

Who Is God? The Attributes of God

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Our Premise

We believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible, unlimited inerrancy of the Bible.

- Verbal inspiration
 - The very words are inspired by God
- Plenary
 - The whole Bible
 - Completely
- Infallible
 - The words are the exact words God wanted
 - We will also see the exact letters and spaces between the letters

2 Timothy 3:16–17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.” (NASB 2020)

...inspired - θεόπνευστος (theopnewstos) - from Θεός God, and πνέω to breathe or blow. Prompted by God, divinely inspired, occurs only in 2 Tim. 3:16 in the NT. (Zodhiates 2000)

Literally, all scripture is God breathed. From θεός (theos) God and πνεῦμα (pnooma) breath.

The source of this inspired, God breathed word is an operation of the Holy Spirit. Again, looking at the Greek word used, the word pnooma is the same word used to describe the Holy Spirit. God breathed by the power of God, the Holy Spirit.

The Results of this are multiple.

- Beneficial
- Teaching
- Rebuke
- Correction
- Training in righteousness
- Fully capable
- Equipped

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you.” (NASB 2020)

2 Peter 1:20-21

“Above all, you do well if you recognize this: No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet’s own imagination,” (NET 2nd ed.)

Yes God has spoken, and He has not stuttered. The God of truth has given us the Word of Truth, and it does not contain any untruth in it. The Bible is the unerring Word of God. (Geisler and Howe 1992, 12)

Our Premise

- Authoritative
 - Every word is authoritative
 - Every place name
 - Every phrase
 - Every number
 - The Bible is the final word
- Unlimited inerrancy
 - The Bible is fully inspired of God
 - There is no error
 - Jesus Christ is on every page

Matthew 5:18

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished!” (NASB 2020)

Matthew 5:18

“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter will pass from the law until everything takes place.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Jot and Tittle

Jot – י – Hebrew letter yodh

ב - Hebrew letter beth

כ - Hebrew letter kaph

Our Tools for Study

- The Bible
- The Holy Spirit
- A notebook
- Some note cards
- A journal
- An open heart

The Story of the Bible

- From outside our time domain
- The Bible
- 66 Books
- 40 Writers
- 1 Master Architect and Author

The Story

Who were the men used?

- Highly educated and barely educated
- Professional fishermen
- Kings
- Exiled prophets
- Prime ministers and statesmen
- Tax collectors
- Mechanics
- Doctor
- Farmer

How was this done?

- The Old Testament is in two languages
 - Hebrew
 - Aramaic
 - Ezra (5:8; 6:12; 7:12-26), Daniel (2:4-7:28), and one verse in Jeremiah (Jer. 10:11). (Smith 1997)
- The New Testament is in only one language – Greek
- There is a version of the Old Testament that has been translated into Greek that was available to Jesus and the disciples,
 - Septuagint (LXX)
 - The Septuagint is a translation done for Hellenized Jews of the Diaspora who, no longer understanding Hebrew, wished to hear and teach the Bible in their language. Scholars argue over the date of the translation, placing portions as early as 250 BC and other parts as late as 100 BC. Most concur that it was translated in segments by many translators over a couple of centuries and then was gathered together into one library of scrolls or one codex. The Septuagint follows a different order from English Bibles and usually includes up to 15 apocryphal or noncanonical books. (Elwell and Comfort 2001, 200)
- The text did not originally include chapters or verses. Chapters and verses were added later.
 - The present division of the whole Bible into chapters was made by Cardinal Hugo de St. Cher about 1250. The present division into verses was introduced by Robert Stephens in his Greek Testament, published in 1551, in his edition of the Vulgate, in 1555. The first

English Bible printed with these chapters and verses was the Geneva Bible, in 1560.
(Smith, Smith's Bible Dictionary 1986)

Background

- Old Testament
 - The New Testament concealed
 - Written over 2000 years
 - The story of a nation
- New Testament
 - The Old Testament revealed
 - Written in one generation
 - The story of a man

Who is God?
What is God?

