

The God of faith and (or) the God of the philosophers in the light of the conversion of Blaise Pascal

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Aim: To discuss the relationship between God as understood in philosophy and God as understood by the Christian faith in the light of the conversion of the scientist Blaise Pascal.

Methods: We offered an explanation of the *philosopheme* attributable to Blaise Pascal, and then examined the meaning of the phrase *God of the philosophers*, with special attention to Plato's and Aristotle's theology, and then assessed the prominent features of the Christian God. The Hellenistic environment in which early Christianity spread and its influence on early Christian theology were analysed, with special emphasis on the term *logos*.

Results: Blaise Pascal's Christian faith was not in accordance with Catholic Church, although Pascal considered himself a Catholic. We demonstrated that term *God of philosophers* is ambiguous term, i.e. what that God is. It appears that most probably *God of philosophers* is god of Aristotle or Plato because these two philosophers had the biggest impact on the evolution of natural theology. The *God of philosophers* is more like an impersonal concept than a person like *God of faith*. We presented the essential features of the Christian God: the doctrine of the Trinity, God's creation, God's personality and God's incarnation, and discussed on the different understandings of the term *logos*, and its importance. For us, the term *logos* served as a point of contact between the philosophical and the Christian understanding of God.

Conclusion: Christianity is a faith based on reason, i.e. in Christian God can be known through reason and not just by faith. We tried to go beyond Pascal's radical distinction between the God of faith and the God of the philosophers, namely through the lens of the philosophical term *logos* and show the there is no radical difference between the *God of faith* and *God of philosophers*.

Keywords: Blaise Pascal; comprehension; creation; God of faith; God of philosophers; logos

Introduction

The dichotomy between the God of the philosophers and the God of faith arose from the testimony written by Blaise Pascal after his conversion to the Christian faith. No one before him had ever emphasized the difference between the God of the philosophers and the God of faith to such an extent. Pascal recorded his testimony in the *Memorial* (Pascal, 1654). Blaise Pascal was among the first intellectuals who distinguished between the God spoken of in philosophy as a science and the God spoken of in revealed religion, i.e., the Christian faith. He believed that those terms are not synonymous, as is evident from his famous saying from the *Memorial*: “*The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not the God of the philosophers and scholars*” (Pascal, 1654, p. 2). Although on the surface, this seems to be quite a witty statement, if we delve deeper into the matter, we will see that it presents several issues.

The first issue is the definition of the “God of the philosophers and scholars”. What God is that? In fact, a consensus of all philosophers who have pondered upon God is assumed here, which is wrong. Moreover, Pascal, as a Catholic, believes that philosophy as a science does not say anything about God that would contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church, which believes that reason is absolutely necessary for understanding the overall reality, including God. The latter position is best expressed in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*: “*Faith and reason are like two wings upon which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.*” (Ivan Pavao II., 2013).

Just as reason cannot be completely separated from faith, faith cannot be separated from reason. Early Christian theologians knew this, and they thus adopted philosophical concepts in order to better express their faith. It is therefore difficult to understand Pascal’s radical distinction between the God of faith and the God of the philosophers. Didn’t the philosophers (*ratio*) strive for rational knowledge of the highest being? (Aristotel, 1988a, ca. 350 B.C.E., XII). This is the position of theology (Akvincski, 2005, ST II), and it is confirmed in the Scripture (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Wis. 13:1) as well.

The main question we will try to answer is the following: Is the God of the philosophers also the God of faith? To achieve this, we will first elaborate on the phrase *God of the philosophers*. We will show the essential features of Plato’s and Aristotle’s understanding of God. Here, we will demonstrate that speaking of the God of the philosophers is neither a simple nor precise task, as the God of the philosophers is a very ambivalent concept. Furthermore, we will reflect on the intersection of early Christianity and Greek philosophy or philosophy in general. Christianity arose at the intersection of Semitic thought and the Greek understanding of the world, so it can be said that Christianity is a synthesis of the two, with, of course, its own originality – which it undoubtedly possesses. Here, we will emphasize the uniqueness of the *Gospel according to John*, especially the prologue (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jn. 1:1–18) where the term *logos* (Greek: λόγος) is mentioned. We will explain the difference between the Greek and Christian understanding of the term λόγος. This paper strives to take a critical look at Pascal’s claim and prove that it is not completely precise. The aim of the paper is to show the congruence of the philosophical thinking that pondered upon God with revealed religion where God revealed himself to people.

The conversion of Blaise Pascal and an introduction to the philosophical-theological dichotomy

The issue we are dealing with in this paper begins with Blaise Pascal and his conversion, as recorded in history. It happened on Monday, 23 November 1654, and it started in the evening hours, namely between ten thirty and eleven thirty. There are not many people who remember the exact day and hour when their conversion to Christianity took place. However, since Blaise Pascal was an excellent mathematician and philosopher, he was exceptionally intellectually gifted, and among other things, he had a very good memory, so he recorded his conversion in writing, and his testimony remains with us to this day as a memory of his *Night of Fire*. Before we present Pascal's *Memorial*, the document where Pascal wrote down his deeply lived testimony and thanks to which a philosopheme exists in the field of theology and philosophy, we will briefly outline his biography, as well as the dichotomy that arose from his understanding of God, which he recorded in his *Memorial*.

Life and work

Blaise Pascal was born in the French town of Clermont-Ferrand on 16 June 1623. Interestingly, Clermont is the town where Pope Urban II gave permission for the First Crusade (1097–1099) which left a great impact on that town, as it became a centre of Christianity (Adamson, 1995, p. 1). Pascal was very gifted even as a child, and at the age of sixteen, he started publishing mathematical articles. In addition to this, he is considered to be one of the pioneers of mechanical calculators, as he invented one just before he turned twenty. He received most of his education from his father, Étienne Pascal, who worked as a tax collector and local judge. His mother, Antoinette Begon, died when Blaise was only three years old, which left a deep scar on his childhood. He had two sisters – the younger, Jacqueline, with whom he was very close, and the older, Gilberte. Just like her brother, his younger sister Jacqueline was intellectually gifted as a youth and started composing music at the age of eight. She later joined the monastery i.e., the Port-Royal Abbey in Paris, where she died at the age of thirty-six (Adamson, 1995, p. 4).

Scientist and theologian

Blaise Pascal's life can be divided into two parts. The first part would be the one before his conversion, when he was devoted to more exact sciences. At that time, he mostly authored works in the field of mathematics and physics. The second part would be the one after his conversion, i.e., after the *Night of Fire*, when he became devoted to asceticism and writing theological works dealing with philosophical and spiritual topics (Adamson, 1995, p. 6). Two of his books from the said fields are his most famous ones, namely *Lettres provinciales* (Provincial letters) (1656), which was condemned by Pope Alexander VII (Adamson, 1995, p. 115), and *Pensées* (Thoughts) (1670), which was published posthumously as fragments of his writings. His conversion was a lengthy process assisted by his sister, the nun Jacqueline. The writing *On the Conversion of the Sinner* was found in her possession, and it could have, judging by its character, been authored by Blaise (Adamson, 1995, p. 68).

His *Memorial* where he wrote about his conversion was first written on a piece of paper and only later copied onto parchment that Blaise sewed on the inside of his coat. The *Memorial* was discovered by accident, namely after Pascal's death, when a servant was going through his clothes. His biographer wrote the following of him: "Interest in mathematics and religion of the Gospels were never again combined to such a high degree in a single person" (Adamson, 1995, p. 20).

Pascal's faith

Blaise Pascal was a Catholic, and a very devout one, in fact (Adamson, 1995, pp. 83–84). The Catholic reformation led by the Jesuits took place during his lifetime, and Pascal himself was associated with a faction within the Catholic movement called Jansenism (Küng, 1987, pp. 73–78). Although it is debatable whether he ever officially belonged to the Jansenist movement (Adamson, 1995, p. 71), he was certainly in direct contact with them (Adamson, 1995, p. 61), and he criticized the Jesuits for the same reasons the Jansenists criticised them for (Myers, 2006, p. 251; Küng, 1987, p. 65). Pascal did not agree with the Jesuits (meaning that he did not agree with the Catholic Church either) regarding the role of grace in salvation. Thus, his conflict with himself began, and he was in a dilemma about how he could remain faithful to the Church and religious authority on the one hand, and his own understanding of religion on the other hand (Küng, 1987, p. 78). Pascal also talked about the knowledge of God through the Scripture (Küng, 1987, p. 66) similar to the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*, which talks about the knowledge of God based on revelation (supernatural knowledge), and he did not give too much importance to the rational knowledge of God (natural). The latter position is not in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church, which, at the First Vatican Council, pointed out that there is a natural and a supernatural knowledge of God (Concilium Vaticanum I, 1870, Dei Filius).

Although Pascal was a scientist and although he highly valued reason and thought (Pascal, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 355), he was not prone to reason when it came to knowing God. Reason, according to Pascal, is the source of delusions, namely due to the fact that it is, just like the body, prone to sin. This always makes it vulnerable and thus prevents it from pure and true knowledge, as well as leads it to various uncertainties (Pascal, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 255). Pascal believed that man is a very unreliable and weak being, and that therefore reason as such is compromised. Thus, he wrote in his *Thoughts*: "*Man is but a subject full of error, natural and ineffaceable, without grace. Nothing shows him the truth. Everything deceives him.*" (Pascal, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 249).

Jansenism

Jansenism was a movement that arose within the Catholic Church and appeared after the Reformation (1517), and its founder was the Catholic theologian Cornelius Otto Jansen, who taught theology at the University of Louvain and who, as early as during his student days, wanted to reform the Church (Adamson, 1995, p. 55). Said movement was created as a theological response to the counter-reformation (Catholic reformation), so it came into frequent conflicts with the Jesuits. The Jansenists believed that the reformers Martin Luther and Jean Calvin overemphasized God's grace for salvation, taking away human

responsibility, while the counter-reformers, especially the Jesuits, overemphasized human responsibility in salvation while neglecting God's grace, and they thus resembled the Pelagians (Adamson, 1995, p. 56).

The main tenets of Jansenism can be found in Jansen's book *Augustinus*, published in 1640, which was published posthumously. The belief that God saves one without one's own merit is the main principle promoted by the Jansenists. In this belief, human participation in the act of salvation is actually excluded. Jansenists thus emphasize God's grace in the act of salvation and neglect man's free will and his good deeds, i.e., deeds of mercy (Aglialord, 1994).

Jansenists also believed in the doctrine of predestination taken from Augustine (Adamson, 1995, p. 41; Aglialord, 1994). According to the Jansenists, the salvation of man is possible only through the undeserved grace of God, and man cannot do anything to redeem himself in terms of good deeds or his own free will. Man thus loses his role in the act of salvation. The Jansenists believed that whatever good deeds a man does, they cannot affect his salvation, as only God decides on salvation through the grace he gives to man. As man is saved exclusively through God's grace, God is the one who initiates and gives grace, and he thereby predestined some people for salvation by giving them grace, and others for doom by denying them grace (Adamson, 1995, p. 58; Aglialord, 1994).

Catholic faith and Jansenism

The doctrine of predestination taught by the Jansenists is contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church that God desires all men to be saved (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, 1 Tm. 2:4). Salvation as such requires faith, i.e., God's grace, as well as good deeds, namely deeds of charity (*caritas*). In the Epistle of James, the following is written:

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jas. 2:14–17).

It is true that man cannot do good deeds without the grace of Christ, and Jesus Christ himself points out: “*apart from me you can do nothing*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jn. 15:5). Grace helps man do good deeds, but it is man who decides through his free will to do or not to do good deeds. If God only gave grace to the chosen, and they could therefore believe and be saved, that would mean that some people are doomed in advance, and that God's call to the universal salvation of mankind does not exist (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016).

