

THE NATURE OF GOD

A lesson in Oneness Theology

The Nature of God:

I. The Oneness of God:

The first and most important question to address, relating to the nature of God, is “how many God's are there?”

According to Deuteronomy 6:4 there is only one God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (NKJV)
4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!

This passage is the central tenet of faith for the Hebrew people.

The prophet Isaiah would put it this way:

Isaiah 44:24 (KJV)
24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

God alone created the heavens and the earth.

Isaiah called Him the “Holy One” 30 times in His prophecy.

Later in the New Testament, Jesus would reiterate this sacred truth and certify that it is the oneness of God is the most important of all commandments.

Mark 12:29 (NKJV)
29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

II. Attributes of God:

a. God is Holy – 1 Peter 1:15

1 Peter 1:15–16 (KJV 1900)
15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;
16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Recognizing God's holiness is foundational. To say that God is holy is to say that God different from mankind. His ways and thoughts are not like ours.

Isaiah 55:9 (KJV 1900)

THE NATURE OF GOD

A lesson in Oneness Theology

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are my ways higher than your ways, And my thoughts than your thoughts.

God cannot sin or lie. He never grows weary or changes. He exists in perfect, eternal holiness

b. God is Spirit – John 4:24

John 4:24 (KJV 1900)

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

God is a Spirit. He does not have a body. When we see Biblical expressions like “the right hand God” or “the eyes of the Lord,” these are not literal expressions revealing the anatomy of God. Rather these types of expressions are used to help us understand the invisible attributes of God.

a. God is Invisible – 1 Timothy 1:17

1 Timothy 1:17 (KJV 1900)

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Colossians 1:15 (KJV 1900)

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

b. God is Immutable – Malachi 3:6

Malachi 3:6 (KJV 1900)

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

God does not change. Whatever we can say about the nature of God in the Old Testament, will also be true of God in the New Testament. If God is One in the Old Testament, He will be One in the New Testament.

The Manifestations of One God:

While the nature of God never changes, the way in which God manifests Himself to us does.

Hebrews 1:1–3 (KJV 1900)

*1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

THE NATURE OF GOD

A lesson in Oneness Theology

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The word *manifest* means to appear, reveal or to make known. There are many Biblical manifestations of God – The Angel of the Lord, the burning bush, pillar of fire, pillar of cloud, the man who wrestled with Jacob or even Melchisedek.

However, there are three principle ways in which God has revealed Himself to mankind.

As Father (Creator), as the Son (Redeemer), and as the Holy Spirit (Indwelling believers for Regeneration).

These are not distinct persons, but simply different ways God has revealed Himself to mankind.

I. The Father

The term Father refers to the manifestation of God seen in creation. He is invisible, transcendent, Holy and unchanging. The Father or Creator is clearly seen in His creation.

Romans 1:20 (NIV)

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

James 1:17 (NKJV)

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

II. The Son

The Son is God manifest in the flesh for the purpose of redemption.

John 1:18 (NKJV)

18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Colossians 1:13–15 (KJV 1900)

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

1 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)

THE NATURE OF GOD

A lesson in Oneness Theology

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

It is important to note that the term Son does not refer to the eternal second person of the Trinity, but rather to the humanity of Christ. This manifestation began in the womb of Mary.

III. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God at work or manifesting in the lives and affairs of mankind. A number of times the Old Testament speaks of individuals being overshadowed or moved upon by the Holy Spirit. Again this term does not relate to another distinct person in the Trinity, but it is a term used to refer to God in action.

Genesis 1:3 (KJV)

3 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

- a. God is Spirit – John 4:24
- b. There is One Spirit - Ephesians 4:4
- c. The Lord is that Spirit – 2 Corinthians 3:16-17

We must remember that God is a Spirit. The term Holy Spirit is not intended to denote another person of God, but rather it speaks to us of God at work in our lives.

It's All in Jesus – The Incarnation

2 Corinthians 5:19 (NKJV)

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

The word incarnation refers to the indwelling of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:9 (NIV)

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

Key words in this text: All, fullness and bodily.

Rather than a second person of the Godhead – Jesus was simply God manifesting His fullness in humanity.

- a. Jesus was fully God & perfectly human

THE NATURE OF GOD

A lesson in Oneness Theology

b. Does it really matter? Is it important that we understand the deity of Christ? (See John 8:24)

i. It is important as it relates to baptism

When one understands that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not distinct persons, but three manifestations of one person the formula of baptism becomes very simple and Matthew 28:19 has no confusion.

ii. It is important as it relates to prayer

iii. It is important as it relates to your witnessing

I. Jesus is the Son

Luke 1:31–32 (NIV)

31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.
32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

II. Jesus is the Father

John 10:30 (NIV)

30 I and the Father are one."

John 14:7–10 (NKJV)

7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV)

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

John 5:43 (NKJV)

43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

III. Jesus is the Holy Spirit

John 14:17–18 (NKJV)

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

THE NATURE OF GOD

A lesson in Oneness Theology

Jesus' Two Natures: Divine & Human:

John 1:1 & 14 (KJV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Some people express confusion over the words and prayers of Christ. It is important to remember that Jesus was both God and Man. His being God did not in any way diminish His human nature. Jesus did and said everything that you and I could say or do in relationship to God, except sin.

Jesus possessed two distinct natures.

As God:	As Man:
Never slept	Grew weary
Can not be tempted	Was tempted
Omnipresent	One place at a time
Could not die	Suffered and died
Unchanging	Grew and matured
Knew all things	Limited in knowledge

Most of Jesus words and prayers are spoken from His human nature. As a man, Jesus is the Son of God operates fully within the role of being human. However, as God He is the Father and does what only God can do such as receive worship and forgive sin.

1 Timothy 2:5 (NJV)

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

THE NATURE OF GOD

A lesson in Oneness Theology

Terms for God:

I. Biblical Terms for God:

- a. *God* – The Biblical word is Elohim. It is a title and not a name. As a title it is like the term “President” applied the head of state.
- b. *LORD* – The Hebrew word is Jehovah. The people of Israel spelled the term YHWH and many would not speak the name aloud. It means the “self-existent one.”
- c. *Christ* – The Greek word is *Christos*. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah. It means “the anointed one.”
- d. *Jesus* – A very common name among the people of Israel. It is a more modern version of the name “Joshua” and it means “Jehovah is become my salvation.”

II. Non-Biblical Terms:

- a. Trinity – Historically used to represent three persons of God. This term is found nowhere in the Bible.

Trinitarian view of God:

Three distinct persons sharing one substance and existing co-equal, co-eternal, and co-essential as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Tertullian, a Latin theologian of the early third century, is credited with using the words “Trinity”, “persons” and “substance” to explain that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are “one in essence – not one in Person”. About a century later, in 325, the First Council of Nicaea established the doctrine of the Trinity as orthodoxy...

- b. Holy Three – Nowhere in scriptures is God referred to as a “Holy Three.” In contrast, the scriptures are replete with references to God as the “Holy One” – 28 times in the book of Isaiah alone.
 - i. God the Son – While the term Son of God is common, Jesus is never referred to as “God the Son” or the “Eternal Son.”
 - ii. Persons (as it relates to God) – While Jesus is said to be the “expressed image of His person,” the plural form “persons” is never used in the Bible with respect to God.