

# WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

The Bible is God's love letter to mankind, not only telling people what God expects, but revealing what He is like. In this study we will discover 8 of the most relevant, important attributes revealed in the Scripture about God Himself.

## ATTRIBUTE #1: GOD IS OMNISCIENT!

God is a perfect Spirit, and as such, has perfect knowledge. When we say that God is omniscient, we mean that God **knows all things** and is **perfect** in knowledge. The perfect knowledge of God is exclusively His attribute. It relates to Himself and to all beyond Himself. It includes all things that are **actual** and all things that are **possible**. This attribute is declared everywhere in the Bible, among them:

**Isaiah 46:10-** "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, that is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."

**Proverbs 5:21-** "For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths."

**Hebrews 4:13-** "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Perhaps the greatest Scripture regarding God's omniscience is **Psalm 139**. God is the Lord who knows **our thoughts** from afar. He is acquainted with all **our ways**, knowing **our words** even before they are on our tongues. He needs to consult no one for knowledge or understanding (Isaiah 40:13-14). He is the all-knowing Lord who prophesies the events of the future, including the death of His Son and the return of Christ at the end of this age. Since only God can claim this attribute, a great passage to read is the book of Job which gives insight into what happens when humans feel they can know and understand what is happening in another's life and in the world. Read God's rebuke of Job and his friends (Job 37-42) – **only God** truly knows **everything!**

It must be noted that omniscience does not come from God **programming** every event to happen. The Bible is clear that He is all-knowing and man is a **free** and consequently **responsible being**. This revelation should fill us with profound **reverence**. This should alarm **sinners** and result in confidence in the hearts of God's children and deepen their **comfort**. Here are some things to consider:

**God's knowledge is absolutely comprehensive. (Proverbs 15:3)** We may have habits hidden from our fellow man, but not from God.

**God has perfect knowledge of all that is in nature. (Psalm 147:4)**

**God has perfect knowledge of all that happens in human experience.** He knows thoughts and motives, all words spoken- idle, good, or bad- and He even knows what our lives would have been had we acted or decided differently.

**God has perfect knowledge of all that transpires in human history. (Daniel 2 & 8)**

**God knows from all eternity to all eternity what will take place.**

## ATTRIBUTE #2: GOD IS OMNIPOTENT!

The omnipotence of God is that attribute by which He can bring to pass everything which **He wills**. God's power has no **bounds** or **limitations**. This is an attribute of God alone, and essential to His nature as an infinite, independent, and perfect Being. Among the distinct declarations of Scripture attributing such power to God are the following: **Gen 17:1; Ex 15:11,12; Deut 3:24; 1 Sam 14:6; Ps 62:11; 65:6; 147:5; Dan 4:35; Matt 6:13; 19:26; Eph 3:20; Rev 19:6**. It is also clearly expressed in the word "Shaddai", often applied to Him in the O. T. The power of God is especially seen:

1. In **creation** (Gen 1:1; Rom 1:20);
2. In the **preservation** of His creatures (Heb 1:3; Col 1:16, 17);
3. In the **redemption** of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:35, 37; Eph 1:19);
4. In the **conversion** of sinners (Ps 110:3; 2 Corinthians 4:7);
5. In the continuation and success of the Gospel in the world (Matt 13:31, 32);
6. In the **preservation** of the saints (1 Peter 1:5);
7. In the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15);
8. In making the righteous **happy forever**, and in **punishing the wicked** (Matt 25:34; Phil 3:20, 21). This power is only limited by God's own **holy nature**, which renders it impossible for him to **do wrong** (Num 23:19; Heb 6:18), and by the laws which He has Himself created in the nature of things; in other words He is able to do everything that is in harmony with His wise and holy and perfect nature and will not contradict it.

Some considerations:

**What is impossible by natural means comes to pass by **supernatural** means!**

**All human actions, present or future, are dependent upon God's **will and power**.**

**Know His will, therefore, and be filled with and dependent upon His power!**

**The Bible clearly tells us that the devil has **no power** over believers (Luke 10:19).**

**Only God is all-powerful! The devil is not almost as powerful as God- he has lost his power through Jesus' **death and resurrection!****

