

THE BIG '5' QUESTIONS Q. one: Who is God?

I. God has revealed His character and attributes. God has infallibly communicated who He is through His Word, through His Son, and through the creation. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom 1:18-21).

God is uniquely characterized by:

A. His Oneness; The Lord our God is one, the only living and true God. “There is no God but one” (1 Cor 8:4). “There is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him” (1 Cor 8:6; Deut 6:4).

B. His Self-existence; He is self-existent and infinite in being and perfection. “But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure His indignation” (Jer 10:10). “Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand together (Is 48:12-13).

C. His Incomprehensibility; His essence cannot be understood by anyone but Himself. God cannot be equated with anything in the creation. “God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Ex 3:14). “Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? (Job 11:7; Is 5:8-9).

D. His Spirituality; He is a perfectly pure spirit. “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24). He is invisible and has no body, parts, or changeable emotions or passions. “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (1 Tim 1:17). He alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light (1 Tim 6:16).

E. His infinitude and immutability (changelessness); He is infinite, unchangeable, immense (He transcends all space), and He is eternal. “So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, so that you do not act corruptly and make a graven image for yourselves” (Deut 4:15-16a). God is immutable, He does not change. “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed” (Mal 3:6). “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!” (1 Ki 8:27). “Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Ps 90:2). “Now

when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless’” (Gen 17:1). In every way He is absolutely holy, perfectly wise, wholly free, completely absolute. “And one called out to another and said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory’” (Is 6:3).

F. His Sovereignty; He works all things according to the counsel of his own unchangeable and completely righteous will for His own glory. “But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases” (Ps 115:3). “Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it*, *surely* I will do it” (**Is 46:10**; Eph 1:11). “The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil” (Prov 16:4). “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen” (Rom 11:36).

G. His Love; He is most loving, gracious, merciful, and patient. He overflows with goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. He rewards those who seek Him diligently. “Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth” (**Ex 34:6**; 1 Jn 4:8).

H. His Justice; At the same time, He is perfectly just and terrifying in his judgments. He hates all sin and will certainly not clear the guilty. “However, You are just in all that has come upon us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly” (Neh 9:33). “The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. You destroy those who speak falsehood; the LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit” (Ps 5:5-6). “A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; the LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet” (Nah 1:2-3).

II. God owns, upholds, rules, and defines His creation. God’s relations to His creatures and His creation are known by:

A. His Self-sufficiency and independence; God has all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness in and of Himself. “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself” (Jn 5:26). “The LORD will accomplish what concerns me; your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of Your hands” (Ps 138:8). “You are good and do good; teach me your statutes” (Ps 119:68).

He alone is all-sufficient in Himself. He does not need any creature He has made nor does He derive (by necessity) any glory from them (Eph 2:10). Instead, He demonstrates His own glory in them, by them, to them, and upon them. He alone is the source of all being, and everything is from Him, through Him, and to Him (and utterly dependent upon Him) (Rom 11:34-36).

B. His Sovereign dominion; He has absolute sovereign rule over all creatures, to act through them, for them, or upon them as He pleases. In His sight everything is open and visible. “For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of

the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and *among* the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” (Dan 4:34b-35). “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb 4:13).

C. His Absolute knowledge; His knowledge is infinite and infallible. It does not depend upon any creature, so for Him nothing is contingent or uncertain. “Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and He said to me, ‘Say, ‘Thus says the LORD, “So you think, house of Israel, for I know your thoughts” (Ezek 11:5). “Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it all” (Ps 139:4).

D. His Transcendent Holiness; He is absolutely holy in all his plans, in all his works, and in all his commands. “The LORD is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds” (Ps 145:17). “There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides You, nor is there any rock like our God” (1 Sam 2:2).

E. His Absolute claims upon His creatures; Angels and human beings owe to Him all the worship, service, or obedience that creatures owe to the Creator and whatever else He is pleased to require of them. “Saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.’ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, ‘To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.’ And the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen.’ And the elders fell down and worshiped” (Rev 5:12-14). The ‘fear of God’ is His rightful due. “Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? Indeed it is your due! For among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You” (Jer 10:7).

F. His infinite worth and absolute beauty; God is wonderful, the focal point of existence, He is worthy to be loved. His character is perfect, wonderful and excellent. We were created to be satisfied in Him and all that He is for us. It is the creature’s duty to live for His glory—that duty flows from our being made in His image. We glorify God by trust, thanksgiving, worship, and obedience. The Law summarizes love to God and neighbor as this: love God enough to live a life of gratitude to Him, and love neighbor enough not to covet. “And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ ‘This is the great and foremost commandment’” (Mt 22:37-38; Deut 6:4-5).

III. God exists as an eternal Tri-unity of Persons.

A. The unity of the three Persons; This divine and infinite Being consists of three real Persons (given instances of divine essence), the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Spirit. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20). “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves” (Jn 14:11).

These three have the same substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine

essence without this essence being divided. “Yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him” (1 Cor 8:6). “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*” (Jn 1:14, 18). The Father is not derived from anyone, neither begotten nor proceeding. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father. “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me” (Jn 15:26). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (Gal 4:6).

B. The distinction between the three Persons; All three Persons are infinite and without beginning and are therefore only one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being. “You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, ‘and My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. ‘I, even I, am the LORD, and there is no savior besides Me’” (Is 43:10).

