

# The Nature of God: *God is Self-Existent, Omniscient, Sovereign, and Triune*

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## Abstract

It can be difficult for us to understand some aspects of God's nature since they are so different from what we normally experience as humans. We might eventually accept that these things are true of God as our trust in the Lord deepens, but we'll undoubtedly spend a lot of time pondering how these things function in the meantime. Due to their limited brains, humans find it difficult to understand God's nature, although it is clear from the scriptures that God has made himself known to be self-existent, omniscient, Sovereign, and Triune. Therefore, this paper attempts to understand the Biblical concept of the nature of God.

**Key Words:** *God, self-existent, Omniscience, Sovereign and Trinity*

## I. God is Self-Existent

Self-Existence can be defined as "God exists in and of himself". This signifies that He had no origin and has always existed, unchanged from the beginning of time until the end of all time. Since God exists beyond space and time, he has no beginning and no end.

### 1. There is no beginning for God

The origin of everything is currently one of the most hotly contested topics of conversation. How did the earth, the sun, the stars, the plants, the animals, and people come into being? What initiated these events? Are they only the results of an impersonal force that set off an initial reaction, which gave rise to everything observable? We are confident that God's word is accurate. We can read Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", and John 1:3 "Through Him all things were made; without Him, nothing was made that has been made", and know that God made the sun, moon, stars, and everything else in the universe! God is the cause of all beginnings and the source of all creation. It can be difficult for us to understand that God is self-existent in particular. We're accustomed to everything around us having a beginning and an end. However, God is not a creature. He is without beginning or end. He is entirely independent. A. W. Tozer states that "God had no origin, that He had no beginning, that He requires no helpers, that He suffers no change, and that in His essential being there are no limitations."<sup>1</sup> God does not originate from anything; hence Tozer's claim is valid. Everybody has a lineage back to someone else, and everything has a lineage back to something else. But when it comes to God, he was not formed. He is self-existent. If God had a descendant, that descendant would have existed before God and would therefore be seen as being superior to God. Since God is supreme by definition, there is no way that there could be something greater than God. Therefore, God has no beginning, He is self-existent.

### 2. God is Independent

Knowing that God is wholly independent of whatever he has made is essential to understanding him at all. God is self-existent and self-sufficient, and this is what is meant by his independence. It's also significant to note how completely dependent on God we are as his creation. God says, "For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it (Psalm 50:10-12). God is the creator of all that exists, thus since He is separate from creation and independent from it, everything

that exists is His. Wayne Grudem affirms that “Scripture in several places teaches that God does not need any part of creation in order to exist or for any other reason. God is absolutely independent and self-sufficient.”<sup>2</sup> Since God is the fullness of being and the source of all existence, he is eternally and completely autonomous in his existence, his perfections, and all of his works. He is also the origin and the end of all things. God is the only reason for their being, as well as their ultimate purpose. The creation and everything in it depend on God for their existence and sustenance; God does not require the existence of any created being. In this context apostle Paul says, “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he gives everyone life and breath and everything else (Acts 17: 24-25). God is independent in Himself and causes everything to depend on Him because He is independent in Himself by being self-existent. God is the only one who brought everything into being.

### **3. God is Self-Existent: I am who I am**

God made a highly significant revelation about Himself when He revealed to Moses the phrase "I AM" at the burning bush. The declaration of God is this: "I Am That I Am." The words "I Am" and "I Am That I Am," as well as the phrases "I Am That which I Am" and "I Am what I Am," show who He is. The Lord says in Exodus 3:15 "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation." God was revealing that He is self-existent and can exist by Himself. “And the Lord said to Moses, "I am that I am." The words could be rendered, "I will be that I will be," and often the word is used in that sense, "I will be with thee?" Its origin is the same as that of Jehovah—being, existence—and certainly denotes the One who will always be: personal, continuous, absolute existence.”<sup>3</sup> The fact that this awesome name, I AM WHO I AM, indicates this boundless, unchangeable, and self-determining God became close to us through Jesus Christ is one of its implications. Jesus responds to the criticism of the Jewish authorities saying, “Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” (John 8:56–58). Jesus discloses to the Jewish audience that He is the "I Am" who was revealed to Moses in the Old Testament when He makes seven claims about himself as "I Am" in John's Gospel. Therefore, Jesus is a self-existent God.

### **Application**

God is self-existent, eternal, and pure. God refers to Himself as "I AM." As Moses did at the burning bush, we will respond in reverence and amazement when we realize the self-existence of our God. Having faith in the Self-Existent one is not sufficient to have faith in God. More than just existing, He is the God of character who demands holiness in our character. He is more than that. Furthermore, we must believe what He is to have faith in Him, it is not enough to simply believe that He exists. The Bible states that "without faith, it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore, believe in Him.

