

BASIC DOCTRINE

Lesson 2

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD (THEOLOGY PROPER)

The greatest privilege for any believer is knowing God. Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, said in Jn. 17:3, *“And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”* Jesus defined eternal life as knowing God. The unbeliever does not know God and does not have a relationship with Him. Jesus said in the last days many deceived people will be surprised to discover that their man made religion failed to introduce them to God. Jesus said in Mt. 7:21-23 *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”* This lesson is designed to briefly introduce the doctrine of God or theology proper.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

- A. **Builds humility:** When you study God you are reminded of how big God is and how small you are. (See how people responded to seeing God – Ex. 34:8; Isa. 6:5; Lk. 5:8)
- B. **Builds perspective:** Knowing God helps you keep your perspective on life. It helps you not become anxious and to be calm in the trials of life because you know who God is and that He is in control.
- C. **Helps us live godly lives:** Because God is holy, righteous, just, etc. we can model our lives after him and strive to be like Him morally.
- D. **Gives life meaning:** God is the reason why we live and exist. If God doesn't exist then everything we do becomes meaningless, there are no standards, and right and wrong become relative.
- E. **Keeps us from sin:** Knowing God is just, wrathful, holy, and always watching is a deterrent against sinning. God sees all we do and avenges himself on the ungodly.
- F. God is the totality of all His infinite attributes. To know and understand God's attributes is to know and understand God. Therefore most studies about God focus on His attributes. Because God is an infinite being He has many attributes. If you were to try and study in depth all God's attributes found in Scripture it would take you a life time. Because this is an introductory study we study the attributes of God mentioned in the Westminster Shorter Catechism which we will use as our outline. As we look at the attributes of God mentioned in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, remember that some of the attributes mentioned are general attributes that include many others. For instance, God's goodness covers His grace, mercy, love, compassion, etc. God's goodness in a

general attributes and under the goodness of God, there are many other attributes of God that could be studied. The Westminster Shorter Catechism reads:

"God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."

II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD MENTIONED IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Below are listed the eleven attributes of God mentioned in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Under each attribute is a series of verses. Read each verse and write down the key phrase or thought that relates to or helps explain that specific attribute of God. Then in the application section try to write down how that attribute applies to you and why it is important.

A. Spirit

1. John 1:18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.
2. John 4:24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
3. II Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
4. I Tim. 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

a. Application:

B. Infinite (God is infinite in all His attributes. The verses below relate to some of His attributes of greatness i.e, omnipresence, immanence, transcendence.)

1. I Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built!
2. Psa. 139:7-12 Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Thy hand will lead me, And Thy right hand will lay hold of me. If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm

me, And the light around me will be night,” Even the darkness is not dark to Thee, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to Thee.

3. Jer. 23:23-24 “Am I a God who is near,” declares the Lord, “And not a God far off? “Can a man hide himself in hiding places, So I do not see him?” declares the Lord. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the Lord.
4. Isa. 66:1 Thus says the Lord, “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?
 - a. Application:

C. **Eternal**

1. Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2. Psa. 93:2 Thy throne is established from of old; Thou art from everlasting.
3. Isa. 43:10-13 “You are My witnesses,” declares the Lord, “And My servant whom I have chosen, In order that you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. “I, even I, am the Lord; And there is no savior besides Me. “It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,” declares the Lord, “And I am God. “Even from eternity I am He; And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?”
4. Rev. 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”
 - a. Application:

D. **Unchangeableness (Immutability)**

1. Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.
2. Isa. 46:8-11 “Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and

there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

3. James 1:17 Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.

- a. Application:

E. Being (The being of God describes God's existence.)

1. Exod. 3:13-14 "And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' then you shall say to him, 'With a powerful hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.
2. Psa. 90:1-2 Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.
3. Isa. 44:6 "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

- a. Application:

F. Wisdom

1. Psa. 147:5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.
2. Prov. 2:1-7 My son, if you will receive my sayings, And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the Lord, And discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity.

