



GOOD NEWS GUIDE

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

September, 2016

Perspective

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

One morning recently the sky was covered with clouds, white ones nearby and darker gray ones in the distance. One area was like a mosaic, with the sun shining strongly through cracks between individual patches of cloud, creating a bright network of lines. It was interesting and quite beautiful.



I thought of how differently we see the sun, depending on our situation and perspective. When the sky is covered completely by dark clouds, we can't even tell where the sun is behind them. When there are no clouds, we need protection against the burning heat and light the sun gives off. In the early morning or the late evening the sun often turns layers and banks of distant clouds into astonishingly lovely skylines.

But the sun doesn't change. It continuously gives off its light and heat, not only toward earth but in all directions. We experience it in many different ways, depending on the season, the time of day, and the condition of the sky where we are.

Our experience of God is like that in some ways. God is unchanging. His total wisdom, His absolute power, His fantastic creativity, His mind-blowing love for His weak, wayward, rebellious human creatures—all of these are constant and consistent, and have been, and always will be.



It's a matter of perspective. When things are going well, we may recognize God's hand of blessing and be thankful. When things go badly we tend to think He has abandoned us

or, even worse, He may be punishing us for our sins. When we pray for something and then get it, it seems that God is smiling on us; when we don't get the answer we wanted, we may doubt God's love or His power or even His existence. Singing a hymn in church, it's easy to feel that God is near. When we abandon church and prayer, we feel lost—but God has not moved and He has not changed.

The way to have the right perspective on God is to understand and believe what the Bible says about Him. The Bible is God's usual means of revealing Himself to us. I have listed some Scripture passages on Page 3 that may help you to see God from a better perspective.



Like my observation about the sun, we tend to see ourselves from behind the "cloud cover" of our own self-interest—our own situation, history, culture, surroundings, desires, fears, hopes, and frustrations. We need to see ourselves also from God's perspective.

What does God see when He looks at you or me? He sees one who has been created "a little lower than God," and crowned "with glory and honor." (Psalm 8:3) But He also sees our flaws—our selfishness; our failure or outright refusal to obey His commandments; our self-centeredness and lack of love.

The Apostle Paul saw himself from God's perspective. (Read Romans 7:14-25) Even though he was such a great warrior and worker for the Gospel, he was not able to keep himself from sinning. He needed to be rescued from his own sinful nature.

That's how God sees you and me. Created a little lower than God, crowned with glory and honor, destined to reign with Christ forever in Heaven—and yet horribly stained and

disfigured by sin; desperately needing to be rescued by a Savior.

Consider yourself objectively. Are you the smartest person in the world? Are you the most valuable human being in any way at all? No, you're not. (At least I'm sure that I am not.)

Are you smart enough to give God advice about how to manage the universe? No? How about running the country—do you know the answers to all the hard questions?

If you're like me, you don't even know how to manage your own life properly. And when you know what you should do, often you don't do it.

God knows all about your actions, your failures to act, even your thoughts. And He cares. You might think, with about 7.4 billion souls alive on earth today, there would be some that He simply wouldn't care about. Maybe He would just let you or me slip through the cracks, along with a few million others, without caring very much.

Not so. He cares very much for you, for me, and for every single human being that He has created. Jesus put it this way: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6-7) He wants only good for us: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Many of you who read these words are discouraged. In the past you have caused heartache and serious difficulty, not only for yourselves but for your family and others. You need to see yourself as God sees you. "I love you," He says. "You are precious to me. I have plans for your life even now—plans to give you hope and a future." He urges you to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), knowing that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6)



Let me rephrase this, to be sure that you get it. No matter how messed up your life has been up to now, God sees you as His precious son or daughter, created in His image, destined for the Kingdom. But you are also a work in progress—a lump of clay in His hands, being molded into a vessel that He can use for His glory. In order to realize the beautiful destiny He has planned for you, you need to trust Him, turn over control of everything to Him, and let Him run the show. As Romans 12:1 says, "offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." And as often as you stray from this attitude of sacrifice and surrender, start over and do it again.

But you can't, of course. Not without help. Jesus said, "apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) That's a primary reason for His sending the Holy Spirit. Thus He could say, "I am with you always."

Now for those of you who don't have serious mess-ups in your past (and I guess that includes me), the same words apply, of course. Your past actions may not have been so obviously damaging, but there has been plenty of occasion for God to shake His head sadly over your behavior.

All of us—every single one—have sinned and fallen far short of the glory with which God created us. Like Paul, we need to be rescued from the "body of death." We need a Savior.

God sees us from His perspective, and He knows completely who we are, and what we are, and what we need. And so Jesus came and showed us what God's love is all about, as He gave himself to the shame and agony of scourging, and the excruciating pain of death by crucifixion.

If we see ourselves from God's perspective, we see ourselves as nothing and less than nothing; as wayward creatures who are totally worthless, except for one simple fact: God loves us, and for some reason He wants us to be with Him eternally, to share in His glory. That makes all the difference.

Grace and Peace—YOU ARE LOVED!.

Brother Roland

What the Bible Says about GOD

Genesis 1:1,14 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Psalms 147:4 He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Romans 1:20 His ... eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

Psalms 102:25-27 Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain ... they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am."

Isaiah 44:6 Thus says the ... Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god."

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

1 Corinthians 8:4b We know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one."

John 4:24 "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

Psalms 145:3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

Isaiah 6:3 One [of the seraphim] called to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Exodus 15:11 Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

Job 11:7-9 Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Ephesians 1:9-10 ... the mystery of his will, ... which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

1 Corinthians 2:11 ... no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Malachi 3:6 For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

1 Timothy 1:17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Colossians 1:15 [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

John 5:26 As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

1 Timothy 2:5 There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

1 Timothy 6:15 ... the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more ... shall we be saved by his life.

Ephesians 1:5-6a In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace.

Comments and questions may be sent to
Brother Roland
PO Box 14
Fayetteville PA 17222

Holiness

Part of God's plan for us is that we should be holy: "As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:15-16) And with the guidance and powerful help of the Holy Spirit, we can be.

Puzzle:

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Words:

* HOLINESS IS:

A LIFELONG PROCESS
BECOMING LIKE JESUS
BELONGING TO GOD
BEING SET APART
CARING
COMMANDED
COMMUNION
ETERNAL DELIGHT
FAITHFULNESS
FORGIVING
FREEDOM FROM SIN
FULLNESS OF JOY
GENTLENESS

GIVING
GOD'S WORK IN US
GODLINESS
GOODNESS
JOY
LIGHT
LIVING SACRIFICE
LONG-SUFFERING
LOVE
MEEKNESS
MORAL PURITY
OBEDIENCE
OUR TRUE GOAL
PEACE

PRAISE
PROMISED
RESTING IN THE LORD
SANCTIFICATION
SELF-CONTROL
SERVING
SONSHIP
SPIRITUAL WORSHIP
SURRENDER
THE DIVINE NATURE
TRANSFORMATION
WHOLENESS
WORSHIP