

## Who is God – 17 May 2026

### I) Introduction

A.) Today, I want to answer a very important question: Who is God?

B.) Now, if you were to go out into the street and ask random people that question, you may hear things like:

- 1) He's the Creator...He's the universe...God is a she
- 2) God is whatever you perceive Him to be...We are all god...God is love
- 3) God is a figment of our imagination...He is the almighty Judge.

C.) Some of these answers are correct, while others reflect profound ignorance or outright contempt for the person of God

- 1) The problem is that far too many people—even Christians—approach this question with too little curiosity or sincerity; what a shame, because it is the most important question a human being can ask
- 2) How we answer it shapes everything about us—our worldview, our priorities, our moral compass, our approach to relationships, government, and life as a whole

D.) If you want to know why the world is so messed up, look no further than individuals' and nations' approaches to the question, "Who is God?"

- 1) When humans have an incomplete or twisted perception of our Lord, - about his character and nature - they are much more vulnerable to moral decay, false teaching, and deception.
- 2) Ask yourself: how does Germany go from the center of the Protestant Reformation – to the center of Nazi evil?
- 3) How does a nation like America, founded on Judeo-Christian principles, devolve into another Sodom? The people's perception of who God is shrinks and contorts until they no longer know, love or fear Him.

E.) A fateful conversation in Genesis 3 is a good illustration of this

Genesis 3:1-6 - *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

- 1) Notice the seduction strategy here; Satan doesn't start with temptation to the senses – how tasty the forbidden fruit looks; nor does he start with the promise of divine knowledge
- 2) He first goes after God's character; he seeks to warp Eve's perception of her divine Maker - **Slide 2—line by line**
- 3) God shrinks in Eve's mind, so the divine guardrails that protected her from evil are stripped away

F.) Human beings throughout history, even people blessed and anointed by God, have fallen prey to the same pattern

- 1) They latch onto faulty views of God; these views harden into corrupt thinking, corrupt beliefs, and corrupt behavior; even within churches that profess Christ
- 2) So today, I want to answer the question "Who is God?" as fully as I can in using the revelation of Scripture and nature

## **II) First, God is an immensely powerful being.**

A.) He exists outside of and apart from creation and has the infinite capacity to create, sustain, alter, or destroy reality

- 1) In other words, time, space, and matter — all that exists in the cosmos — are merely clay in His hands; I want to illustrate God's power by diving into a bit of physical science
- 2) All matter in the universe — nebulae, gas clouds, stars, planets, minerals, and living beings — are composed of atoms - SLIDE 3. There are an estimated  $10^{80}$  atoms in the cosmos...number looks like this — click 3a
- 3) Every single one of these atoms has electrons, neutrons, and protons — particles held together by strong-force energy. This energy is what gives matter its mass, its stuff (*three new particles*)
- 4) When atoms are split, part of this binding force is released as energy; here's what that energy release looks like - SLIDE 4.V – Nuke
- 5) Think about this: a modern nuclear warhead needs only the atoms contained in a ball of plutonium that would fit in your palm for an energy release comparable to 24 billion pounds of dynamite
  - a) The initial energy release can burn at 180 million degrees Fahrenheit, 18,000 times hotter than the sun's surface
  - b) After 10 seconds, the fireball is more than a mile in diameter, rises thousands of miles into the stratosphere and at dark, is 25 times brighter than the sun to people 12 miles away
  - c) Buildings and people are severely burned up to 20 miles away—all this from the few atoms in an object the size of a tennis ball
- 6) Now imagine the energy, the power locked in the atoms in the entire universe; absolutely and utterly unimaginable...and yet, it is nothing compared to the power of the almighty God who sourced all of it and wields it at will
  - a) **Testimony of Thunderstorm**

B.) The Bible rightly says, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*

1) It is correct to interpret “fear” as respect or reverent awe, but I think good old fashioned “fear,” being afraid, works really well too. The writer of Hebrews says, “*It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*” Why? **Slide 5**

C.) Look what happens when two prominent men of God see the Lord in His power.

[Isaiah 6:5](#) - “*Woe to me!*” I cried. “*I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.*”

[Revelation 1:16-17](#) - *In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.*

1) Comprehending God’s power and fearing it can be healthy because it helps us see just how unworthy we are in His presence and drives us to our knees

2) It can shake us out of complacency and a whining spirit

3) Further, it acts as a guardrail against sin, because we fear this great and magnificent God who will hold us accountable for the evil we do (*when love doesn’t work, fear can do the job*)

D.) Unfortunately, so many people in the world, including Christians, dismiss this aspect of God and reduce Him to a kindly old grandpa who warmly welcomes all but Hitler and serial killers into heaven

1) God is tolerant, permissive, and indulgent; He suggests we do good, but overlooks our destructive behaviors

2) Example: There is a well-known Texas senate candidate, who portrays himself as an enlightened follower Jesus; he recently criticized a federal court decision upholding Texas’ right to display the 10 Commandments in school classrooms

