

THE NATURE OF GOD.

I. God is _____.

- A. Emory Bancroft has written: “God as Spirit is incorporeal (no body), invisible, without material substance, without physical parts or passions and therefore free from all temporal limitations.” (*Elemental Theory*, p. 23)
- B. Jesus made this clear when he told the Samaritan woman: “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Some have been disturbed, however, as they compare this statement with certain Old Testament expressions which speak of God’s arms (Deuteronomy 33:27), His eyes (Psalm 33:18), ears (2 Kings 19:16), and mouth (Isaiah 58:14).
- C. However, these terms are simply anthropomorphic expressions. An anthropomorphic expression is a term which is used to explain some function or characteristic of God by using words descriptive of human elements.
- D. Robert Lightner writes: “Such expressions do not mean that God possesses these physical parts. He is Spirit (John 4:24). Rather, they mean since God is spirit and eternal, He is capable of doing precisely the functions which are performed by these physical properties in man.” (*The God of the Bible*, p. 67)

II. God is a _____.

- A. Again, to quote from Robert Lightner:
 - 1. “Personality involves existence with the power of self-consciousness and self-determination. To be self-conscious means to be able to be aware of one’s self among others. It is more than mere consciousness. Even animals possess something which makes them aware of things around them. The brute, however, is not able to objectify himself. Man, in contrast to the brute, possesses both consciousness and self-consciousness. Self-determination has to do with the ability to look to the future and prepare an intelligent course of action. It also involves the power of choice. The brute also has determination, but he does not have self-determination—the power to act from his own free will and to thus determine his acts. It is usually admitted that there are three elements of personality—intellect, emotion, and will.” (*Ibid.*, p. 65)
- B. Thus, as a Person, God exhibits all those elements involved in personality.
 - 1. *He _____.* (*Genesis 1:1*)
 - 2. *He _____.* (*Genesis 18:20, 19:24, 25*)
 - 3. *He _____.* (*Psalm 104:27-30*)
 - 4. *He _____.* (*Psalm 75:6, 7*)
 - 5. *He _____.* (*1 Peter 5:6, 7*)
 - 6. *He _____.* (*Psalm 94:9, 10*)
 - 7. *He _____.* (*Proverbs 6:16*)
 - 8. *He _____.* (*Genesis 6:6*)
 - 9. *He _____.* (*Genesis 3:16*)

III. God is _____. (*Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:5, 6; 46:9; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5*)

IV. God is a _____.

A. C.C. Ryrie writes: "There is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal Persons, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence."

B. Robert Culver writes: "Two expressions have been traditionally employed to designate certain inner relations between the Father and the Son, and the Father and the Son with the Spirit. These two expressions are the eternal generation of the Son by the Father and the eternal spiration (or procession) of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. They began to be employed about the time of the council of Nicea (A.D. 325). They expressed in scriptural language the idea that the Son and the Spirit were eternally with the Godhead. John 1:14 refers to our Lord as the 'only begotten' of the Father. And John 14:16, 26 and 15:26 speak of the Spirit as 'proceeding from the Father and the Son.'" (*The Living God*, p. 96)

C. False views concerning the Trinity.

- There are two serious errors about the doctrine of the Trinity.
 - The error of _____. This says that the Trinity consists of three separate (but co-operating) Gods.
 - The error of _____. According to this view there is but one God who simply reveals himself through three different modes, or roles. For example, a particular man could be considered a *husband* to his wife, a *father* to his children, and an *employee* to his boss.

D. Proposed _____ demonstrating the Trinity.

- Throughout church history various illustrations have been offered to demonstrate the Trinity. Six such examples are as follows. The first four are totally unscriptural, while the final three possess some limited possibilities.
 - A three-leaf clover
 - The three states of water (liquid, vapour, and solid)
 - The threefold nature of man (body, soul, spirit)
 - The three parts of an egg (shell, white, yolk)
 - The dimensional example: A book has height, width, and length. These three cannot be separated, yet they are not the same.
 - A triangle