## **II. The Omniscience of God**

God is omniscient, which means that He has perfect knowledge of everything that has ever happened, is happening, or will happen in the future. This encompasses both the feasible and the actual. In essence, God is innately aware of everything and is aware of every tiny detail. “Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit” (Psa. 147:5).

### **1. God's Knowledge of All Things**

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb 4:13). Nothing can be kept a secret from God because He is all-knowing. A. W. Tozer has written: “God knows instantly and with a fullness of perfection that includes every possible item of knowledge concerning everything that exists or could have existed anywhere in the universe at any time in the past or that may exist in the centuries or ages yet unborn.”<sup>4</sup> God has an unending, all-encompassing knowledge of every subject. God has access to all knowledge. His decisions are therefore wise ones. He has never had to change his judgments after receiving new information. God is aware of all that was, is, and will because “for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens” (Job 28:24). Although we find it astonishing that God can foresee the future, we find it much more

incomprehensible that He can know everything right now. There is nothing that is hidden from God. Even the things that humanity has not yet discovered are known to God. This understanding is inherent and unearned. The psalmist writes, "Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely" (Ps 139:1-4). Scripture calls attention to God's eyes seeing everything in a symbolic manner (2 Chron 16:9). God therefore possesses complete knowledge of everything, and His knowledge is self-derived and unlearned.

## **2. God's Knowledge of the Universe**

Calvinist, R.C. Sproul states, "He knows all things will happen because he ordains everything that does happen. This is crucial to our understanding of God's omniscience. He does not know what will happen by exceedingly good guesswork about future events. He knows it with certainty because he has decreed it."<sup>5</sup> Sproul's statement is noteworthy because everything in the cosmos is decreed by God. He governs the lives of men and determines the sparrow's fall because Jesus says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care" (Mat 10:29). Similarly, Jesus said that God keeps track of every hair on our heads (vs. 30). God is the creator of the universe and is in charge of controlling it with His unlimited knowledge since "His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). Therefore, God knows everything about the cosmos flawlessly and completely. Elihu questioned Job in Job 37:16, asking if he was aware of "the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge." An introduction to the breadth of God's knowledge can be found in this verse. His knowledge of the universe has no geographical boundaries because He knows everything in this universe and He knows both the number and names of all the stars of heaven. The scriptures reveal the fact that "He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name" (Ps 147:4). God knows everything that is happening right now, as well as everything that has ever happened and everything that will happen for all of eternity in this universe.

## **3. God's Knowledge of the Humanity**

J. I. Packer, a reformed theologian, describes omniscience as "God knows everything about everything and everybody all the time. Also, he knows the future no less than the past and the present, and possible events that never happen no less than the actual events that do...all his knowledge is always immediately and directly before his mind."<sup>6</sup> Packer shows that God has knowledge of the past, present, and future of humanity and that this information comes directly from Himself. He doesn't need to get any external information to know anything about humanity or anything in this universe. God knows everything about how we grow while still in our mother's womb and in the days before we are born. God revealed to the prophet Jeremiah that He had known him even before his conception. (Jer 1:5). According to Ephesians 1:4-5, God chose us in Christ to be adopted into His family before the world was created. The psalmist says, "Your eyes saw my unformed body..." (Ps 139:16). Therefore, scriptures help us to understand that God created everything, maintains it, and now causes it to work every second by his design for it, therefore he is the only one who truly knows everything, both in and in connection to everything else (Eph. 1:11). God doesn't need to learn anything; His understanding of humanity doesn't progressively deepen with time. He immediately possesses extensive knowledge; He has always known everything about us. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure (Ps 147:5).

### **Application**

God governs over the lives of every human and every other living creature in the universe, and He possesses a limitless, all-pervasive knowledge of every subject. Therefore, instead of worrying about our wants and desires, we should confidently pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10) so that all of our needs will be met. God already knows what each of us needs before we even speak.

## **III. The Sovereignty of God**

The sovereignty of God refers to God's supremacy, kingship, and His deity. Saying that God is sovereign is a declaration that He is the Most High, acting in accordance with His will both among the inhabitants of the earth and the army of Heaven, with no one able to question Him, "What do you?" (Dan. 4:35). God is sovereign in His command, authority, and Presence.