Faith without good deeds is not sufficient for salvation, as confirmed by the teaching of the Catholic Church (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016). Faith cannot be differentiated from good deeds. Faith and good deeds coexist in Christianity, and they cannot be divided. The importance of good deeds can particularly be seen in the pericope about the last judgment (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Mt. 25:31–46) where Jesus says: “*Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me!*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Mt. 25:40). The emphasis is precisely on what the faithful did, or what they did not do.

The doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church in the light of the Reformation in 1517 was defined at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), and the hypotheses of said council were in some places implemented earlier, and in others later (Alberigo, 2006, p. 26). The Jesuits, as the leaders of the Catholic reformation, tried to teach people and spread the orthodox teachings of the Catholic Church. The Jansenists. On the other hand, were their opponents within the Catholic Church, until the Church condemned them as heretics. Such divisions between Jesuits and Jansenists divided the faithful. Therefore, one could declare oneself as Catholic and a member of the Catholic Church, and at the same time have theological beliefs that diverge from the orthodox teachings of the Catholic Church. This could not be checked among ordinary faithful people, but in the theological reflections of Blaise Pascal, we do see attitudes that are not completely Catholic.

With the familiarization of the Apostolic See with the teachings of the Jansenists, it became clear that their teachings deviate from the Catholic faith. Proof of this is the inclusion of Pascal's work *Lettres provinciales* (Küng, 1987, p. 77) in the index of forbidden books, and the bull of Pope Innocent X *Cum occasione* (1653) where he condemned the main tenets of Jansenism (Adamson, 1995, p. 118), as well as the writing of Pope Alexander VII, who condemned the Jansenist work *Augustinus* in the papal constitution *Ad Sacram Beati Petri Sedem* published in 1656, where he demands that the faithful accept the propositions of the bull *Cum Occasione* and that they move away from the Jansenists (Adamson, 1995, p. 77).

Pascal's Catholicism

From the above, we can see that there is a dichotomy in how Blaise Pascal is perceived. Blaise Pascal was a Catholic, or he perceived himself as one (Küng, 1987, p. 79), but he was also in contact with the Jansenists, to whom his sister, nun Jacqueline, also belonged (Adamson, 1995, p. 61). Taking into account his sympathies for the Jansenists, who based a good part of their doctrine on teachings that were essentially against the teachings of the Catholic Church (Adamson, 1995, p. 60), we can conclude that Pascal's experience of faith was not entirely Catholic. In other words, Pascal's understanding of the Christian faith was not in line with the official teaching of the Catholic Church of his time, and he thus fell into the heresies represented by Jansenism, which was condemned by Pope Innocent X in the bull *Cum occasione* (1653).

However, Blaise Pascal should not be criticized for putting a personal relationship with God above knowledge through reason; on the contrary, it should be pointed out that he was "a child of his time", as well as that things should always be looked at in the context of the period when they happened. If we take into account the fact that just before the *Night of Fire* took place, Blaise's father Étienne died (1651), that Blaise suffered from many illnesses, and that, at the time, there was vast religious unrest across Europe, it is very easy to understand why Pascal preferred sentiments over reason (Pascal, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 305) and why he withdrew into seclusion and lived the life of a saint.

Although some of his beliefs are not in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church, that does not mean that we should ignore his testimony of conversion, his Christian faith, or the fact that he showed an inclination towards the Catholic Church. In defence of Pascal's

Catholicism, the encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium* notes that the faith of people who have true trust and faith in God, but “barely know the paragraphs of the Apostles’ Creed” should not be neglected (Papa Franjo, 2015, section 125). Blaise Pascal died at the age of thirty-nine on 19 August 1662 in Paris, most likely from stomach cancer. His last words were those of a man who truly believed in what he had experienced, namely: “May God never forsake me” (Adamson, 1995, p. 13).

The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob – not the God of the philosophers and scholars

No one made the distinction between the God revealed in Scripture (that is, the God of faith) and the God who can be known through reason (that is, the God of the philosophers) the way Blaise Pascal did. It was Blaise Pascal who started this debate between philosophers and theologians. In his *Memorial*, he wrote the following:

“GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob, not of the philosophers and of the scholars. Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace. GOD of Jesus Christ. My God and your God. Your GOD will be my God. Forgetfulness of the world and of everything, except GOD. He is only found by the ways taught in the Gospel. Grandeur of the human soul. Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you. Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. I have departed from him: They have forsaken me, the fount of living water. My God, will you leave me? Let me not be separated from him forever. This is eternal life, that they know you, the one true God, and the one that you sent, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. I left him; I fled him, renounced, crucified. Let me never be separated from him. He is only kept securely by the ways taught in the Gospel: Renunciation, total and sweet. Complete submission to Jesus Christ and to my director. Eternally in joy for a day’s exercise on the earth. Not to forget your words. Amen.” (Pascal, 1654, p. 2).

Here, we see that Pascal distinguishes the God of the philosophers from the God of faith. Pascal affirms the God who was revealed in the Scripture, and he denies the God who is known through discursive reflection, that is, the God of the philosophers, the one of whom philosophers and scholars wrote. This presents an issue for two reasons. The first is the fact that one can very easily conclude from the history of theology that philosophy, or the rational knowledge of God, had an important influence on the development of theology. Philosophy (reason) helped theology develop into a science. Justin Martyr (Christian martyr and philosopher; 2nd century) spoke about philosophy as the preparation of the pagans for the fullness of the revelation that took place with the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The second reason is the fact that in Scripture itself, which Pascal refers to, it is written that God can be known through nature, i.e., through reason (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jb. 12:7–10; Wis. 13:1–9; Rom. 1:20). This tells us that the knowledge of God through philosophical reflection is scripturally based. The Catholic Church calls such knowledge the natural knowledge of God (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016), but Pascal denies it. By denying the God of the philosophers, that is, the God who can be known by reason, no matter how incomplete that knowledge is compared to revelation, Blaise Pascal denies a substantial part of the Christian theological tradition.

Knowledge of God according to Blaise Pascal

Pascal did not, like some philosophers, view God as the first cause, an absolute or a substance. For Blaise Pascal, God’s manifestation in Jesus Christ is the most important part of

knowing God, because “*without Jesus, this knowledge is useless and barren*” (Périer, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 112). For Pascal, the existence of God was so certain that he believed that his permanence did not even need to be proven (La Chaise, 2000, 1672 C.E., p. 134). Thereby, he reduced the role of reason in theology, even though reason played a dominant role in theological teachings.

Pascal did not want to deal with rational arguments for the Permanence of God but he wanted to show that God must be felt. Pascal’s nephew, Etienne Périer, wrote the following in the preface to the first edition of *Thoughts*: “*He wanted to work on touching and moving the heart rather than convincing and persuading the spirit with evidence*” (Périer, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 112). The earliest interpretations of Pascal’s philosophy tell us about the primacy of feelings in the knowledge of God, and not the primacy of reason, which was quite dominant before him and is visible especially in scholasticism.

The theology of the Middle Ages emphasized rational reflection in theology and completely ignored feelings. Pascal truly believed that the best way to know God is through feelings, not through thinking. Thus, in his lectures on Pascal’s *Thoughts*, La Chaise wrote: “*The truth is that one should not think so much about proving God but about being able to feel Him, and that the latter is the most useful (...) And in order to feel God, one must seek Him with feelings that exist in us*” (La Chaise, 2000, 1672 C.E., p. 134). Considering this, it is very easy to understand why Blaise Pascal distinguished the God of faith from the God of the philosophers.

Scholasticism, which had its foundations in Aristotle’s philosophy (Ventimiglia, 2021, p. 176), limited faith to reason, which for Pascal was not an adequate way of knowing God. By reading Scripture, Pascal found that there was a difference between the sublime and distant God that philosophers and scholars wrote about based on rational knowledge, and the tender God full of mercy who revealed Himself in the Scripture. For Pascal, the God who revealed himself to people in the Scripture is not the same God that philosophers spoke about in philosophical theology (Küng, 1987, p. 84).

God of the philosophers or God of faith

Pascal’s *God of the philosophers*, about whom philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus as well as intellectuals of the Enlightenment wrote – each in their own way – is a God who can be known by reason, where no supernatural revelation is necessary. Indeed, even Christian thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, René Descartes, and later G. W. Leibniz sometimes wrote more about the so-called Aristotle’s God – or God as the first mover (*primum movens*) who is impersonal – than about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ex. 3:6), i.e., the God who was revealed in Scripture and who became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ.

Hans Küng wrote about the differentiation between the God of the philosophers and the God of faith: “*On the whole, the concept of God as the philosophers use it is abstract and undefined. The God of the philosophers remains nameless. He is not revealed. Biblical faith in God is concrete and definite. The God of Israel has a name and demands a decision*” (Küng, 1987, p. 575). The existential significance that God has for man is very important to Pascal, namely to the extent that he considers the knowledge of God without the Scripture to

be insignificant (Küng, 1987, p. 66). For Pascal, only the knowledge of God through the Scripture is the correct knowledge of God. Therefore, in the *Memorial*, he points out the following: “*He can be found only on the paths indicated in the Gospel*” (Pascal, 1654, p. 2).

For Pascal, the God of Jesus Christ cannot be the same God that the philosophers talked about in their philosophical arguments (Pascal, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 187). Pascal even thought that Descartes “*would be glad to be rid of God*” (Pascal, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 309) because of his rational proving of God’s permanence. Pascal saw God as a person close to people, as someone who realizes his relationship with them, and not as a God who is so distant and sublime that he has no relationship with people. Pascal did not believe that the truth can be known through philosophy because “*Metaphysical proofs for God are so far from the way people think and so complicated that they quite are poorly understood (...) This is precisely what the knowledge of God without Jesus Christ results in*” (Pascal, 2000, 1670 C.E., p. 187).

Romano Guardini, one of the leading Catholic theologians of the 20th century, studying Pascal’s legacy of thought, wrote about the God of the philosophers:

“Once again, what does this mean? What would the ‘God of the philosophers’ be? This notion falls under the concept of absolute because it can be obtained by reflecting on external reality, by analysing inner experience, or working out the world of logic and values. ‘First cause’, ‘supreme being’, ‘absolute idea’, ‘eternal law’, ‘absolute value’, etc. The characteristic of this definition of God is the fact that it tries to understand him in a pure unconditioned form, free from everything that could in any way mean limitation, finalization, secularization, or anthropomorphism. This God is more absolute than man can imagine.” (Guardini, 1966, p. 36).

Pascal’s understanding of God was influenced by his understanding of religion, which he founded on principles that were not entirely Catholic. The issue of Pascal’s understanding of God lies precisely in its subjectivity. In fact, Pascal presents God as a personal being, which God is, but he takes away the objective side of the highest being. This is evident from the fact that the *Memorial* mentions “*my God and your God*” (Pascal, 1654, p. 2). Thus, a personal God – understood predominantly by faith and not by reason – quickly turns into something that is not God, but rather our idea of God. On the other hand, philosophical ponderings about God strive to talk about God objectively.

God of the philosophers

In general, the notion of God is associated with the opinion that God is an exclusively religious concept, and that as such it does not belong in philosophical discourse. However, this is not true. The question of God’s existence, his attributes, and his relationship with the world are actually deeply philosophical matters. The great Christian philosopher René Descartes writes the following in the first pages of his *Meditations on First Philosophy*: “*I have always been of the opinion that two questions – the question of God and question of the soul – are the main ones that shall be proven by philosophy rather than by theology...*” (Descartes, 1998, p. 5). Descartes wrote this mostly for apologetic reasons. If believers already have the faith they received in the revelation found in the Scripture, how can someone who is not a believer be convinced that God exists? What does the Bible mean to an unbeliever? Not much; therefore, it is necessary to assume that the knowledge of God can also be reached through natural means, which is confirmed by revelation itself (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Rom. 1:20).