E. Old Testament passages regarding the Trinity.

- The first name used for God: _____ (Genesis 1:1). This name is plural in form but is joined to a singular verb.
- The creation of man. (Genesis 1:26)
- The expulsion from _____. (Genesis 3:22)
- The confusion at _____. (Genesis 11:7)
- The usage of the same word, *echad*, in Genesis 2:24 and in Deuteronomy 6:4. *Echad* is Hebrew for "one." These passages teach that God is one, as husband and wife are one.
- The teachings of King Agur. (Proverbs 30:4)
- The plural forms used in Ecclesiastes 12:1 and Isaiah 54:5.
 - (1) *"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . ."*
(Ecclesiastes 12:1). In the original this is literally "thy creators."
 - (2) *"For thy Maker is thine husband..."* (Isaiah 54:5). Here "maker" is really "makers."
- The triune conversations in _____. (Isaiah 6:8; 48:16; 63:9, 10)
- The conversation between the Father and Son in the _____. (Psalm 2:1-9; 45:6-8; 110:1-5)

F. New Testament passages regarding the Trinity.

- a. The baptism of _____ . (Matthew 3:16, 17)
- b. The _____ of Christ. (Matthew 4:1)
- c. The teachings of Jesus.
 - i. John 14:16: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.”
 - ii. The Greek word here translated “another” is *allos*, meaning another of the same kind. *Heteros* is the Greek word for another of a different kind. It is never used in referring to the Trinity.
 - iii. John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father Will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”.
- d. The baptismal formula.
 - i. Matthew 28:19, 20: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
- e. The apostolic benediction.
 - i. 2 Corinthians 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

G. A scriptural summary of the Trinity.

- a. The Father is God (John 6:44-46; Romans 1:7; 1 Peter 1:2).
- b. The Son is God (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8).
- c. The Spirit is God (Acts 5:3, 4; Hebrews 9:14).

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Reduced to its simplest definition, an attribute of God is _____.

Some theologians prefer the word “perfection” to that of attribute. A. W. Tozer has written:

“If an attribute is something true of God, it is also something that we can conceive as being true of him. God being infinite, must possess attributes about which we can know nothing.” (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 19) “In the awful abyss of the divine being may lie attributes of which we know nothing and which can have no meaning for us, just as the attributes of mercy and grace can have no personal meaning for seraphim or cherubim. These holy beings may know of these qualities in God but be unable to feel them sympathetically for the reason that they have not sinned and so do not call forth God’s mercy and grace. So there may be, and I believe there surely are, other aspects of God’s essential being which He has not revealed even to His ransomed and Spirit-illuminated children.” (*Ibid*, p. 52).

Finally, it must be concluded that there are hidden facets of God’s nature wholly unknown (and perhaps unknowable) by any created being, even angels. They are known only by Jehovah God himself.

We now consider some twenty-one attributes or perfections of God.

A. God is _____.

1. Exodus 3:13, 14: “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”
2. Lehman E. Strauss writes: “Hardly a person has not been baffled by this passage when reading it for the first time in the English Bible. Exactly what did God mean? He simply wanted to be known by His name, “I AM.” In the divine vocabulary there is no past or future tense. With God there is no “was” or “will be,” but always the “now,” the present. “I AM” is God’s name and indicates His absolute and essential being, His self-existence and eternalness. The *New Standard Dictionary* defines the word “am” to mean “present permanent existence.” (*The First Person*, p. 52).
3. We have already discussed the existence of God, but one of his attributes is self-existence. This is simply to say (with staggering implications) that God exists because he exists. He is not dependent upon anything or anyone for his thoughts (Romans 11:33, 34), his will (Romans. 9:19; Ephesians 1:5), his power (Psalm 115:3), or his counsel (Psalm. 33:10, 11).

B. God is _____.

1. Psalm 50:10-12: “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.”
2. This attribute is closely connected to the attribute of self-existence, but carries it a step further. This means God has never had in eternity past, nor can ever have in the ages to come, a single need for which his own divine nature has not already provided.

I AM THAT I AM

C. God is _____. (*Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 102:11, 12; 90:2*)

1. Simply defined, this means God is absolutely free from the tyranny of time. In him there is no past or future, but one always and never-ending present. He is neither conditioned nor confined by time.
2. During one of his dialogues with the wicked Pharisees, the Son of God made reference to his attribute of eternity. Note his declaration:
 - a. John 8:56, 57: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”
 - b. It should be observed that he did not say, “before Abraham was, I was,” but “before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