### **1. God's Sovereign Control**

A. W. Pink says, "God is not indifferent, but is behind the scenes of human action. The doings of the future ten kings about Babylon and the Beast—the ecclesiastical and secular powers—are not only under the direct control of God, but all is done in fulfillment of His words."<sup>7</sup> According to Pink, everything that occurs in this universe occurs exactly as God intended and is under his supervision. God is in control of everyone, including the celestial powers, inside the church and the secular governments. The Bible declares that God is in control of everything in this universe. Moses learns that God, not Pharaoh, is in charge of Egypt's and Israel's affairs when God appears to him in Exodus 3 and reveals Himself as "I AM WHO I AM." In Exodus 6:8, God declares "I am the Lord," indicating that He has complete authority over every nation around the world. God wants Moses to understand that since he is the Lord and the sovereign, he will undoubtedly free Israel from slavery in Egypt and lead them into the promised land. Nothing can prevent the Lord from keeping his word. The life of His begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is such a powerful illustration of the Creator's control over the natural world. All things, including fish in the sea and silver in the land, are under the dominion of Christ, who is the Lord of Creation. The apostle John claims that Christ is the Eternal Word and He is the creator God (John 1:3). Paul confirms this in Colossians 1:16 "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him." In Mark 4:35–41, Christ Jesus calms a storm with His divine authority. In Matthew 17:24–27, He causes a fish to provide exactly the right quantity of silver coin to pay the Temple dues. These wonders serve as a constant reminder that He is the Son of God, the All-Powerful and that everything in the universe is under His sovereign Control.

## **2. God's Sovereign Authority**

God's omnipotent authority, however, goes beyond mere control. It also represents his power because his creatures are obligated to follow his instructions. J. I. Packer described God's Sovereign authority as "embraces everything that comes into the biblical picture of God as Lord and King in his world, directing every process and ordering every event for the fulfilling of his eternal plan"<sup>8</sup> The biblical narrative is frequently interpreted as showing God as an all-powerful ruler who creates by exercising authority: He orders, and it is done. The actual world, which God was intended to mercifully and benevolently preside over because He is the supreme creator of everything that exists. An all-powerful God should not only have created the universe but also be its whole controller and the supreme authority over everything that is not him. In the Decalogue, the covenant that Moses gives to Israel after God freed them from Egypt in a sovereign act, God first identifies himself as Lord (Exod. 20:1-2) and then proceeds to give His ten commandments based on that identity. Three distinct claims regarding God's Sovereign Authority are stated in the New Testament. Firstly, the persecuted early church cried out to God in prayer in Acts 4:24, beginning with the words "Sovereign Lord, who made heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them." Secondly, Paul addresses God as "the blessed and only Sovereign" in a magnificent doxology in his first letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:15). Thirdly, John sees the martyrs at the altar in one of his visions in the book of Revelation, crying out, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth" (Revelation 6:10)? In all these three instances God's sovereign authority has been mentioned. Therefore, to recognize God as sovereign is to acknowledge that He is the King who sits on a throne and rules and reigns over all of creation with His sovereign authority.

## **3. God's Sovereign Presence**

Justin Taylor says, "It seems like we could endure a lot of suffering if we just have the presence of God. But there's a form of suffering, as you know, that entails the seeming absence of God. And I think that's oftentimes the most painful—What do you do when it seems like God is not near, and no matter what you do, he does not seem to answer?"<sup>9</sup> The evidence of God's omniscience is found in His created order (Psalm 44:21). God is everywhere because he is sovereign. His wisdom and power are present throughout all of his creation (Psalm 104:24). We won't be able to stand steadfast in challenging situations, and our prayers will lose all value if we don't comprehend and believe this truth. The covenant solidarity between God and his creation, which we can refer to as presence, is the foundation of his omnipotent dominion. He exercises his kingly authority, mastery over all things, presence among his covenant people, and dominion over his entire created universe (Colo 1:16). The covenant Lord is described in the Bible as one who claims people as his own (Exo. 6:7). He expresses this desire frequently in the Bible (Gen. 17:7; Ex. 29:45). When God accepts us as his people, he fights our battles, blesses us, loves us, and occasionally as a loving father He disciplines

us for our sins (Amos 3:2). Our Lord Jesus' promise that "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mat 28:20) encapsulates all of this.

## **Conclusion**

We get relief from melancholy, anxiety, fear of failure, guilt, and shame because God is sovereign. We are liberated to live a joyful life, to let go of the past, to have hope for the future, to live fearlessly, and to love passionately because God is sovereign. "In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Ps. 16:11).

## **IV. The Doctrine of Trinity**

The Trinity is the union of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit into a single Godhead. The foundation of it lies in the fact that God revealed Himself to humanity in three different ways: first, as the Creator, the Lord of the history of salvation, the Father, and the Judge; second, as the Lord who, in the incarnated figure of Jesus Christ, lived among humans and was present in their midst as the resurrected one; and third, as the Holy Spirit, whom they experienced as the helper or intercessor in the power of the new life. When we give it some thought, the Trinity is the greatest presentation of God to His people.

