

# WHO IS THIS "GOD?"

## Scripture and Notes on God's Nature

1. God is spirit – He is immaterial (not made of anything), incorporeal (does not have a physical body), and invisible.
  - a. **John 4:24a** "God is spirit..."
  - b. **Luke 24:39b** "...For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."
  - c. **Colossians 1:15a** "He is the image of the invisible God..."
2. God is person.
  - a. He is self-aware and self-determining: He existed in Himself and is aware of who He is; He is also free to do as He chooses (He knows He is the almighty, infinite God and can do as He pleases).
    - i. **Exodus 3:13-14** "<sup>13</sup>Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' <sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.'"
  - b. God is infinitely intelligent (not simply some mindless force or arbitrary decision-maker)
    - i. **Psalms 139:1-6** "O LORD, you have searched me and known me! <sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup>You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. <sup>4</sup>Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. <sup>5</sup>You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.
    - ii. **Jeremiah 10:12** "It is he who **made** the earth by his power, who established the world by his **wisdom**, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens."
  - c. God has emotions.
    - i. Grief, **Genesis 6:6** "And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."
    - ii. Joy, **Zephaniah 3:17** "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."
    - iii. Compassion, **Psalms 135:14** "For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants."
    - iv. Anger, **Deut. 9:22** "At Taberah also, and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath."
  - d. God has the power to make decisions (volition).
    - i. "The will of God is the natural extension of what God thinks, feels and expresses out of his unchanging nature." – Elmer Towns
    - ii. **Exodus 14:4** ""And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them,

and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." And they did so."

- iii. **James 4:14-15** "14yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'"

3. God is life.

- a. **Genesis 2:7** "...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature."
- b. **Acts 17:25** "nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."
- c. **Romans 4:17** "as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."
- d. Because man is made in God's image, God has life and life is part of His nature and image.
- e. Life cannot exist apart from God.

4. God is self-existent.

- a. **Isaiah 43:10** "Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me."
- b. **Revelation 1:8** "8"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."
- c. "I am that I am", YHWH, God's name means "he who always exists.'"
- d. Because of who He is, He must always have existed with no beginning or end.

5. God is unchangeable (immutable).

- a. Because God is infinitely and eternally perfect in nature and all His ways, He cannot, by definition, change.
- b. **Numbers 23:19a** "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind."
- c. **Hebrews 13:8** "Jesus Christ is the **same** yesterday and **today** and forever."
- d. **Malachi 3:6a** "For I the LORD do not change..."

6. God is not limited by time and space.

- a. **Isaiah 57:15** "For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy..."
- b. **Psalms 90:2** "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."
- c. **Psalms 10:26-27** "They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, 27but you are the same, and your years have no end."
- d. **1 Kings 8:27** ""But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven **cannot contain** you; how much less this house that I have built!'"

7. God is one.

- a. **Deuteronomy 6:4** “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”
- b. **Isaiah 43:10** “Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.”
- c. **Isaiah 45:18** “For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): “I am the LORD, and there is no other.””
- d. Elmer Towns: “To speak of more than one supreme, absolute, perfect and almighty Being makes about as much sense as talking about a square circle.”
  - i. This is especially important in our culture since many have a belief that Satan is God’s equal and opposite power. He is certainly powerful compared to us, but God is infinitely more powerful than Satan, demons, and angels.
- e. Hebrew *Echad* (“the Lord is one [*echad*],” Deut. 6:4): One is not only singular, but a unity; The Trinity (tri-unity): God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.
  - i. **Genesis 2:24** “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh [*echad*].”
  - ii. **Genesis 1:1** “In the beginning, God [literally “Gods”, *Elohim*] created [singular] the heavens and the earth.”
  - iii. **Matthew 28:19** “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name [singular, not *names*] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”
  - iv. **John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [indicating separateness], and the Word was God [indicating unity].”
  - v. **John 10:30** “I and the Father are one.”
  - vi. **Romans 8:9** “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God [Holy Spirit of God] dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ [identifying the Spirit and Jesus as God] does not belong to him.”

### Scripture and Notes on God’s attributes

1. Love
  - Love is easily the most popular and readily accepted attribute of God. However, it’s also a misunderstood attribute, especially when separated from the rest of God’s attributes, either out of ignorance, misunderstanding, lack of knowledge, or intentional disregard for the rest of Scripture. So what does the Bible say about the relationship between God and love?
    - a. Love is a fundamental attribute of God.
      - i. **1 John 4:7-8b, 10** “...for love is from God...for God is love...In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us...”
        1. God does not merely love, nor are these verses saying He is merely capable of love, but that He *IS* love.
        2. Love emanates from God and reflects His whole being.
        3. Love does not originate in us, but in God.

