

The features of the God according to the Old Testament

HW for November 15, 2021

Characterize the person of the God of the Old Testament according to the following passages. Try to do this only on the basis of the texts you have read, and do not use what you know about him from elsewhere (although you know full well that you cannot completely abstract from the European cultural memory of which you yourselves are participants).

For each of the four passages, write a characterisation of no more than 20 words.

1. Genesis 18:16–33

¹⁶ The men set out from there and looked down toward Sodom, Abraham walking with them to see them off. ¹⁷ Now the LORD had said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by him? ¹⁹ For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is just and right, in order that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him." ²⁰ Then the LORD said, "The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave! ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note." ²² The men went on from there to Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Abraham came forward and said, "Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty? ²⁴ What if there should be fifty innocent within the city; will You then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the innocent fifty who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" ²⁶ And the LORD answered, "If I find within the city of Sodom fifty innocent ones, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Abraham spoke up, saying, "Here I venture to speak to my Lord, I who am but dust and ashes: ²⁸ What if the fifty innocent should lack five? Will You destroy the whole city for want of the five?" And He answered, "I will not destroy if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ But he spoke to Him again, and said, "What if forty should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not do it, for the sake of the forty." ³⁰ And he said, "Let not my Lord be angry if I go on: What if thirty should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." ³¹ And he said, "I venture again to speak to my Lord: What if twenty should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not destroy, for the sake of the twenty." ³² And he said, "Let not my Lord be angry if I speak but this last time: What if ten should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not destroy, for the sake of the ten." ³³ When the LORD had finished speaking to Abraham, He departed; and Abraham returned to his place.

Exodus 20:1–7

God spoke all these words, saying: ² I the LORD am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: ³ You shall have no other gods besides Me. ⁴ You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on

the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the LORD your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, ⁶ but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments. ⁷ You shall not swear falsely by the name of the LORD your God; for the LORD will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.

3. Deuteronomy 26:5–11

⁵ You shall then recite as follows before the LORD your God: "My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation. ⁶ The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. ⁷ We cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. ⁸ The LORD freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents. ⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ Wherefore I now bring the first fruits of the soil which You, O LORD, have given me." You shall leave it before the LORD your God and bow low before the LORD your God. ¹¹ And you shall enjoy, together with the Levite and the stranger in your midst, all the bounty that the LORD your God has bestowed upon you and your household.

4. Isaiah 1:10–17

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, You chieftains of Sodom; Give ear to our God's instruction, You folk of Gomorrah! ¹¹ "What need have I of all your sacrifices?" Says the LORD. "I am sated with burnt offerings of rams, And suet of fatlings, And blood of bulls; And I have no delight In lambs and he-goats. ¹² That you come to appear before Me -- Who asked that of you? Trample My courts ¹³ no more; Bringing oblations is futile, Incense is offensive to Me. New moon and sabbath, Proclaiming of solemnities, Assemblies with iniquity, I cannot abide. ¹⁴ Your new moons and fixed seasons Fill Me with loathing; They are become a burden to Me, I cannot endure them. ¹⁵ And when you lift up your hands, I will turn My eyes away from you; Though you pray at length, I will not listen. Your hands are stained with crime – ¹⁶ Wash yourselves clean; Put your evil doings Away from My sight. Cease to do evil; ¹⁷ Learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice; Aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan; Defend the cause of the widow.