

"The God of the Bible"

Who is the God of the Bible and what is He like? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to take a look at what God reveals about himself. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible isn't simply another book; it's God's book, divinely inspired and full of wisdom. Now, through the Bible God reveals His character, His heart, and His nature. Bible history is truly His story. The Scripture reveals how He created and interacted with man through the centuries. And one thing is for sure: God loves everyone and has always wanted what is best for us. Well, this is why we spend our time studying the Bible. And nothing else measures up. Thanks for being with us today. We want to be part of your life each week.

We know many reasons to believe in God: the starry heavens above, the moral law within, the complexity of the cells of our body are only a few. Now these things couldn't have just happened by accident. No, they came by intelligent design. And only a supremely intelligent and supremely powerful Being could have created them. That person is God! Romans 1 and verse 20 says that God's "invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made." Now, we can perceive some things about God from looking at the world, but to know God truly, we must go to Scripture.

If God did in fact, create us, then we need to know Him. We need to know how we can come into a relationship with Him and what He desires from us. We can't find that in the woods or by the seashore, we find God by looking into His divinely revealed Word, the Bible. Only the Bible can help us understand His character, His character and His nature, and His love for us.

Now, if you want to know more about God, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of this lesson and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083, or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. And that number is 1-800-321-8633. Now if you live outside the United States, we have materials free online, and you can watch our program at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Isaiah 40 verses 25 and 26, and we'll study about the God of the Bible.

Our reading today comes from Isaiah chapter 40 verses 25 and 26, "'To whom then will you liken Me, That I would be *his* equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these *stars*, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power, Not one *of them* is missing." That's the nature of our wonderful and powerful God. Let's pray together. Oh Father, we're thankful that from the starry heavens above and the moral law within, we can come to know that You are a good and righteous, powerful and wise God. And Father, we pray that we may give ourselves to you fully and freely. In Jesus name, Amen!

How do you view God? J. B. Phillips many years ago wrote a book entitled, *Your God Is Too Small*, which created quite a stir. He saw that what many thought God was like and how the Bible describes God were quite different. Many people have never taken the time to study what the Bible actually says about the nature and the character of God. Some simply focus on one aspect of the Lord's nature and ignore other aspects that are just as important. God is gracious, but God is also holy and just. God is

compassionate, but He will also punish evildoers who will not repent. God is not lopsided in character. He doesn't have faults like we do.

Isaiah 55 verses 8 and 9 says, "For My thoughts (God is speaking), For my thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts." Now, since we are imperfect and weak creatures, it's hard to understand our Creator who has no imperfections or weaknesses. We'd like to believe that He's just like us; but He isn't. We compromise, but He doesn't. We sin, but He doesn't. We lie to ourselves, but God never lies. He is indeed perfect.

But God is not a "force" or simply an immovable object, like some people think. Scripture describes God as a person. He thinks, feels, acts, loves, wills and judges. He has the mind, the emotions, and the will of a person. He can be grieved as He was in Noah's day in Genesis 6. He can love and He showed that love by giving Jesus for our sins. He can rejoice when sinners repent, as He does in Luke chapter 15. He can reason and He asks us to reason with Him in Isaiah 1 verse 18. He can become angry and does so with those who will not repent. God can plan and prepare for the future. When Jesus prayed, you remember He prayed "Our Father." You see, Christians have a relationship with God as a child would with his father. God made man in His own image, so that man has an intelligent and moral spirit.

Now when Jesus came to earth, He had flesh and blood; but the Father in heaven and the Holy Spirit are not physical or material. God is spirit. You remember the Lord Jesus said in John 4 and verse 24, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." God is indeed spirit; and the Lord said in Luke 24 verse 39, that "a spirit does not have flesh and blood." Paul told the philosophers at Athens in Acts 17 verses 24 to 25, that "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things." God created man. Paul said in Acts 17 and verse 29, "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, or an image formed by the art and thought of man."

Sometimes children ask, "Well where did God come from?" Well the answer is that God has always existed. Indeed, He is self-existent. Acts 17 verse 28 says, that "in Him we live and move and have our very being." Now you'll remember that God introduced himself to Moses in Exodus 3 and verse 14 as, "I AM WHO I AM." Now this phrase is revered as the holy name of God by the Israelites. And today we use words like Yahweh or Jehovah to reflect this self-existent nature of God.

Now God is not only spirit and self-existent, He is also infinite. God does not have the limitations that men have. Space and time cannot limit God. As to time, God is eternal. Moses wrote in Psalm 90 and verse 2, "Before the mountains were born, Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." 2 Peter 3 verse 8 says, "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day." Now unlike us, God exists outside of time. He created time for us, but He is not limited by it. Nor is God limited by space. When Solomon finished building the Temple, he said in 1 Kings 8 verse 27, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!" Proverbs 15 and verse 3 says, that "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good."

Now beyond this, we must confess that God is all-wise and all-knowing. God knows and understands all things about people, about nature, about animals and the universe. Romans 11 verses

33 to 36 says, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became his counselor? Or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

Well, God is not only all-knowing, He's also all-powerful. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 10 and verse 27, that "With God all things are possible." Job 42 and verse 2 says God "can do all things." Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 32 and verse 17, "Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You." Now being all-powerful doesn't mean that God can or will perform logical impossibilities, such as making a square circle or a stone so large it can't be moved.

