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Getting to Know God

What the Bible Reveals

From time to time surveys are undertaken asking people whether they believe in God. Surprisingly about 60% usually say they do, though only about 10% of them go regularly to a place of worship. But if the survey goes further, and asks these professed believers in God what they believe *about* Him, an almost incredible vagueness emerges.

Their general view of God reflects their view of themselves. Most people are inclined to be indulgent towards their own failings and they think of God as necessarily being the same. "I like to think of God", they say, "as infinitely kind, always forgiving and never condemning anyone, even wrongdoers. Others will say, "Well, if God exists, and I do what I think is right, I shall get whatever reward there is." Since in part of the Western world all religions are now regarded as equally true anyway, any approach to God is as good as any other.

The fact is that modern man is largely pagan. He has lost any sense of the authority of God, because he has lost any basis for belief. Left to his own imaginings, he lacks all conviction; he is confused and indifferent.

Where is the Basis?

It is surely self-evident that if a religion is to have any power and authority for mankind, *it must be revealed* by God Himself. For there is only one alternative: if the message is not from God, it must come from man. But how can any man presume to tell other men and women what is true and right?

The teachings of the great majority of the religions of the world obviously come from human thinking. There is one notable exception. The religion of the Bible -- the Christian religion with which this booklet is concerned -- is emphatically a *revealed* religion, the word of God for man.

Its message is never presented as of human authority. "**The word of the Lord**" comes to the prophet and he delivers it as just that. Old and New Testaments are alike in this. When that Word is written down for the benefit of future generations, it is, says Paul, "**inspired of God**". Literally he wrote, "**God-breathed**" (2 Timothy 3:16), a remarkable expression conveying the thought that God's Spirit (or 'breath') was in the very written words. So, says Peter, the Scripture "**came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit**" (2 Peter 1:21). Notice the contrast: not "**by the will of man**", but from God direct by His Spirit.

This is why the Bible is *the* book of supreme authority. It is God's Word for us. But an important consequence follows: if this is so, we dare not neglect it. We must take it seriously.

God's Self-Revelation

So to the Bible let us go. What has it to tell us about God?

This information is not scanty -- it is abundant. It commences in the first page of the Bible and is maintained right through to the last, that is to say, all through the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets of the Old Testament, and then through the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament. But this picture of God is not complicated or confused, for there emerges one outstanding Personality with His own decisive character, closely concerned with the career of the human race and the future of the world. He cannot be relegated to the fringes of human concerns, nor pushed away "somewhere" in the distant heavens, to be conveniently ignored. If men and women do that, the consequences for themselves will be disastrous.

The commonest description in the Bible of the nature of God is "everlasting". Consider these examples:

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from *everlasting to everlasting* thou art God" (Psalm 90:2).

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that *the everlasting God*, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding" (Isaiah 40:28).

"The LORD is the true God; he is the living God, and an *everlasting King* ..." (Jeremiah 10:10).

Here is a quality of existence entirely outside our experience. Indeed God indicates so Himself through His prophet:

"The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses *flesh*, and not *spirit*" (Isaiah 31:3).

Here there is an obvious contrast between "men/flesh" and "God/spirit". God's nature is "Spirit", and forms therefore an absolute contrast with human nature, which is limited in mind, weak in character, and perishing in death.

God is Eternal

The most explicit descriptions in the New Testament are from the Apostle Paul:

"Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17, R.V.).

"The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power eternal. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:16, R.V.).

It is remarkable that in these descriptions the two most explicit terms about God's nature are expressed as negatives. He is "incorruptible" (*not* corrupting) and "immortal" (*not* dying). God has a "nature" the direct opposite of "human flesh". So He is "eternal", literally "of the ages" (R.V.).

margin). It is significant that Paul uses this term three times in one verse: "... to the King eternal (of the ages) ... be glory for ever and ever" (unto the ages of the ages -- R.V. margin). How impressed he must have been with the thought of the *everlasting* nature of God.

The Greatness of God

The sheer supremacy of God and the glory which should be ascribed to Him by puny mankind is a constant theme throughout Scripture. It was well expressed by David, King of Israel:

"Blessed be thou, O LORD, the God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness: and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chronicles 29:10,11).

