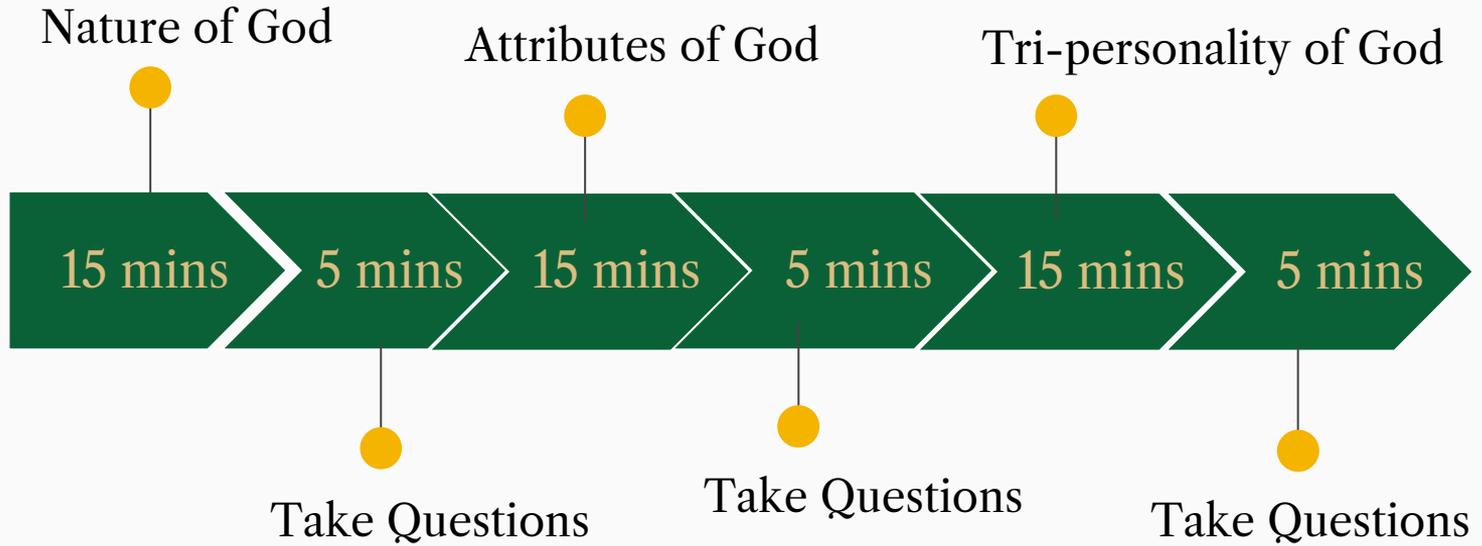


Westminster Confession of Faith,
Chapter 2:

*Of God, and of the Holy
Trinity*

All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church
February 6, 2022



Goals:

Answering the question:
“Who is God?”

- The **Nature** of the Godhead
- The **Attributes** of the Godhead
- The **Tri-personality** of the Godhead

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q.4, Q. 5, and Q.6

Q. 4. What is God? A. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one? A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q. 6. How many persons are there in the godhead? A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

“It is worthy of notice that the Standards do not undertake to prove in any way the fact of the divine existence. They take precisely the same position upon this point as the Scriptures. **They simply take for granted that there is a God, and then proceed to expound the contents of the revelation which he has been pleased to give.** Incidentally, some of the arguments for the being of God are suggested in the Scriptures, but **the fundamental position of the Bible is, that it assumes the existence and government of God** without the presentation of formal proof.”

- Francis R. Beattie

Westminster Confession of Faith: 2.1

1. There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just, and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

The Nature of the Godhead

God is:

1. How many gods exist? Only **One**.
 - a. *Living*
 - b. *True*

1 Corinthians 8:4-6 - “Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that **“an idol has no real existence,”** and that **“there is no God but one.”** For although **there may be so-called gods** in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”

The Nature of the Godhead

God is:

1. One
2. A **Spirit** "...without body, parts, or *passions*"

"He is a Spirit; and He is distinguished from all other spirits in that He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being and perfections"

- Charles Hodge

***God exists in a class of beings of which He is the only member.

John 4:24 - "**God is spirit**, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

Deuteronomy 4:15-16 - "... **you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you** at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure..."

Luke 24:39 - "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. **For a spirit does not have flesh and bones** as you see that I have."

1 Timothy 1:17 - "To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

The Nature of the Godhead

“Without passion”?

- Impassibility - Historically, every branch of historic Christianity of every variety agrees with this, although now “passion” does not mean the same thing today. **Passion does not mean the degree of care, but passion is the state of being when you are provoked by something.**
 - When something provokes you, it is not a “passion” because you actually care about something. **The reason why it is a “passion” is because you were *moved* by something to care.** God cares about His creation, and God can not be made to care about His creation more! God can not be made to hate sin *more* by introducing something new to Him! **God is not susceptible to causes.**

Questions?