The Westminster Confession of Faith

1. There is but one only, (Deut. 6:4, 1 Cor. 8:4–6) living, and true God, (1 Thess. 1:9, Jer. 10:10) who is infinite in being and perfection, (Job 11:7–9, Job 26:14) a most pure spirit, (John 4:24) invisible, (1 Tim. 1:17) without body, parts, (Deut. 4:15–16, John 4:24, Luke 24:39) or passions; (Acts 14:11,15) immutable, (James 1:17, Mal. 3:6) immense, (1 Kings 8:27, Jer. 23:23–24) eternal, (Ps. 90:2, 1 Tim. 1:17) incomprehensible, (Ps. 145:3) almighty, (Gen. 17:1, Rev. 4:8) most wise, (Rom. 16:27) most holy, (Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8) most free, (Ps. 115:3) most absolute; (Exod. 3:14) working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, (Eph. 1:11) for His own glory; (Prov. 16:4, Rom. 11:36) most loving, (1 John 4:8,16) gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; (Exod. 34:6–7) the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; (Heb. 11:6) and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, (Neh. 9:32–33) hating all sin, (Ps. 5:5–6) and who will by no means clear the guilty. (Nah. 1:2–3, Exod. 34:7)
2. God hath all life, (John 5:26) glory, (Acts 7:2) goodness, (Ps. 119:68) blessedness, (1 Tim. 6:15, Rom. 9:5) in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made, (Acts 17:24–25) nor deriving any glory from them, (Job 22:2–3) but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things (Rom. 11:36) and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleaseth. (Rev. 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:15, Dan. 4:25, 35) In His sight all things are open and manifest, (Heb. 4:13) His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, (Rom. 11:33–34, Ps. 147:5) so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. (Acts 15:18, Ezek. 11:5) He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. (Ps. 145:17, Rom. 7:12) To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them. (Rev. 5:12–14)
3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: (1 John 5:7. Matt 3:16–17, Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14) the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; (John 1:14, 18) the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. (John 15:26, Gal. 4:6) (The Westminster Confession of Faith 1996)

That simple statement of who it is we follow tends to drive you to one place – worship.

As no argument is presented in the Old Testament to prove the existence of God, so in like manner there is no argument advanced to demonstrate that God may be known. Men of those times knew God because of His presence with them. That truth does not imply His bodily appearance. In fact there is little that borders on a physical conception nor, on the other hand, is there much doctrine that establishes the fact of the divine essence. (Chafer 1993, 260)

What We Know of God He Has Revealed to Us

Revelation is a divinely initiated activity, God's free communications by which he alone turns his personal privacy into a deliberate disclosure of his reality.

Divine revelation palpitates with human surprise. Like a fiery bolt of lightning that unexpectedly zooms toward us and scores a direct hit, like an earthquake that suddenly shakes and engulfs us, it somersaults our private thoughts to abrupt awareness of ultimate destiny. By the unannounced intrusion of its omnipotent actuality, divine revelation lifts the present into the eternal and unmask our pretensions of human omniscience. As if an invisible Concorde had burst the sound barrier overhead, it drives us to ponder whether the Other World has finally pinned us to the ground for a life-and-death response. Confronting us with a sense of cosmic arrest, it makes us ask whether the end of our world is at hand and propels us unmasked before the Judge and Lord of the universe. Like some piercing air-raid siren it sends us scurrying from life's preoccupations and warns us that no escape remains if we neglect the only sure sanctuary. Even once-for-all revelation that has occurred in another time and place fills us with awe and wonder through its ongoing significance and bears the character almost of a fresh miracle. (Henry 1999, 17)

Where Does God's Revelation of Himself Start?

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (NKJV)

Where Does it End?

Revelation 22:20–21

"He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (NKJV)

Can I Learn About God?

Job 11:7

"Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?" (NKJV)

The rhetorical question God asks of Job leads to one conclusion, no – not without serious help.

Serious Help

1 Corinthians 1:21

"For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe." (ESV)

More Serious Help

1 Corinthians 2:10–11

“these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” (ESV)

If we only understand this through the power of the Holy Spirit, then how did He do this?

Hebrews 1:1–4

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.” (ESV)

As believers, we have help. Real help and a promise from the author.

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (ESV)

Christ’s confident declaration to his disciples that the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth (John 14:26) mirrors his conviction that God himself stands at the center of divine revelation and voluntarily steps out of the otherwise hidden supernatural in order to confront man with the erstwhile unknown and impenetrable. (Henry 1999, 19)

Let’s scan some of what the Bible has about who God is.

God is spirit, He is not corporeal like we are.

John 4:24

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (ESV)

He has revealed Himself as having always existed.

