

The Attributes of God

“What is God like?” There is no description which fully explains what God is like. We cannot see him; we cannot prove he exists. God exists beyond our understanding of time and space because they are beyond our comprehension. No one has ever seen God. And yet Christians believe that we can know this God personally, even intimately, we love Him and hope for what we do not see yet, but we wait for His coming with patience. And that this is what God wants too. Bible gives us glimpses of God and tells us about some of his characteristics - his love, compassion, power and creativity. *Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*(2SA7:22) David rejoiced to sing praises to the Lord His God Who does great things for His servants and Whose glorious character, attributes are proclaimed, throughout extremity of the heavens by creation itself.

The Bible describes God's appearance as a brilliant light because there is no darkness in Him at all.(1JO1:5) This describes God's beauty, holiness, purity. God is completely good and pure in His dealings with mankind. God is a triune being. This truth is a mystery— the Trinity – which are in relationship with each other: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son is Jesus Christ who lived in Israel 2,000 years ago. Jesus explained the closeness of his relationship with his Father, saying ‘I and the Father are one’. Jesus says, ‘anyone who has seen me has seen the Father’. We can get an idea of what God is like by looking at Jesus’ life. We see his compassion and love for people – especially the poor and oppressed; his desire for justice; his anger with hypocrisy and wrong-doing and his self-sacrifice in being put to death even though he was innocent. During his life on Earth, Jesus was totally human, but also totally God. Jesus possesses divine attributes. He is eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, unchanging, holy, and sinless. *For in Him lives all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*(COL2:9) He is a person can be known, compassion, merciful. *For I am meek and lowly in heart,* (MAT11:29)

The Holy Spirit is another aspect of God – a spiritual form of God which cannot be seen but can be experienced personally. Christians believe that the Holy Spirit comes to live within them. They speak of experiencing a deep sense of love and peace. the Holy Spirit changes the way they think and act, for example, enabling them to forgive someone who has wronged them where forgiveness was impossible previously. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, counsel, courage, knowledge, devotion, understanding, and fear of the Lord. God is all-seeing and all-knowing. We cannot hide from him. He knows our thoughts. *Psa 139:13-14, says God knows us even before we are born - ‘you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother’s womb’* God created men and women to share it with him. God wanted us to have a relationship with him. God made us ‘in his image’. He has given us capacity to love unconditionally; a sense of justice, morality, spirituality which sets us apart from other living creatures. When humanity’s relationship with God went sour in the garden of Eden, he devised a rescue plan—hinting at the coming of Jesus Christ to restore that relationship.

God cares about people. In the years that followed, God made an agreement with Abraham, that he would become the father of a nation – the Jewish people. An encounter between God and one of Abraham’s descendant, Moses, gives an insight into God’s awesomeness. God speaks to Moses from a bush which is on fire but not burning up. He tells Moses to take off his sandals because he is standing on holy ground. When Moses asks his name, God said, "I AM WHO I AM." (EXO3:14) Later, when the Jewish nation was being led astray by evil leaders, God inspired prophets to urge the people to return to right ways of living. The prophets also spoke of a coming Messiah – someone who would rescue them and bring them back to God. That Messiah was Jesus Christ. God is holy and loves justice. There is a price to be paid for all the wrongdoing. But God, in the form of Jesus, took the punishment for it on himself by being crucified on a cross even though he had never done sin. because Jesus did this, humanity can be set free from blame and be in a relationship with God for eternity. After Jesus had returned to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in Christians with His presence. He is there to come alongside us to bring God's plan for our lives. And the Holy Spirit lives within us to provide us with comfort. He created the Church—a worldwide family of Christians. And he wants an ongoing relationship with His people.

God has revealed Himself to humanity through our mind, or conscience. All societies have a certain moral code built into them in which stealing, lying, murder, such are condemned. Humanity's sense of right and wrong testifies to God's existence. However, we can ask what God has revealed about Himself in His Word and in creation that reverent reason can grasp. There are natural approaches to the existence of God. *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*(PSA19:1) David saw—the immense array of stars, the sun, and the moon—taught him to worship the Creator. The existence, structure of what we see in the heavens and sky are His "handiwork" and keep on declaring God's glory. God's glory is His perfections revealed. science continues to deepen our appreciation for God's design. The more we learn about how universe is structured, the more clearly we can see the work of God, the more fully we grasp the power of God.

