

AN
OVERVIEW
OF OUR FAITH

**Of course, it all begins
With God.....**



God is not a being.
God is the **ground of being** itself.



Freedom Quotes

**What does that
mean?????**

**When you think of God, what
do you imagine God to be?**





**But (probably) God is
not an old man in the
sky...**

God: The Ground of All Being

Beatrice Bruteau

*"Being is really Be-ing;
it is not really a noun but a verb. ...
To-exist is dynamic, not static."*

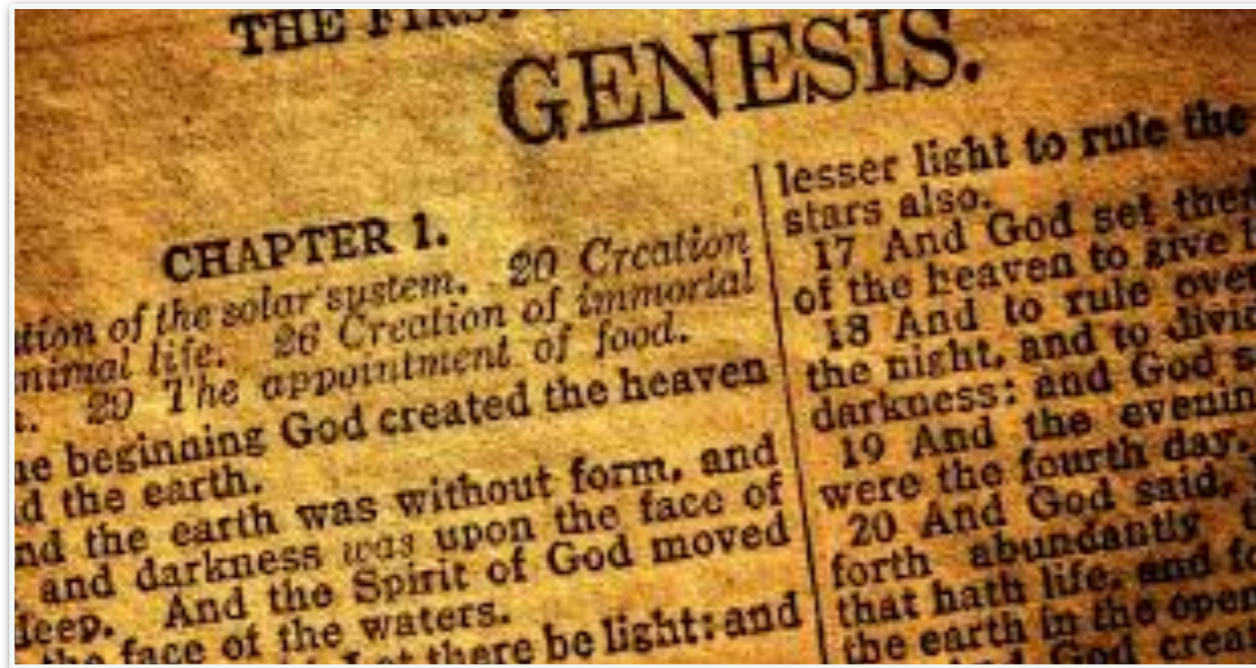
*"Dynamic be-ing means more-being,
being-more. Endlessly more. Every
kind of "more."*

Being must be both one and many."

**How do we get to
know God?**

List some ways

Through the Bible and Church



Through creation



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Through life experiences

“good judgment comes from experience and **experience comes from bad judgment.**”

“In the book of life, the answers aren't in the back.”