4. God is the only source of love and authority on love.
  5. Love can only come from a person, also demonstrating God's personhood, and that He is not merely some "force."
  6. The God of the Bible is unique as the only God in all the world who is defined as love, whose fundamental attitude is love.
- ii. **John 14:31** "I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father."; **John 15:9** "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you."
1. The persons of the Trinity, equally and eternally God, love each other.
  2. Because God is love and He existed before the world, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist in perfect love and unity.
- iii. **John 3:16a** "For God so loved the world..."; **Matthew 5:45** "For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."
1. Greek *agape* – love, benevolence, goodwill
  2. Because God's love is infinite and all-powerful, He can and does love everyone.
  3. God's love is for everyone.
  4. This love is also unearned. No one deserves this love, but God gives it because of who He is.
- iv. **Psalms 118:1** "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!"; **Lamentations 3:22-23** "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup>they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."; **1 Corinthians 13:8** "Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away."
1. Because God is eternal and unchanging, His love is eternal and unchanging.
  2. Other things in this world will end, but God's love will not.
- v. **Psalms 33:5** "He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD."; **Proverbs 8:17** "I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me."; **1 John 4:16** "God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."
1. He loves obedience to His word and commands, and loves those who obey Him.
  2. Those who know God love Him, and He reveals Himself to those who love Him.
- vi. **Matthew 18:12** "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?"
1. In His love, God pursues people.
  2. God desires man to know Him and to love Him.

## 2. Holiness

- a. The root meaning of “holiness” is “to separate or cut off” – Towns
  - i. First, His separation from all creation. He is infinitely and absolutely incomparable to anything and everything in existence.
    1. The aspects of His nature give us some understanding, though incomplete due to our natural limitations and sin, of His holiness, perfection, and separateness. God’s holiness is an attribute that is very difficult for even the most knowledgeable pastor and theologian to understand.
    2. **Isaiah 40:25** “To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.”
      - a. God is not just “a” holy one, or someone who is merely holier than us, but is THE HOLY ONE.
      - b. Holiness is synonymous to God. That is, when we think of holiness, we are also thinking of God. They are one and the same.
    3. **Psalms 99:5** “Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!”
      - a. God is to be praised for His holiness.
      - b. “His footstool” suggests bowing to the ground before Him in worship.
    4. **Revelation 4:8** “<sup>8</sup>And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!””
      - a. His highest creation and the greatest beings lift up their voice in constant, eternal praise and worship of the Holy One.
    5. **Isaiah 57:15** “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy...”
      - a. God’s name is holy.
    6. **Matthew 6:9** “<sup>9</sup>Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...””
      - a. We are all to recognize, first and foremost, the holiness of God as a fundamental attribute of God.
      - b. Recognition of God’s rule in Heaven is an acknowledgement that He is apart from and far above all His creation.
  - ii. Second, holiness is the perfection of God in all His moral attributes. God is holy, therefore everything His wills and does is holy. God’s perfection in what and who He is demands that He is perfect in all He thinks, says, and

does. We can see his holiness in comparison to our sin and unholiness.

1. **Job 15:15** “Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight...”; **Job 25:5-6** “Behold, even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure in his eyes; <sup>6</sup>how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!”
  - a. Even His most holy and pure creations are impure compared to God, much less humans.
2. **John 17:17** “<sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”; **Romans 3:4** “Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.””; **Numbers 23:19** “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”
  - a. Every word God speaks is truth, and he does not lie. He will never change and therefore He will never lie.
  - b. When man’s word comes up against God’s word, God’s word will always prevail and be shown to be true, good, perfect, and righteous.
3. **Psalms 71:19** “Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?”; **Deuteronomy 32:4** ““The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without **iniquity**, just and upright is he.””; **Psalms 19:9 (NASB)** “The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.”
  - a. God is perfectly just in all He does. Righteousness, justice, and uprightness are all essentially the same qualities. When God and His actions are declared righteous, it means they are perfectly just and upright, with no impurities or falsehood.
  - b. God has no iniquity (sin) in Him. Iniquity is an imbalance and inconsistency of moral being and character, and since holiness is complete and infinite perfection, iniquity is anything less than that. More specifically, it refers to a lack in moral perfection, or sin. There is nothing unequal or lacking in God, including His moral character.
4. **Romans 1:18** “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness...”; **2 Corinthians 6:14** “For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?”; **Habakkuk 1:13** “You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong...”
  - a. The opposite of righteousness is lawlessness.

