# THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

## What is the single greatest commandment God ever gave?

What if someone were to ask you that question? What would your answer be? Suppose you asked a dozen strangers on a street corner the same question. What do you think they would say?

Interestingly, this question *has* been asked. As a matter of fact, Jesus was once asked this very question:

Mark 12:28-34 <sup>28</sup> And one of the scribes came, and...asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? <sup>29</sup> And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

Jesus did not simply say that believing in the absolute oneness of God is important; He said it *is the most important commandment of all!* 

Jesus went on to add that the second most important commandment was to love our neighbors as ourselves:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.
31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.
32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

Notice the response of the scribe: "thou has said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:" The scribe did not say "there is none other but *them*." He said *there is none other but he*.

...<sup>34</sup> And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

So Jesus responded to the reply of the scribe ("there is one God, and there is none other but he" by commending the scribe for his correct understanding of the absolute oneness of God.

Given the fact that Jesus declared this (the oneness of God) to be the single most important fact of our faith, it makes sense that we understand and appreciate the absolute oneness of God.

Is God a person, a group of persons, or a spirit?

John 4:24 God {is} a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship {him} in spirit and in truth.

Since God is a spirit, He does not consist of flesh or bones as we do:

Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

### Has anyone ever seen God?

Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared {him}.

John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

We refer to this invisible, immortal Spirit as God the Father.

Colossians 1:13-15 <sup>3</sup> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: <sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: <sup>15</sup> Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

1 Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, {be} honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Notice that the "King eternal" is the "only" wise God. There is no other.

1 Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom {be} honour and power everlasting.

1 John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

# If no man has seen God at any time, then who was Jesus?

He was God incarnate, or God the Father revealed (manifested) in the flesh; He was God revealing Himself to us in a way we could comprehend. Jesus is the **image** of an invisible God:

Colossians 1:13-15 <sup>3</sup> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: <sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: <sup>15</sup> Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

We could never see God as He is (invisible, glorious) so He became a man in order that we might know Him on our level.

While the Bible is clear that no man has seen God in His essence, as a Spirit, man has certainly seen the image of the invisible God in the person of Jesus Christ. That visible image of the invisible God is what we call the Son.

The man Christ Jesus was a visible, human manifestation of the invisible Spirit; in other words, the Father dwelling in a fleshly body:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

John 10:30 I and {my} Father are one.

John 14:8-9 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou {then}, Shew us the Father?

Colossians 2:9 For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Notice that the Bible does not say that Jesus dwells in or is a part of the Godhead; it says **all** of the Godhead dwells in Christ. In other words, everything that God consists of (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) is embodied in Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

**John 8:58** Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

God prepared Himself a body through which He would reveal Himself to us, though in His essence He is a spirit:

**Ephesians 4:4** {There is} one **body**, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

That body (the image of the invisible God - Colossians

1:15) was the Son that was begotten (born):

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Son walked the earth for thirty-three years. During this time, it was the Father/God/Spirit that gave the Son/man/flesh life and power:

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Many churches today teach a "co-equal" Trinity of three persons, in which "God the Father," "God the Son," and "God the Holy Ghost" are three equal partners. Jesus declared that the Father (Spirit) was greater than the Son (flesh).

John 6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come {again} unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and {to} my God, and your God.

God, as a Spirit which cannot die, did not die on the cross; rather, His fleshly body and image (the Son), died on the cross.

Likewise, we are all created in the image of God. In other words, each of us is a miniature representation of God's nature. Each of us has a body, soul, and spirit, though each of us is just one person. When we die, it is not our spirit that dies, but our bodies. God's body died on the cross.

Where does the Holy Ghost fit into all of this? Some verses speak of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Father. Just how many Spirits are there?

**Ephesians 4:4** {There is} one body, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Notice that "Spirit" is spelled with a capital "S," which denotes the Holy Spirit; there are many evil spirits, spelled with a lowercase "s," and human spirits as well. Since there is only one Spirit, God and/or the Holy Spirit and/or the Spirit of Christ are all one and the same. The terms "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit" are both translated from the same Greek phrase, ἄγιος πνεῦμα hagios {hag'-ee-os} pneuma {pnyoo'-mah}. "Hagios" means "holy" and "pneuma" means "spirit or ghost."

