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## Where Is God?

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1978

Transcribed and Edited by David Sielaff, 2003, and January 2024

Read the accompanying "[January 2024 Newsletter](#)"



**Just where is God, the Eternal, the Creator, the One who made us and the universe? This is a question that everybody has asked. It is a question that should be asked. When we look in Scripture we have some information about God, about 1350 pages worth in my Bible, but we still ask the question, just where is God after all? All of us at some time have needed God to be with us, to be near us, to help us, to care for us, and of course we want Him desperately to love us. The Bible says that He does love us. But just where is He? Why does He not show Himself? Why can we not see Him and observe Him like we do our earthly parents?**

Hardly a day goes by that I do not ask God, in one way or another, to help me and to help others who need Him. I have people asking me to pray and ask God to help. I need you to pray for me and for all of us. That is one of the main reasons for prayer. Hardly a day goes by that I do not feel that I need Him some way, somehow, to be near and to help. Sometimes we are happy. Sometimes we are low. We are just all human beings. But whether we are happy or whether we are low, we still need and want God.

All of you reading this would have to say that from time to time (probably more often than we even care to admit), we want God to be near us. We want to be able to see Him if we could. Like I said earlier, each of us has our low times and periods of depression [anxiety, sadness, and grieving, *DWS*]. We are all human beings, and every individual in this world has troubles. I do think that people who have a general belief in Christianity and the teachings of the Bible should have an overall view of optimism. We do not have to go around being pessimistic all the time. But at the same time every one of us has low periods.

### *A Friend's Phone Call*

About a month ago I was in a little low period and I got a telephone call from a very dear friend who had just been examined by a team of doctors. They told him pessimistically that from all the tests his heart was in a very, very sad shape. He was upset about it. All of us were upset about it, obviously, because when you have specialists telling you there is practically no hope, you begin to despair. I would, everybody else would. I remember hanging up that telephone and praying to God on his behalf, I said I not only want him to be helped and his family, but that I want to be helped too. If You, God, would just heal him or make it possible so that it would not be as bad as we thought it was (or something of that nature), it would not only help him (my dear

friend) and his family, but it would cheer me up too, because I needed it as well.

You know, it was not but 3 or 4 days later that I received another a telephone call. It was just a beautiful thing, but from time to time we need things like this. My friend took more tests and this time the doctors were not as pessimistic as they were before. I do not know whether God answered my prayer, or all the other people praying for him, but I honestly believe He did answer. All that I did know was that I was cheered up. I needed to come out of the time of lowness that I was experiencing.

### *Seeing God?*

You can have all types of things like that happen, and we experience them from time to time, so we know that God is near us. Especially in times of crisis, we want Him to be near (Psalm 145:18–20; Acts 17:24–28). But still, do we see Him? No, we do not. Some people say they have seen Him in visions and certainly the apostle Paul did — we know that from biblical revelation — but most of the time even the greatest saints of God never witnessed the visible form of Almighty God. Even Christ in His spirit form, how many people have seen Him? Yes, on rare occasions, some have seen Him, but most of us never had that experience.

He is our Father all right. He tells us that He is in the Bible, and that we have an elder brother in Jesus Christ, who is at His right hand at the present time. I firmly believe it. I am sure that most of you believe it. But how many of us have actually witnessed Him with our eyes, seeing Him, seeing Christ beside the Father asking Him **“with groanings which cannot be uttered”** (Romans 8:26), according to the apostle Paul, on our behalf asking the Father various things for us? Well, we have never seen Him doing that. We have revelation which tells us that happens, but we have never seen it.

### *Why Is God Absent?*

The point is this, why does God do things this way? It almost seems like He is an absentee Father, if we want to phrase it that way, or Christ is an absentee elder brother.

If you or I would leave our children to their own devices without any guidance whatsoever, without any help, just imagine what kind of a state they would be in? I am talking about our own physical children here on earth. If we just abandoned them to let them go the way they want to, without any supervision at all, or never seeing them (we might give them a phone call once in a while), that is really not a very good way to rear children.

When we look to God, who is called our Father, He seems to be our Father all right, and we know that He helps us from time to time, in fact quite a bit, probably more often than we realize. I am sure that is true. But where is He? If you want to get in contact with Him, you can get on your knees and pray to Him, but it is not like a telephone conversation with some friend, because He does not answer back like a friend would, in most cases. Maybe you have the warm glow of a feeling that God has heard you and answered your prayers. That is true and that is good, and you should have that (John 15:7–11; 1 John 5:14–15). That is all fine. But it is still not a type of telephone conversation like you carry on with your friend.

