

How Big Is God?

The Greatness of God

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Here in America, June 16 is Father's Day—a day we set aside each year to honor our dads by giving them gifts, cook or buy some special meal, and let them have a day off from work around the house. This sort of honoring fathers is something that we should be doing every day because, as you know, it is the fifth commandment. In Exodus 20:12 it says, "Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

Let us look at a New Testament spiritual parallel to this found in Luke 11:2. The reason I turned to this scripture is because I did not want you to guess right away where I was going. This is Luke's version of the so-called "Lord's Prayer" which is also found in Matthew 6:9. This is Jesus speaking.

Luke 11:2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name."

As Christians, we have a far greater Father to honor every day, not just our physical father. We have a spiritual Father who is far and away more important than our physical father because He is the one who provides for us and gives us so many things. Especially us, as Christians, He has called us out of this world and given us the opportunity to fulfill the potential that we have.

Jesus says here that we are to *hallow* the name of our Father in heaven. The word is *hagiazō* in the Greek, and it means *to make holy*. It means to sanctify or to set apart. The definition though that I would like to concentrate on is "to show a difference from the common." We all have our common fathers. They are all men, but we have one who is a *holy* Father. He has been set apart from our common fathers. That is what we are going to key in on today.

Our fathers are but men. They are human. They are beings created in God's image, but they are full of flaws and deficiencies. As a father myself, I count myself among those full of flaws and deficiencies. Like I said, we have a heavenly Father who is different, uncommon—a *great* Father who is so much more and better than any man, any father, no matter how great that man may happen to be.

I began speaking about fathers because it is a tie-in with the holiday tomorrow. I am not going to focus on God as a Father. That is not my purpose. I just wanted to introduce the subject to get you thinking about the idea that we have a God who is different from the common. I am more concerned with how we view God in general in our everyday lives, in our everyday relationship with Him, because He is not just a Father. Of course, that is how He is introduced to us by Jesus Christ. He is the One who revealed the Father. That is just one of His hats as a Father, just like a human father.

Just think of your father. He is a father, but he may also be a carpenter, or a plumber, or a salesman, or a butcher, baker, candlestick maker. He may also be a hunter, or a fisher, or he might be a ballplayer, a golfer, a tennis player, a card player, or a sailor. He might even like NASCAR, or he could be a skeet shooter. He may be a poet, a playwright, a stamp collector, a gardener, a model railroader, or a woodcrafter. He may fly planes for a living. He may skydive occasionally.

Do you get my point? God is not a one-dimensional figure. He is not just a Father, He is also designer. He is Creator. He is Life-giver. He is Law-giver. He is our provider. He is the King of all that there is. He gives, He reveals, He works out prophecy. He answers prayers. He heals sickness. He works in world events, and He works in church events.

He works in our individual lives—calling, forgiving, granting repentance, justifying, sanctifying, and ultimately glorifying. Maybe you have never thought of Him in this way, but He is the supreme geologist, biologist, botanist, chemist, physicist, mathematician, linguist, historian, writer, and author.

I could go on and on with the things that He is, and the things that He does. So when we look at God as though He only has one job, or only wears one hat, we lose sight of how wonderful He is, how expansive His mind is, how talented He is, and intelligent, how creative, and how powerful He is. I forgot to mention that He is also the Supreme Judge.

Like I said, it can go on and on. We have a truly great high and almighty God who will not be pigeon-holed into one little niche that we like to think is God. He is so much more. His mind is so great, and His power is so wonderful that our little minds cannot grasp it. But we have got to do our best to grasp as much of it as we can so that we can truly know Him, and what He is, and what He does.

I know we, as human beings, really have a huge problem with this. The reason is that all we know revolves around *human* things, *human* traits, *human* strengths, and *human* standards. We compare everything with ourselves, or with the common man, or with the average man, or maybe even the "best" men.

If we are really trying to improve ourselves, a lot of times we set as a standard another man who is doing what we want to be able to do, and then we set our sights on that. With God, we cannot do that. He is not comparable to a man. But that is the only way we know how to think, and so we have to get some sort of idea by seeing how man is, and then comparing what God is to man to at least try to get some sort of grasp of how great He is. That is hard to do. Our minds can really only grasp but just a thin sliver of what God is and what God does. We are just so earthbound, are we not? We are so bound to what we see and what we know and what we are involved with.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

I have got to admit here that there is such a great gulf between Him and us. Think about it. We are stuck here on earth. Remember I said we were

earthbound. His thoughts are in the heaven. We are way down here on earth. Just as much higher than the heavens are from the earth, that is the difference between us and God. That is something we can understand a little bit.

