

Q2: What is God?

God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.

Psalm 86:8–10 and 15

Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvellous deeds; you alone are God.... You, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Commentary

God is an eternal, independent being.... He gives being to all creatures.... God is an eternal, unchangeable being.... His being is without any limits. Angels and men have their beings, but then they are bounded and limited;...but God is an immense being that cannot be included within any bounds.... There never was nor shall be time wherein God could not say of himself, 'I am'.... He is a God that gives being to all things.... He is the Being of beings, subsisting by himself;...'I am that I am, and as I am, so will I be to all eternity'.... He is infinite in power, sovereign in dominion, and not bounded as creatures are.... He is so strong that he is almighty, he is one to whom nothing is impossible.... He wanteth nothing, but is infinitely blessed with the infinite perfection of his glorious being...self-sufficient, all-sufficient, absolutely perfect.... There is no succession or variation in God, but he is eternally the same.... God ever was, ever is, and ever shall be. Though the manifestations of himself unto the creatures are in time, yet his essence or being never did nor shall be bound up by time. Look backward or forward, God from eternity to eternity, is a most self-sufficient, infinite, perfect, blessed being, the first cause of our being, and

without any cause of his own being; an eternal infinite fulness, and possession to himself and of himself. What God is, he was from eternity, and what God is, he will be so to eternity.

Thomas Brooks (1608–1680). An English Puritan preacher, Brooks studied at Cambridge University before becoming rector of a church in London. He was ejected from his post, but continued to work in London even during the Great Plague. He wrote over a dozen books, most of which are devotional in character, *The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod* being the best known.

From “Christ’s Eternal Deity Proved” in *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, edited by Rev. Alexander Balloch Grosart, Volume 5 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1866), 150–157.

Further Reading

“Self-existence”, “Transcendence”, and “Almightiness” in *Concise Theology*, by J. I. Packer.

Prayer

I believe, O sovereign Goodness, O mighty Wisdom, that thou dost sweetly order and govern all things, even the most minute, even the most noxious, to thy glory, and the good of those that love thee. I believe, O Father of the families of heaven and earth, that thou so disposest all events, as may best magnify thy goodness to all thy children, especially those whose eyes wait upon thee. I most humbly beseech thee, teach me to adore all thy ways, though I cannot comprehend them; teach me to be glad that thou art king, and to give thee thanks for all things that befall me; seeing thou hast chosen that for me, and hast thereby ‘set to thy seal that they are good.’ And for that which is to come, give me thy grace to do in all things what pleaseth thee; and then, with an absolute submission to thy wisdom, to leave the issues of them in thy hand.

John Wesley (1703–1791). An English preacher and theologian, Wesley is largely credited, along with his brother Charles, with founding the English Methodist movement. He travelled generally on horseback, preaching two or three times each day, and is said to have preached more than 40,000 sermons. He also was a noted hymn-writer.

From “Forms of Prayer: Thursday Morning” in *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley*, Volume 6 (New York: J. Emory & B. Waugh, 1831), 392.

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Q3: How many persons are there in God?

There are three persons in the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Commentary

The...Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being one God, is...necessary to us to be believed, not only as to the eternal...but especially for the knowledge of God's three great sorts of works on man: that is, as our Creator, and the God of nature; as our Redeemer, and the God of governing and reconciling grace, and as our Sanctifier, and the Applier and Perfecter of all to fit us to glory.

The Scripture tells us that there are three, and yet but one God.... We are to be baptised into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 29.) And there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one (1 John v. 7.)... [That] God is one infinite, undivided Spirit; and yet that he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be believed.

We must...know, believe and esteem him to be the only infinite, eternal, self-sufficient Spirit, vital Power, Understanding, and Will, our most perfect Life, Light, and Love; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things; our absolute Owner, Ruler, and Father; our Maker, our Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

Richard Baxter (1615–1691). An English Puritan, Baxter served as a chaplain in the army of Oliver Cromwell and as a pastor in Kidderminster. When James II was overthrown, he was persecuted and imprisoned for 18 months. He continued to preach, writing at the time that: "I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men." As well as his theological works he was a poet and hymn-writer. He also wrote his own Family Catechism (from which this quote is taken).

From "The Catechising of Families" in The Practical Works of Richard Baxter, Volume 19 (London: Paternoster, 1830), 33, 62, 165.

Further Reading

“Trinity” in *Concise Theology*, by J. I. Packer.

Prayer

Not without trembling, we have entreated of the most holy mystery of the reverend Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which we have learned out of the scriptures: and here now we will stay, humbly worshipping this Unity in trinity and Trinity in unity. And let us keep in mind and acknowledge this distinction or division most manifestly declared in the scriptures, and the unity also commended unto us with exceeding great diligence.... There is but one God.... Therefore when we read that God created the world, we understand that the Father from whom are all things, by the Son by whom are all things, in the Holy Ghost in whom are all things, created the world. And when we read that the Son became flesh, suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation, we believe that the Father and the Holy Ghost, though they were not partakers of his incarnation and passion, yet notwithstanding that they wrought our salvation by the Son.... And when sins are said to be forgiven in the Holy Ghost, we believe that this benefit and all other benefits of our blessedness are unseparably given and bestowed upon us from one, only, true, living, and everlasting God, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To whom be praise and thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.

Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575). A Swiss reformer, and the successor of Zwingli as head of the Zurich church, Bullinger wrote both theological and historical works comprising some 127 titles. There exist about 12,000 letters from and to Bullinger, the most extended correspondence preserved from Reformation times. He corresponded with Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I of England, Christian II of Denmark, and Frederick III Elector Palatine among others.

From “Of The Holy Ghost: The Eighth Sermon” in “The Other Eight Sermons of the Fourth Decade” in *Decades of Henry Bullinger*, translated by H.I., Volume 4 (Cambridge: University Press, 1851), 325–326.

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