



# Foundations of

# FAITH

## The Great I Am

### Lesson 2

We know that there is a God because we can see evidence of his existence everywhere about us in nature. But had God not chosen to reveal himself to man, there would be no way of determining what he is like. The Bible, however, portrays the characteristics of the supreme being and in this lesson we shall study several.

**ETERNITY.** When Moses was called by God to deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, he asked a question. "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM:** and He said, Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** has sent me unto you." (Exodus 3:13, 14). Later, God explained to Moses, "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by my name **YAHWEH** was I not known to them." (Exodus 6:3). It seems clear that the expression, **I AM**, is intended to indicate the meaning of the word **YAHWEH** since both expressions are from the same Hebrew root. **YAHWEH**, then, means "the existing one" or "the one who is." The word clearly implies the eternity of God. God has always been and, and he always will be. He is without beginning and without end. It is often asked, "Where did God come from?" The answer is that he did not come from anywhere. He has always been. Accustomed as we are to measuring everything in terms of time and place, this is very difficult to understand. It is but one expression of the fact that God is unlimited.

**SPIRIT.** To the woman at the well Jesus said, "God is a Spirit." What is a spirit? A spirit is not matter as are human beings. After his resurrection Jesus said to his disciples, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have." (Luke 24:39)

To describe a spirit in terms of material things is impossible. Since we have never seen a spirit we cannot fully appreciate the nature of one. "No man has seen God at any time." (John 1:18) However, as we learn some of the other characteristics of God's nature we also learn some additional things regarding his spiritual qualities.

**UNITY.** There is but one God. We read in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." Here as in most other places in the King James Version the word "Yahweh" is rendered "Lord". Yahweh is a more accurate translation, and the American Standard Version gives this, "Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God is one Yahweh." Again we read, "The Lord, he is God; there is none else beside him." (Deut. 4:35)

Nevertheless, there are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The fullness of God dwells in each of these. We read of Christ, the Son, "For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9) The term "God" is applied to each of the three, the word "God" being not a proper name but an expression of deity. The idea of a plurality of persons in one is expressed in the first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) In the original Hebrew the subject is plural, the verb singular, or, in

other words, a plurality in one. Again, Yahweh expressed the same thought when he said, "Let us make man in our own image." (Gen. 1:26)

There are two extremes of teaching regarding this characteristic of God. One is tri-theism or the teaching of three Gods. This contradicts the many passages affirming the unity of God. The other is expressed in the so-called "Jesus Only" theory. This theory denies the plurality of persons in the Godhead. The fallacy of this teaching is seen in those passages which teach that the Son is today at the right hand of God. (See 1 Peter 3:22; Col. 3:1.) If God is but one personality, he could not be at his own right hand.

Furthermore, in John 17 the Son prays to the Father. This necessitates more than one personality in God. Yet in this prayer the unity of God is affirmed when Jesus prays "that they all may be one; as, you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us." (John 17:21) We may accept by faith the fact that there are three personalities in one God.

**OMNISCIENCE.** That God is omniscient simply means that his knowledge is unlimited. We read, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and **knows all things.**" (1 John 3:20) "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." (Psalm 147:5) "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." (Prov. 15:3) The knowledge of God even extends to the little, insignificant things about us. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matt. 10: 29, 30) He knows our thoughts and everything about our lives. "Thou know my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. You compass my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word that is in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou know it altogether." (Psalm 139:2-4) He is acquainted with our sorrows and our needs, and being a God of compassion, he is also interested in our trials. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33)

**OMNIPOTENCE.** Several terms are applied in the scriptures to God. One of the first terms used in the Bible is the expression "God Almighty." We read, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, **I am the**

**Almighty God:** walk before me and be you perfect." (Gen. 17:1) The expression "Almighty" means that there is no limit to his power or, in other words, that he is omnipotent. In a vision of the heavenly scene, we have depicted in Revelation 19:6 a great multitude saying "Alleluia: for the **Lord God Omnipotent** reigns." It was this omnipotence that enabled God to create the world and it is by the same omnipotence that the miracles described in the Bible were performed. Men have had difficulty accepting Biblical miracles because they have first denied the omnipotence of God. But Jesus says, "With God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26)

