

Article 2, Part 1 – God the Father
Back to the Basics

Intro – An April 2018 Study by Pew Research Center

- Americans were asked, “Do you believe in God or not?” Their responses provided a variety of interesting results.
- For instance, nine-in-ten Americans believe in a higher power, but only a slim majority believe in God as described in the Bible.
- Previous Pew Research Center studies have shown that the share of Americans who believe in God with absolute certainty has declined in recent years, while the share saying they have doubts about God’s existence – or that they do not believe in God at all – has grown.
- The survey of more than 4,700 U.S. adults finds that one-third of Americans say they do not believe in the God of the Bible, but that they do believe there is some other higher power or spiritual force in the universe.
- A slim majority of Americans (56%) say they believe in God “as described in the Bible.” And one-in-ten do not believe in any higher power or spiritual force.
- A growing number of Americans does not believe in the God of the Bible. A new survey conducted by LifeWay Research and released by Ligonier Ministries revealed that 52% of Americans and 30% of evangelicals say they believe that Jesus was a “good teacher, but he was not God.”
- Now more than ever, it is time for the church to recapture a biblical view of God.

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

“There is one and only one living and true God.”

- At the bedrock of our faith is the truth that God is one. Deut. 6:4 says it best – “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!*” The Jews call this passage the *shema* and it is one of the most foundational truths of their faith.
- Because Christians believe the biblical truth that God is one, we are counted among the monotheists rather than the polytheists.
- Our God (Jehovah) is the only “living and true God” – all others are the invention of men.

- Psalm 96:4-5 – *“For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. 5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.”*
- Isaiah also gives us a humorous account of worshiping false gods – *“He cuts down cedars for himself, and take the cypress and the oak...he burns half of it in the fire...and the rest he makes into a god...he falls down before it and worships it.”* (Isa. 44:14-17)

“He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.”

- The Scriptures are revelation, and as such they reveal many things about God. First the article says that God is “intelligent.” In fact, the Scripture tells us that He’s omniscient – He knows all things.
- Psalm 139:2-4 – *“You know my sitting down and my rising up; you understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.”*
- Jehovah is also “spiritual.” Jesus explains in John 4 – *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* (John 4:24) God is a spiritual being who allowed Himself to take on flesh in the incarnation of Jesus.
- Scripture also tells us that God is a “personal Being.” That is, He has a real identity that He has elected to reveal to sinful humans like us. We can have a personal relationship with a personal God!

- The Bible is also crystal clear that God is the creator of all things – *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”* (Gen. 1:1). We believe the Lord created everything *ex nihilo* – out of nothing God made everything!
- People often ask “Who created God?” The answer is simple – no one created God. Why? Because did not require a creation – He is eternal. He has always existed and always will exist!
- Scripture also tells us that our God also the Redeemer. Rev. 5:9 says that the heavenly choir sang a new song to Jesus – *“You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”*
- Redemption means that Jesus paid the price for our sins with His blood. Who was the payment made to? Some have suggested the Devil, but the author of Hebrews reminds us it was God!
- Hebrews 9:12 – *“With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”* God send His Son to redeem the world through His own precious blood.
- Scripture also reminds us that God is the “Preserver” of all things. Col. 1 says, *“And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”* He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Without God everything would cease to exist.
- God is also the Ruler of the universe. While Satan is described as *“the god of this age”* (2 Cor. 4:4), make no mistake – God is still in control. *“He does all that He pleases”* (Psalm 115:3).

“God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures.”

- These words remind us that God is completely holy – totally perfect. When Isaiah was called into the ministry, he was ushered into heaven’s throne room where he heard one seraph say to another – *“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of His glory”* (Isa. 6:3).
- James 1:13 tells us, *“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.”* God is perfect in all His ways!
- Until someone understands the holiness of God, they will never come to understand the cross. Jesus came to reconcile imperfect sinners to a perfect God. That’s why Jesus is the only Way!
- Because God is perfect, He also has perfect knowledge of all things – all that has been created and all that has yet to be created. He is “all powerful and all knowing.”
- The omnipotence of God is seen countless times throughout Scripture, but I love the reference in Rev. 19 – *“Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”* All power is in His hands. *“With God all things are possible”* (Matt. 19:26).
- As for God being all-knowing, “His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures.” To put it bluntly, God knows everything in every age.

- God even has an intimate knowledge of “the future decisions of His free creatures.” A great example each person’s reception or rejection of Christ. Our Lord knew each person who would receive Christ from eternity past, and based on that foreknowledge God called many to salvation (Rom. 8:29).

“To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.”