What god is the God of the philosophers?

When talking about the God of the philosophers, an important issue arises. Considering that philosophy in itself is quite polyvalent, as its history shows us (Matulić, 2009, p. 387), i.e., given that there are many philosophers and many different mutually exclusive philosophical systems, the following question arises: which god is the God of the philosophers? Here we allude to the fact that there are many different understandings of God and deities in philosophical thought, with some of them being mutually exclusive. For instance, Spinoza and Descartes understand God in different ways even though both belong to the so-called rationalist philosophy.

Pre-Socratic theology

Ever since the pre-Socratic philosophers, there have been beliefs that one being is the source of all being or all reality. The pre-Socratics sought a mostly material cause of the first principle (*arkhē*). Thales considered water to be the first principle (Diels, 1983, DK 11A12), Anaximenes considered it to be air (Diels, 1983, DK 13A1), Heraclitus thought it was fire (Diels, 1983, DK 22A1), etc. However, there was a philosopher named Anaximander who considered the first principle to be *Apeiron* (Diels, 1983, DK 12B1), which refers to something unlimited, immortal, and divine that he describes in the following manner:

“(...) it is neither water nor any other of the other so-called elements, but a substance different from them, which is infinite, and from which all the heavens and the worlds within them arise (...) Noticing obviously how the four elements mutually transform into each other, he did not want to make one of them the basis but rather sought it in something else beyond them.” (Diels, 1983, DK 12A9).

Anaximander can thus be said to be the first metaphysician (Bosworth, 1949) as he did not view the true being from the point of view of earthly reality but saw it as something that transcends the boundaries of the material. This essentially means that, for Anaximander, being is transcendent, and not immanent. Thus, Nicholas Rescher came to the following conclusion: “*Besides its role as the primordial beginning or Urstoff – the ultimate material source of all existence – the apeiron is also the Urzustand, i.e., the primordial state in the history of the cosmos from which everything was later defined*” (Rescher, 2005, p. 3).

Plato and Aristotle

However, when talking about the God of the philosophers, one cannot avoid talking about Plato and Aristotle, whose philosophical systems paved the way for philosophy as we know it today. Later philosophical systems that came after ancient philosophy were imbued with the Christian faith, and after the Enlightenment, philosophers were divided into those who defended the religious tradition and those who opposed it. Thus, when talking about the God of the philosophers, we are actually talking about the God of ancient philosophy and the God of significant thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle. Each of those philosophers had their own philosophical system based on which they interpreted reality. There were also followers of their philosophical systems, namely Platonists and Aristotelians. Since their philosophy was dominant in ancient Greece (during Hellenism), Christianity – which had just begun to spread – due to the lack of theological concepts or thought categories, took over certain philosophical concepts from Greek philosophers, and they influenced

the understanding of the Christian faith. This helped the Christian faith present itself more accurately, but it also helped philosophy overcome some internal contradictions (Devčić, 2003, p. 109).

The God of the philosophers is actually a syncretism of many philosophical thoughts about a being who has certain attributes, such as eternity, immutability, omnipotence, omniscience, self-sufficiency, unity, etc. These attributes can also be found in different places in the Scripture: God is eternal (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Rom. 1:20), almighty (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ps. 91:1), sole (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ex. 20:3), etc. Therefore, the first Christian thinkers concluded that what Greek philosophers meant by *arkhé* was in fact a pagan version of the Christian God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ. This is most evident in the prologue of the *Gospel according to John*, where instead of the concrete person of Jesus Christ – the God-man – the term *logos* is mentioned, which in ancient Greece referred to the *world mind*.

Natural knowledge of God

From Thales and the School of Miletus to Aristotle, Plotinus, and the closing of the last Plato's Academy by Emperor Justinian in 529, we see systematic progress in theological thought. From the first primordial beginnings – which were of a material cause – we came to Plotinus's *One*, which he defines in the *Enneads* as something that existed before everything and is thus different from everything. In other words, the *One* is above everything because it existed before everything (Plotin, 1984, ca. 270 C.E). Here, we see an echo of transcendence similar to the Christian concept of God, a God who is outside the world but rules the world. Although Plotinus' understanding of the *One* is different from the Christian understanding of God, it should be kept in mind that the God of the philosophers is known through reason, not revelation (Akvinski, 2005, ST I, q. 2, a. 1, ad. 1.). God thus known still has its shortcomings. Thus, in his work *Proslogion*, Anselm of Canterbury wrote that if man had not learned all the secrets of God – who is always above – through holy revelation, he would not learn them through reason which is limited either (Cantuariensis, 1997, II).

Man has the possibility to know God through the light of natural reason. After all, it is God who created man's reason, thus raising him above the instinctive world. The Catholic Church has always believed that: "(...) *reason by its very nature strives for the truth and has the necessary means to reach it.*" (Ivan Pavao II., 2013, section 49). However, this does not mean that rational knowledge is complete or final, as it is impossible for reason to understand a thing that surpasses it. This is precisely why there is faith, which the Scripture defines as conviction in reality that is invisible to us (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Heb. 11:1).

As for the reasons why theology needs philosophy, Thomas Aquinas writes the following:

"This science can get help from the philosophical sciences, not necessarily because it needs it, but in order to better clarify what it presents. (...) The fact that the holy ignoramus uses other sciences in such a way does not stem from its shortcomings or infirmities, but rather from the shortcomings of our mind, which – using the knowledge of natural reason – can more easily reach the knowledge of the reality that transcends reason and is discussed by this science." (Akvinski, 2005, ST I, q. 1, a. 5, ad. 2).

Aristotle's Unmoved Mover

Although the phrase “God of the philosophers” is ambivalent as there are many philosophers who disagree on a number of things, when one mentions the God of the Philosopher, one thinks of Aristotle and his thought-conceptual construction of the first cause (*causa prima*). In ancient Greece, there were various philosophical schools and independent philosophers, and among the most famous and important ones was Aristotle, whom Thomas Aquinas simply called “the Philosopher” in his works. Born in Stagira in 384 BC, he was the son of the physician Nicomachus, and he wrote numerous philosophical works and laid the foundations of many of today’s studies, both in the field of natural sciences and in the field of humanities. Aristotle’s philosophical works were written in ancient Greek, translated in Europe in the 13th century, and subsequently implemented into Christian medieval theology. The concepts of the said pagan philosopher were used in theology to express and explain its beliefs more precisely (Ventimiglia, 2021, pp. 76–77).

In his works *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, Aristotle dealt with various problems while trying he tried to explain how the world works. *Physics* dealt with the visible world – i.e. with matters that natural sciences deal with today – and *Metaphysics* dealt with the things that go beyond the natural world. In *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, Aristotle mentions a being he calls the Unmoved Mover (Greek: ὁ οὐ κινόντων κινεῖ) who – in his opinion – must necessarily in order for the philosophical system he built to work. Aristotle built a system based on cause and effect according to which there must be a cause preceding all other causes. If such a cause did not exist, that would mean that the cause-and-effect state of things goes to infinity, which, according to Aristotle, is difficult to explain (Aristotel, 1988b, ca. 350 B.C.E., VIII.1 251a).

To understand how Aristotle created the concept of the Unmoved Mover and its attributes, it is necessary to explain how he understood the world and time. According to Aristotle, time refers to the number of motions and is eternal. This led him to the conclusion that motion is also eternal (Aristotel, 1988b, ca. 350 B.C.E., VIII.1 251b). Therefore, Aristotle begins with the assumption that the world and time are eternal. Thus, for him, the world could not have been created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) – a feature of Abrahamic religions only. From the above, he concluded the following: “Therefore, motion is just as continuous as time, because time is the same as motion.” (Aristotel, 1988a, ca. 350 B.C.E., XII.6 1071b). In this light of thought, Aristotle believed that there must be a mover who sets all other movers in motion but is not set in motion himself, as he saw that there are beings that move and those that are at rest, as well as that the beings that move can also be at rest. He also saw that there is no permanence in these motions, and so he wrote: “Since motion should always exist and should not be interrupted, there must be something eternal that sets in motion first, either one or more beings. And that first mover must be unmoved.” (Aristotel, 1988b, ca. 350 B.C.E., VIII.5 258b).

Furthermore, Aristotle believed that the primordial beginning or mover – who is unmoved – must exist by necessity and not by chance, as chance doesn’t explain anything, and it leads into a *circulus vitiosus*. According to Aristotle, everything exists for a reason, so everything moves because it is moved by something, and since the Unmoved Mover is the original cause of all motion, it must exist out of necessity (Aristotel, 1988a, ca. 350

B.C.E., XII.7 1072b). In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle mentions God as one who is pure thought and who thinks himself, because, “Mind ‘thinks’ itself”. Life is thus present in God, because the activity of the mind is life (Aristotel, 1988a, ca. 350 B.C.E., XII.7 1072b). Therefore, God is identical to the Unmoved Mover, and Aristotle separates him from the sensible world and writes: “(...) *it is obvious that there is a being that is eternal, immovable, and separate from the senses (...)* *It is also impatient and unchanging*” (Aristotel, 1988a, ca. 350 B.C.E., XII.7 1073a). It is easy to conclude that Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover has a certain similarity with the classical God of theism, but if one investigates in a little more detail, one can easily see that there are also significant differences between the two.

In *Physics*, Aristotle writes about the Unmoved Mover differently. The primordial mover must be eternal because motion is eternal, just like time. Therefore, the Unmoved Mover is in fact the eternal mover of matter – which does not move alone, but is set in motion by the Unmoved Mover – with the Unmoved Mover being “*the cause of its own self-movement*” (Aristotel, 1988b, ca. 350 B.C.E., VIII.5 259b). Since Aristotle could not imagine a world that had its spatial and temporal beginning – as according to him time is eternal and uncreated, and the world is also eternal given the fact that he defined time as the number of motions – is it legitimate to raise the question of transcendence in Aristotle’s understanding of the Unmoved Mover?

According to F. Šanc, Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover is definitely God (Šanc, 1924, p. 25). He came to this conclusion by citing passages from *Physics* where Aristotle proves that motion cannot go on indefinitely, but that there must be an Unmoved Mover who sets everything in motion. However, this does not prove that the Unmoved Mover is transcendent. For something to be transcendent, it must exist outside the world, and since the world is eternal, as so is time, this would mean that the world is equivalent to the Unmoved Mover, which Aristotle indirectly proves by making matter eternal: “*But if something like that has always existed – some mover that is unmoved and eternal – then the thing that was first moved by it must be eternal as well. This is also evident from the fact that there would otherwise be neither creation nor disappearance.*” (Aristotel, 1988b, ca. 350 B.C.E., VIII.6 260a). Here, it is clear that Aristotle made matter (and the world is matter) eternal and thus limited the transcendence of the Unmoved Mover.

Transcendence of the Unmoved Mover

It should be kept in mind that time is also matter which, according to the Christian tradition, was created together with the world, with God being the creator of space and time. God is thus eternal and exists before time. Thus, both God and time could not have existed from the beginning. As for the relationship between God and time, evangelical theologian William L. Craig writes the following: “*God is a personal being who has experienced the past, present, and future. Given his permanence and existence before the beginning of time and after the end of time, God must be eternal; this means that He existed in every time that ever was*” (Craig, 2001, p. 15). God exists in time, but his existence is not tied to time, as time is God’s creation just like other beings.

One can conclude that the Unmoved Mover does not possess transcendence – which is a characteristic of the Christian (and Jewish and Islamic) conception of God’s nature – but

this philosophical term served Aristotle to explain how motion arose and avoid contradictions in his philosophy. In fact, according to Aristotle, it is even possible that there is more than one such mover (Aristotel, 1988b, ca. 350 B.C.E., VIII.5 259a). Therefore, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is certainly not God in the strict sense of the word, at least as defined by classical monotheism. Instead, it is more of a philosophical explanation of a metaphysical problem which later, through various interpretations, came to be known as Aristotle's God. This happened thanks to T. Aquinas, who incorporated Aristotle's thinking into Christian theology (Kenny, 2003, p. 16).