The natural world reveals that God is wise, powerful, and eternal. God's "invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world"(ROM1:20) God has revealed of Himself in nature and creation of the world God’s qualities that nobody has an excuse for rejecting Him or for doing what is wrong. Pointing out what we see in the sky, those are not deities or spirits—they are creations of God. In *Deu.4:19, He said, beware when you look up to the sky and see the sun, moon and stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the Lord your God has allocated to[benefit] all the peoples under the heaven.*

Genesis 1:1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Although God reveals Himself to all people through their reason and built-in desires, He revealed Himself in a special and powerful way directly to the Israel(Jews). God chose a small, weak, sinful people to teach them about Himself, and to prepare them for the coming of Christ. Perhaps you have an issue for which you need some answers, but you have never really asked God what He has to say about it. In Jeremiah 33:3, He says, "*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and wondrous things you do not know.*" God will reveal Himself to a heart that is sincerely seeking Him. The Bible, which is God's masterpiece of self-revelation.

He is the only true God: The scripture is clear, there is only one true and living God. Isaiah 45:5 says, "*I am the Lord, there is no other; there is no God but Me.*" Bible tells us that He is a person; which says He is intelligent, knowable and has a personal will. Bible clearly says that there is but one God: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (DEU6:4) In the OT God is referred often at "Elohim," which is plural. God reveals Himself to us as a triune God, that is, one God in three persons. This doctrine of the Trinity is central to a biblical understanding of Who God is. In Gen 3:22 God says, "Since man has become like one of Us." Isaiah 6:8 says, "Who should I send? Who will go for Us? And Jesus commands to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We see this element of God's self revelation and our understanding of God throughout bible. Those who deny this truth cannot truly be called Christians. It is doctrine Jesus taught and it is set forth by systematic study of scripture. It is how God reveals Himself to us, thus we must accept it God is Sovereign: That is, He is omnipotent, all powerful and able to do all His holy will. God's sovereignty is his right and power to do all that he decides to do. The word Almighty literally means "all-powerful." He is "God Almighty." All of Psalm 91 is inspiring, for it describes the complete confidence we have if we are trusting in God. God can protect us. God has supreme spiritual power to defeat Satan the devil, to transform the worst of sinners, to resurrect mortal humans to become immortal glorified saints in the coming Kingdom of God. When he decides to do a thing, he does it, and no one can stop him. God's sovereignty speaks to His rule or reign over all things, His sovereignty speaks to the fact that by His own power He can do whatever He pleases. God is able to bring His will to pass whatsoever He wills. God is the sovereign power over all the universe. Everything was created by Him. He expects complete loyalty, reverence and obedience.

God is Holy: Rev. 4:8, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!*" Only God is holy. The word "Holy," is often used in scripture to speak about the Christian being separated from sin and separated unto God. the word Holy to describe God, it is speaking not only of His righteousness and perfection, but of the reality that He is separate and different from us. This word speaks to His divine existence, or the fact that He is infinitely exalted above all of creation. This should fill us with reverence and awe. As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

God is eternal: The word eternal means "everlasting, having no beginning and no end." Psalm 90:2 tells us about God's eternity: "*Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*" He has neither beginning nor end; He has always been and will always be. Time and space to not limit God. God is not subject to the special laws of time and space which confine us. He is timeless. He tells us in 2 Peter 3:8 that "With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day." He can act within time or outside of its limitations. "everlasting," which means that God has existed through all time. Truly it is incomprehensible to us.

God is omnipresent: Omnipresence means all-present. God is capable of being everywhere at the same time. It means his divine presence encompasses the whole of the universe. God can be everywhere at once because He sends His Spirit everywhere. So understanding that just as effective and perfect as if God were standing right beside us. God's Holy Spirit also serves as His eyes and ears to bring back to God perfect and total awareness of everything in every place. Psalm 139 tells us that there is no place where we can escape the presence of God. He is present everywhere in all His fullness.

God is omniscient: Omniscience means all-knowing and all-wise. God knows everything.(1JO3:20) He knows all things, past, present and future, the possible as well as actual. There is nothing which escapes His knowledge or understanding. Psalm 139:4 says, "*Before a word is on my tongue, You know all about it, Lord.*" Even thoughts of our hearts are known to Him. For God to be sovereign over His creation of all things, He has control over everything that is happening. How comforting to know we have a Creator and Provider who will never forget us or overlook our needs and prayers!

God is righteous: God is both righteous and just. God's righteousness means God always acts in accordance with what is right and Himself final standard of what is right. *The Lord is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness.*(ZEP3:5) He is the author of Justice. He is standard by which fairness and justice are measured. God's righteousness as God's justice. Righteousness is holiness in action. Deu.32:4 says of God, "*A faithful God, without prejudice, He is righteous and true.*"

Omnibenevolence: God is all-good and all-loving. God is love. This means that God is ever about the business of giving Himself to others. 1John4:8 tells us that God is love. Jesus tells us in Matthew that that God's love is for all of His creation, as He causes His sun to shine and rain to fall on the just and the unjust. God loves all of His creation and does so with a selfless and sacrificial kind of love. Greek term agape is applied to the love that human beings have for God and to the love that God has for man. Love for God is associated with the concepts of praise/worship, and devotions towards God.

