

God Has A Dream

by Staff

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I know what God is thinking! I know God's heart! Do you? On the other hand, do you say, loosely quoting Isaiah 55:9, that God's thoughts are higher than your thoughts, as high as heaven is above the earth?

For those who are interested, God's heart is an open book. In the Bible He has revealed to mankind all His deepest thoughts and His greatest hopes. For those who doubt that we can know what God is thinking, a very clear passage in God's Word proves otherwise. Whether one believes this or chooses to reject it is up to the individual.

In his letter to all the saints at Philippi, Paul encourages them: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). This means exactly what it says! Human beings can think the same kind of thoughts that Christ did. Right away, we need to remember that it is not God's habit to command or ask of us what we cannot do. Therefore, if we have proved that the Bible is indeed God's holy message to us, and as a result have begun to believe it, then we will come to the realization that we can have the mind of Christ in us. We can believe in and think the very same thoughts and ideas that occupied Jesus Christ's mind.

On further thought, this scripture becomes even more astounding. Since He declares that He speaks only those ideas which He had learned from His Father in heaven—"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (John 7:16)—we can have the very thoughts and ideas of God the Father coursing through our human brains! It all depends on if we really want them!

How Much Is It Worth?

How much is it worth to us to know the mind of God? Where do we see people knocking at doors to acquire this kind of knowledge today? Is it worth giving up some other pursuits to gain the time and concentration required to discover what God is thinking? Are we convinced that it is profitable to know what our Creator is going to do? Or are we too busy with "more important" business?

What could be more important than discovering how to live life in the most profitable manner possible? What could be more profitable than acquiring this "insider" information as soon as possible? Are we not interested in eliminating much of our worry and stress? We can do this if we believe what God believes!

Because we have heard it preached for so many years, most of us in God's church generally know where we are headed and how to get there. Yes, we can "read God's mind." But knowledge is of little value unless we apply it in our daily living. Here is some help in how to make this knowledge work for us. It is quite easy to understand. All we need to do is believe it, and true belief reveals itself in behavior.

First, however, we must know exactly what this wonderful knowledge we are to believe in is. We, made in God's likeness, are thinking beings because God is a thinking Being. Just like us, God spends His time thinking thoughts, and He has ideas that fascinate Him. They are strong ideas,

reasons why He lives the way He has chosen to live His life. He ponders past events and present activity and anticipates how He will shape the future. These great ideas in His mind make God what He is. His ideas surely must motivate Him to be what He is, as His name, "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14), implies. God really is what He says He is! His ideas energize Him to work patiently on His great master plan that He has purposed to work out here below.

Genesis 1:26 records that God said to another Being, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." After man's creation, God began to preach to Adam the wonderful good news of why He had created him and what glory his future held in store. This same message motivated Abraham to wait for a city "whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The gospel was preached to the Israelites coming out of Egypt (Hebrews 4:2). It was the message of the prophets, and when Christ came, He preached this gospel also (Mark 1:14-15). Herbert W. Armstrong proclaimed it to this present generation.

For those who observe God's seven annual Sabbaths, this gospel is preached through the harvest symbolism of the holy day plan: Passover commemorates God's action of reconciling to Himself those who will repent. The Days of Unleavened Bread are calculated to remind us every year that we need to put sin completely out of our lives and replace it with God's own way of sin-free living. Pentecost celebrates the reaping of the firstfruits harvest of 144,000 who have accepted God's lifestyle and become qualified to rule with Christ at His return. The Feast of Trumpets is a prophecy of Christ's return to usher in life as it could have and should have been lived on this earth all along. The Day of Atonement reveals to us the time when the world will be at one with God. The Feast of Tabernacles brings into our life hope of the way God thinks the world ought to be and shall be for the next thousand years. Finally, the Last Great Day celebrates the Great White Throne Judgment of all the rest of humanity. The magnitude of this final period is symbolized by the ingathering of the rich fall harvest, which is far larger than the small spring harvest of firstfruits. These annual holy days of God eloquently preach the good news of human beings entering into the glorious realm of the ever-living God.

When we apply our minds and hearts to consider the meaning of God's holy days, we are in effect thinking the Father's thoughts, ideas that originated with the Great God. This gospel is one of the two main threads that run through the Bible from beginning to end.

The Law of God

The second set of ideas or principles of God's Word, which also spans the Bible from beginning to end, is even more fundamental to God's thinking. It is something so dear to Him that it may well be the very reason why God even has a gospel to share with us!

