

# THEISM

No. 1

Written by Robert L. Waggoner for the advancement of biblical theism.

January, 2003

## *The Greatest Person in the World*

When you think of great people in the world, you may think about three of the greatest Old Testament personalities – Abraham, Moses, and David. You may think about two of the most notable apostles in the New Testament – Peter and Paul. You may consider three of the most influential leaders in church history – Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Luther. You may think about the greatest Greek philosophers – Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates. You may think about great world conquerors, such as Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Napoleon. You may think that Homer, Chaucer, and Shakespeare are the greatest literary writers of all time. Or you may think of other great personalities in other categories.

Whatever great personalities you may consider, in whatever categories, you must surely know that the greatest person in the world is God. According to the Bible, God is great in what he has done, in what he is doing, and in his promises about what he will do.

**Notice what God has done.** God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. God formed mankind from the dust of the ground. God prepared the Garden of Eden for a human dwelling place. God created a moral universe wherein people are expected to obey his commandments. God gave a commandment to Adam and Eve and when they disobeyed God judged Adam and Eve for their sin. God accepted Abel and his offering but rejected Cain and his offering. God transfigured Enoch so that he did not die. God judged the world because of its wickedness. God instructed Noah to build an ark to save the human race.. God destroyed the world with a flood. God confounded human language and scattered humanity over the face of the earth.

God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to a land he did not know. God promised that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God enabled Sarah to give birth to Isaac in her old age. God declared that through Isaac, and then through Jacob his promise to Abraham would be fulfilled. God caused the sons of Jacob to migrate to Egypt. God called Moses from the burning bush and commanded him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God dried up the Red Sea and led Israel across on dry ground. God gave them manna in the wilderness for forty years. God gave the Law and priesthood at Mt. Sinai. God and brought the Israelites across a raging Jordan River. God enabled the Israelites to conquer the Canaanite nations.

God raised up judges to rule over the Israelites. When the Israelites wanted a king, God first gave them Saul, then later gave them David, who was after his own heart. God promised that through King David the Messiah would come. When God's people went astray, he sent prophets among them to call them back to himself. When the people became rebellious, he sent other nations to conquer them and bring them into captivity. God preserved his people in their captivity and brought them back to the land of Judah.

Before the world was created, God predestined the salvation of humanity (Ephesians 1:4). God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah. God sent his only begotten son to be born to a virgin. Through Jesus, God's messages of eternal salvation and of his kingdom were proclaimed on earth. God gave his son to die on a cross that the sins of believers might be forgiven. God raised Jesus from the dead. God brought the church into existence through the preaching of his word. God endowed apostles with power to perform miracles to confirm the word. God has granted to sinful humanity the right to repent (Acts 5:31; Acts 11:18). God has appointed a day for judgment (Acts 17:31). God has done all these things and more. What God has done indicates his greatness.

**Notice what God is doing.** God continues an active relationship with humanity. God rules (Daniel 5:21; Romans 13:1). God's activity is characterized as faithful, holy, loving, merciful, truthful, all-powerful, all wise, etc. God is active in that he now sustains what he previously created – in him we live and move and have our very being. God provides, he feeds the ravens (Luke 12:24). God gives life abundantly. God's grace is extended to sinners. God forgives. Through Christ, God gives all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). God justifies sinners through faith in Jesus Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, God sanctifies his people. God makes plain to people what can be known of him (Romans 1:19). When people sin, God gives them up (Romans 1:24, 26). God sends a strong delusion upon unbelievers that they may believe a lie and be condemned (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). God does not want any to perish. God wants everyone to repent. God is a father to his people. Through the gospel, God brings people into his family. Through Christ, God's people are adopted as God's children. Christ is considered the elder brother. God loves his children. God does not

allow his children to be tempted above what they are able to bear. Like a loving father, God chastises his children. God is angry with sinners. God is not mocked, he causes people to reap what they have sown. God's word is not bound, it is active in accomplishing his purposes. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. God hears and answers prayers. God gives his children a spirit of power and love and sober-mindedness (2 Timothy 1:7). God makes his church grow. God saves. God guarantees our salvation. God equips his people with armor to withstand Satan. God works in his people. God gives guidance through his commandments. God does all these things and more. What God is now doing indicates his greatness.

***Notice what God promises that he will do.***

God's greatness can be observed not only in what he has done and in what he is now doing, but also in recognition of what he has promised he will do. God will destroy this earth with fire (2 Peter 3:10-12). God will raise the dead. God will judge the world through Christ. God will save the righteous and grant them eternal life in heaven. God will condemn the wicked and send them to hell. God will also send Satan and his angels to hell. God will receive the kingdom back from Christ. Because God is able to fulfill his promises, his promises of what he will do indicate his greatness.

***How do you feel to stand in the presence of a great person?***

Many stand speechless in the presence of some great person. Some have come into the presence of a physical manifestation of God. When Isaiah saw the Lord in the temple, he said, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). After God had appeared to Job in a whirlwind, Job said, ". . . I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:2-6). Three times in scripture when sinners are brought to justice they are characterized as saying to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!" (Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:30; Revelation 6:16). They want to be hid from the face of him who sits on the throne. People often come before kings with fear and trembling, but God's children can come before his throne with boldness (Acts 4:31, Ephesians 3:12). ***What does it mean to be in the presence of this great God?*** When Isaiah saw the Lord, one of the seraphim cleansed him. Then the voice of the Lord asked, "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Isaiah responded, "Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:6-8). *To be in the presence of the greatest person in the world is*

*to be in his service.* God's people are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). "We are God's fellow workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

*To be in the presence of the greatest person in the world requires that his servants stand before him in holiness.* As one must be properly clothed when in the presence of some great official, so one must also be properly clothed in the presence of God, just as those who attend a wedding must wear appropriate apparel (Matthew 22:11-13). Those who stand before God must be clothed in righteousness. God's grace of salvation teaches us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:11-14). "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:12-17).

*To be in the presence of the greatest person in the world evokes worship toward him* similar to that of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders who said, "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created" (Revelation 4:6-11).

Is it not a great privilege, and a great joy, to be in the presence of the greatest person in the world, to be in his service, and to worship him?