Greatness ... power ... glory ... victory ... majesty ... all in heaven and earth ... kingdom ... exalted ... head over all. We do well to read slowly through these terms to appreciate David's profound sense of the majestic supremacy of God. It was shared by the Apostle Paul, as we have seen.

This deep conviction of God's supreme majesty is shared by all the faithful of Old Testament times. Now we should not neglect the Old Testament, for in it are revealed the foundations of the character of God, basic truths about Him which are confirmed and expanded in the New Testament.

Furthermore it was to Israel that was granted the great revelation of God's supremacy over all the gods of mankind in the stirring events of their Exodus from Egypt. The Israelites saw the effects of the plagues upon the Egyptians and witnessed their own deliverance at the crossing of the Red Sea. Moses put it very strikingly 40 years later:

"For ask now of the days that are past ... whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is? ... Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials (R.V. margin), by signs, and by wonders ... according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt *before your eyes?*" (Deuteronomy 4:32-34).

Upon this open demonstration of His power and salvation on their behalf, God based His appeal for their service towards Him:

"*Ye have seen* what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. *Now therefore*, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar (special) treasure unto me from among all peoples ... " (Exodus 19:4,5).

Notice particularly here that God's appeal for faith in Himself was solidly based not upon His moral excellence (of which He would give plenty of evidence later on), but upon the demonstration of His supremacy over the greatest pagan system on earth at the time (the Egyptian). This is reinforced when God reveals through Moses His Law for Israel, for the very first clause begins:

"I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2).

Then follow the Ten Commandments, the kernel of God's Law for them.

The authority comes first; the moral teaching follows. It is impossible to dispense with this order. Strikingly, Jesus adopts the same position. The words he spoke, he said, were not his own, but his Father's. In prayer to God, he addresses Him as "Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25).

Though God was a Father to all who sought Him, yet He remained "Lord of heaven and earth". Unhappily it has to be said that these priorities have been widely ignored in our days, even by many who would regard themselves as followers of Jesus Christ.

The Uniqueness of God

From his recital of all God's great works on behalf of His people, Moses drew the following conclusion:

"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is none else*" (Deuteronomy 4:39).

This was a vital affirmation in a world of a multitude of pagan gods. It remained vital all through the centuries of Israel's persistent neglect of the God who had delivered them. In His frequent reminders through the prophets that it was He who had delivered them from the oppression of Egypt, He declares that He is God *alone*:

"I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me" (Isaiah 45:5).

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul recognises the existence of many cults and pagan gods; yet to the believers in Christ these idols are nothing:

"We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods ... yet to us there is *one God*, the Father, of whom are all things ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

And in writing to the Ephesians Paul says:

"There is one body ... one Spirit ... one hope ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all ... " (4:4-6).

This is a resounding declaration of the unity of the various aspects of the Christian faith, all depending on the "one God".

Modern Attitudes

All that we have considered so far of the greatness, the glory, and the majesty of the one God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, implies that He should receive reverent worship from frail mankind -- and so He does from the faithful all through the pages of the Bible.

But what are we to say about the attitudes towards God today, even among many professed Christians? Firstly, religious opinions in Western civilisation have greatly changed through the increase in followers of other cults. It is now held by many that all religions offer their own way to God and are all equally "valid". People reject the great claims of Christianity to be the sole way to "salvation", expressed thus by the Apostle Peter:

"Neither is there salvation in any other (than Jesus Christ):for there is *none other name* under heaven ... whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

It is no wonder that, for modern man, God as portrayed in the Bible has receded from the centre of attention and is relegated to the fringes. A casualness and familiarity at times, even in religious exercises, show that God is no longer accorded the honour due to His Name. Even terms of holy

significance like "Hallelujah" (which means "Praise the Lord") are bandied about to evident approval by profane comedians.

To this must be added the humanist and materialistic spirit which exalts the human mind, and has little thought for the existence of God or for His worship. Even these brief reflections upon the state of modern opinion show what a gulf exists between today's attitudes towards God and that manifested by Jesus and the apostles.

The Character of God

But this one God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, worthy of all reverent worship, is not just an impersonal Power. He is a Personality, with a character of His own. He has eternal moral principles, which He has made known to mankind through His commandments and precepts.

The first explicit description of the character of God occurs in a revelation to Moses about 1400 B.C. Moses had received many communications from God during the events of the Exodus, but he evidently felt that he did not yet know God as a Personality, so he makes a request:

"if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee ..."