*"I think this is an unconstitutional decision, I also think this is a deeply un-Christian decision...My faith teaches me to love my neighbor as myself. Not just my neighbors who look like me, not just my neighbors who vote like me, not just my neighbors who pray like me. I'm called to love all of my neighbors the way I love myself. That includes my Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, agnostic and atheist neighbors...I don't want the government forcing a religion down my throat"*

- a) How unfortunate, that this person wasn't on Mount Sinai to remind the Creator that the 10 commandments might offend people of different faiths...and to inform the Father that His Son would come one day and teach us to respect all religions

3) The knowledge of God's unimaginable power and His righteous hatred of sin is lost on such people; they are blind to His holiness – **SLIDE 6.V Holiness**

### **III) The second trait – in His holiness, God is unyieldingly just and good**

A.) Everything God thinks, does and says is perfectly righteous, without flaw; He never acts illogically, or with malice or impatience, and does all things with perfect intention...no matter how we – as fallen humans - perceive his works

- 1) Every command he gives is designed to maximize human flourishing; to bring love, peace and spiritual prosperity to his people
  - a) Anything God says "yes" to will ultimately benefit us; anything he says "no" to will eventually harm us
- 2) Look at the 10 commandments, the first four are: (1) worship the one God; (2) make no idols; (3) honor the Lord's name; and (4) honor the Sabbath rest
  - a) These God-centered commands assure we're looking to the right source for truth and life; and when we do that, we take care of the next six, which deal with human relations
  - b) (1) Respect your mother and father; (2) do not kill, but value human life; (3) do not commit adultery, honor your marriage oath; (4) do not

steal, but rather respect the property rights of others; (5) do not lie; and (6) don't covet your neighbor's belongings, be content with what you have

c) If every human obeyed these laws, we would have no crime, no hunger, no war; we would have the utopia – the paradise – everybody seems to desire

3) In fact, do you know what sin is? Any thought, word or act that violates God's good designs for mankind...when we do or say things that harm another by actions taken or not taken

a) Our disobedience breeds violence, arrogance, theft, poverty corruption, and faithlessness...though it may bring pleasure for a season, sin always ends in misery and destruction

B.) Therefore, God who is perfectly just, must judge it and destroy sin; he renders appropriate judgement on nations and individuals...they will receive precisely what they deserve...God's righteous character demands it

1) You might be saying, "Well, I haven't done anything seriously wrong. I haven't killed anyone, robbed a bank, been strung out on drugs...you know, the really bad stuff; and I'm friendly and give to charity."

2) Sorry to tell you folks, we aren't judged by what we consider good works; we're judged by the standard of God's perfection...

a) God knows every thought and intent of our hearts...there's nothing we think, say or do that is hidden from Him; if we aren't as perfect as He is - even in our thoughts - we are lost – **READ SLIDE 7**

3) Not one person, no matter how good or bad, can stand justified on their own merits before God; we are all under his righteous wrath!

4) In Matthew 22, Jesus tells of a king who held a banquet for his citizens; when they arrived, he dressed them in a white cloak; but one among them was not dressed in this cloak

a) He is one who thought he could be in the king's presence without the proper covering...one given by the king

5) What does the king do? **SLIDE 8, then click 8a**

6) One of the greatest torments of darkness is the profound loneliness, being cut off eternally from all love and all light...destined to day-after-day, year after year to fester in intense regret and sorrow

7) God takes no joy in his judgement, but sinful man cannot co-exist with a holy, perfect God.

#### **IV) The good news**

A.) Praise be to our Lord there is another attribute of God that gives us hope!!

[1 John 4:7-8](#) - *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

1) John wrote something very profound here — something that should ring with great joy in the ear of the hearer; this infinitely powerful, righteous, and holy God, is a fountain of love

2) He is the source of the purest love; John describes it as “agape;” a love that is sacrificial, giving, generous, patient, and kind.

a) It is entirely selfless and seeks the good of its beloved even when it is costly

3) How can we measure God's affection for us? **SLIDE 9**

4) These verses tell us God's love is *Abounding* - Hebrew “rab-hesed” — much, abundant, great, strong, exceeding

5) They tell us God's love is *steadfast, never-ceasing*; it is loyal and constant; it doesn't change with the times or situations.

B.) This is illustrated magnificently in the calling of the prophet Hosea.

- 1) In chapter 1 of his writing, God orders Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer; She bears him two children, but then abandons the family to return to her prostitution and eventually becomes a slave.
- 2) God used Gomer as an illustration of Israel's unfaithfulness:
- 3) He was essentially proclaiming, "My chosen people Israel are wed to Me, but they prostitute themselves to foreign gods and commit spiritual adultery; they are an unfaithful, unclean spouse who has defiled our sacred relationship

C.) Listen to our Lord's cry in Hosea 11:1–9; I'll paraphrase the passage so you get the clearest picture of God's perspective

*"When Israel was a child, I loved (them), and out of Egypt I called my children. And yet they sacrificed to pagan gods. I taught the people of Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms. I led them with gentle cords, gentle bands of love. I stooped and fed them. And yet, they will be carried away to slavery in Egypt and Assyria because they refuse to repent. My people are bent on backsliding from Me."*

- 1) God's wrath is justly stirred up against Israel, and through Hosea, He describes the suffering they will endure at the hands of foreign kings; they will become victims of their own rebellion and unfaithfulness and deservedly so.

