

Biblical Topics

God IS...

God is not a mere idea which lacks reality. God IS, He is a Being. He calls Himself "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14). This distinguishes Himself as the One who IS from idols which are "nothing."

- Isaiah 41:24: But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable.
- 1 Corinthians 8:4: o then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

God was not created and made. His existence does not depend on something else. He exists of Himself and by Himself. He is the one and only Absolute and Supreme Being.

"God is a spirit." What this spirit consists of we do not know. Yet He is a self-existing, invisible, living personal Being, having consciousness, intellect, emotions, and will. The Bible sometimes speaks of God as though He were like a human being having arm, hand, finger, face (Exodus 6:6; Ephesians 1:20; Luke 1:20; Numbers 6:24-26), yet He has no human body. Such figurative language is an adaption for our finite minds, which cannot grasp the infinite spiritual essence of God. In heaven we shall see God as He is. God is...(God's attributes)

A) Eternal (without beginning and without end)

Psalm 90:1-2, "¹Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ²Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

God's existence has no beginning and no end, it is not measured by years and centuries, for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). There is no time with God, as we think of time, there is no past and future, but one everlasting presence. Parents and friends will die, heaven and earth shall pass away, but our God is from everlasting to everlasting, a sure refuge and dwelling place in all generations.

B) Unchangeable

Psalm 102:27, "But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

Malachi 3:6, "I the LORD do not change."

God is unchangeable not only in His essence and attributes, but also in His will toward us. He does not grow older, does not lose some of His attributes, is not swayed by whim or humor, but He is always the same. Men are fickle, change their minds, and cannot be depended on. What a sad thing if we never knew

how to take God. But with Him there is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). He is and always will be what He has revealed himself to be in the Bible, and we need not fear that He has since changed His mind, or will do so in the future.

C) Omnipotent (almighty, all-powerful)

Genesis 17:1, “I am the almighty God.”

Matthew 19:26, “With God all things are possible.”

Luke 1:37, “With God nothing shall be impossible.”

This God demonstrated in the creation of the world, and still does so in upholding all things by the Word of His power. The idol Baal could neither hear nor help his priests, but God heard the voice of Elijah (1 Kings 18:25-39), proving Himself to be the Almighty God. In this lies a warning: God is not weak and feeble, but He is able to punish and destroy (James 4:12). But there is also a strong comfort: trusting in Him, we have a strong and powerful friend, who is able to do more than we ask or can think (Ephesians 3:20-21).

D) Omniscient (all-knowing)

Psalms 139:1-4, “¹ O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.”

John 21:17, “Lord, You know all things.”

God knows all we do say, or think, everything that happens in the universe and in our own personal lives. We can hide many things from men, but God knows the innermost secrets of our hearts. He knew the murderous thoughts of Cain (Gen. 4:6) and the dishonesty of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). Let us not think that we can conceal anything from Him (Psalm 90:8). But He knows also our afflictions and needs, our trouble and heartaches, our wishes and prayers, and He stands ready to help us.

E) Omnipresent (present everywhere)

Jeremiah 23:24, “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.”

God is present everywhere at the same time, He fills heaven and earth. He is not far away from us (Acts 17:27-28), but is with us wherever we may be. He is with us at school, with our parents at home, with our friends far and near, with

our missionaries in foreign lands, etc. In the house, on the street, when we wake or sleep, work of play, in storm and sunshine, in sickness and health, He is always by our side. What a warning! He is always near to protect and help us (Is. 41:10)

F) Holy (sinless and hating sin)

Leviticus 19:2, "I, the Lord, your God, am holy."

Isaiah 6:3, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."

The Holiness of God is His glorious majesty, by which He is exalted above all created things (John 12:41). It also denotes His freedom from sin and His opposition to sin. As He himself is holy, He wants us to be holy. As we are children of the Holy God, we should constantly strive to be holy in our lives.)

G) Just (fair and impartial)

Deuteronomy 32:4, "He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."

The justice or righteousness of God is that He always does the right thing. Men are not always just and fair in their dealings with us. Sometimes we grumble against God, as did the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:11). But let us be assured, whatever God does or allows to happen in our lives is just and right.

H) Faithful (keeping His promises)

2 Timothy 2:13, "if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself."

The faithfulness of God consists in this that He keeps His promises. He is absolutely trustworthy. Men promise much and keep little; God promises much greater things, and He keeps them all, perhaps not always in the way we expect, but certainly in the way that is best for us. Let us always trust in Him, and we shall not be disappointed. How happy we can be knowing that our God is faithful and will not go back on His promises.

I) Benevolent (good, kind, desiring our welfare)

Psalms 145:9, "The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made."

Benevolent means good-willed. God is good to His creatures, He satisfies the desire of every living thing (Psalm 145:15-16). If He feeds the fowl of the air and clothes the lilies in the field with beauty, He will certainly do much more for His children (Matthew 6:30). "Good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

J) Merciful (full of pity)

Psalm 145:9, "The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made."

To be merciful means to have pity on those who suffer, to forbear from inflicting punishment. God is not a hard and cruel Master, as the heathen imagine some of their idols to be, and as men sometimes prove themselves to be (The unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:28-20), but He is merciful, has pity and compassion on us in our weakness and distress. And His mercy is greater than that of our own parents (Is. 49:15-16). Whatever may betide us, let us never think that God is cold and indifferent to us, but He has a warm heart for us, and His mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:22-23).

K) Gracious (showing undeserved kindness, forgiving)

Exodus 34:6-7, "⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."

1 John 4:8, "God is love."

To be gracious is much like being merciful, however, with this distinction that while "Merciful" considers the misery of a person, "gracious" considers his unworthiness. Because of our sins we deserved neither goodness nor mercy from God, but only wrath and punishment. Yet without our merit or worthiness God loves us (John 3:16) and bestows upon us temporal and eternal blessings. The consciousness of our guilt and unworthiness should not keep us from trusting in His grace. Just as we are, we may come to Him, and for Christ's sake He will prove Himself to be our good and gracious father in heaven.

The above information is taken from: "Luther's Small Catechism" annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.