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Who's there?

It's our nature to worship. Always has been.

Anthropologists estimate that we've worshipped about 18,000 gods, goddesses and various critters throughout the past 6,000 years.

Mostly, folks just mix and match until they make a god with characteristics they consider reasonable—a god pretty much like themselves. We’ve been like that since we left Eden. It’s not that we don’t know better.

In his letter to the church in Rome, Paul said, “his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made, so they are without excuse.”

Nevertheless, chatting about forbidden fruit one day in the Garden, Eve told the crafty serpent:

“We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden except the tree in the center of the garden. ‘Don’t eat its fruit or even touch it,’ God said, ‘or you’ll die.’”

And the serpent called God an insecure liar.

“You certainly won’t die,” the snake said. “God knows that the moment you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.”

Unfortunately, the First Couple believed him and ate. And Sin alienated mankind from God for 4,000 years, until it was nailed to a cross.

The Bible is not merely a book that tells *about* God. It *contains* God. His breath is embedded in every word.

God has transmitted his very substance into every verse of Scripture, for it is God-breathed. He reveals himself through his names and titles, metaphors and similes.

His most revelatory name is YHWH, which means “I am,” as recorded in Exodus 3:14-15.

God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of

Israel: ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”

“I am” signifies the self-existent, eternal, unchanging nature of God, who exists outside of time, independent of any creation.

When it is said that God’s name is YHWH, said theologian and archeologist Merrill Unger, “simple being is not all that is affirmed. *He is* in a sense in which no other being is, and the cause of his being is in himself.”

All of this was lost when translators way back when decided that pronouncing his name violated the Third Commandment. So, they replaced it with LORD, which seems about as revelatory as calling someone by their job title.

But YHWH is not his only name. From “In the beginning” to “Amen,” the Bible reveals God through countless descriptive names.

He is the *Servant* King, redefining power by combining

royal authority with humble service.

“Though Jesus was in the form of God,” Paul told the Philippians, “he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

God is *Our Rock*—immovable. He’s *Our Refuge* from danger and distress. And he’s *Our Provider*.

During the Reagan Administration, I served as a congressional press secretary on Capitol Hill. After we lost an election, I was out of work for a couple of years, during which time we defaulted four times on our mortgage. Then, two weeks before we would have been homeless, a couple offered to let us move into their century-old log cabin, rent free! And throughout all of that turbulent time, we wanted for nothing.

God Hears every word, *knows* every thought.

“O Lord, you have searched me and known me!” The Psalmist says. “You discern my thoughts from afar and are acquainted with all my ways.”

He’s also the *Avenging God*.

In his book, *Every name of God in the Bible*, Larry Richards reminds us that “even God’s wrath reminds us of his love. Fear of punishment is intended to turn our eyes to Jesus and his forgiving love.”

And nowhere, except Calvary, will his love be more profoundly expressed than at the final judgment, when he will open the seventh seal.

Immediately, there will be silence in heaven that will last for about half an hour, we’re told in Revelation 8:1. Then, one by one, God’s angels will pour out destruction on a third of the earth and kill a third of mankind ... but *only* a third ... because God loves.

Even so, the rest of mankind will refuse to give up worshiping demons and idols or repent of their thefts, murders or sexual immorality.

But out of about 780,000 words in the average version of the Bible, all of God's names are summarized in just three words in 1 John 4:8.

God is love.

“Scripture contains no equivalent statements with respect to other qualities of the divine nature,” says Unger. “Love is the highest characteristic of God, the one attribute in which all others harmoniously blend.”

These three words turn His entire Book into a Love letter, beginning with the creation of Earth out of His imagination and the creation of man in His image.

About 4,000 years after Moses, we meet Love as Trinity.

“When **Love** was baptized, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw **Love** descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, **Love** said from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” ~ Matthew 3

Finally, on Pentecost, after ascending to his Father, Love came once more.

Suddenly, his disciples heard the sound of a violent blast of wind rushing into the house from out of the heavenly realm. The roar of the wind was so overpowering it was all anyone could bear!

“Then,” we’re told in Acts 2, “all at once a pillar of fire appeared before their eyes. It separated into tongues of fire that engulfed each one of them. They were all filled and equipped with Love and empowered by Love to speak in languages they had never learned.”

And this time, Love came to stay.

Meanwhile, back at the beginning ...

After introducing himself in the first two verses of the Bible, Love said, “Let there be light.”

And “morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy,” as infrared and ultraviolet became, complete with meaning, purpose and abilities. Radiation became, packed with newly-conceived wavelengths. Frequencies and intensities, polarizations and photons became and were immediately and perfectly functional and integrated.

Thousands of years later, we discover wave theory and quantum theory. But every aspect came into being out of absolutely nothing when Love spoke four words.

And Love separated light from darkness, and there was evening and morning the First Day.

“Let there be an expanse to separate water from water,”

Love said at the crack of Day Two. I can imagine Love singing, dancing and laughing as he was creating.

The next day, he gathered the water beneath heaven into seas, leaving behind dry land, which he called “Earth.” And he covered the earth with vegetation.

We’ve been able to identify around 390,000 plant species so far, 94 percent of which have flowers, as well as about 2,000 types of fruit, created in mind-numbing detail—from the supersymmetric particles that make up the quarks and leptons that blend into atoms, to subtle and blazing colors, soft, slippery and prickly textures, infinitesimal and humongous heights and lengths, widths and depths.

And though it’s not mentioned, Love also came up with a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious something that we call “life,”—the nature of which philosophers, theologians and scientists still ponder, probe and argue.

Day Four, Love created the sun, the only star in our Solar System, 332,000 times bigger than Earth—a ball of hot plasma that converts about 4,000,000 tons of matter into

energy every second, enables life to continue and gently tans the skins of people who bask in its glow. And as the earth orbits the sun, a pockmarked moon, the fifth-largest natural satellite in the Solar System, orbits the earth. But there was much more.

Around the Solar System, Love created the Milky Way—400 billion *stars* like our sun and at least 100 billion *planets*. The Milky Way, in turn, is just one of billions of galaxies in the universe, visible through the James Webb Space Telescope, which scientists say can peer back 13.5 billion years and see the first stars and galaxies forming the early universe.

... 13.5 Billion “years?” Even distance is time.

The Trinity had to be having a blast!

On the Fifth Day, Love created birds and the creatures of the seas. Nearly 20,000 kinds of birds inhabit our world. Our seas are estimated to contain “226,000 species.” Yet, “91 percent remain unclassified, according to the National Ocean Service, “and 95 percent of the ocean remains unexplored.”

“Let the land produce living creatures according to their

kinds,” Love said on Day Six ... “wild animals, livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.”

About 8.7 million animal species live on the earth today, the most precise calculation ever offered, with 6.5 million species on land and the rest in the oceans.

Then ... on Day Six ... Love created a man! In his very own image! An incomprehensible act that would be exceeded only by the even greater act of self-sacrifice he would make for mankind 40 centuries later.

Finally, on the Seventh Day, Love rested from his work and declared it to be a Sabbath, “a dimension where the human is at home with the divine,” a day off which he would later set in stone atop Mt. Sinai.

Today, the Fourth Commandment has pretty much been scraped off the tablet. In its place, we’ve scratched in: “Sunday is my day to catch up on work and chores.”

Love’s not demanding stagnation. All he’s saying is, “Hey, you’ve worked hard all week, like I did when I created the

Universe. Okay, different job, but the same principle. So take a break. Let's hang out—catch a game, play with the kids, enjoy the garden, whatever.”

One day, EVERYTHING changed!