

## Who is God?

When we first open the Scriptures, we see that the first person we meet is God (Genesis 1:1). The Bible makes clear that we know that God is real though the created order (Psalm 19, Romans 1:20). Many believe God exists but have different views on who or what he is.

### What are some views people hold of God?

Norman Geisler in his one volume work, *Systematic Theology* gives seven views of God:

Atheism - God does not exist

Polytheism - Many Gods exist

Pantheism - God is the Universe, all that is in the Universe is God

Pan-en-theism - God is in the Universe

Deism - God is beyond the Universe but is not in it, or does not interact with it

Finite Godism - That God exists and is beyond the Universe but is limited in power and ability

Theism - That an all-powerful God that is beyond the Universe exists and who interacts with the Universe he created

### What does the very first book of the Bible say about God?

1. God is the Creator of All Things (Genesis 1:1, 2:7) - God is the reason we exist, and we exist for his pleasure and for His Glory (Romans 11:33, 1 Corinthians 10:31).
2. God is Possessor of Heaven and Earth (Genesis 14:19, 22) - God is not only the creator but it all belongs to Him, the universe is his property and has absolute rights over it.
  - a. Psalms 24:1 - "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein (KJV)
  - b. Job 41:11 - Who has first given to me, that I should repay him, whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.
  - c. Psalms 50:8-12 - For every beast of the forest is mine the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills and all that moves in the field is mine.
3. God is Blessor / Empowers - When God creates the animals, he blesses them and told them to be fruitful and multiply, and he blessed mankind and tells them to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:22, 28).
4. God as Lawgiver (Genesis 2:16, Isaiah 33:22) - We are usually cool with God until he tells us what to do. But it is in his very nature to make law and set boundaries which are ultimately for our good. God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or he would die (Genesis 2:16-17).
5. God as Judge of all the Earth (Genesis 18:25) - When Adam disobeyed God, we see that God pronounces a penalty which is Adams and Eves eventual death as well as the introduction of the curse on the earth and pain in childbearing (Genesis 3:14-21). We see that God judges

Sodom and Gomorrah for their sin (Genesis 18:20, 19:24). We see later that God judges the whole Earth with a worldwide flood saving only Noah and his family (Genesis 6-9). Even after the flood, man would continue in rebellion against God, and He would confuse man's language at the tower of Babel so that they would not build a one world government that would not have God as the head (Genesis 11).

6. God of Mercy, Patience and Tenderness - Even though we see God as Lawgiver and Judge, we also see a God who right after man sinned provides a means to repair the relationship (Genesis 3:15). He also provides animal skin clothes to Adam and Eve, which points to an innocent substitute that would need to die to cover our sin (Genesis 3:21). God sits with a disobedient sinner and encourages Him (Cain) to repent (change his mind) (Genesis 4:1-7). God eats with Abram (his name before he was named Abraham) and allows him to ask the same question five times concerning the safety of his nephew Lot (Genesis 18:23-33). We see God providing for a single mother in the desert and pronouncing a blessing (Genesis 16).
7. God Has Emotions - Unlike the idea that God created the world and lets it run on its own without interference, we see a God that cares deeply about what he has created and how his creatures behave. In Genesis 6:5-6, it says that the wickedness of man brought grief to God's heart. The Bible also says that God is a Jealous God. This does not mean a sinful jealousy based on covetousness (a desire for something that does not belong to you or something you should not have) but a passionate anger when the worship and allegiance his creatures are supposed to give Him is given and offered or shared with another (Ex 20:5, 34:14; Deut 4:24, 5:9, 6:15; Joshua 24:19).

### **What are some attributes of God?**

We established that God exists and that we can learn quite a bit about him from the first book of the Bible. As theologians study the whole of scripture, they aim to describe God's qualities usually known as attributes. Charles Ryrie in his book Basic Theology, describes attributes as "qualities that are inherent to a subject". He also prefers to call these attributes perfections because the attributes he has he has them perfectly. Some attributes we share with God in a limited way and some attributes God possesses alone. The attributes that we share with God are called Communicable Attributes and the Attributes he has within himself alone are called his Incommunicable attributes (New Believers Handbook - Max Anders).

### **What are some of God's Incommunicable Attributes?**

**God is Eternal** - God is the creator of time, space, matter, so He would need to exist outside of time, space, and matter. He has no beginning or end. He has always been, and he will always be. He is the Moses in his prayer says the God is God from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 90:2). In Genesis 21:33, it says that Abraham called on the everlasting God.

**God is Immutable** - God in his essence, does not change. He doesn't need to learn, grow or develop. He is who he is perfectly. Scriptures that support this are:

Malachi 3:6 - For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed (NASB)

James 1:17 - Every good thing and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation of shifting of shadow (NASB)

We see in the Scriptures that God at times does make changes based on the behavior of mankind, but God in his essential character and ultimate goals does not change. The below description of God will always be true:

**“The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”** - Exodus 34:5-7

**God is Omnipresent** - The prefix Omni means “unlimited”. When we say that God is “Omnipresent”, we are saying that there is nowhere where he is not present. King Saul says this in 1 Kings 8, when he is dedicating the temple, “But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold even the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built.” (1 Kings 8:27). Paul in Acts 17:22-28 highlights this characteristic of God as well as points to God being the Creator and Owner of the Universe:

**“...Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “*In him we live and move and have our being’ as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring’.*”**

**God Is Omniscient** - This means that God is all-knowing. He has numbered all the hairs on your head (Luke 12:7). In Psalm 147:7, we see God’s Omniscience and Omnipotence, “He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power. His understanding is beyond measure. (ESV)

**God is Omnipotent** - God is All-Powerful. God asks Abraham “Is anything too difficult for the LORD” (Genesis 18:14). God asks Moses a rhetorical question, “Is the LORD’s power limited?” (Numbers 11:23a). The answer is “NO”. There is nothing that God cannot do. Creation itself tells us of his power, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen being understood through what has been made...” (Romans 1:20).

## **What are some of God's Communicable Attributes?**

**God is Holy** - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines Holy, "Moral and ethical wholeness or perfection, freedom from moral evil. Holiness is one of the essential elements of God's nature required of his people. Holiness may also be rendered 'sanctification' or 'godliness'. The Hebrew word for 'holy' notes what is 'sanctified' or 'set apart' for divine service." In 1 John it says, "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." God tells the Israelites "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2b, 1 Peter 1:16). The priest that represented the Israelite people before God has on his turban, "Holiness To the LORD" (Exodus 39:30). God wants us to be holy because he is Holy. Yet, if we are honest, we must admit we fall short of the holiness he requires (Romans 3:23). Praise God that In Christ God holiness is fulfilled, yet we are called to still strive live a holy life, and when we fall short was can ask for God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

**God is Love** - 1 John 4:7-8 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." The Greek word here for love is Agape, which is a self-sacrificing love that loves regardless of the behavior of the recipient, yet this is not a love that partners with or enables evil (1 Corinth 13). God's Love is a Holy Love. God shows this love though allowing sinners to enjoy his creation (Matthew 5:42-48). He ultimately shows His love though sending his Son to suffer and die for our sins (1 John 4:9-10, Romans 5:8).