

God Revealed – Self-Revelation

God is a Spirit and fundamentally different in being and constitution than His creations. Many people have asked, “Why does God seem to be hidden?” or “If God wants us to know He exists, why doesn’t He just show up?”

Romans 1:20 NKJV For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...

The text continues by saying that the knowledge of God is available and accessible to everyone because God has made it plain to them in His creation. His invisible qualities have been made clear by the things He has made. One of the major reasons for the hiddenness is because of sin, disobedience, or indifference toward Him.

As a Spirit being, God can be present and not be visible or evident.

Even when apparently absent, God remains present and able to intervene in people’s lives. At times and to specific individuals and groups, God visually presented Himself. These appearances are called “*Theophanies*.” Theophany comes from the Greek words *theos* (God) and *phanein* (to appear); thus, a theophany is an appearance of God. The word “*Theophany*” does not appear in the Bible, but “*God appeared*” in many ways. God’s appearance has been manifested in various forms, including fire, clouds, lightning, a thunderous voice, earthquakes, and strong winds. He revealed Himself as the Angel of God in a glory cloud or pillar of cloud or fire to the people of Israel and to the Egyptians a cloud of darkness. At times these visible appearances or manifestations of God took on a human form.

Biblical appearances of God are characterized by their diverse contexts and manifestations.

- Abraham encountered God when he arrived in Canaan and at the oaks of Mamre, (Genesis 12:1-9; Genesis 15; Genesis 18:1).
- Moses stood in God’s presence at the burning bush and again when he went up into the glory cloud that was like a consuming fire on Sinai and saw the backside of God, (Exodus 3:1-6; Exodus 24:15-18; Exodus 33:18-23).
- The Angel of God spoke to Jacob in a dream, (Genesis 37:11-13). Jacob wrestled with a divine figure, (Genesis 32:24-30).
- God appeared to Moses, Joshua, and seventy elders of Israel,

(Exodus 24:9-11). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Elijah, (1 Kings 19:5-18). Job received God's response from a tempest, (Job 38-42).

- Ezekiel saw God in the likeness of a man riding upon His throne carried by four living creatures (cherubim), (Ezekiel 1).
- In the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saw the form of the Son of God, (Daniel 3:25).

At times, God is revealed as the Angel of the Lord.

These appearances are seen in multiple places, (Genesis 16:7-14; Genesis 22:11-18; Judges 5:23; 2 Kings 19:35; and other passages). Many of the "Theophanies" are truly a "Christophany," or appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.

Numerous revelations of God are divine metaphors that attribute human characteristics and physical form to Him.

A "divine metaphor" is a figure of speech that attempts to describe the divine nature with terms that believers can easily comprehend. The Lord spoke to Moses face to face (Exodus 33:11). God told David to seek His face, (Psalms 27:8). The hand of the Lord was against the city, (1 Samuel 5:11). The arm of the Lord is revealed, (Isaiah 53:1). God's ears are open and His eyes see, (Nehemiah 1:6). God's eyes see every precious thing, (Job 28:10). The clouds are the dust of God's feet (Nahum 1:3). God is seen sitting on His throne and the host of heaven are on His right and left hand (1 Kings 22:19). God rode upon a cherub and flew upon the wings of the wind (Psalms 18:10). God fought with His people in battle (2 Chronicles 32:8; Isaiah 63:1-6). Heaven is God's throne and earth is His footstool (Isaiah 66:1).

Isaiah said there is no God like the LORD our God.

Isaiah 64:4 NKJV For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him.

When Isaiah saw the LORD high and lifted up and sitting on a throne, he was overwhelmed.

Isaiah 6:5 NIV84 So I said: "Woe is me... For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD Almighty."

God has revealed Himself in such a way that we may know Him and know that He is interested in us. Yet, scripture says clearly that no man has ever seen God. Aspects of God's essential nature remain hidden from human view. His "essential nature" is different from His essential

attributes: timelessness, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, perfection, and sovereignty. At the same time, His essential nature cannot be separated from His character and attributes.

John 1:18 AMP No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, or the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known].

