



Peninsula City Church

Behold Our God!

The Solitariness of God

Michael Podhaczky

20th August 2017 the PM Service

Contents

The Solitariness of God.....	3
An Introduction	3
1. My head hurts.....	3
2. God's eternalness illuminated by the biblical writers.....	4
Some concluding thoughts	6

The Solitariness of God

An Introduction

Q. Have you ever stopped and thought about the existence of God before there was anything?

In this reflection, I will struggle with our inadequate language to say something about the existence of God before there was anything. I will use the medium of language in an attempt to describe the indescribable. There are no words that can capture what needs to be said here, but since, this is the means that we have, I will attempt to describe the eternal God who has always been.

Well, there was a time (an inadequate and contradictory idea) when God in the unity of His nature, existing in three persons, dwelt alone before anything was created. He dwelt in perfect unity outside of time and space and created both. For example, there was¹

- No heavens: Where His glory is now displayed
- No earth and solar system: For His footrest
- No angels, 24 elders, four living creatures: To sing His praises
- No universe: To be upheld by the word of His power

There was nothing, no one but only God.

This was not for a day, a year, or a million years, but was for eternity before the first created thing came into existence. So, during this past eternity (a contradictory statement), God was alone and complete in His unity, i.e. He existed in solitariness in complete totality as God. He was self-contained, self-sufficient in every way and in need of nothing. If He had needed anything a universe, angel or human in any way, He would have created them in past eternity. Actually, they would have existed with Him. So, before there was anything God was absolutely solitary, i.e. living alone in His divine unity, from the Latin *solus* meaning alone. In creating when He did, He added nothing to who He was, because He does not change. Therefore, His essential being and glory can never be improved or lessened by creation.

Wow, I do not know about you, but that is a mind blowing concept even though it is true. I have wrestled with this theological feature of God's nature for years, and I think that I am no closer to a clear understanding this truth. This truth is absolute in its reality but is beyond our grasp this side of heaven or maybe even forever. But this should not stop us from attempting to understand something about this amazing truth. So, here let's awkwardly look at this amazing feature of God's divine nature and see where we land.

1. My head hurts

Q. So where to from here and why bother reflecting on this feature of God's divine nature?

I love wrestling with concepts like this, even if we can never fully grasp what it is all about. This is for a couple of reasons; firstly, it helps me to see God in a better light, He is GOD the source of creation. Secondly, it helps see my place in the scheme of things and appreciate the value of my relationship with Him. But, even if it is no other reason than we can, it is worth examining matters like this one. I don't know about you when I study these kinds of theological realities I am left awestruck and struggling for words and thoughts because of our amazing God. It has been said that,

"Few today are accustomed to meditate on the perfections of God."²

¹ Pink, Arthur W. *The Attributes of God*. (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2010), 9

It is within this context that I would like to offer some musings regarding God's solitariness of His essence. Let me start by stating that, God is untouchably distinct and separate from all of His creation in His excellence, peerlessness and perfection. This is who He was and is and is to come in His nature. However, for all that, we can say and think, He so much more. He knows so much more, He is so much more, and we struggle with all of this reality.

"The LORD, our God, has secrets known to no one. We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that He has revealed to us, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions" (Deut 29:29 NLT)

It is recorded in the book of Job that Zophar the Naamathite said to Job in relation to knowing the depths of Gods knowledge and understand,

⁷ "Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? ⁸ It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? ⁹ Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea" (Job 11:7-9 ESV).

Psalms 139:6 states that,

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!" (Ps 139:6 NLT)

Paul said,

"No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God His plan that was previously hidden, even though He made it for our ultimate glory before the world began" (1 Cor 2:7 NLT).

"For everything comes from Him and exists by His power and is intended for His glory. All glory to Him forever! Amen" (Rom 11:36 NLT)

However, we can still know something, and that is God is eternal. That is, God alone is eternal in the endless idea of His character. But what about time how does this work within the notion of eternity. Well if we are honest we do not know if there was time before creation. If there was it might have been a time in a way that we are unable to comprehend, as it would appear that the day night system came into existence with creation. On this matter, Noah Webster in his dictionary pointed out a crucial proposed distinction between absolute and relative time. He said that,

"Time is absolute or relative; absolute time is considered without any relation to bodies or their motions. Relative time is the sensible measure of any portion of duration, by means of motion. Thus the diurnal revolution of the sun measures a space of time or duration."³

Therefore, as a proposal before creation, we may need to speak regarding the absolute time when refereeing to God in eternity past. However, when speaking about the created order, then we mean relative time. This would have come into existence with the day night system and continues until He determines that it is no longer needed.

