

## WHAT DOES THE WORD GOD OR DEITY OR DIVINITY MEAN?

What is God who people seem to treat as a collection of moral principles that is somehow able to have a relationship with us and act like a person?

St Thomas said that God is an infinite substance - he is not just an abstract idea nor is he a thing like any other thing. But he is real. Just like anything real, God has properties. For example, he has creative powers and is loving. To be God, God will govern his properties and attributes but they will not govern him. God is so different from the creation that he is fundamentally unknowable.

Before we can destroy the concept of God we have to be sure we know what we mean by God. What is God or deity? This is a popular question in a world where just about anything can be called God.

God is the best, greatest and most powerful person there could be. God is the being who is to be our ultimate concern. If we are going to call anything else God then we may as well call the president God. To give the term a real meaning it has to be restricted to the greatest moral being. If God is not entirely moral then morality is more important and entitled to more honour than he is. He can't be God for he can't come first. If personality is better than impersonality then God must be a person of some kind though perhaps very different from person as we know it if he is perfect.

A weak being would not be divine.

A God of evil would be crazy and would not be a great being for he is captive to stronger forces.

A God that has unfree will would not be the greatest being for the forces that program him are better and greater.

An impersonal God is no more a God than electricity is.

The idea of many gods is self-contradictory for none of the gods is fully free to do her or his own thing.

Some people teach that God exists and is just a symbol for morality. God is just another word for morality.

It is unreasonable to worship a God that it just that for he is an it not a he and an idea not an entity. It is quite foolish. It is dishonest as saying that to worship Santa is to worship the custom of exchanging gifts at Christmas.

Don Cupitt is well known for believing that talk about God is not talk about a real being but about beliefs about moral principle. God is not a spirit in this view – he is morality (page 9, Taking Leave of God).

If morality is an invention then we have made God but God has not made us. If it is not then we have discovered God and he has made no effort to be discovered which is the opposite of the biblical view that God reveals himself to us.

Some say that since the idea of a real God is obvious rubbish that people who pray and believe in God must believe that God is a picture of love and goodness and is not real. For example, when a person loves God it is love that he or she loves for God is literally abstract love and not a being. When he or she prays it is not to get God to do something for them but to change themselves for the better. Prayer is opening yourself up to love and using prayers and meditations to assist you in this. People can temporarily believe in nonsense when they trick the reason. So, it is wrong to say that a person engaging in what looks to be irrational spiritual activity must believe that the God they pray to is not real. They think he is as real as long as they keep the smokescreen. Praying is like communicating with another being so it is a pretence and a deception to pray to a God that does not exist. Self-help techniques would be more honest. The Christians might say that God is literally love but they also see him as a being and say they do not understand how these things could be true so just because God is love we cannot say that they are just praying to love and not a being. At most they are people who believe in a God who does not exist and one who does and the same time and cannot see it. Believers in this God have no business picking on atheists but they do.

Others feel that since there is no evidence for a personal and real God those who believe in God are really praying to something they have imagined and not a real God. But they may have weak faith but still pray. You don't need faith to pray. You could pray to the being you don't believe in just in case. You don't have to believe your doctor exists in order to talk to him. A solipsist, a person who doesn't believe anything exists other than himself or herself, would still converse with a doctor!

A spirit is a real entity that has no parts. It doesn't need anything to hold it together or put it together. God must be spirit for since no being made him he must be a being that needed no maker. If God had a maker he would not be God for something would have more power than him. Theism supposes that when there must have been a maker it had to be God for there is none better. God has many attributes. He is literally his attributes. He is literally love for example. Strictly speaking, God is absolutely one so he has only one attribute which is all of these rolled into one.

Pantheism is the doctrine that all things are one spirit and that this spirit is God. This leads to many contradictions. If all is God I am God and if I am God I am a spirit and if I am a spirit then I am the only being that exists. I am the woman I kill when I drive recklessly. I am also the car. Pantheism is just pretending that things which are not supreme are God is it has no God at all. It is a fully cracked form of atheism and it would be wiser to accept proper atheism.

Polytheism has lots of gods who are subject to greater powers and forces therefore they are no more gods than the presidents of the world are. You cannot call a being divine just because it has strong psychic powers.

Deism is the notion that God made the world but has no interest in it. He does not answer prayer or work miracles. Science will show no sign of his existence. And it does show no sign. When God made the world and us he must do miracles for that is a miracle. But it is answered that God making all things is not unnatural but God changing natural law to work miracles is unnatural and God does not do unnatural miracles. Theists say that when God made so much good in the world he must be interested in us. But even if God does not care there will be some worlds better than others assuming we are not on the only planet with life on it. How do they know that there are not billions of spiritual and physical worlds which would show that God was random? Deists should forsake the word God and replace it with cosmic intelligence or something. The word Deism implies belief in God so it has to go as well.

God in the Bible is referred to as Yahweh. Father Richard P McBrien observes in his tome Catholicism (HarperSanFrancisco, New York, 1994) page 279 that nobody knows for sure what Yahweh means. There is a connection with the verb to be but any more than that leaves everybody mystified. W F Albright suggested that it is only the first word of the name yahweh aser yihweh which means, "He who brings into being whatever comes into being". It would mean then that God is creator. Others think Yahweh means, "I am who I will be". If so, that implies a changeable God. Some say such a God must be imperfect and not a real God.

God for Christians is a being without parts - that is spirit. The danger is that we think of God as a gas that is not made up of atoms or parts. But then this gas would just consist of one part. It is its part. This part does not consist of any other parts. Do you see the implication of all that? A God without parts is no more existing than a square circle. He is a something that is a nothing. The idea that nothing consists of two or more nothings would make more sense than that for something can never be nothing to any degree. Christianity degrades children by playing conjuring tricks with words. The idol worshipper adores a god of wood or stone or so the Christian says. They bemoan how demeaning that is. But how much more is it demeaning to adore nothing and call it God? At least the idol worshipper adores something real. And he adores something that is more understandable than a being that is supposed to be pure spirit. Christianity demeans all whom it gets to adore its God. To the mind of a child, God is just like pretending the naked emperor is wearing clothes as in the children's tale The Emperor's New Clothes. It's pretending that something that cannot be seen or examined or verified by the senses is real. The God concept is disrespectful and therefore an abuse of the mind of a child.

The most "sophisticated" version of God is that he is the reason anything exists instead of nothing. He doesn't make things out of his power but he makes the universe simply by commanding it to exist. That is pure magic. Telling something to exist is not making it. Religion claims it uses the word making in a rough sense. In this way, it has people imagining that God making a universe where there is nothing at all to make it from makes sense. It is magic. It is as sensible to say that your cat made the universe with a spell. It is far more extreme magic than a prince turning into a frog.

None of the versions of God make any sense. You get that feeling when you read what is meant by God. But the evidence that God is incoherent is indisputable.

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