

# Who is God?

## Introduction

Those who know God, know that the answer to this question is of paramount importance to our lives, society, the world, and the Universe. For those who do not know Him, often don't even consider that there could be a supernatural force at work in their world.

Modern science does not include the possibility of a supernatural answer to any of our modern-day definitions. The exclusion of God from the classroom has created corporate workspaces with no accommodation for Biblical answers, let alone reverence. Socially, even considering that God might have created something or possibly be the answer to a question, is viewed as primitive, outmoded, or a relic of an earlier age.

## 9 in 10 Believe there is a Higher Power

Even if a person does not believe in God, they have some mental conception of what people refer to when they speak of God. In reality "theology", as the study of God, is universal. Everyone has a "theology" whether they want to admit it or not. Everyone walks around with all sorts of ideas about who God "is" or "must be".

Nine-in-ten Americans believe in a higher power (2018 Pew Research Poll). Nearly 33% of those surveyed believe in some sort of unknown spiritual force but not the God of the Bible. For those who know God, we can look to many places in the Bible and find support for describing that feeling we have of a higher power as that of the Holy Spirit working within us.

Ephesians 1:4-5 <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

God is ready to adopt us, we just have to answer the call.

## God is complex

Christian doctrine of the Trinity has two basic parts: First, there is the one God; and Second, he exists in three persons. God is one being, who reveals Himself in three eternally co-existing persons. The doctrine of the Trinity is important because it helps us in a limited way describe the very essence of God. Fully understanding his essence is beyond our comprehension.

*In Scripture we find:*

- **Father** (*Deuteronomy 6:4*) "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our **God is one Lord.**"
- **Spirit** (*2 Peter 1:21*) "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were **carried along by the Holy Spirit.**" (*Genesis 1:26*) "Then God said, Let **Us** make mankind in our image, in our likeness, ..."
- **Son** (*Matthew 3:16-17*) "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "**This is my Son**, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Jesus says, (*Matthew 28:19*) "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

**In Genesis, God uses the phrases "let Us" and "in Our" implying more than one person existing at the same time. When He made us in His image, we were made in the image of His Son.**

### **The Unfathomable Nature (Essence) of God**

In a letter he wrote, at age 24 to the Council of Nicea, Athanasius describes the unfathomable nature or essence of God.

... "And the [universal] faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three eternal, but one Eternal." ...

*Athanasius - 4th century bishop of Alexandria in 328 AD*

Another one of Athanasius's letters to the Council of Nicea listed what he believed were the books that should constitute the New Testament. "In these [27 writings] alone the teaching of godliness is proclaimed," he wrote. "No one may add to them, and nothing may be taken away from them." Though other such lists had been and would still be proposed, it is Athanasius's list that the church eventually adopted, and it is the one we use to this day.

### **The Spirit's Primary Role Regeneration**

Jesus makes it abundantly clear that no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born again, and this is precisely what the Spirit does: The Spirit convicts' people of their sins, He opens their heart to the Gospel message, and regenerates/quicken their heart.

Throughout the entire book of Acts, every time the words filled with the Spirit are used, one can expect amazing events are about to be revealed due to the power of the Holy Spirit. Whether it is through Pentecost, John the Baptist, Stephen, Saul of Tarsus, Barnabas, or the spiritual gifts that the Spirit bestows on believers, this all comes by the power of the Holy Spirit

Christians will begin to produce fruit, bear fruit, grow in holiness, and be more conformed into the image of Christ each day (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:22-23; Rom. 8:13).

The Holy Spirit is paramount to the Christian life. He is the third person of the Godhead and has been active in God's creation since the beginning of time. He moved the hearts of men in the Old Testament paving the way for Jesus Christ. He empowered Jesus to fulfill the work of the Father and accomplish atonement for many. The Spirit played a vital role in the resurrection of Jesus by raising Jesus up from the dead on the third day. The Spirit also was the critical movement that Jesus made present after His ascension as He created a new special relationship with the Spirit and humankind. This new

relationship gave the Church explosive power, boldness, revelation, unity, sanctification, and regeneration. Without the Spirit, there can be no life, no power, and there would not be a Church!

