**Come now, and let us reason**

**together... Isa 1:18**

***A series of lessons about our***

***reasonable God and our reasonable faith***

***Wyldewood Baptist Church 3030 Witzel Ave Oshkosh, WI 54904 Pastor Randy King***

**Please Note:**

**This series follows the natural pattern of questions addressed in books of Christian apologetics. First we consider the existence of God; next the attributes of God; thirdly the relationship of God to man; and lastly, questions regarding man, faith, and religion. There is no attempt to come up with some "new doctrine." We do not pretend to have all the answers, we simply use the Bible along with other sources to try to bring to light the truths of God regarding these subjects. If at times the study seems overly simple for such complex topics, please bear in mind that the lessons are not intended to impress theology students. The purpose of these lessons is to encourage and give understanding to Christians who are first considering these mighty truths. Pastor Randy King**

**“Come Now” Series Table of Contents**

**I. Questions related to the existence of God**

***1. How do I know there is a God?***

***2. If there is a God, where did He come from?***

***3. Why is it important to think rightly about God?***

***4. Aren't there many Gods?***

**II. Questions related to the attributes of God**

***5. How can God be infinite? Eternal? Self-sufficient?***

***6. Can God change?*  *Is He immutable?***

***7. Is God really omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent?***

***8. How can God be just and merciful at the same time?***

***9. If God is all-wise and all good, why did He allow evil and suffering into His creation?***

**III. Questions related to God's interaction with man**

***10. If God is sovereign, then isn't everything predestined to happen God's way?***

***11. If God is real, why doesn't He just reveal Himself instead of requiring faith?***

***12. How can I believe the Bible? Didn't man write it? Why all the versions & contradictions?***

***13. If a person never heard of the Bible, can they know God?***

***14. Why can God only be approached on His terms? What if I have my own ideas?***

***15. Can a man be clean and righteous in the sight of God? Can he have peace and know he is forgiven?***

**IV. Questions related to man, faith and religion**

***16. Don't all religions basically worship the same God?***

***17. Isn't a sincere Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim going to heaven the same as a devout Christian?***

***18. How do you know that Christianity is the right religion? Isn't that being proud?***

***19. Why are there all these different Christian religions who all claim they believe the Bible?***

***20. What about all these "out of body" or "after death" experiences? Reincarnation?***

***21. How could a loving God send anyone to an eternal hell?***

***22. If a person never heard about God, would God send them to hell?***

***23. What about an agnostic? If he doesn't believe in God, God leaves him alone, right?***

***24. If God is all wise and all powerful, why does he need our prayers?***

***25. Why do bad things happen to good people?***

***26. I know Christians who are hypocrites or who lost their faith? Do they still go to heaven?***

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Sample Lesson

**together... Isa 1:18**

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**Lesson # 16**

**Section IV: Questions related to man, faith, and religion**

**Don't all religions basically worship the same God?**

In our first section we studied questions related to the existence of God. Then we studied the attributes of God. Thirdly we considered questions regarding God's interaction with man. In this final section, we are going to answer questions related to man, faith, and religion. Once again I want to establish that the Bible is going to be our point of reference. No attempt is made to explain away every religious belief of every other religion in the world. We do not question the sincerity of those who follow other religious writings, but neither do we hesitate to correct them when they contradict the Bible. **(Isa 8:20) To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**

In lesson number four we established from the Bible that there is but one God. The exclusivity of God is clearly taught throughout the Scriptures. This present lesson asks a related question: **Don't all religions basically worship the same God?** The answer is a resounding **"NO!"** and we will set about to prove that. We will see first the Bible teaching of the one true God. Then we will reflect upon some of the attributes of God. Thirdly we will contrast the Bible portrayal of God with some of the false teachings of our day about God. This will clearly show that the God worshipped by many people is ***not*** the God of the Bible!

