



Conducted by
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“I read in Heb. 11:5 concerning Enoch, where the scripture says, ‘For before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God’. If God can be ‘pleased’, is He then subject to the same emotions as we humans?”

This is one of those questions which inherently expresses great profundity together with naivety: profundity because it takes us into the realms of metaphysics when considering the nature of God, and naivety because it seems to indicate a lack of appreciation of what God has already demonstrated. Consequently, we shall need to

say something about the nature of God, and then try to understand how these so-called emotions fit into His nature.

The Nature of God

The Apostle John says, **“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”**. John 1:18. A further revelation is given by Jesus Himself when he spoke with the woman at the Well of Sychar, **“God is Spirit”** (not ‘a Spirit’ as in A.V. — no indefinite article in the Greek). In addition to the above, the God/Moses encounter at the scene of the burning bush is quite revealing. After Moses had tried to make his excuses for not returning to Egypt, he finally said to God, **“when they (the children of Israel) shall say to me ‘What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you”** (Ex.3:13,14).

It is as well to pause here while we consider the implications of this name I AM. In Rom. 16:26 Paul refers to God as **‘the everlasting God’**. The word **‘everlasting’** should in fact be translated **‘eternal’** because the Greek word AIONIOS refers to someone who is in the nature **endless**, so the **‘eternal God’** is by nature endless. He was the Great I AM in the day of Moses; if He spoke to us today He would still be the Great I AM; and if the earth should last for a further million years He would remain the Great I AM. He is the God of Causation and yet He Himself is Uncaused. He reigns over the Universe as its Lord and Creator; the illimitable tracts of space are His domain; there is nothing that man could conceive of which would not be His. Paul, when writing to Timothy says God, **“Who only has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see. To him be honour and eternal dominion”** 1 Tim. 6:16.

So in this brief and cursory (but scriptural) look at God, what have we arrived at? (a) Jesus, His Son, has declared and revealed Him (b) No mortal has seen Him or can see Him (c) By nature God is Spirit (d) By existence He is Eternal (e) By omnipotence and power He is Lord and Sovereign of the Universe. We can further say that His dwelling place is Heaven, and in some way from there He has to communicate His Will, intentions, and His Essential Being so that we mortals can understand the essence of His nature. This is not an easy task, and only a God such as ours could do it.

His Personality

Personality, strictly speaking, means being a person and having a personal existence or identity. As human beings we identify a person who, in substance and observable outline, is similar to ourselves; it is extremely difficult for our minds to conceive of Spirit having ‘form’. Paul, however, when he wrote his letter to Phillipis says, **“Who being in the form of God, ... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant”** (Phil. 2:6,7); the word **‘form’**, in each case, is the Greek word MORPHE. Therefore, the phrase **‘form of God’** is literally MORPHE THEOU and means the nature or essence of Deity which subsists in both God and His Christ. It is quite evident from scripture that Jesus existed with God before the foundation of the world; He existed on earth in manifested mode as a man; and He now exists in splendid glory at the right hand of God in Heaven. While He exists, no matter in what mode He may be manifested, the nature and essence of Deity is inseparable from Him. **Because** Jesus exists as a Person, and if He was in the ‘form of God’, then it is surely logical to understand that God, even though Spirit, exists in ‘form’ as a Person. All the O.T. writers and prophets would testify to that, and all the N.T. writers have testified to the manifestation on earth of His Christ, both in human form as a man, and in nature and essence as Deity. It is then but a step for us to understand that the Eternal Spirit, the Holy, the Third Person of the Godhead, can be manifested

in the hearts and minds of men, displaying the same nature and essence of Deity. So we can summarise this section by saying that the three comprising the Godhead; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, are separate Persons, but **inseparable in the nature and essence of Deity.**

The Emotions

We now need to examine the main thrust of the question, but in view of my comments up to this point perhaps we should re-phrase the question and ask, “Are the emotions of Deity the same as human emotions”?

I believe all Christians should have indelibly printed on their minds **GOD IS GOOD**; believing that, we can never attribute to God anything which is dubious or evil, either in intent or action. Everything He does is **GOOD** for those who will receive it; it is His nature, and He cannot change; so far as the Christian is concerned, his every belief, hope, thought, action, **must** stem from that premise. Therefore, we must **also** believe that every so-called **emotion** which we attribute to God – such as wrath, anger, displeasure, punishment – must also be expressions of His overall Goodness, as **must** love, compassion, forbearance, patience.

The Goodness of God will always try to reproduce in His Creation His own Goodness, because that is what He has **Willed** from the beginning. To do that, He must not only lay out all the blessings which will accrue from doing His Will, but He must also present, clearly and unambiguously, what will be the result of **neglecting His Will**: as the God of all Creation He acts in a perfectly reasonable and responsible way when He does that; **He must act in accordance with His nature.** So when Paul says, “**But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation**” (Rom. 2:8), we would look at the **natural** emotions of wrath and indignation and possibly attribute them to God as a vengeful outburst, when in actual fact they are **Divine** reactions in a spiritual sense to what God is by nature, and they are brought about by the Divine abhorrence of evil. We can then understand that it is not God acting in a capricious way in whims of anger and fury and punishing recalcitrant children in a similar way to a schoolmaster punishing errant school-children, but rather that it is man **punishing himself** because of his non-adherence to the Will of God which is doing nothing but seek his good. This very fact, of course, makes it absolutely imperative for Christians to get out and teach the Will of God to as many people as can be reached; that is an extension in us of what God has always attempted to do through His faithful servants, and as we are **responsible** for that, so we shall be held **accountable.**

Most of man’s pleasures are sensuous by nature, as distinct from the Divine pleasure. We may occasionally indulge ourselves in aesthetic pleasures – such as viewing the beauty of nature or listening to music – but in our media-dominated society these occasions are becoming increasingly rare. Jesus spoke to His disciples on one occasion and taught against worldly carefulness, and said, “**Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom**” (Luke 12:32). When will we understand that God’s ‘good pleasure’ is embodied in His gracious Will for mankind? He doesn’t want to give us the trivia that the world gives; He wants to give us a **kingdom.** Do you doubt this, brother, sister, friend? His Divine nature is such that He **delights** in giving; how different this attitude is from a world which thinks or says, “What’s in it for me, before even raising a finger to help. Surely we cannot be unaware that in order to destroy the power of sin He had to respond to the requirements of His own nature and **sacrifice Himself** in the Person of Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary. Yes, I’m talking about the Great I AM, the Creator of the Universe. The awe-inspiring impact of this ought to drive us out of our worldly reverie and make us face grim reality. It means that sin is so abhorrent to the Divine Nature that anyone not cleansed from it will perish with it. The Divine Nature deeply loves the sinner,

but will reject him because of the sin attached to him. Do you understand that, dear reader? The most perplexing thought, however, is that it is love that does it, because God is love.

Faith in God is not about singing hymns and attending Meetings, important though these are, but it is trying to understand Him. People think of God as displaying human emotions because that is all our finite minds can grasp, but I am convinced there is more to it than that, as I have tried in my imperfect way to explain.

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