea of man being sovereign in himself, and being relative in his righteousness, poses the problem that he has to deal with his relative righteousness. How does he deal with it? He works it out. He comes back in another life, and he gets another chance. If he's bad, then he comes back in a worse form. If he's bad in one life, Eastern Mysticism says, you're going to come back at a lower economic level. And you find yourself a beggar out in the streets. Whereas, if you work out your life and do good works, you'll come back next time in a higher economic level, and in a higher position in life. All of that is Satan's way of dealing with the fact that God is righteous. If God is absolute righteousness, we have an enormous problem. If God is absolute righteousness, and God cannot compromise His integrity, then the only people that can associate with Him in heaven are those who are absolutely righteous.

So, immediately Satan says, "I've got to get rid of a personal God who can be absolutely righteous." A thing cannot be absolutely righteous. A life force cannot be absolutely righteous. It can be anything. You're all acquainted with Isaiah 64:6 that says, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We all do fade as a leaf in our iniquities like the wind had taken us away." The word "righteousnesses" refers to all of our human good. And the Bible says that, with God, that is the filthiest kind of rag imaginable. It is totally offensive and rejected.

In Romans 3:10-12, Paul says, "As it is written, there is none righteous. No, not one. There is none that understands. There is none that seeks after God. They're all gone out of the way (that is, the way of absolute righteousness). They are together become unprofitable. There is none that does good: no, not one." Again, if you have an absolute authority in the Bible, and you read that – "There is none that does good: no, not one," immediately, you know that nobody can go to heaven by doing good. The Bible tells you that there's not a human being on the face of the earth that can do good by God's standards. And if it takes doing good to get into heaven, and you can't do good, then you're hopelessly lost. That's the point that the Bible makes. God demands the same absolute righteousness in His creatures that He Himself has.

So, Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And the glory of God is the standard of absolute righteousness. Because God is righteous, it is simply impossible for Him to do anything at all that is wrong. It is absolutely impossible for God to do anything that is wrong.

In Ezra 9:15, Ezra says, "Oh, Lord God of Israel, You are righteous. For we remain yet escaped. As it is this day, behold, we are before You in our trespasses, for we cannot stand before You because of this." Because God is righteous, the Jews were in great trouble in standing before God, because they were so unrighteous.

In Psalm 48:10, the psalmist says the same thing: "According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise unto the ends of the earth. Your right hand is full of righteousness."

Psalm 119:137 says, "You are righteous, O Lord, and upright in Your judgments."

Psalm 145:17 says, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." God is absolutely righteous in all His ways. He is absolute righteousness. He is not just righteous sometimes. It's not just a relative matter.

Jeremiah 23:6: "In his day, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely. And this is His name whereby He shall be called. The Lord is our righteousness." In the immediate future, when the Jewish people are once more restored as God's earthly people, they are going to be identified by the title, "The Lord, our righteousness." They'll be called by that title, and that means our absolute righteousness.

Then in the New Testament, this same concept is stressed in 1 John 2:29. It says, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone that does righteousness is born of Him." And there it is. You know that God is absolute righteousness, and that man is only relatively righteous. If you find a man that can say, "I have absolute righteousness," you know that he is borne of God, because that's the only way you can get absolute righteousness; that is, by being born again, and having that imputed to your account.

**God is Justice**

The third vital factor about the essence of God is the fact that God is justice. Here you have a real, tremendous problem. This means that God is absolutely fair. This is something we find very hard to say about human beings. We find it hard to say about ourselves that we are absolutely fair in all that we do. But Deuteronomy 32:4 points this out, when Moses says about God: "He is the rock. His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice; a God of truth, and without iniquity, He is just and right." It is impossible for God to do anything that is unfair. Because God is justice, He demands that disobedience against His laws must inevitably be punished.

So, in John 3:36, we have the statement: "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life, and he that does not believe on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Because God is justice, He must send those to hell who do not have His absolute righteousness. Because God is justice, He must punish those who are guilty of sin with eternal death. And since we are born into the human race with Adam's guilt upon us, we start off with everything against us.

In Romans 6:23, therefore, we read, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The reason that the wages of sin is death is because God is absolute justice. It is amazing how many Christians there are who somehow think (and that certainly the unbeliever thinks) that God is some grandfatherly character who's going to watch his little grandchildren do something that is bad, and He's going to wink at it; He's going to ignore it; and, He's going to just bypass it and not do anything about it. If God is just, then He cannot do that.

In 2 Chronicles 19:7, we are told: "Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of bribes." God is no respecter of persons because He is absolutely just. So, you find that in the Old Testament Scripture, some of God's favorite people come under tremendous chastisement because of their sin. We won't take time to delve into some of the consequences of sin in the lives of some of the great biblical saints. It's because God is justice. Because of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for man's sins, God is now free to forgive man, or God is free to condemn man. Don't forget that. Because of what Christ did on the cross, it is fair for God to forgive a person who accepts that sacrifice, and to send him to heaven. It is equally fair for God to condemn a person who rejects that sacrifice to an eternity in hell.

**God is Holy**

It is at this point of these two features that we have the holiness of God. It is the righteousness of God combined with the justice of God that constitutes the holiness of God. You can see why Satan is out to undermine the concept that God is holy. If God is holy, then you're dealing with somebody that has absolute righteousness. And if you have absolute righteousness, then you have a person – not a force or a thing. If you have execution of absolute fairness, then you have, again, a person, and not a force. And if you must deal with a God who deals with absolute righteousness as the standard, and who executes perfect justice in dealing with sin, and thus you have a God of holiness, then there is no hope for man apart from the provision that God has made.

Satan knows, that for the descendants of Adam and Eve, God has made a way out. Satan knows that for himself, and a third of the angels that rebelled against God with him, no salvation has been provided. There is no way out. So, what Satan wants to do is to take as much of the human race down with him by undermining the fact of the holiness of God.

**God is Love**

Another factor in the essence of God, and one that creates a great deal of problem and confusion is the fact that God is love. What this means is that God has a mental attitude that does not carry bitterness toward people. It is a mental attitude that is free from bitterness. He is not a God of vengeance who is trying to make people suffer. 1 John 4:7-8 says, "But beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that doesn't love does not know God, for God is love."

1 John 4:16 says, "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." So, it is the love of God for us, not while we're nice people, but when we're condemned offensive sinners, that motivates the expression of the grace of God toward us that is expressed in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. It is God's love that has looked upon us, realizing that His holiness must condemn us. There's no way out for us. So, God says, "I'm going to come through, and I'm going to make a provision for you. It is His love which enables Him to take action that preserves both absolute righteousness and perfect justice, and sets it free. It is the holiness of God that keeps His love from being able to be expressed. Absolute righteousness cannot have fellowship with sinful man.

The prophet Isaiah had a hard time trying to make that clear to the people of Israel who were so rebellious. Again and again, he tried to make it clear to them that a God of absolute righteousness cannot have fellowship with sinful man. Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, that He will not hear." This principle is in operation in the life of the unbeliever. But I must remind you that Isaiah was talking to people who were God's people. He was making it clear to them that even as those who were in the family of God, it is their sins that have separated them from God's blessing.

So, again, Satan wants to deemphasize this matter of the holiness of God, so that people won't mind being sinful. And people are willing to be sinful. Among us, as Christians, it is not so unusual to find that someone suddenly is willing to be enormously sinful. And people get shocked. They come to me and they say, "Hey, do you know what's happening?" And you can see the pain; you can see the heartache; and, you can see the disbelief in their faces as they have to express a problem of sin that has confronted them in a personal way with someone they are associated with. Absolute righteousness cannot have love, and cannot have fellowship, with sinfulness.

So, the love of God and the blessing of God is separated from us because of our sinfulness. You needn't think that you can go along playing the game of countering God's standard, and still be in the position of blessing. To that extent, you ought to consider how you deal with people who have brought consequences upon themselves because of their own sinfulness, to the extent that until they're ready to say, "That was wrong; I repent of it; and I change my ways," that they should be permitted to follow in the consequences of their sinfulness. Romans 6:23 has told us that justice demands a penalty for sin.

Well, it was the love of God, as John 3:16 tells us, that sent the Son to the cross to die for the sins of the world. So, divine righteousness and perfect justice are satisfied. Then the love of God is set free to be expressed toward sinners.

