

What is God Like?

WHO IS GOD?

God created you and the universe you live in. He transcends human description and all natural laws because He is greater than them. God gives us a glimpse of Himself in Exodus 34:6,7 as:

The LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished.

He exists as three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who are one in essence. God is one, yet three distinct persons who play different roles in our lives. As high, mighty, and infinite as He is, God cares about every detail of your life. He is not aloof and knows you better than you know yourself. He also longs for a close relationship with you.

HOW CAN YOU KNOW GOD IF HE IS SO GREAT?

Knowing God must be approached from two angles: intellectual and experiential. Both of these must be used or the result will be a dysfunctional knowledge of God.

- Intellectual: God transcends human description. However, He has certain characteristics, or traits, that He has revealed to us; referred to as attributes. These are not “parts” of God, but they do help us understand His personality. Think of these attributes as facets on a beautiful diamond. Each attribute is unique, but works with the others to reflect God’s majestic glory and beauty.
- Experiential: We must get acquainted with God as we would anyone else, by spending time with Him. Daily we should commune with Him through Scripture, prayer, and fellowship with believers. Develop a close walk with Him. Get to know Him as your heavenly father.

WHY SHOULD YOU KNOW GOD?

- To see life from God’s perspective.
- To develop personal holiness.
- You will know what to imitate if you know what He is like.
- To trust God more
- To “set your mind on things above.”
- To worship God for who He truly is – anything else is idolatry.

What is God Like?

Hebrew Words for "God"

Elohim (Strong's #430)

What it means: the supreme God

How it appears in English Bibles: God, Lord

First reference: Genesis 1:1

*In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth.*

JAWH/Jehovah (Strong's #3068)

What it means: the self-existent one

How it appears in English Bibles: LORD

First reference: Genesis 2:4

*When the **LORD** God made the earth and the heavens. Genesis 2:4*

El (Strong's # 410)

What it means: mighty one

How it appears in English Bibles: God

First reference: Genesis 14:8

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine.

*He was priest of **God** Most High,*

Adonai (Strong's #136)

What it means: Lord, sovereign

How it appears in English Bibles: Lord

First reference: Genesis 15:2

*But Abram said, "O **Sovereign** LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?"*

From: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, James Strong.

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Harris, Archer, and Waltke.

Greek Words for "God"

Kurios (Strong's # 2962)

What it means: supreme authority

How it appears in English Bibles: Lord

First reference: Matthew 1:20

*But after he had considered this, an angel of the **Lord** appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."*

Theos (Strong's # 2316)

What it means: God

How it appears in English Bibles: God

First reference: Matthew 1:23

*The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel--which means, " **God** with us."*

From: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, James Strong.

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Kittel.

What is God Like?

The Trinity

We believe in one God, who is creator and sustainer of life, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; each of whom is equal in power and glory. (Matt. 3:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; 1 Pet. 1:2)

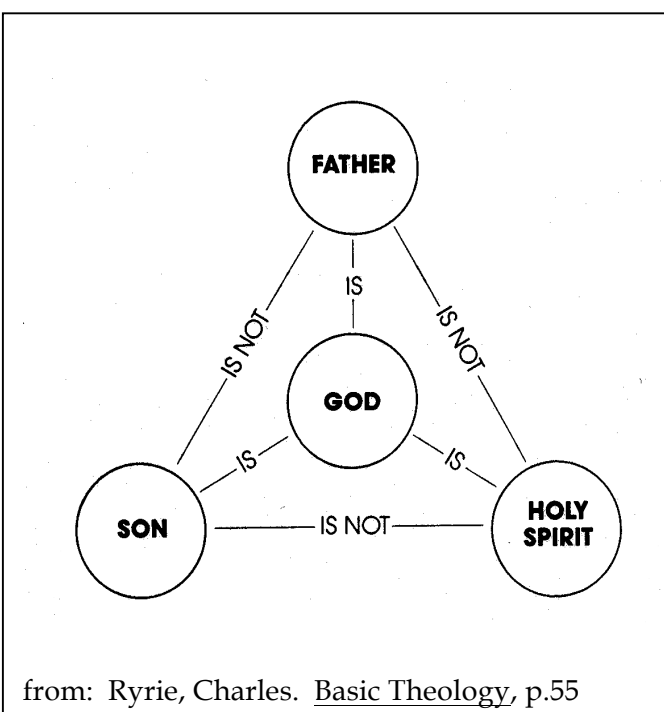
Orthodox Christians recognize that the Scriptures reveal God as tri-unity: three distinct persons, yet one in essence. This doctrine is known as the Trinity, and is a lynchpin of biblical Christianity. Therefore to understand the Christian faith, one must come to terms with the Trinity. The great theologian BB Warfield defines the Trinity this way, “*There is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead, there are three coeternal and coequal persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence* (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia).” The diagram below describes the Trinity. We may never realize the mechanics of how it works from this side of eternity, but we must by faith accept it.

