

**“To Whom Then Will Ye Liken God? ... saith the Holy One.”  
(Part II Verses 10-31)**

*Who is God?* This question has been asked throughout time. Coming to know God is a personal endeavor, and a personal choice. From the beginning, most of Adam and Eve’s children chose to believe Satan, “and loved Satan more than God” (Moses 5:13). When Eve was pregnant with Cain, she hoped that he would be an exception, but “Cain hearkened not, saying: Who is the Lord that I should know him?” (Moses 5:16). Unfortunately, many follow Cain’s attitude today, dismissing God with a callous disregard, never seeking to know - or follow - Him.

Despite their rejection of the Lord, mankind is nevertheless drawn to set their hearts upon, or worship, *something*, and so it is that idol worship of one kind or another has existed as long as man has. Modern revelation teaches us that:

They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall” (D&C 1:16).

Why has there always been such confusion about God? Why do so many people use so many different names for “God” today? Are they all worshipping the same Being? Why don’t people realize and understand that they are the literal offspring of Elohim, and that, as children of God, they are fore-ordained to become like Him?

The Lord has never sought to keep His identity a secret from His children: “Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?” the Lord asks His people (Isaiah 40:21). Yes! He has made these things known from the beginning, but His children turn away from knowing Him, and therefore, turn away from knowing the truth about themselves, as well.

Joseph Smith taught these important principles about the nature of God:

Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

- First, the idea that he actually exists.
- Secondly, a **correct** idea of his character, perfections, and attributes.
- Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will.” (Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith* 3:38)

Having shown, ... that correct ideas of the character of God are necessary in order to the exercise of faith in him unto life and salvation; and that without correct ideas of his character the minds of men could not have sufficient power with God to the exercise of faith necessary to the enjoyment of eternal life; and that correct ideas of his character lay a foundation, as far as his character is concerned, for the exercise of faith, so as to

enjoy the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even that of eternal glory; we shall now proceed to show the connection there is between correct ideas of the attributes of God, and the exercise of faith in him unto eternal life.

Let us here observe, that the real design which the God of heaven had in view in making the human family acquainted with his attributes, was, that they, through the ideas of the existence of his attributes, might be enabled to exercise faith in him, and through the exercise of faith in him, might obtain eternal life (Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith* 4:49 *Emphasis added*).

Bruce R. McConkie added:

There is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal. He has all power, all might, and all dominion. There is no power he does not possess and no truth he does not know. Every good thing dwells in him independently in its eternal fullness. He is the Creator, Upholder, and Preserver of all things. His name is Elohim, and he is our Father in heaven, the literal Father of the spirits of all men. He has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's, and is in fact a resurrected and glorified Person. The name of the kind of life he lives is eternal life; and eternal life, by definition and in its nature, consists of life in an eternal family unit and of the possession of the fullness of the glory and power of the Father (Bruce R. McConkie, May 1977 *Ensign*, p. 12).

Brigham Young also explained:

If any of us could now see the God we are striving to serve – if we could see our Father who dwells in the heavens, we should learn that we are as well acquainted with him as we are with our earthly father; and he would be as familiar to us in the expression of his countenance and we should be ready to embrace him and fall upon his neck and kiss him, if we had the privilege. And still we, unless the vision of the Spirit is opened to us, know nothing about God. You know much about him, if you did but realize it. And there is no other one item that will so astound you, when your eyes are opened in eternity, as to think that you were so stupid in the body (Brigham Young, *JD*, 8:30).

Isaiah 40:9 gives the instruction to “lift up thy voice . . . [and] say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” Taken at its simplest interpretation, we may be tempted to explain that this instruction pertains specifically to Judah not recognizing Jesus as her Messiah. We may then want to turn to Zechariah, chapters 12-13, and point out that Jesus, as Lord, will stand upon the Mount of Olives, and deliver the Jews out of the hands of their enemies. It is at that time, Zechariah teaches us, that the Jews will recognize Jesus as the One they rejected and wounded (Zech. 13:6). “Behold your God!” some may want to pointedly proclaim at that moment . . . but, if that is the way we are picturing it, we are blinding ourselves to the reality of our own shortcomings. Elder Neal A. Maxwell reminded us that in that day, no one will be able to stand, as all will kneel in trembling before the Lord (see “Why Not Now?” October 1974 Conference). Regardless of where our personal “Mount of Olives” encounter will take place, it is assured that at that moment, we will be aware of how much we did not understand or embrace in our own knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ.

