

In this universe there is nothing like the unique God. It is difficult for us as human beings to fathom how marvelous God is. We are limited in time, but He is eternal. We are limited in space, but He is omnipresent. We are limited in our understanding, but He is all-knowing. He is beyond our best thoughts of Him, and His ways far surpass our ways. Because of our limitations, we often impose our human standards on Him and weigh Him on a human level; but He is divine and eternal, and His standard is not our own. Many people blame God for the ills of the human condition and bitterly demand, "If God is so loving, why does He allow this to happen?" But perhaps unknowingly they expect God to be like man and fail to understand that our ills reflect how much we fall short of being like God. If we consider Him as He is, and not how we think He should be, we find that in every aspect of His being, He alone is good and right and just. In His person, His nature and attributes, His manifestation, and His work He is indeed far above all. Thankfully, God exists!

His Person

What can be known about God is revealed in the Bible. The Bible is the sole record given by God concerning Himself and His doings. Without the Bible we are left with only man's opinions about God, untrustworthy because of the limitations of man. But if we accept and believe the Bible as God's testimony of Himself, we have a clear way to know Him.

According to the Bible there is only one God. The ancient Jews confessed this as do the modern believers: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4) and "There is no

God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4). And yet, the pure revelation of the Holy Scriptures testifies that God is three: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Our rational minds will wonder: How can God be one and three? But God is beyond human rationale. Because He is God, His Being confounds our human thoughts. In His being He is triune, "three-one." All Three are God, all Three are equal, and all Three are eternal. But we should not think that there are three Gods; instead, the divine truth is that the Three are distinct but never separate. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit mutually indwell each Other (John 14:9-10; 8:29; Luke 4:1). Where the Father is the Son and the Spirit are. When we see the Son, the Father and the Spirit are there. When the Spirit comes to us, He brings the Father and the Son to us.

Because God is triune, He can come to man and dispense Himself into us. The apostle Paul speaks of the Triune God as the God of our experience: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). In His trinity, God the Father comes to man as the loving source embodied in the enjoyable Christ of grace and realized by the communicating and transmitting Spirit. Although God is so mysterious and wonderful, He is available to man because He is triune.

His Nature and Attributes

In the Bible there are three little sentences that reveal God's nature to us: "God is Spirit" (John 4:24), "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16), and "God is light" (1 John 1:5). These do not describe what is God is like, but what God is. He is not merely

spiritual but Spirit, not merely loving but love itself, and not merely in the light but the very light. Hence, if we can have God—and we can—we can have Spirit, love, and light. These meet the great needs of man. Human ethics and morality fall far short of what God in His salvation offers to man, for by receiving Him we become partakers of what He is in His nature (2 Pet. 1:4)—we partake of Him as Spirit, love, and light.

God's nature is simple, but His attributes are manifold. The Bible gives us a long list of characteristics that God possesses. To name only a few, we know that He is living (Deut. 5:26; Heb. 9:14), holy (Isa. 6:3), righteous (Rev. 15:3), faithful (1 Cor. 1:9), wise (Rom. 16:27), merciful (Rom. 9:16), compassionate (Rom. 9:15), impartial (Rom. 2:11), immutable (James 1:17), glorious (Acts 7:2), honorable (Rev. 5:13), majestic (Jude 25), powerful (Eph. 1:19), and mighty (Rev. 1:6). He is grace (Eph. 2:7), peace (Rom. 16:20), joy, hope (Rom. 15:13), encouragement (Rom. 15:5), kindness, forbearance, longsuffering (Rom. 2:4), and endurance (Rom. 15:5). And these do not exhaust what He is in His attributes. Such a God is our Savior, and as our salvation He desires to impart these riches to us.

His Manifestation

Although God is so marvelous, He is mysterious. And yet, God has manifested Himself to man. This He did first in the person of Jesus Christ. The apostle John writes: "No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18). In Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Col. 2:9); that is, all of

God is embodied in Christ. Christ is the manifestation and expression of God in an individual way. But God is also manifested in a corporate way. God caused Christ “to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). Christ is the manifestation of God in an individual way, and the church, as the Body of Christ, is the manifestation of Christ in a corporate way. Thus, in the church God is manifested corporately. Finally, in eternity to come, God will be manifested in the New Jerusalem, the final mutual abode of God and man. This will be the consummation of His corporate expression forever. In spirit the apostle John saw the vision of this corporate manifestation: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.... And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God....And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them” (Rev. 21:1-3). This city signifies that God will be fully manifested for eternity through Christ and through His redeemed people.

His Work

God is a working God. To this the Lord Jesus testified: “My Father is working until now, and I also am working” (John 5:17). In eternity past, God formed His plan, His *economy*, and chose the believers to be holy (Eph. 1:4). These He predestinated unto sonship (Eph. 1:5). Even before the foundation of the world, God determined a way of redemption for man (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). In time God created the universe, and especially He created man for His purpose. For thousands of years He dealt with man, first

with the Adamic race in general, then with the called race of Jews, the descendants of Abraham. Finally, He came as a man Himself. Through incarnation He began a new dispensation in which He is mingled with man and lives through man. In His humanity, He went to the cross and died for our sins; then after three days He resurrected from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-4). This accomplished an eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12). Based on this redemption, God now forgives (Eph. 4:32), justifies (Rom. 3:24), reconciles (Rom. 5:10), and regenerates (1 Pet. 1:3) all who believe in the person and work of Christ. Today He is sanctifying the believers (1 Thes. 5:23) and leading them as His sons into glory (Heb. 2:10). In eternity future the redeeming God will administrate the new heaven and the new earth, and from His throne will proceed a river of life supply for all His redeemed people (Rev. 22:1). He will be expressed for eternity through His redeemed ones, for they will bear the glory of God (Rev. 21:11). Thus, through His work God will make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

God’s salvation is available through the Spirit to everyone who repents and believes in Christ. Such a God desires all men to enter into and enjoy so great a salvation.

© 1993 *Living Stream Ministry*
P.O. Box 2121
Anaheim, CA 92814

19-014-001

ISBN 978-0-7363-0193-0



9 780736 301930

God

*His Person,
His Nature
& Attributes,
His Manifestation,
& His Work*