

The Nature of the Godhead According to the Bible

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Introduction

- The nature of God as revealed in the Bible
 - + The Old and New Testaments give consistent testimony to the nature of God
 - + The Triune God is the only God there is
 - + All other “gods” are idols
- Common theological heresies regarding the Godhead
 - + Denial of the Deity of Christ
 - + Denial of the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit
 - + Denial of the Trinity
- Theology and salvation

Christian Concept of God

- God's nature is first revealed in the Old Testament, and nothing about it changes as the New Testament adds more light
 - + The polytheism of Greek mythology and Mormonism deny the infinite nature of God
 - + The pantheism of the Eastern religions and the gnostic cults deny His personality
 - + In contrast, the Bible reveals God as both infinite and personal with unique intrinsic perfections:
 - God is eternal, unchanging, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, just, faithful, benevolent, merciful, gracious, loving
 - God is personal and can be known (though not exhaustively!)
 - All Bible writers wrote within a frame of reference in which God is infinite and personal – they knew Him and conversed with Him

Christian Concept of God (continued)

- The ancient written Hebrew language did not have vowels
- The ancient Hebrew Name for God was JHVH or YHWH – depending on how one transliterates it – sometimes called the tetragrammaton (four-lettered name)
- "Jehovah" is a hybrid word that originated after the time of Christ (~ 900 A.D.) derived from combining JHVH with the vowel points of the Hebrew word "Adonai" (Lord), which were added by later scribes
- JHVH is an emphatic form of the verb "to be" sometimes translated "I am" or "I am that I am"
- In most of its appearances, it is translated LORD (as opposed to Lord) in the KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, and other versions
- Among common and reputable translations, only the ASV of 1901 uses Jehovah

Christian Concept of God (continued)

- The original pronunciation of JHVH was close to Yahweh
- The Jews by the time of Christ considered utterance of the Name to be blasphemous
- This may have been the motivation for the vowel marks of Adonai placed on JHVH - to remind the reader to say Adonai rather than the sacred Name
- By the time of Jesus, "Adonai" in Hebrew and "Kurios" in Greek (both equivalent to "Lord" in English) were commonly used in reference to the true God
- How did the tradition develop that did not permit later Jews to utter the Name?

Christian Concept of God (continued)

- It is possible* that utterance of the divine Name may have been equated to a claim of deity by the speaker, an implicit denial of the absolute uniqueness of the infinite and personal God
- This may be why the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy
 - + Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am.” And immediately the Jews took up stones to stone Him (John 8:58)
 - + For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God (John 10:33)
- What did Jesus do that caused the Jews to accuse Him of blasphemy? He said, “I am” which is exactly the meaning of the sacred Name (Exodus 3:14)

*This is purely speculative on my part. I've never read of anyone else taking this position.

Christian Concept of God (continued)

- There is only one God, but
 - + His oneness is not spoken of in the Old Testament with the Hebrew word “yachid” which refers to the numeral one
 - + Rather, the word "echod" (a Hebrew word that means "unity with diversity") is used
 - + Also, the Hebrew word used for God is "elohim”
 - + Elohim is a plural noun and the plural is of a type that can only be used for a number of entities greater than two
- Note Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7, 8; Deuteronomy 6:4; Ezra 2:64
- This is consistent with the idea that there is only one God Who is made up of three persons
- Later in the talk, verses are cited that show the Trinity is first introduced in the Old Testament
- The most common heresies involve denial of the Deity of Jesus Christ, denial of the Deity of the Holy Spirit, and denial of the Trinity

