

The background of the cover is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds, with a bright orange and yellow glow from the sun just below the horizon. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of trees are visible against the bright sky.

Compelling Descriptions Of God

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Forward:

How is God described in the Bible? While we may not know everything about the nature of God, there are some things we can know about who God is.

Throughout Scripture, God is defined as Spirit, a person, life, self-existent, unchanging, unlimited by time and space. To understand God better, it is important to understand these aspects of His nature.

Many years ago when my wife and I were teaching school in an Alaskan village, the Lord moved on me to read the Bible from beginning to end as many times as I could in a school year. I did that and was able to read through the Bible six times during the year.

Later, I asked the Lord why he wanted me to read the entire Bible rather than selected Scriptures.

The Lord, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit told me that it was so that I could better understand the personality of God.

At that time, I had never thought of God having a personality.

Throughout this study, it is my desire that you will better understand the personality of God.

Chapter 1

God is a Spirit.

John 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Thus we see that he was truly a man. Toil came in with sin; therefore Christ, having made himself a curse for us, submitted to it. Also, he was a poor man, and went all his journeys on foot. Being wearied, he sat thus on the well; he had no couch to rest upon. He sat thus, as people wearied with travelling sit. Surely, we ought readily to submit to be like the Son of God in such things as these. Christ asked a woman for water. She was surprised because he did not show the anger of his own nation against the Samaritans.

God relates to humanity.

God has hands:

Isaiah 65:2

I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

The Gentiles came to seek God, and find him, because they were first sought and found of him. Often he meets some thoughtless trifler or profligate oppose, and says to him, Behold me; and a speedy change takes place. All the gospel day, Christ waited to be gracious. The Jews were bidden, but would not come. It is not without cause they are rejected of God. They would do what most pleased them. They grieved, they vexed the Holy Spirit. They forsook God's temple, and sacrificed in groves.

God has feet:

Psalm 8:6

Thou made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

the greatest honour ever put upon human nature, were exemplified in the Lord Jesus. With good reason does the psalmist conclude as he began, Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, which has been honoured with the presence of the Redeemer, and is still enlightened by his gospel, and governed by his wisdom and power! What words can reach his praises, who has a right to our obedience as our Redeemer?

God has eyes:

1 Kings 8:29

That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

God's promises must be the guide of our desires, and the ground of our hopes and expectations in prayer. The sacrifices, the incense, and the whole service of the temple, were all typical of the Redeemer's offices, oblation, and intercession.

God has fingers:

Exodus 8:19

Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

God is not to be understood as having a physical body. God attributes human form and personality to himself in order to relate to humanity in terms meaningful to us.

In some passages God is also said to have wings (Ps. 17:8; 36:7) and feathers (Ps. 91:4), but this figurative language, depicting God as a protecting mother bird, does not imply that God has a physical body.

A spirit is also invisible. Though God was in the pillar of fire that led Israel through the wilderness, he was never visible to the nation (Deut. 4:15).

Because God is invisible Spirit, no one has ever seen him

John 1:18;

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

As no mercy comes from God to sinners but through Jesus Christ, no man can come to the Father but by him; no man can know God, except as he is made known in the only begotten and beloved Son.

God is eternal, immortal and invisible.

1 Tim. 1:17

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No man, with Paul's example before him, can question the love and power of Christ to save him, if he really desires to trust in him as the Son of God, who once died on the cross, and now reigns upon the throne of glory, to save all that come to God through him. Let us then admire and praise the grace of God our Saviour; and ascribe to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons in the unity of the Godhead, the glory of all done in, by, and for us.

The second commandment is a ban on the making of idols. It prevents the use of idols in religious service. God prohibits idols for many reasons but one of them was because God is Spirit.

When we acknowledge that God is Spirit (John 4:24), we recognize that God is not limited by a physical body. The word “spirit” means “incorporeal being.” God is sometimes described by metaphors of a physical body (hands, Isa. 65:2; feet, Ps. 8:6; eyes, 1 Kings 8:29; and fingers, Ex. 8:19). These expressions describe aspects of God such as His strength, steadfastness or insight rather than providing a physical description of God’s “body.

Chapter 2

God is a person.

Most of the religions of the world portray God as an impersonal being or a force. The Bible paints a totally different picture of God. He has all of the characteristics of personality.

