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### Who is God and What is God Like

Every culture and religion in the history of humanity has had concepts of who God is and what God is like. In some religions or cultures, God is assumed to be in control of things such as the weather and nature, thus depicting him as a storm, while others believe that God is mighty, thus worshipping the things that they perceive as being the most powerful. Other cultures or religions have regarded God as being everywhere, thus worshipping everything. From a Christian perspective, however, the Bible provides various instances and verses that explain who God is and what God is like.

#### **Who is God**

God is the supreme creator of the universe. God is the creator of the world, the universe, and all things that are in it including humans. The book of Isaiah states that “Thus saith the Lord, ... I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (New International Version, Isaiah 45.12). God reveals himself through Isaiah, stating that God is the creator of the world and all the things that are hosted on it. Isaiah focuses on the role of Jerusalem in God’s plans for the world. Furthermore, the context of the verse is based on the Israelites desertion of the ways of God, and the consequences that would follow, which include destruction by foreign enemies (Wierenga 44). While warning Israel of the repercussions that would follow their evil ways, Lord reveals himself as being the sole creator of the world and everything that is in it. Therefore, one may argue that God is the creator of the world and the universe, and thus having control over it and everything that is contained in it.

In addition, God is described as being the savior of the world. In the book of Hosea, God states that "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no savior beside me" (Hosea 13.4). Hosea denounces the worship of other gods, other than Yahweh by the Israelites. In doing so, God instructs him to marry an unfaithful wife, which was meant to symbolize the relationship between man and God. His reconciliation with the unfaithful wife, however, was to symbolize the reconciliation between man and God (Hughes 38). The love of God towards Israel is symbolized by the love of a man towards his unfaithful wife, thus upon repentance, there is reconciliation. Because of his anger towards the Israelites, God tells them that he is their savior, thus if they repent, he would save them from their enemies and other calamities (Hughes 45). Hence, one may perceive God as being a savior, the one who watches over humans when they behave according to his ways. However, even if they digress from his ways, he is willing to forgive them as depicted by his willingness to forgive the Israelites if they repented their sins and change their ways.

Furthermore, the Lord declares himself as being the redeemer. The Israelites had digressed from the ways of God, which angered him. Nonetheless, God said to them, through Isaiah, that he was their redeemer, and the holy one in the whole of Israel (Isaiah 43.13). From this verse, therefore, God is depicted as being a redeemer, one who is willing to redeem humans if they act according to his ways. The actions of Isaiah were prompted by the fact that the Israelites had turned away from the ways of the Lord, making their sins appear irredeemable. God, therefore, revealed himself through Isaiah, instructing the Israelites that he is their redeemer, despite their sins (Wierenga 37). Thus, one can deduce that God is the redeemer of human beings, the extent of their sins notwithstanding.

### **What is God Like**

The Bible describes God as being transcendent. God is portrayed as being above, distinct, and independent from the universe. The transcendence of God can be seen from his name as Yahweh, which is the name that God used to reveal himself to the Israelites. Scholars argue that the name Yahweh stands for "I Am that I AM," which stresses the transcendent nature of God (Exodus 3.14). Furthermore, God's transcendence can be seen from the book of Psalms, where it is stated that "But our God is in the heavens; He

does whatever He pleases" (Psalms 115.3). Furthermore, God can be described as being self-conscious, as depicted by Exodus 3.14. "I Am that I Am" stresses that God is self-conscious, thus aware of himself and his identity. Self-consciousness entails an objective awareness of who he or she is (Wright 17). Thus, God can be described as being transcendent and self-conscious. He is aware of who he is and his abilities, while he is also beyond the world.

Furthermore, God can also be described as being immanent. This can be seen from various verses in the Bible. The book of Proverbs describes how God watches the ways of man, yet he cannot be seen directly by humans. Solomon states, "For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths (Proverbs 5.21). One can, therefore, see that God operates from within the universe and sustains it. Furthermore, Solomon speaks of the way that God looks at the earth from heaven. In the book of Psalms, Solomon states that "The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; 14 From His dwelling place He looks out On all the inhabitants of the earth" Psalm 33.13-14). One can, therefore, see that God watches over the universe, as he can see it from heaven. Furthermore, it is seen that God watches over the inhabitants of the world as revealed by Solomon (Wright 22). Therefore, one can argue that God has an imminent nature, thus able to observe and to sustain the world from heaven.

God can also be perceived as being sensible and emotional. In the book of Genesis, for instance, it is stated "The LORD was grieved that he had made the man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain" (Gen. 6.6). Aspects such as grieve are associated with emotions and sensations (Davies 65). By being grieved, therefore, God can be viewed as having emotions. To highlight the emotional side of God further, God becomes angry on various instances. Things such as anger are related with emotions, in that, one would never become angry if he or she is not emotional. In Proverbs, for instance, it is stated of the various things that God Hates (Proverbs 6.16). This hatred is because of the fact that God is emotional and sensational (Davies 29).

God can also be described as being just. In the book of Deuteronomy, God is illustrated as "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he" (32). This verse reveals that God is just in all his ways. He is also perfect that one can argue

that whatever he does is well deliberated and just in nature. Furthermore, God's judgments reveal the fact that he is a moral being. To depict the moral nature of God, he gives guidelines on what things can be perceived as being right or wrong (Davies 17). The Bible gives instructions clearly on what is to be considered as being right and what is to be considered as wrong. Things such as the Law of Moses, which originated from God, emphasize this nature. Furthermore, the psalmist states that God is fair and just. Psalms (25.8) states, "God is fair and just; He corrects the misdirected, Sends them in the right direction" thus revealing God's just nature and willingness to correct the misdirected people. Hence, one can argue that God is just in all his ways and that he loves just people. He is also willing to guide the misdirected people to lead them to his just ways.

The Bible also defines God as being righteous and holy. In various instances in the Bible, God reveals himself as being a holy God. He is so righteous and perfect that he cannot endure sinful living (Davies 39). The righteousness of God can be seen in the book of Romans, where it is stated that all humans fall short of God's glory (Romans 3.23). It, therefore, means that despite the attempts by humans to be holy, they can never reach God's level of righteousness. God is also depicted as righteous in other verses in the Bible. In the book of Ezra, it is stated that "O Lord God of Israel, you are righteous" (Ezra 9.15). The psalmist also noted the righteous nature of God, writing, "The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous" (Psalms 19.9). Therefore, one can argue that God is righteous and he loves righteous people and righteous ways. This can also be seen by the fact that he punished various individuals who had wicked ways. God subjected people such as Jehoram and Jeroboam because of their unrighteousness while saving individuals such as Noah and Lot because they were righteous (Hughes 66).

Various religions and cultures in the world have had different perceptions of who God is and what he is like. Some cultures associate God with being powerful, while others associate him with natural things such as nature. However, with Christianity, the Bible provides several insights on who God is and his nature. There are various descriptions of who God is, starting with Genesis where he is described as

being the creator of the universe. Furthermore, God's nature is illustrated in various instances in the Bible. The Bible portrays God as being emotional and sensible, as highlighted by the fact that he gets angry and becomes painful, which are associated with emotions and sensations. Furthermore, the Bible depicts God's nature as being transcendent and immanent. It, therefore, means that God is everywhere and he is all seeing. God is also described as being just and righteous, in that whatever he does is just and righteous.

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