Heresy 1: Denial of Christ's Deity

<i>Spoken of Jesus</i>	<i>Spoken of JHVH</i>
Revelation 19:11-21	Zechariah 14:2
Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2, 3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23	Isaiah 40:3
Matthew 11:10; Luke 1:17	Malachi 3:1
Hebrews 1:10-12 (cf 1:8)	Psalms 102:25-27
1 Peter 2:3	Psalms 34:8
John 12:37-41	Isaiah 6:1,3, 10
Romans 3:22	Jeremiah 23:5, 6
Philippians 2:10, 11; Romans 14:11	Isaiah 45:23
Romans 10:13	Joel 2:32
Hebrews 1:8	Psalms 45:6
Acts 1:8	Isaiah 43:10

Heresy 1: Denial of Christ's Deity (continued)

<i>Title:</i>	<i>Applied to Jesus in:</i>	<i>Applied to God in:</i>
<i>First and Last</i>	Revelation 2:8; 22:13	Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12
<i>I AM</i>	John 8:24, 28, 58 et al.	Exodus 3:14
<i>Author of Eternal Words</i>	Matthew 24:35	Isaiah 40:8
<i>Light</i>	John 1:4-9; 8:12	Psalms 27:1; 1 John 1:5
<i>Rock</i>	1 Peter 2:6-8	Isaiah 8:14
<i>Bridegroom</i>	Mark 2:19	Isaiah 62:5
<i>Shepherd</i>	John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4;	Psalms 23:1
<i>Forgiver of sins</i>	Acts 5:31; Mark 2:5, 9	Jeremiah 31:34
<i>Redeemer</i>	Titus 2:13, 14	Hosea 13:14; Psalm 130:7
<i>Savior</i>	2 Peter 1:1; Luke 2:11; Matthew 1:25	Isaiah 43:3, 10, 11; 45:21
<i>Possessor of The Glory</i>	John 17:1-5; 1 Corinthians 2:8	Isaiah 42:8
<i>Judge</i>	Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:21-27	Joel 3:12
<i>Mighty God</i>	Isaiah 9:6; 10:21; Deuteronomy 10:17; (Hebrew: "El Gibbor")	Jeremiah 32:18; Nehemiah 9:32

Heresy 2: Denial of the Holy Spirit's Deity

- The Bible teaches the Deity of the Holy Spirit by attributing to Him:
 - + Divine names, such as “God” in Acts 5:3,4, and Spirit of God as in 1 Corinthians 3:16
 - + Divine attributes, such as His being eternal in Hebrews 9:14, omnipresent in Psalm 139:7-10, omniscient in 1 Corinthians 2:10, and omnipotent in Luke 1:35
 - + Divine works, such as creation in Psalm 33:6 and imparting life in Romans 8:11
 - + Divine honor and glory, as in 1 Peter 4:14
- Although pseudo-Christian cults deny His personality (calling Him a “force”), the Holy Spirit
 - + is called “He” in John 14-16
 - + is lied to in Acts 5:3
 - + is grieved in Isaiah 63:10 and Ephesians 4:30
 - + exerts His will in Acts 13:2 and 1 Corinthians 12:11

Heresy 3: Denial of the Trinity

- There are places in the Bible in which the three members of the Godhead are mentioned together:
 - + Isaiah 48:16; 63:8-10
 - + Matthew 3:16, 17; 28:19
 - + Luke 1:35
 - + John 15:26; 14:26
 - + 1 Corinthians 12:4-6
 - + 2 Corinthians 13:14
 - + Ephesians 2:18; 3:1-5, 14-17; 4:4-6; 5:18-20
 - + 1 Peter 1:2
 - + Jude 20, 21
- Who raised Jesus from the dead?
 - + Father: Romans 6:4
 - + Son: John 2:19, 21
 - + Holy Spirit: Romans 8:11
 - + God: Acts 3:26; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Acts 17:31

Theology and Salvation

- The belief of true doctrine about God does not save you
 - > *Demons know the correct doctrine about God*
- Having fear of God does not save you
 - > *Demons tremble before God!*
- Denial of the true doctrine about God will keep you out of heaven
 - > *John 8:24, 28*
- Having no fear of God will keep you out of heaven
 - > *Matthew 7:21*