

SHAPED2LIVE

Transcendent God

As we begin this study, please understand that by no means is what we are about to leap into completed research. So, I encourage you to take the information that is shared during this teaching and use it as a catalyst to swim deeper into your relationship with our Lord, YEHOVA.

Transcendent, another attribute that we ascribe to God. A characteristic if you will that attempts to help us to begin to know and possibly understand God. But there is a huge problem. In the book of Isaiah 55:7-9, the LORD says this.

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts." (New American Standard Bible)

And in Romans 11:33-36, it says this.

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen." (New American Standard Bible)

So, where do we begin to try and understand this attribute of God? And in the grand scheme of things, does it even matter if we obtain any understanding at all that God is transcendent?

As we begin, let's first look at the definition of transcendent and then look at a quote by A.W. Tozer from his book titled *The Attributes of God Volume 2* as well as dive into a few scriptures.

In looking at the definition, we will look at both the word Transcendent and Transcend.

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Adjective **TRANSCENDENT**

1. beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience.
"the search for a transcendent level of knowledge."
 - Surpassing the ordinary, exceptional.
"the conductor was described as a "transcendent genius."

Similar:

superior
supreme
consummate
predominant
incomparable
unrivalled
unequaled
unparalleled
matchless
peerless

- **(of God) existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe.**

Similar:

supernatural
preternatural
transcendental
otherworldly

tran·scend

/tran(t)'send/

verb

1. be or go beyond the range or limits of (something abstract, typically a conceptual field or division).
"This was an issue transcending party politics."

Similar:

go beyond
rise above
cut across

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A.W. Tozer - *"It is difficult to understand how He can be here with us, and in us, pervading all things, but at the same time transcending all things. It looks like a contradiction, but as with many other apparent contradictions, it's not all contradictory; the two thoughts are entirely in accord with each other.*

God is always nearer than you may imagine him to be. God is so near that your thoughts are not as near as God; your breath is not as near as God; your very soul is not as near to you as God is. And yet because he is God, his uncreated being is so far above us that no thought can conceive it nor words express it.

I want to make it very clear that when I say "far above," I do not mean geographically or astronomically removed. It's an analogy. Because we are human beings and live in this world, we learn to speak by analogy.

So, when we say that God is far above, where using an analogy. We're thinking about a star that's way above, wait out yonder in space—but that isn't what we really mean when we think about the transcendent God.

When we say that God's transcendence is "farness above," we are not thinking about astronomical distances or physical magnitude. God never thinks about the size of anything because God contains everything. He never thinks about distance, because God is everywhere; he doesn't have to go from one place to another, so distance doesn't mean anything to him. We, humans, use these expressions to help us to think—their analogies and illustrations.

*So, we talk about God being high and lifted up, elevated, lofty, and transcendent. We think not about distance for that doesn't matter. It's **quality of being** that matters." A.W. Tozer¹ (Emphasis added.)*

Now, contemplating the definitions that you have read and what Mr. Tozer has expressed. Who can say that they fully grasp the idea of the transcendence of God? Can you fully take hold of the fact that *"your very soul is not as near to you as God is"*? What about the fact that *"He never thinks about distance, because God is everywhere; he doesn't have to go from one place to another"*?

While our brains continue to attempt to come to grips with these thoughts, let's look at a few scriptures that point to this particular attribute of God and also see if we can speak to the question that I asked earlier in this lesson.

¹ A.W. Tozer The Attributes of God Volume 2 pgs. 65-69

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"...in the grand scheme of things does it even matter if we obtain any understanding at all that God is transcendent?"

Ephesians 2:5-7

"Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for] it is by grace (His favor and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation).

And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

He did this that He might clearly demonstrate through the ages to come the immeasurable (limitless, surpassing) riches of His free grace (His unmerited favor) in [His] kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ Jesus." (Amplified Version)

What do we see?

- He transcends our "shortcomings and trespasses."
- He transcends "the ages" (time).
- His grace transcends any limitations.

2nd Chronicles 2:6

"But who is able to build Him a house, since heaven, even highest heaven, cannot contain Him? Who am I to build Him a house, except as a place to burn incense in worship before Him?" (Amplified Version)

What do we see?

- His presence transcends "heaven, even highest heaven."

Isaiah 55:7-9

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have love, pity, and mercy for him, and to our God, for He will multiply to him His abundant pardon.

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For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Amplified Version)

What do we see?

- His thoughts, ways (actions) transcend those of men.

Romans 11:33-36

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unfathomable (inscrutable, unsearchable) are His judgments (His decisions)! And how untraceable (mysterious, undiscoverable) are His ways (His methods, His paths)!

For who has known the mind of the Lord and who has understood His thoughts, or who has [ever] been His counselor?

Or who has first given God anything that he might be paid back or that he could claim a *recompense*?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. [For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him.] To Him be glory forever! Amen (so be it)." (Amplified Version)

Recompense Defined:

1. To render an equivalent to, for service, loss, etc.; to requite; to remunerate; to compensate.

He cannot *recompense* me better.

2. To return an equivalent for; to give compensation for; to atone for; to pay for.

Note: When you truly consider this word recompense in relation to YEHOVA. How can you return anything equivalent? What can you give to Him that is proper compensation for who He is, let alone what He has done? How can you pay or atone for what He is owed?

What do we see?

- His knowledge,
- His judgments (decisions).
- His ways. (His methods, His paths).

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- His thoughts. ("who has ever been His counselor?")
- *"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. [For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him.] To Him be glory forever! Amen (so be it)."*

In other words, He transcends ALL! AMEN (SO BE IT!)

Now, to the question of *"...in the grand scheme of things, does it even matter if we obtain any understanding at all that God is transcendent?"*

Here is why it matters.

If YEHOVA does not transcend time, then that means that He is controlled and thereby limited to it, and there would be no way for Him to do anything that could affect humankind or anything else throughout the ages (all time.)

If he is limited to distance, then He cannot be the ever-present God who sees all and knows all and all at the same moment.

If He is controlled by or limited to what we call reality, then He cannot be the God who created something out of nothing, and that would also disqualify Him as being a self-existing God and make Him a created being like us.

He is not testable, repeatable, or completely observable because if any of these could be done, then He does not transcend anything.

The fact that He transcends all should prompt us to trust and love Him with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength. Who He is, transcends our emotions, our inadequateness, our past, our present, our troubles, our pains, and our future.

All of this assures us of an eternal relationship with Him through Jesus the Christ. Why?

BECAUSE HE TRANSCENDS ALL, AMEN! (SO BE IT!)