

## The nature of God

Christianity and Judaism don't agree about certain things, but they've got one major thing in common, and that's the man upstairs, the big guy.

So who, or what, is God?

Page one of the Bible tells us, "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*".

Which makes a lot of people ask, "so how did God get created then?"

Unfortunately, we won't find out until the sequel is published...

The creation story shows God to be the creator and the sustainer of all life. He made it all, and he's responsible for everything's continued existence.

The good things, the bad things, even the boring things.

The Bible tells us that God has the following impressive qualities: omnipotence – unlimited power over everything, and omnipresence – being everywhere, throughout time, plus omniscience, which means he knows everything there is to know. And let's not forget omnibenevolence, which means being infinitely good and all-loving.

That causes some confusion though, as the Old Testament tells us about many occasions when God practised his destroying, punishing, and cursing skills. In the old days, it was definitely not a good idea to make him angry.

In Christianity, God is considered to have three aspects – the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which is the basis of the Catholic blessing.

The omnipotent creator is God the Father, but when Jesus was born on Earth to atone for the sins of mankind, he revealed himself to also be God the Son, and there's also God the Holy Spirit, a guiding voice for humanity.

If you think that's a bit confusing, you're not the only one. Different Christian traditions spent centuries arguing about what it all means. It's not at all confusing from the perspective of Judaism, though. They don't believe Jesus was a manifestation of God at all.

One thing that Jews and Christians do seem to agree on is that God is male. There's no reason to think that he's actually got a beard, or any physical characteristics, but he is always a 'he'.

But actually, even that isn't quite right.

There are some passages of scripture where God is referred to as being like a

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mother hen, and serious Bible scholars of both religions agree that, really, God has no gender. There's no end to the debate about the exact nature of God.

It does state clearly in the Bible though, that God cannot be understood by the human mind, which makes it rather tricky to come to any definite conclusions.