



Church of God Sunday School

WHO IS GOD TO YOU?

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Who is God to others? (Exodus 5:1-2; Acts 9:1-5; John 3:1-2; Luke 18:18).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Jesus asked His disciples an important question (Matthew 16:13-14; Mark 8:27-28).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** "Whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15-17; Mark 8:29).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Satan's purpose is to deceive (Genesis 3:1-5; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:14).
- ❑ **Friday:** The truth is revealed to the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-29).
- ❑ **Saturday:** It is a blessing to truly know God (Jeremiah 9:23-24; 31:33-34).

MEMORY VERSE: *"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* —Matthew 16:15-16

Perception and Reality



The sixteenth President of the United States (Abraham Lincoln) has been considered by many to be the greatest President our country has ever had. Words used to describe him have included: *honest, humble, good communicator, patient, determined, and intelligent*. Some of his nicknames were "Honest Abe" and "The Great Emancipator." Yet, this man who was so loved by many people was hated by others. Those people often used words like *fool, coward, idiot, and weak* when describing Abraham Lincoln. He was so despised that some newspapers went so far as to suggest that he should be assassinated (and eventually he was). How could such different perceptions be of the same man?

If you were to take a survey and ask people "Who is God to you?" perhaps you would be surprised at the variety of answers. Some people believe God is like a loving but indulgent grandfather (very little discipline and lots of gifts). Others see God as a Santa Claus (if you are good, you will be rewarded; if you are bad, you will get nothing). Still others believe God is like a harsh taskmaster (nothing you do is good enough).

Some feel God is like an absentee father (not around much, expects you to make it on your own).

There is only one God, so why is there such a large variety of ideas concerning who God is? Also, why is your perception of God so important? Some people say it is not important what you believe about God as long as you are sincere. Is that true? Your understanding of who God is will determine the spiritual path you take. Consider it like this: perception is the lenses of your eyeglasses and reality is what you are looking at. If your lenses are dirty or cracked or if you have the wrong prescription, how is your vision of the things in front of you? No doubt, you will see things blurry and distorted, or you may even see things that are not there. You will be more likely to misstep, fall down, and perhaps even go in the wrong direction. The problem is not with reality but with your perception.

Whom Do Others Say God Is?

Throughout the Bible you can read of many examples of people not realizing who God truly is. When Moses told Pharaoh the words of God, Pharaoh said: "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2). On the road to Damascus, Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?"

(Acts 9:5). Nicodemus called Jesus "Rabbi . . . a teacher come from God" (John 3:2), and the rich young ruler called Him, "Good Master" (Luke 18:18).

In Matthew 16:13 Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" This question was asked when they were on the "coasts of Caesarea Philippi," an area filled with many temples and gods. Jesus' disciples answered the question, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias [Elijah]; and others, Jeremias [Jeremiah], or one of the prophets." Although all of these were great men, the people had failed to see Jesus as He truly was. It was one thing for the disciples to tell Jesus what others thought of Him, but then Jesus made the question more personal: "But whom say ye that I am?" (verse 15). The disciples had traveled with Jesus, heard Him teach, and saw the miracles. Whom did they think Jesus really was? Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This was a bold statement, for the Jews believed to say such a thing was to claim Jesus was God Himself.

The Devil Will Try to Confuse You

Do not trust your human perception. Some people have had terrible things happen to them. The devil will use those situations to try and distort their vision of who God is. He will say things like, "If God really loved you, that would not have happened" or "What kind of a God would let bad things happen to good people?" or "Where was God when things went wrong?" It is the devil's purpose to keep you from God in any way that he can. If he can convince you to believe his lies about God, he will keep you from having a beautiful relationship with God, from becoming a Christian, and from someday making Heaven your home.

Knowing God Is More than a Perception or Belief



When Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well, she said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet" (John 4:19). However, by the time she returned to the city, she was telling people, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (verse 29). What changed her understanding of who Jesus truly is? She had spent time with Jesus. When Peter boldly declared Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus told him, "Blessed art thou . . . for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

It is important that you have more than just a belief or knowledge concerning who God is. Evil spirits and devils "believe [in God], and tremble" (James 2:19). When in the synagogue in Capernaum, a man with an unclean spirit cried out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). Simply believing is not enough. You must put actions to your belief.

There are some things you can do to truly discover who God is. One thing you can do is talk to people who know Him. Ask them questions, like "How do you know God is real?" and "What does God mean to you?" When the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's God-given wisdom, she traveled perhaps as far as 1500 miles to the city of Jerusalem where Solomon lived to see if what she had heard was true (1 Kings, Chapter 10). The afflicted woman in Mark, Chapter 5, "heard of Jesus" (verse 27), and she believed she could be healed. Then she put actions to her belief and pressed through the crowd to touch Jesus' garment. These two women first heard about God; then, they did something about it. This also shows the power of a personal testimony. Listen to what people who truly know God have to say about Him, and in time you can also be a light to people who are searching for God.



Something else you will need to do as you search for God is talk to Him. Just as Saul did in Acts 9:5, ask God to tell you who He is. Begin to earnestly search for Him. He has promised that "when ye shall search for me with all your heart. . . I will be found of you" (Jeremiah 29:13-14). God has promised that when you seek Him, you will find that "he [is] not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). In the busy, noisy world in which we live, find a quiet place to seek God. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

Bible Quiz



1.) It has been said that you become like the people you spend the most time with. How does that statement relate to your understanding of who God is and His plan for your life?

2.) What factors might have determined the different perceptions people had of Abraham Lincoln?

3.) What factors might contribute to the different viewpoints people have of who God is?

4.) Why is it important that you know God for who He truly is?

5.) Give examples from the lesson of names and titles people used when describing Jesus:

6.) How did Peter know Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God"?

7.) During his trial Job had many questions about why God allowed him to suffer. But what did Job say about God in Job 42:2?

8.) What are some "actions" you should take when learning who God really is?

Who Is God to You?

Ask this question of someone you can tell knows God.

Write his or her answer on the left side of the book below.

Then write down who God is to you on the right.

Compare the two.

**If one has known God (been saved and serving Him) for a long time,
how might their answer differ from yours?**