– Charlie Brown

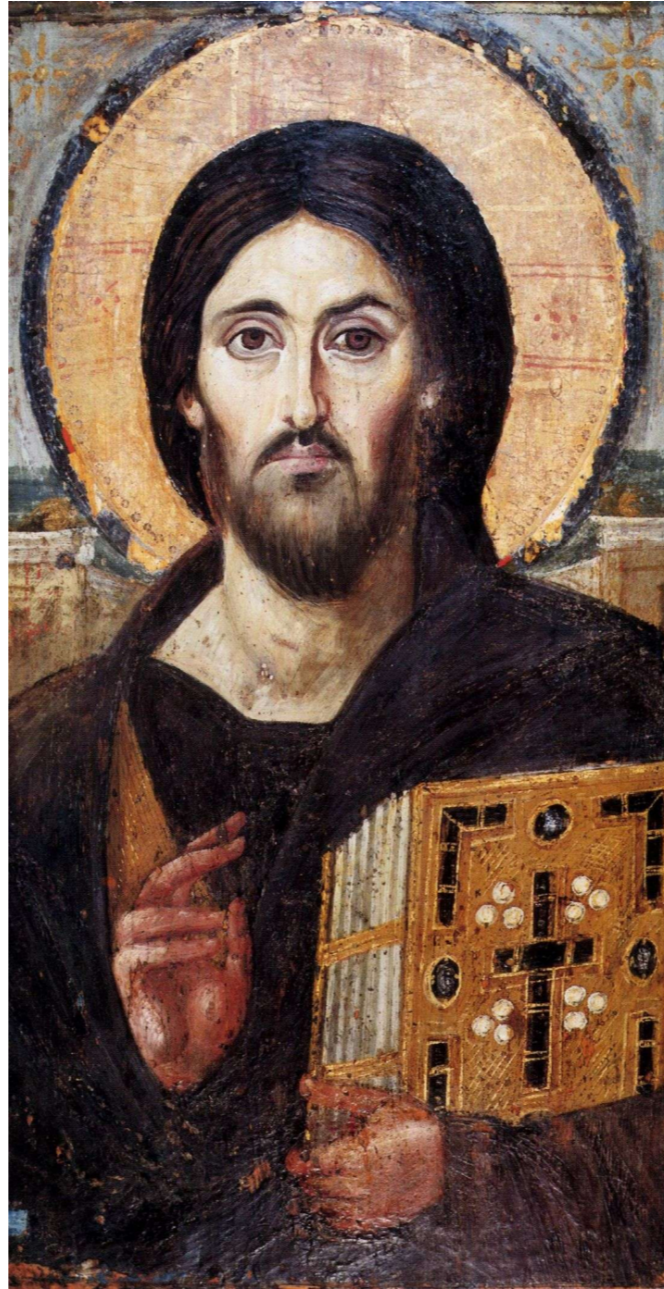


Please write down your earliest memory of God

Since then, how have you experienced God?
Write it down please...

Summmarize 1 Bible story you know

Please share what it means to you.



Jesus

Who is he?

Please write down

- Three things you think are true about Jesus

please share one

- Why do you believe this?

When you think of the Holy Spirit

What do you imagine he/she/it to be?



Have you felt

God's Holy Spirit working in your life?

How so?

**Have you ever experienced something
you considered to be miraculous?**



Care to share?

When we really think about it...

- Every day is a miracle, our life on this blue orb floating in space, children, air and water and our ability to marvel at all of it...and this guy! Truly a miracle!



The church

As one wag once put it: “Jesus promised us a kingdom but all we got was the church!”

**What does that mean
to you?**

The church is made up of human beings

Which means nothings
going to be perfect...
and sometimes
things'll be downright
ugly!



Which is why we have most of the new testament!

- The apostles letters are often to communities that are struggling to learn this new way of life: a life based on service and forgiveness rather than a life based on power, money and fame.



The New Testament

Is made up of 27 books and letters

- Beginning with the **FOUR GOSPELS**
- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John

Gospel means Good News

- Mark written around 66-70
- Matthew written around 85-90
- Luke written around 85-90
- John written around 90-110
- And then there was Q or Quelle,
German for Source

- Before they were written down the gospels were passed on orally at house meetings and around camp fires. Much like our Hawaiian people who preserved precise memories through stories and songs and dance, so too were the stories of Jesus preserved.
- We believe Mark is the earliest gospel because Matthew and Luke use so much of what Mark wrote. Mark is also the shortest of the gospels.
- Luke and Matthew also relied on another source, Q, believed to be simply a list of sayings by Jesus that has now been lost to time.

- John's Gospel, the last to be written, is quite different from the first three. It is a mystical meditation on the true nature of Jesus, and the result of additional time to reflect on the immense meaning of God becoming a human being.

