

Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



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Deity

Trying to understand the nature of God is inherently difficult. Nevertheless, there are some clues that point us to one important characteristic.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;' . . . So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:26-27).

"Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him" (Job 36:26).



One of the great controversies that racked the church in the early centuries of its existence was the question of the nature of God, particularly as it related to the person of Jesus Christ. Early church councils debated these questions exhaustively, with excommunication facing the losers. Today, orthodox Christianity has settled on a view of deity that recognizes three persons in the godhead — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — known popularly as "the Trinity." This trinitarian view of God is denied by Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, Muslims, and others who insist that God is a single entity.

I seldom preach or teach on the Trinity, primarily because I do not consider myself qualified to explain it. John

Wesley explained the problem well: "Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show you a man that can comprehend the triune God." There is much about God that we mortals simply cannot know, and it is presumptuous to pretend that we have all the answers. So in coming to this question, a large dose of humility is in order.

There is sufficient evidence in the Scriptures to support the proposition that God is more than a single, isolated being, but rather possesses some characteristics of a community.

First, God frequently speaks of Himself as a plurality. This is apparent in the early chapters of Genesis: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'" (Gen. 1:26). "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil'" (3:22). "And the Lord said, ' . . . Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (11:7). Some argue that this is God talking to His angels. But these are deliberative statements, and we

know that God takes counsel from no one (Isa. 40:14). In some sense, the God who made these decisions was a "we."

Second, unlike any other prophet, the human Jesus was accorded treatment as God. He was worshipped by men, an honor due only to God (Jn. 9:38). He claimed a pre-existence with God that no human could ever claim (Jn. 17:5). He was even called "God" (Jn. 1:1; Jn. 20:28; Titus 2:18; Heb. 1:8).

Finally, reflect on the statement that "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). Love, by definition, requires a relationship, an "other" upon whom expressions of love can be showered. If God is a single mind, whom did He love prior to creation? But if "one God" is comprised of three personalities—like a single cube having three dimensions—the dynamics of love take on a whole new meaning.

Whatever the details, Elihu summarized our position elegantly: "God is great, and we do not know Him." We will never fully comprehend the nature of God, but we can appreciate His awesome power and majesty, and commit our lives to knowing and doing His will.

— David King