Self-Awareness

A basic characteristic of personality is self-awareness, the ability to know oneself. When God told Moses, “I am that I am” (Exod. 3:14), God was describing himself according to his own perception. He was aware of who he was.

That he is faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word as well as in his nature; let Israel know this, I AM hath sent me unto you. I am, and there is none else besides me. All else have their being from God, and are wholly dependent upon him. Also, here is a name that denotes what God is to his people. The Lord God of your fathers sent me unto you. Moses must revive among them the religion of their fathers, which was almost lost; and then they might expect the speedy performance of the promises made unto their fathers.

Self-Determination

God also has self-determination. Self-determination implies freedom and God is free to do whatever he chooses. Hence, being a person is equated with freedom. The opposite of freedom is determinism and there is nothing that makes God do or be anything. God is free to follow the direction of his nature. Hence, when man is made in the image of God, man is a free being, responsible to his Maker.

Self-determination involves accepting the responsibility for one's life. The self-determination of God is seen in that he exists by himself and perpetuates himself by his nature

Intelligence

Personality also implies intelligence. God is said to know

Genesis 18:19

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Though God long forbears with sinners, from which they fancy that the Lord does not see, and does not regard; yet when the day of his wrath comes, he will look toward them.

Exodus 3:7

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

God notices the afflictions of Israel. Their sorrows; even the secret sorrows of God's people are known to him. Their cry; God hears the cries of his afflicted people.

The oppression they endured; the highest and greatest of their oppressors are not above him. God promises speedy deliverance by methods out of the common ways of providence. Those whom God, by his grace, delivers out of a spiritual Egypt, he will bring to a heavenly Canaan.

God has known

Acts 15:18

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

We are left free in this, as in the like matters. Let converts be warned to avoid all appearances of the evils which they formerly practiced, or are likely to be tempted to; and caution them to use Christian liberty with moderation and prudence.

The infinite wisdom and omniscience of God is taught in the Bible

Jeremiah 39:18

For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.

Those who trust God in the way of duty, as this good man did, will find that their hope shall not fail in times of the greatest danger.

Emotion

Another characteristic of personality is emotion.

Some may not use the word “emotion” relating to God, but rather the word “sensibility.” However, emotions are attributed to God.

The feeling of grief.

John 3:16

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.

Nicodemus was afraid, or ashamed to be seen with Christ, therefore came in the night. When religion is out of fashion, there are many Nicodemites. But though he came by night, Jesus bid him welcome, and hereby taught us to encourage good beginnings, although weak.

And though now he came by night, yet afterward he owned Christ publicly. He did not talk with Christ about state affairs, though he was a ruler, but about the

concerns of his own soul and its salvation, and went at once to them

God feels love

Psalm 103:8-13

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. [9] He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

God feels kindness

Exodus 3:7-8

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

God feels empathy

John 11:35

Jesus wept.

Christ's tender sympathy with these afflicted friends, appeared by the troubles of his spirit. In all the afflictions of believers he is afflicted. His concern for them was

shown by his kind inquiry after the remains of his deceased friend. Being found in fashion as a man, he acts in the way and manner of the sons of men. It was shown by his tears. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Tears of compassion resemble those of Christ.

God feels sorrow.

Psalm 7:11

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

David is confident that he shall find God his powerful Saviour. The destruction of sinners may be prevented by their conversion; for it is threatened, if he turn not from his evil way, let him expect it will be his ruin.

But amidst the threatenings of wrath, we have a gracious offer of mercy. God gives sinners warning of their danger, and space to repent, and prevent it. He is slow to punish, and long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish. The sinner is described

God has a will.

Because God is a Person, he also has a will, the volitional aspect of personality. He has the ability to make his own decisions and choose his own actions

John 4:34

Jesus saith unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

God sometimes uses very weak and unlikely instruments for beginning and carrying on a good work. Our Saviour, by teaching one poor woman, spread knowledge to a whole town. Blessed are those who are not offended at Christ.

Believers submit their will to the will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The apostle having closed the part of his epistle wherein he argues and proves various doctrines which are practically applied, here urges important duties from gospel principles. He entreated the Romans, as his brethren in Christ, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to Him.

This is a powerful appeal. We receive from the Lord every day the fruits of his mercy. Let us render ourselves; all we are, all we have, all we can do: and after all, what return is it for such very rich receiving?

