

WHO IS GOD?

The Bible tells us that man cannot know God by his own effort and wisdom:

"Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" - 1 Cor.1:20, 21.

Yet the psalmist writes in Psalm 14:1, that it is only the fool who says, "There is no God". The psalmist can say such a thing because the evidence that God exists and the fact that there is a 'designer label' in all of creation is overwhelming.

Paul in Romans 1:19-20 shows this evidence of God being all around us. His invisible attributes, eternal power and divine nature are clearly to be seen and there is therefore no excuse for not believing that He exists.

Man can know God because God has made himself known:

"...what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain" - Ro.1:19

He has made Himself known in creation (Ro.1:21); through His word (Heb.1:1) and through His Son (Heb.1:2)

Proofs

A number of arguments, or *proofs*, for the existence of God have been put forward over the years; the four main ones are Cosmological, Teleological, Anthropological and Christological.

Cosmological

This derives from the Greek word *kosmos* meaning world. The world cannot be self-existent, everything owes its existence to an event that produced it. Events are explained by a cause lying outside them, for instance, vapour condensed by cold falls as rain. However the cold has its explanation in something else and so we are led on a trail of discovery of causes and what they, in turn, are dependent on.

Whereas this argument does not prove who or what the cause of the world is; it shows clearly that there is a designer label and it is not just a 'happy accident'. We therefore must accept the existence of a Creator.

Teleological

This derives from the Greek word *telos* meaning end or design. The world has order and design stamped all over it and therefore there must be behind the design a designer with intelligence capable of creating and sustaining such a design.

Anthropological

This derives from the Greek word *anthropos* meaning man. This is also called the, "Moral Argument" because it relates to man's mental and moral condition which gives evidence to an Author who has both mind and spirit as man has. To a Lawgiver who placed conscience within man. And to an End Purpose; such a being alone can satisfy the demand of man's soul. Man shows by his very nature that such a being must exist.

Christological

This derives from the Greek word *Christos* meaning the Anointed One or the Messiah. This argument has its foundation in the fact that amongst other things the fulfilment of prophecy found within the Bible must be accounted for; and the supernatural character and mission of Christ must be accounted for. These events cannot be explained without the existence of God.

God's Characteristics

The Bible never seeks to 'prove' God. Its opening words in Genesis 1:1 mean that, "*when the beginning began, God was already there.*" He is therefore, from the very beginning of the Bible, shown to be an **eternal** Being - not only without end but also without beginning.

The God of Scripture is **infinite**. In the beginning He was already there, the only one to be truly eternal. We often think eternal means to have no end but in reality it means to have no beginning or end. God alone fits this description.

God is **immutable**; that is, He never changes. Hebrews 6:17-18 shows how we can totally rely on God because of His unchanging covenant.

The Bible tells us that God is:

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| Living: | God is the living God (Jer. 10:10)
God is the source of all life (Neh. 9:6) |
| Personal: | God is not a force, He is a person with feelings* (Zeph. 3:17)
God is spirit (John 4:24) |
| Superior: | God is superior to man "as the heavens are higher than the earth"
(Isa. 55:8, 9, 1 Cor. 1:25)
God alone is God and there is no other god (Isa.43:10, 11)
God exists outside time and space (Ps 90:4) |
| Eternal: | God always has been, always will be (Ps 90:2) |
| Omnipresent: | God is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10) |
| Omnipotent: | He is all-powerful. He spoke and the worlds came into being; He laughs at all that human beings can do (Psalm 2); He alone can stop human beings doing what they plan to do (Genesis 11:6-9) |

Omniscient: God alone has perfect knowledge.

Although this great God is the sovereign ruler of the universe, He still reveals Himself in a personal way. The 'I AM' (not the 'I was' or 'I will be') always reveals Himself to His people not as an impersonal force but as a loving Creator God (Hebrews 1:1-3). He is a loving God who wants all of us to be saved and have an eternal future with Him.

What Does This Mean For Us?

God is the source of life; therefore we need to go to Him about our life.

God is a person; therefore we can have a relationship with Him.

God is superior to us; therefore we can look to Him for wisdom and guidance.

God is outside time and space; therefore He is not bound by those things that bind us.

God is eternally God, He is always the same; therefore He is trustworthy.

We further learn that God is great and powerful - 1 Chr. 29:12

That He is righteous and just - Ps 11:7

That He is faithful and keeps His word – Deut. 7:9

That He is Holy (absolutely pure and totally different from the created order) - Josh 24:19

That He is jealous in the sense of not willing to share His glory with another, Is. 42:8, or to tolerate divided loyalties in the people He loves and has saved, Ex.20:5

That He is a God of wisdom: Rom 11:33

That He can be angry Ps 30:5

That His anger doesn't last because He is abounding in love – Ps 103:8; 1 John 4:7-10

That He is a forgiving God - Ps 130:3, 4

The clearest picture we have of God is Jesus who, in answer to the question, "*Lord show us the Father*", answered, "*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*" (Jn.14:8, 9) Later the Bible tells us:

"In the past God spoke to us through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being (nature or person)..." - Heb.1:1-3

If you want to know what God is like, search His Word but most of all look at Jesus.

* When Christians say that God is without body, parts or passions it doesn't mean that God has no feelings. The Bible makes clear that God is spirit but that He rejoices over His people, can be angry, loves, etc. What we mean is that God's feelings are not like man's, corrupt and unpredictable (passions), His love is a perfect love, His anger a perfect anger, not driven but perfectly expressed.