Exodus 3:14

“God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”” (NRSV)

Psalms 90:2

“Before the mountains were formed or the earth and the world were brought forth, you are God from eternity to eternity.” (ISV)

Without His self-revelation to us, we will never get it.

Job 11:7–9

“Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” (NRSV)

God appeared to Abraham, but since He is not corporeal but is spirit, this implies He revealed Himself through an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ, the Angel of the Lord.

Acts 7:2

“And Stephen replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,” (NRSV)

1 Timothy 6:13–16

“In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.” (NRSV)

He is perfect and blameless and desires this for us.

Matthew 5:48

“So be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (ISV)

Genesis 17:1

“When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and announced, “I am God Almighty. Live in constant awareness that I’m always with you, and be blameless.” (ISV)

God does not change. He is always the same and He has not changed His mind about sin.

Malachi 3:6

“Because I the LORD don’t change; therefore you children of Jacob, aren’t destroyed.” (ISV)

James 1:17

“Every generous act of giving and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father who made the heavenly lights, in whom there is no inconsistency or shifting shadow.” (ISV)

God cannot be localized or placed into a box and kept in one place.

1 Kings 8:27

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!” (NKJV)

Yet God takes notice of each of us individually. You cannot hide from Him or escape Him.

Psalms 139:1–13

“O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb.” (NLT)

Hebrews 4:13

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.” (NLT)

God is holy, wise, and infinite.

Revelation 4:8

“Each one of the four living creatures had six wings, and they were covered with eyes, inside and out. Day and night they never stop singing: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.”” (GNB)

Psalms 147:5

“Great and mighty is our Lord; his wisdom cannot be measured.” (GNB)

Romans 16:25–27

“Let us give glory to God! He is able to make you stand firm in your faith, according to the Good News I preach about Jesus Christ and according to the revelation of the secret truth which was hidden for long ages in the past. Now, however, that truth has been brought out into the open through the writings of the prophets; and by the command of the eternal God it is made known to all nations, so that all may believe and obey. To the only God, who alone is all-wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever! Amen.” (GNB)

Isaiah 6:3

“They were calling out to each other: “Holy, holy, holy! The LORD Almighty is holy! His glory fills the world.”” (GNB)

All that he does is righteous as He is righteous.

Revelation 15:4

“Who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name, because you alone are holy? All nations will come and worship before you for your righteous acts have been revealed.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Deuteronomy 32:4

“As for the Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are just. He is a reliable God who is never unjust, he is fair and upright.” (NET 2nd ed.)

God is love.

Exodus 34:6

“The LORD passed by before him and proclaimed: “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness,” (NET 2nd ed.)

The other question hinted at, what is God?

God is a Spirit, (John 4:24) in and of himself infinite in being, (Exod. 3:14, Job 11:7–9) glory, (Acts 7:2) blessedness, (1 Tim. 6:15) and perfection; (Matt. 5:48) all-sufficient, (Gen. 17:1) eternal, (Ps. 90:2) unchangeable, (Mal. 3:6, James 1:17) incomprehensible, (1 Kings 8:27) every where present, (Ps. 139:1–13) almighty, (Rev. 4:8) knowing all things, (Heb. 4:13, Ps. 147:5) most wise, (Rom. 16:27) most holy, (Isa. 6:3, Rev. 15:4) most just, (Deut. 32:4) most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. (Exod. 34:6) (The Westminster Larger Catechism: With Scripture Proofs 1996)

We are going to be examining the attributes of God. Who He is. “Inherent characteristics of God revealed in Scripture and displayed in God’s actions in biblical history. They are characteristics equally of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God’s attributes are revealed in progressively richer and fuller ways within the history of redemption.” (Elwell and Comfort 2001)

The attributes of God present a theme so vast and complex and so beyond the range of finite faculties that any attempt to classify them must be only approximate as to accuracy or completeness. So, also, the attributes are so interrelated and interdependent that the exact placing of some of them is difficult if not wholly impossible. (Chafer 1993, 189)

We will also take a look at the various names of God. These names are “expressive of His Person, God’s person, presence, and character — none of which can be fully comprehended by the human mind — are all concentrated in His name.” (Bromiley 1988, 504)

Proof that there is a God is not as difficult as one would think. The “belief in the existence of God has been almost universal among men.” (Boyce 2010, 12)

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