

He/Him The Identity of God

Do you ever think about God? We tend to think that the most important thing to figure out is who we are, what our deepest longings are, and how to live as our authentic selves. But what about questions that go beyond us as individuals? All of us care about things outside of ourselves. We care about our friends and family, the culture we live in, and the world we inhabit. What about all that? Beyond that, what makes us so important? The reality is that a worldview that begins with “me” can’t truly answer these questions. If the individual is the ultimate standard who determines who and what matters, it makes truth, justice, and rights totally arbitrary. Nobody can be right, nobody can be wrong, and none of it really matters. But none of us believe this, and none of us live like this. If anything at all objectively matters, there must be a standard outside of ourselves—and really outside of anything that has the capacity to change and evolve. Put simply, there must be a Creator—a God.

This changes the equation entirely. Instead of looking for direction and meaning by asking “Who am I?”, this search must begin with the question “Who is God?” We can attempt to answer this by coming up with our own idea of “God”, one almost entirely based on our own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Yet doing this is no different from arbitrarily making up our own meaningless standards, only worse because we appeal to the authority of “God” to enforce our personal preferences. If we are to truly know God, and so know meaning, we must go to His objective, authoritative revelation—the Bible.

God is Holy: “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isaiah 6:3). This primarily means that God is totally unique—there is nothing like Him, He is the infinite Creator, and everything else is created by Him and so answers to Him. This is the thing that most makes God God. He is the standard of all goodness. He is the perfect, eternal, self-existent, uncreated Being, and everything else in the universe owes its existence to Him.

God is Love: “But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him” (1 John 4:8-9). God is the source and definition of love, and as His creatures, we are commanded to love Him and each other. The perfect expression of love is to live in the world as God intended, according to His commands (Romans 13:10) and done for the good of others over ourselves. This is done perfectly in God’s self-sacrificial work through Jesus (John 3:16).

God is Justice: “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne, steadfast love and faithfulness go before you” (Psalm 89:14). Justice is to perfectly give to each person their due. God in

His law emphasizes that all people must be judged by the same standard, that there is no practicality, and this is because He shows no partiality. This means that God must punish all law-breaking—to allow evil to go unpunished would be horribly unjust.

God is Mercy: The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6). Even though God’s justice demands that ultimately everyone must get what they deserve, His love compels Him to patience and graciousness. When we understand that God is perfect, holy, and infinite, that He created us and gives us life and breath every moment, we begin to understand that as soon as we break one law or fail to give God all the worship He is due, we deserve eternal, infinite punishment. The fact that God has delayed this judgment is a great mercy. The fact that He has given us a way of escaping it is even greater.

Jesus is God: “Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!” (John 14:6-7). God is infinitely far off from us because of our sin. We don’t have the relationship with God that He intended when He made us because we are unholy and disobedient. But God bridged that gap by doing the unimaginable—becoming like a creature. God took on a nature like our’s, He became like us so that He could live the perfect human life we fail to live. And this is how God reconciles His holiness, love, justice, and mercy. Love moved God to send His Son for us. The holy God lived in perfect holiness as a man on the earth. Justice against sin was satisfied by Jesus dying on the cross as a substitute in our place, the righteous willingly taking the full penalty of the unrighteous. And mercy is now offered to us, as Jesus’ sacrificial death can save us from punishment, and His perfect righteousness can be given to us. We receive this gift by placing our faith in Jesus, turning from our sin, and trusting in the perfect, holy, loving God who created us to live in relationship with Him for all eternity.