The Jesuit priest Frederick Copleston, who wrote several volumes on Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, writes: "... *the first mover is not God the Creator: the world has existed from the beginning without having been created from the beginning. God shapes the world, but he did not create it; he shapes the world and is the source of motion by pulling the world or acting on it as a final cause*" (Copleston, 1988, p. 351). Here, we see that Aristotle was on the right track, but that his concept of God is still very different from the God revealed in the Scripture.

Aristotle's God and the Christian God

Now that we have presented the essential features of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover (God), we can compare him with the Christian God. The biggest difference between Aristotle's understanding of God and the Christian understanding of God lies in creation. Aristotle's God has always existed, and with it, time has also always existed. Thus, the universe is eternal, and essential features of the universe are space and time. On the other hand, the Christian God created the universe from nothing (*ex nihilo*), meaning that the universe is not eternal, but that God created it. Another important difference is in their nature. Aristotle's God, as he himself wrote, "*thinks himself*" (Aristotel, 1988a, ca. 350 B.C.E.). He is not a person whose essential characteristic is the relationship manifesting itself primarily between three persons participating in a single divine essence (the Trinity), and then also with people. Aristotle's God is a concept, a solitary monad, and an impersonal being that does not communicate with people or have the desire to reveal itself to them. The Christian God is an active God who comes into contact with people, and he was the first to reveal himself to people.

Although Aristotle's God can be known through reason, as Aristotle knew him, there is no desire for knowledge in that relationship. In other words, Aristotle's God has no desire to be known, and the fate of human life does not depend on it. The Christian God, in contrast to Aristotle's God, does not have any needs that would point to some type of necessity, but a desire pointing to freedom, for man to know him, to enter into a relationship with him, and thus reach his salvation. According to the Christian understanding, the relationship between God and man is necessary for man, and it is God who approaches man first, not man who approaches God through faith (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016; Drugi vatikanski koncil, 1986).

Based on the above, one can conclude that Aristotle's understanding of God does not completely match the Christian understanding of God. Still, there are some similar characteristics between them, such as Aristotle's God being the first cause, and the Christian

God being the cause of all that is. In Aristotle, just like in Christianity, God is the highest hierarchical being. However, there are also differences, such as a different understanding of the relationship between time and eternity, as well as the very nature of God. An essential characteristic of the Christian God is the fact that he is a person. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the transcendent and the immanent. It is difficult to talk about Aristotle's God as an absolutely transcendent being, as he exists together with time, while transcendence is one of the fundamental characteristics of the Christian God (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016).

Plato's Demiurge

In early Christianity, Plato's philosophy was viewed as a very familiar philosophy, which is most evident in Aurelius Augustine, who, in his most famous work *On the City of God* (*De civitate Dei*), wrote: "We have chosen the Platonists, deservedly the most famous of all philosophers, as they were able to realize how the human soul, although immortal (...) cannot become blessed if it does not participate in the light of God from whom it itself was created" (Augustin, 1995, Lib. X, 1).

Indeed, early Christianity viewed Platonism as a very familiar philosophy (Hadot, 2010, p. 339). However, this does not mean that Christianity is a softened form of Platonism for the masses as some have thought (Nietzsche, 2008, p. 4). Platonism has sometimes been viewed as a thought precursor to Christianity, which is by no means true (De Vogel, 1985, p. 31). In its essence, Christianity has an originality that in certain respects has no similarity with Platonism and is also in some parts in conflict with it. First of all, it should be noted that Christianity, unlike Platonism, does not believe in a radical difference between body and soul, i.e., substantial dualism, but in complementarity, where immortality is not only reserved for the soul but also for the body, as Christ was bodily resurrected (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Lk. 24:43).

On the other hand, the question of God and divinity is complex in Platonism in general, let alone when it comes to comparing the biblical God and Plato's demiurge, where the latter is viewed as a certain type of deity, however not the one who created the world out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), but someone who only transforms already existing matter. Demiurge (Greek: κρέτεριός) means master or craftsman in ancient Greek. Thus, it is not a personal name for a specific god and it is not a proper noun. Only later did demiurge become a name and a personal term in the philosophical-theological tradition.

Plato's theology

In his dialogue *Timaeus*, Plato presented his theology and cosmology, which derives its origin from the Orphic mythological tradition, as well as from the rational thinking of Plato, who was influenced by religious and mythological traditions that came before him. In the first Croatian translation of the dialogue *Timaeus* (transl. 2017), the following is written in the philosophical commentary:

"Timaeus cannot therefore be adequately understood by looking for a theoretical and scientific discussion about the organization of the physical world. Equally, it would be a mistake to read and interpret the dialogue within the horizon of Christian monotheistic

theology as its early announcement, still burdened by the remnants of Greek polytheism and a pre-scientific, mythical, and poetic view of the world” (Barbarić, 2017, p. 11).

In *Timaeus*, Plato’s starting point is the following question: “*What is that which always is and has no becoming, and what is that which is always becoming but never is?*” (Platon, 2017, ca. 380 B. C. E., 27d). Here, in the character of Timaeus, Plato raises the question of ontological reality where something must always be and as such is eternal and unchanging, while, on the other hand, something else comes into being and is changeable. The constancy of the world is sought in its omnipresent changeability. In fact, it is evident from the seasons that the world as such is not constant, and thus the question of its true foundation based on the principle of the pre-Socratic *arkhé* arises. It is here in *Timaeus* that the demiurge is mentioned for the first time, which was translated into Croatian as creator, assembler, and god. It is important to point out that it is emphasized how the demiurge is not the creator of the universe, because: “(...) *the father and maker of all this universe is past finding out; and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible.*” (Platon, 2017, ca. 380 B.C.E., 28c).

For Plato, matter exists as disorder or chaos (*χάος*), and the demiurge shaped it and “*brought it from disorder into order*” (Platon, 2017, ca. 380 B. C. E., 30a). Order means the cosmos (*κόσμος*), that is, the thing that is today called the universe. According to Plato, it has a soul, mind, and body. The world is one, i.e., there are no more worlds, it is composed of four elements: water, air, earth, and fire, and is of spherical shape (Platon, 2017, ca. 380 B. C. E., 30b–32b). It is clear from the above that Plato’s concept of god is still under the influence of Greek mythology and the polytheism that was present at the time, as in *Timaeus* he mentions god and divinity on several occasions in different ways (Platon, 2017, ca. 380 B. C. E., 37c).

Plato’s idealistic philosophy thus distinguishes between the demiurge, who is the assembler of already existing matter that he shaped into the world, and the eternal highest *idea of Good* that the demiurge observed when he created the world. Thus, the world was created at the moment when the demiurge decided to put a soul into it, which is also when time began to exist (Platon, 2017, ca. 380 B. C. E., 37d–37e). It is necessary to keep in mind that, the concept of soul (*psykhé* (*ψυχή*)) was used by Greek philosophers to refer to life itself, and not to a specific mental organism such as consciousness. Thus, a world that possesses a soul is actually a living world that exists.

Barbarić lists three interpretations of God the demiurge or producer. The first interpretation is that the demiurge is a metaphor for life itself or the cosmos of ideas. According to the second, the demiurge is an image of the soul of the world (*anima mundi*), which was also extensively talked about by the pre-Socratics, and especially Heraclitus in terms of *logos*. The third interpretation equates the demiurge with the highest idea of Good (Barbarić, 2017, pp. 337–338). Although all three interpretations have some interesting points, their answers still are unsatisfactory. It is clear that Plato’s conception of God as a demiurge is certainly not identical to the Judeo-Christian conception of God who creates from nothing. Therefore, we can conclude the following:

“From everything that has been said, it is clear that the concept of God’s creation of the world from nothing is not the same as the divine production of the world that Plato presented in *Timaeus* (...) because his production of the world is preceded on the one hand by

an ever-existing, eternal model of ideas, i.e., of an ideal living being (...) and on the other hand, an ever-existing completely disordered and chaotic motion...” (Barbarić, 2017, p. 344).

Plato's God

Plato's demiurge has fewer characteristics of God than Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. The main characteristic of God is the fact that he must be the highest being in the hierarchy. In Plato, the demiurge is only the assembler of already existing matter, and he is thus neither transcendent nor the first cause, but only an active cause that assembles already existing matter. Plato's demiurge is not the highest being in the hierarchy, and the Idea of Good is (Platon, 1977, ca. 380 B. C. E., VII, 517c). The idea of Good in Plato's thought is not causal, that is, it does not create the material world, but is instead the highest principle to which everything strives. Although it can be concluded from the above that the Idea of Good has some characteristics of God, such a conclusion is not satisfactory as it does not explain who created the demiurge or matter in general.

Plato talks about the Idea of Good in a moral-spiritual sense, but not in a causal sense. The idea of Good is an abstract concept that Plato uses to explain the highest idea to which everything strives, but it has no causal power, i.e., no power of creation, an active power in the world, or the power to intervene in the world. Thus, it is not possible to talk about the Idea of Good in the light of theism or deism. The demiurge cannot create beings, and neither can the Idea of Good. It is thus imprecise to talk about Plato's God as it was once upon a time talked about in the Christian tradition (Justin, 2012, ca. 150 C.E., II Apol.). Plato describes the creation of the universe using expressions from mythological and religious traditions that influenced him, but priority is placed on describing the creation of the universe, and not on the one who created it, i.e. God. He also does not answer the question of why the world was created.

The Christian God and Plato's philosophy

Plato's philosophy had a certain influence on some Christian theologians, such as Augustine and Justin Martyr, and it bears some similarity with Christianity. The biggest similarity lies in the fact that Plato speaks of the sensory world as a transitory world, and Christianity tells us the same. However, in some respects, it is diametrically opposed to the Christian understanding of God. Plato does not talk about the creation of the world out of nothing, which is the fundamental determinant of the Christian God. Plato's demiurge is not the highest being in the hierarchy of beings, while the Christian God is. Furthermore, Plato's demiurge and Idea of Good have no desire to enter into a relationship with man, as they do not have a relational component by their very nature, and they are not persons. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – the God of Jesus Christ – is a person who revealed himself to people through Jesus Christ and invited them to form a relationship with him in order to participate in his divinity.

Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, Plato's Demiurge, and the God of Jesus Christ

We can conclude that neither Aristotle's Unmoved Mover nor Plato's Demiurge have identical characteristics with the Christian God. However, there are certain characteristics where similarities between them can be sensed. These similarities helped the early Christian theologians equate the God that the Greek philosophers talked about with the Christian God in order to present their belief as successfully as possible. Among the first ones to do this was the Christian martyr and philosopher Justin who lived in the 2nd century AD. He was among the first men on the trail of the synthesis of philosophy and theology, and he believed that philosophy was for the pagans what the Old Testament was for the Jews. Just as the Old Testament was a preparation for the Jews for the coming of the Messiah, who is manifested in Jesus of Nazareth, philosophy was a natural preparation of the pagans for the revelation or knowledge of God manifested in the New Testament (Justin, 2012, ca. 150 C.E., II Apol.)

Aristotle's Unmoved Mover has many more characteristics of God than Plato's demiurge, and we can conclude that Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is the God of the philosophers. Aristotle's God meets most of the characteristics of the God of the philosophers listed by R. Guardini. Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is the first cause as well as a being that thinks itself, which Thomas Aquinas later called a pure act (*actus purus*). Thus, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is closer in its characteristics to the God revealed in the Scripture, the God of Jesus Christ. Thomas Aquinas was on the same trail when he presented his Five Ways, as these proofs of God's permanence were taken from Aristotle's philosophy, and they do not exactly represent Thomas's original thought (Ventimiglia, 2021, p. 81).

