

"As for the Parbaron the west, there were four on the highway and two at the Parbar.."
I Chronicles 26:18

Who is God (Part 2 of 2)

Theme: Relating to the Almighty

Review

God is unchanging, approachable, and can be known. God is a spiritual being that has always existed and always will. He is one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). He is a God of love, kindness, and fair judgment. He has taken incredible care to reveal Himself through nature, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit. Each person has a human spirit and that spirit has an awareness of God and a desire to know Him more. Many of the things that create good human relationships are also those needed for a proper relationship with God: personal connection, love, appreciation, commitment, and shared values.

Introduction

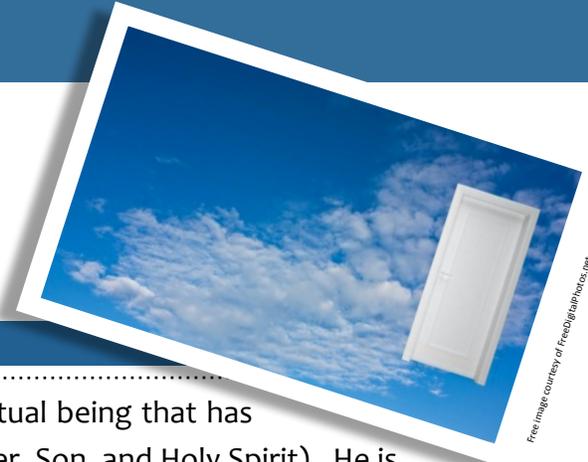
The unchanging (Mal. 3:6), eternal, and Almighty God is beyond human words. God is so far above all we can grasp that we can't even find proper comparisons. Recognizing this fact the Scripture notes, **"Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You..."** (2 Sam. 7:22a). As we continue this study of *Who is God*, we realize how limited we are in trying to portray Him in a meaningful way. He is not at all like any of us for God says, **"... You thought that I was altogether like you..."** (Psa. 50:21). In spite of our inability to describe God, deep inside each of us is an understanding (that is placed there by God) which allows us to grasp some of the essence of the Indescribable One. Today the word "awesome" is often used to portray God since it recognizes that God is above and beyond anything we have seen or heard.

Bible Truth

Understanding Him More

The Way: If we want to understand God, we would be wise to listen to what He says. **"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me' "** (John 14:6). This verse clearly says there is one way to the Father (thus Heaven), there is one truth, and eternal life comes

through the Son. The Father and Son are seen as working together and it is made clear there is just one road that leads to Heaven--faith in Jesus Christ. All He says is absolutely true and it is impossible for Him to lie, mislead, or deceive. According to the divine plan, Jesus Christ provides us life (now and for eternity).



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Holy: It is absolutely essential for God to be Holy (without any sin and totally righteous). Scripture records, **"...as He who called you is holy..."** (1 Peter 1:15). If God were not holy, then He could not be trusted nor would His words carry any weight. Since He is holy, His words carry extreme importance and He can be trusted in all things. It is our lack of holiness (due to sin) that has broken our relationship with God. A holy, righteous God cannot be associated with (look upon) sin; He must maintain total separation. Thus, when Christ was on the Cross He cried, **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"** (Matt. 27:46b). At the moment Christ became the sin of the world, He had to be forsaken by the Father who had to remain totally holy. After His death, the penalty for sin had been paid and the relationship between the Father and Son was again restored. Similarly, our relationship with God can be restored. The restoration depends upon our sins being forgiven; then we and the Father will be one. He will tenderly hold us in His arms and call us His child.

Grace: Christ had to give up all His heavenly glory to become a man and die for our sins. He became poor so we could become rich (receive the riches of God's grace through faith). **"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich"** (2 Cor. 8:9).

Discuss: What does it mean to you that He became poor so you could become rich?

