

God is Beyond Comprehension

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We often think of God in human terms. Since God has no equal, we fall back on describing God in relation to ourselves, which serves neither Him nor us. Yet, the eternal, invisible God is not human in any sense. He is beyond time and matter, and unconstrained by the events on this tiny speck of a planet. All things are as nothing when compared to His sublime greatness. His unbounded vastness exceeds the scope of His created universe.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways.” (Isaiah 55:8-9). God is not a human construct, not a product of our imaginations. Instead, we are a product of His imagination. He is beyond us, ineffable, too enormous to be grasped, and yet it is the quest of many to attempt to grasp God nonetheless. When we die, I expect we all will be surprised to discover how much we believed about God was incorrect. It is impossible to understand God fully or to confirm what we think we know about Him. By faith, we believe in God and, by faith, we rely on God to direct us toward His unfolding truth.

God’s Love is Not Cuddly

In this article, I wish to elevate God above those human attributes we give Him. We do God a disservice when we assign traits, such as love, and then ascribe human characteristics and imperfections to those traits. For example, people view God as a loving father—the Bible teaches us to do so—and then conclude that God could never cause pain because no loving human father would do that. But God is not human.

From God’s eternal perspective, pain is a momentary condition and is unlabeled, neither good nor bad. Pain is a triggered response to circumstance. Growth or discipline can be painful, and God is not averse to sending those circumstances when we need it and because He loves us. God’s love is the greatest force in the universe, but that force can sometimes leave ripples of pain in its wake. Just look as the immense suffering Christ had to endure in

order to fulfill the highest expression of God's intense love for humankind. The existence of pain does not negate God's love. Suffering can coexist with love.

God's love is not protective like the human variety of love. It is more concerned with deeper, spiritual goals like character development and transformation of the soul into something that more clearly reflects God's image. Scripture is full of examples of those loved by God who were not spared suffering, even martyrdom. God allowed his beloved people, the Israelites, to be oppressed as slaves by the Egyptians for generations. He expressed his deep concern regarding their misery and suffering in Exodus 3:7-8. From a human perspective, it makes no sense that God would allow that calamity to continue for so long. Why didn't He rescue them sooner? Yet God's higher purposes were at work and required delay until He had prepared His chosen prophet, Moses, to lead them out of slavery with an amazing demonstration of power.

God's Priorities

We have to be careful not to judge God by human standards or to think that a loving God would never punish or destroy. In my book, *Four in the Garden*, Creator says, "I create. I destroy. In all I do, I love. My purposes encompass joy and pain, life and death, growth and decay. You can't comprehend all My ways. I only ask that you trust." It takes faith to believe that God is always acting according to His best intentions, especially when we can't understand outcomes.

Unlike humans, God doesn't give priority to preservation. From God's eternal perspective, nothing endures forever except Himself, so He doesn't strive to make anything last. Even heaven and earth will pass away (Matthew 24:35, 2 Peter 3:10). Psalm 103:15-16 says, "The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more." Nothing lasts. Everything comes to an end, sometimes sooner, sometimes later. We can be grateful, however, when

something does last and we are able to enjoy it. Besides God, one thing that endures is our souls, and God promises to preserve our souls (Psalm 121:7).

God's justice is unlike human justice. His punishment is not swift, but can be deferred, even after a person has died. We humans prefer swift judgment and immediate punishment. 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." God delays so that people have a chance to change and turn to Him. This doesn't mean that God won't execute justice. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, "His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He."

God tracks time differently than we do. "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." (2 Peter 3:8). From that point of view, the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt wasn't long when considered in light of eternity. Our lifetime is but a quick blip on God's radar, so it's amazing to me how much "time" and attention He give us. God created time and lives outside of time, so His touch on your life is timeless and eternal. We have to be careful with timetables when it comes to God. His "soon" is not our "soon." Two thousand years ago, Jesus said He is coming soon.

Bigger Than We Can Imagine

In Isaiah 6, the prophet describes his dramatic vision of God. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple." The concept of a king seated on a throne is a human invention. God appeared to Isaiah in a form he could understand in order to illustrate His ultimate sovereignty. Yet God is so much greater than a king on a throne, but that illustration is the best we have to describe His supremacy and power. He is far beyond what we can imagine and without equal (See Isaiah 46).

In the forward to my book, *Four in the Garden*, I describe God as “transcending our understanding, the inscrutable God who defies our man-made definitions and imaginations. We do not capture and subdue God for purposes of study or control. Rather, we gaze and marvel so we might be changed. From that place of awe, we approach God and find the meaning and connection we long for.” The main goal for us on this Earth is not to understand God as much as to be transformed by His love. As for understanding God, we will understand more when we see Him face to face. “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Until that day, let us remain in awe that we have such a wondrous God that created this amazing universe. And let us be ever thankful that such an awesome God loves you and me.

Questions for Reflection

1. God is always bigger than the mental container in which we try to hold Him. How can you expand yourself to allow God to be bigger in your life?
2. If God can't be fully known because He is beyond our comprehension, then what value can be found in seeking to understand Him?
3. What is your response to the knowledge that God is vastly superior to you? Does it help or hinder your relationship to Him?

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