We can see the stars up in the sky and we can say that one of them there is so many light-years away. We can get maybe a glimpse or an inkling of how much higher God is from us. If He can make something so far away come and give us light here on earth over such a long distance, then He must be a great God. But that does not really do Him justice. There is a chasm, a gulf, between us and God that is miles wide and miles deep. Maybe I should say light-years wide and light-years deep. In our carnal state, this gap, this gulf, this chasm, cannot be bridged. There is just no comparison.

Let us go to I Corinthians 2. We will see this somewhat repeated in the New Testament.

I Corinthians 2:6-11 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

In man's carnal state there is just no way you can grasp what God is working out. Carnal man can only get a fleeting glimpse of the grandeur and greatness of God. Thankfully, fortunately for us we have God's Spirit that allows us to get a better view, a closer view, maybe a little bit longer view, a more exact view of what God is and what He is working out in our lives and in the lives of many others. Even this view has its limits. We only have the *earnest* of the spirit. We do not know everything. Paul gets back to this in I Corinthians 13 in talking about love—*agape* love.

I Corinthians 13:9-11 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. . .

That is how we think in comparison to God. To Him we are just children. To all the things that *we* know are like what little toddlers know compared to what *we* know. Do you understand? As the toddler is to the man, so are as men to God, but the gap is so much greater.

I Corinthians 13:11-12 . . . but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then [when we are perfected] face to face [we will really know]. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Just as God knows us *now*, we will be able to know *then* what *He* knows. That is going to be such a wonderful time. Talk about mind-expansive things, we are just going to be probably inundated with the things that we could know, and thankfully we will have a spirit body and a spirit mind to be able to take it because the things that God knows are just beyond all comprehension to man. Our knowledge is only partial right now, obscured by a fog in which we get snatches of reality as the clouds drift past, but then we get engulfed by the fog again, and our way gets kind of misty, and we do not quite grasp all that we could grasp.

Paul uses the metaphor of *seeing in a mirror*. We have pretty clear mirrors now with the mercury backing. I believe it is mercury backing normally, and they have got a piece of glass on there so the backing is protected. We get a pretty good idea when we look in the mirror of what we look like, and what other things look like in the mirror.

The common mirror in New Testament times was a piece of polished bronze or brass. It was just polished metal. We have chrome, where you can get a pretty good reflection. The common mirror in those times was not as good. You got a dim reflection, probably good enough to comb your hair, but you could not really see all the dirt and grime and everything else.

This is the idea that Paul is getting across. It is a very dim reflection of what we can see of what God is. It is kind of foggy. The glass is dark, obscured. Maybe we turned the shower up too high, and the mirror gets all fogged and you see that fuzzy-looking *you* coming back in your reflection. That is about how it is. The reflection falls far short of what is real, but just for fun let us try to make that image just a little sharper about how we look at God.

Let us go to Isaiah 40. This is the famous chapter in Isaiah where He talks about "To whom then will you liken God? To whom will I be equal?" Verse 9 gives us some food for thought about how great God is.

Isaiah 40:9 O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

That is what we are trying to do today, say "Behold your God!" *This is He!*
This is our God!

Isaiah 40:10-12 Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand. . ."

How much water can you hold in the palm of your hand? A cup? Less than a cup probably. Maybe a couple of tablespoons. How much does God hold in His hands? All the water that is on the face of the earth! We are puny! How wide is your outstretched hand? A span. Mine is about five inches long. That is about the average. Do you know that God measures the entire universe in one span of His hand? We have a pretty big God, do we not?

Did you know that God carries a measuring cup that will hold all the dirt—all the matter of the earth? That is what it says. He calculated the dust of the earth in a "measure"—a little one-third of an ephah, or something like that. Did you know that He has a pair of scales that can weigh all the hills and the mountains of the earth? It kind of gives you the idea of Atlas a little bit. We

know that God is not really huge, but it is the idea that we are supposed to understand. He is a God that is so much greater than us that He is without comparison.

I am almost at a loss to tell you how much greater God is. We know that when God came to this earth He came as a man. He was the normal size of a man, but what our God can do is absolutely huge! He can measure the whole universe between His thumb and His pinkie finger. He can hold all the waters of the earth in one hand. He is *gigantic* in what He can do. He has absolute power, and He can bring anything to pass, whatever He desires.

