



Who is God and What is He Like?

BREAKING NEWS: God is who he is, not who we think he is because of what we have been taught. If you have created God in your own image, or wittingly or unwittingly allowed someone to help you do that then God will probably be a member of your church and denomination. He will keep and observe all your religious ceremonies, holidays and holy days, all your rules and regulations and all your rituals.

- God created in your image will hate the people you hate.
- God created in your image will vote for the person you vote for.
- God created in your image will be a member of your race, nationality and perhaps even your gender.

When God is created in our image, he turns into a god of the rule-book who insists on absolute compliance, more interested in punishing than comforting.

When God is created in our image, he always keeps religious rules and he is capable of being manipulated by what we do. We can earn and deserve favors from the gods humans create in their image.

Many churches preach the gospel of moral behavior and sin management on a regular basis. They preach threats and warnings about those who fail to behave properly, and the eternal, ever burning hell in which they will be tortured forever and ever, because they failed.

The gospel is not all about “here’s what’s wrong with the world” and here’s how we can fix it. The gospel is not all about “here’s what’s wrong with you” and how you

better fix your problems before it’s too late and God (because he loves you) sends you to hell to be tortured forever and ever.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is all about the goodness of God, not our failures, shame and guilt.

God is doing far more than merely producing good works in our lives—God is making us into a good work. *We ourselves are a good work—God’s good work.*

We ourselves are new men and new women in Christ. We are God’s temple—his house. We are under construction—*we are a work in process. We are a new creation. We are God’s reconstruction project.*

This is the secret of God’s grace—this is God’s end game. In our pride we try to convince ourselves that God will love us when we deserve it. In our pride we are easy fodder for religious institutions that will persuade us God will never love us unless and until we favorably measure up to all of the dictates, rules, dogmas and doctrines of that particular religion.

Who is God and what is he like? *God is exactly like Jesus, who came to fully reveal the heart, soul and essence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

The old covenant instructed Israel to love its neighbors but never seek a treaty of friendship with its enemies. In Matthew 5:43-44 Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

While the old covenant insists that God curses those who disobey him and blesses those who obey, in Matthew 5:45 Jesus says God does not discriminate with rain and sunshine. Those who are good and those who are evil both receive rain

and sunshine. In Matthew 5:46 we read that faith in Jesus transcends merely returning love to those who love us.

The blessings and favor of God are not directly linked with degrees of worthiness or unworthiness we demonstrate. We must not think of our relationship with God as being our pursuit of gaining his favor, of pleasing him and earning his approval.

When we in turn love others the way God loves us, we love as he loves...without regard to whether they deserve it or not.

The love with which we love others is a love we are passing on, it is God’s love given to us. Therefore, when we love those who do not love us, we will not feel spiritually superior or self righteous because the love we are giving originates with God. A Christ-follower will not triumphantly congratulate themselves by saying, “I love person X, even though person X doesn’t love me.”

Rather, the force of what a Christ-follower will say will go something like this: “God loves Person X and God loves me. God loves Person X even though Person X does not appear to love me. God enables me, by his grace and through his love, to pass on his love to Person X.”

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—Greg Albrecht

Join us for “Who is God and What is He Like?” at the audio teaching ministry of Christianity Without the Religion, the week of July 21, 2019.