

**What the Bible teaches about**

# **The Trinity**

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## Introduction

**F**or as long as I can remember I have been able to read. In other words, I do not remember learning. I imagine that I started with some sort of *primer*, from which I learned the alphabet and simple words. My debt to that book can never be calculated, for it was the foundation for all my future reading. And yet I do not remember anything about it.

This short book is also a primer, and I hope that from it you will go on to read further. It is not a book to tell you all that you need to know. It is intended simply *to help you make a start*. It introduces you to the most basic teaching concerning the Trinity. It will remove that sense of strangeness that you may feel as you first approach this deep subject and make it possible for you to progress where once you thought you would never begin.

May we all spend our lives as those who ‘pursue the knowledge of the LORD’ (Hosea 6:3)!



# 1

## **My God, how wonderful you are!**

**T**his book must begin by declaring that *God is*. This is not something that can be proved, nor does it need to be. Every man and woman knows it to be true. Man has a sense of God built into him. It is something that he knows in his heart—something left over from the time when mankind was in touch with God, and obeyed his law. Man still has a sense of this law, which is seen in his sense of right and wrong. There cannot be a sense of law unless there is a Lawgiver. Added to this, there is the sky above, and the creation around, both of which speak of God's everlasting power and deity. When a person says, 'There is no God,' he is being deliberately ignorant of a fact which he knows to be true.

But we can know much more about God than this, if we turn to the Bible. Here God has revealed to the human race all that we need to know about him, and all that he requires of us. All the books of the Bible owe their origin to him. The human writers were 'borne along' by the Holy Spirit in such a way that they produced exactly what God planned. The words they wrote are the words he intended. And yet this happened without any interference with their natural talents, and without any stereotyping of their personalities. The Bible

is not the word of men, but the Word of God. This means that we do not have to sit and wonder what God is like. We do not have to guess. He has told us himself.

## **A Spirit**

He tells us that he is a Spirit (John 4:24). He does not have a body, as we do. He is invisible—no one has ever seen him, or can see him (1 Timothy 6:15–16). He cannot be felt with the senses, or weighed, or measured. It is true that we sometimes read of his eyes, his ears, his mouth, and so on. But this is just a way of making clear to our poor minds that God sees all things, hears his people's prayers and makes himself known. God cannot be pictured or represented in any way, and he forbids us to try to depict him (Exodus 20:4).

However, we must be careful to remember that God is a personal Spirit. In other words, we must not think of him as a *Something* which we cannot describe, but as a *Someone*. He has names, the best known of which is 'Jehovah'. This is simply an English version of the Hebrew name 'Yahweh', and in our Bibles this is usually translated 'the LORD'. He has communication with men and women, and more than one has become known as his 'friend' (Exodus 33:11; James 2:23). On the very first page of our Bible we read of him speaking, and this continues all the way to the last page. We learn again and again that it is possible to *know* God. This would not be possible if he were just a force or an influence which we could never describe.

## **Very great**

Because God is a Spirit, he is not limited in any way, and there is no person or thing which may be likened or compared to him (Isaiah 40:18).



### ***Everywhere***

So far as space is concerned, he is everywhere (1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7–10). “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the LORD’ (Jeremiah 23:24). He is in all places at all times, and there is no place from which he is absent. We must not think that only *part* of God is to be found in any particular place in the universe. The *whole* of God is present there. He is there in all his majesty and glory and the totality of his being. And this is true of all places, all the time. How can this be? Our mortal minds cannot take it in. The finite cannot understand the infinite! All we can do is believe what God has declared concerning himself, and bow in adoring wonder.

### ***Eternal***

So far as time is concerned, he is eternal (Isaiah 40:28; Habakkuk 1:12). ‘Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God’ (Psalm 90:2). He alone has immortality in and of himself (1 Timothy 6:16). He inhabits eternity, and his years have no end (Isaiah 57:15; Hebrews 1:11–12). This, too, is beyond our comprehension. Everything owes its beginning to him, but he himself had no beginning. He is; he always has been; he always will be. This is what is meant by the quaint expression ‘world without end’, which is often used in some church services. There is no change in him: there never has been, and there never will be, for he is always the same (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17). All things depend on him, but his own existence does not depend on anything or anyone other than himself. He is the Fountain of his own being. This is why one of his names is ‘the living God’ (Revelation 7:2). This is also why he announced his name to Moses as ‘I AM WHO I AM’ (Exodus 3:14).

### ***All-knowing***

So far as knowledge is concerned, he knows everything (Psalm 139:2–5; 1 John 3:20). ‘His understanding is infinite’

(Psalm 147:5). For ourselves, we have to learn one thing at a time, and our knowledge is always small. There is no such thing as learning so far as God is concerned. He knows all things as they really are, all at once. There is no limit to his understanding. It is a mystery to us how this can be so. But nothing is a mystery to God. There is nothing which he does not fully understand. There is nothing of which he is ignorant or uncertain and, of course, this means that he cannot be deceived.

### ***All-powerful***

So far as power is concerned, he does whatever he chooses (Psalm 135:6; Daniel 4:35). 'He does whatever He pleases' (Psalm 115:3). What he pleases to do is decided by his own nature. Because he is holy, he cannot ever choose to depart from what is pure and right. Because he is perfect in every way, he cannot ever choose to change. A change would be either for better or for worse. If for better, it would show that he was not already perfect; if for worse, he would become less than perfect. It is true that he sometimes chooses to change the way in which he deals with a man or a woman, but this is because there has been a change in the person concerned, and not because there is ever any change in him. Nothing that he chooses to do ever fails to happen (Isaiah 46:10). Because he is God alone, and all other beings are his creatures, his will can never be resisted (Romans 9:19; Daniel 4:35). Everything in the universe, however small, serves his purposes. It brings to pass what he has planned and decided (Ephesians 1:11).

### **Unique**

What we have read so far tells us what God is in himself. But it is not enough to say that he is a personal Spirit, who is everywhere, eternal, all-knowing and all-powerful. What is this God *like*? What sort of God is he?