### *Seeing God, Biblical Examples*

In the Old Testament Moses had the privilege of seeing God with his own eyes. Moses saw Him in His glory, but only His hinder parts on one occasion (Exodus 33:20–23). But Moses was able to speak to Him like a man would speak to his friend. That was an extraordinary thing. The apostle Paul on the road to Damascus saw Jesus Christ, and Paul saw Him in His glory. We know that John the apostle saw Jesus Christ in His glory in vision in Revelation chapter 1, the glorious visible image of Christ as He is right now.

But most of us do not see Him that way. We have to continually ask the question: if He is our Father, where is He? We want Him near. We want Him with us. We want Him to help us, in times of crisis, yes, but we want Him to care for us all the time. The Bible says He loves us, but we want Him to show it, don't we?

This lecture is “Where Is God?” or, why is it that God does not show Himself all the time like our earthly fathers would do? They are not with us all the time obviously, but they are nearby where we can see them, we

can touch them, we can hug them, they can hug us and help us. However, where God the Father and Christ Jesus are concerned, though They say They love us and are near us and all of that, still at the same time there is no visible or tangible relationship that all of us would like. We are told in the Bible that such closeness will come one of these days, but it is not with us at the present, and we must acknowledge and accept it.

### ***God Is Near***

We do have biblical revelation, however, that tells us that God is near, very near indeed, more near than we would even believe. This comes from revelation and the ascertaining of this is through faith. It is not through reality in the sense of something you can touch, you can feel, but we have many, many scriptures which show the nearness of Christ and of God the Father. Take for example the beautiful Psalm 139, which bears quoting in this regard. This was a Psalm of David and he wrote,

**“O YHWH, you have searched me, and known me.  
 You know my downsitting and mine uprising,  
 you understand my thought afar off.  
 You compass my path and my lying down,  
 and are acquainted with all my ways.  
 For there is not a word in my tongue,  
 but, lo, O YHWH, you know it altogether.  
 You have beset me behind and before,  
 and laid your hand upon me.  
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
 it is high, I cannot attain unto it.  
 Where shall I go from your spirit?  
 or where shall I flee from your presence?  
 If I ascend up into heaven, you are there:  
 if I make my bed in hell [*sheol*, the grave], behold, you are there.  
 If I take the wings of the morning,  
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;  
 Even there shall your hand lead me,  
 and your right hand shall hold me.  
 If I say, ‘**Surely the darkness shall cover me**’;  
 even the night shall be light about me.  
 Yea, the darkness hides not from you;  
 but the night shines as the day:  
 the darkness and the light are both alike to you.  
 For you have possessed my reins [caused me to move]:  
 You have covered me in my mother’s womb.  
 I will praise you;  
 for **I am fearfully and wonderfully made**:  
 Marvelous are your works;  
 and that my soul knows right well.”**

• ***Psalm 139:1–14***

I could go on with other scriptural examples, but many of us are very acquainted with what David was saying here. He was reiterating to us and to all mankind that God is very near. You cannot escape His presence. But, He does not seem to be near to us at all. Why is this?

## *How God Shows Himself*

Obviously there are good reasons why God does it this way, or He would be visible to us. Of course some would say, that is a cop-out, because who knows if there is a God? David said [paraphrasing]: *I am wonderfully made and look at the creation, it is wonderfully made, and anyone who says there is not a God is truly a fool* (Psalms 14:1 and 53:1). Though that is what the Bible says, you do not need a Bible telling you that. Granted, we have to know who He is by divine revelation, but there is a God, without any doubt. He does not show Himself directly, yet He shows Himself in nature all the time by the creative processes that go on at the present time. He shows Himself in many, many ways, in animals, in plants, in the stars — in our own lives.

Look at your right or left hand and just fold it up into a fist and let it come out again. It is most marvelous how that all happens, is it not? Whenever I wonder if God is very near I just look at my hand (mine is not pretty). It is **“fearfully and wonderfully made.”** Marvelous too are all the parts of our bodies, and everything that we find in the universe that we can see with the eye. They all show us that God is very much “around.”

## *Why Does God Not Show Himself?*

He must not want Himself to be visible to us during these 70-odd years that we live on this earth. Obviously He does not want it to be that way at present, or else He would be visible. We know from that understanding alone, if we have any common sense at all, that God must have a reason for these things. The answer is not yet here with us, we know that, but there must be a reason, or none of it makes any sense.