Verses 13 and 14 show that He not only has absolute power, but that He has absolute intelligence and wisdom. Nobody has taught Him. Nobody told Him how to create. Nobody told Him how to do this or how to do that. He already knows all that. We cannot tell Him anything. This reminds me of I Corinthians 1:25—"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

Our nuclear physicists or nuclear scientists—those who have the most expanded minds among us as far as what men can do—are fools in comparison to what God is. He made those laws, and they are just trying to tinker with what they know, what they can see, and what they can measure. God has no equal when it comes to knowledge and understanding. He is the Author of them, and their Teacher. So if we ever think that we are bringing something to the table, trying to tell God something that He does not know, you have another "think" coming!

The idea of Isaiah 40:26 is also found in Psalm 147.

Psalm 147:4-5 He counts the number of the stars; he calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

To me this is a truly incredible, mind-boggling, almost mind-numbing thing to think about, that God has numbered, counted, and named all the stars in the universe. What does this mean? Let us expand our mind here. Man has no idea how many stars there are, and he has numbered only a few thousand.

I do not know how many there are. There are star charts, and maybe they have numbered a few million. Let us give them the benefit of the doubt and say they have put names on a million of them.

I wanted to find out what astronomers these days think about how many stars there are, so I entered the CompuServe Forum on astronomy. I asked a question of the astronomers there—"How many stars are there in the universe? Could you give me an approximation, a good guess, as a ballpark figure?" I got two replies from some amateur astronomers, not astrologers, and they both calculated it the same way. They said, "Take the average number of stars in an average size galaxy like the Milky Way and multiply that times the number of galaxies that we think there are."

Well, this is a ballpark figure, and I am telling you, this has to be a huge ballpark! The first one calculated " 1×10 to the 22nd stars," and the other calculated " 1.5×10 to the 22nd stars." We will take the lower one. That is ten trillion times a billion stars. Maybe you can understand this figure a little bit better: 10 sextillion, or let us just say the figure "one" with 22 zeros after it.

Let us remember that God not only made them all, and numbered them all or whatever, but He also *named* them. I read somewhere that the average person has the ability to identify less than 1,000 people by name. It is actually a lot less than that. I think the number was closer to 500. In effect, we all have a thimble for a brain when it comes to God.

Maybe this will help expand your mind a little more. Let us say 50 billion people eventually make it into the Kingdom of God, become God-beings, and God says, "Okay 50 billion of My sons and daughters, I am going to give you a reward. I am going to give you all an equal number of stars to rule and create around, and do all the things that gods do." How many stars would you have? Are you ready? Two hundred billion stars!

Now we have not even calculated planets that you might have to finish all around these two hundred billion stars per god-being. If there are fifty billion

of us, when it all winds up, do you know how many galaxies that is? Two. Two entire average-size galaxies, and you guys are afraid to rule a few cities? How about galaxies?

Let us go on to something else. What about God's ability to plan things in advance? We know about God's overall plan that He designed eons and eons ago to bring many sons to glory, but what about all the little details that most of us are bound to forget and mess up on because we are so finite? Did He plot all these little details out? Look at Job. God is saying to Job:

Job 38:22-23 "Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?"

What kind of a God do we have that makes up treasuries of snow and hail just in case He needs them in a time of trouble, or in battle and war? I am going to show you where He used these.

Exodus 9:22-24 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail [He kind of made use of His "little" treasury here], and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

You and I (if we were God) would probably say, "Oh, we need some hail quick. Moses just asked for it. Let us go make us some!" But God had this planned long in advance, and He had the treasury of hail ready for a time of trouble like it was in Egypt. It will happen in the near future. He has probably been stocking up His hail treasury because He is going to need it in just a few years.

Revelation 16:17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

This is the seventh bowl.

Revelation 16:20-21 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, every hailstone about the weight of a talent. And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

If you do the figuring on this, you will find that these hailstones God has been saving up for just a time like this, were between 44 or 48 pounds a piece, depending upon what talent you use. I may be taking these scriptures literally, but I am not for a second supposing that God cannot do this.

We know that God is a faithful Creator, and He is faithful to all of His creation. He creates and He maintains. That is what it means to be a *faithful Creator*, in that He has not only created what He has done, but He also makes sure that it comes about to its fullest potential, and things work out the way He wants it to do. We have to have this faith in Him because He is working out our lives. He did not make this world and everything in it and then retire to some nice corner of the universe to sit and drink mint juleps the rest of the time. No, He is very involved.