### **ATTRIBUTE #3: GOD IS OMNIPRESENT**

By this we mean that God is at all times **everywhere present**. This attribute is closely associated with the first two; for everywhere God is present He is active with full knowledge of what is or will take place. God is **free** from the laws or limitations of **space** (see Ps 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Heb 1:3; Acts 17:27-28; etc.). We must understand one important thing regarding this: God is present **spiritually**, not materially. In other words, we must guard against something we learned about last study: pantheism, which states that God *is* everything and is not personal. The Bible clearly teaches the opposite! Again, one of the greatest Scriptures regarding God's omnipresence (and the first two characteristics) is **Psalm 139**. We see in vv. 7-12 great statements: "**Where can I go from Your Spirit, or where can I flee from Your presence?**" See how awesomely God's attributes are grouped in this Psalm! In verses 1-6, the writer speaks of God's knowing everything (omniscience). In vv. 13-19 God's omnipotence overwhelms him. And the psalmist declares in vv. 7-12 that he is never out of God's sight (omnipresence) any more than he is outside His range of knowledge and power!

God is not like the **idols** of other religions that are limited to one altar or temple area. God reveals Himself in the Bible as the Lord who is everywhere. God was present as Lord in all creation (Ps 139:7-12), and there is no escaping Him. He is present in our innermost thoughts. Even as we are formed in the womb, He knows all the days of our future.

God sees in secret and rewards in secret, as Jesus taught His disciples; He looks not only on outward actions, but especially on the **inner attitudes** of a person's heart (Matt 6:1-18). Because God is the Creator and Sustainer of time and space, He is everywhere. Being everywhere, He is our great **Comforter**, Friend, and **Redeemer**.  
A consideration:

**"God, you see me", should serve as a warning and deterrent to all!**

#### **ATTRIBUTE #4: GOD IS ETERNAL & IMMUTABLE**

**Revelation 1:8-** "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

**Malachi 3:6-** "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed."

The word eternal has two meanings Biblically: 1) Things which have a **beginning** but will have **no end** like angels or the human soul, and 2) that which has no beginning and will have no end. The latter alone describes God. Time has past present and future; eternity has not. God had no beginning and will **have no end**; He is eternal. Consider: **short and transitory is the life of man; he is perishable. Why trust in people who are here one day and gone the next. Put your trust in God who is from everlasting to everlasting- indeed fear and trust only Him!**

By the term "immutable" we mean "**unchangeable**". The Scripture makes this clear in the title God uses with Moses, "I Am Who I Am" (Ex 3:14). From this it is to be understood that God is eternally the same in what He is and in the principles of the way He acts. But immutability is not **immobility**. God acts and His actions vary with reference to different ends. This is a word about Bible instances that tell us that God "**changed**" His mind (e.g., Jonah 3:10; Genesis 6:6, etc.). This does not at all involve a change in God's purpose or character and it certainly does not involve God not knowing what was going to happen. When God does something differently than expected, we say He changed His mind when in reality, it is **not God** who changes, but **mankind**. In Jonah, God did not change, the Ninevites did. God's **character never changes**, but His dealings with people do as they change from ungodly to godly, from disobedience to obedience. It is like a bicyclist who is biking against the wind and then changes directions. It seems like the wind has changed but it is blowing as it was before.

A consideration: **You can know what God thinks and how He will act at any time- He is completely trustworthy because He does not change.**

#### **ATTRIBUTE #5: GOD IS HOLY**

The term holy or holiness is used to indicate **purity or separation** from all that is sinful, impure, or morally imperfect; i.e., it is moral wholeness.

Holiness is one of God's essential attributes. It is entire freedom from moral evil and absolute **moral perfection**. The Scriptures lay great stress upon this attribute of God (Ex 15:11; 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 71:22; 99:9; 111:9; Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 1:12; Rev 15:4; etc.). Of utmost importance in this connection is the revelation of God's holiness in the character and work of **Jesus Christ** who the Bible declares was **sinless**.

By the holiness of God, we do not mean that He is subject to some law or standard external to Himself; holiness and perfection all come **from Him**. He is the One in whom these eternal sanctities reside, who is Himself the root and ground of them all. In this sense it is said without qualification, "**There is none holy like the Lord**" (1 Sam 2:2); "**Thou alone art holy**" (Rev 15:4).

The holiness of God should cause us to consider many things:

- 1) **It is special ground for reverence, awe, and adoration** (Ps 71:22; 111:9, etc.).
- 2) It is the **standard of all human holiness** (Matt 5:48; 1 Peter 1:6; etc.).
- 3) **It puts itself in opposition to, and condemnation of, all sin** (Habakkuk 1:13; 1 Sam 6:20; Isaiah 6:5; etc.).
- 4) To consider this attribute should **awaken or deepen** human consciousness of **sin**-this should convict us all!
- (5) **It is revealed to us as a standard to strive toward!** (Ex 19:6; Lev 20:7; Heb 12:1; 1 Peter 1:16).