When God agreed to his request, Moses enlarges on it: "Show me thy *glory*". Now Moses had on more than one occasion already witnessed the "physical" glory of God in the form of great light and demonstrations of power. Here he wants something more. God is aware of this:

"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee ..." (Exodus 33:13-19).

The way, the glory, the goodness of the Lord will all be expressed in His Name and will enable Moses to "know" Him. This Name is now proclaimed:

"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty . . ." (Exodus 34:6,7).

So emerges the great portrait of the God of the Bible given by Himself. He has a definite moral character, in which mercy, longsuffering (slow to anger, R.V.), goodness and forgiveness play a great part, but always consistent with His "truth". Echoes of this description are frequently found in the subsequent books of the Old Testament, especially the Psalms (see Psalm 103, for example) and the prophets.

This portrait of God expresses His "goodness" and also His "glory" of character. It is this aspect Jesus has in mind when he declares to the woman of Samaria, "**God is Spirit**" (not "a Spirit" which misleads) (John 4:24). The character of God is described as "Spirit". It forms a great contrast with the natural character of human flesh expressed in its thinking and desires, and described by John as "*the spirit of the flesh ... of the world ... of error*".

The Holiness of God

It follows from what we have just considered that God in His nature and character is quite different from man. He dwells in "light unapproachable", unseen by mortal eyes, says Paul. But His "thoughts" (a term which always includes His purposes) are greater than man's, as he said:

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

So God is "holy": that means He is "set apart" from mankind. Man cannot blunder heedlessly into His presence as if God were just another man. On account of their sins they cannot approach Him at all, except in the way He indicates. Israel were taught in the Law that approach in worship and sacrifice could only be through the priests, the sons of Aaron, whom God had Himself appointed. The aim of the Law was to develop in the people of Israel that mind and character which were like His. So He commanded them: "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44); and Peter echoes this in writing to the early believers in Christ:

"But as he which called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living" (1 Peter 1:15).

Jesus had already said as much to the woman of Samaria –

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23,24).

The "holiness" which God requires from true believers is not that ascetic spirit shown in time past by hermits; nor is it to profess to worship God and to "go through all the motions", and yet to manifest a spirit of mind which owes more to human self-indulgence, covetousness and pride than it does to the Spirit of God. God was not tolerant of such an attitude in Israel. Nor will Jesus be at the Judgement. There are some to whom he will say, "I never knew you: depart from me" (Matthew 7:23).

God as Father

"Our Father, which art in heaven" This first line from "The Lord's Prayer" used to be one of the best known in the New Testament. Today it is much less frequently repeated. But even at the height of its use, it is to be feared that the term "Father" was used in a conventional sense without much thought about its implications.

In Old Testament times God had already revealed Himself as a "Father". "Israel is my son, my firstborn" (Exodus 4:22) was His declaration to Pharaoh in Egypt. Through the long centuries of their experience the faithful appreciated the relationship:

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:13-14).

In the New Testament the supreme manifestation of God as Father is in the person of His beloved Son. Jesus constantly refers to God as "my Father" and, when addressing the disciples, as "your heavenly Father". The infinite grace of God, so dear to the psalmists and prophets, was shown in the giving of His Son as the atonement for sin. And so the faithful are granted a new relationship with God, in which they are not only "heirs with Christ" but "sons and daughters of God". John exclaims:

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and such we are" (1 John 3:1, R.V.).

But in these days of casual familiarity it is easy to slip into the habit of thinking of God, and indeed even addressing Him, as "one of us". Jesus kept his priorities clear at all times, and particularly in his prayers. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25) warns us that although God is truly our Father, He remains "Lord of heaven and earth" and should be worshipped as such. Twice in his prayer for the disciples shortly before his crucifixion, he addresses God direct: "Holy Father ... O righteous Father" (John 17:11,25). There is no familiarity here, but a profound recognition of this "otherness" from man.

Similarly the Apostle Paul, quoting from the Law and applying the saying to the believers in Corinth, urges them to "come out" and "be separate" from the idolatrous worship and practices in Greek society. God promises them, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters"; but Paul does not hesitate to complete the quotation, "saith the Lord Almighty", and to go on to urge his readers to cleanse themselves "from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God", that is, in reverent worship (2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1).