The author of the book of Hebrews said that "God is upholding all things by the word of His power." He is very active in His universe, in His creation. If He did not, we had better watch out, because we know the law that says if things are not kept up and maintained, they all degenerate. That is a law of nature.

For years now economists have been debating whether it is a good thing to micro-manage or macro-manage the economy. They have arguments on this side, and arguments on that side, about whether these people like the Federal Reserve should dabble in all the *big* things like the money supply, or

whatever, or if they should get down to the individual level of individual jobs, and things like that. I do not know how that one is going to work out, but I know God's is. God is a micro-manager of His universe.

Matthew 10:29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will."

Have you ever thought about what it means that God knows every sparrow that falls to the ground? I tried to do a little digging in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to find out how many sparrows there are in the world. Do you know what I found out? I found out that we do not know! Nobody takes care of sparrows like God. Nobody numbers them like God. Men do not. Men do not have the mind to keep track of how many sparrows there are, much less than how many die.

But I figured out now the answer to that old question—"If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around, does it make any sound?" The answer is *yes*. The reason is, because God hears it just like He knows every sparrow that falls to the ground.

The best I could figure about these sparrows is that there are over 85 different species of sparrows all over the world. Now how many birds make up each species? I do not know. Nobody knows. Just to give you an example, the Red-billed Quelea is a sparrow, and it is found in East Africa. This little red-billed quelea and all its friends get together in flocks of 20 million birds, and God either causes or passes on each one of those 20 million birds' death. He is a big God, is He not? What a tremendous God we have who can keep track of the minutia of sparrows' death. I do not know if there is an obituary up in heaven for sparrows, but He knows. He is not One to let something even as small as that slip by His notice—and we think that He ignores *us*.

Matthew 10:31 "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

That is a classic understatement. You will be God one day. Do you think He does not keep track of *you*? He does not just pass on our death; He passes on everything we do, and everything that is done to us. There is no reason to doubt His watchful care over us.

Matthew 10:30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Now this is a flooring thing! Have you ever thought about how many hairs are on your head? Well, *Encyclopedia Britannica* got someone to estimate it. I did my own independent estimation before I was able to dig into *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and I came up with about the same figure. They say, "On a human head, the average total number of hairs is between 100 thousand and 150 thousand." For those of you who are losing it, it is much lower than that. But there are others who make up for that. To be conservative, I took somewhere around the mid-point. This is the average I came up with: 120 thousand hairs on a person's head.

God knows all them. He is aware that they are there, and if He wanted to He could count them. There is no problem with that. Did you know that the average person loses about 70 a day? They grow back in most of the time, or they break, whatever. We are talking about God having to know plus or minus 70 hairs a day.

Jesus is talking to His disciples here, so let us discount everybody else in the world except His disciples, and I came up with a round figure of how many disciples of Jesus Christ are on earth right now. I just pulled a number out of the air: 100 thousand. I made the multiplication real easy. Guess how many hairs God has to keep track of now on all His disciples. Would your believe 12 billion, plus or minus 7 million? Those are the ones that fall out every day. God can keep track of 12 billion hairs on the heads of His saints. We have a big God, do we not?

Are you beginning to feel a little small in comparison to God? If you are, good! One of the purposes of this sermon is to make you feel small. I am not doing this to make myself feel big, because I feel small too, but we really need to see the incredible difference there is between God and us. Only when we see Him in this proper perspective can we truly say *we know Him*, and we can truly appreciate Him and what He does for us. If we are not seeing us as a little speck of significance, and seeing Him as the ultimate in significance (if you understand what I mean), we are not getting the right picture. He is *everything*. We are nothing. Unless we realize this, and acknowledge this, then we have got too much pride. We are puffing ourselves up.

The religious people of this world have a much greater problem of understanding God than we do. Not only do they worship a God that they do not know, they also do not appreciate whatever things they do know about the true God.

An article appeared in *The Charlotte Observer* on May 6, 1996 titled "Lost—Our Sense of Awe." The author comes to a conclusion that made a very good basis for this sermon. That conclusion is as follows:

The sense of awe and mystery that could drop believers to their knees is mostly absent. A fearful respect that once meant removing shoes, or reverencing a symbol of divine presence, is rarely observed. Today many believers have homogenized the Holy One. [Have we not seen that?] They conceive of God in ways that don't require their humble obedience or patient trust in adversity. That way their spiritual digestive systems aren't upset.