Although the Lord tells us to not be afraid of testifying “Behold your God!” to Judah, and all nations, we must humbly prepare and qualify ourselves to be worthy of sharing that message by first worshipping God in truth, and in His temple (Isa. 40:9), and establishing a personal relationship with Him. “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men” the Lord has promised (D&C 11:21).

The sacred truths about who God is, His character and His characteristics, as well as His Plan and His work, have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The fact that these precious truths were lost is testament to the foibles of men, as the Lord, Himself, has sought to make them clear from the beginning of time.

Through Isaiah, the Lord questions His people, and invites them to compare Him to themselves, and to their idols. Men are like grass, the Lord declares. They vanish away, and their works vanish with them, but His works are eternal, and stand forever. The idols are simply the works of men’s hands, as fleeting and non-substantial as the hands that made them. The Lord “blows” upon them, and they wither away (see Isa. 40:6-8).

Isaiah reveals a multi-dimensional God. The complexity and majesty of His nature is revealed in these verses:

O, Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain;  
O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings,  
lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid;  
say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand,  
and his arm shall rule for him:  
behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd:  
he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom,  
and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,  
and meted out heaven with the span,  
and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,  
and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? (Isa. 40:9-12)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained in his video segment, “Christ and the Cosmos:”

This magnificent, far-reaching telescope is deliberately situated above the smog so this powerful instrument can better probe the galaxies. So it is with life and seeing by the lens of faith. If we are to see things more clearly, we too must lift ourselves above the secular smog. Then, in the words of the hymn, we can ‘in awesome wonder consider

all the worlds [God's] hands have made,' and 'see God's power throughout the universe displayed.' Otherwise, we will be kept from probing Jesus' Universal Gospel and from seeing things as they really are.

Nevertheless, by viewing the stretching cosmos, we can humbly contemplate the vastness of divine handiwork. Long before he was born in Bethlehem, and became known as Jesus of Nazareth, our Savior was Jehovah. Way back then, under the direction of the Father, Christ was the Lord of the Universe who created worlds without number, of which ours is only one. How many planets are there in the universe with people on them? We don't know, but we are not alone in the universe! God is not the God of only one planet! (from film vignette, Neal A. Maxwell, Christ and the Cosmos).

At another time, Elder Maxwell said:

Therefore, in the expansiveness of space, there is stunning personalness, for God knows and loves each of us! We are not ciphers in unexplained space! While the Psalmist's query was, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4), mankind is at the very center of God's work. We are the sheep of His hand and the people of His pasture. His work includes our immortalization - accomplished by Christ's glorious Atonement! Think of it, brothers and sisters, even with their extensive longevity, stars are not immortal, but you are ("Our Creator's Cosmos," CES Conference, 13 August 2002).

Isaiah continues:

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?

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket,  
and are counted as the small dust of the balance:  
behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn,  
nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering (Isa. 40:13-16).

Victor Ludlow explains "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering:"

The pagan worshippers in Lebanon believed that as they performed burnt offerings, the smoke from the wood and offerings traveled up into the heavens, where their gods could ingest it and receive energy and health. Of course, such a source of power is not needed by the true and living God, and besides, no act of sacrifice on our part can begin to compensate him for what he has provided us (Ludlow, *Isaiah, Prophet, Seer, and Poet*, p. 345).

The Parry brothers add:

Lebanon, known for its immense forests, could not provide enough wood or animals to support a sacrifice worthy of God (Parry, *Understanding Isaiah*, p. 345).

Isaiah continues:

All nations before him are as nothing;  
and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

The workman melteth a graven image,  
and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold,  
and casteth silver chains.

He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot;  
he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image,  
that shall not be moved (Isa. 40:17-20).

Isaiah prophesied in a time when nations rose and fell in quick succession, each conquering in the name of their own god(s), and capturing the statues of other nations' gods to display in their temples. In the above verses, the Lord mocks the fact that these false idols need to be secured in place so that they will "not be moved," while He, as God of the universe, moves where He pleases, and sets the very stars and planets into motion. How is that mankind would turn to these empty and worthless objects instead of to the Lord?

