

What is God Really Like?

We have learned that the Bible is God's Word and therein is the Truth we can depend upon. We have also learned that Satan has deceived us about God. The Bible tells us God has answered the lies of Satan by sending His Son to reveal His true character and to show us that God really wants us to be His friends. In this lesson we begin to look to the Bible to get a better picture of what God is really like.

In Genesis chapter one, the word "God" in the Old Testament Hebrew language is "elohim" meaning "gods," plural. The concept of God being more than one person is seen throughout the Bible beginning with the creation story.

Genesis 1:26 says *"And God (Elohim) said, let us (plural) make man in our (plural) image."*

In the New Testament we find more evidence for the three persons who make up the Trinity, or the Godhead.

John 14:26 *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, (one person) whom the Father (two persons) will send in my name (Christ – three persons), he (notice the Holy Spirit is a "he" and not an "it") shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

The three persons of the Godhead have taken specific "roles" in order that we, their creatures, can better understand and relate to Them and Their activities.

First is the Father – He has the role of the Almighty God. He is understood as being seated on the throne of the universe. He is in total control. Nothing happens without His knowledge and permission. He remains on the throne continually.

I Corinthians 8:6 – *“But to us there is but one God, **the Father**, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”*

Ephesians 4:6 – *“One God and **Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

Revelation 3:21 – *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my **Father** in his throne.”*

Next is the Son – His role is to be seen as the embodiment, the express image of the Father God. He is the One who lives among His creatures to show them what God is like. He is the One who came to earth and lived among us.

Hebrews 1:1 -5 – *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his **Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and **the express image of his person**, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

The Father is on the throne. The Son is the embodiment of God. So how can we understand God as being omni-present, that is, everywhere at once?

We are able to comprehend this through the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Even though God has all power, He prefers to use the power of the truth spoken to the human heart softly in love. *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord”* (Zechariah 4:6). This is the role of the Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as the Spirit of Truth. While the Father remains on the throne the Son and the Holy Spirit are working more directly with us. Even though the three members of the Godhead have taken different roles, They are yet the same.

Note what Jesus says as recorded in **John 14:8 - 9**

“Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”

Jesus said if you have seen me you have seen the Father. In other words, *“if you’ve seen me, you’ve seen God, we are the same”*

Jesus then added, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you **another comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever”* **John 14:15,16**

Jesus said *“another comforter”* – the Greek word is “allos” and it means “another of the same kind.” In other words Jesus is saying, *“I am just like the Father, and the Spirit is just like Me – We are all the same!”*

If they are all the same, that means that they all love us in the same way and are working together for our salvation.

This is the Father’s plan, carried out by the Son, impressed on our hearts by the Spirit, and witnessed by the angels. All three persons of the Godhead are fully, equally, and eternally God!

Wherever you see the title “Father” or “Son” or “Holy Spirit”, you can replace it with the word or title of “God.”

No one word or name can describe the Infinite and Almighty God - therefore God is known by many names. Note all the names that apply to Christ, the Son, as given in **Isaiah 9:6**: - *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

In the following texts, we see the Son in His role as Creator.

John 1:1 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him**; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”* **Verse 14** - *“and “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...”*

Ephesians 3:9 – *“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in **God, who created all things by Jesus Christ**”*

Colossians 1:16 - 18 *“**For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church.**”*

These verses clearly establish the Son as the Creator. There are other roles He fulfills as well. As we study we will discover that the Son is the Lord God of the Old Testament as well as the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament! Note the following passage:

Nehemiah 9:6-15 *“**Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous: And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea; And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.***

Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: And gavest them bread

from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them..”

The “Son” is the one who created the earth. He’s the one who drowned the world in the flood. He is the one who led the Israelites through the wilderness. He’s the one who gave the law on Mt Sinai. He is the Lord in both the Old and New Testament. That’s what the Bible is referring to in -

Acts 4:10 - 12 – *“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

And I Timothy 2:5 – *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”*

There is *“One mediator (connection) between God and man.”* It’s not the Father – He remains on the throne. It’s not the Holy Spirit – He’s the Helper living in our heart, it’s the Son. He is the link between heaven and earth; this has always been His role. We can’t go up to heaven to God – He must come down to us, and the Son did that.

Some picture Jesus pleading with the Father to forgive us. But if the Son has to plead with the Father on our behalf before He will forgive – then they are divided, they are not one! Two statements from Jesus should clear this up –

John 10:30 *“I and the Father are one.”*

John 16:26,27 *“In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf because the Father himself loveth you.”*

Jesus came to show us that God the Father loves us just as much as Jesus, the Son. The Father is just as kind and tender, loving and compassionate, and merciful and forgiving as the Son.

Those religions that don't accept Jesus as God, as One with the Father, have a difficult time understanding God's true character. They usually focus on God's judgment, anger, and wrath as seen in the Old Testament. God the Father is thus seen as rigid and severe. As a result they become rigid and severe! This is the picture of God that motivates the terrorists!