The following quote is from Annie Dillard. I do not know who she is. She wrote the following:

Why do people in churches seem like cheerful brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the absolute? Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? I would say very few. The general mood of the spiritually minded, regardless of their religious identification, seems to ignore the power and the majesty of any deity, no matter what deity they worship. We have created God in our own image, and the results have been devastating.

First, we have lost the sense of awe. As science filled the void of knowledge once understood to be the domain of the divine, God was pushed further into the corner. Before long, God was put out of work altogether by the growing confidence that all things would eventually be explained through refinement in scientific theories.

Second, we are impatient with silence. [Is that not the case? If God does not answer us right away we almost bug Him to death, or whatever, to make Him answer us.] We want, we expect answers

now. [emphasis added] But the horrors of war, the tragedy of natural disasters, the frightening specter of disease leave many rejecting any sense of a beneficent providential deity. Too often we hear no reassuring voice, feel no strong arm lift us up.

Third, rampant individualism has infected our beliefs. God is shaped to fit our needs, to be no more than a foot taller than ourselves. [He is a lot bigger than that.] A God, who in any way threatens to lead us beyond our personal autonomy, will likely be reduced to a more manageable size.

The author of this contends that the solution lies in people who gather together. That is very interesting.

The solution lies in emulating the holiness of God. For those of us who are Christians that can begin in some basic ways. We can start by bringing back a sense of holiness and awe in our hours of worship. We must face the fact that some of our preconceptions of God are wrong. We have fashioned God to fit the contours of our desires, and then bow before them with religious abandon—the god of my cause, the god of my understanding, the god of my experience, god of my comfort, god of my nation, god of my success have been our particular favorites. Only by rediscovering the holiness and majesty of God will we be able to face the sufferings and uncertainties of life with comforting hope, and it must begin on our knees.

This man said that humility—knowing our lowly place before God—is the key to grasping the greatness of Him.

What is man's true state? David asked the exact same question.

Psalm 8:3-4 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?

David looked up into the heavens, like we have been doing today in a sense, and he said, "Why God? You're so vast. Your mind is so incomprehensible. You are so much greater than us. Why do you even deign to think about us, much less care for us?"

Let us trace this out. What is man? Let us go to Matthew 22. You might say this is a strange place to go to find out what man is before God, but I am going to go backwards here.

Matthew 22:39 And the second [great commandment] is like it:
"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus says, "All you people should love each other equally. You are as good as your fellowman. Love them equally to you." This seems okay. We are at least as good as our fellowman.

Let us go to Philippians. We turn to this one often when we are talking about humility.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

It makes us feel spiritually better when we are thinking of other people more than we are thinking of ourselves. So other people are better than us. That is fine.

I Corinthians 1:26-29 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Now we are foolish, we are weak, and base, and despised. We are beginning to look a little more grim than before, and it does not look like we have a whole lot to be proud of, at least among our fellowmen.

Let us go to Proverbs 30. This starts to get personal.

Proverbs 30:2-3 Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One.

Now we are stupid and base. We do not have any understanding (compared to God of course). That is how we seem. We are dumb, unlearned, thick-headed. Like he says pretty bluntly—we are "stupid."

Psalms 73:22 I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.

The word "like" is not in the Hebrew. It should read, "I *was* a beast before You." Now we are not even human! We are beasts before God!

Let us go to Job 25. Bildad is speaking to Job.

Job 25:5-6 "If even the moon does not shine, and the stars are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is a maggot, and a son of man, who is a worm?"

We are not just beasts anymore; we are maggots and worms before God. We are those slimy things that come out of the earth like dung beetles, or something like that which breaks down all the refuse. What makes this worse is that our Savior says the same thing about Himself in a prophecy in Psalm 22:6. He was God in the flesh, and if He was a worm, what does that make us mortal, corruptible, stupid human beings?

You may not believe it, but we can go even lower.

Isaiah 40:15-17 Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the balance; look, He lifts up the

isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.

You see how this started out. We at least were water molecules among the nations—that drop in the bucket, or we were maybe a dust particle. But then, that is not small enough. We are nothing, and *less* than nothing, and worthless.

I hope by this time you are thoroughly disgusted with yourself. You feel thoroughly small, because that is the proper attitude to have when we are comparing ourselves with God.

We are going to go to Job 40 and look at one more thing here. After God finally talked some sense into Job about what the comparison between him and God really was, Job finally got it. He said:

Job 40:4 "Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer You?"

This word "vile" literally means "light," as in "not heavy." It could float off like a helium balloon. Another way to translate this would be "utterly insignificant." In Job 42:6 he says, "Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He had finally gotten to the point where he understood that great gulf between him and God, and he had better shut up, because God had every right to do what He wanted to do.

