

## **GOD THE FATHER**

Advent Anglican, January 15, 2023 — Part 1 of 3 with Bob Stallman and Bruce Waltke

### **“I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER”**

- “We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen” (the Nicene Creed)
- “Hear, O Israel: The LORD (*YHWH*) our God, the LORD (*YHWH*) is one”  
(The first line of the Shema’, Deuteronomy 6:4)
- Moses said, “Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD (*YHWH*) is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.” (Deut 4:39)
- “... there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

### **QUESTION 1: HOW DO WE KNOW GOD AT ALL?**

- There is an inevitable mystery about God in himself as the one who both reveals himself so that he can be known in truth and in deep relationship, yet who also conceals his fulness so that he cannot be known comprehensively or brought under the control of anyone or anything.
- “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20–21)

## QUESTION 2: WHAT IS METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE?

- Metaphor as a primarily **rhetorical** device
  - Metaphor: "The figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that to which it is properly applicable." (The *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989)
- Metaphor as a primarily **cognitive** device
  - "A metaphor is that figurative way of speaking in which one thing is spoken of in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another." (Stallman, "Divine Hospitality in the Pentateuch," 1999)

## QUESTION 3: HOW DOES METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE WORK?

- Metaphor enables us truthfully to say what we **really mean**, expressing thoughts, attitudes, and feelings without having uttered something in ways that are necessarily improper, dispensable, or logically absurd.
- Metaphor expresses essential truths about things in ways that foster a **productive imagination** that invites reflection and exploration, resulting in new ways of organizing our experience.
- Metaphor provides a way for the **speaker** who by presenting a metaphor also issues a concealed invitation to explore it and the **hearer** who willingly accepts that invitation to acknowledge their co-participation in a **community** grounded in shared reality.
  - Although C. S. Lewis elsewhere affirmed the truth of metaphorically stated Christian doctrines, he nevertheless once remarked,

"I have not [here] tried to prove that the religious sayings are true, only that they are significant: if you meet them with a certain good will, a certain readiness to find meaning. For if they should happen to contain information about real things, *you will not get it on any other terms.* [emphasis mine]

("The Language of Religion," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper, 129–41 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967] 141)