

## 1. What are the attributes of God?"

The Bible, God's Word, tells us what God is like and what He is not like. Without the authority of the Bible, any attempt to explain God's attributes would be no better than an opinion, which by itself is often incorrect, especially in understanding God ([Job 42:7](#)). To say that it is important for us to try to understand what God is like is a huge understatement. Failure to do so can cause us to set up, chase after, and worship false gods contrary to His will ([Exodus 20:3-5](#)).

Only what God has chosen to reveal of Himself can be known. One of God's attributes or qualities is "light," meaning that He is self-revealing in information of Himself ([Isaiah 60:19](#); [James 1:17](#)). The fact that God has revealed knowledge of Himself should not be neglected ([Hebrews 4:1](#)). Creation, the Bible, and the Word made flesh (Jesus Christ) will help us to know what God is like.

Let's start by understanding that God is our Creator and that we are a part of His creation ([Genesis 1:1](#); [Psalm 24:1](#)) and are created in His image. Man is above the rest of creation and was given dominion over it ([Genesis 1:26-28](#)). Creation is marred by the fall but still offers a glimpse of God's works ([Genesis 3:17-18](#); [Romans 1:19-20](#)). By considering creation's vastness, complexity, beauty, and order, we can have a sense of the awesomeness of God.

Reading through some of the names of God can be helpful in our search of what God is like. They are as follows:

Elohim - strong One, divine ([Genesis 1:1](#))

Adonai - Lord, indicating a Master-to-servant relationship ([Exodus 4:10, 13](#))

El Elyon - Most High, the strongest One ([Genesis 14:20](#))

El Roi - the strong One who sees ([Genesis 16:13](#))

El Shaddai - Almighty God ([Genesis 17:1](#))

El Olam - Everlasting God ([Isaiah 40:28](#))

Yahweh - LORD "I Am," meaning the eternal self-existent God ([Exodus 3:13, 14](#)).

God is eternal, meaning He had no beginning and His existence will never end. He is immortal and infinite ([Deuteronomy 33:27](#); [Psalm 90:2](#); [1 Timothy 1:17](#)). God is immutable, meaning He is unchanging; this in turn means that God is absolutely reliable and trustworthy ([Malachi 3:6](#); [Numbers 23:19](#); [Psalm 102:26, 27](#)). God is incomparable; there is no one like Him in works or being. He is unequalled and perfect ([2 Samuel 7:22](#); [Psalm 86:8](#); [Isaiah 40:25](#); [Matthew 5:48](#)). God is inscrutable, unfathomable, unsearchable, and past finding out as far as understanding Him completely ([Isaiah 40:28](#); [Psalm 145:3](#); [Romans 11:33, 34](#)).

God is just; He is no respecter of persons in the sense of showing favoritism ([Deuteronomy 32:4](#); [Psalm 18:30](#)). God is omnipotent; He is all-powerful and can do anything that pleases Him, but His actions will always be in accord with the rest of His character ([Revelation 19:6](#); [Jeremiah 32:17, 27](#)). God is omnipresent, meaning He is present everywhere, but this does not mean that God is everything ([Psalm 139:7-13](#); [Jeremiah](#)

23:23). God is omniscient, meaning He knows the past, present, and future, including what we are thinking at any given moment. Since He knows everything, His justice will always be administered fairly (Psalm 139:1-5; Proverbs 5:21).

God is one; not only is there no other, but He is alone in being able to meet the deepest needs and longings of our hearts. God alone is worthy of our worship and devotion (Deuteronomy 6:4). God is righteous, meaning that God cannot and will not pass over wrongdoing. It is because of God's righteousness and justice that, in order for our sins to be forgiven, Jesus had to experience God's wrath when our sins were placed upon Him (Exodus 9:27; Matthew 27:45-46; Romans 3:21-26).

God is sovereign, meaning He is supreme. All of His creation put together cannot thwart His purposes (Psalm 93:1; 95:3; Jeremiah 23:20). God is spirit, meaning He is invisible (John 1:18; 4:24). God is a Trinity. He is three in one, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. God is truth, He will remain incorruptible and cannot lie (Psalm 117:2; 1 Samuel 15:29).

God is holy, separated from all moral defilement and hostile toward it. God sees all evil and it angers Him. God is referred to as a consuming fire (Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 1:13; Exodus 3:2, 4-5; Hebrews 12:29). God is gracious, and His grace includes His goodness, kindness, mercy, and love. If it were not for God's grace, His holiness would exclude us from His presence. Thankfully, this is not the case, for He desires to know each of us personally (Exodus 34:6; Psalm 31:19; 1 Peter 1:3; John 3:16, 17:3).

Since God is an infinite Being, no human can fully answer this God-sized question, but through God's Word, we can understand much about who God is and what He is like. May we all wholeheartedly continue to seek after Him (Jeremiah 29:13).<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Does God have a physical body?

Both the Bible and good philosophy report that God is non-physical - spirit. In John 4:24 it is said that God is spirit (see also Luke 24:39; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17). This is why no material thing was to be used to represent God (Exodus 20:4). But this can also be shown by reflecting on what God is. Philosophically the same truth comes through. All that is created is necessarily finite and limited. But the first cause (God) is uncreated, and therefore must be non-finite, or infinite. That which is beyond the finite must, by definition, be infinite, and the Bible states that God is beyond creation (1 Kings 8:27; Job 11:7-9; Isaiah 66:1-2; Colossians 1:17). That which is physical cannot be infinite - for you cannot add finite parts together until they reach infinity. Therefore God is spirit as opposed to physical/material in His Being. This does not mean He cannot localize a physical appearance. God is not composed of matter nor any other imaginable substance. He also cannot be measured, is not spatial, and has no true location (presence is a different concept).

Knowing this truth can help us understand the metaphorical speech often used to describe

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/attributes-God.html>

God or, more often, God's actions in Scripture. In the case of God, once all finitude is negated from a statement, what is left is what is actually true. If nothing is left, then it is a pure metaphor. Some metaphors use attributes from creation itself ([2 Samuel 22:3](#)). Others use man's attributes (anthropomorphism - [Deuteronomy 33:27](#)). In this way we can go from what we know by experience to what we know through the metaphors. For example, when Scripture describes God's mighty arm we know that arms are by definition limited - but might is not. So God's mighty arm is actually unlimited power to act (what we call omnipotence). When Scripture describes God's mind, we know that minds are limited, but knowledge is not. God's mind is actually His infinite knowledge (what we call omniscience).

There were times in the Bible when God appeared in a physical body in order to be seen by men in a form which they could perceive without danger to themselves. Because God said, "No man can see me and live" ([Exodus 33:20](#)), He chose at certain times to reveal Himself in human form. These occurrences are called theophanies ([Genesis 12:7-9](#); [18:1-33](#); [32:22-30](#)). Every theophany wherein God takes on human form foreshadows the incarnation, where God took the form of a man to live among us as Emmanuel, "God with us" ([Matthew 1:23](#)).<sup>2</sup>

### 3. What is an anthropomorphism?"

The word *anthropomorphism* comes from two Greek words, *anthropos*, meaning "man," and *morphe*, meaning "form." In theological terms, anthropomorphism is making God in some way into the form of man. Mostly, it is the process of assigning human characteristics to God. Human traits and actions such as talking, holding, reaching, feeling, hearing, and the like, all of which are chronicled throughout both the Old and New Testaments, are ascribed to the Creator. We read of God's actions, emotions, and appearance in human terms, or at least in words we normally accept and associate with humans.

In several places in the Bible, God is described as having the physical attributes of man. He "sets [his] face" against evil ([Leviticus 20:6](#)); the Lord will make "His face" to shine on you ([Numbers 6:25](#)); He "stretched out his hand" ([Exodus 7:5](#); [Isaiah 23:11](#)), and God scattered enemies with His strong arm ([Psalm 89:10](#)). He "stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth" ([Psalm 113:6](#)). He "keeps his eye" on the land ([Deuteronomy 11:12](#)), the "eyes of the Lord" are on the righteous ([Psalm 34:15](#)), and the earth is His "footstool" ([Isaiah 66:1](#)). Do all these verses mean that God literally has eyes, a face, hands and feet? Not necessarily. God is spirit, not flesh and blood, but because we are not spirit, these anthropomorphisms help us to understand God's nature and actions.

Human emotions are also ascribed to God: He was "sorry" ([Genesis 6:6](#)), "jealous" ([Exodus 20:5](#)), "moved to pity" ([Judges 2:18](#)), and "grieved" over making Saul Israel's first king ([1 Samuel 15:35](#)). We read that the Lord "changed His mind" ([Exodus 32:14](#)), "relented" ([2 Samuel 24:16](#)), and will "remember" when He sees a rainbow in the sky ([Genesis 9:16](#)). God is "angry with the wicked every day" ([Psalm 7:11](#)), and He "burned

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/God-physical-body.html>

with anger” against Job’s friends ([Job 32:5](#)). Most precious to us is God’s love, in which He predestines us to salvation ([Ephesians 1:4-5](#)) and because of which He gave His only Son in order to save the world ([John 3:16](#)).

Anthropomorphisms can be helpful in enabling us to at least partially comprehend the incomprehensible, know the unknowable, and fathom the unfathomable. But God is God, and we are not, and all of our human expressions are intrinsically inadequate in explaining fully and properly the divine. But human words, emotions, features, and knowledge are all that our Creator provided us, so these are all that we can understand in this earthly world at this time.

Yet anthropomorphisms can be dangerous if we see them as sufficient to portray God in limited human traits and terms, which could unintentionally serve to diminish in our minds His incomparable and incomprehensible power, love, and mercy. Christians are advised to read God’s Word with the realization that He offers a small glimpse of His glory through the only means we can absorb. As much as anthropomorphisms help us picture our loving God, He reminds us in [Isaiah 55:8-9](#): “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 higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/anthropomorphism.html>