God has determined a way of living that He calls good, righteous, and holy. Herbert Armstrong understood that the essence of God's way is outgoing concern for others, thus he came to call it the "way of give" as opposed to the competing "way of get." Before God began populating the universe with angelic and human beings, His chosen way of life became a law. He made it the law by which His entire universe operates. This spiritual law of God, encompassing His personal, holy way of life, is the written expression of His deepest reasoning and emotion.

It is no wonder, then, that the law is, in short, whatever God is! Because God is good, so is His law because He created that law. The law is called holy, righteous, eternal and never-changing because God is all these things. Why? Because He wants to live that way! Because His way of life bears only

good fruit, God wants us to live the way He lives, so He commands us to switch from transgressing His commandments to honoring and keeping them.

It should now be a little bit easier to understand that, when we meditate on God's law night and day, He has succeeded in getting us to think His own thoughts. King David, a man after God's own heart, shows us in the Psalms why we ought to think lovingly about His law. When we meditate on the beauty of the weekly Sabbath (the fourth commandment), for instance, we are letting Christ's mind be in us, we are thinking thoughts that are very dear to God, and in the process, we are also endearing ourselves to Him!

What God Dreams

God's spiritual law as well as His gospel is the stuff His dreams are made of. Unless we desire to begin dreaming God's dreams with Him now, however, we will take His salvation offer lightly and not in earnest. We simply will not have the earnestness of spirit to purge ourselves from our sinful ways, nor the endurance and dedication of heart to see it through until the formation of God's character is accomplished in us.

II Thessalonians 2:10, 12 describes the fatal flaw of many a nominal Christian: "[T]hey did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . but had pleasure in unrighteousness." In other words, they never learn to value the gospel of God and His law very highly. They fail to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33), and their hearts never say, "Oh, how I love Your law!" (Psalm 119:97). There is insufficient effort on their part to love the things God loves, nor enough desire to dream God's dreams.

The Bible shows our Creator and Redeemer as continually focused on the gospel and the law. Jesus expresses the mind that He would like to be in us, and He recognizes these two great sets of ideas without ceasing. Notice Mark 1:15: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ". . . Repent [believe in God's law], and believe in the gospel." Again, in Matthew 6:33 He pleads in the Sermon on the Mount, "Seek first the kingdom of God [the gospel] and His righteousness [His law, "for all Your commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172)]."

These are the ideas God wants us to embrace above everything else. If we do, His mind will be in us. He wishes us to open the doors of our hearts and adopt this mindset because He cannot do that for us. God has done and is doing all He can for us, but to *let* His mind be our mind is totally our choice.

A popular song of several years ago recounts how a relationship has regretfully gone sour between two lovers. The woman apparently spurns his wholehearted attempt at reconciliation, as he directs his plea with this refrain:

Some day I'll get over you,
I'll live to see it on through.
But I'll always miss
Dreaming my dreams with you.

Think of God and us. God wants to dream His dreams with us. However, the oftentimes unanswered question is "Do we desire to join God in His dreams, or do we continue to dream our own separate,

different dreams apart from Him?" God is aware of our hopes and dreams; they tell Him a great deal about where our heart is. Even if we reject God's proposal to us, He would rather be dreaming His dreams with us. He wants everyone to share what He has to give (II Peter 3:9).

Dreaming God's Dream

Oh, yes, God's thoughts are infinitely higher than the selfish and vile thoughts of mankind—but this can change! It is being changed in God's church today. When God says in Isaiah 55:8, "My thoughts are not your thoughts," He means that as a rebuke to the rebellious and impudent house of Israel. It is an expression of His great disappointment with their performance. It ought not have been so; they should have and could have turned to God with all their heart and all their soul, as He had commanded them. They refused to believe Him and believe in His goodness. They refused to dream His dreams with Him. Will we?

In the same passage in Isaiah, God commands the Israelites, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (verse 7).

God says that we can forsake our bad thoughts. He says that we can replace them with the right thinking that He has revealed to us in His gospel and in His law. He commands us to believe in this right thinking. Whether we will do it is up to us.

Thank God for His unflinching determination to see us changed from what we were—and in many respects, what we still are—to what He envisions us to become. And not only us, He wants this same future for the whole house of Israel and through them, ultimately all mankind. Those are the thoughts of His heart that He has made known to us to awaken in us the desire to come and dream His dream with Him.