The created order of things came into existence because God chose them to be created. So, the things that we see and even the ones that we do not see did not exist at some stage. When that was, no one knows only God, but there was a moment when the first thing was created.

2. God's eternalness illuminated by the biblical writers

Within this context, we read what some of the biblical writers have to say on the matter. The premise of the biblical writers is that God has always existed. The following is some of the evidence from their writings.

² Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 8

³ Webster, Noah. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. Vol II. (Noah Webster, 1828), n.p.

Moses declared that there was a time of creation, but even before then for eternity God existed.

"The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And He thrust out the enemy before you and said, 'Destroy'" (Deut 33:27 ESV).

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Ps 90:2 ESV).

Proverbs says in relation to wisdom,

²² "The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His work, the first of His acts of old. ²³ Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. ²⁴ When there were no depths, I was brought forth when there were no springs abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, ²⁶ before He had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. ²⁷ When He established the heavens, I was there; when He drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸ when He made firm the skies above, when He established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ then I was beside Him, like a master workman, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, ³¹ rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the children of man" (Prov 8:22-31 ESV).

Isaiah refers to God as the One, who inhabits eternity,

"For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite'" (Is 57:15 ESV)

While John in his gospel

"In the beginning was (and always has been) the Word (Jesus who is God), and the Word was (and always has been) with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1 ESV). John in stating this truth appears to be pointing the reader back to Genesis 1:1 the beginning of creation. However, in referring to the Word (Christ) and God John goes back beyond creation into eternity past before the creation.

Jesus talked with the Father regarding their existence before creation.

"And now, Father, glorify Me in your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed" (Jn 17:5 ESV)

"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that you have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (Jn 17:24 ESV).

On this matter, Paul points out that we have been chosen by God in Christ before creation. So, for this to happen God had to be around before then to be able to do this choosing.

"Even as He (God) chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love" (Eph 1:4 ESV)

Christ must have existed before the creation to be able to create it,

"For by Him (Christ) all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through Him and for Him (Col 1:16 ESV)

The Jude at the end of his letter finished with a doxology

"To the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Jude 25 ESV)

Then in the Revelation John records that the Lamb's book of life existed before creation. So, this to exist, then God who was involved in this with the Lamb of God (Christ) needs to have existed before creation.

“And swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay” (Rev 10:6 ESV)

“And all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain” (Rev 13:8 ESV)

On this matter of God's eternal existence has been explained as,

“God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in His own being...”⁴

So God has no beginning, nor end.⁵ God in the unity of His nature, existing in three persons, dwelt alone before all of the creation when there was nothing and no one but God. He is the eternal God who has always existed, even if we struggle to understand this truth.

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. Have you ever stopped and thought about the existence of God before there was anything?

When talking about God, we need to keep in mind that He is,

“Solitary in His majesty, unique in His excellency, peerless in His perfections. He sustains all but is Himself independent of all. He gives to all, but is enriched by none.”⁶

“These questions rhetorically speak of God's unmatched character and excellence. Consider a few more observations Pink made concerning the solitariness of God.

- There was a time when creation, even heaven, didn't exist, but God's glory did because He is from everlasting.
- There was a time when neither angels, nor humans were praising Him, and He was still altogether wonderful.
- He is self-contained, self-sufficient, and self-satisfied.
- He was under no compulsion to create out of necessity or deficiency.
- He created all things simply to display His glory.
- God could've very well chosen not to create, and He still would be The Perfect One.

Perhaps one the most humbling observations Pink made was that God gains nothing from our worship as it pertains to His intrinsic worth. What Pink is saying is that God's glory and worth aren't contingent on our praise or adoration. Surely, we are called to praise Him, which Pink terms our praise as manifestative glory, but not intrinsic glory. God's glory isn't increased or diminished by any outside agency's recognition, acceptance or rejection of Him. He is altogether lovely! We are very small. He is big!”⁷

⁴ Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 168.

⁵ “God Is Eternal.” <http://www.letusreason.org/Apolo5.htm> (22nd May 2017).

⁶ Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 12-13.

⁷ “The Attributes of God: The Solitariness of God.” <https://urbanresurgence.wordpress.com/2011/04/05/chapter-1-the-solitariness-of-god/> (Accessed 23rd May 2017).