For a simpler understanding of the difference between Aristotle's Unmoved Mover and Plato's Demiurge, we made a distinction of their parameters, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Comparison of Aristotle's *Unmoved Mover* and Plato's *Demiurge*

Parameters	Aristotle's Unmoved Mover	Plato's Demiurge
Purpose	Thinks by himself	Shapes pre-existing matter
Essence	Intellect	Creator of the material world
Relation to time	Eternal	Not eternal
Activity	Causality	Formation
Metaphysical concept	Act (already is)	Potential (still is not)
Activity	Primary cause of everything that exists	Creates cosmos (<i>kósmos</i>) from chaos (<i>kháos</i>)
Directed towards	Itself	the Idea of Good

The phrase "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob" appears several times in the Scripture. Important passages for our paper are the following: Ex. 3:6; Mt. 22:32; Mk. 12:26; Lk. 20:37 (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020). Pericopes from the Synoptics (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Mt. 22:23–33; Mk. 12:18–27; Lk. 20:27–40) appear in the context of questions about the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees once provoked Jesus with a difficult question related to his resurrection speech: At the resurrection whose wife will a woman be, if seven were married to her? (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Mt. 22:28; Mk. 12:23; Lk. 20:33).

Jesus answered the Sadducees' question by referring to the Old Testament passage about the bush where Moses met God who said to him: "*I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*" (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ex. 3:6). Jesus also says that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Mt. 22:32; Mk. 12:27; Lk. 20:38). Jesus speaks to us about God as the one who gives life, and he does not speak about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the past, but in the present tense, as if they were alive. Emphasis is placed on God who is not the God of the dead but of the living, which anticipates eternal life. It is God who rules over death, God gives life to man and helps him sustain it (Brown, Castelot, & Fitzmayer, 1980, p. 154).

Moreover, the name "God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob" is a nomadic way of naming God. It developed in a nomadic society before Israel had its own kingdom. Nomadic tribes worshiped a tribal God, and such worship was passed down from generation to generation (Brown et al., 1980, p. 151). In the tribal society, a strong need for a God who would protect the tribal clan from other tribes developed. From this need, religiosity was developed, i.e., the need to offer a sacrifice to God. In the ancient Semitic society, there was no personal piety, but piety as such developed out of society (Brown et al., 1980, pp. 176–177). The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob represents the God of living people who existed, and who worshiped the same God from generation to generation. He does not represent an abstract concept that exists in the mind, but a living presence that manifests itself in reality, i.e., in the lives of real people, which is what the history of salvation refers to (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016).

The God of faith is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the God who created the whole world out of nothing, the God who is present in human history as a person, the God who has his own name that he revealed to people (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ex. 3:14), and the God who became a man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian God is not just a concept that exists by itself, i.e., some sublime being that has no contact with the world. Rather, the Christian God is triune and is revealed as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and it is precisely in this multitude that he realizes his unity. When philosophy talks about God, it talks about him as something distant, foreign, and impersonal. On the other hand, the God of Christian revelation is the God of relationships, a God who is a multitude in himself and who comes out of himself to enter into a relationship with people. Gisbert Greshake wrote the following on the triune God:

"The Christian revelation has shown that God is not the highest, self-contained substance, or a unique, unattainable, immovable monad, but a life that is communicated, a relationship, a *communio*. That relationship, the thing that for Aristotle is of least significance in the entire being, is revealed by Christianity as the true essence of all existence (...) and it becomes clear: the highest, divine being is the union of three persons." (Greshake, 2007, pp. 24–25).

Supernatural knowledge of God

Unlike philosophy, theology does not take reason, but revelation as its starting point. Based on revelation, it reaches the knowledge of God. Starting from their own faith, theologians try to rationally understand God's mysteries, while also using philosophy, i.e., philosoph-

ical considerations regarding God. However, for theology, every philosophical consideration regarding God is flawed as it is not part of the revelation, but is reached through reason, which is a limited way of knowing reality. In his work *Summa Theologica* Saint T. Aquinas asks the following question: “*Can we know God in this life with natural reason?*”. He then quickly concludes that we cannot, claiming the following: “*Our natural knowledge begins with the senses. Therefore, our natural cognition can only extend as far as it can be guided by our senses of things*” (Akvincski, 2005, ST I, q. 12, a. 12). What T. Aquinas wants to say is the following: we can know God through our reason, but never in his entirety – our reason is finite since humans are finite beings, and as such they cannot understand God, who is infinite in his essence.

Starting from all of the above, we come to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is not just the name Blaise Pascal used for the God of faith to distinguish him from the God of the philosophers, but it is also the name for God used in the Scripture. God did not call himself that by chance. Biblical faith is a historical faith because God is revealed in history through people, and this is where salvation as such also takes place, and it must always be viewed in its entirety, and not through a particular experience (Brown et al., 1980, p. 146). God is revealed to precisely chosen people, to a precisely chosen nation, in a precisely chosen place.

Apostle Peter says that God is “*the God of our fathers*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Acts. 5:30), which points to the historical part of the salvation revelation, as God was worshiped that way in the time of the patriarchs. Since the people of Israel were not able to think abstractly and create general concepts like the Greeks did later, they worshiped God in terms of the beliefs of special persons like Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. This is precisely why the first pages of the Scripture do not talk about some abstract first man, but a person who has a name – Adam. Biblical-exegetical research reveals that: “*The theological specificity of the expression ‘God of the Fathers’ is important in biblical religion, as it shows the personal relationship between God and the patriarch (and the people), thus suppressing formalism in religion. (...) Moreover, it is a means of dissuading the thought that God is only in one place*” (Brown et al., 1980, p. 151).

Abraham is considered to be the forefather of the Christian faith; he is the one whom God called (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Gn. 12:1) and through whom the tribes of Israel were born. Abraham’s son was Isaac, and Isaac’s son was Jacob, who was later named Israel. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, saying: “*Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men, and you have prevailed.*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Gn. 32:29). Israel had twelve sons (Asher, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Zebulun, Benjamin, Shimon, Judah) to whom the twelve tribes of Israel were born, so the nation of Israel was named after Jacob (Israel), son of Abraham.

The Scripture follows God’s revelation to a specific people from whose lineage (David’s lineage) comes Jesus Christ, who is considered to be the Son of God (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Lk. 4:40). The very name Son of God comes from the Old Testament when the name was used for Israel (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Wis. 18:13), which also points to the historical connection between the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Jesus Christ, i.e.,

the Old Testament and the New Testament. Therefore, in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, the following is written: “God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New.” (Drugi vatikanski koncil, 1986, DV 16).

Triune God

The Christian faith professes faith in one God who is revealed in three divine persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity is a mystery that Christians believe in and worship. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the following is written about the Trinity: “It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the ‘hierarchy of truths’.” (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016). “How does multiplicity arise from unity?” is a *philosopheme* that can be explained with the doctrine of the Trinity. It is impossible to answer this well-known philosophical question using only philosophical concepts, but when the theological knowledge of the Christian faith is applied, then answering it becomes possible. If God is triune in himself, yet one and only (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016), then one can understand how a multitude arises from unity without violating the principles of formal logic (Coreth, 2001, pp. 416–417). This shows that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is not only based on faith but is also based on reason, and it helps us understand certain philosophical difficulties (Ventimiglia, 2021, p. 104).

The experience of God

When Blaise Pascal mentions the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he does so because of what is happening in him, and not based on some philosophical or theological understandings of God. In fact, when someone experiences conversion (*metanoia*), something inexplicable and very deep happens inside them, affecting their whole person, i.e., the totality of the being. The event of conversion forces a person to change their understanding of the world around them, as well as their inner self, and they truly become someone else – a new person, which is the goal of Christian spirituality. In his work *The Myth of Sisyphus*, where he discusses the meaning and meaninglessness of life, the French existentialist philosopher Albert Camus wrote: “I have never seen anyone die for the ontological argument” (Camus, 1998, p. 9). This means that no one believes in God because of rational argumentation, but because of their personal experience of God that transcends reason. This is exactly what Pascal’s experience of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob represents.

God the creator

The biblical God is the God that creates out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). He is the God who created time and space, the God who is eternal. In other words, he is not in time but rather outside of both time and space, meaning that he is transcendent. He transcends the world given to us, and is unknowable, ineffable, and therefore a mystery. All transcendent concepts are mysterious and not definable. Above all concepts is the concept of God, representing absolute transcendence, which is why God is called the *Holy Secret* (Rahner, 2007, pp. 95–97).

Transcendence is a sign of something different, and the Christian God is transcendent and immanent. He is in the world and yet not the world.

One of the ways man can know God and his immeasurable greatness is through the beauty of the nature surrounding him. The man of ancient times looked at nature as a creature that demanded a Creator. As for the importance of catechesis on creation, the Catholic Church believes the following:

“Catechesis on creation is of major importance. It concerns the very foundations of human and Christian life: for it makes explicit the response of the Christian faith to the basic question that men of all times have asked themselves: ‘Where do we come from?’ ‘Where are we going?’ ‘What is our origin?’ ‘What is our end?’ ‘Where does everything that exists come from and where is it going?’ The two questions, the one about the origin and the one about the end, are inseparable. They are decisive for the meaning and orientation of our life and actions.” (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016).

The Scripture mentions in several places that God the Creator can be known through the world. For instance, in the *Book of Wisdom*, the following is written: “*For all men who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know him who exists, nor did they recognize the craftsman while paying heed to his works*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Wis. 13:1). It is also mentioned that the greatness and beauty of God who created all beings can be deduced from the beauty and greatness of said beings (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Wis. 13:5). The Fourth Way (*Quarta Via*) by T. Aquinas presents a similar concept, namely that the knowledge of God is reached through the degrees of perfection of being (Kenny, 2003, pp. 80–81).

In the *Epistle to the Romans*, Apostle Paul also points out the value of the natural knowledge of God through the very creation of the world (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Rom. 1:19–20). At the First Vatican Council, in the dogmatic constitution *Dei Filius*, the Catholic Church also confirmed that God can be known through the created world. The following is written in the constitution: “*Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason from created things; for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*” (Concilium Vaticanum I, 1870, Dei Filius II). All this tells us the following: God is the creator of the entire world, things visible and invisible, which man can know through reason, and creation itself is the process of God’s revelation.

The God of faith, in contrast to many philosophical concepts of God, is not a shaper of matter such as the demiurge in Plato, a being from which matter gradually emanates as in Plotinus, or a concept that thinks itself as in Aristotle. Instead, he is the Creator of the world who creates out of nothing, which his points to his greatness, with one of his names thus being the *Creator*.

At the beginning of the *Book of Genesis*, the following is written: “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Gn. 1:1). “In the beginning” (Hebrew *בְּרֵאשִׁית* – transliteration *Be•rê•shît*) means that God creates with time, as well as that before creation time did not exist. Thus, the following question was answered: what did God do before he created the world? Since before the creation of the world there was no time or space, we cannot speak of any temporal “then”. Therefore, we can conclude that

God created the existing world out of nothing. This is the key characteristic of God, as he brings matter that previously did not exist into existence (Rebić, 1996, p. 54).

God's power is manifested in the very creation of the world. He is the one who creates and owns what he created, the master and owner of all created things. God is therefore a being who requires worship simply because he created the entire universe and as such governs it, with the universe being subordinate to him. Therefore, the very creation of the world and man is the beginning of the history of salvation (Rebić, 1996, p. 76).