It is acceptable to God: a reasonable service, which we are able and ready to give a reason for, and which we understand. Conversion and sanctification are the renewing of the mind; a change, not of the substance, but of the qualities of the soul.

The progress of sanctification, dying to sin more and more, and living to righteousness more and more, is the carrying on this renewing work, till it is perfected in glory. The great enemy to this renewal is, conformity to this world. Take heed of forming plans for happiness, as though it lay in the things of this world, which soon pass away.

Do not fall in with the customs of those who walk in the lusts of the flesh, and mind earthly things. The work of the Holy Ghost first begins in the understanding, and is carried on to the will, affections, and conversation, till there is a change of the whole man into the likeness of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.

Thus, to be godly, is to give ourselves to God.

If we possessed the infinite understanding as does the will of God, we would find, God's activities very predictable. Paul urged the Romans, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God"

The Bible describes God as a person, although most of the world's religions tend to portray God as an impersonal being or force.

Characteristics of God's personality include.

Self-awareness

Exodus 3:14

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Certainly I will be with thee. That is enough. Two names God would now be known by. A name that denotes what he is in himself, I AM THAT I AM.

This explains his name Jehovah, and signifies,

1. That he is self-existent: he has his being of himself.
2. That he is eternal and unchangeable, and always the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever.
3. That he is incomprehensible; we cannot by searching find him out: this name checks all bold and curious inquiries concerning God.
4. That he is faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word as well as in his nature; let Israel know this, I AM hath sent me unto you. I am, and there is none else besides me.

All else have their being from God, and are wholly dependent upon him.

Self-determination

Job 23:13

But he is in one mind, and who can turn him and what his soul desires, even that he doeth.

As Job does not once question but that his trials are from the hand of God, and that there is no such thing as chance, how does he account for them?

The principle on which he views them is, that the hope and reward of the faithful servants of God are only laid up in another life; and he maintains that it is plain to all, that the wicked are not treated according to their deserts in this life, but often directly the reverse.

Intelligence

Genesis 18:19

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Though God long forbears with sinners, from which they fancy that the Lord does not see, and does not regard; yet when the day of his wrath comes, he will look toward them. The Lord will give Abraham an opportunity to intercede with him, and shows him the reason of his conduct.

Emotion

Exodus 3:7-8

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

God notices the afflictions of Israel. Their sorrows; even the secret sorrows of God's people are known to him. Their cry; God hears the cries of his afflicted people. The oppression they endured; the highest and greatest of their oppressors are not above him.

Volition of God's will

John 4:34

Jesus saith unto them, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Christ knows all the thoughts, words, and actions, of all the children of men. And the power of his word. He told her secret sins with power. She fastened upon that part of Christ's discourse, many would think she would have been most shy of repeating; but the knowledge of Christ, into which we are led by conviction of sin, is most likely to be sound and saving.

Chapter 3

God is characterized as life in Scripture.

One of His many names is “the Living God”

1 Samuel 17:26

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, what shall be done to the man that killed this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

It was a trial of David's meekness, patience, and constancy. He had right and reason on his side, and did not render railing for railing; with a soft answer he turned away his brother's wrath.

This conquest of his own passion was more honourable than that of Goliath. Those who undertake great and public services, must not think it strange if they are spoken ill of, and opposed by those from whom they expect support and assistance.

They must humbly go on with their work, in the face not only of enemies' threats, but of friends' slights and suspicions.

He is both the source and sustainer of all life

John 5:26

Joshua told his people, “Ye shall know that the living God is among you” (Josh. 3:10). Young David recognized that Goliath was defying “the living God”

The gospel is for all people

1 Samuel 17:26

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, what shall be done to the man that killed this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

Peter called Jesus “the Son of the living God”

Psalm 36:9

For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

They put themselves under his protection, and then are safe and easy. Gracious souls, though still desiring more of God, never desire more than God.

The “living God.” He is both the source and sustainer of life.

Matthew 16:16

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

All life comes from “the life”

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Be not cast down and disquieted. The word heart. Let your heart be kept with full trust in God. The word you. However others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, be not you so. Christ's disciples, more than others, should keep their minds quiet, when everything else is unquiet. Here is the remedy against this trouble of mind, "Believe."

Chapter 4

God is self-existent.

One of the primary names of God in the Old Testament, Jehovah, emphasizes the self-existent nature of God.

When He described Himself to Moses as “I am that I am”

Exodus 3:13-15

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is his name? What shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

He emphasized the fact that He exists independent of all other things in the universe. Our continued existence depends on the environment which God has placed us in, but God exists without that limitation.

God is Jehovah.

One of the common names for God in the Old Testament is “Jehovah.” The name comes from the verb “I am.” In Exodus 3:13-15,

Exodus 3:13-15

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto

Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

Moses confronted Jehovah in a burning bush. When Moses asked for an identification of God, the answer given was, "I am that I am." The name implied not only that God always was, is, and will be, but that God is independent of any other thing. "Jehovah," therefore, means "the self-existent God." Others interpret the name to mean also "the one who is utterly trustworthy and reliable."

Man exists in dependence upon food, water, and air, but God exists independently. From before birth man is dependent upon others, but God is dependent only upon himself.

Chapter 5

God is unchanging

God is immutable or unchanging. Changes either improve or corrupt the person or thing being changed. Since God by definition is perfect

Psalm 102:25-27

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

It is very comfortable, in reference to all the changes and dangers of the church, to remember that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And in reference to the death of our bodies, and the removal of friends, to remember that God is an everlasting God.

Do not let us overlook the assurance this psalm contains of a happy end to all the believer's trials.

Gen. 6:6

But in each case the apparent change in God really describes a change in people.

God is consistent in His attitude toward sin. When people change by practicing sin or turning from sin, God's consistent response to sin may be perceived as a change in His response to changing people.

Chapter 6

God is never improving, already perfect.

Psalm 102:25-27

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

The Bible states, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent”

(Num. 23:19). To deny the immutability of God, some have pointed to the biblical accounts of God repenting.

God is consistent in his nature to judge sin.

Genesis 6:6

And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

1 Sam. 15:11 reveals that it was men, not God that changed. When men sinned, God was consistent in his nature to judge sin. The word “repent” used in these references refers to an expression of sorrow rather than a change of character or nature.

When men sought to live for God, God was still consistent in his nature to reward believers. The changing life-styles of men caused the consistent behavior of God to appear to change, but the change was not in God. God is unchangeable.

Chapter 7

God is unlimited by time and space.

God is not limited by time and space. Another of His names is “the Everlasting God” (Gen. 21:33).

When Paul described God to the Athenian philosophers, he noted, “God that made the world and all the things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24).

Bible teachers describe this aspect of God’s nature as the infinity and immensity of God. It is the foundation of our view of God’s sovereignty in the universe.

The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4).

There can only be one God. To speak of more than only one supreme, absolute, perfect, and almighty being called God makes about as much sense as talking about a square circle.

he meaning of words would become useless and truth would collapse. “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isa. 44:6).

Time is the measurement of events that appear in sequence. Since God created the world, he existed before the first event. God never had a beginning point. He always existed. And God will continue without a terminal point. This is why Christ was called the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

Neither is God limited by space. Space is all the area where there is physical reality and being. Space is the distance between objects. God is independent of space. His existence goes beyond the farthest located object. The presence of God never ends.

Paul told the Athenian philosophers that “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands”

(Acts 17:24). Solomon observed that “the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him God” (2 Chron. 2:6).

Time and space are results of God’s creative act. He himself exists beyond time and space. God is infinite, while time and space are limited. God alone exists in the universe without limitations.

If another God did exist, then God would not be the self-existent, all-powerful, unlimited God. It is axiomatic that two unlimited beings cannot occupy the same space. If another God did exist, then God could not be an unlimited God. The infinity and immensity of God are strong arguments for the sovereignty of God in the universe.

Chapter 8

God is one Lord.

God is also described as being “one Lord” (Deut. 6:4) – a reflection of His unity. There can only be one God (Isa. 44:6). Our faith in the Trinity is not inconsistent with this aspect of God’s nature because we believe in one God in three personalities, not three separate gods.

Isaiah 44:6-7

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; *I am* the first, and *I am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.

⁷ And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). There can only be one God. To speak of more than only one supreme, absolute, perfect, and almighty being called God makes about as much sense as talking about a square circle.

The meaning of words would become useless and truth would collapse. “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isa. 44:6).

When we talk about the Trinity, we are still talking about one God in three personalities. The idea of God as a Trinity was suggested in Hebrew thought by the name of God, Elohim, which is a plural.

God for you to know and understand his will, his purpose for your life. Stay in God’s word and you will understand his personality and traits.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I
accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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