- b. Iniquity/sin is, at its very core, not just rebellion and opposition to rules, but to God Himself.
  - c. In His holiness, God cannot look upon evil and hates sin.
  - d. God has every reason, authority, and power to carry out justice. In fact, it would be unjust for Him NOT to address sin.
  - e. Justice is an extension of God's holiness. If He did not address injustice, He would not be just or holy.
  - f. In the face of an absolutely, infinitely holy God, any sin is absolutely, infinitely abhorrent to Him, no matter how small it might seem to be.
3. Two questions: How can God be both just and loving? How does it relate to us?
- a. God's love and holiness are not in competition with each other. Love and justice are not separate, but rather they both need each other in order to truly be perfecting loving and just.
    - i. The example of Creation
      - 1. When God created man, He created them in His image and made them holy (morally perfect and without sin, though not with God's eternal, infinite attributes) and in a perfect relationship with Him and each other in love.
      - 2. Because man was made in His image, man needed free will in order to love and live in true obedience to Him, so God gave Adam and Eve one rule: not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In His love, He warned them and did not hide the consequences of eating the fruit, and reminded them they could eat of ANYTHING else in the garden of Eden.
        - a. Can a person love if they are not free to choose to love? Can a person be morally perfect if they cannot exercise the free will to obey or disobey? Example of robot.
        - b. Also, if God did not warn them of this rule, He would be neither just nor loving. Where there are no rules, there can be no consequences. If there were no consequences, it would be as if there was never any rule and therefore Adam and Eve could never truly display love or holiness.
      - 3. Adam and Eve exercised their free will by disobedience to God and ate the fruit. This demonstrated something about themselves:
        - a. They believed God wasn't truthful, making Him a liar and a deceiver.
        - b. They believed they knew better than God.
        - c. They displayed pride in themselves and arrogance towards the commands and wisdom of God in their rebellion towards Him.
        - d. They loved themselves more than they loved Him.

4. God, in His faithful holiness, did as He said He would and, due to Adam and Eve's disobedience, cursed humanity with death and eternal separation from Him (Genesis 3:16-19). See Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death..."
  5. Because Adam was the patriarch and representative of all humanity, we all sinned in Adam, and now have a sinful nature. See Romans 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned..."
  6. However, in His love, knowing that man was utterly hopeless in reconciliation to Him, promised a perfect Savior who would one day take the punishment they deserved for their sin by bearing the wrath of God upon Himself (Genesis 3:15). Therefore, both God's love and holiness/justice could be completely and perfectly satisfied.
- ii. The Law given in the Old Testament testify both to God's love and holiness.
1. The Law is God's standard for right living, and was given to expose both our complete sinfulness, and the perfection of God.
  2. The Laws showed and taught us how we are to love God and love our neighbor.
  3. Disobedience to the Law demonstrated a love for self over love for God and man.
  4. The Laws were not given arbitrarily (for no good reason), nor were they put in place to keep us from peace and joy. The two greatest commandments are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). The whole Law can be summed up in these two commandments.
  5. Therefore, the Law was given by God's love and holiness to help us live with love and holiness.
  6. However, Romans 3:23 tells us, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
    - a. The Greek word translated as sin, *hamartia*, initially meant missing the mark as in archery or spear-throwing. Anything but a bullseye was an error, no matter how close the archer got.
    - b. Anything short of God's perfect Law, which is an extension of Himself, is sin. (Anything we think, say, or do that breaks God's law)
- b. So how do I respond?
- i. We need to learn, understand, and acknowledge who God is in our hearts, and who we are in relation to Him.
    1. God is God, you are not.

2. God created you, you are not an accident (Psalm ch. 139).
3. God created you to know and love Him (Jeremiah 9:24).
4. Sin has separated you from God (Isaiah 59:2).
5. God is perfect, you are not (Rom. 3:23).
6. You have no power over your sin now (Rom. 7:18).
7. You deserve the eternal punishment for your sin (Revelation 20:11-15).
8. God loved you before you loved Him (1 John 4:19).
9. God alone can save you (Isaiah 45:21).
10. God promised a Savior to take your punishment and reconcile you to Him (Isaiah ch. 53).