#### **ATTRIBUTE #6: GOD IS RIGHTEOUS & JUST**

**Justice and righteousness** are terms used synonymously in the Bible. They are an **outflow** of God's holiness. Holiness deals with God's character while justice and righteousness are an expression of His character in His **dealings with people**. He is infinitely righteous in Himself and in all He does. First, God imposes righteous laws and executes them righteously. Justice is not an optional product of His will, but an unchangeable principle of His **very nature**. God is the righteous Governor of the world. His laws are **fair and realistic**. This is legislative justice. God is also the righteous Judge. The sentences He pronounces, the rewards He bestows, and the penalties He inflicts are all **righteous**. This is the judicial or distributive justice of God (see Deut 32:3-4; Ps 19:7-10; 36:6; 97:2; 119:142; Isaiah 33:22; Acts 10:34; Rom 2:11; Rev 15:3; 16:7, etc.) God is interested in fairness as well as in what makes for right relationships! His actions and decisions are **true and right**. His demands on individuals and nations to look after victims of oppression are just demands (Ps 82)! As Lord and Judge, God brings justice to nations (Ps 67:4) and "sets things right" in behalf of the poor, the oppressed, and the victims of injustice (Ps 103:6; 146:6-9). **Consider this:** for the wicked, the unjust, and the oppressor, God as **supreme Judge** of the earth is a dreaded force. But for all who are unjustly treated, God's just action is **reason for hope**.

#### **ATTRIBUTE #7: GOD IS MERCIFUL & FILLED WITH (LOVING)KINDNESS**

When we speak of God's mercy we refer to the aspect of God's love that causes Him to help the **miserable**, just as grace is the aspect of His love that moves Him to forgive the **guilty**. Those who are miserable may be so either because of breaking God's law

or because of circumstances beyond their control. God shows mercy upon those who have broken His law (Dan 9:9; 1 Tim 1:13, 16), a mercy that is not deserved (Rom 9:14-18). God's mercy extends beyond punishment that is withheld (Eph 2:4-6).

**Consider:** Withheld punishment **keeps us from hell**, but it does not get us **into heaven**. But God's mercy goes beyond even this; He actively helps those who are miserable due to circumstances beyond their control. We see this in the life of our Lord Jesus. His healing ministry grew out of His attitude of compassion and mercy. **Consider this:** because God is merciful, He expects His children to be merciful (Matt 5:7; James 1:27).

**When we speak of God's kindness, or "loving-kindness", we speak of God's loyal love and favor toward His people.** In the OT, this refers to God's long-suffering love: His determination to keep His promises to His chosen people in spite of their **sin and rebellion** (Deut 7:12; Hosea 2:14-23). This attribute was shown through His mercy and forgiveness **toward sinners** when payment of sins through sacrifice was no longer effective (Deut 22:22; Ps 51:1). In the NT, the Greek word translated as "**grace**" best represents the idea of God's loving-kindness. **Consider what this attribute means to us:** Because God has been gracious toward believers, they should **treat all people with kindness or grace** (Luke 6:35). All people are created in God's image and should be treated accordingly; no matter how badly they have twisted and deformed that image (James 3:9). Kindness is not an apathetic response to sin, but a deliberate act to **bring sinners back to God** (Hosea 2:14-23; Rom 2:4).

#### **ATTRIBUTE # 8: GOD IS LOVE**

Christianity is the only religion that sets forth the Supreme Being **as love**. The gods around the world are angry, hateful beings in need of constant appeasement. This attribute alone could take weeks to discuss, but to conclude this study, I offer the following: Love is the **highest characteristic** of God, the one attribute in which **all others** harmoniously blend.

Because of the hundreds of references to love in the Bible, it is certainly the most remarkable book of love in the world. It records the greatest love story ever written—God's unconditional love for us that sent His Son to die on the cross (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). Love is not only one of God's attributes; it is also an essential part of **His nature**. "God is love," the Bible declares (1 John 4:8, 16) - the personification of perfect love. Such love **surpasses** our powers of understanding (Eph 3:19). Love like this is everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3), **free** (Hosea 14:4), sacrificial (John 3:16), and enduring to the end (John 13:1). Love is like oil to the **wheels of obedience**. It enables us to run the way of God's commandments (Ps 119:32). Without such love, we are as nothing (1 Corinthians 13:3). Such Spirit-inspired love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8) but always flourishes.