

Capital G-God

1. Capital G or little g?

When I was growing up we would sit down to dinner and *say grace*. "God is great, God is good, now we thank Him for our food, in Jesus name we pray, Amen." People expect that God should be happy with our little pat responses and phrases. While this wasn't actually a bad idea, God deserves more than a little ditty over dinner. As Joshua had come to the end of his life, he felt the need to call on them to choose to serve the Lord. This might have seemed a little ironic since they had just gone through victory after victory as they began subduing the land.

Josh 24:14-16 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

They answered "oh, of *course* we would never forsake the Lord to serve other gods." It is a strange thing about how people think. Serving God is just a matter of course to so many. Man is so shortsighted. They cannot imagine that anything could tempt them away from the miraculous work of God. They *say* that – until they are tempted by not getting what they want. They *say* that – until things are not going the way they think they should. Joshua continued on:

Josh 24:19-24 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he *is* an holy God; he *is* a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

20If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

22And Joshua said unto the people, Ye *are* witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, *We are* witnesses.

23Now therefore put away, *said he*, the strange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

24And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

The people insisted, "Nay; but we will serve the LORD." Joshua held them to it. They had testified with their own mouths that they were going to serve the Lord. They were witnesses against themselves. Joshua then challenged them to remove the strange gods which were among them and they said, "The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." I want to ask, if the people were apparently so willing to serve only Jehovah God, what were they doing with such strange gods amongst them? The history of Israel shows that they were human just like everyone else. When they got into the land, they found themselves quickly chasing off after other gods.

Sometimes when I talk to people about their relationship to God I will ask them How they spell God. They will respond very simply g-o-d (everyone goes along with my question so very politely). At that point I quickly follow up with, "Do you use a capital G or a

little g?" You can see the light go on in their head as they get what I am after. A little g-god is just an idol, a superstitious talisman, a good luck charm, a mythological figure for a superstitious people. When people say capital G-God, they are talking about the Master of the Universe Who holds all power and is infinitely righteous and deserves our respect and absolute obedience. People will *always* allege that they would do whatever such a God said. Yet, for as often I have heard this, you would think that we would be living in the most righteous world. It seems *everyone* would be willing to be living a life of obedience to God, but our experience of the world is so *vastly* different.

When people are pressed about living their life for God and doing something so simple as going to church faithfully, they begin to resist. There is not a small number of people who will insist that the Bible doesn't say that you have to go to church.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: **and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. [We have *never* been so close to the Second Coming of Christ. Today, we should be urging people more than ever before to come to church.]**

As we exhort people to holiness and joining in God's work, you quickly see people getting uncomfortable and resisting.

Isa 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Ezek 33:31-32 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee *as* my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, *but* their heart goeth after their covetousness.

32And, lo, thou *art* unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

Part of the problem we have in trying to get people to face God is getting them to admit to themselves just how much we need to repent and turn our lives over completely to God. People expect that God should have to be satisfied with their vague and vapid offering of their sort of good efforts and behaving themselves. People will carefully and deliberately study to achieve a degree, a career, to be proficient at their job, or to get a promotion...but they will not deliberately seek out how to serve God because, though they do not like to admit it, they are actually in rebellion against God.

Since people *know* implicitly that God is a capital G-God, then they are not merely resisting some pressure on them, they are in jeopardy of full rebellion against God. But who would like to think that of themselves? They think they are only *resisting*, but what they are resisting is God's sovereignty because *their* sovereignty to do as *they* think is right is being threatened. When you place *your* sovereignty over God's sovereignty then that is not *resistance*, it is called absolute *rebellion*. In *their* minds, the only way God gets His way is if He just happens to agree with them.

After Jesus had entered Jerusalem He was confronted with people who were looking to trip Him up. They were looking for an opportunity to have an occasion to bring a charge against Him. They were gunning for God.

Matt 22:35-38 Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

Deut 10:12-13 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

I am not suggesting that people become wild eyed fanatics, but that we carefully seek out God, to know Him beyond a glib capital G-God.

