

Yahweh vs. God



"Because no one truly knows anything about God, anyone who thinks they do is simply a problem child." (Sufi woman writer Rabia). 1)

If there is a deity, it cannot be the private property of any religion or a being that favors a particular sect. Nor may it separate humans from animals or the living from the non-living, loving some and hating others. For if it formed all things—whether by hand, through labor pains, or by spontaneous creation—then to discriminate among its own works would be wrong. A god that shows favoritism is, in effect, renouncing its claim to be Creator of all; such a being cannot be called God.

Yet the Old Testament's Yahweh is a warrior (Exod. 15:3) and bears precisely these traits: "The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger but great in power; the LORD will certainly not leave the guilty unpunished." (Nahum 1:2–3)

"Arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction, Yahweh is jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully." 2) A deity like Yahweh—or Allah as portrayed on Old-Testament lines—cannot, in the true sense, be called God.

In the first Genesis creation story, **Elohim** ("gods") creates Adam and Eve **together** on the sixth day and orders humankind to "fill the earth and subdue it." This is not harmonious coexistence but an anthropocentric mandate—treating all other life as a dictator treats an ignorant populace. Such a mindset should not be worshiped as divine. Because of this human-centered narrowness we have driven countless species to extinction and wrecked the natural world—squandering the hard-won wisdom other creatures gained through their struggle to survive, wisdom that might have enriched our own lives. Losing those chances makes our future darker still.

When a deity, as commonly described, favors some of its creatures and rejects or discriminates against the rest, it denies the perfection of its own creation and thus forfeits the title "Creator." A god **only for Jews**—one who destroys them all, then capriciously repopulates them—is no god. To portray deity as belonging to one people shows plainly that the people made their god, not the other way round.

A true God would either love **all** beings equally or be serenely indifferent to all. Hence to paint the God of religions grounded in the Old Testament—Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unificationism, Shincheonji, etc.—as an object of fear is mistaken. On this basis Yahweh or Allah, as usually presented, cannot be God in the true sense.

In the New Testament, by contrast, “God” rarely appears as an actor who directly disciplines or intervenes in human affairs. Apart from what Jesus says, there are hardly any cases of God appearing to others to instruct or interfere. With a few exceptions—where Paul portrays the post-Easter Jesus as intervening in individuals’ lives much like Yahweh—such cases are absent. God’s role thus differs markedly from Yahweh’s. “The God Jesus speaks of is not a malicious master who kills or saves at whim; he is **our Father** [who shows humaneness].” 3)

In short, the God Jesus names is not an external being distinct from us like Yahweh, but an indwelling presence—one with him. As the Hindu deity appears in human form to command a war, or as the Buddha, through enlightenment, enters the divine state, so Jesus reached such a state and sought to proclaim it: if we awaken, we too become sons and daughters of God—indeed, become **one** with God.

“In Matthew 5 Jesus repeatedly insists we must act beyond the sayings of the ancients: avoid even petty abusive words (v. 22); reject divorce (v. 31) and all oaths (v. 34); condemn revenge (v. 38); denounce usury (v. 42). He says that lust is already adultery (v. 28). He calls for universal forgiveness... Pure worship, a religion without priestcraft or outward display, the affection of the heart and the imitation of God, immediate communion of conscience with (the heavenly?) God—this is the outcome of the principles Jesus has set forth.” 4)

Christianity claims that one’s eternal residence is fixed by one’s earthly deeds. But if God is omniscient and omnipotent, the shortest proof of that wisdom and power would be to let all creatures dwell in heaven **from the start**—not to impose a troublesome middle stage called “this life,” and then consign some to heaven and others to hell. A deity who makes beloved beings endure an imperfect earthly life,

or who abandons them to eternal torment, cannot be called a God of love. This paradox itself suggests that "heaven" and "hell" are not places we go after death but states we experience **here** and **now**.

If God is merciful, concerned for human life, and truly omnipotent, then the boundless treasures of "heaven" should be poured out **here** to lift the happiness of earthly beings. Yet among the many gods people worship, none has thought of so simple a course; they make only lavish, low-probability promises of compensation **after** death. This alone betrays the emptiness of claims that their gods are omniscient, omnipotent, and overflowing with charity.

If a being with powers beyond human thought created heaven and earth, the question "How did such a being arise?" inevitably leads to an infinite regress. Moreover, "omniscience and omnipotence are mutually exclusive. If God is omniscient, he already knows how he will exercise omnipotence to intervene and alter history. But if he already knows this, he cannot change his mind about intervening; therefore he is not omnipotent." 5)

Religions often say **human beings** are God's favorites—but in practice it is not humanity, but one's **own nation** or people who are specially loved. This is old-fashioned ethnocentrism. If a compassionate deity made all things, it must love **every** human—and beyond that, **every** being—without distinction.

To single out humans is to imply God created only humans while someone else made the rest—denying that God created all. That leads naturally to the truth: **humans created "God."**

God must be **truth**. What is not true cannot be perfect; what is not perfect cannot be absolute. A claim that God is a metaphysical transcendent being cannot be "true." To posit a reality that **overrides** the laws of nature—miracle, resurrection—is merely a fable born of fantasy or ignorance. All beings and all phenomena arise and move according to **natural law**. The true providence of God needs no supernatural force; it **is** the order of nature itself. Seek truth within nature's laws and there you will find a God as ordinary—as close—as ourselves.

"The word **providence** can mean nursing a sick body back to health; it can also mean 'the principles and laws governing nature' or 'the hidden will of God in the universe.' Note the character 攝 (*seop*): it is composed of a **hand** and **three ears**. The providence of God is the inspiration that comes when the hand of the heart is raised and, not with the body's two ears, but with the **third ear** granted to the humbled in long meditation, we listen." 6)

"Methodologically we define **Messiah** as 'a king, priest, or other specific figure sent by God at the end time to serve as mediator of salvation.'" 7) But do we need such a **mediator** at all? This notion arises from imagining that the social order of this world—kings and judges deciding right and wrong—must be mirrored in the next.

To say that salvation requires a **divine functionary** whose verdict we must receive is meaningless. It has served only to let clergy, as supposed divine agents, dominate the faithful. Such a process, we insist again, **cannot** be.

If a true God is a perfect being, then theologians' duty is to seek God's perfect attributes ceaselessly—to revise our concepts as knowledge grows, asking what a more rational, more perfect account must be. To forbid this, and to force people

to believe in an outmoded, imperfect deity propped up by yesterday's logic, is a misfortune for humankind. Through such research we can form a conception of God that transcends every nation and people and anthropocentric bias—and craft teaching accordingly. We are fully capable of this.

Sources

1. **The Laughing Jesus**, Timothy Freke & Peter Gandy, Three Rivers Press, 2005: 201
2. **The God Delusion**, Richard Dawkins, Kim Young-sa, 2007: 50
3. **The Life of Jesus**, Ernest Renan, BiblioLife, 1863: 106
4. **The Life of Jesus**, Ernest Renan, BiblioLife, 1863: 110–111
5. **The God Delusion**, Richard Dawkins, Bantam Press, 2006: 101
6. **The Great Questions of God**, Bae Chul-Hyun, 21st Century Books, 2015: 272
7. **The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of Christianity**, Immanuel Tov et al., ed. Dr. Im-Mi-Young, Kumran Publishing, 2008: 107