The three Omni's: Latin prefixes are often used to describe God; one such prefix is "omni" which means "all." So when you hear that God is omnipresent that means He is present everywhere in all the universe. (Psa. 139:7-8). This attribute of God has been of great comfort to godly people in all ages because it assured them that it is impossible to go anywhere outside of

God's realm. He never loses track of us. God is also omniscient which means He is all wise and all knowing. He knows the past, present, and future. He knows the beginning from the end. He is infinite in understanding. **"Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure' "** (Isa 46:10). God is certainly omnipotent which means He is all powerful, capable of doing anything He wants at any time (as long as it is consistent with His character—lying would not be). With God all things are possible (Matt. 19:26). However, God has power over His power so He may not do what we would think He should. He has the power to do anything, but sometimes His knowledge and wisdom determine when to restrain His power. One day He will come to earth again; His true power over the entire world will then be evident.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where did God come from? God has always existed and always will (in all three persons). He is self-existing—depending on no one or anything for His existence. God was not created or made; He is eternal (Gen. 21:33; Ex. 3:14; Psa. 90:2).

2. Is God male? God is a spirit and as such transcends (is above and beyond) gender. We know God created male and female in His image (Gen. 1:27); thus God represents and participates in both genders. The Bible (in the original languages) uses masculine titles and names for God (Father, Son, Jehovah, etc.) but also employs feminine analogies and word pictures for God (Isa. 49:14-15, 66:13). Male pronouns are always used to refer to God; Christ came in human form as a male and the Holy Spirit is referred to in masculine terms in both Testaments. However, He also possesses the attributes we typically ascribe to females, such as, nurture, tenderness, gentleness, and compassion. What is important for us to know

today is that God does not differentiate between us based upon gender (Gal. 3:28-29); we are all equal in God's eyes.

Discuss: Some teens have had a bad relationship with an earthly man or father so it may be hard to relate to a male. This is such an unfortunate situation; however, God is kind, tender, loving, and always acts properly. He is the epitome of true compassion—never out to criticize or belittle.

3. If God cares for me, why do I have problems and why is there war, poverty, and suffering? This is basically the question, "Did God create evil?" Sometimes what we perceive as evil is merely the misuse of that which is good. Water is wonderful, and we could not live without it; it is a good thing from God. However, if one falls into a lake and cannot swim, water can drown him/her; we perceive this as evil but it is really an unintended consequence of misuse. Sometimes evil is the consequence of human sin in general. Humans decided to use a good thing God gave them, their free will, to sin. If God had created us like robots that could not sin and only did what He wanted, then we would have no free will. There would be no sin, but without free will there could be no true love, no motivation, and we would not be in His image. So God has the power to prevent all evil, but that is not His only attribute. In His infinite wisdom, knowledge, and holiness He created us with a free will and delegated certain powers to us. The evil and suffering we now experience are the results of our (and mankind's) own choices, natural events, persecution, and living in a fallen world. The good news is that God does have the One who someday will return to earth to take all power into His hands and will put down all evil and unrighteousness. Then He will rule the world in peace.

4. Is Allah God? This question is often asked by those who have a question about Islam or the Koran

(Quran). This question is best understood on the basis of linguistics and correct theology (religious ideas). Arabic speaking people used the term Allah before the Koran was written indicating that it basically means "God." Arab Christians today use the word Allah to refer to God—the God of the Bible. Generally each language requires its own word for God. If a person is trying to defend the Koran or promote Islam, then the word Allah is not consistent with the Christian God (because the attributes and teachings of the two are not compatible). A Christian must be careful when speaking to those of another language to be sure the word used for God conveys the correct Scriptural teaching (Acts 17:23-28), such as: the right of Israel to exist as a nation, the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Savior, and the Bible as the only Word of God. If not, that god is not the God of the Bible and that name/title should not be used.

Note: Each language translates the original biblical words in a way that satisfies that language. Allah is not a name or title for God used in the original writings, but that means little because the English word God is not in the original either (God is our English translation for the Hebrew word Elohim, see Further Study at end of this lesson). The Spanish use Dios for God, a word not in the Bible, but that is what the Spanish language requires.

Life Applications

God is awesome and indescribable; deep down each person knows He exists, is eternal, and is powerful. You can learn about God from the natural world, but the authoritative source for more information comes from the Word of God—where the mind of God is conveyed to our minds. At some point a sincere person will realize knowing more and more about God is not the only issue; the main issue is developing a relationship with Him. Imagine having a relationship with the Almighty. That relationship is needed so that you can have a new, fresh start in life (become a new creation).

"Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace" (Job 22:21). God cares about you as a person, as an individual. It is His desire to have a restored, personal relationship with you (a relationship that was destroyed by sin). Thus, the main issue for each person is having their sins forgiven. Forgiveness comes from faith in the death of Jesus Christ in your place. That forgiveness applies to all past, all present, and all future sins. God accepts you "in Christ." As God's child you are saved for all eternity and have a home in Heaven. This salvation from God is instantaneous and complete; it is based upon simple faith. A personal relationship means you have to have faith that He died for your sins; it is not based upon the church you attend, being water baptized,

partaking in church ceremonies, doing good works, saying a certain prayer, etc. This new personal relationship means you will be saved and a new life will begin. **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"** (2 Cor. 5:17).

As a new creation, you can be sure God has just begun to work in your life. He wants to help each person with everyday problems:

- addictions, failures, troubles, emotions, fears, health,...
- the need to get through each day in a way He and you are thankful
- the need for meaning and purpose in your life

Discuss: Compare a stand-off god (who created the world and then had no more involvement) to the true God who not only created everything but cares about you as a person. Consider that He wants to get involved in your life and will even send His Spirit to help in daily life.

Trust in Him, know you are in His arms, and that He cares for you. He has a plan for your life, values you for who you are, and is full of mercy and grace. In addition to a plan for your life, you can know (through the Word) what lies ahead in the future.

Take 2 Heart

Summary

There is nothing in the universe like God, so to what or whom can we compare Him? Fortunately He has revealed what we need to know and much can be understood by this phrase, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"** (John 14:6). We also learn that He is

holy, gracious, and encompasses all that is good and righteous. Four frequently asked questions were addressed: where did God come from, is God male, if God cares for me why do I have problems, and is Allah God? The main thing in life is developing a relationship with God. That relationship brings salvation and helps with life's problems, addictions, failures, fears, and

emotions. It also establishes a purpose in life and teaches us how to live for Him each day.

Gospel

"As for the Parbar on the west, there were four on the highway and two at the Parbar" (1 Chr. 26:18).

This verse makes no sense, so why is it used here? Simple, as a stand-alone verse (outside of its biblical context) it make no sense; the same is true of a human life outside of Christ. However, if the verse is read in its biblical context it is talking about putting workers near certain gates (Parbar) and highways, so it does make sense. Perhaps your life does not make sense and you wonder if all the struggles in life are worth it, i.e., "What's the point?" If so, it is time to consider that only a life lived in accordance with the context of God's plan makes sense. Thus the Bible says, **"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us**

up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..." (Eph. 2:4-6). This is His plan and it gives each life a purpose and direction, i.e., your life will make sense.

Encouragement

We should all praise the Lord for the love and care He provides each believer. Similarly, each teen who wants to live for the Lord should be given thanks. Life throws us some curve balls (disappointing events) and each person needs a personal, encouraging pat on the back from other believers. The Apostle Paul sent Timothy to encourage fellow believers in their faith (1 Thes. 3:2). When a letter was read to believers, **"...they rejoiced over its encouragement"** (Acts 15:31). In the same way, each young person who has a desire to know Him more is a delight to those around them; they are like a letter of encouragement to others. Thank you for all you are and all you desire to be as a teen living for Christ.

Further Study

Primary Names of God

In the Hebrew Old Testament three primary names of God are used; the NKJV translates them as shown below. Only three names are shown, although many other names and titles are used to tell us who God is.

- **Elohim** (means strong one) is translated **"God"** (Gen. 1:1).
- **Adonai** (means lord or master) is translated **"Lord"** (Gen. 15:2).
- **Jehovah** (expresses the eternal, self-existent nature of God; He is the One who was, who is, and is to come) is translated **"LORD"** (Ex. 15:2). Note: the Jews feared to take the original holy name (Yahweh) upon their lips as too holy to be pronounced. So they substituted other letters to come up with Jehovah.

- **Theos** is translated **"God"** (1 Tim. 2:5).
- **Kurios** is translated **"Lord"** and is a name consistently given to Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:3).
- **Iesous** is translated **"Jesus"** (1 Cor. 1:3). The name Jesus literally means "Jehovah rescues from the greatest danger and sets in the greatest place of safety." (*The Names of our Wonderful LORD*, by H. Bultema)
- **Christos** is translated **"Christ"** (actually a title not a name) and means the same as Messiah or Anointed (1 Cor. 1:3).

The Holy Spirit has no specific name (Holy Spirit is more a title than name), but is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Grace, the Holy Spirit, etc.

The Greek New Testament has several primary names for God: