

# The One True and Living God

***“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”***  
**—Deuteronomy 6:4**

**NEARLY TWENTY CENTU-**ries ago the Apostle Paul wrote, “There is no God but One. For even if there are so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as there are, indeed, a vast number of gods and lords—yet for us there is but one God, the Father, who is the source of all things and the goal of our living, and but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom everything was made and through whom we live.” (I Cor. 8:4-6, *Williams New Testament*) The situation today is still the same. Among the world’s religions, there are many gods and lords worshipped by the people, and most professed Christians worship three gods, while claiming that the three are somehow one.

It is clear from the Old Testament that the ancient servants of God, beginning with Abel, believed that there was but one true and living God—the Creator of the universe, and the sustainer of all life. The Creator informed Moses and the ancient Israelites that his name was “Jehovah,” meaning the self-existing, or eternal one. (Exod. 6:3) Moses testified

that the almighty Heavenly Father is “the eternal God.”—Deut. 33:27

In Isaiah 42:8, God declares, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” In the *King James Version* of the Old Testament, there are many places where the name “Jehovah” appears in the Hebrew manuscripts but is not so rendered in the English text. Rather, the name “LORD,” in capital letters, is the translated name. This is the case in the verse just quoted. To know this is a valuable help to all careful students of the Bible, for thus we know that the English word LORD is translated from the word Jehovah in the Hebrew, and, therefore, both refer to the same being—the one true God.

In the foregoing text, God explains that he will not give his glory to another. This is verified throughout the Scriptures. For example, at the time of his resurrection Jesus was exalted to a very high position of honor and glory, to the “right hand of the throne of God.” However, Paul explains, this was “to the glory of God the Father.” (Heb. 12:2; Phil. 2:9-11) Explaining further, Paul wrote, “The scripture says, God put all things under his feet. It is clear, of course, that the words ‘all things’ do not include God himself, who puts all things under Christ.”—I Cor. 15:27, *Good News Bible*

God, the Creator, does not hesitate to bestow glory and honor upon those who prove worthy of it. Indeed, Adam was crowned with earthly glory and honor when created, but then failed to prove worthy of maintaining this high position of favor in the Heavenly Father’s family of those created in his

image. God has similarly bestowed honor upon his holy angels, and has anointed his beloved Son Jesus “with the oil of gladness” above his “fellows.”—Ps. 8:5; Heb. 1:9

Our Heavenly Father has additionally promised to exalt the faithful footstep followers of Jesus to a high position of honor and glory in the Messianic kingdom. Jesus confirmed this in a promise to these in which he said, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”—Rev. 3:21

While the Creator is unselfish in bestowing honor and glory upon his people, he does not share his own glory with anyone, not even with the highly exalted and glorified Jesus. In the text quoted earlier, God declares, “My glory will I not give to another.” Our finite minds, however, can grasp only in a very limited manner all that is implied by his expression, “My glory.” Indeed, we cannot understand it at all with regard to his appearance and nature, for “no man hath seen God at any time.”—I John 4:12

The Bible speaks of the “eyes of the LORD,” and tells us that “his ears are open” to our cry. (Ps. 34:15) It speaks of his face, arms, hands and feet. However, the use of these expressions in association with God must be understood as symbolic, not literal. They do not imply that the great Creator of the universe is similar in bodily form and appearance to his human creatures. They signify, rather, that, as our maker, he knows everything about us, and can relate to every feature of the human body, mind, and character through his infinite power and wisdom.

We are not to suppose that God's knowledge and ability are limited to matters concerning his own servants on earth. He knows what is happening throughout the whole world and is able to overrule the course of events according to his will and purpose. Because this is true, we may be assured that the evil in the world is not by his planning and instigation. Rather, he has permitted it, because his wisdom knows that it will result in rich blessings to all those who ultimately will be properly educated by it.

## **GOD'S GLORIOUS CHARACTER**

Though we are not enlightened as to God's bodily form we can know about the glory of his character. This is revealed to us through his Word and the plan of salvation contained in its pages. The central attributes of the Creator's character which combine and harmonize in all his eternal purposes and plans, and which form his glory, are his wisdom, justice, love and power.

The Prophet Isaiah inquired, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40:13,14) The obvious answer to these questions is that no one has taught God, the great Creator of the universe, for he is the fountain and source of all knowledge.

The wisdom of God is displayed in all his creative works. The psalmist wrote, "How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what he has done! Each day announces it to the following

day; each night repeats it to the next. No speech or words are used, no sound is heard.”—Ps. 19:1-3, *GNB*

Not only in the heavens do we see the wisdom of the Creator displayed. Closer to us, and on every side, we see manifestations of his infinite wisdom. We see it in every flower, in every blade of grass, and in the innumerable other works of nature with which we are surrounded. How irrational it is to ascribe all the marvelous works of creation to mere chance. Truly, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”—Ps. 14:1

It is in the plan of God for the redemption and recovery of the human race from sin and death that we find the greatest display of his wisdom. This plan is based on the fact that one man, Adam, was made the responsible head of the human race. Upon his creation by God, Adam was placed on probation and given an opportunity to prove his worthiness to enjoy the blessings of everlasting life and dominion over the earth, which were given to him by his Creator.

Lacking that wisdom which can be acquired by God’s creatures only by experience, Adam failed the test, but God had already planned his redemption through another man—“the man Christ Jesus.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) Adam partook of the literal fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (Gen. 2:8,9,16,17; 3:17-19) From that moment onward, he and all his progeny have been gaining a knowledge of evil in all its terrible forms. This has been permitted by divine wisdom for mankind’s ultimate profit.

Adam’s lesson and experience with sin and evil will be of benefit to him when awakened from the sleep of death amidst the righteous conditions of

Christ's kingdom which will soon come on earth. It will be then that the wisdom which is displayed in the divine permission of evil will be seen, appreciated, and be of inestimable value to Adam. Indeed, the entire human race, which came from his loins, will likewise profit from their experience with evil.—Rom. 5:12,18,19; 11:32,33; I Cor. 15:21,22

## **GOD'S JUSTICE**

“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne,” we read in Psalm 89:14. The throne is a symbol of God's rulership and control over the affairs of his vast universe. His rulership is based upon justice. It is never unjust. However, the justice of the Creator can be understood and appreciated only in the light of the wisdom displayed in his great plan of salvation for the human race.

To see an innocent child suffer and die through no wrongdoing of his own, when we know that God could prevent it, does not in itself seem just. However, when we know that the child, and all seemingly innocent victims of evil, are to be awakened from the sleep of death and receive compensating blessings; and that through the endless ages of eternity, all who have suffered because of the reign of sin and death will thereby have their joys increased, then we can understand.—Isa. 35:10; Hos. 13:14; Rev. 21:3-5

Justice is equity, and we see the justice of God displayed in the redemption that is provided through Christ Jesus. He was “made flesh” for the “suffering of death, ... that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (John 1:14; Heb. 2:9) The Greek word used by the Apostle Paul to describe

the operation of God's justice in connection with the redemption of Adam and his race from death is one which means "a price to correspond," and is translated "ransom." Thus the apostle wrote, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all."—I Tim. 2:5,6

## **THE LOVE OF GOD**

The justice of God can be seen in its true light only when viewed in conjunction with his love. In I John 4:16, we read that "God is love." The greatest display of this love is recorded in John 3:16, where we read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here the teachings of the Bible break with human tradition, which considers God to be harsh, unyielding in his justice, and without mercy. The belief is that Jesus, being kind and loving, stepped in and appeased the wrath of God so that man might have life. This is quite out of harmony with the Scriptures which, as in the text just quoted, reveal that it was God himself who, in keeping with his love, sent his Son to be the Redeemer and Savior of mankind.

In the text cited earlier which states that "justice and judgment" are the habitation of God's throne, we also read that "mercy and truth" shall go "before his face." In the plan of God for human salvation and redemption through Christ we see a marvelous blending of the two principles, justice and love. While justice demanded the payment of a price for human sin, love provided that payment, so that

God could be both “just, and the justifier” of all who come to him through Christ.—Rom. 3:26

## **DIVINE POWER**

The one true and living God is omnipotent in his power. Because of this, the Scriptures refer to him as being the Almighty. In an assurance of divine care for the people of God we read concerning him, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Ps. 91:1) Paul had confidence in this promise, and wrote, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”—Rom. 8:31

The power of God always operates in harmony with his wisdom, justice and love. If God were powerless, the plans devised by his wisdom would be of no value, and the blessings provided by his justice and love would go undistributed. It is the power of God which implements the various aspects of his plan of salvation and carries them through to completion.

God’s plan of salvation calls for an awakening of those who sleep in death, and only divine power is able to restore the dead to life. We have an outstanding demonstration of this in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Tradition would have us believe that Jesus himself broke the bands of death which held him in the tomb, but the Bible does not agree with this. Concerning Jesus’ resurrection, Peter said, “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”—Acts 2:24

The Apostle Paul wrote concerning the “exceeding greatness” of God’s power “which he wrought



in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 1:19,20) In the outworking of the divine plan the “exceeding greatness” of God’s power continues to operate. In order for his plan to reach completion, there must be the resurrection of the footstep followers of Jesus to live and reign with him in his kingdom, and then the resurrection of all mankind from the sleep of death.—Rev. 20:4,6; Acts 24:15

## **GOD’S PROTECTION AND CARE**

The power of God has been exercised on behalf of his people in all ages. There were the many miracles in connection with the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in the land of Egypt. There was the deliverance of the three Hebrew captives in Babylon from the fiery furnace, as well as the deliverance of Daniel from the mouths of the lions.—Exod. 15:1-6; Dan. 3:27-29; 6:25-27

In Jesus’ day the power of God was employed by him for healing the sick and raising the dead. In a less spectacular way, but of great importance, God’s power sustained Jesus, giving him strength to endure the hardships inflicted upon him by his enemies. In every time of need the power of God’s Holy Spirit filled the mind and heart of the Master, and by it he was comforted and made strong.—Matt. 3:16,17; Luke 4:14,15; John 3:34,35

The Holy Spirit, or invisible power of God, came upon the waiting church at Pentecost. Suddenly the apostles were able to speak in languages formerly unknown to them. This enabled them to accomplish the divine purpose of witnessing the Gospel to the visiting Jews in Jerusalem who had gone there from

many parts of the then known world to commemorate one of the yearly feasts of Israel.—Acts 2:1-11

Throughout the entire age since then, the power of God's Holy Spirit has continued to operate in the lives of his people, those who have dedicated themselves to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. As with Jesus, it has sustained them in their trials, and enabled them to be overcomers in this world of selfishness and sin. While the worldly-minded have not understood, every faithful follower of the Master has been a miracle of grace, one that has been wrought by the indwelling of God's power through his Spirit.—Rom. 15:13; Eph. 1:13,14

## **GOD'S GLORY**

God's power is always utilized at the direction of divine wisdom which, in turn, plans all things in keeping with God's justice and love. It is the perfect and harmonious blending of these four attributes of the divine character that constitutes the glory of God which will soon fill the earth. "The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."—Isa. 40:5

The traditional concept of the glory of God is quite different from that presented to us in the Scriptures. Millions hold to the tradition that God's glory is revealed by the idea that those who die in unbelief are eternally consigned to torment in a fiery hell. What a distortion this is of the truths as presented to us in the Bible.

In the first place, it is contrary to the principle of justice, a divine law of equity which is expressed in the Bible by the expression, "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."

(Exod. 21:23,24; Deut. 19:21) How far removed from this simple formula is the teaching that divine justice is satisfied only when a person suffers excruciating pain in the torments of hell for all eternity, as punishment for a few years of unbelief and wrongdoing during the present short span of life.

This tradition is also contrary to the principles of divine love and mercy. The Bible informs us that man was created in the image of God. This of necessity must mean that the qualities of mercy and love so often displayed by the average human being must be a reflection of the divine image which has come to them from their first parents, Adam and Eve. Because of these qualities, humans will not, normally, inflict torture even upon one of the lower animals, much less upon their fellowman. Yet tradition says that God, who is the very embodiment of mercy and love, will torture unbelievers eternally.

Human traditions also do violence to the infinite wisdom of God. One example is in connection with the teachings of the Bible with respect to the world's future day of judgment. Tradition teaches that the eternal destiny of every individual is fixed at death. However, realizing that the Bible teaches that there will be a future day of judgment, a further theory was developed that saints will be returned from heaven and sinners from torment. All will be caused to pass before the judgment seat of God to have their good and evil deeds rehearsed before them, only to be re-sentenced to either eternal bliss or torment. No useful purpose will have been served, since all will be returned to the places assigned to them when they died. All of this, according to tradition, is to be accomplished in a literal twenty-four hour day.

The almighty power of God has also been defamed by the traditions of men. Many claim that God wanted his people to convert the world to Christ, beginning at Pentecost, and, by doing so, usher in an era of universal and lasting peace and happiness. Although a noble purpose, the fact is that the world has not been converted, and peace has not been established. This means, if tradition is true, that God lacks the power to accomplish his purposes, a supposition which is unthinkable in the light of the testimony furnished in the Word of God.

Only as we accept the teachings of the Bible alone and ignore all human tradition with respect to the divine purpose for human redemption and salvation, do we find exemplified the truth of God's character and plan. The Scriptures plainly tell us that God is infinitely wise and just, also that he is merciful, loving and powerful, and fully capable of carrying out his wise, just and loving plans for the salvation and eternal happiness of his human creatures.

This divine plan of salvation is carried out through God's beloved Son, who, because of his work of sacrifice on behalf of mankind, is called the "Lamb of God." (John 1:29) When the salvation of mankind through the Lamb is fully accomplished, and the knowledge of the glory of God fills the earth, then will be fulfilled the prophetic words of John the Revelator. "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, ... and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Rev. 5:13

Let us, then, look forward to the time when all mankind will join together in harmonious voice to

sing the song, “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear [reverence] thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”—Rev. 15:3,4 ■

*“He telleth the number of the stars;  
he calleth them all by their names.  
Great is our Lord, and of great power:  
his understanding is infinite.  
The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him,  
in those that hope in his mercy.  
Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem;  
praise thy God, O Zion.  
Psalm 147:4,5,11,12*