Ephesians 4 and verse 6 says that there is "one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." God is certainly unique. The first of the Ten Commandments says, that "You shall have no other gods before Me." That is, no other gods besides Me. Man-made gods are forbidden, because they are imaginary and don't exist. Idols can't reflect the true grandeur and glory of the eternal God who doesn't live in temples made with hands according to Acts 17 and verse 24. And men sin against God when they forsake the immortal God and they serve creatures as the pagans did with idolatry in ancient times. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 8 and verse 4, "Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one."

Now since God is Lord of all, He is sovereign. God rules the nations. And according to Jeremiah 18 verses 7 to 10, God plants and uproots nations. According to Acts 17: and verse 26, He "made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place." God now commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17 and verse 30). And at the end of the world, God will judge each of us according to our works and according to His Word.

As the judge of men, thankfully God is impartial. God doesn't show favoritism, but He accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right (Acts chapter 10 verses 34 and 35). Because God is holy, we can regard what He teaches is righteous. Psalm 19 and verse 9 says, that "The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether." God's moral and religious standards will stand firm at the judgment. Though people want to set God's ways aside, God has spoken in His word what His teaching is about, and those things regarding spiritual matters and about morals. God hasn't given us any weak or useless laws. Each one has a purpose.

And as we consider God's character, we must realize that God is utterly holy. Isaiah tells of the seraphim who cry out, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts" (Isaiah 6 and verse 3). James 1 and verse 13 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone." God commands His children in 1 Peter 1 and verse 16, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Because God is holy, sin is offensive. You know, people today are keenly aware of what offends them, but they may not know what offends God. While God may love the sinner and has provided a way of salvation, God still gets offended when the people He loves sin against Him.

God's grace doesn't cancel out His holiness. God never approves of sin. The prophet Habakkuk says about God in chapter 1, verse 13, "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor." According to Hebrews 6 and verse 18, the Bible says "it 's impossible for God to lie," or to commit any sin. You see, it's God's holiness that demands justice when people sin. God's goodness means that He cannot ignore sin. God doesn't simply make up sins arbitrarily. Sin is sin,

because God knows it's destructive and harmful. God speaks out against sin, because He loves people. Now being holy is good for people; and sin is always harmful.

In addition, God is unchangeable. God Himself said in Malachi 3 and verse 6, "I am the Lord, I do not change." Moses wrote in Numbers 23 verse 19, that "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" You see, God doesn't have the weaknesses of fickle men who change at a whim. James 1:17 says, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." I am thankful that God doesn't change, because that means that we can count on Him to keep His promises. We can also count on His commandments and His moral teaching. Culture doesn't change God. Right and wrong do not change with the times.

I am thankful that God is merciful, yes. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 45 that your Father in heaven "causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." Now even though men were foolish and disobedient, God's kindness and love appeared in Christ Jesus. Titus 3 and verse 5 says "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy." God's mercy can save even the worst of sinners when they repent and turn to Him.

That's because, God is love. We know what love is and what good is, because of the great example of our God in Christ Jesus. 1 John 4 verses 7 to 11 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. Now in this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." God's character teaches us how to live and how to love. And we love because He first loved us (1 John 4 verse 19).

Now why does this matter? Well the more we know about God, the more we love Him and the more we want to be like Him. Christ embodied every good and righteous thing, and everything He did blesses us and gives us life. The Lord Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." We need to know the Lord Jesus; and the more we know Him, the better our understanding of our Father in Heaven will be. Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful that you sent Jesus. So that we might understand Your love and Your character. Help us to be loving people who follow You always. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen!

God is God. He created us, gives us life, and will judge us at the last day. And whether we accept or approve of Him, He's still the one true and living God. God's power, His teaching, and character hasn't changed, even if our culture changes. What we think or feel about God doesn't define Him. God defines and describes Himself through His revealed word. And we must accept Him on His terms. The God of the Bible is very different from many popular beliefs. Some serve a false god that they wish existed rather than the true God revealed in Scripture. And this is why we must search the Scriptures. We want the true God.

I have a question. Paul called the God of the Bible "my God" in Philippians 4 and verse 19. Is He your God? Be honest: are you living in such a way that honors or dishonors God, that pleases or offends Him? If you are living in such a way that God is offended, then shouldn't you think about your soul?

Now to get right with God, love and believe in Jesus Christ. Believe that He died for your sins and arose from the dead. Make Him your Lord by turning from your sins in repentance. Becoming a Christian and transforming your life, leaving that old man of sin to become like Jesus Christ. And with your love, and faith, and repentance, confess your faith and be baptized into Christ. Now baptism is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Baptism is the time when God buries the old man of sin and raises you up to walk in newness of life according to Romans 6 verses 3 to 7. Now in baptism God acts upon you, making you His child, adding you to the church, and forgiving your sins, and giving you eternal life. What are you waiting for? The Bible says in Acts 22 verse 16, "Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name." Won't you do that today?

We hope that today's study has stirred you to consider your soul. Now if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now if you live outside the United States you can download our materials at our website: www.searchtv.org. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses and study sheets. You'll want one of the study sheets. Don't worry, we won't ask you for money or put you on a list.

Please get involved with a church of Christ in your area. They love you and they support this ministry, for which we're grateful. If you are looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.