1 John 4:9 puts it this way: "In this the love of God was manifested toward us; that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

The alternative to God's love, again, is His wrath, as expressed in John 3:36. By the way, on the love of God, the unbeliever counts heavily upon the supposition that if God is a God of love, that He simply cannot do such a terrible thing as putting a person for all eternity into the lake of fire; into a place of burning; and, into a place of pain. No matter how you and I stop to think about it, and how we consider that, we can't enter into that. It is just impossible to enter into a period of time that never ends, in which a person is in constant pain – suffering for sins, a payment that he can never pay in full.

So, people fall back on the love of God to explain that they are going to escape that: God could not be so cruel. That's why it's important for you to know that God is holy because He's absolute righteous and perfect justice. This love of God is restricted by the holiness of God. God's love cannot do anything that His Holiness does not permit. And the sovereignty of God, by the same token, is also controlled by the holiness of God. While God is sovereign, He is king. He can do anything He wants to do, yet He cannot do that which compromises His own holiness. The sovereignty of God is restricted by holiness.

Sometimes people say, "What's the supreme facet of the essence of God? What's the greatest thing? What's the real controlling factor?" Theologians in the past have landed on this one. They have said that it is sovereignty. That's the supreme truth about God. That is not so. The supreme controlling factor about God is His holiness. That is what governs all of these other characteristics.

**God is Eternal Life**

In the matter of eternal life, we're talking about God's own unique kind of life. God has a life that we cannot grasp – a life that never began, and a life that never ended. It is the life that you and I are confronted with when our children come up to us and say, "Where did God come from? How did God begin?" What your child is asking you is the deep theological revelation of the eternal life of God. God's life is eternal because it always was. Exodus 15:18 says, "The Lord shall reign forever and ever." God has a life that never ends. It is an eternal life.

In Deuteronomy 32:40, Moses says, "For I lift up my hand to heaven and say, 'I live forever.'" He is quoting God.

Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He has thrust out the enemy from before you, and shall destroy them." That verse points up to us the comfort of thinking through the essence of God. There are many times when we face crises; we've got a heartache; or, we've got a problem. If we would sit down and say, "Now let me think through the essence of God, and relate each facet to my particular situation," you would discover that there is an enormous comfort in reviewing the nature of God. That's what this verse is saying: "The eternal God is your refuge." You're not just being supported by somebody who's a sometime-Charlie around here. This is the eternal God, and underneath are everlasting arms. You don't have yourself supported by arms that are suddenly going to go weak and disappear. You're dealing with One who has the quality of eternal life.

Going back again to that first book of the Old Testament, in terms of its order of writing, Job 36:26, says, "Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; neither can the number of His years be searched out." Here's a demonstration of what we're talking about. In the process of this discussion with Job, who was suffering intense physical pain, the fact that God is eternal life, and that His years cannot be searched out, was a point of comfort to him.

In Psalm 9:7, the psalmist emphasizes this point: "But the Lord shall endure forever. He has prepared His throne for judgment."

Psalm 90:2: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You have formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." There you have the declaration that there was never a time when God was not: "From everlasting to everlasting, You are God." You don't understand eternal life – life without beginning and life without ending, and I can't explain it. It's a concept that demonstrates how God's mind is as far above our capacity of thinking as the heavens are above the earth.

Psalm 135:13: "For Your name, O Lord, endures forever, and Your memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations." That emphasizes the eternity of God again.

Psalm 145:13 says, "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations." That is because God always is. There never is a time when He is not.

In Isaiah 43:13, the great prophet Isaiah says, "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 hinder it?" Before there was anything else, there was God.

The New Testament reiterates the same concept in 1 Timothy 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever." Unto the King eternal. God always has existed.

Let's look at one more verse. In Revelation 1:8, God is presented, as Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." We've had that in our verse today in Revelation 4:8. The eternity of God is eternal life. He was; He is; and, He is to come now.