What difference does it make in our lives?

- 3 -

God has created us and all that we see in order to share His existence with us. Graciously in keeping with His character, God has revealed Himself to us. He wants us to know Him, to love Him, to be in fellowship with Him, to serve Him and to bring Him glory through our lives. *"You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."*(JER29:13)

God has revealed Himself to the world through Jesus Christ. *"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things,"*(HEB1:1-2) Jesus is the Messiah of whom those prophets spoke. Christ is latest part of God's continuous message. Jesus Himself testified that He had come to earth to reveal the will of God the Father.(MAT11:27)He inspires His Church and her Sacred Tradition to help us remember who God is and what he has done for us. Christ is fully God and fully man.

Knowing God gives us purpose. It adds reason and convincing to our lives. It tells us that there is a God in heaven, that He is on His throne and not only does He care for us but that He created us for a purpose. Consider the emptiness and vanity of life lived without knowledge of the God. Knowing God assures us that to everything there is a season and a time, to every purpose under heaven. God made us, wondrously and gloriously have we been made in the image of God.

Remember, we were created to be in fellowship with God and being created in His image. His sovereignty assures us that there is nothing too hard for Him, and it is on the basis of our faith in such a God that we can rest secure in Him. He is always in control. He can do anything He desires, and scripture tells us that when we pray, He hears and answers our prayers. The God of all the universe, the one for Whom nothing is impossible, has given you permission to come and make your requests before His throne. His holiness assures us that He is pure and good. He cannot be corrupted, His holiness tells us that He is not like us, that as His Spirit works in our lives, that we can become more and more like Him.

His eternal nature assures us that He is infinitely different than us. Our God is self sustaining and needs nothing from us. He is without beginning or end, because He is everlasting, the Alpha and the Omega, He can meet our every need. He is infinite assures us that there is life beyond this earth. When Jesus promised that He would go and prepare a place for us, we can take Him at His word. Knowing that our God is without beginning or end, that He knows all things, can do all things and is always everywhere at all times should bring great comfort to our souls. His Omnipresence assures us that He can keep His word to never leave us nor forsake us. He cannot be confined to some image or statue. He is not a prisoner to some temple we build for Him. He is everywhere, at all times forever. There is no place we can escape Him.

His omniscience assures us that He has everything under control. Nothing will ever take Him by surprise. He who created all things knows all things and has made provision for you before you ever need them. He knows what we need before we even ask! His righteousness gives us certain knowledge that someday all wrongs will be made right, that while injustice may reign on this earth, God will be the final judge. We know that someday, every wrong will be made right and everyone of us will stand before Him and give account. His righteousness tells us that He will punish sin. It tells us that we must make things right with Him. In the end, justice will prevail because our God is personification of what is just and right.

While God is just, He is also gracious and merciful. This speaks to God's patience and His longsuffering with His fallen creations. Psalm 103:8 says, *"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and full of faithful love."* Mercy speaks to God withholding punishment that we do deserve while grace speaks to His giving us good things we do not deserve. While He has every right to punish us, instead He chooses to pursue us, to call us to Himself. Withholding His wrath, in His Mercy He extends His goodness and grace to us. And His love for us assures us that He is always looking out for our best. Nowhere was more clearly seen than on Calvary's cross. He sent Jesus to die for us. This is the ultimate fulfillment of God's love. One true and living God Who offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who will receive.

God is immutable or unchanging. God acts consistent with His character at all times. Malachi 3:6 says, *"For I am the Lord, I do not change."* Not only does God not change but His moral principles do not change. We do not bring change to God, our change results in different applications of God's immutable character. Because God does not change, His promises are sure and can be completely trusted. What God has promised He will fulfill.(NUM23:19) God will not change His mind about His promises. He will not change His plan or His purposes and the proper conviction about this truth provides us with the faith to live as God has designed. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*(HEB13:8)

God reveals His character to us in the Bible for the purpose of knowing Him. The more we know about God, the more we can come to know Him personally. The more we come to love God, the more we will obey to God's will, The knowledge of God is absolutely serious to our ability to live the godly life we have been called to live.(MAT21:23-27) So as you contemplate the majesty and wonder of our God, what do you know about Him but rather do you know Him? Have you ever come to a point in your life where you've placed your trust for forgiveness of sins and eternal life in God.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we always seek to be like Him. Meekness is vital for us to become more Christlike. God's holiness is the basis for our call to holiness, like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior. God's basic attribute is holiness and from this flows His love, mercy, grace. A fuller knowledge of God's holiness serves us well in godly living. *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*