Theologian, Louis Berkhof - *The Holy Trinity 1938*

### **Theotetos means Christ IS the Godhead in Colossians 2:9**

(Colossians 2:9-12) <sup>9</sup>For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Theotetos) bodily. <sup>10</sup>And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: <sup>11</sup>In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: <sup>12</sup>Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

The Greek words Theiotes and Theotes are found throughout scripture, and have an important distinction between them because of their different derivations; theotes being from theos from the noun meaning deity, and theiotes from the adjective theios meaning divine. In Colossians 2:9, Paul uses the Greek word Theotetos (from Theotes) to describe Christ. He says, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (KJV)

**Other translations interchange "Deity" for "Godhead" correctly using the noun form of theotes rather than the adjective theios which would have only had Christ appearing, to be god-like. (Christ needs to be God for the atonement to work. See below)**

In Colossians 2:9, Paul is declaring that in the Son there dwells all the fullness of absolute Godhead; they were no mere rays of divine glory which gilded Him, lighting up his person for a season and with a splendor not his own; but He was, and is, absolute and perfect God; and the Apostle "uses theotetos to express this essential and personal Godhead of the Son; **Hence, the fact of the indwelling of Deity in Christ is not as an alien presence, but as an inhabitant in his own home.**

Richard C. Trench - *Synonyms of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), pp. 7-8.*

### **Hebrews Author - describing The Son**

(Hebrews 1:1-3) <sup>1</sup>In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. <sup>3</sup>The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

### **Animal Sacrifices**

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. ([Gen. 3:21](#)) This verse records the very first death in the Bible. The skin for Adam's and Eve's covering came from an animal God had created and then killed to make a sufficient covering for His children's guilt. The first death in history was a sacrificial death. Something innocent died to cover the sins of someone guilty. And God was the One who provided the sacrificial animal.

God commanded the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and to take some of the blood from the lamb and to put it on their doorposts (see Exodus 12:1 – 13:6). Those who were faithful to God were redeemed. According to the

Levitical priesthood a sacrifice had to be without defect. (Lev 22:20) "Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf."

### **Substitutionary Atonement**

Any sacrifice offered to God has to be without defect. We humans are born with a sinful nature and no one lives a life without sin. (Romans 3:23) tells us we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Isaiah 59:2) "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

So ideally God would not accept any sacrifice by any man since sin has already made them impure. The one person who lived without sin was Jesus so He was the only one capable of being offered as an acceptable sacrifice. Yet if Jesus were only a sinless man (not also God), we would still have a great problem. His death would be good for only one man; in fact, it would be good for only one sin.

God requires man to die because of sin—even one sin. Suppose in your entire life you committed only one sin. As a sinless man, Jesus could die as a substitute for that sin. But if you were to sin again you would have to die for that second sin. Well, you know that you have sinned more than once in your life! How could one man, Jesus, die for all your sins and for all the sins of mankind? And how could it work for us two thousand years after His death?

### **Why God sent God to die for God**

His being God added an eternal element to His redeeming blood. Hebrews 9:14 says that the Lord offered Himself up through the eternal Spirit. He has accomplished an **eternal redemption** for us (Heb. 9:12). Now Jesus' blood is effective for all men of all times. It can cleanse every sin of every man on the earth throughout time and space.

God cannot be more merciful and less just or be more wrathful and less compassionate. If He did lean to one side more than the other, He would cease to be perfect and thus, cease to be God! The answer to the question of why God sacrificed God is because He is perfect justice, mercy, and love. The Christian Lord is the only higher power who has reconciled the "dilemma" of perfect justice and perfect mercy. Justice was not compromised by His mercy.

### **The by-product of this dilemma**

St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas said that while any manner God chose would have sufficed for our salvation, the passion of Christ was the perfect means because "man knows thereby how much God loves him and is thereby stirred to love him in return" (Summa III, 46, art. 3).

### **The New Covenant**

At the Last Supper, which was a Passover Supper, Jesus Himself served as the sacrificial lamb. Through His death and resurrection, He extended the Passover to all of humanity (instead of only God's chosen people). Those who have been and are faithful to God and who accept the body and blood of Jesus are redeemed. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28). The new and everlasting blood covenant from God replaced the old covenant and eliminated the requirement of animal sacrifices to God, which is why people stopped sacrificing animals to God.