All the animals, even the higher animals that we have here on earth, do not ever question the matter of God and why He is not here. My children once had some little dogs. Those little dogs were very familiar with me, my wife and with my children. But their concept of creation or a creator went no farther than what they saw in me or in my wife or in the children. They cannot conceive in any way of a deity of some kind out there. It is the same thing with a cat or a chimpanzee.

We are humans. It is entirely different with us. We are the only species or creation on this earth that can have a concept of God and really wants to be in contact with the divine being, the Creator. But we cannot see Him. Our animal friends can reach out to each other and to us, and they seem completely satisfied. They do not go around with hang-ups over matters of Deity. But do we not have our hang-ups? Yes we do, all the time.

We ask ourselves, where is God? Why does He do things this way? Clearly, if there is a God, as I said before, and because He does not reveal Himself at present, there must be a reason why He wants His higher creation, His creation of humanity on this earth, you, me, all of us put together, why He wants us **NOT to be near Him** in a visible sense. Why is this?

I cannot answer all the questions, but I can give you some biblical answers which are going right down the proper road so we can begin to understand why this is the case. Frankly, if we would believe the biblical revelation, it would tell us in most candid terms that God is creating in us something that will redound to His glory, and not only to Himself, but also to ourselves in the future. He needs to put us through these 70-odd years in the fashion He is doing at the present time, to bring us into the glory He has provided for us in the past, that He will give to us in the future.

The Bible says there will come a utopia on this earth and in the universe. It will involve us. Obviously then, He is putting us through some experiences here to give us greater glories in the future.

## *Good and Evil in Salvation — Why?*

If you understand the nature of salvation — which is, we are destined to become the literal Sons of the living God, to be like God. He has to put us through experiences **so we can become like He is**. Thankfully, for the experiences of knowing good and evil He only assigns to us about a 70-year period, more or less. That is all we need apparently to get experience to teach us how to become like His children. If you will be like God, you should NOT need supervision over you all the time. He wants to treat you like adults.

Does God the Father have supervision over Himself in heaven? No, He does not. Does Jesus Christ at the present time have supervision over Him? True, God is His Father, and true, He obeys what His Father wants.

Christ said that while He was on earth **“the Father and I are one”** (John 10:30, 17:22). Christ does not have to ask God the Father all the time for permission to do this or that. Not really. If they are one, they each do what is right. They know what is good. They do not have any supervision whatsoever.

We do need supervision, but He wants to bring us to a place, if we will be Sons of God and be like They are, that no supervision will be needed. That is what the biblical teaching is all about. That is what Christianity is trying to teach us. We need to be in a place where we do not have continual supervision all the time, for if you do, you will continue to be like an infant.

### ***What God Is Doing***

What He would like to do for us and why He has put us down here on this earth — there is hardly a doubt about this — and why He *seems* to “absentee” Himself from us (He has not), is because He is allowing us to have a certain amount of freedom to experience good and bad, or good and evil. This is good for us. Evil is not good, but it will turn out by our experience with it, not liking it and seeing how bad it is, that we will then avoid it as time goes on, when we really understand how bad it can be.

If there will be good and evil around, and you will be like God and not have supervision because you will do things properly in the future, you need to experience working with, and experiencing, good and evil right now. The trouble with us as human beings is that life as we have it now, seems to make evil overtake us more than the good. That is true. That is why He only gives us about 70 years to have to go through these things.

We are destined to become like God. In Genesis 3 where the serpent is introduced and we find the Garden in Eden, and Adam and Eve are there. It says,

**“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which YHWH God had made. And He said unto the woman, ‘Yea, has God said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?””**

• **Genesis 3:1**

The woman said, well we can, except this one tree of good and evil. The serpent, which is Satan, says in verse 4, that you would not die if you eat this fruit,

**“You shall not surely die: For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods [plural, *elohim*], knowing good and evil.”**

• **Genesis 3:4–5**

The knowledge for Adam and Eve was to be, as it is for God the Father and for Christ as God, to know good and evil. The word “evil” there does not really mean sin. Eve sinned. Adam sinned and brought on bad. It only means “bad,” good and bad. How many of us have experienced good? All of us have. How many of us have experienced bad? All of us have. Most of the time it seems that the bad is more than the good.