What the Trinity is not:

- Three gods
- Father as Creator, Son and Holy Spirit as created beings.
- Father, Son, and Mother (Mary) – a misperception many Muslims hold to.

What the Trinity is:

- One God – Isaiah 43:10
- Three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



Why is the doctrine of the Trinity important?

- The integrity of Scripture. The Bible confers deity upon the Father, Son, and Spirit; yet clearly states there is only one God.
- Jesus had to be God to live a sinless life and be a perfect sacrifice.
- The Holy Spirit must be God to understand and reveal the mind of God.
- If the Son and the Spirit are not God, they could not fulfill their promises or live up to their “job” descriptions.

The Trinity is the perfect community, God is relational.

What is God Like?

God, the Father

*We believe in God the Father, the first person of the Trinity.
He transcends human description and natural laws because He is greater than them.
(Gen. 1:1; Ex. 3:14; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 5:19-23)*

**If you could describe God in one word...what would it be?
In your opinion, what vocation best fits who God is?**

God is too incredible to describe in completely human terms. Other than words like “awesome”, “magnificent”, “glorious”, etc., we struggle to find a word or phrase that accurately captures the fullness of God’s character. The problem is compounded when some of His character traits seem to be contradictory (e.g. love/wrath). Since our finite minds are incapable of definitively summing up God’s character, we break it down and label the various character traits individually. These are not “parts” of God, but they do help us understand His personality. Think of these attributes as facets on a beautiful diamond. Each attribute is unique, but works with the others to reflect God’s majestic glory and beauty. Each of these attributes works together in perfect harmony.

Do not make the mistake of focusing on one or several attributes at the expense of others. For example, some people like to think of God as just a loving heavenly daddy, while ignoring His absolute holiness. Others may think of Him as just an angry judge who is out to pounce on them as soon as they think about sinning. Both views are inadequate and lead to an unhealthy outlook on life.

God’s attributes are generally divided into two categories: transcendent/incommunicable or immanent/moral. The moral attributes deal with His attitudes and are communicable (i.e. God shares the capacity for these traits with us); the transcendent are not. Theologians differ on exactly how many attributes God has, and this is due primarily to semantics and definitions of the attributes.

What is God Like?

God, the Son: Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary and is True God and True Man. (Isaiah 7:14; John 1:1-14; John 5:18; Phil. 2:6-11)

We believe in the bodily death and resurrection of Christ, in His ascension into heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God, and in His ministry for us as High Priest and Advocate. (Luke 24:50-52; I Corinthians 15:3,4)

He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. (Titus 2:13; Acts 1:11)

JESUS' BIRTH

- Virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matt 1:18) – Therefore did not inherit the sin nature.
- Matthew's genealogy traces Joseph's line; Jesus is legally of the tribe of Judah.
- Luke's genealogy traces Mary's line; Jesus is of David, but not of Solomon (important since Solomon's line was blocked according to Jeremiah 22:24-30).
- The religious leaders never challenged Jesus' genealogy!

JESUS' CHILDHOOD

Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature (Luke 2:52).

JESUS' LIFE

Helps us to know the Father (Jn 14:8-14) and see Jesus' perfection

JESUS' DEATH

- His trials were fraudulent and some were illegal.
- Crucifixion was so brutal, the Romans would not do it to Roman citizens.
- The Roman soldiers declared Jesus dead (John 19:31-34).

WHAT DID JESUS' DEATH ACCOMPLISH?

Atonement – Jesus was a substitute for us, so that we could be “at one” with God.

Propitiation – God is satisfied with Jesus' substitutionary death as payment for our sins.

Justification – God declares us righteous in His sight; forgiven.

Redemption – Jesus paid the ransom and freed us from the bondage and consequences of our sin.

Reconciliation – We can have a good relationship with our heavenly father.

JESUS' RESURRECTION

- It was physical (John 20:24-28).
- Over 500 saw Him at one time after the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-6).

WHAT DOES JESUS RESURRECTION MEAN FOR THE CHRISTIAN?

- Jesus proved He has power over death.
- Jesus is alive to live through us (Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 2:20)
- Jesus is alive to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25)
- Jesus is alive and serves as our defense lawyer (I John 2:1,2)
- He will never leave us or forsake us (Matthew 28:18:20) **PRAISE GOD!**

What is God Like?

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE is so complete that anyone who denies the deity of Jesus Christ must also deny the authority and accuracy of the Scriptures. Below is a summary of the Biblical evidence for the deity of Christ.