I Am

- In John's gospel, we hear Jesus refer to himself as:
- I am the gate
- I am the good shepherd
- I am the way...

I Am

**Being the name God gave Moses at the burning bush, when Moses asked
God to name himself:
“I am who I am” came the reply**

John's Gospel drives home the point that the nature of God

- Is compassion
- Mercy
- Gentleness
- Self-giving



- The remaining books and letters of the new testament begin with The Acts of the Apostles, written also by the author of Luke's gospel. It tells the story of the early church: the Holy Spirit was on the move, transforming frightened followers of Jesus into the incredibly committed men and women who took up this new way of life: a life based on compassion, mercy, service and love.

- Acts is followed by the 13 Letters that tradition tells us were written by St. Paul, plus the Letter to the Hebrews who's author is unknown.
- Scholars tell us that most likely, Paul himself probably wrote the letters to the Romans, Corinthians 1 and 2, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon.
- Paul probably is not the author of the letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, or 2 Thessalonians and Paul is definitely not the author of 1-2 Timothy or Titus.



Why Does It Matter?

- The problem is that those other letters often contradict what Paul himself has to say. The radical Paul of the authentic seven letters (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon) is slowly but steadily reshaped into the **conservative** Paul of the probably inauthentic threesome (Ephesians Colossians, 2 Thessalonians) and finally into the **reactionary** Paul of those certainly inauthentic ones (1-2 Timothy, Titus).

Meaning the real Paul often gets a bum rap as being anti-woman, anti-freedom, and far too close to the powers that be.

- Because the radical Paul, the one who says there is “no more Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free, because all are one in Christ,” is slowly being tamed, sanitized and Romanized. His views on slavery and patriarchy (men first) are reshaped, in the later, non-authentic letters, into the cultural and social expectations of Rome.

- **WHICH ANTICIPATES OUR
LAST CLASS SESSION
ENTITLED:**

- “GOD MADE US IN HIS IMAGE,
THEN WE RETURNED THE
FAVOR — AND MADE GOD IN
OUR IMAGE!”

- We can trace this “taming” of Paul by comparing the letters we know he wrote with the others he likely didn’t write. For example,
- Paul sends back the now-converted slave Onesimus to his owner, Philemon, telling him that a Christian can’t own a Christian because all people are equal. Paul reminds Philemon "to do your duty," and free Onesimus, and to consider him "no longer as a slave but as a beloved brother -- especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord" (Philemon 1:8,16).

- Then, someone unknown who writes in Paul's name, says this: "Slaves obey your masters ... fearing the Lord" and "Masters treat your slaves justly ... you also have a Master in heaven" (Colossians 3:22-4:1 & Ephesians 6:5-9). Christian-on-Christian slavery is back, but, in a kinder, gentler way!



- Finally, still later, the “**reactionary Paul**” never **mentions mutual duties**, addresses only the master, and says to “**tell slaves to be submissive to their masters** and ... to be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior” (Titus 2:9-10).

**The famous line used by
slave owners for generations
to justify slavery...**



- Which is why learning about the faith and our Bible is so important. **Context is key and if we know the context, we can avoid all kinds of harm that happens when folks just pluck Bible verses like fruit, disconnected from their history, authorship and meaning.**

- Agree???
- Disagree??
- Explain!

- Unlike the fundamentalists (who arose only about 120 years ago) and who claim every word of the Bible must be taken “literally,” the church, for 2000 years, has always treated the Bible as a conversation between humanity and God, subject to human limitations and human mistakes.

- Or, as one fellow has
Jesus saying:
- “You read Scripture to understand what love means, while I use love to understand what scripture means.”
- What does this mean?

If our **understanding of scripture defines love** for us, are we allowed then to exclude, condemn and cast out certain people?

Sure!!

- The Bible, especially the older testament, and some of the letters attributed to, but probably not written by Paul, is full of examples of excluding, destroying, shunning, people.

But if Love tells us how

- to interpret scripture,
can we exclude, judge,
condemn?

Please explain...

Well done!!!

See you next week!

Same bat time!

Same bat place!



The End

Of Part 1 of 5