And in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples he addressed God as: "Our Father, which art in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). God is indeed a Father to the faithful, showing all the care and concern that a father would feel for His children. But those "sons and daughters", while appreciating His grace and mercy towards them, must never presume to forget the reverent worship which is His due. This balanced attitude is severely threatened in our times of freedom of expression and human rights. The Bible alone enables us to preserve that balance.

The Love of God

Today the most widely held view is that "God is love". Does not the Apostle John say so in his epistle (1 John 4:1 6), and in his gospel? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" that men and women should live and not die (John 3:1 6). God is all kindness, it is said, and He would not condemn or reject anyone. The result of this thinking is an emotional view of God, formed from human desires. C.S. Lewis once described this as the view of God as "a kindly grandfather", anxious only to keep His children happy by gratifying their every wish.

But this is a gross perversion of the love of God revealed in the Bible. No human father, earnestly desiring his children's welfare, believes this result can be achieved by gratifying their every wish. Now God is the Supreme Father, who created the human race that they might reflect His own character of truth, mercy and holiness. So "God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27) and gave men and women remarkable powers of reason, understanding, conscience and will -- all denied in the same degree to the animals -- so that they might use them to understand Him and develop characters fit for the eternal destiny He desired for them.

This attitude towards erring mankind, showing that He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4), is shown in His dealings with the nation of Israel, described in Scripture as His "son", and also as His "wife". Understanding these human relationships, and knowing that essentially their success lies in mutual dependence and selflessness, helps to explain the qualities of patience and compassion God exhibits to His individual children.

When Jesus was describing to his followers God's never-failing interest in His children's welfare, he told the story of the prodigal son. The Father's pain when his son demands his portion and his rights

echoes God's own hurt when men and women wish to strike out on their own, heedless of His ways and His loving care. In the parable, the father's constant watchfulness mirrors God's, who ever waits to receive repentant sinners who can be covered by the clothing for sin provided through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor is this description of God found only in the New Testament or in the teaching of the Lord. The prophet Hosea's personal experiences with a faithless wife were no different from the treatment God Himself received from the wayward nation of Israel. Just as Hosea took back his wife, so God always stretched out His arms to receive Israel again. In doing so, however, He did not show any approval of what His people had done: the experiences they endured because of their faithlessness were intended to teach them about the kind of lives His children should be living.

So there emerges the great principle that it is not the personal desires of men and women which have first place in God's purpose for them, but their ultimate good. The attitude of God is indeed of mercy, kindness, grace and forgiveness towards His children, as the New Testament so abundantly declares; but it is all within the framework of their ultimate welfare in His purpose.

The Wrath of God

But what if men and women turn their backs on Him, reject His authority, ignore His commandments and proceed to do their *own* will? One thing is clear. Since God is Lord of heaven and earth, and Creator of mankind, He cannot ignore their rebellion, for that would be to abdicate His authority in the very world He has created. He must try to correct the situation, to get people to change their ways. This He does by bringing pressures to bear upon them. One of the clearest examples is the case of Israel under the Judges, after the death of Joshua:

"The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baalim and the Asheroth (R.V., pagan gods). Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served him eight years. And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer ... who saved them ... " (Judges 3:7-9).

The lessons are clear. Israel's abandonment of their God, who had delivered them from Egypt, aroused His anger. He brings pressure to bear upon them in the form of foreign invasion and slavery. After a time the pressure has its effect -- Israel repented. Their repentance was evidently genuine, for God was quick to respond and bring deliverance.

This pattern is repeated many times in Israel's history. About 700 B.C. the Assyrians destroy the Northern Kingdom based on Samaria; and eventually the Babylonians overthrow the Southern Kingdom of Judah, about 600 B.C. Why did God permit these invasions? Because, despite all His efforts in sending His prophets to appeal to the people and warn them, "**They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words**". The record ends with this significant comment:

... until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was no remedy*" (2 Chronicles 36:16).

When, despite all appeals, people will not repent, God puts an end to the situation. This is what He did at the Flood, when the earth was "**corrupt**" and "**filled with violence ... all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth**" (Genesis 6:11,12). That generation of mankind would not repent; they could not be reformed. The only solution was to remove them, in order that the purpose of God could continue in a faithful remnant.

