



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 40:26 | Psalm 139:7-12 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Exodus 3:14; 20:1-6; 32:12-14
Jonah 3:1-10 | 2 Peter 1:16 | Hebrews 1:1-3

► SUMMARY

When some people picture God, they imagine a grandfatherly type who loves everyone but only has so much control over the events of this world.

Regardless of what we imagine, it's important that we look at Scripture to see what the Lord actually says about Himself. In it, we learn what He is like, what He loves, and how He relates to us. Otherwise, we run the risk of making incorrect assumptions and missing out on the joys of an enriching, truth-based relationship with our great and majestic God.

► SERMON POINTS

Isaiah 40 centers on God's greatness and majesty and describes Him as far superior to creation. Even the most powerful earthly ruler is nothing in comparison; the Father's wisdom and might reign over everything. Psalm 139 further illuminates the greatness of the Lord, this time centering on His omnipresence: "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ... Even darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You" (vv. 7, 12).

The Greatness of God

The Bible is replete with references to God's majesty. Psalm 93:1 says, "The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty." Isaiah 40:1-26 explains how God is greater than all of His creations. In comparison to the Lord, the nations of the earth are "like a drop from a bucket, and are

regarded as a speck of dust on the scales" (v. 15). Likewise, He is more powerful than lifeless man-made idols that cannot answer prayers or empower us (vv. 18-20). The Lord is also beyond this world: "It is He who sits above the circle of the earth ... who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to live in" (v. 22). He's more majestic than the greatest earthly king, as He "reduces rulers to nothing ... [and] makes the judges of the earth meaningless" (v. 23). He is above the heavens and the stars, calling "them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing" (v. 26).

Four Attributes of God

Let's look at a few of the most important characteristics of our Creator.

■ **God is a person.** The Bible reveals that our Maker is not an invisible force; instead He has emotions, intelligence, a will, and a personality. Adam and Eve were perfectly designed with these same characteristics (Gen. 1:26). It's true that since their rebellion, everyone has been born into the world with a fallen nature. However, we are still made in His image and capable of having an intimate relationship with Him.

We see evidence of the personhood of God throughout the Bible. When God addressed Moses at the burning bush, He introduced Himself not as "It is" but "I am" (Ex. 3:14). The commands against idolatry in Exodus 20:1-5 reveal God's emotional response when humans put other priorities in His place, but indicate that if we love and obey Him, we

can expect His unfailing love and care (v. 6). And Jesus modeled praying to the heavenly Father. God is not an impersonal energy, but a loving Father Who invites us into a close relationship with Him.

- **God is spirit.** Jesus said, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). In the book of Revelation, John describes a heavenly throne surrounded by glorious light, but he doesn’t describe the One sitting on it in physical terms. In fact, that same apostle wrote elsewhere, “No one has ever seen God” (1 John 4:12).

Of course, Jesus—God the Son—had a body when He walked on this earth, and people were able to see Him and learn about the Father. But now He comes to dwell in our hearts through the Spirit when we trust Him as our personal Savior.

Because God and the Holy Spirit are one, His presence is always with us. Because He is everywhere, we never have to face any trial, temptation, or difficulty alone. We are always within His perfect care for us and kept in His presence (Ps. 139:7-13; Matt. 28:20). As spirit, He is equally present with each one of us at all times, no matter where we are on the earth.

- **God is eternal.** The Creator always has been, is, and always will be. His existence has no beginning and no end. He’s everlasting—unlimited by time (Ps. 90:1-2). This is difficult for us to comprehend, but the difficulty doesn’t change the fact that God has always existed. As part of the Trinity, Jesus shares this eternal nature; in John 8:58, He says, “Before Abraham was born, I am.”

- **God is unchangeable.** When we speak of the steadfastness of the Lord, we mean His nature doesn’t alter and we can trust in His covenantal promises (Mal. 3:6; Isa. 40:28). He won’t go from Spirit to merely physical body, from person to non-person, or from

eternal to temporary. His principles and character are immutable (James 1:17).

One passage that causes people concern is found in Exodus 32:12-14, in which the Bible says, “The LORD relented” (v. 14). But when we examine why the Lord decided not to destroy the people of Israel, we see that Moses interceded for them. Of course, God is omniscient, so He sees the future. He knew in advance that Moses would pray fervently for mercy, so the wording here in Exodus is anthropomorphic. In other words, the Bible uses human terms to record the Lord’s response to Moses’ prayers.

Another time God appears to change His mind is found in the story of the city of Ninevah (Jonah 3:1-10). Jonah declared this city would be destroyed due to its sinfulness. However, “When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their evil way, then God relented of the disaster which He had declared He would bring on them” (v. 10). Because the people responded to Jonah’s warning, God didn’t bring destruction. The story of Ninevah depicts an unchanging principle: the Lord is always ready to respond to anyone who seeks to reconcile with Him. Jesus said He would not turn anyone away (John 6:37) and He is “the same yesterday and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

► RESPONSE

- God is personal, spirit, eternal, and unchangeable. Which of these attributes spoke the most to your heart today, and why?
- As born-again believers, we have the privilege of calling the Creator of the universe “Father.” How can remembering that truth transform how you think about your life’s problems?

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