

“WHAT IS AN ANTHROPOMORPHISM?”

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

Man has difficulty understanding who God is. Man is used to using terms relative to his day to day terminology. Thus, the Bible speaks of God in having human attributes, as this is what man understands. These are called “ANTHROPOMORPHISMS” (Greek - “anthropomorphia”; anthropos = man & morphe = form).

Some of these are listed below:

John 4:24 speaks of God being a spirit
Exodus 24:10 speaks of God’s feet
John 10:29 speaks of God’s hand
Jeremiah 21:5 speaks of God’s arm
Matthew 18:10 speaks of God’s face
Hosea 11:8 speaks of God’s heart
Proverbs 15:3 speaks of God’s eyes
Genesis 6:6 speaks of God grieving
Psalms 44:23 speaks of God sleeping

Exodus 33:11 states that Moses was “face to face” with God and yet v. 20 states that *no one can see God and live*. then in v. 23 it is stated that Moses saw God’s back. However, Genesis 12:7; & 18:1 states that God appeared to Abram. Likewise in 26:2 He appeared to Isaac and to Jacob in 35:9. In like manner, He appeared to Solomon in I Kings 3:5, as well as to David in II Chronicles 3:1. *Does the Bible contradict itself?*

The answer is, “No”. If one understands the Bible by a study in “Hermeneutics” (the study of the science of interpretation of the Scriptures). This course teaches proper understanding of the: parable, fable, simile, metaphor, allegory, irony, hyperbole, apostrophe, personification, anthropomorphism, anthropathy, prolepsis or anachronism, synecdoche, metonymy, etc.).

Note in Exodus 33:7-12 Moses was in a “special tent” and God placed a cloud over it and He was conversing with Moses as a special servant. That makes a difference in understanding the stated question, such as His appearance to Moses through the burning bush in Exodus 3.

John 14:9 states that if one has seen Jesus he has seen the Father (Trinity). Philippians 2:6-8 speaks of Jesus being in the “form of God” and the “likeness of His appearance”. Thus, we are able to see God through seeing Jesus (by faith, via the Scriptures).

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