The Father of the child Jesus was also the Holy Ghost:

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Obviously, Jesus did not have two Fathers, yet the Bible clearly declares that the Holy Ghost was His Father. The only logical conclusion is that the Holy Ghost and the Father are one and the same Spirit. In fact, the terms "Spirit of your Father" and "Holy Ghost" are used interchangeably in Matthew 10:19-20 and Mark 13:11:

Matthew 10:19-20 <sup>19</sup> But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given

you in that same hour what ye shall speak. <sup>20</sup> For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Mark 13:11 <sup>11</sup> But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

Since there can only be one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit are identical. In fact, the terms "Spirit of Christ" and "Spirit of God" are used interchangeably:

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

There is only one Saviour:

Isaiah 43:10-11 Ye {are} my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I {am} he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11 I, {even} I, {am} the Lord; and beside me {there is} no saviour.

Hosea 13:4 Yet I {am} the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for {there is} no saviour beside me.

However, Luke 2:11 clearly calls Jesus the Saviour, so Jesus must be the physical manifestation of the Yahweh of the Old Testament:

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

### What is the importance of the Oneness of God?

Just as a bride takes on the name of her husband, we take on the name of Jesus when we are baptized in His name. **No one** in the Bible was **ever** baptized in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; everyone was baptized either in the name of Jesus, Jesus Christ, or the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5).

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The name of Jesus in baptism brings remission of sins:

Acts 2:38 <sup>38</sup> Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

### THE ONENESS OF GOD - ADDITIONAL STUDY

1. Are Father, Son, and Holy Ghost names or titles? If they are titles, then what is the **name** of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Also, how many names are referred to in Matthew 28:19?

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the **name** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

2. If Jesus is not the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in one, then why did all of His disciples use the name of Jesus Christ when they baptized?

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 19:5 When they heard {this}, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

- 3. Why is not one person in the entire Bible ever baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, if this is the correct formula in baptism?
- 4. We believe that the Father is the divine nature of Jesus, and that the Son is the image (humanity) of the invisible God (Spirit). We teach that the humanity of God (the Son) was subject to and empowered by the Spirit of God (the Father). If the Father and Son are both co-equal persons in the Godhead, how do you explain the following verses:

John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and {to} my God, and your God.

John 14:28 ... If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The Son can do nothing of**himself, but what he seeth the Father do...

John 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

John 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them...I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and {that} hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

- 5. If the Father and Son are equal, who is Jesus praying to in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he asks for the cup to pass from Him? How and why does God pray to God? Doesn't it make more sense that humanity was praying to divinity?
- 6. Jesus' dying words on the cross (in Matt. 27:46) are easily explained; before the Son (humanity) could die, the Spirit (Deity) had to leave:

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

7. Apostolic doctrine teaches that the Son is God revealed in flesh, not eternally pre-existent as a person separate from the Father. The Bible teaches that the Son was begotten (born):

John 3:16 For God so loved the world,

that he gave his only **begotten** Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

8. If God the Father is a loving Father, why would he offer His son to die, rather than Himself? The truth is that he manifested, or revealed, Himself as a man, in the person of the Son, to die for us:

1 Timothy 3:16 ... God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

9. If the Son is eternal as a second person in the Godhead, explain the following verse:

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

10. If the baptismal formula is not important enough to be re-baptized over, why did Paul instruct John's disciples to be re-baptized?

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard {this}, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

11. If the Son is a person separate to and equal to the Holy Ghost, then why is it unforgivable to blaspheme the Holy Ghost but not the Son?

Matthew 12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the {world} to come.

12. If Jesus was God the Son before his birth, and already had all power as God, why is all power

given to the Son in Matthew 28:18, and who gave it to Him? If it was the Father, then He had to have more power than the Son in the beginning.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

13. Who is the Comforter promised in John 14? Why does Jesus say it is Himself in verse 18?

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 {Even} the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

14. In Revelation 22, who sends His angel to His servants, the Lord God of the holy prophets or Jesus? Is this because Jesus is the Lord God of the holy prophets?