- a) Yet, even when God is justly angry, we see His unwavering love continue for these rebels

**Hosea 11:8-9, 11** – *"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim?... all my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man—the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities...I will settle them in their homes, declares the Lords.*

- b) This carries the tone of an earthly father weeping over a wayward child and yearning for that child to come home and walk in his care, love, and wisdom
- 2) Jesus drives this point home in a well-known parable; He tells of a father whose son deeply insulted him by demanding his inheritance while the father was still alive so he could go party
- a) Imagine if you were that father, knowing the son would waste money you worked for on pointless, immoral, and self-destructive behaviors
  - b) At some point, after years of the child's rebellion, many fathers may write him off and focus his attention on the faithful children.
  - c) And yet, in Luke's Gospel, chapter 15, we see the patient love of the prodigal's father; his son returns after living a reprobate life, hoping only for food and shelter from his father
  - d) And yet, as soon as the ragged, starving son appears on the horizon, the father drops everything and runs toward him as fast as his elderly legs will carry him
  - e) He throws his arms around his son, kisses him and tells his servants:

[Luke 15:22-24](#) - *'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'*

D.) That, ladies and gentlemen, is divine love, supernatural love; the kind of love that moves God to act as the tireless shepherd seeking the lost sheep

- 1) The good shepherd will climb mountains, trek through desert valleys, thick fog, floods, through thorny shrubs and murky swamps, all while fending off predators. Why?
- 2) Because the sheep are his, and he loves them; he will risk his life to save even one of them and bring them home

3) Look what God our great shepherd commands in Hosea Chapter 3.

- a) He says, "Hosea, go get your wife. She may have chosen a life of adultery and has been deservedly debased as a slave, but go get her; Hosea did so, and even paid to buy her out of slavery
- b) He didn't have to suffer the loss of silver, because she was his wife, and he had a right to simply take her; but he chose to pay the price of redemption to show her he was willing to sacrifice on her behalf
- c) **(Time Permitting)** Years ago, Chuck Smith shared a unique version of the Gingerbread man story that further illustrates sacrificial love

*A little girl baked a gingerbread man and as she was taking it out of the oven, she admired how handsome he was...when she was all through, he jumped out of the pan and ran away. He taunted his maker as he put distance between the two of them. The girl went home crying for her runaway gingerbread man. But the next day, as she passed the local bakery shop, there looking at her through the window was her gingerbread man lying on a tray. So she went in to the proprietor and said, "I want my gingerbread man. He's there in the window." And he said, "He will cost you ten cents." She said, "Oh no, no, you don't understand. He's mine. That's my gingerbread man. I made him." The proprietor said, "He costs ten cents." So the little girl went home collected her ten pennies and she ran back to the bakery, put her pennies on the counter and said, "Now I want my gingerbread man." The man took the gingerbread man out of the window and handed it to the little girl and hugged him close as she walked home, saying, "Now, you are really mine. First of all I made you and now I bought you."*

E.) God does the same for all of mankind...**SLIDE 10**

- 1) It's as if we were all Gomers – enslaved to sin and destined for eternal misery; God offered His own Son as payment to free us from that destiny
- 2) While paying the price of our freedom, Jesus took on the wrath of the Father that was due us; he suffered in our place and satisfied God's judgement against us

3) If we are in Christ, God no longer sees our sin, but the righteousness of Jesus upon us; we are therefore made children of God and destined for eternity with Him

F.) In essence, the Lord holds us closely to himself and says, *my child, you belong to me. I made you, so you are mine by divine right. But now I've purchased you. You ran away and the world got the better of you; but I've paid the price, now come home with me!*

## **V) Conclusion**

A.) Today folks, we all have choices before us:

- 1) If you're a Christian, but you know you've lacked the curiosity or the willingness to know God as He really is...and the mediocre, powerless nature of your walk shows it
  - a) Confess it and ask forgiveness for accepting much less than what God wants to give us...there is wisdom, strength and fruitfulness to gain in knowing the fullness of God's character...seek him to take you deeper in himself
- 2) If you are not a Christian, you have two choices before you: continue walking on your path where you make the rules, or go the Lord's way as a follower of Christ
  - a) Listen folks, either way, you will absolutely meet the Lord; the question is how will you meet Him
  - b) Will you stand before this Almighty, Supreme Power and be rightly sentenced to eternal darkness? Or, will you see Him as the loving Shepherd who greets you warmly in the Heavenly realm? The choice is yours!
  - c) Come up