D. God is _____. (*1 Kings 8:22, 23, 27; Jeremiah 23:24*)

1. God has no _____. He is bounded only by his own nature and will.

E. God is _____. (*Psalm 139:7-12; Matthew 18:20*)

1. The great theologian A. H. Strong defines this attribute as follows:
 - a. “God, in the totality of His essence, without diffusion or expansion, multiplication or division, penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts.” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 279)
2. The omnipresence of God thus means he is present _____ with his whole being at the same time. The great danger to avoid in rightly understanding this attribute is the grievous error of pantheism, which says that God is everywhere, and everything is God. This is totally false.
3. Two aspects should be kept in mind as one studies the omnipresence of God.
 - a. *God's _____.* This speaks of God being in the world, acting within and through his creation.
 - b. *God's _____.* This affirms that God is above and beyond his creation.

F. God is _____ (all-powerful). (*Genesis 18:14; Revelation 19:6*)

1. This means God can do anything if it can be done and if it does not contradict his own nature.
2. To illustrate these two things: God *cannot* create a rock so heavy that he couldn't lift it, because the very nature of this act would be impossible to perform. God *cannot* lie, or steal, for these things would contradict his own nature.
3. Here are some areas in which God's omnipotence is clearly seen.
 - a. *Over _____.*
 - i. He separates light from darkness (Genesis 1:4).
 - ii. He separates the waters by the firmament (space) (Genesis 1:7).
 - iii. He separates the seas from the dry land (Genesis 1:10).
 - iv. He measures oceans in his hands (Isaiah 40:12).
 - v. He weighs mountains in his scale (Isaiah 40:12).
 - vi. He regards nations as a drop in the bucket (Isaiah 40:15).
 - vii. He looks upon the islands as small particles of dirt (Isaiah 40:15).
 - b. *Over _____.* (*Daniel 4:30-32*)
 - c. *Over _____.* (*Psalm 103:20*)
 - d. *Over _____.* (*Job 1:12; 2:6*).

- i. The first two chapters of Job deal with Satan's accusations against the patriarch before God. The devil then subjects Job to various fierce and fiery trials, but not before being granted the needed specific permission from the omnipotent God himself.
- ii. William Evans writes: "Satan has no power over any of God's children saving as God permits him to have. This fact is clearly established in the case of Job (1:12 and 2:6), and Peter (Luke 22:31, 32), in which we are told that Satan had petitioned God that he might sift the self-righteous patriarch and the impulsive apostle. Finally, Satan is to be forever bound with a great chain (Revelation 20:2). God can set a bar (limit) to the malignity (evil) of Satan just as he can set a bar to the waves of the sea." (The Great Doctrines of the Bible; p. 33).

e. Over _____ . (*Hebrews 2:14, 15*)

G. God is _____ (all-knowing). (*Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 40:13, 14; Hebrews 4:13; Psalm 104:24*)

1. God possesses (without prior discovery of facts) complete and universal knowledge of all things past, present, and future. This includes not only the actual, but also the possible.
2. This total and immediate knowledge is based on his eternity (he has always, and will always exist), and his omnipresence (he has been, is, and will always be everywhere at the same time).
3. **He _____ all things. (*Proverbs 15:3*)**
4. **He _____ knows all things (the big and small of his universe). (*Psalm 147:4; Matthew 10:29, 30*)**
5. **He knows mankind.**
 - a. Our _____. (Psalm 139:2; 44:21)
 - b. Our _____. (Psalm 139:4)
 - c. Our _____. (Psalm 139:2, 3; Revelation 2:2, 9, 13; 3:1, 8, 15)
 - d. Our _____. (Exodus 3:7)
 - e. Our _____. (Matthew 6:32)
 - f. Our _____. (Genesis 18:17-19; 22:11, 12; 2 Chronicles 16:9)
 - g. Our _____. (weaknesses) (Psalm 103:14)
 - h. Our _____. (Psalm 69:5)
 - i. He knows his _____. (John 10:14; 2 Timothy 2:19)
6. **He knows the past, present, and future. (*Acts 15:18*)**
7. **He knows what might or could have been. (*Matthew 11:23*)**

b. A. W. Tozer has written: "God perfectly knows Himself and, being the source and author of all things, it follows that He knows all that can be known. And this He knows instantly and with a fullness of perfection that includes every possible item of knowledge concerning everything that exists or could have existed anywhere in the universe at any time in the past or that may exist in the centuries or ages yet unborn. God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all beings and every being, all creaturehood, and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell." (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 62)