Now fortunately for us, and for Job, God does not leave us *as nothing*, and *less than nothing*. Without God that is indeed what we would be—nothing, and less than nothing. We would be without hope, without purpose. Remember, that is what Paul says in I Corinthians 15. Without the resurrection of the dead, which is our hope, where would we be? What would we have to look forward to? We might as well be *nothing* if all would stop at our death.

But when God enters our lives, when He begins to have a relationship with us, everything changes. We are still worms and maggots. We are still water

molecules and dust particles, but when God is *in* us, and *with* us, and helping us and guiding us, we are worms and maggots with potential. Maybe we could say we are caterpillars that can become butterflies—if we do not make the process stop.

Let us go to Hebrews 2. God has offered us the chance to go from worm and maggot—from nothing, and less than nothing—to God!

Hebrews 2:5-8 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place [this was David], saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You made him a little lower than the angels [The margin says *for a little while you have made him a little lower than the angels*. But what happened?]; You crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. [This is the butterfly stage.] You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now [like I said before] we do not yet see all things put under him.

"Eye has not seen nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love Him." At the resurrection we will be crowned with glory and honor. We will be given the very nature of God. (For some reason right now I am thinking of the Pizza Hut commercial. We will be made of the stuff that *He* is made of. I do not know why that popped into my head, but it did.) We love the stuff He is made of, do we not?

When our glorification comes, we will have that incorruptible heavenly body. We will have His mind, His power, His life—*everything!* Remember, we were nothing. Now *everything* will be subject to us. Talk about a "rags to riches" story, this is *the* ultimate "rags to riches"! Do you grasp the enormity of this?

That huge gulf—that great chasm between us *little-nothing-worm-maggot* men—will be bridged, and we will be God. We will be one with God. We

will be part of His Family. It is understanding this fact, combined with the humility to recognize what we are now, that should motivate us to do as it says in Hebrew 12.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all people [that is an element of humility], and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord.

Remember, the man in the article said we have got to start being holy, being humble. He must have gotten that out of Hebrews 12.

Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest anyone should fall short of the grace of God.

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

We want to be butterflies. We do not want to stay a caterpillar or be squashed as unfit to be a butterfly.

Let us go to Matthew 5. Did you ever think of the Beatitudes in this sense? Do you know that one way you could categorize the Beatitudes is that they are all elements of humility? On the other hand, the clause in each one of the Beatitudes is an element of our glorification. First He says *humility*; then He says *glorification*. In Proverbs 15:33 it says "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility."

Matthew 5:3-4 "Blessed are the poor in spirit [That is an element of humility. What is their reward?], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn [There is another element of humility.], for they shall be comforted."

In Revelation it says there will be no more tears or crying in God's Kingdom. That is comfort.

Matthew 5:5-6 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."

If we were not dependent upon God, knowing that He was the only One who could give us these things, we could not hunger and thirst. This is an element of humility. We have to put ourselves under subjection to Him so that He will feed us these things, and we will be filled.

Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

You have to be humble to really be merciful. If you were proud, you would step on people's necks, but if you pick them up and help them and be merciful, you have to be humble.

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Yes, there is something as the beatific vision, but we are not going to sit there and do that all day for eternity, but we will see the face of God. What a reward! It says in the Old Testament that you shall not look on the face of God and live. The only way we can look on the face of God is if we are God.

Matthew 5:9-10 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

He ends where He starts off. We need these character traits of humility, character, and holiness if we want a place in God's Kingdom, and we start with knowing where we are in relation to Him.

Let us conclude with the last two Psalms. This should be our attitude.

Psalms 149:1-4 Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints. [Guess who He is talking to?] Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. [There is the time-setting.] Let them praise His name with the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people. [Why does He do that?] He will beautify the humble with salvation.

Why is He so happy about His people? They are with Him! They are in the Kingdom of God. They have turned into butterflies! He has given them salvation. They are glorified. We can have an eternity with Him. That is what He has been shooting for all this time. No wonder He is happy.

Psalm 149:5-9 Let the saints be joyful in glory. [Yes! We will be very joyful when we are glorified!] Let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth [Listen to these things that we will be able to do.], and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment: This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!

We will judge the earth. I Corinthians 6 says we will judge angels. You had better want to be a butterfly. Just think of that great gulf that has been bridged between this point and that point.

Psalm 150:1-6 Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

Yes indeed! Have a happy Sabbath everybody.