

Question 7. *What is God?*

Answer. *God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.*

I. Introduction

A. John Own said, “*If we maintain then the glory of God, let us speak in His own language or be forever silent. That is glorious in Him which He ascribes unto Himself. Our inventions, though never splendid in our own eyes, are unto Him an abomination; a striving to pull Him down from His eternal excellency, to make Him altogether like unto us. God would never allow that the will of the creature should be the measure of His honor.*”⁷ When we speak of God and His being, attributes, and works, we need to remember that we are stepping on holy ground.

II. “God is a Spirit...”

A. Essence

1. God is not material; He is immaterial. God is not comprised of a body or parts. He is not physical or visible. God is a spiritual being; He does not belong to the physical realm and is outside of all things created.
 - a) **John 4:24 (LSB):** *God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*
2. God is pure spirit, not comprised of complexity, but is pure divinity. God is pure deity, truly simple in His being. You do not gather up the attributes of God and put them together to make God. God is who He is. He is not comprised of parts but is Himself.

⁷ John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. 1647. (Reprint, Carlisle, Pa.: Gorge Kline, 1792), ix.

III. “God is... infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being...”

A. Attributes

1. An attribute is not what God does; it is what God *is*. It has been best practice to refer to God’s attributes as “perfections.” God cannot lose or add attributes to Himself; He has no accidental attributes. For if that were the case, they would not be perfections or essential to God’s being, therefore not an attribute.

a) God is infinite.

(1) This is the doctrine of *Divine Immensity*, also known as *Omnipresence*.⁸ In other words, He is immeasurable and all present. This differs from His eternity, for God is not only unbound by time, but He is unbound by space.

(a) **Job 11:7-9 (LSB):** “*Can you find the depths of God? Can you find the limits of the Almighty? 8 They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? 9 Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.*”

b) God is eternal.

(1) This is the doctrine of *Divine Timelessness*.⁹ God has no beginning or end. He is not only transcendent in space but also in time. He is “I AM” (*Yahweh*), not bound by time but forever outside of it (Exod. 3:14).

⁸ Stephen J. Wellum, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, (B&H Academic, Brentwood, Tennessee, 2024), 622.

⁹ *Ibid.* 619.

(a) **Psalm 90:2 (LSB):** *Before the mountains were born, or You brought forth the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

c) God is unchangeable.

(1) This is the doctrine of *Divine Immutability*.¹⁰ God is not becoming; He *is*. He is not developing, learning, or growing. He is perfect and therefore forever the same throughout all His eternal existence.

(a) **James 1:17 (LSB):** *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

(2) Because God is immutable, and His attributes are of His very being, all of His divine perfections are unchanging. As we will see, His being and all attributes corresponding to His being are unchangeable.

IV. “in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”

A. When we speak of God and His very being, we must speak in terms of *ad intra* (internal of God) to distinguish from that of God which is *ad extra* (external of God).¹¹

1. *ad intra*

a) God’s wisdom is not outside of Himself. He is not a being that learns, but a being that is perfectly wise in Himself. God is pure wisdom (*ad intra*), and God reveals wisdom and shares it with His creation (*ad extra*). God is perfect in discerning, planning, and decreeing.

¹⁰ Ibid. 607.

¹¹ Ibid. 593.

b) God is pure power (*Divine Omnipotence*) in Himself (*ad intra*), and He manifests that power through Creation and Providence (*ad extra*), as we will see in *Questions & Answers 11 – 14*.

(1) **Psalm 147:5 (LSB):** *Great is our Lord and abundant in power; His discernment is infinite.*

(2) We could include the truthfulness of God with His wisdom, since they are so closely related. Wisdom is His discernment and will; truthfulness would refer to His inability to lie.

(a) See Numbers 23:19 and Titus 1:2.

c) God is holy in and of Himself. He is not holy because of what He does (*ad extra*); He is holy because of who He *is* (*ad intra*). To speak of the doctrine of *Divine Holiness* is to speak of God's sheer God-ness.

(1) **Revelation 15:4 (LSB):** *Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed.*

(2) We may also include the goodness of God here at the mention of His holiness. *Divine Goodness* is the outpouring of *Divine Holiness*.

2. *ad intra* & *ad extra*

a) Because God is holy (*ad intra*), He therefore acts in holiness towards His creation, whether in its pre-fallen, post-fallen, or post-redeemed state (*ad extra*). When we speak of God's justice, we must distinguish between who

God is (*ad intra*) and what God does because of who He is (*ad extra*). God is just: He is righteous, and so He executes justice and rules righteously over His creation.

(1) **Exodus 34:6-7 (LSB):** *Then Yahweh passed by in front of him and called out, “Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”*

b) To speak of God’s justice, we would say that God is a law unto Himself. God can never act contrary to who He is. He, therefore, will judge according to who He is and not according to anything outside of Himself, for there is nothing greater than Him.

(1) God’s justice is not a mere function of His will; it is the outworking of His nature.¹² God only works according to who He is. His action or work is never based upon anything other than Himself and His perfections.

V. Application

A. When we speak of God, we must remember that we are approaching the Holy One. On addressing what is required in the third commandment, The Baptist Catechism answers in *Exchange 59*, “*The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God’s names, titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, and works.*” We must be careful when we

¹² Ibid. 655.

speaking about God. He is the only perfect, holy being; He deserves our most careful attention and consideration.

B. And yet, as Christians, we are compelled to grow in our understanding of who God is. We know that we will fall short in our efforts to understand and know the infinite One. We confess, He is above us, His ways are above our understanding, and yet there is no greater pursuit for mankind than to seek God and know Him.

C. Reflection Questions

1. **Question 1.** *“Have you repented to God for all the times you ascribed to Him something that He is not?”*
2. **Question 2.** *“When was the last time you praised God for His justice?”*
3. **Question 3.** *“Do you find comfort in the fact that God is unchanging?”*

VI. Repeat / Sing Question & Answer 3 – 7

A. **Question 3.** *How may we know there is a God?*

1. **Answer.** *The light of nature in man, and the works of God; plainly declare there is a God, but His Word and Spirit only, do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners.*

B. **Question 4.** *What is the word of God?*

1. **Answer.** *The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are the Word of God, and the only certain rule of faith and obedience.*

C. **Question 5.** *May all men make use of the Holy Scriptures?*

1. **Answer.** *All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted, to read, hear, and understand the Holy Scriptures.*

D. **Question 6.** *What things are chiefly contained in the Holy Scriptures?*

1. **Answer.** *The Holy Scriptures chiefly contain what man ought to believe, concerning God and what duty God requireth of man.*

E. **Question 7.** *What is God?*

1. **Answer.** *God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.*