The Lord Jesus Christ died specifically so that you and I can share eternal life. I can't explain to you entirely the consequence of what we have in eternal life. It isn't just that you're going to escape hell. It isn't just that you're going to live forever with God. You have a quality of life, eternal life, which is God's life Himself. And that is the life that the Lord Jesus Christ came to provide to us. And the consequences of that, I'm convinced, we will never be able to explain until we actually get to heaven and discover what it is to have eternal life – such life as we have never known. What kind of life do we know? We know life in its very hazardous and it's very tenuous position.

As most of you know, one of the long-time members of Berean church, Mrs. Pruitt, died this past week. This morning, Mr. Pruitt was telling me that on Thursday of last week, they found that she didn't feel well. She went to the hospital. On Saturday, things got worse, and they said that it was a serious case of cancer. On Monday, he was told it is not only cancer, and not only serious, but it's terminal. By Tuesday or Wednesday, she was in the Lord's presence. That is tenuous life. It was out of the blue. Nobody was expecting this. In less than a week (a matter of days), suddenly an individual was called home to be with the Lord. That's the kind of life we know.

So, when we talk about eternal life, and all the consequences of possessing that kind of life, I assure you that we don't begin to enter into the significance of that. But, John 10:17-18 make it clear that that's the kind of life that we have: "Therefore, My Father loves Me because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received of My Father." The Lord Jesus said, "I lay down My life. I volunteered to do it for the exclusive purpose of providing eternal life for those who would then trust in Me."

So, in John 10:27-28, we have those verses that give such agony to those who believe you can lose your salvation. Jesus says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." The only way you could suggest that a person could lose his salvation is you would have to interpret eternal life to mean that it's as long as you behave yourself, or it means six months at the best, or a few weeks. That is not eternal life. Eternal life is the life quality that God has. It never began, and it never can end. This is the kind of life that God shares with us.

The apostle John loved that theme. He referred to it again in 1 John 5:11: "And this is the record that God has given to us of eternal life. And this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has eternal life." And notice: Don't talk about: "Someday you're going to have eternal life." Recognize yourself for what you are. You are *now* the possessor of eternal life. Your body may conk out on you at any moment, but you have within your being eternal life. The body is going to be brought back. Furthermore, you have a soul and spirit that shares the life of God, and it will share it with Him for all eternity. 1 John says, "You have eternal life now." That in itself ought to have an ennobling quality about us. How can we be the kind of crummy, low-down, sloppy type of characters we can be as Christians, knowing that we possess within ourselves eternal life?

That is royalty of the highest kind. As members of the royal family of God, we ought to act accordingly. But I'm sad to say (and we should remember) that this is not true with the unbeliever. For the last part of the 1 John 5:12 says, "And he that doesn't have the Son of God does not have life." There is a big difference between the believer and the unbeliever. One has eternal life, and the other does not. You're not waiting to get it. You already have it. The Lord says that once you have it. You can never lose it.

Well, we've come through the basic foundational features of the essence of God. We'll continue from here next time. Let's concentrate on these for the moment this week – that we have a God who has absolute authority. He is supreme king. He is righteousness and justice, which provide Him with perfect holiness. He is love, and He is eternal life.

One of the things that you will never find in Eastern mysticism, with all its multiplicity of God, is a God of love. Those who have come out of Hinduism, for example, are frequently born again. They are frequently drawn to the gospel of Christianity, because the feature of the love of God is presented to them. And they are shocked. They do not think in terms of a God of love. They only think of a Krishna or a Rama or all the rest of them who are vengeful, and who are going to impose a bad karma upon them – a bad consequence of their life. But they have nobody to come along to help you out.

You and I have got a bad karma. Let's face it. We've got the worst kind. We were born with a contamination of Adam's sin. We have our own personal sins. We have the worst karma of all. We did need somebody to act in love to solve the problem for us. That's what Jesus Christ did. If you want to think in terms of karma, just remember that He took it. It is the Lord Jesus who took our bad karma, and you never have to face it again. That is the significance of a God of love who provides eternal life on the basis that you can never lose it again.

Obviously, none of these things could be true of a force. It is not the force that is out there, as Satan is trying to tell us. It is not some universal mind. It is not some impersonal power that is out there. It is a personal living God. Satan hates it. And unless you have the objective information of Scripture on which to base your thinking about the nature of God, you will be sooner or later drawn into his deception.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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