

**MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612**

**NEWS & EVENTS – November 2022**

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*Wow! You look like your best dog died!* As a native of South Carolina, I heard that expression from time to time. Deer hunting was a passionate endeavor with some folks I knew. In the lowlands and heavy undergrowth, deer were pursued and pushed by dogs out of the swamps and woods into open areas where the hunters were posted. In deer season it excited these hunters to hear the sound of these baying dogs getting louder and louder. It meant the hunt was on and the deer was approaching their position. Usually, a hunter's best dog was their lead dog. Most of the time it was the one who first caught the scent of the deer and began to chase the deer, exploding into a barking frenzy, and causing others to join in the pursuit. The lead dog was highly influential in teaching other dogs to be better dogs, living up to their higher purpose, leading by example. I came to understand that when someone's best dog died it was a big-time bad day. In my family tribe we've recently experienced the death of our best dogs at the rate of two times in two weeks. Those were big-time bad days. You could see it in our countenance and hear it in our voice. Life for the moment seemed so out of order.

An out of order condition for many people is called *dyslexia*. It can be defined as a disorder involving difficulty reading relating to how words sound and processing them into proper order in the structure of words. I once heard this riddle. Question: *How does one describe a dyslexic agnostic with insomnia?* The answer: *It's someone who stays up all night trying to figure out if there really is a dog!* A person hearing this riddle may find this puzzle a little humorous. But to those who are afflicted with this condition, and some may say it's a disability, it is surely no laughing matter. Some of the most successful people on earth are and have been dyslexic. Consider that most of humanity in most of our history has been plagued with spiritual dyslexia...trying to figure out how to bring order into their chaotic and jumbled up lives? Maybe the sounds they're hearing, the voices they're following, is quite hard to process. It's like a hunting dog following the wrong lead dog, leading them down the wrong trail, even barking up the wrong tree. You might be thinking a deer dog wouldn't be barking up a tree. You'd be right.

If you would allow me a play on words for a minute, (*the Bible uses this as a learning tool*), what if an out of order life is one who stays up at night, considering if there really is a god. Not just any little "g" god, but a big "G" God? One who is Highest among the gods. Wait a minute, you might be saying, I thought there was only one god. And if there are more than one, can the pagans be right? Is Biblical Christianity polytheistic in structure?

Does the Word of God have anything to say to help inform us in this thought process? Consider these Psalms.

*For You are the Lord Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. Ps 97:9*

*God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. Ps 82:1*

*I said, "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless you will die like men and fall like any one of the princes." Ps 82:6-7*

*For I know that the Lord is great and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases, He does in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. Ps 135:5-6*

To summarize, it appears there are many gods, but only One Most High God. He rules and judges the little gods. The word *rulers* in Ps. 82 is translated from the word *elohim*. Although this word is used to describe the Most High God it also refers to created beings. These are sons of the Most High, angelic creatures different than the *only begotten* Son of God. That would be Jesus, the active agent of creation. In Ps. 82 these creatures are judged by the Most High God. Fallen angels, designed for eternity are judged to die like fallen men. Compare this thought with the judgment upon fallen humanity. The only thing that changes our future is the action of the Most High God, bringing order back into an out of order reality. The birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus has changed everything. Following Him tells me I am on the trail of getting where I'm going. Learning to follow Jesus will lead me to the Father and reject these lesser gods. I am a creature doomed to death yet born again to live forever. Living with my spiritual dyslexia, whether a disorder or a disability, is learning to trust the One who can change my way of thinking and the order of my living. Good Friday is really more than the day we stop to grieve the death of God the Son. It's a day when death no longer ruled our day. The price of man's judgment was paid by God Himself. Our Best God died and rose again. He made it possible to exchange the death sentence for a life with Him. He put Death to death. He defeated the strategy of lesser gods, the enemies of our souls. That was a big-time bad day for these spiritual entities. So how do I process that? Stop looking sad, children of God. Good news brings great joy.

*Give thanks to the God of gods, For His lovingkindness is everlasting. Ps 136:2*

Worship Jesus with thanksgiving this Thanksgiving season. We were made for worship every day. Jesus is Lord!

Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam