

LESSON ESSENTIALS

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 2: WHO IS GOD? WHAT IS HE LIKE?

If you've been contemplating questions about God and His nature, this lesson will encourage you to search the Bible for answers.

It is impossible to truly understand salvation if we aren't well-acquainted with God and His nature. Read this lesson to better understand the foundation of your faith – God Himself!

We all have dreams that we can't wait to accomplish. But not every dream is of God. Continue reading to know how Moses learned the art of surrender.

REFLECT

In a world as confused as ours, it's possible for us to start asking questions about God too. But you don't have to travel the world or fast for 40 days to find answers to these questions. You can just turn to the Bible, the Word of God, to educate yourself

Asha often looked out her window at the stars and wondered why they were there, and why she was there to see them. She wondered about creation and if there was a God or gods who ruled over everything. She wondered if there was a God and if he knew anything about her. What would you tell Asha?

Who is God to you? Can we really know God? Some people take a lifetime to find an answer to this question. Some discover it easily and some never find it at all. People have created many theories about who God is and how we relate to Him. For instance, atheists believe that there is no God – that we created the idea of God long ago before science explained the world. Polytheists are of the opinion that there are many gods, maybe so many we can never know them all. Agnostics are unsure about the existence of God, and are only sure of the fact that God is unknowable. Pantheists believe that 'everything is God' including humans, while the psychoanalysts say that the concept of God is just an illusion, an idea that we've created in our minds for support and strength.

In a world as confused as ours, it's natural to start asking questions about God too. But you don't have to travel the world or fast for 40 days to discover the answer. You can just turn to the Bible, the Word of God, to educate yourself. God gave us His Word, written down, so that we might know Him!

In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, Chapter 1 tells us that God is our Creator, that He created this world and also man. People may have different views on how the world came into existence, but only the Bible gives us the facts on how God the Creator breathed life into this world and into people – his precious creation.

Contrary to what the polytheists might say, the Bible is clear on the fact that God is one, not many. Deuteronomy 6:4 is clear, "Hear Oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." The Jews recite this verse twice every day, just so that they will never forget this fact! However, this isn't the only verse in the Bible that tells us about God's nature. 1 Corinthians 8:5-6, Exodus 7:1 and Psalms 82:6 remind us again and again that God is one. Isaiah 46:9 goes a step further by telling us that God is incomparable- that He is the only God. In this verse, God says, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me."

Having said that, the oneness of God shouldn't confuse us into denying the doctrine of Trinity, which simply means that God has revealed Himself through history in three different ways. God exists in three forms: God the Father, God the Son or Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

And while this doctrine is frequently misinterpreted to mean the existence of three different Gods, the Bible implies that One God exists in the Triune form. It also clearly points out that the Father (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Peter 1:17), the Son (1 John 5:20, Titus 2:13) and the Spirit (Acts 5:3-4, 2 Corinthians 3:17) are equally God.

One common question is whether God is a spirit or a person. The concept of Trinity tells us that He is both. He not only exists as a Spirit, but he also has a personality. Like a spirit, we can't usually experience Him through our five senses (see, hear, touch, smell or taste), but we know that He is around us (John 4:24). In fact, the Bible tells us in Psalms 139:7-12 that God is omnipresent, and no matter where the Psalmist goes, he can't escape from God's presence.

God has a personality, just like you and me, and that is why the Bible says that we've been made in His own image. He too has feelings and emotions. But unlike us, He knows exactly what is happening everywhere. Psalms 147:4-5 tells us that God is omniscient and that there is nothing that escapes Him. God is also all-powerful or omnipotent. Matthew 19:26 tells us that the Almighty God has the power and authority to do whatever He chooses. Many of us will find it comforting to know that God is also unchanging. He never changes His eternal character and purpose, and the way He treats people. Malachi 3:6 says that the Lord God does not change.

It is difficult to not be awestruck by a God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, unchanging, a Spirit, and has a personality. And one might think that this amazing and perfect God would want to distance Himself from us fallen, sinful, broken creatures. But instead He loves us! The Bible reveals to us over and over again that God is love and that He loves people whether or not they love Him back. We might be angry with Him, indifferent to Him or even hate Him, but he still loves us wholeheartedly.

1 John 4:10 tells us, "In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." God loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us on the cross.

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Wouldn't you want to experience God's love and goodness in your life? There's nothing better than having the most powerful being in the universe on your side watching and taking care of you.

In truth, humanity stands guilty before the living God. The reason for His wrath is revealed to us in Romans 1:18-23, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in righteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things." This passage shows that man made his own gods instead of following the true living God. This sin, along with many others, is why mankind is guilty before God and deserves to be punished. However, instead of punishing us, God provided us a way to be free—through His Son Jesus Christ. Even though Jesus was completely perfect and had never sinned, He took the punishment of our sins on Himself by dying on the cross. Because of God's mercy, by following Him we don't have to suffer the wages of our own sin. Jesus is our substitute. That's the extent of love that God has for us and His world. He is so loving and good and wants the best for us.

Wouldn't you want to experience His love and goodness in your life? There's nothing better than having the most powerful being in the universe on your side, protecting you and taking care of you. The next time you look up at the stars, thank God for who He is and that He has revealed Himself to us so that we might have the joy of knowing Him!

IN REVIEW

- God is one and He reveals Himself in the Bible through the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- God also is all-powerful, all-present, all-knowing, good, merciful, and abounding in love.
- God loves us so much that while we were still sinners, He sent Christ to die for us.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- How has your perception of God changed over the years?
- How can you help your unbelieving friends gain a true perception of God?
- Has knowledge of God's attributes pulled you closer to Him?
- What are some of the words you would use to describe God? Do these words come from the Bible? If so, can you find a reference for them?

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