The connection between man and nature also points to the connection with God, as it is through nature that man's weakness and smallness become evident. No matter how advanced man is in terms of science and technology, he will never be able to overcome certain natural occurrences (such as dying). Man is part of nature, and as such, he will never have the last word. After all, it is God who is the master of nature, and he thus has the last word. This is why the psalmist says: *"The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter."* (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ps. 74:16–17). The aim here is to emphasize the power of God, as well as the relationship that man has with God through natural processes. Unlike God, man is an immanent being, he lives in the world and is inseparable from it. Man cannot come out of himself as, in addition to being a spirit, he is also a body, and it is his physicality that binds him to the earth (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Gn. 3:19).

Furthermore, the very act of creation is a free act of God. God creates out of his goodness and love and manifests himself to the people of Israel as liberator and saviour. This means that, after the act of creation, God is not passive as it is believed in deism, but is active, he is the sustainer of the world and leads it to its goal. The God who created life and who is the God of the living and not of the dead (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Mt. 22:32) will not allow life as such to disappear, but will keep it alive, because, *"(...) if individuals or entire nations, even the earth, disappear, life as such will never disappear"* (Nemet, 2003, p. 90). Therefore, the theology of creation is actually the beginning of the history of salvation, which is fully manifested and culminates in Jesus Christ. Thus, man as a created being can have a relationship with his Creator and worship him as the one who gives him life and a share in his divinity.

God is a person

In philosophy, God is viewed as impersonal and distant from man. On the other hand, in Christianity, God is a person who has a name and openly comes into contact with people. God's personality is an essential characteristic of Christian discourse about God. Thus, Rahner wrote the following: *"The claim that God is a person, that he is a personal God, is part of the foundational Christian claims about God"* (Rahner, 2007, p. 105). Just as man is a being who realizes his potential in relationships with others, his neighbours, God is in his essence a relationship or a community (Greshake, 2007, p. 26), which cannot exist without people. A relationship is not an abstract thing, but a fact that exists in reality. It is through people that the transition from "I" to "you" can be realized, or as Buber says: *"Each individual you is a look that extends to the eternal You."* (Buber, 2020, p. 65). This means that we form a relationship with God through our neighbours, as they are the image of God.

Thus, the relationships we form with our neighbours represent our relationship with God, as it is God who is the *eternal You*. Therefore, one cannot be a good believer and a devout Catholic, and at the same time not care about the needs of their neighbours. Unfortunately, such a practice is not rare in the Christian milieu, and it constitutes false piety referred to in the Gospel (*Jeruzalemska Biblija*, 2020, Mt. 23).

As for the importance of a personal God and the role of personality in general as one of God's attributes, the Anglican theologian A. E. McGrath writes the following:

“A person plays a role in the network of social relationships. ‘Individuality’ does not imply social relationships, but ‘personality’ refers to the role an individual plays in a network of relationships where that person is recognized as different from others. The basic idea expressed by the notion of a ‘personal God’ is therefore a God with whom we have a relationship that is analogous to the relationships we have with people” (*McGrath*, 2007, p. 270).

If God is a person, then we can turn to him just like in many places in Scripture men turn to God, telling him of their difficulties and longings. Without a personal God, it is impossible to have a personal relationship with the Creator, and man is thus left to himself. This way of thinking is present in deism, which believes that God created the world, but does not act in it. This leaves us with a God as a being who exists only for himself and does not act in the world (*McGrath*, 2007, p. 280).

Each person has their name, and so does the Christian God. God revealed his name to people. The importance of a personal name is very significant. The first thing people do upon meeting each other is say their name, because the name is the “sign” of a person (*nomen est omen*) and it marks their existence. Without a name, there is no familiarity, as we cannot become familiar with something that does not exist (*Brown et al.*, 1980, p. 147). The God of the philosophers has no name. It is a conceptual idea, and as such cannot be looked at in a relational sense. When we address someone, we are addressing a person. Thus, if we believe that we can address him in prayer, God must be a person. When addressing God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we address the same God. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the following is written about God's name:

“God revealed himself to his people of Israel by making his name known to them. A name expresses a person's essence and identity and the meaning of their life. God has a name; he is not an anonymous force. To disclose one's name is to make oneself known to others; in a way, it is to hand oneself over by becoming accessible, capable of being known more intimately and addressed personally.” (*Katekizam Katoličke Crkve*, 2016).

Many of God's names appear in the Scripture. There are, for instance, names associated with certain people: “*The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob*” (*Jeruzalemska Biblija*, 2020, Ex. 3:6). God revealed this to Moses when the latter saw a burning bush on Mount Sinai, where God revealed himself to him. But only when Moses asked God: “*when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?*” (*Jeruzalemska Biblija*, 2020, Ex. 3:13), did God tell him his name, saying: “*Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘I Am’ hath sent me unto you.*” (*Jeruzalemska Biblija*, 2020, Ex. 3:14). “I am” points to God's personal name, which was not present in any philosophical system. By announcing his name, God actually calls on man and thereby enters into a direct relationship with him in order to establish a coexistence, as by doing so, he becomes available to people (*Ratzinger*, 2017, p. 107).

In the Scripture, there are several names for God that were created over time, such as Elohim, Shaddai, Adonai, Melek, and Sebaoth. There is also the patriarchal name – God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is important to point out is that all these names refer to the supreme deity Yahweh whose name is written with four consonants (YHWH) in the Hebrew revelation (Brown et al., 1980, pp. 147–151). As the Bible was written at a time when many tribes worshiped several different gods, i.e., in a polytheistic environment, the cult of one God marked a turning point in the development of the Israeli nation, as well as of theology itself. The uniqueness of Yahweh is best seen in God’s first commandment: “*I am the Lord thy God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ex. 20:2–3), where God commands the worship of one God, i.e., himself, thus also commanding the people of Israel to reject polytheism (Brown et al., 1980, p. 153).

God who became man

Philosophical speculations that are often present in the discourse about God’s attributes and the relationship between God and the world often neglect the role of the God of faith who can be known through revelation. Although God can be known in a natural way, such knowledge is still not a perfect knowledge of God, as human reason is often flawed and imperfect and looks at God from its imperfect and limited perspective (Nikić, 2000). The God who revealed himself is a God who builds a relationship with people, a God who loves people, and who thus reveals himself to people in the community. Out of all of the attributes of God that philosophy mentions, the one that is actually key when it comes to God’s existence and his non-existence is often overlooked. If God exists, how does that benefit people if he does not care about us, if he doesn’t want to reveal himself and communicate with us? Although the way deists view God theoretically constitutes classic monotheism because they believe in one God, it is in practical terms atheism or agnosticism, namely because believing in a God who has no impact on the world is the same as not having a God at all, which can best be seen in Epicurus and his understanding of God and the gods (Wentworth, 1964, p. 15).

When Blaise Pascal wrote that he believed in the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, he was referring to the God who made a covenant with a chosen people – in this case the people of Israel, the God who came out of his hiding and revealed himself to people. Although God’s revelation begins with the creation of the first parents (Drugi vaticanski koncil, 1986, DV 3), the way God revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush shows that God is not only the Creator, but also the Deliverer. Revealing himself to Moses as a flame in a bush that does not burn (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Ex. 3:2), he symbolizes the same God who appeared on Pentecost in the form of flaming tongues before the apostles (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Acts. 2:3). This is the reason why Pascal’s conversion is called the *Night of Fire*, namely because fire is the ember representing the Holy Spirit, i.e., God (Guardini, 1966, p. 34).

The history of salvation

Since the revelation itself is a manifestation of God’s love, it also constitutes the event of salvation that began after the original sin (*peccatum originale*). The God who frees man

from the bonds of sin and death manifested himself as a deliverer when he brought the people of Israel out of Egyptian slavery ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Ex. 14:30). In the Old Testament, God established several covenants with man where he required faith, i.e., trust, which man, unfortunately, betrayed. After the creation of the first man and the first woman and the drama that unfolded in the whirlwind of sin that entered the world, God decided to destroy all living things on earth because he was disappointed with the evil that reigned ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Gn. 6:6–7). He only had mercy on Noah, because Noah was “*a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time*” ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Gn. 6:9). Thus, after the flood, he established a covenant with his family ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Gn. 9:9).

Abraham, the forefather of Israel, descends from Noah’s lineage. Thus, when we look at Scripture as a supernatural revelation of God, we first look at the history of a family, and then at the history of a nation, which reaches its pinnacle in Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of the entire revelation ([Drugi vatikanski koncil, 1986](#), DV 4). Therefore, Scripture begins with Adam and follows his genealogy through various periods, ending with Jesus Christ ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Mt. 1:1–16; Lk. 3:23–38).

Pinnacle of the revelation

Jesus Christ is thus the pinnacle of the entire revelation. Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Messiah-Christ foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Is. 53). Therefore, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is also the God of Jesus Christ. If we look at revelation in this way, we can conclude that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God who revealed himself in human history where salvation takes place, with the latter experiencing its fullness in Jesus Christ ([Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016](#)).

The uniqueness of God in the New Testament

The novelty of the revelation in the New Testament is God’s incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, faith in God takes on a completely new form. Faith is no longer a notion that can be covered by discursive pondering upon the totality of the being or the first principle. It is also not about a God who is so high in the heavens that he forgot about man, and that man forgot about God. Rather, it is about a God who is present in human history, who actively acts and calls man to conversion, who, “*full of love*” ([Drugi vatikanski koncil, 1986](#), DV 14), came down from heaven in order to become human and to deify us humans. God became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, thus becoming a man ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Jn. 1:14). God’s revelation therefore received its fullness and humanistic and personalistic side. In the dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum*, the following is written: “*Christ established the kingdom of God on earth, manifested His Father and Himself by deeds and words, and completed His work by His death, resurrection, glorious Ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit.*” ([Drugi vatikanski koncil, 1986](#), DV 17).

The Incarnation of God cannot be fully understood even through Scripture. In his work *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm of Canterbury writes the following:“(…) *there is no man who can fully reveal such a secret in this life, and I do not ask of you to do what no man can do, but*

only to do what is as possible” (Cantuariensis, 2014, II). Through the person of Jesus Christ, God and his nature can be discovered internally in the deepest possible way. Before Jesus Christ, theology was not possible; only Christianity was able to develop theology (knowledge of God) because it saw God and could thus say what God is like.

This is also the reason why the following is written in the prologue of the *Gospel according to John*: “No one has ever seen God” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jn. 1:18) The same thing is mentioned in the *First Epistle of John* (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, 1 Jn. 4:12), but as Jesus became incarnate and became a man, the following is also mentioned: “And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father hath sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world.” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, 1 Jn. 4:14). The emphasis on the verb “to see” points to the physicality of God in Jesus Christ. This is different from all other mentions of God – both philosophical and those from other non-Christian religions. Unlike in other religions where man seeks a way to God, in Christianity, it is God who descends to man, which speaks volumes of his character. God calls man and builds a relationship with him, and we are no longer God’s servants but his friends (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jn. 15:15).

In his conversion, Blaise Pascal put an emphasis on the God of faith. Such a god is a person and has a name and cares about the human race – not only about a particular nation or community, but about each individual person (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Lk. 12:6–7). Pascal wanted to highlight the uniqueness of the God who revealed himself not only in the Scripture, but also in a person – Jesus Christ, who lived on earth. Thus, Christianity is a religion pertaining to a person, not a religion pertaining to a book like Islam. The true uniqueness of the Christian understanding of God is reflected in the notion of God as someone who suffered with people, the God who was tortured and betrayed by those closest to him. This is how God became closer to man in the best way possible. When writing about the uniqueness of Jesus among other gods, the Swiss theologian H. Küng mentioned God’s suffering and wrote: “... the Son of God can only be truly understood through the cross. Thus, because of the cross, Jesus is different from other sons of God! (...) To be crucified alive is the basis of faith, the criterion of freedom. Yes, it is the centre and norm of what is specifically Christian” (Küng, 1987, pp. 632–633).

The suffering God is thus the centre of the Christian faith, as well as what distinguishes Jesus Christ from other gods. Jesus Christ is like God incarnate who came down from heaven and became corruptible flesh for the sake of us humans, for the sake of our salvation. It is through the cross and the suffering life inevitably brings that God identifies with us humans and can understand us. For the Jews, the death of God on the cross was scandalous, and for the Greeks it was madness, but for Christians it was the mystery of faith. God understands our pain and our cry (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Mk. 15:34) because he suffered as man suffers, and he was betrayed, tortured, and killed. However, the death of Jesus on the cross does not represent the death of God because, as Moltmann points out: “Jesus’ death cannot be viewed as the ‘death of God’, but only as death in God.” (Moltmann, 2005, p. 233). The mystery of the Christian cross cannot be understood without faith in eternal life. It is eternal life that makes it possible to find joy in the cross, which is necessary for salvation in Christ the Lord.

The intersection of Christian faith and Greek philosophy

Philosophy was a line of thought seeking to transcend the Greek mythology that had been prevalent until then and manifested itself as polytheism. With the help of philosophy, i.e., reasoning, people tried to explain their reality and a number of natural phenomena. With the appearance of Hellenism, or Alexander the Great – who spread the Greek influence and culture by conquering the west and the east – philosophy became a general phenomenon. Many philosophical schools that were not Greek subsequently appeared, and Greek philosophy began intertwining with Semitic thought.

Christianity is mostly discussed in the context of Western civilization. Europe and North and South America are viewed as the so-called Christian countries. However, the fact that Christianity is a religion that originated and has deep roots in the Middle East is often forgotten. The Christian apologist R. Zacharias writes: “(...) *Jesus was not a Westerner. In fact, some of His parables were so Eastern that I think much of the West might not have understood the severity and humour of what He said.*” (Zacharias, 2002, p. 7). It is believed that Christianity as a religion arose in the 1st century, after the death of Jesus of Nazareth and after the establishment of the first Christian community in Antioch (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Acts. 11:26). Soon afterwards, Christianity began to spread across the area where pagans i.e., the Greeks prevailed. This combination of early Christianity – which was under the influence of Semitic thought – and pagans who were the heirs of Greek philosophy led to the inculturation of Greek philosophy into the Christian religion.

Before we dive into the way Christianity was inculturated, let us mention a philosopher who tried to combine the Semitic thought of the Old Testament with Greek philosophy, namely Philo of Alexandria. He is considered to be one of the founders of religious philosophy, i.e., philosophical theology, as he considered God to be of greatest importance in solving philosophical difficulties (Poljak, 2009, p. 658). The city of Alexandria where he lived was the centre of the Hellenistic world, and there was a school that interpreted Scripture allegorically. Philo of Alexandria was among the first men to try to prove the God who revealed himself in the Old Testament by means of philosophy. Thus, Philo was the pioneer of the philosophy of religion.

He used rational knowledge of God's essence, finding help in Greek philosophy (Poljak, 2009, p. 661). Philo tried to familiarize the pagans with Judaism, just like the first Christians tried to familiarize people with the Gospel. They used the prevailing Greek philosophy of the time, which had different schools of thought. This is how Christianity encountered the Stoics and Epicureans, as can be seen in the *Acts of the Apostles*, when Paul preached in Athens: “*A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. (...) He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods.*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Acts. 17:18).

In addition to encountering the Epicureans and Stoics who were known for their ethical teachings and philosophy of life, early Christianity also encountered Neoplatonism. Aurelius Augustine considered Plotinus to be the best interpreter of Platonism, the philosophical system that came closest to Christianity (Čanković, 2017, p. 497). Thus, at its beginning, Christianity encountered numerous philosophical schools, with the apostles, and later the church fathers (who were influenced by Neoplatonism), entering into dialogue with their members (Čanković, 2017, p. 502). Christianity used philosophical concepts that

were missing in theology – which did not even exist as a science at the time – to familiarize people with the Gospel.

Christianity as the true philosophy

The first Christians did not only view Christianity as a faith, but they were sure that Christianity was in line with reason, as well as that it was the true philosophy (Savicki, 1929, p. 76). Christians called Christianity the true philosophy in order to draw attention to themselves as there were many philosophical schools out there. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the Christians of the time were inspired by Greek philosophy – they believed that

“In every age, there were people who, like Socrates and Heraclitus, lived with the Logos, and that they were Christians even if they were considered to be atheists. Also, they believed that any knowledge actually came from revelation to pagan philosophers. Clement of Alexandria has similar beliefs. He thinks that God – just as he gave the Jews the law – gave the Greeks a philosophy that would ‘educate them and guide them towards Christ’” (Savicki, 1929, p. 76).

Thus, early Christianity looked at philosophy as something they could use to better announce the God they believed in – Jesus Christ.

Λόγος between Greek philosophy and Christian theology

Christians realized very quickly what kind of world they lived in. It was a world that worshipped thought, reason, and science. The Roman world – the intellectual successor of Greek culture – viewed the advancement of knowledge as the main principle for worshipping life. Although polytheism reigned in the Roman Empire, most of the main thinkers were much more advanced. Thinkers like Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Plotinus – who shaped late Antiquity – believed in a deity but never discovered who it was. They never gave a name to their gods, but called them gods in general. The stoic Marcus Aurelius thus writes: “*And constantly call on the gods for help...*” (Aurelije, 2004, ca. 180 C.E, 6. 23). In no place did Marcus Aurelius mention what gods he was referring to. Similarly, Plotinus – who is viewed as a religious-mystical philosopher – spoke of the *One* as a deity that is unknowable, ineffable, and distant (Copleston, 1988, p. 502). This secrecy of worship was quite present among late antique philosophical thinker, and early Christianity recognized it and responded to it in its own style.

The Prologue of the Gospel according to John

When discussing the relationship between the God of the philosophers and the God of faith, it is necessary to mention the prologue of the *Gospel according to John*, which begins with these words: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jn. 1:1). The noun “Word” represents Jesus Christ, whom Christians worship as the only true God (Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016). Thus, the Greek term λόγος (*logos*) was equated with God’s Word, which has always been with God, namely because it itself is God and participates in the divine essence. The term *logos* is etymologically derived from the word “legō” (λέγω), which means to say or speak.

The term λόγος is ambiguous, and it can mean speech, word, reason, science, mind, etc. This term was widely used in Greece, as well as during Hellenism. Its meaning varied, but it was mostly used to refer to something reasonable and scientific. However, its meaning stretched as far as being used for living beings in general (Hillar, 2012, p. 6).

In the prologue of the *Gospel according to John*, there are indications of the Trinitarian theology, as well as of inculturation, which has always been a feature of Christian evangelization. As was already mentioned, in the cultural atmosphere at the time of the development of the original Christian community – which was surrounded by numerous philosophical trends where philosophy as such was highly valued – the original apologists had to borrow philosophical concepts and adapt them to the Christian theology.

The prologue of the Gospel has been interpreted in different ways throughout history. Some believed that it contained a Gnostic influence, and others, like Irenaeus, believed that it contained a historical-Christological influence. Some also believed that Platonist philosophy prevailed in the prologue, so they interpreted it in a philosophic-idealistic manner. However, it seems that the prologue as such has a biblical foundation that the author points to at the very beginning of his Gospel. The first word of the Old Testament is “Be•rê•shît” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Gn. 1:1), which means “in the beginning”. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament – the Septuagint – it was translated as ἐν ἀρχῇ (*en arkhé*). The same can be found on at the beginning of the prologue of the *Gospel according to John*.

The author of the Gospel wanted to present a comparison with the *Book of Genesis*, alluding that Jesus Christ was present with God “from the beginning” and that he was not created. “The beginning” as such does not have a quantitative or temporal meaning, but a qualitative one. It means that the incarnate Word was before all creation, as well as that it has always existed “at the Father’s side” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jn. 1:18). The Word (*Logos*) is not a creature, but it has existed since the beginning. Thus, one cannot speak of the Word as a creature or of its origin, namely because it existed before the world that was created (Dugandžić, 1999, p. 189).

Logos

It is believed that the term *logos* was first used by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who lived in the 6th century BC (Diels, 1983, DK 22A8). When it comes to his work, only fragmentary records written by other philosophers remain. He believed that *logos* is the omnipresent mind governing the universe and enabling the harmony of the world. *Logos*, according to Heraclitus, is the reason by which man should be measured: “That is why it is necessary to go after what is common. But although the logos is common, the majority still live as if each had its own mind” (Diels, 1983, DK 22B2). There are different interpretations of Heraclitus’ understanding of the *logos*, but it can be concluded without question that it refers to the principle of the world (*cosmos*) which is common to all people and should be conformed to.

In addition to Heraclitus, other philosophers also mentioned *logos* in their works, but each in a different way. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle mentioned *logos* as an argument from reason, while also identifying other types of arguments such as *pathos* (emotion), and *ethos* (mo-

rality) (Matsen, Rollinson, & Sousa, 1990, p. 120). Anaxagoras, just like the Pythagoreans before him, believed that the *logos* represented what was reasonable and proportional, namely the constructive forces based on which the natural world functions and which should be complied with (Rescher, 2005, p. 39). The Stoics were methodological materialists, and they criticized most of Plato's and Aristotle's theology, mostly because of their transcendence – namely because the primordial beginning cannot be outside of nature, as according to the Stoics, nature is everything. Nevertheless, they believed that the whole of nature is composed of two principles. The first one is passive, and they called it λόγος σπερματικός (*logos spermatikos*), and viewed it as the world's soul watching over the world. Here, the *logos* had the role of the original principle of the world based on which everything existed, with every man possessing a part of that *logos*. They named the other (active) principle *pneuma* (Gerson, 1994, p. 148).

The concept of *logos*, as we have already mentioned, was introduced into Jewish thought by Philo of Alexandria. According to him, the most important being is God, and *logos* comes right after God and is the most similar to him because it was the first to be created. Philo tried to equate *logos* with the Platonic *Idea of Good* (Hillar, 2012, p. 106). The *Logos* is thus a mediator between God and people governing the given world. Although this is not a Christian understanding of *logos*, Philo's understanding also influenced Christian thinkers, especially Origen, Augustine and Justin Martyr (Poljak, 2009, p. 665).

From the logos to Jesus Christ

As we have written, the term *logos* is ambiguous, but in the Christian tradition it is understood as the Word, with the fact that the term Word does not denote a word in the grammatical sense, but represent a specific person - Jesus Christ who is the incarnate Word (*logos*). Understood in this way, the term *logos* must be distinguished by its content and form. Content wise, the term *logos* in Christianity does not represent ancient Greek theology, but represents the personification of Old Testament Wisdom (Brown, 2008, p. 92; Sir. 24; Wis. 9). Formally, the term *logos* is a philosophical term that was used in antiquity to explain the order in the world, that is to say, the reason that governs the entire reality (Hillar, 2012, p. 6; Copleston, 1988, p. 79). The term *logos*, which represent Jesus Christ, was not used by chance. The author of the *Gospel according to John* did not put the typical Greek term used to denote wisdom, which is *sofia* (σοφία), most likely because it is a feminine term, and Jesus Christ is masculine (Hillar, 2012, pp. 125–126).

But then the question can be asked, why use the term *logos* at all? As we have shown, the term *logos* was well known among Greek intellectuals and the Hellenistic world in general. Bearing in mind that the milieu described in the *Gospel according to John* does not originate from the Palestinian area (Brown, 2008, p. 363) and that the same Gospel was most likely written in Ephesus (Brown, 2008, p. 366), a city in Asia Minor that was known in antiquity for its strong philosophical background. Therefore, we can conclude that the term *logos* entered the *Gospel* through inculturation. This is supported by the fact that the *Gospel according to John* is known as the “Hellenistic Gospel” (Brown, 2008, p. 362) because it was created in the Hellenistic culture and was written by people who inherited the culture of ancient Greece, especially philosophy.

