



The Ultimate Gift

MANY PEOPLE, believing in divine possession, have questioned the relational concept of God as wholly “Other”¹ and of his gift(s) *for, to* and *with* his human “others.” Some of those who believe in divine possession are pantheists (God *is* everything). Others are panentheists (God is *in* everything). Still others are Gnostics (God is imprisoned *in* Creation).

Many people, believing in divine possession, have questioned the relational concept of God as wholly “Other.”

At the same time, those who believe in Jesus, his ascension and his relational presence (“otherness”²) welcome the relational concept of God and the heavenly gifts of his attributes — such as justification (Romans 5:16), righteousness (Romans 5:17), grace (Ephesians 2:8) and eternal life (Romans 6:23). The apostle Paul endorsed this understanding: “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8).

The Gift of God

However, while God grants mankind his divine attributes from heaven, Paul elsewhere emphasizes the great underlying truth that God himself is the Ultimate Gift. The apostle writes:

God himself is the Ultimate Gift.

... Jesus Christ ... gave himself for our sins ... — Galatians 1:3, 4.

... [T]he Son of God ... loved me, and gave himself for me. — Galatians 2:20.

As the Gift of our Shield (Psalm 84:9), God surrounds us. He is with us, for us, to us and thus shares with us his attributes. As he said just before his ascension, “... [L]o, I AM³ with you always ...” (Matthew 28:20, emphasis supplied).

Conclusion

Then let us tell others of God's ultimate Gift (Acts 1:8). And let us receive and share his attributes with our neighbors and thereby return those attributes to the Ultimate Gift, who shields our neighbors as well.

Endnotes

1. See "Other or Not," *Outlook* (January/February 2015).
2. See *ibid.*
3. See "The Gospel for the Postmodern World II: The 'I AM,'" *Outlook* (December 2007). Cf. John 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12, 23, 28; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5; 18:6, 8, 37; Revelation 1:8, 11, 17, 18; 21:6; 22:13 with Exodus 3:14.

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