Before we come to the New Testament, two terms used of God in the Old need consideration. In a few passages God is declared to be "*a jealous God*". The term gives offence to modern readers because it is taken in its popular sense and suggests a certain human pettiness. But this is to misunderstand its Scriptural meaning. There it is always used of God in warnings to Israel against forsaking Him and turning away to idols:

"Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples which are round about you; for the LORD thy God ... is a jealous God; lest (his) anger be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee" (Moses to Israel, Deuteronomy 6:14-15, R.V.).

Now it is significant that the same root word is sometimes translated "*zeal*" and "*zealous*". God Himself tells us what He is zealous for:

"I am the LORD; that is my name: and *my glory will I not give to another*, neither my praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42:8).

The Lord God of heaven and earth is determined that the worship due to Him shall not be given instead to mere objects of human creation or imagination. This is His "*zeal*". It is connected with His wrath, for ultimately He will judge those who despise His worship.

The second term is "*the vengeance of the Lord*". Modern usage suggests a spirit of revenge, characteristic of human nature but unworthy of God. Again it is necessary to understand the term in its Biblical sense. The "*vengeance of the Lord*" is used of His judgement of sinners. But the same attribute is used in connection with the saving of the faithful. Isaiah well expresses this latter aspect:

"Strengthen ye the weak hands Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong ... behold your God will come with *vengeance*, with the recompense of God (R.V.); he will come and *save* you" (Isaiah 35:3,4).

The vengeance of God is always righteous retribution. It is a judgement which is deserved because of persistent sin, the vindication of God's holiness and truth in the face of human obduracy and pride.

The New Testament and Judgement

As the judgement of God came upon the nation of Israel for their persistent apostasy and sin, so it will come upon our world for its godlessness and immorality. In a striking passage Jesus compares "the day when the Son of man is revealed" (i.e. when he returns to the earth), to the judgements of the Flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man ... " (Luke 17:26-30).

It is the consistent theme of the New Testament that there is to be a day of judgement for the world. Paul assures the faithful in Thessalonica that God will judge "*at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus ...*" (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 -- the whole passage should be read).

This is such a forthright description of judgement that it shocks most modern thinkers. But Paul is using the language of the Law and the Prophets: the "*vengeance*" is that righteous retribution already discussed; those who "*know not God*" are not so much the ignorant as those who do not "*acknowledge Him*"; and to "*obey not*" the gospel is really actively to reject and disobey. Whatever we may feel, there is no doubt about Paul's message.

But the New Testament also declares that when Christ returns there will be an individual judgement for those who have known the gospel. A distinction will be made between "the righteous", those who have sought to be faithful, and "the wicked". the unfaithful. As Paul declares:

"We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ ... So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10-12).

Judgement, then, is part of the revelation of the purpose of God, His determination not to tolerate lasting sin, sometimes called in the Scriptures, "the wrath of God".

Our God is Real

Enough has been written to show that, far from being vague and shadowy, the portrait of God in the Bible is full of detail. The Lord God Almighty is not only eternal in nature and majestic in power; He is a God who deals in the realities of the world and of human nature. Having begun by creating the human race to dwell upon the earth, He has pursued ever since His resolute purpose "to take out of the nations a people for his name". That purpose is now approaching its climax when, with the return of His Son to the earth in times of great perplexity and fear, His Name will be known from one end of the world to the other in preparation for the day when

"... the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

Meantime, what of us who desire to be His faithful servants and to wait in patient service for the revelation of that day? Here are two New Testament statements which are very enlightening:

"God (is) our Saviour, who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the *knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:3,4).

"God is longsuffering to us-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that *all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9).

The first striking thought that emerges is that of the gracious will of God towards mankind. He desires the welfare of them all, that they should live and not die. But the second is that He requires some action of them. He has revealed His saving truth in His Word, the Bible, and He expects them to get to know what it is. That truth, in the gospel proclaimed by Christ and the apostles, will inevitably bring them to recognise their own shortcomings in a "change of mind", which is what repentance means. And that in turn will bring them into relationship with the God of heaven, with eventually the great prize of eternal life for faithful service.

In short, God is so real that He is proposing to alter the basic reality of our human nature with all its suffering and death, into another like His own and like that of His Son. This God cannot be ignored. His Word is waiting to be opened and read. What are we waiting for?

-- Fred Pearce