1 John 4:12 NKJV No one has seen God at any time.

1 Timothy 6:16 NKJV Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

God has revealed Himself in many ways so that we may know Him and know that He exists, yet, His inner essence or nature has only been disclosed and known by God's Son Who is at the Father's side.

God's Self-Revelation

If we are to know God, He must reveal Himself to us. God's nature and being is incomprehensible, for God is a spirit. As a result, until God reveals Himself, it is impossible for humanity to know Him. His being and essence has been made evident by His self-disclosure. God has disclosed His nature, essence, works, and word so clearly that all humanity may know Him.

God is incomprehensible, "unable to be fully understood or known."

It is incorrect to say that God cannot be known, but He cannot be fully known. It is impossible for man to fully know the infinite, transcendent, omniscient, almighty, omnipresent God. A person may go to the ocean and know much about it, but they have not delved into its depths and hidden places. God is both incomprehensible and infinite.

God dwells outside of time and space.

He is neither limited by space or time and is everywhere present in His fullness perpetually. He is unbounded and unlimited to any point of space or time, but may reveal Himself in any point of space or time. He is not subject to change, (immutable). He is totally consistent and every facet of His character and nature remains the same. The changeless nature of God does not imply a casual indifference, for God is always active in His creation, sustaining it by the word of His power. God's feelings are not beyond His control, but are a deliberate and voluntary choice. God is never the victim or defeated. His emotions transcend the

experience of our finite mind. We may know something about His love, mercy, knowledge, wisdom, and holiness and not fully or exhaustively understand them. The various aspects of God's essence and nature are beyond our ability to comprehend.

David was thinking about the knowledge of God and how the LORD knew everything about him.

He said, the LORD knows everything about me, even the word on my tongue is known by the LORD.

Psalms 139:6-7 NKJV Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

Psalms 139:8-10 NKJV If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

Although we may not fully understand or comprehend Him, God has revealed Himself so fully that we may be able to know Him.

God has disclosed Himself through His Name.

He told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." The unspeakable name of God in the Hebrew is YHWH — (Yahweh or Jehovah). He is the great "I AM" or "I AM WHO I AM." God said this would be His name forever, (Exodus 3:15). God would forever be known as the living, powerful, unbounded, infinite, reigning King.

God has made His thoughts known.

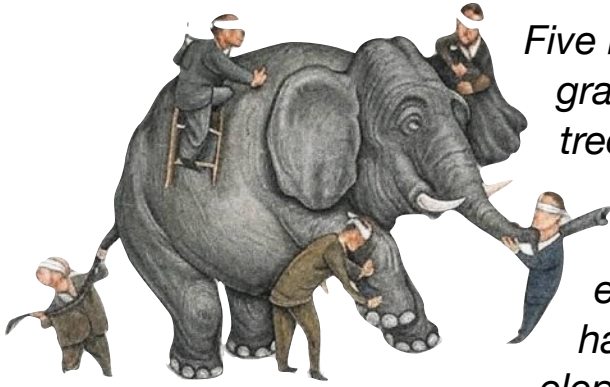
Psalms 139:17-18 NKJV How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

All of God's thoughts and actions involve all of Him. Even the simplicity of God is impossible for us to understand. God gives simultaneous and undivided attention to everything and everyone everywhere without reference to time or space. He has revealed Himself in such a manner that He may be known. His truth is revealed, but not fully or exhaustively known.

- God is Love (1 John 4:8)
- God is Spirit (John 4:24)
- God is Light (1 John 1:5)

To say that we know about God's love, light, and spirit, does not imply

that we know all about His love, light, or spirit.



Five blind men walked up to an elephant. One grabbed his leg and said: "An elephant is like a tree." The second one took hold of an ear and said: "An elephant is like a leaf on a tree." The third grabbed its tail and said: "An elephant is like a rope." The fourth put his hands on the elephant's side and said: "The elephant is like a mountain." The fifth touched the trunk and said "the elephant is a snake." Which one was correct? Each had a revelation of a part of the elephant, but none knew the whole story.

There are many things we may know about God as He reveals Himself to us.