

Article: “What is God Like?”

What is God like? Some try to answer this by using a metaphor, a simile, or an example.

But there is a problem. No matter how we try to define God or visualise Him, we can only partly understand God. Why? Because we are finite and small and mortal, whereas God is infinite and big and immortal. In other words, God is not like a product that we can hold in our hands and then examine with our naked eye. God cannot be put under a microscope or dissected so that we can then write a description and a review about Him. We are not big enough, smart enough, or supreme enough to be able to put God into our hands and then think that we can fully grasp and understand Him. Frankly stated, we are supremely arrogant if we think that we have fully discovered the mysteries of God.

So, what do we know about God then by our natural reasoning? Well, we can glean several things, but that is about it. We can look at this world that we live in and see the fingerprints of a creator in nature and our ecosystem – we are not here because of an evolutionary mutation or a biological accident. We can also examine our own bodies and conclude that our bodies are extremely complex and are evidence that we have been knit together by someone greater than ourselves. By viewing the beauty of creation and the complexity of life – how wondrously constructed and wisely arranged everything is – a person cannot help but conclude that all of this is ‘not’ the handiwork of mankind or the byproduct of chance but the work of God. Only *“the fool says in his heart, “There is no God”* (Psalm 14:1).

Considering this, if God is the Creator and Master of all that there is (i.e., the Creator of mankind, the world, and the universe), we can conclude that we are nothing more than a small drop in the bucket. Compared to the grand scheme of things, we are nothing more than a small pawn. Or, we could say that we are nothing more than a small insect compared to God. Indeed, if God holds this world in His hands, in comparison, we are nothing more than small, tiny insects that inhabit this earth. No wonder why we can’t fully fathom and understand the complexities and depths of God. No wonder why we live in fear of God’s wrath as human beings – we are afraid of being crushed.

We humans, though, can try to offset our fear of God and our tininess in the face of God by acting big, tough, and unafraid. We can construct buildings, create nations, and stand tall; however, we are all wiped to dust when earthquakes, floods, and cyclones destroy us. We really are nothing before God. We are here today and gone tomorrow; civilisations rise one century and fall apart the next, only to be remembered in the pages of dusty books lying on shelves.

So what is God like? Well, God is not like us, and apart from owing our existence to God, we find ourselves living in fear of God because He is big and we are small. He is in charge, and we are not.

But certainly, we should be able to know more about God than just this, right? That is the problem, though. How can we know more about God when we are like a bunch of tiny insects trying to understand One who is bigger, grander, and more supreme than we can comprehend?

I do not say this to be mean or rude or to cause discomfort, but you and I cannot comprehend God. Our minds are too small, our vision is too weak, and our arms are too short to wrap around God, which leaves us with a limited understanding that we have been created and that we should be afraid of God.

There is another way, though. Yes, there is another way for us to understand and know God. That is to say, instead of trying to get to know God on our own terms through our own efforts and limited intellectual reasoning, what if God came to us and revealed Himself to us? Guess what? This is what God has done. He has come to us.

So, when we are asked the question, ‘What is God like?’ our answer is that God is like Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus, we have a man who claimed to be God, said things that only God can say, did things that only God can do, and accepted worship that belongs to only God. Yes, Jesus is God confronting us as a man. Jesus is God expressed in human terms. To know Jesus is to know God.

This changes everything. God became man – He became one of us and dwelt in our midst. He taught, lived, and moved among us, which means that we can behold His glory, glory as of the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.

As we behold God in the flesh – Jesus Christ – what should then grasp us is that this God-Man did not come to be served by us insignificant humans, but rather, He served us! He served us by going to the cross of Mt. Calvary. Do not look over this too quickly. The God of the universe died for ungodly people like you and me and considered it well worthwhile. He died for sinners.

Indeed, Jesus gives us the answer of what God is like. He shows us God is holy and just and also merciful and forgiving. Jesus shows us that God does not take sin lightly, yet still cares for us because He chose to do something about that very sin – it's called the cross.

Furthermore, Jesus also shows us that God is Triune. Yes, from Jesus we hear about the Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God now and forevermore. Not three gods and not three substances, but three persons.

Now, I would be lying to you if I said that this is easy for us to understand, for it certainly is not. Again, we are back to where we were before. As mere mortals, we cannot totally understand the complexities of God; however, we confess these complexities of God as true because Jesus confesses them as true... and Jesus is right because He rose from the dead. That is to say, there is no Heavenly Father for us other than the Heavenly Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is also no other Holy Spirit for us other than the Holy Spirit that is sent by Jesus.

What this all means for us is that it is not necessary to wrap our finite minds around the nature of God – to figure Him out and domesticate Him – but rather to know that God – as revealed by Jesus and the Scriptures – is living and active for you and for your salvation. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the Triune God – is alive and active towards us.

Consider this: You were baptised into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit – one name, three persons; three persons who are active for you and for your good!

God the Father created you. He has given you your body and preserves you. He provides for you and protects you from evil. All of this is done out of fatherly and divine goodness, without any of your worthiness.

God the Son has redeemed you a lost and condemned human being. He has purchased you and freed you from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. He has done this in order that you may belong to Him and live under Him in His kingdom.

And God the Spirit has called you through the Gospel, enlightened you with His gifts and made you holy and kept you in the true faith in the Christian church. The Holy Spirit abundantly forgives you of your sins through the Word and Sacraments and on the Last Day will raise you and all the dead to eternal life.

Truly, our Triune God reveals Himself to us in the Word. We cannot understand Him by our own reason or strength, but He makes Himself known to us and shows us what He is like and gives to us what Christ has accomplished.

Today we confess and believe upon God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: one God now and forevermore – for you and for me.