

# Book Reviews and Study Guides

- [The Knowledge of the Holy](#)
  - [Lesson 1: Thinking Right and God Incomprehensible](#)
  - [Lesson 2: The Holy Trinity](#)

# The Knowledge of the Holy

This is a study guide for William A. Tozer's "The Knowledge of the Holy": The Attributes of God, Their Meaning in the Christian Life

# Lesson 1: Thinking Right and God Incomprehensible

THEME: We should have a lofty concept of God, God is incomprehensible and an attribute is something true of God.

Proverbs 9:10 — The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

- **Lesson 1: Thinking Right and God Incomprehensible**
- Lesson 2: The Holy Trinity
- Lesson 3: The Self-Existence of God
- Lesson 4: The Self-Sufficiency of God, The Eternity of God
- Lesson 5: The Immutability of God, The Infinitude of God
- Lesson 6: The Wisdom and Omniscience of God
- Lesson 7: The Love and Grace of God
- Lesson 8: The Sovereignty and Holiness of God

## The Knowledge of the Holy, Lesson #1: Introduction, God Incomprehensible

The loss of the concept of the majesty of God.

PARAGRAPH #2. LIST WAYS THE CHURCH HAS “SURRENDERED HER ONCE LOFTY CONCEPT OF GOD.”

The concepts of Majesty & Holiness

- MAJESTY: impressive stateliness, dignity, or beauty; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 104:1; Psalm 93:1; Psalm 145:5; Hebrews 1:3; Jude 1:25; Psalm 8:9; Hebrews 8:1
- HOLINESS: “to be set apart.” God is also set apart from something — Set apart from any other name. God’s name is holy. His name is set apart from any other name in the entire universe. Set apart from His creation. God is not like anything or anyone He has created. Set apart from anything that is sinful or evil. In fact, this is what is stressed the most about God in the Bible. He is the most “holy,” and no one is as “holy” as He is. He is perfect.; Hab. 1:13; Ps 20:6—the heaven of his holiness; Ps 51:11; Le 21:8; Eze 43:8; Ac 4:30; 2Pe 2:21; 1Jo 2:20; Re 3:7

1. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS EVIDENCES OF OUR “UNAWARENESS”? of the Holiness and MAJESTY of God?
2. What effect does an awareness of the holiness have?

PARAGRAPH #5. TOZER POINTS OUT AN “ALARMING” DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE EXTERNAL GAINS AND THE INTERNAL LOSSES OF THE CHURCH.

Gains Mostly external and losses internal ...

3. IN WHAT WAYS IS GOD WRONGLY thought about? [Ch. 1 Why we must think rightly about God?]

What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us. [It influences every other part.]

- What is my witness concerning God.

The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of 10,000 temporal problems.

- Is my concept of God worthy of him?

#### 4. What is God like? [Ch. 2 God Incomprehensible]

- Roman, Greek, Babylong, Persian mythology -- grotesque
- Infinite Ps 147:5

Job 11:7 ¶ Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

Pr 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Jer 29:13 — And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

God is unsearchable but He is not unknowable. We can know Him as He reveals Himself to us.

- What has God disclosed of himself?

## A Divine Attribute: Something True About God

A DEFINITION OF OF ATTRIBUTE: An attribute of God is whatever God has in any way revealed as being true of Himself. An attribute is something true of God.

- How Many Attributes are there of God?
  - Seven?
  - A thousand?
  - Numberless?

What is God like? What kind of God is He? How may we expect Him to act toward us and toward all created things?

Psalm 19:1 — The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork

Are you prepared to see God?

Matthew 5:8 — Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"We must break ourselves of the habit of thinking of the Creator as we think of His creatures."

- Man changes and his character, traits come and go — are unstable.
- Man is made and therefore is the sum of the traits that make up his character.
- There is but one God; God is simple, uncomplex, one with Himself.
- The harmony of His being is the result not of a perfect balance of parts but of the absence of parts. Between His attributes no contradiction can exist.

"The doctrine of the divine unity means not only that He need not suspend one to exercise another, for in Him all His attributes are one. All of God does all that God does; He does not divide himself to perform a work, but works in the total unity of His being."

"The divine attributes are what we know to be true of God. He does not possess them as qualities; they are how God is as He reveals Himself to His creatures. Love, for instance, is not something God has and which may grow or diminish or cease to be. His love is the way God is, and when He loves He is simply being Himself."

What can we know about God? What He has disclosed about Himself.

- Israel Could know that God was among them.

Joshua 3:10 — And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. [1Sa 17:46]

- The people of the earth could know that God is mighty.

Joshua 4:24 — That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever

- God keeps His promises.

Joshua 23:14 — And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

- God knows it all.

2Sa 14:20 — o fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.

- God alone is God.

1Ki 8:60 — That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.

- And so much more ...

# Lesson 2: The Holy Trinity

THEME: God is Trinity in Unity God is three in one. While we know not the Godhead perfectly, we can safeguard our explanations of Him by binding our words to those of Scripture.

Proverbs 9:10 — The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

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## The Godhead is a Mystery

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.

"Love and faith are at home in the mystery of the Godhead. Let reason kneel reverently outside.

## How Jesus Spoke Sheds Light on the Godhead

Plurality

John 14:23 — Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

"Christ did not hesitate to use the plural form when speaking of Himself along with the Father and the Spirit. "We will come unto him and make our abode with him."