C. The explanation and relevance of the Holy Trinity; Yet these three are distinguished by several distinctive characteristics and personal relations. This truth of the Trinity is the foundation of all of our fellowship with God and of our comforting dependence on him. “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*” (Rom 8:26-27). “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (Rom 8:33-34).

IV. A true knowledge of God comes only through Christ the Lord.

A. The pre-existence of Christ affirms His deity. When we speak of Christ’s pre-existence, we are referring to the fact that He has existed from all eternity—before the universe was made. Christ in His pre-existence *precedes all things*; He is *before all things* (Col 1:17). Christ’s eternal pre-existence is taught in John 1:1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Christ spoke of His eternal pre-existence. *Glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was* (Jn 17:5; 6:62). The O.T. speaks of Christ’s eternal pre-existence. *From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity* (Mic 5:2).

B. The role of Christ as Creator and Upholder affirms His deity. All things were *created by Him and for Him* (Col 1:16). All things in creation are *upheld by Him* (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3). All things *came into being by Him* (Jn 1:3). *The world was made through Him* (Jn 1:10).

C. The works of Christ testify that He is God (only God can do these things). He forgives sin (Col 3:13; Mk 2:5-12). He bestows eternal life (Jn 10:28). He receives and answers prayer (Jn 14:14; Acts 7:59). He will raise the dead at the resurrection (Jn 5:21; 28-29; 11:24-25). He builds the Church and

keeps it (Eph 4:7-16; Mt 16:18). He exercised absolute authority over the laws and institutions of God (*over Law*, Mt 5:31-38; *over the Temple*, Mt 12:6; *over the Sabbath*, Mt 12:8; *over the Kingdom*, Mt 16:19). He is the final Judge of the world ((Acts 10:42; 17:31; Jn 5:21-23, 26-29).

Only One who is fully God could bear the infinite penalty for sin (Is 53:6). A being who is merely a creature and not God could never *reveal God* to man (Col 1:15); could not *bring man back to God* (1 Pet 3:18); could not be the perfect *Mediator between God and man* (I Tim 2:5).

D. The claims that Christ made of Himself could only be true of God. He spoke of Himself as the supreme object of saving faith (Jn 14:1; 3:36). He claimed that all other relationships must yield to Him; He requires that the believer must keep Him first in the affections (Mt 10:37; Lu 14:26). He claimed that all the spiritual and eternal needs of humanity are met and satisfied in Him. Consider all of the “I am’s” that came from His lips: “I am,” *Bread, Way, Living Water, Door, Shepherd of the sheep . . .*

Christ provides the knowledge of God (Mt 11:27; Jn 14:6). Rest for the soul (Mt 11:28-29). Security from danger (Jn 10:28-30). Fruit-bearing ability and energy (Jn 15:5). Rivers of living water (Jn 7:37). Sanctification (1 Cor 1:30; Heb 2:11; 12:2). Completeness for the believer (Col 2:10). He repeatedly preached Himself as *God’s eternal truth incarnate* (Jn 14:6). He demanded and received divine worship. Men and angels are created; they rightly refuse to receive worship (*Apostles said no*, Acts 14:11-15; *Peter said no*, Acts 10:25-26; *Angels said no*, Rev 19:10; 22:8-9). Christ received worship (*from His disciples and followers*, Mt 14:33; 28:9 *from those upon whom He worked miracles*, Mt 15:25; Jn 9:38). Worship was accepted by Christ though Christ had declared that men should worship God alone (Mt 4:10).

E. Christ’s oneness with the Father affirms His deity. Christ’s oneness with the Father is such that, according to Scripture, man’s attitude toward Christ is man’s attitude toward God:

- To know Him is to know God (Jn 8:19; 14:7)
- To see Him is to see God (Jn 12:45; 14:9)
- To believe in Him is to believe in God (Jn 12:44; 14:1)
- To hate Him is to hate God (Jn 15:23)
- To honor Him is to honor God (Jn 5:23)
- To receive Him is to receive God (Mk 9:37)
- The Father commands worship of the Son (Heb 1:6)
- The host of heaven worships the Son (Rev 5:8-14)
- Finally, all will worship Christ the Lord (Phil 2:10-11)

F. Christ has titles that belong only to One who is truly God.

- Only begotten Son (Jn 3:16)
- “Thy throne, O God” (Heb 1:8)
- Mighty God (Is 9:6)
- The First and the Last (Rev 1:17-18)
- God blessed forever (Rom 9:5)
- Lord of Glory (1 Cor 2:8; Ps 24:8-10)

- Lord of all (Acts 10:36)
- King of Kings, Lord of Lords (Rev 19:16)
- Lord and Savior (2 Pet 3:2)
- The True God and Eternal Life (1 Jn 5:20)
- The Holy and Righteous One (Acts 3:14)
- Immanuel (God with us) (Is 7:24)

G. Christ's Lordship is joined to His victory over sin and death. "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 'Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.' For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, 'SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.' 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified'" (Acts 2:32-36).

Christ's obedience unto death on a cross is cited as to why God has exalted Him above every created thing. "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:8-11).

The Big Five Questions:

- 1) Who is God?
- 2) Where did we come from and what is the image of God?
- 3) What has gone wrong with the world?
- 4) What happens when we die?
- 5) What is the solution to the world's problems?