

# Chapter Two: The Doctrine of God

## I. Introduction

The doctrine of God is the cornerstone of all Christian theology. A right understanding of who God is shapes every other belief and practice in the Christian life. For The Holy Christian Church International (THCCI), our confession of God is rooted in the Holy Scriptures and is in continuity with the historic, orthodox Christian faith—particularly as articulated by the church fathers and affirmed by the Holiness-Pentecostal and Wesleyan-Arminian traditions.

**THCCI Statement of Faith:** "We believe that there is but one living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love."

## II. Biblical Exposition of God's Nature

### God as One and True (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; 1 Timothy 2:5)

The Shema, Israel's daily confession, begins with the declaration: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). This declaration of divine oneness (Heb. *echad*) emphasizes the uniqueness and indivisibility of the God of Israel. Isaiah reinforces this in stating, "I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Isa. 45:5).

Paul affirms the same truth in the New Testament: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

This God is not a force or an impersonal essence but an intelligent Spirit (*John 4:24*) who knows, speaks, wills, loves, and acts. He is infinitely holy (*Isaiah 6:3*), entirely sovereign (*Psalms 115:3*), and utterly worthy of trust and adoration (*Revelation 4:11*).

### The Attributes of God

Following the classic categories from historical theology, the divine attributes are commonly distinguished between *incommunicable* (those that belong to God alone) and *communicable* (those shared, to a degree, with creatures).

- **Incommunicable Attributes:**
  - *Aseity* (self-existence) – *Exodus 3:14*
  - *Immutability* (unchangeableness) – *Malachi 3:6; James 1:17*
  - *Infinity* (limitlessness in presence and power) – *Psalms 147:5*
  - *Eternity* (God exists outside time) – *Isaiah 57:15; Revelation 1:8*
- **Communicable Attributes:**
  - *Love* – *1 John 4:8*
  - *Wisdom* – *Romans 11:33*

- *Justice – Psalm 89:14*
- *Mercy – Ephesians 2:4*
- *Holiness – 1 Peter 1:16*

Thomas C. Oden notes in *Classic Christianity* that the holiness of God “means not merely purity but absolute otherness. God is not like us. He is set apart in glory.”

### **III. God as Creator and Sovereign Ruler (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1; Colossians 1:16-17)**

Genesis 1:1 begins Scripture with the statement: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” The Christian doctrine of creation affirms that the world is not eternal but was brought into existence by God's will (*ex nihilo*—out of nothing).

Psalm 24:1 proclaims, “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

In Colossians 1:16-17, Paul states that “all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” This passage affirms that creation was not only the work of the Father but also of the Son and the Spirit (see also Genesis 1:2).

The sovereignty of God means He is not a distant watchmaker but actively governs the affairs of heaven and earth (Daniel 4:35; Romans 8:28).

### **IV. Doctrines Denying the True God**

Throughout church history, various heresies and philosophical systems have denied the biblical doctrine of the one true God. Some of the most notable include:

#### **1. Modalism (Sabellianism)**

Modalism teaches that God is a single person who reveals Himself in different modes or aspects (Father, Son, Spirit) rather than three distinct persons. This heresy was refuted by early theologians like Tertullian (*Against Praxeas*) and rejected at the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381).

Modern examples: *Oneness Pentecostalism* (e.g., *United Pentecostal Church International*).

#### **2. Arianism**

Arius (c. 256–336) taught that the Son was a created being and not fully God. This view was condemned at the Council of Nicaea (325), which affirmed the full divinity of Christ. Athanasius (c. 296–373) was its chief opponent, arguing for the eternal generation of the Son (*Contra Arianos*).

Modern examples: *Jehovah's Witnesses*.

### **3. Deism and Process Theology**

In the modern era, Deism and Process Theology have undermined God's biblical identity. Deism views God as a distant creator who does not intervene in the world. Process Theology depicts God as evolving with creation. Both deny the biblical view of God's omnipotence and immutability.

Modern proponents include some liberal Protestant seminaries and writers like Charles Hartshorne.

### **4. Pantheism and Panentheism**

These views, often found in Eastern and New Age thought, equate God with the universe (pantheism) or see the universe as part of God (panentheism). Christianity rejects both as idolatrous, affirming instead a transcendent yet immanent God (*Acts 17:24–28*).

Modern examples: *Unitarian Universalism*, *New Age Spirituality*.

## **V. The God of Scripture and Other Religious Conceptions**

Christian theology asserts that the God revealed in Jesus Christ is not the same as the deity described in Islam, Hinduism, or other world religions. While Islam claims monotheism, it denies the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Qur'an explicitly states, "Say not three" (Surah 4:171), rejecting a core tenet of the Christian faith.

Exegetically, John 1:1–14 reveals the divine Word becoming flesh—a concept utterly foreign to Islamic theology. Hebrews 1:3 affirms Christ as the "exact imprint" of God's nature. Islam denies this, rejecting Christ's divinity and the Spirit's personhood.

Hinduism's polytheism and impersonal ultimate reality (*Brahman*) bear no resemblance to the God of the Bible who speaks, acts, and enters into covenant with His people (*Genesis 12:1–3*; *Exodus 3:14*). Buddhism often does not affirm a personal God at all.

As Frank D. Macchia argues in *Baptized in the Spirit*, a personal God who dwells with and empowers believers through the Spirit cannot be reduced to a philosophical abstraction or moral ideal.

### **The Problem with Pluralism**

Pluralism asserts that all religions are equally valid paths to God. This claim directly contradicts the exclusive claims of Christ: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Peter echoes this exclusivity: “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Pluralism distorts the biblical revelation of God’s redemptive plan. As Alister McGrath notes in *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, “To say that all religions are equally true is to empty Christianity of its central message: that God has uniquely revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.”

Dr. Jerry Walls writes in *Salvation and Damnation: A New Perspective* that “pluralism reduces truth to sentiment and robs the gospel of its scandal. The offense of the cross is precisely that Christ alone saves, and no other name will do.” He warns that pluralism trades the glory of God’s exclusive self-revelation for an unoffensive religiosity that ultimately leads people away from salvation.

Timothy George contends that interreligious dialogue must not “blur the boundaries that distinguish Christian revelation from religious speculation.”

## **VI. THCCI’s Affirmation of the One True and Living God**

The Holy Christian Church International unashamedly affirms:

There is only one living and true God, revealed in Holy Scripture as eternal, infinite in power, perfect in holiness, and worthy of all worship. This God is not a philosophical ideal, cultural construct, or impersonal force, but the Creator of all, the Redeemer of humanity, and the Righteous Judge. He has revealed Himself definitively in the person of Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. All other conceptions of deity are inadequate, false, or idolatrous.

## **VII. Questions for Further Discussion and Reflection**

1. Why is it important to affirm both the oneness and the personal nature of God?
2. How does the doctrine of God’s attributes shape our worship and daily lives?
3. In what ways do modern distortions of God’s character (e.g., moral therapeutic deism, pantheism) affect Christian discipleship?
4. How should we engage people of other faiths who claim to believe in “God” but reject the God of the Bible?
5. Reflect on the holiness of God. How does it confront and transform your understanding of sin, grace, and mission?
6. How does understanding pluralism help you defend the uniqueness of Christ and the exclusivity of salvation through Him?
7. What theological implications arise when Christians equate the God of the Bible with the gods of other religions?