But even the serpent said, **“You shall become as gods [Elohim], knowing good and bad,”** good and evil. It seems that in our process of becoming like God, we need to be aware of both good and bad. This word “knowing” here can mean something more than just “to be aware of.” In fact it is used later in a euphemistic way for a man to know his wife. That is a way of phrasing about coming close together in intimacy as we all know, but what it means is to participate in, or to be with in a close way. It just does not mean to be aware of, although it means that also.

In this verse 5 the serpent is saying: as soon as you take of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you will become like God, like the gods, *Elohim*, knowing and participating in good and bad. That is what the serpent said. Perhaps he told a falsehood, because we know that Satan the Devil was a liar from the beginning. But he was not telling a falsehood in this case. We find in the last part of Genesis 3 that God Himself came along, after He caused Adam and Eve to leave the Garden of Eden, and He said, **“And YHWH God said, ‘Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil ...’”** (Genesis 3:22).

**“To know good and evil [bad].”** It means that God must know, not only to be aware of, but He Himself is well aware of and sees evil (bad in this case) affecting Himself as well as His creation. He was the one in



Isaiah 45:7 Who created good and created evil or bad: **“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I YHWH do all these things.”** He knows how to use evil. He has used it all the time. The evil or bad on earth is no surprise to God. He is the one who created the bad as well as creating the good. He put all mankind in this environment so we would experience good on the one hand, and bad on the other.

### *Christ's Experience*

When God's Son came into this world as Jesus Christ born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem 2000+ years ago, He came into this world and experienced good. He had good times, but most of it was bad. Finally this world put Him on a tree of crucifixion and He experienced bad, worse than anyone ever experienced bad.<sup>1</sup> He was willing to come down and go through these things to be our pioneer, our captain, to lead us into the Family of God, to go through all the good and the bad, really bad, to show us it is worth it to get to the place He wants us to be. These experiences really are very good for us when you get down to it.

The apostle Paul said in Romans 8:19–23 that at the present time God has allowed the whole creation to be in a kind of bondage, or chaos, difficulties, in groanings, and bad things. Not only the creation, but Paul said we who have the firstfruits of God's Spirit, we also have problems and difficulties. All of these things shall be worked out in the end. **“All things work together for good for them that love God”** (Romans 8:28). In the future, all will come to love God. We know that.

### *Our Experience*

What is happening is that God wants us to experience good and bad. He is not telling us to sin. He does not want you to sin. Whether you sin or not you will still suffer bad. The sun may come out on a real hot summer day and you have to walk across the dusty plains, and you get mighty upset if you are out without an umbrella. You are not sinning, but you say, this heat is bad. Or in the depth of winter in Minnesota you have a light coat on. That is also bad, and we are not talking about sin (Hebrews 12:3–13).

We have to experience good and bad to become like God is now. He wants us to experience these things so He can treat us as adults. Ancient Israel had the Law with them all the time as a schoolmaster. That lasted for about 1,500 years. The apostle Paul said that when you become true spiritual adults — understanding what becoming like God is all about — then you have freedom:

**“Stand fast therefore in the LIBERTY wherewith Christ has MADE US FREE, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”**

• *Galatians 5:1*

Too many of us desire to become bondservants to man, bondservants to everyone it seems like, but God does not want it that way. Every human being is destined to become like Christ and God are now (Elohim. **“children of God,”** 1 John 3:1–2). He wants you to be free now to make decisions on your own, under His superintendence obviously, but not in the way He watches over us now, as an infant (Romans 8:21, 9:8; Philippians 2:15).

That is the final reason He stays away, and lets you make up your own mind: so you can go the way you want to go, under His governance, certainly. He is teaching you to become like Himself, with full freedom and authority to do as you please. But He wants you to walk in the laws and principles of love and the concerns of the other person. He wants you to be like He is. He wants you to become a member of His family.

He has put us on earth to go through several years — 50, 60, 70 is the biblical standard, 80 maybe, 90, 100 years — of understanding good, understanding bad, and we find Him absent so He can treat us like Himself, an *Elohim*. That is why He is not visible all the time. Yet He is very close. He is watching over us, whether we realize it or not. Where is God? He is near. One day we will see Him (read 1 John 3:2), put our arms around Him, and really understand His purpose for putting us on this earth.

Ernest L. Martin, 1978

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<sup>1</sup> Read [“Chapter 21 - The Manner of Jesus' Crucifixion”](#) in Dr. Martin's surprising book, [The Secrets of Golgotha.](#)”