**OMNIPRESENCE.** As the eternity of God means that he is unlimited in time, as his omniscience informs us that he is unlimited in knowledge, and as his omnipotence tells us that he is unlimited in power, so the omnipresence of God declares that he is unlimited in space. God is always present. Finite beings that we are, we cannot fully comprehend how this can be, but by faith we accept the teachings of the scriptures. Yahweh declares, "Am I a God at hand, say's the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? say's the Lord." (Jer. 23:23, 24) The Psalmist sings, "Where shall I go from thy spirit or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you are there: if I make my bed in Sheol, 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." (Psalm 139:7-10.) Because God is always present, we know that he is never far from us. In speaking to the Athenians on Mars Hill, Paul informed his pagan audience, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, **though he be not far from every one of us:** for in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" Acts 17:27-28)

**IMMUTABILITY.** God's immutability is his unchanging nature. It is said of Christ, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8) The same thing is true of the entire Godhead. God was the same in the days of the Old Testament as he was when Jesus walked on the earth. His methods and covenants with man have changed, but his principles are eternal and his character unalterable.

Yahweh says, "For I am the Lord, I change not." (Mal. 3:6). James says of God, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17) David declares, "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." (Psalm 102:25-27)

**FAITHFULNESS.** The immutability of God suggests another attribute – his faithfulness. If God cannot change, then it follows that his promises to us are unalterable. The Hebrew writer demonstrates that we may rely on the promises of God because "that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. 6:18) The two immutable things which he names in this passage are the promise and oath of God. He concludes that since God changes in neither of these things, we may rely on his faithfulness.

The omnipotence of God further guarantees his faithfulness. Men make promises which they desire to keep, but often find themselves unable to carry them out. But there is nothing which God determines to do which he cannot perform. (See Romans 4:20, 21)

The omniscience and holiness of God assure us that the promises God makes are not only sure, but they are also right. In his holiness God can do no wrong, and in his omniscience God possesses the wisdom to know those things which are right.

Many other passages declare the faithfulness of God. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for his is **faithful** that promised). (Heb. 10:23) Bu the Lord is **faithful**, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." (II Thess. 3:3) "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (II Tim. 1:12)

Any man who begins to appreciate in a small way the nature of God must declare with David, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Psalm 139:6) God cannot be circumscribed by the words or thoughts of man because truly he is the great "I AM."

### TEST ON LESSON 2

**Match the words in the left hand column with the definitions in the right hand column by writing the number of the definition in the blank after the word it defines.**

Omnipresent	(1) All powerful
Eternal	(2) All knowing
Immutable	(3) Without beginning or end
Omnipotent	(4) Unlimited in space
Omniscient	(5) Unchangeable

**Write true or false after each of the following statements:**

- God instructed Moses to tell the children of Israel that "I AM" had sent him. ....
- A spirit does not have flesh and bones. ....

- 3. There is only one person in the Godhead. ....
- 4. God is not far from every one of us. ....
- 5. Both promise and oath of God are immutable. ....

**After each of the following scriptures write the characteristic of God indicated in that passage. Each characteristic discussed in this lesson is used at least once. Where more than one characteristic is mentioned, two blanks are supplied.**

- 1. Genesis 21:33. ....
- 2. 1 Kings 8:27. ....
- 3. Psalm 90:2. ....  
.....
- 4. Psalm 147:4. ....
- 5. Isaiah 44:6. ....  
.....
- 6. Jeremiah 23:24. ....  
.....
- 7. John 4:24. ....
- 8. Colossian 1:16 ....
- 9. Hebrews 4:13 ....
- 10. Jeremiah 32:17 ....
- 11. Hebrew 13:8 ....
- 12. 1 John 1:9 ....

# The Great I Am

## Lesson 2

### Answers

These lessons are based on the King James Version, so if you are using another translation the words employed may vary slightly. Sometimes an alternative answer is possible. The following is a useful guide.

Section 1 – 4, 3, 5, 1, 2.

Section 2 – T, T, F, T, T.

Section 3 -

1. Eternity
2. Omnipresence
3. Omnipotence and Eternity
4. Omniscience
5. Unity and Eternity
6. Omniscience and Omnipresence
7. Spirit
8. Omnipotence
9. Omniscience
10. Omnipotence
11. Immutability
12. Faithfulness

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