

## The Living God

*Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him. -- Luke 20:38*

Life is truly amazing! On a personal level, each individual life should bring us to a sense of wonder and awe at God's guiding hand of providence that continually works all events to achieve his good purpose. However, even in a much more general sense, life *itself* is amazing! How is it that, though composed of such "simple" stuff of this world such as atoms and energy, we humans also have such complex immaterial parts such as thought, personhood, a sense of being, and the inner sense of right/wrong and good/bad? I intrinsically *know* that something called "me" exists.

Sadly, the rampant philosophy of materialism tells us that life is no different than "non-life" in a fundamental sense. In a pure materialist view, the universe is a big machine cranking out its existence through physical law, time, and randomness, ultimately without any meaning or purpose. In this view, if a distinction is to be made at all between "living" and "non-living," the distinction would be only one of matter or mechanism. That is, what differentiates life from non-life is only what things are made of and how things function. In materialism there can be no distinction in value. If the universe is only composed of "stuff" bumping around into other "stuff" then what ultimate purpose can some particular arrangement of "stuff" (like, say, a human) have?

I have deep compassion for those whose worldview is defined by this blinding, demonic philosophy. It is a philosophy that, taken to its logical conclusion, leads one ultimately to a crippling nihilism and hopelessness. How can one cope with such meaninglessness and hopelessness? Often a man will turn to seeking short-term pleasures to attempt to numb the nagging questions that beg to be answered: Who am I, really? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Where did this all come from? Why can I not live up to who I know I should be, or even just do what I know I should do? What is *actually* good, right, and true?

Consider, then, the **beautiful destruction** to materialism that is the nature and person of our God! Scripture records for us the deep importance God places on the separation between life and non-life, and the immeasurably high value to life. Read Genesis 1 and 2 and note the number of times "living" is used. In Genesis 3, sin introduced the concept of "death" into the world and removed from man the highest of valued possessions that God had given man: life itself.

In Luke 20:38, Jesus refutes the erroneous understanding of Sadducees that there is no such thing as resurrection by noting that Scripture states that their God is God of the living, not a God of the dead. In fact, this distinction between living and non-living is so important that God often chooses the title of "living God" when describing himself to his people, especially when wanting to emphasize how he is different from idols or the "gods" of other nations. In this title, God emphasizes his eternal self-existence as a defining attribute that is unique to him alone. The fact that we serve a living God changes everything about our relationship to him. The questions sound almost silly, but are real: Why praise a nonliving God? Why sing to piece of wood? Why pray to a God who is God only of the dead and not the living?

It is profoundly humbling that God would share something of his eternal “beingness” with his creation to such a degree that we have self-awareness, thoughts, feelings, and, most importantly, an ability to have a personal relationship with God through his only son who, not incidentally, Peter calls the “Christ, the Son of the living God.” So, although we each had forfeit our right to eternal life through our sin and rebellion against our living God, the Son of the living God *gave up his life* to redeem us, pay our debt, and restore to us this most prized possession, eternal life. And not just life... but abundant life (John 10:10).

In a very real sense, therefore, *life itself* is truly amazing! May we revel in this life, through all its joys and challenges, because, if we have truly joined into the household of God through faith in Jesus Christ, the **greatest treasure in the universe** has been restored to our account, is ours to enjoy here in partial measure, and is our hope for the future in its fullness and completion when, someday, we enter the courts of our Lord.

*My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.* -- Psalm 84:2

Pastor Aaron