Revelation 22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings {are} faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Revelation 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, {and} the bright and morning star.

15. Since we are created in the image of God, why do we not consist of three persons each?

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his {own} image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

16. If God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are three separate persons perfectly one in unity, then they must have one perfectly unified will. However, in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed "not my will, but thine

be done" to the Father. Clearly, the will of the one praying was different from the will of the one being prayed to. If, as the Son, he had no will outside that of the Father, then this prayer would have been meaningless. If however, the will of the flesh (Son) differed from the will of the Spirit (Father), this verse is easily explained.

### Additional verses for study

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I {am} the first, and I {am} the last; and beside me {there is} no God.

Isaiah 44:8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared {it}? ye {are} even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, {there is} no God; I know not {any}.

Isaiah 45:5 I {am} the Lord, and {there is} none else, {there is} no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that {there is} none beside me. I {am} the Lord, and {there is} none else.

Isaiah 45:21 Tell ye, and bring {them} near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? {who} hath told it from that time? {have} not I the Lord? and {there is} no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; {there is} none beside me.

Hosea 13:4 Yet I {am} the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for {there is} no saviour beside me.

Psalms 71:22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, {even} thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou **Holy one** of Israel.

Psalms 78:41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 29:23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the **Holy One** of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

Hosea 11:9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I {am} God, and not man; the **Holy One** in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

Habakkuk 3:3 God came from Teman, and the **Holy One** from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

Malachi 2:10 Have we not all one father? hath not **one God** created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Mark 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

Romans 3:30 Seeing {it is} one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

1 Corinthians 8:4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol {is} nothing in the world, and that {there is} none other God but one.

Galatians 3:20 Now a mediator is not {a mediator} of one, but **God is one**.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is **one God**; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God {is} one Lord:

Psalms 89:18 For the Lord {is} our defence; and the **Holy One** of Israel is {our} king.

Isaiah 1:24 Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries,

and avenge me of mine enemies:

Isaiah 5:24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, {so} their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the **Holy One** of Israel.

Isaiah 10:20 And it shall come to pass in that day, {that} the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the **Holy One** of Israel, in truth.

Isaiah 29:19 The meek also shall increase {their} joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the **Holy One** of Israel.

Isaiah 30:15 For thus saith the Lord God, the **Holy One** of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

Isaiah 30:29 Ye shall have a song, as in the night {when} a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the **mighty One** of Israel.

Isaiah 31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because {they are} many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the **Holy One** of Israel, neither seek the Lord!

Isaiah 41:14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, {and} ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the **Holy One** of Israel.

Isaiah 41:16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, {and} shalt glory in the **Holy One** of Israel.

Isaiah 41:20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the **Holy One** of Israel hath created it.

Isaiah 43:3 For I {am} the Lord thy God, the **Holy One** of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt {for} thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Isaiah 43:14 Thus saith the Lord, your redeemer, the **Holy One** of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry {is} in the ships.

Isaiah 43:15 I {am} the Lord, your **Holy One**, the creator of Israel, your King.

Isaiah 45:11 Thus saith the Lord, the **Holy One** of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

Isaiah 47:4 [As for] our redeemer, the Lord of hosts [is] his name, the **Holy One** of Israel.

Isaiah 48:17 Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the **Holy One** of Israel; I {am} the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way {that} thou shouldest go.

Isaiah 49:7 Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, {and} his **Holy One**, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, {and} the **Holy One** of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

Isaiah 49:26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood,

as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord {am} thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

Isaiah 60:9 Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the **Holy One** of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

Isaiah 60:14 The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee; The city of the Lord, The Zion of the **Holy One** of Israel.

Isaiah 60:16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord [am] thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the **mighty One** of Jacob.

Jeremiah 50:29 Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the Lord, against the **Holy One** of Israel.

Jeremiah 51:5 For Israel {hath} not {been} forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the **Holy One** of Israel.

Ezekiel 39:7 So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not {let them} pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I {am} the Lord, the **Holy One** in Israel.

Habakkuk 1:12 {Art} thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine **Holy One**? we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

Zechariah 14:9 And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.