### **1. There is one God**

One and only one God is remarkably stated in the Bible. He is a one being, not three gods. God is one in his being because He says, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Bible demonstrates that God is only one and we should not worship any other gods. Grudem helps us to understand that "The three different persons of the Trinity are one not only in purpose and in agreement on what they think, but they are one in essence, one in their essential nature. In other words, God is only one being. There are not three Gods. There is only one God"<sup>10</sup> In fact, the existence of only one God is unequivocally established by the scriptures. Both testaments make specific mention of this truth. Prophet Isaiah declares, "I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Isaiah 45:5). The New Testament also clearly teaches that there is only one God. Apostle Paul affirms, "For there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Since there is only one God. He exists in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and each of them is fully God, we must infer that the three are the same. We are called to set a standard that opposes the expanding post-modern subjective opinion of the truth by clinging to the reality that there is only one God and we must proclaim Him.

### **2. God is three persons**

According to the doctrine of the Trinity, there is only one God who eternally exists as three separate persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Or, to put it another way, God is three in person and one in essence. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three coequal and coeternal beings who are eternally present within the one Being that is God. The characteristics, the will, and the purpose of the three persons are also the same. Tozer states that "The Persons of the Godhead, being one, have one will. They work always together, and never one smallest act is done by one without the instant acquiescence of the other two."<sup>11</sup> Therefore there is harmony in their responsibilities. All will do as one wills. The Lord Jesus made this very clear and said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38). Being in harmony with the Father, Christ had come to accomplish what He had been sent to do. The Lord Jesus came to fulfill the Father's will, the Holy Spirit's will, and His own definitive will. The Holy Spirit of God guided and led him and Father approved Him. Therefore, we see three persons working together with complete agreement. We need to be very clear that the Father is not the Son nor the Holy Spirit; the Son is not the Father nor the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Son nor the Father. For instance, while Jesus was on earth, Father was there in heaven which is why Jesus prayed, "Our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). The Lord Jesus promised His disciples to send the comforter, the Holy Spirit of God (John 14:16-17). We see three persons, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct in Jesus's teaching. Jesus speaks the truth; hence God is three persons.

### **3. Each person is fully God**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the three equally God. Each member of the Trinity is equal in rank, power, glory, and majesty. Berkhof explains that "the divine essence is not divided among the three persons, but is

wholly with all its perfection in each one of the persons so that they have a numerical unity of essence.”<sup>12</sup> The ability of the divine essence to coexist fully and unbrokenly in multiple people sets it apart from human nature. Although the coexistence of this divine essence in each member of the Trinity is beyond our capacity to comprehend, the Bible plainly states that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equal in aspect. Another inference that can be drawn from the above-mentioned is that there cannot be a difference in the essential dignity of one of the members of the Godhead from the other. There is no subordination between the three of them; the Father is not superior to the Son, and vice versa. It is not explicit as do Jehovah's Witnesses, who think the Son is less than the Father. We can only refer to subordination in terms of order and relationship as subordination. The Lord Jesus, though He was fully God, submitted to the Father in his relationship and responsibility. Seven "I AM" assertions that Jesus makes in the Gospel of John establish His deity. Some Christians view the Holy Spirit as power which is a faulty understanding. Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son and is both entirely personal and fully God. The fullness of God is shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Application**

The doctrine of the Trinity aids in our comprehension of the fact that there is only one God and that He exists as three distinct persons, each of whom is fully God. One of the applications from this doctrine is that we were created with the intention of being in relationship with one another, just as God is in relationship with each of the three persons of the trinity. We must act in the same way as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit interact with one another, show one another love, and cooperate to fulfil God's plan in the world.

### **End Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> Tozer, Aiden Wilson. *The Knowledge of the Holy*. Harper and Row Publishers, 1961, P. 64
- <sup>2</sup> Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, P. 160.
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- <sup>6</sup> Packer, J. I. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2011, P. 34.
- <sup>7</sup> Pink, A. W. *The Sovereignty of God*. Gideon House Books, 2016, P. 204
- <sup>8</sup> Packer, J. I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. InterVarsity Press, 2012, P 9.
- <sup>9</sup> Piper, John, and Justin Taylor. *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*. Crossway, 2006. P. 225
- <sup>10</sup> Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, P. 281.
- <sup>11</sup> Aiden Wilson Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (Harper and Row Publishers, 1961), 30.
- <sup>12</sup> Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1941. P-88

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