It was precisely the ancient Greek philosophers who dealt with the question of the origin of the world. The author of the *Gospel according to John* did not write the genealogy of Jesus Christ like the synoptics Matthew and Luke, but began to write using a philosophical discourse. The author of the Gospel writes about what was before the very beginning of creation. It transcends both time and space, and this makes the *logos* transcendent. The first to use the synthesis of Greek philosophy and the Scriptures was the Jewish philosopher Philo, and it is considered that he had an influence on the author who wrote the *Gospel according to John* (Hillar, 2012, p. 39), but also on early Christian theologians. One of them is Justin Martyr who, among the first Christian authors, tried to synthesize philosophical and religious thought (Hillar, 2012, p. 138), which supports the fact that the Hellenistic intellectual culture influenced the writer of the Fourth Gospel. Justin Martyr especially used the term *logos* as a Greek philosophical term in the footsteps of Heraclitus (Hillar, 2012, p. 143). It was precisely the concept of *logos*, which he understood as reason, that proved to him that whatever the philosophers said before Christianity about the origin of the world, in Justin's words "belongs to Christians" (Justin, 2012, ca. 150 C.E., II Apol. 13). Thus, according to Justin, early Christian theology affirmed, accepted and surpassed Greek philosophy.

From the God of the philosophers to the God of faith

So far, we have tried to show different ways of understanding God. First, we briefly showed that the God of the philosophers is not a monolithic concept. We then presented the basic understanding of God in Christian theology. Moreover, we elaborated on different ways of interpreting the term *logos* and showed that Christianity arose in the Hellenistic milieu and was helped by philosophical concepts in terms of expressing its own Christian notions. One of these notions is undoubtedly the concept of *logos*, which is identified with Jesus Christ in the Scripture (Hillar, 2012, p. 108) and represents the Old Testament personification of Wisdom (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Wis. 7:22–30). We have shown that the term *logos* entered Christian thought through inculturation. The author of the Fourth Gospel wanted to achieve a kind of synthesis of philosophy and religion through inculturation, and they used the concept of *logos* as a link between Semitic and Greek culture. They wanted to show the rational Greeks that the Christian faith is a reasonable faith and that it does not represent anything magical.

Although Blaise Pascal distinguishes the God of the philosophers from the God of faith and gives preference to the God of faith, there are authors who believed differently. One of them is the former Pope Benedict XVI, who, as head of the chair of dogmatic theology at the University of Tübingen, wrote a work already famous as a Christian classic, namely *Introduction to Christianity*, where he wrote:

"By deciding in favour of the God of the philosophers and logically declaring this God to be the God who speaks to man and to whom one can pray, the Christian faith gave a completely new significance to the God of the philosophers, removing him from the purely academic realm and thus profoundly transforming him. This God who had previously existed as something neutral, as the highest, culminating concept; this God who had been understood as pure Being or pure thought, circling round forever closed in upon itself without reaching over to man and his little world; this God of the philosophers, whose pure eternity and unchangeability had excluded any relation with the changeable and

transitory, now appeared to the eye of faith as the God of men, who is not only thought of all thoughts, the eternal mathematics of the universe, but also agape, the power of creative love.” (Ratzinger, 2017, pp. 115–116).

In the aforementioned book, J. Ratzinger explained that polytheism was worshiped among the pagans of the Hellenistic world, especially the Greeks and Romans. From their gods, the Christian tradition took over the God who was worshiped by philosophers and scholars and who represented the totality of being, a pure act (*actus purus*) that has no potency in itself as it is perfect and therefore thinks itself. This God is represented as *logos*, or the reason governing the world that man should strive towards, namely by being reasonable. This constitutes the essence of the Greek philosophical thought that began by transferring from *mythos* to *logos* (Bošnjak, 1978, pp. 27–28).

As was already mentioned, the term *logos* comes from the word “legō”, which means to say or speak. Let us now mention the *Book of Genesis* where God creates the world. God creates with words, and *logos* represents this creative power of God: “*And God said*” (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Gn. 1:3). This wisdom from the Old Testament represents God’s reason, which is described as *logos*.

The prologue of the *Gospel according to John* is a Hymn to Christ which was added later in the Gospel. This is evident as it differs stylistically from the rest of the Gospel. The hymn as such was used in the liturgy of the community where theology was being created (Dugandžić, 1999, pp. 186–187). It is clear that the original Christian community considered Jesus to be a God, as well as that the *Logos* represented God’s revealed and incarnate Word (Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020, Jn. 1:14), or the person of Jesus Christ, thus surpassing Philo’s understanding of the term *logos* (Hillar, 2012, p. 130). Later, certain issues – the so-called heresies – arose in Christian communities in relation to the understanding of Jesus’ divinity and the relationship between the *Logos* and God, which was clarified only at the Council of Nicaea in 325.

Discussion

In this paper, we showed that the original Christian theology tried to present its faith through inculturation into the philosophical terms of the time. Thus, it took over the thought concept nowadays known as “the God of the philosophers” and gave it a Christian form. Although the phrase “God of the philosophers” is unclear, we attempted to explain it, namely using the ancient Greek philosophical theology based on which Christian theology grew. This is best seen in the prologue of the *Gospel according to John*, where the term *logos* is used as a synonym for Jesus Christ. Later, medieval theologians, influenced by Aristotle, managed to further deepen the understanding of God – it did not remain only within the framework of faith, but it also entered the framework of reason. Thus, the Christian faith proved to be a faith of reason able to defend its position against various anti-religious objections. With such an understanding, one can show that the God of the philosophers is also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but only in the formal sense, as they differ in their content conceptions, as shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Comparison of the God of the philosophers and the God of faith according to Blaise Pascal

Parameters	God of the philosophers	God of faith
Experience	Objective	Subjective
Knowledge	By reason	By revelation
Type of invocation	Contemplation (<i>theoria</i>)	Communication (prayer)
Experience	Rational	Emotional
Attribute	Concept	Personality
Name of God	Has no personal name, since he is not a person	Has a personal name, as he is a person 'I am who I am' (<i>Ex. 3:14</i>)
Manifestation	Transcendence	Incarnation
Relationship to the world	Deism	Theism

Is it justified to distinguish between a personal God to whom we turn with our heart and who is reached by faith, and God as a concept that we know through rational reflection? In this paper, we have shown that the answer is no. Man is not only a being of reason, nor is he only a being of emotions, but he is rather both a rational and an emotional being. In the first and great commandment, Jesus Christ said that one shall love the Lord with “*all your heart and all your mind*” (*Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020*, Mt. 22:37; Lk. 10:27). This means that both faith and reason are needed for complete knowledge of God. Man is a complete being and cannot be viewed partially. God gave man reason so that he can know him based on nature and deepen his faith acquired through revelation (*Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016*).

The fact that the Catholic Church recognizes the knowledge of God through reason tells us that it is not justified to distinguish the God of faith from the God of the philosophers. Purely rational knowledge of God will be imperfect due to the limitations of man as a being. Man, as a finite being, cannot fully know an infinite being such as God. Thus, exclusively rational knowledge will be insufficient and deficient. Knowledge of God that rests on rationality will quickly turn into atheism. This is where faith comes in, and it serves as a light for man and enlightens his reason (*Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016*), whose essential characteristic is immanence. However, on the other hand, faith without reason is condemned to fideism, and thus to fanaticism and dogmatism. Therefore, it is obvious that faith and reason are not opposed to each other, but coexist together – only through both faith and reason can we properly know God.

Knowledge of God based on revelation is a higher knowledge, all the more so because “*faith stands above reason*” (*Katekizam Katoličke Crkve, 2016*). This is what the uniqueness of Pascal’s emphasis on the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is all about. By affirming the God of faith, Pascal wanted to emphasize the God who comes into personal contact with man. It is God who revealed himself to people and who created man in his own image (*Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020*, Gn. 1:27). This God is present in human history through people of flesh and blood and wants all people to be saved, and men can establish a personal relationship with him. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob – the God of Jesus Christ, not an abstract concept that exists only in our minds. Unfortunately, due to excessive rationalization, the God of the philosophers has turned into a concept that is impersonal and distant from man. Therefore, man has distanced himself from God.

Philosophical thinking regarding God viewed in this way has its shortcomings – namely because it tries to rationalize the mystery of faith. This is *de facto* contrary to faith itself. Such a way of understanding God is wrong as it neglects one of the key characteristics of God, namely his personality. Man has the need to pray to God, and prayer itself is a form of communication where man seeks a personal relationship. This means that God must be a person, as only a person can enter into a relationship.

Faith requires understanding and *vice versa*, which means that God can only be properly known through both reason and faith. Reducing the knowledge of God exclusively to faith or reason, which Blaise Pascal did by denying the God of the philosophers, is wrong in view of the teaching of the Catholic Church, which condemned fideism and rationalism ([Concilium Vaticanum I, 1870](#), Dei Filius), as well as in view of the Christian intellectual tradition. Having that on mind we can ask a question – was the discourse regarding the radical difference between the God of the philosophers and the God of faith a miss? Does that mean Blaise Pascal was wrong?

Pascal's phrase God of philosophers belongs to the spirit of his time. Namely, Pascal was familiar with then-prevailing philosophical discourse about God, in which one tries to abstract God from reality as such. That way of thinking about God that was present in scholasticism. Thus, in the Middle Ages, more was written and spoken about the philosophical concept of God as the first cause or pure act. Scholasticism has forgotten to talk about the biblical God, the God of the living, the God who manifested himself in human history through the faith of specific people, in this case: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For Pascal, the God who is present in human history is the God of faith. Pascal had no intention of doing philosophical thinking about the difference of God of philosophers and the God of faith. He just wanted to affirm the God of faith before the God of philosophy, that is to say, the God of the living before the abstract concept of God. Unlike philosophers who understood God as a concept or substance, Pascal understood God differently. He did not understand God as a concept or God as a pure act. He saw him as a timeless being who entered time. By creating the world, God became a being in time. God cannot be a temporal being, because that would mean that he is contingent. However, by creating the world, God enters time. Entering time means that the timeless God revealed himself to a temporal being, a human person. He enters into communication with man, a historical being, whose essential characteristics are space and time. With revelation, God enters human history, and the traces of him are visible in everyday human existence. That is why Jesus says that God is the God of the living, not of the dead ([Jeruzalemska Biblija, 2020](#), Mt. 22:32; Mk. 12:27; Lk. 20:38).

The Incarnation represents the highest way in which God enters time. God becomes man. Pascal's radical emphasis on the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is the understanding of God as a personal being who enters into a relationship not only with people who are in the community, but also with every man personally. We can conclude that Blaise Pascal's Catholic faith was such because of the spirit of the time and the environment in which he lived. His Catholic faith was not in accordance with the official teaching of the Catholic Church. By emphasizing feelings in the knowledge of God and diminishing reason, Pascal denied the God that the philosophical tradition ponders upon, who is recognized as God in the theological tradition of early Christian theologians, especially

Justin Martyr, as well as in scholasticism, especially by Thomas Aquinas. The best proof of this is the identification of Jesus Christ with the term *Logos*, as well as the incorporation of Aristotle's philosophical system into Christian scholastic theology.

Pascal's way of knowing God – where he neglected the rational part of knowledge and thus limited God only to the Scripture and feelings – goes against the teachings of the Catholic Church, as well as the Scripture itself. Thus, his negation of the God of the philosophers is imprecise and inadequate. This paper has shown that the complementarity of faith and reason is essential for the knowledge of God, as well as that they are not mutually exclusive but that they complement each other. We have shown that the God of the philosophers does not exclude the God of faith, as well as that there is no significant difference between the God that philosophers pondered upon and the God who was revealed in the Scripture. We can thus conclude that the God of the philosophers is also the God of faith.

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