But since we now understand the Old Testament God is the Son, we might ask, "How could gentle Jesus do some of those harsh things we read about in the Old Testament?" Hebrews 13:8 says "*Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.*" That's true, God never changes – but people do. Note the following text.

Hebrews 8:7,8 – "*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. **For finding fault with them**, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*"

"*Finding fault with them*" – God doesn't change, but people do! In the days of Moses, God could not have sent Jesus to preach the Sermon on the Mount to those hard hearted, rebellious people he led out of Egypt. They weren't ready to hear things like - "*love your enemies and do good to them.*" They would not have listened to a God like that. God had to do some drastic things to reach them. But, God understands the nature of men and meets them where they are and leads them no faster than they are able to follow.

That's the reason the Bible rarely mentions Satan in the Old Testament. The name "*Satan*" is mentioned in only 15 verses of 4 books. Whereas in the New Testament "*Satan*" is mentioned in 34 verses in 12 books. In the Old Testament Satan is known as the "*serpent*" but in only one place - Genesis 3.

In the New Testament Satan is referred to as the "*serpent*" five times, in II Corinthians and Revelation. In the Old Testament the name "*devil*" is never used, but in the New Testament it is found in 57 verses of 17 different books.

As a matter of fact, out of the 31,173 verses in the entire Bible - the word "*Satan*" is found in only 49. Whereas the name "*God*" is found

in 3,876 verses, and “*Lord*” in 6,668 verses. It is clear the Lord is more interested in revealing Himself than His adversary, Satan.

We find the reason for this in the book of Genesis where we note a drastic loss of the knowledge of God. The descendants of Jacob (Israel) migrated to Egypt where they became enslaved for hundreds of years. When the time came for Moses to deliver God’s people, their spiritual condition was very poor. Most of them had forgotten the God who had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Ancient Israel came out of bondage contaminated with the pagan gods of Egypt and they gave Moses a difficult time. God called them “*stiff-necked.*” The Hebrew word is “*qasheh,*” meaning: hard, cruel, severe, obstinate or hard headed.

The pagan gods seemed very real to them. They were always on the verge of deserting this “*new*” God of Moses - for the old “*gods*” of Egypt. To tell them about Satan and his power would only put them in danger of worshipping Satan as they did some of the pagan gods in Egypt. So the first step that God asked His people to take as they traveled in the wilderness was simply - “*Have no Gods before me - worship the one God who brought you out of Egypt.*” The knowledge about Satan would have to come later - when their faith in the true God was more stable.

One Bible scholar wrote this thoughtful comment – “*When we talk of Satan’s strength, he fastens his power more firmly upon us. When we talk of the power of God, Satan is driven back. As we draw near to God, he draws near to us.*” Youth’s Instructor 1/4/1900

Since they were unaware of the existence of Satan – God himself took the blame for good and evil. We can clearly see this in the story of Job.

Job 2:1 – 10 – “*Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou*

movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”

Who brought all the evil calamities upon Job? Who smote him with boils? Satan. But who got the blame? God. Why? Because in that day they were unaware of the existence of Satan. In their minds if a woman was barren, God had closed her womb. If a woman had a baby, God had opened her womb. If a nation came up against another nation – God sent them. If a man dies – God killed him. We see this in the story of the death of King Saul.

I Chronicles 10:3 – 5 - *“And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers. Then said Saul to his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died.”*

This clearly indicates that Saul killed himself by falling on his sword. But note what is said a few verses later -

Verse 13 – 14 *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the LORD: therefore **he slew him**, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.”*

This is another apparent contradiction which we must think through to a logical conclusion. Did God kill King Saul Himself, or did God

allow the King to commit suicide? Saul clearly killed himself by falling on his sword, but in the mind of many of the writers of scripture, God is responsible for everything, good and bad, and they wrote it that way as seen in this story.

The Old Testament nation of Israel, though many were “*stiff-necked*,” were the only people who acknowledged God at all – they were all He had! And because many were rebellious and hard headed, He had to do some harsh things or lose them all. God loved man too much for that. It is a mistake to think that the way God reacted in those emergency situations of those days is the way He is all the time, to think that that is His nature. Just as a loving parent has to do some difficult things at times in order to discipline a child, though the parents hate doing it, their goal is always for the good of the child. God hated doing those harsh things as well, but they had to be done for the overall good. But the Bible records that when the time was right God sent His Son to clear all these things up.

Galatians 4:4 says, *“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,”*

John 3:16,17 says, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.”*

Jesus shows us exactly what God is like in a way we can understand. That Is what we all need to see and we see it perfectly in Jesus. If you’ve seen Jesus, you’ve seen God! This is the good news! This is the true gospel – God is not what His enemies have made Him out to be. God is just like Jesus!

Response Questions;

1. I understand the God of the Bible includes three persons in their distinctive roles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yes ___ No ___

2. I understand the three persons which make up the Trinity are the same in character and purpose. Yes ___ No ___

3. I believe the good news is that God the Father is just like Jesus! Yes ___ No ___