- Unity, Equality

Yet again He said, "I and my Father are one." It is most important that we think of God as Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. Only so may we think rightly of God and in a manner worthy of Him and of our own souls.

It was our Lord's claim to equality with the Father that led to His crucifixion.

## The Early Church's Statements on God

Credo are statements of faith. Many early believers would sum up their beliefs as they had an opportunity to stand for their faith. These Christians would study to develop their own credo based on what they had learned about their faith.

## The Apostles' Creed, from birth of the Church to the 800's

The Apostles' Creed, though not written by the apostles, is the oldest credo of the Christian church and is the basis for others that followed. It has many forms with some believing to be originally written by apostles, but seeing editions through to the 9th century.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
Born of the Virgin Mary,  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell;  
The third day He rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
The Holy catholic Church,  
the Communion of Saints;  
The Forgiveness of sins;  
The Resurrection of the body,  
And the Life everlasting.  
Amen. — The Apostles' Creed

A heresy called Arianism erupted in the fourth century (300s). Arianism denied the divinity of Christ.

## The Nicæan Creed, 325 AD

The Arian controversy necessitated theological focus which culminated in the writing of the Nicene Creed in 325 AD. 318 Church fathers met at Nicæa and adopted a statement of faith.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
The only-begotten Son of God,  
Begotten of Him before all ages,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made,  
Being of one substance with the Father,  
By whom all things were made. — Nicæan Creed on the Son

I believe in the Holy Spirit  
The Lord and giver of life,  
Which proceedeth from the Father and the Son,  
Who with the Father and Son together  
Is worshipped and glorified.— Nicaean Creed on the Holy Spirit

## The Athanasian Creed, Sometime after 350 AD.

Athanasius was the chief champion against the heretics who followed after Arius, who argued that Christ was an exalted creature but that He was less than God. Athanasius died in 373 AD, and the epithet that appeared on his tombstone reads "Athanasius against the world." This great Christian leader suffered several exiles during the embittered Arian controversy because of the steadfast profession of faith he maintained in Trinitarian orthodoxy. Though the name "Athanasius" was given to the creed over the centuries, the Athanasian Creed was probably written after the death of Athanasius as a result of Athanasius' influence is embedded in the creed.

The content of the Athanasian Creed stresses the affirmation of the Trinity in which all members of the Godhead are considered uncreated and co-eternal and of the same substance. In the affirmation of the Trinity the dual nature of Christ is given central importance.

...For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another. But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal....There is, then, one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits. In this Trinity, there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less. The entire three Persons are coeternal and coequal with one another.... That we worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity, neither blending their persons nor dividing their essence. For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another. But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal. -- from the Athanasian Creed

## The Council of Chalcedon

Along with Arianism (denied the Divinity of Christ) arose other heresies:

- In the fifth century (400s) another heresy (monophysitism) stated that Jesus was theanthropic (God-man): that he was neither purely divine or purely human
- Nestorianism claimed Jesus had two natures and was therefore two persons, one human and one divine.

Both the Monophysite heresy and the Nestorian heresy were clearly condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD.

## My Father is Greater than I

John 14:28 &mdash; 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.

How do these creeds stating equality of the father and son harmonize with the saying of Jesus, "My Father is greater than I"?

"Equal to His Father, as touching His Godhead; less than the Father, as touching His manhood,"

To redeem mankind the Eternal Son did not leave the bosom of the Father; while walking among men He referred to Himself as "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," and spoke of Himself again as "the Son of man which is in heaven."

# Co-Active

The Persons of the Godhead, being one, have one will. They work always together, and never one smallest act is done by one without the instant acquiescence of the other two. Every act of God is accomplished by the Trinity in Unity.

It is a real if understandable error to conceive of the Persons of the Godhead as conferring with one another and reaching agreement by interchange of thought as humans do.

That instant, immediate communion between the Persons of the Godhead which has been from all eternity knows not sound nor effort nor motion.

A popular belief among Christians divide the work of God between the three Persons, giving a specific part to each, as, for instance, creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, and regeneration to the Holy Spirit. This is partly true but not wholly so, for God cannot so divide Himself that one Person works while another is inactive. In the Scriptures the three Persons are shown to act in harmonious unity in all the mighty works that are wrought throughout the universe.

In the Holy Scriptures the work of creation is attributed

- to the Father (Gen. 1:1),
- to the Son (Col. 1:16), and
- to the Holy Spirit (Job. 26:13 and Ps. 104:30).

The incarnation is shown to have been accomplished by:

- the three Persons in full accord (Luke 1: 35),

At Christ's baptism

- the Son came up out of the water,
- the Spirit descended upon Him and
- the Father's voice spoke from heaven (Matt. 3:16, 17).

In Hebrews 9:14, we behold the three persons operating together:

Hebrews 9:14 — How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The resurrection of Christ is likewise attributed variously:

- to the Father (Acts 2:32),
- to the Son (John 10:17-18), and
- to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4).

The salvation of the individual man is shown by the apostle Peter to be the work of all three Persons of the Godhead (1 Pet. 1:2), and the indwelling of the Christian man's soul is said to be by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-23).

## Conclusion

The doctrine of the Trinity is truth for the heart. The fact that it cannot be satisfactorily explained, instead of being against it, is in its favor. Such a truth had to be revealed; no one could have imagined it.