I. EXPLICIT ASSERTIONS OF DEITY

John 8:58/Ex 3:13 (I AM = YHWH)	Mark 14:61-64 (I AM)
John 10:30-33 (perfect unity in essence)	John 1:1 (eternality and deity)
John 1:1/Genesis 1:1 (creation)	Titus 2:13/2 Peter 1:1
1 John 5:20 (true God & eternal life)	1 Tim 3:16 (God manifested in flesh)
1 Tim 1:13	John 20:26-29 (no rebuke)
Zech 12:10/Rev 1:7 (trace pronouns)	John 5:18 (equality with God)
Matt 16:15-17/Isa 9:6 (Jesus=Messiah)	John 14:9 (seen Me, seen Father)
1 John 3:16/1 John 4:8 (essence)	Mark 2:5-7 (forgiveness of sin)
Rom 9:5 (Christ according to the flesh)	Hebrews 1:8 (throne of God)
2 Peter 3:18 (our Lord & Savior = Jesus Christ)	

II. THE APPLICATION OF DIVINE NAMES TO JESUS CHRIST

Isaiah 7:14 (Immanuel)	Matt 1:16; 26:63; Luke 2:11
Isaiah 9:6 (Mighty God/Eternal Father)	Matt 2:2; 22:41-46; Mark 14:16
Isaiah 40:3 (LORD...Our God)	Mark 1:1; Luke 2:26; 22:61-71
Jer 23:5,6 (LORD Our Righteousness)	

III. ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY

Eternity (John 1:1)	Life (John 1:4)	Love (1 John 3:16)
Immutability (Heb 13:8)	Holiness (Heb 7:26)	Truth (John 14:6)
Omnipotence (Matt 28:18)	Self Existence ((John 5:26)	
Omniscience (1 Cor 4:5)	Omnipresence (Matt 28:20)	

IV. DIVINE WORKS ASSOCIATED WITH DEITY

Forgiveness of sins: Matt 9:2-7	Creation: Gen 1:1
Final Dissolution and	Providence: John 1:1
Renewal of Things: Heb 1:10-12	Resurrection/Judgment: I Cor 4:5

V. HONOR AND WORSHIP DUE TO DEITY

John 20:28	Acts 7:59	Hebrews 1:6
John 5:23	Philippians 2:10	2 Peter 3:18

VI. EQUAL ASSOCIATION WITH DEITY (OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GODHEAD)

Matthew 28:19*	John 14:1	1 Corinthians 1:3
2 Corinthians 13:14*	John 17:3	Ephesians 6:23
Matthew 3:16,17*	Acts 2:38	Revelation 20:6; 22:3

* Members of the godhead seen by personality

This page from a document I received in the late 1970's - source unknown

What is God Like?

God, the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to impart to mankind the saving work of Christ. He convicts sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need of a Savior and regenerates them. At the point of salvation He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom, and uniquely endows each believer with gifts for building up the Church. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scripture. His power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christ like character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:16-27; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 4:10)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY, HE IS NOT AN "IT"!

The Holy Spirit is God:

- Spirit of God ↔ Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9-11)
- Holy Spirit ↔ Spirit of the Lord (Acts 5:3,9)
- Holy Spirit knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)
- The Lord is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17)
- The Holy Spirit speaks as God (Hebrews 10:15-17, c.f. Jeremiah 31:33,34)

The Holy Spirit is a Person, not a force:

- He grieves (Eph 4:30)
- He can be lied to (Acts 5:3)

According to John 16:7-11, the Holy Spirit reminds unbelievers of...

- sin
- lack of personal righteousness
- judgment (Satan and his forces are going down)

Five commands for Christians concerning the Holy Spirit...

1. Do NOT **grieve** Him (Ephesians 4:30)
2. Do NOT **quench** Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19)
3. **Pray** "in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18, Jude 20)
4. **Live** by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16)
5. **Be filled** with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)

What is God Like?

The Holy Spirit's ministry to believers includes:

Regenerating -- the imparting of new life (Titus 3:5)

Baptizing -- occurs at the moment of salvation

1. Places us into Christ (Romans 6:4)
2. Places us into the Church (1 Corinthians 12:13)
3. Signifies that we belong to Christ (Romans 8:9)

Indwelling – Romans 8:9-11

1. Intimacy with God
2. Permanent residence by God
3. God owns us (1 Corinthians 6:19,20)

Filling -- Controlling us when we yield to him (Ephesians 5:18)

The Scriptural command to be filled is in a present, on-going tense.

Illuminating – giving understanding on spiritual matters (1 Cor 2:9-14)

Gifting – Spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4-11)

Sealing – The guarantee of eternal life (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)

Interceding for us – Romans 8:26,27

Granting us freedom – 2 Corinthians 3:17