Matt 5:6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Ps 122:1,9 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

Ps 42:2,4 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

4 When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

2. How big is God?

1Ki 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

Jer 23:23-24 *Am* I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

24Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Isa 48:13 Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: *when* I call unto them, they stand up together.

God both transcends and is immanent in His creation. Being immanent is term that means He is everywhere at once *in* creation, but He is not *part of* creation itself. Ancient religions that have survived to this day consider their god part of the creation. God also transcends His creation. He goes *beyond* that which is created. Also, His power transcends anything we can imagine.

3. How big is God *in your life*?

The bigness of God is worthy of consideration. Even if you acknowledge how big He is, the more significant question is how big is God *in your life*? Mankind works hard at defining how little and insignificant God is to declare Him as non-existent. For example, in the Humanist Manifesto II, which exalts man as supreme, you can see how hard the Humanists have worked to minimize God.

Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage. More

recently they have generated concerned social action, with many signs of relevance appearing in the wake of the "God Is Dead" theologies. But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the "ghost in the machine" and the "separable soul." Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture.

(This is reflected in the Humanist Manifesto I and III)

- How big is God in your *salvation*, your eternal life?

The power of God over nature, the power of God over the course of history, the power of God over creating the world from nothing all pales in comparison to the most impossible accomplishment of God – that God should become flesh, dwell in the cesspool of the iniquity of this world, and then *become* the sacrifice for sin, taking on our sin and the infinite judgement for that sin.

John 1:3-5 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
4In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

2Cor 5:20-21 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.
21For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Matt 10:28-32 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
29Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.
30But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
31Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.
32Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

- How big is God in your daily life?

Ps 139:1-12 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*.
2Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.
3Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.
4For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
5Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, **[in this case, the grave and not the torments of flame]** behold, thou *art there*.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*.

The work of God should be the great unifying factor that orders our world.

When Jeb Bush was running for President, he said in a town hall meeting, "Well, I always get in trouble when the Pope says things, because I'm a Catholic. I'm informed by my faith, and he is an inspirational leader of my church. But I don't question people's Christianity. I think that's a relationship they have with their Lord and Savior and themselves. So I just don't think it's appropriate to question Donald Trump's faith. He knows what his faith is. And if he has a relationship with the Lord, fantastic. If he doesn't, it's none of my business."

What I want to take issue with here is the statement, "It's none of my business." That would be like watching someone bleeding on the street and walking by and saying, "It's none of my business." People dying and going to hell is most *certainly* our business. If our lives are centered around making sure we are comfortable and secure in *this* world then there is a big problem. We should certainly pass through this world responsibly, but with a sense of direction, like a magnet under a paper with iron

filings. Are the decisions we make compatible with the great work of God's redemptive plan?

There are some who think they are too great of sinners that they can't turn to God. In reality, they just won't repent of their rebellion against God. When we were in sin against the infinitely righteous God, our sin was infinitely sinful. Jesus is big enough that He can infinitely pay for the infinite sin of mankind, but only if we turn to Him and ask Him to. Would you like to ask Christ to be your Savior today?

If you are saved, is God more like a little g-god good luck charm to you, or is He your Sovereign God in charge of your life?

Ps 119:129-133 Thy testimonies *are* wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

131 I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

There are plenty of drugs, alcohol, lust, and worldly amusement to distract us from the joys of our responsibilities before God. Those who serve God know this joy. You can have this, too, as you turn your life over to God.

1. Capital G or little g? Josh 24:14-24, Heb 10:24-25, Isa 29:13, Ezek 33:31-32, Matt 22:35-38, Deut 10:12-13, Matt 5:6, Ps 122:1,9, 42:2,4
2. How big is God? 1Ki 8:27, Jer 23:23-24, Isa 48:13
3. How big is God in your life? 2Cor 5:20-21, Matt 10:28-32, Ps 139:1-12, 119:129-133