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The Attributes of the Godhead

Typically the discussion of the attributes revolves around describing...

- The **incommunicable attributes of God**. These attributes which bear little or no analogy to us which describe the divine nature. *How the Creator is completely unlike his creation.*
 - Such as Immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, absolute, aseity.
- The **communicable attributes of God** are the attributes which bear analogy to us. Primarily refer to God's moral attributes which bear some analogy to us. *How the creation bears the marks of its Creator.*
 - Such as love, holiness, righteousness, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness.

However... the division seen in the WCF describes God as he is in himself, and how he relates to his creation.

The Attributes of the Godhead

- God is **immortal**, invisible, **eternal** -
 - “... which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and **only** Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who **alone has immortality**, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and **eternal** dominion. Amen.” (1 Tim 6:15-16).
- God is unchangeable (**immutable**) -
 - “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom **there is no variation or shadow due to change**” (Jam 1:17; cf. Malachi 3:6).
- Concerning God, nothing can contain Him (**omnipresence**) and there are no limits (**infinite**) to his power, wisdom, understanding, knowledge, or any of His other attributes -
 - “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or **where shall I flee from your presence?** If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.” (Ps 139:7-10).

The Attributes of the Godhead

- God is all powerful (**omnipotence**) -
 - “He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not split open under them. He covers the face of the full moon and spreads over it his cloud. He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his rebuke. By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered Rahab. By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent. Behold, **these are but the outskirts of his ways**, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?” (Job 26:7-14; c.f. Jer 32:17; 1 Chron 29:11; Eph 1:19-21).
- “God is knowable - he has revealed himself. But there are such vast limits to our knowledge that we also admit that in a profound sense God is **‘incomprehensible’**” - Van Dixhoorn

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Exodus 34:6-7

6 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

“In all these characteristics we are seeking not only to describe something about God as he is, in and of himself, but also to praise him for how he expresses his character to the world he has made. ...

In speaking of God’s justice and mercy, of his power and his wisdom, indeed of all his attributes, we do not for a moment think that we are able to ‘define’ God, in any limiting sense. ... **What we do want to do is to rejoice in God’s character with as much depth as we are able**, so that we may better reflect his image, give him much glory, and enjoy him forever.”

- Chad Van Dixhoorn

Westminster Confession of Faith:

2.2

2. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and **is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient**, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. **He is the alone fountain of all being**, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath **most sovereign dominion** over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. ...

The Attributes of the Godhead

- God is absolutely independent (**aseity**).

God is not only the supreme being, but also the one “through whom all others have their being.” In contrast to the Creator God’s creatures are utterly dependent, as he is the very the fountain of all things.

Acts 17:24-25 - “The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, **as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything**”

Romans 11:36 - “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen”

Westminster Confession of Faith: 2.2 continued

2. ... In his sight all things are open and manifest, **his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature**, so as nothing is to him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. **To him is due** from angels and men, and every other creature, **whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.**

The Attributes of the Godhead

- God is all-knowing (**omniscient**).

Hebrews 4:13 - “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

Romans 11:33-34 - “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

Ezekiel 11:5 - “And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he said to me, “Say, Thus says the Lord: So you think, O house of Israel. **For I know the things that come into your mind.**”

Acts 2:23 - “this Jesus, delivered up according to **the definite plan** and **foreknowledge** of God, **you crucified and killed** by the hands of lawless men.”

“... the portrait which the Standards draw of God... is true to Scripture, presenting God as being alike strong and tender, at once just and loving. Moreover, **it is a portrait which fully justifies the statement of the Confession that to God is due, from angels and men and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.**

- Francis R. Beattie

Questions?

Westminster Confession of Faith:

2.3

3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q.9, Q.10, and Q.11

Q. 9. How many persons are there in the Godhead? A. There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and **these three are one** true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; **although distinguished by their personal properties.**

Q. 10. What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead? A. It is proper to the Father **to beget** the Son, and to the Son **to be begotten** of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost **to proceed** from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

Q. 11. How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father? A. The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, **ascribing unto them** such names, attributes, works, and worship, **as are proper to God only.**

The Triunity of the Godhead

Matthew 3:16-17 - “And when **Jesus** was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “**This is my beloved Son**, with whom I am well pleased.””

Matthew 28:19 - “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in **the name** of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

(τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος)

... there are many things in the Scriptures that are clear in terms of what the Word itself teaches, but not in terms of the mysteries it reveals. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery and cannot be comprehended, but if we look to the affirmations of the Word, we can know that there is one God in three persons: “The words are plain and easy: every man understands them, but the mystery contained in those words passes the reach of man; we may well discern these things to be so, though we cannot fully conceive how things should be so.”

- J. V. Fesko

Questions?