**Different systems of theology and theories of God** (From Bancroft's Theology)

* + 1. **Deism** - This view represents the universe as a self-sustained mechanism. God is the Maker, but not the sustainer. After creation, God withdrew Himself and left earth to a process of self-development.
		2. **Atheism** - This view excludes God altogether, denies Him any existence at all.
		3. **Skepticism and Infidelity** - a doubt or disbelief in the existence of God, especially the God of Revelation
		4. **Agnosticism** - This is a denial that God can be known. Etymologically, agnostic and ignoramus mean the same thing. The former is from the Greek, the latter from the Latin.
		5. **Pantheism** - This view maintains that the universe in its ever-changing conditions is but the manifestation of the one ever-changing universal substance which is God; thus all, everything is God and God is everything. God is therefore a necessary but unconscious force working in the world.
		6. **Polytheism** - This is the doctrine of many Gods.
		7. **Theism** - This is the belief in the existence of a personal God, - Creator, Preserver, and Ruler
		8. **Monotheism** - This view teaches that there is but one God. Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism are monotheistic religions.

**I. SCRIPTURES PROVING THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUE GOD (From Lesson 4)**

1. **(Exo 34:14) For thou shalt worship \_\_\_\_\_ other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:**
2. **(Deu 6:13-15) Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. {14} Ye shall \_\_\_\_\_ go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; {15} (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.**
3. **(Isa 44:6) Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ me there is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God.**
4. **(Isa 44:8) Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is \_\_\_\_\_\_ God; I know not any.**
5. **(Acts 17:24-25) God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; {25} Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;**
6. **(1 Cor 8:3-6) But if any man love God, the same is known of him. {4} As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. {5} For though there be that are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) {6} But to us there is but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.**
7. **(Eph 4:6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**
8. **Some attributes of the true God as revealed in the Bible**
	1. Exclusivity
		1. **(Isa 44:6) Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ me there is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God.**
	2. Omnipotent
		1. **(Job 42:2) I know that thou canst do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.**
	3. Transcending man in every way
		1. **(Isa 55:9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than your ways, and my thoughts than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ thoughts.**
	4. Triune (one God in three persons, not three Gods)
		1. **(1 John 5:7) For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
	5. Spiritual being
		1. **(John 4:24) God is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.**
	6. Eternal
		1. **(Deu 32:40) For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for ever.**
	7. Changeless
		1. **(Mal 3:6) For I am the LORD, I change \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.**
	8. Holy
		1. **(Isa 6:3) And one cried unto another, and said, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.**
	9. Loving
		1. **(1 John 4:8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
	10. Perfect
		1. **(Mat 5:48) Be ye therefore \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**
9. **CONTRASTING- (false) - concepts of God by various groups**
	1. Mormons (Latter-day Saints)
		1. God the Father was once a man, he has a physical body; no trinity; there is a heavenly Mother; worthy men may become gods themselves someday
	2. Jehovah's Witnesses
		1. No trinity; Jesus was the first thing Jehovah created
	3. Unification Church (Moonies)
		1. God is positive and negative; the universe is God's "body;" God does not know the future; God needs man to make him happy; no trinity
	4. Christian Science
		1. God is the impersonal "Principle of life, truth, love, intelligence, and spirit;" God is all that truly exists, (matter is an illusion)
	5. Unity School of Christianity (Unitarians)
		1. No trinity; "God" is interchangeable with "Principle," "Law," "Being," "Mind," "Spirit;" God is in everything, much as the soul is in the body; spirit is reality, matter is not
	6. Scientology (Dianetics)
		1. Does not define God, but rejects the Biblical description of God. Everyone is a "thetan," an immortal spirit with unlimited powers over its own universe, but not all are aware of this
	7. New Age (mixture of Hindu, Native American, astrology, Buddhist, and Taoist writings)
		1. Everything and everyone is God. God is an impersonal force or principle, not a person. People have unlimited inner power and need to discover it
	8. Judaism
		1. No trinity; God is personal, all powerful, eternal and compassionate
	9. Hinduism
		1. God is "The Absolute," a universal spirit. Everyone is part of God (Brahman) like drops in the sea. People worship manifestations of Brahman (gods and goddesses). People are God, but they are unaware of it.
	10. Hare Krishna (Iskcon)
		1. God is Lord Krishna; the souls of all living things are part of him. Writings say Krishna once divided himself into 16, 308 forms to mate with 16,308 female cowherds.
	11. Transcendental Meditation
		1. Each part of creation makes up "God" (Brahman) Supreme being is not personal. All creation is divine; "all is one."
	12. Buddhism
		1. Mostly atheistic; some speak of the Buddha as a universal enlightened consciousness or as a god. Goal of life is Nirvana, to eliminate all cravings or desires. Use the "Eightfold Path" to free Buddhists from desiring anything.
	13. Islam
		1. God (Allah) is one. God revealed the Koran to Mohammed through the angel Gabriel. God is a severe judge, seldom depicted as loving Jesus is only one of 124,000 prophets sent by God to various cultures; Jesus is not divine or God Himself
	14. Bahai World Faith
		1. God is an unknowable divine being who has revealed himself through nine "manifestations" (religious leaders) including Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammed, and Baha'u'llah. Jesus is not God and did not rise from the dead. Jesus has returned to earth in the form of Baha'u'llah.
	15. ***Bible Christianity (To wash your mind out from all that blasphemous rubbish)***
		1. **(Isa 42:8) I am the LORD: that is \_\_\_\_\_\_ name: and my glory will I not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to another, neither my praise to graven images.**
10. **conclusions**
	1. All of the major religions in the world have a ***different*** concept of who God is.
		1. We have only glanced at some of the major differences about the Godhead. If we were to give a companion list of the various teachings about Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, pre-existence, omnipotence, etc., the differences would be equally striking.
	2. Not only are there "some" differences, ***the discrepancies are irreconcilable.***
		1. God cannot be both eternal and finite; He cannot be "from the beginning" and have a date of origination.
		2. God cannot be both personal and impersonal, by definition of terms he must be one or the other.
		3. God cannot be both creator and part of His creation. Either He was before all things or he came into existence with all things
		4. God cannot both "have a physical body" and "not have a physical body."
		5. God cannot be omnipotent and subject to His creation; either He is over all or under all, but not both
		6. God cannot exist as a trinity and at the same time be not triune. One or the other is wrong.
		7. God cannot be the SAVIOUR of the world and man be the savior of the world. Either we are saved by God or we are saved by human effort, both cannot be simultaneously true.
	3. Those who claim that "We all basically worship the same God" are displaying their ignorance of the teachings of the various groups.
		1. This comes partly from a lack of teaching on the world religions and various cults
		2. This claim also arises from those who are hesitant to stand against false doctrine. For the sake of unity, they would prefer to accentuate the places where various religions have common beliefs than to face the obvious differences.
		3. Most people who are lost want to believe that others who sincerely practice a religion must be acceptable in the sight of God. This is absolute heresy.
			1. **(1 Tim 4:13) Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
			2. **(Isa 8:20) To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in them.**
	4. The Roman Catholic Church has "co-existed" with these false doctrines for many years. This is commonly known, and easily documented in many of their writings.
		1. They allow heathen tribes to practice witchcraft and spirit worship as long as they also observe the "mass"
		2. They are opening "dialog" with Muslims around the world
		3. They openly promote the World Council of Churches and other groups that are trying to minimize doctrinal differences
		4. The whole situation is complicated by recent compromises prevalent in our day
			1. Billy Graham is an evangelical (former Baptist evangelist) who has Catholic priests on his program.
			2. Jack Van Impe (a former Baptist evangelist) promotes the Pope sometimes.
			3. Many formerly fundamental pastors are joining and promoting groups like "Promise Keepers," whose theme song at their most recent pastor's conference was "Breaking Down the Walls"
			4. The modern Bible versions and contemporary rock music both contribute to doctrinal impurity. They are becoming increasingly popular in many churches.
	5. The Bible-believing Christian is faced with a choice: Stand against heresy and false religions, or compromise for the sake of unity. It becomes increasingly difficult to even tell who is really saved in evangelical groups any more. May God help us to stand up and proclaim boldly:
	6. **(Deu 32:31) For their rock is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.**