Have ye not known? have ye not heard?  
hath it not been told you from the beginning?  
have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,  
and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;  
that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,  
and spreadeth them out as tent to dwell in:

That bringeth the princes to nothing;  
he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown:  
yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth:  
and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither,  
and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things,  
that bringeth out their host by number:  
he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might,  
for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

Why sayst thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel,  
My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard,  
that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth,  
fainteth not, neither is weary?  
there is no searching of his understanding.

He giveth power to the faint;  
and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary,  
and the young men shall utterly fall:

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings as eagles;  
they shall run, and not be weary;  
and they shall walk, and not faint.

The princes and kings of the earth come to nothing. While the Lord has given them their "breath of life," if they do not turn to Him, they will have no "root" in the earth; they will be cut off without the eternal bonds of roots and branches that come through covenantal blessings and promises. Eternal life includes the promise of "a continuation of the seeds forever and ever" to those who are sealed in the everlasting covenant of marriage. Even the young shall faint and fail and their works come to naught, but those who "wait upon the Lord," will receive the promise of renewal and eternal blessings through the priesthood.

Isaiah 40:29-31: What Did Isaiah See as the Reward of Those Who "Wait upon the Lord"?

Speaking of the ultimate power given to those who wait upon the Lord, whose strength "the Lord shall renew," the prophet Isaiah said they shall "mount up with wings as eagles" (Isaiah 40:31). Elder Orson Pratt suggested that those who have been confined to the mortal sphere and its laws may be renewed with the light of truth and be enabled to move from place to place at accelerated velocity, even with the speed of light. (See *Journal of Discourses*, 3:104.)

The greater promise reserved for those who have been true and faithful in keeping the commandments by waiting upon the Lord is found in their being able to "run and not be weary" and to "walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31; compare D&C 89:18-21.)

Since every man who runs experiences normal weariness from his prolonged exertion, and it is rare, indeed, that anyone faints merely from walking, it is evident that these promises apply more to the things of the Spirit, for the Lord "fainteth not, neither is weary (Isaiah 40:28).

While there are those who "run" without being sent (see Jeremiah 23:21), the Lord's servants are commissioned to run his errand. A man called by the Lord to serve is engaged in a contest in which "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Ecclesiastes 9:11); but the reward is to those who "endure to the end" (Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13). To have the strength to run the race of life without becoming weary is a valuable promise; to be able to journey with safety and not faint or fall away from the truth is a great blessing. What consolation and encouragement it is to those who wait upon the Lord to be able to serve mightily and not weary of it, to walk with certainty and not fall away (*Old Testament Manual*, 1 Kings-Malachi, p.182).

In His great Intercessory Prayer, Jesus said: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3; emphasis added). This, indeed, is the great goal of our lives: to know God.

The Lord has not kept Himself secreted away from His children, but has sought to reveal Himself to them from the first. Adam and Eve knew God, and tried to teach their children to seek after Him. Most, as discussed earlier, chose not to. Each of the patriarchs of each dispensation also sought to bring their people into God's presence. Enoch and Melchizedek succeeded in this endeavor. Abraham was God's friend, and Isaac and Jacob each established their own personal relationship with the Lord. Moses had a personal encounter with the Lord, and then diligently prepared his people for the same:

And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh: For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence . . . (D&C 84:19-24; emphasis added).

Moses' people were crippled by their hardness of heart, and the loss of the Melchizedek Priesthood, but some *did* accept the invitation to know God for themselves. Through the Restoration, we now have the Priesthood and other key doctrines restored so that we, too, can know God. *Do we? Will we?*

Throughout the ages, prophets have struggled to share these important truths. Isaiah asked "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1). In

that particular chapter, Isaiah would prophesy that God would pour out His life for the transgressions of His people. Who could believe the manifold characteristics of God? He is an all-powerful Being, Creator, and Judge; yet He is still the Shepherd of Israel who numbers His sheep, and gives His life for theirs. No wonder Paul proclaimed: “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:23).

“Behold your God!” we are to proclaim. Then let us come to know Him, that we might more easily share that knowledge with others. When we hungrily search the scriptures, ponder, pray, and worship in the temple, we can come to find and know the Lord.

To reiterate Joseph Smith’s essential teaching:

Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

- First, the idea that he actually exists.
- Secondly, a **correct** idea of his character, perfections, and attributes.
- Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will.” (Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith* 3:38)