- The reason we worship is very simple – because He is God. We are natural, but He is supernatural. We are finite, but He is infinite. We are the creation, but He is the Creator. We are imperfect sinners, but He is the perfect God.
- The only logical response to such an awesome God is “the highest love, reverence, and obedience.” Each of those are an essential part of our service and worship to Him.
- The greatest command is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Why? *“We love Him because He first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19) We love Him for who He is and all that He has done in securing our salvation.
- We owe our God the highest reverence – because He alone is the perfect God of heaven and earth. Scripture reminds us that *“the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”* (Prov. 9:10). Be careful how you take up the name of the Lord and handle His Word!
- Our love and reverence will be made manifest in our obedience. Jesus said, *“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you”* (John 15:14).

“The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.”

- Our God is distinctive from all the imaginary gods in the world because only Christians serve a God who is three in one.
- The God of Scripture exists eternally as the “triune God” – “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” I’m sure it’s for that reason that Jesus charged us to baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).
- Most so-called believers have no problem confessing that the Heavenly Father is God. He has many names and titles in Scripture, often based on the language you’re reading, but people generally accept that the Father is God.
- The trouble comes when Christians assert that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also completely and fully God. Critics say that the doctrine of the Trinity was an invention of the church, several centuries after the time of Christ.
- But, the Bible affirms the full deity of Christ. The passages are too numerous to mention, but here are just a couple:
 - John 1:1 – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word.”*
 - Col. 2:9 – *“In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”*
- In regard to the Spirit, the apostles used His name synonymously with God. In Acts 5, Peter said that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit, and in doing so He actually lied to God (Acts 5:3-4).

- Some have suggested that because God is One, He can not also be three at the same time. The baptism of Jesus shows us otherwise. In that one moment, all the members of the Godhead were present.
- Matt. 3:16-17 – *“When He had been baptized, **Jesus** came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw **the Spirit of God** descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly **a voice came from heaven**, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*
- And while the three – Father, Son, and Spirit – comprise the One Godhead, each member of the Trinity has His own “personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.”
- To put in in layman’s terms, the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father – but each of them are God. Each of them labor for the glory of the Father.

“God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace.”

- This section of the article introduces us to the doctrine of “God as Father.” The Father is the first Person of the Trinity and as such He “reigns with providential care.” In theological terms, this idea is called the providence of God.
- Providence says that God, in His sovereign power, is working all things toward His appointed will. He even operates within the freewill of man to accomplish His providential purposes.

- Paul explains the providence of God in the life of a believer – “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).
- But the providence of God is not limited to the life of a believer. Solomon said that, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Prov. 21:1).
- The providence of God reminds us that Jehovah is not like the god of deism – a god who wound the world up and is now letting it spin out of control. Amid all the chaos, we can rest assured that IS in control and His perfect will is going to be fulfilled.
- God’s providence includes all things, but the BF&M mentions His providential care of “the universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history.” Like a symphony, God brings all parts together to accomplish His perfect plan.
- All of it is “according to the purposes of His grace.” Everything God has done moves us toward salvation or damnation. It is His desire that all men be saved, as by His sovereign power He has turned the hearts of many to Himself.

“He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise.”

- We’ve already discovered from Scripture that God is indeed omnipotent and omniscient. We can add to that list **omnipresence** and **omnibenevolence**. He is everywhere and He is loving in all His ways.
- The omnipresence of God is clear in Scripture – “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into

heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there” (Psalm 139:7-8).

- We couldn’t escape the presence of God even if we wanted to. And why would we want to flee the presence of the One who is omnibenevolent?
- Psalm 106:1 explains the eternal goodness of God – “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” He never changes (Heb. 13:8) – thus God is eternally good.
- It’s also good to know that God is all-wise. When the psalmist considered the depths of the wisdom of God, he said, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it” (Psalm 139:6).

“God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.”

- The final words of this section highlight the Christian doctrine of adoption. We’re all familiar with the concept – adoption happens when you welcome someone outside the family into the family. There are so many awesome stories!
- Many people would say that everyone is a child of God, but that is NOT the case. The only children of God are those who have placed their faith in Jesus. Through faith in Christ, they have been adopted into the family of God.
- Romans 8:15 – “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” At the moment you were saved, the Holy Spirit brought you into the family of God and sealed you until the day of salvation.

- John marveled at the doctrine of adoption. He said, “*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*” (1 John 3:1)
- God is everyone’s Creator, but He is Father only to those who have placed their faith in Jesus. Daily we should pursue our Heavenly Father! Jesus taught us to pray, “*Our Father, who art in heaven.*” (Matt. 6:9)
- Even though everyone has not been adopted into God’s family, He is “still fatherly in His attitude toward all men.” And though they don’t acknowledge it, God even provides for those who aren’t His children.
- Matt. 5:45 – “*He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*” God daily blesses even those who curse and ignore Him.

If Christ is your Savior, God is your Father. You are forever a child of God. Live each day with that assurance.

Conclusion – The late theologian J.I. Packer wrote in His classic volume on God, *Knowing God*, these words – “You sum up the whole of the NT religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one’s holy Father. **If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father.** If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all.”