3. Rom. 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
4. Rom. 16:27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.
 - a. Application:

G. **Power** (Omnipotent)

1. Gen. 17:1 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.
2. Jer. 32:17, 27 'Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee, . . . "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"
3. Luke 1:37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."
 - a. Application:

H. **Holiness**

1. Psa. 47:8 God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne.
2. Isa. 6:3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."
3. I Pet. 1:15-16 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
4. Rev. 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

a. Application:

I. Justice

1. Deut. 10:17-18 “For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe. “He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.
2. Psa. 37:28 For the Lord loves justice, And does not forsake His godly ones; They are preserved forever; But the descendants of the wicked will be cut off.
3. Psa. 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before Thee.

a. Application:

J. Goodness

1. Psa. 25:8 Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.
2. Nahum 1:7 The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him.
3. Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

a. Application:

K. Truth

1. John 17:17 “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.
2. Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,
3. Heb. 6:18 in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is

impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.

a. Application:

III. THE TRINITY – ONE GOD, THREE PERSONS

The doctrine of the Trinity is a foundational doctrine of the Christian faith. The word Trinity describes how the one God has chosen to manifest himself in three distinct persons i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God, each person is distinct from the other two, and yet they all together make up the One God. When the attributes of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are compared, it becomes clear that they are all God, and yet the Scriptures teach there is only one God. Below is just a quick survey of the Trinity.

A. There is one God

1. Deut. 4:35, 39; 35 To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. . . 39 the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.
2. Isa. 45:5-6, 14, 21-22; 5 "I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. . . there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, 14 God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.' "21 . . . And there is no other God besides Me,. . . There is none except Me. 22 . . .For I am God, and there is no other.
3. Isa. 46:9 For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,

B. Allusions to the Triune God

1. Gen. 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .
2. Gen. 3:22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, . . .
3. Gen. 11:7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, . . .

C. The Scripture Often Mentions the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Together

1. Mt. 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
2. II Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
3. Tit. 3:4-6 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

D. Each Person of the Trinity is Referred to as God in the Bible

1. The Father is God
 - a. Jn. 6:27 “Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”
 - b. Jn. 8:54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’
 - c. Rom. 15:6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - d. II Cor. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.
2. Jesus is God
 - a. Jn. 1:1, 14, 18. . . the Word was God. . . . 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.
 - b. Jn. 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”
 - c. Tit. 2:11-14 . . . looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus . . .
 - d. Ex. 3:14 (I AM = Yahweh) cf. Jn. 8:24, 28, 58-59 (Jesus claims to be the I AM) 24 . . . for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” . . . 28 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of

Man, then you will know that I am He, . . . 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

3. The Holy Spirit is God

- a. Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit . . . You have not lied to men but to God.”
- b. I Cor. 2:10-11 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.
- c. II Cor. 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
- d. Heb. 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit . . .
- e. Jer. 31:31-34 (The Lord speaking) cf. Heb. 10:15-16 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us. . . (Then quotes Jer. 31)
- f. Heb. 3:7-9 cf. Ex. 16:7; 17:7 – The Lord speaking, vs. 4. Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, (then quotes what God said through Moses in Ex. 16 & 17)

IV. **TAKING TIME TO NOTICE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE**

A. **Psalm 145**

In the chart below is the text of **Psalm 145** (to the left). In the blanks to the right write down any attributes of God that you can find in the verse.

#	Verse	Attributes
1	I Will extol Thee, my God, O King; And I will bless Thy name forever and ever.	God, King, Sovereign, blessed, eternal
2	Every day I will bless Thee, And I will praise Thy name forever and ever.	Blessed, eternal

#	Verse	Attributes
3	Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable.	Lord, great, worthy of praise, unfathomable
4	One generation shall praise Thy works to another, And shall declare Thy mighty acts.	God who does mighty things
5	On the glorious splendor of Thy majesty, And on Thy wonderful works, I will meditate.	Glorious, Majestic, wonderful works
6	And men shall speak of the power of Thine awesome acts; And I will tell of Thy greatness.	Powerful, awesome, great
7	They shall eagerly utter the memory of Thine abundant goodness, And shall shout joyfully of Thy righteousness.	Goodness, righteousness
8	The Lord is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.	Gracious, merciful, patient, loving
9	The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.	Good, merciful
10	All Thy works shall give thanks to Thee, O Lord, And Thy godly ones shall bless Thee.	Praiseworthy, Lord, blessed
11	They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, And talk of Thy power;	Glorious, Sovereign, Powerful
12	To make known to the sons of men Thy mighty acts, And the glory of the majesty of Thy kingdom.	Mighty worker, glorious majesty & sovereignty
13	Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Thy dominion endures throughout all generations.	Sovereign, eternal
14	The Lord sustains all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down.	Lord, sustainer, compassionate
15	The eyes of all look to Thee, And Thou dost give them their food in due time.	Omniscient, preserving
16	Thou dost open Thy hand, And dost satisfy the desire of every living thing.	Sustainer, provider
17	The Lord is righteous in all His ways, And kind in all His deeds.	Lord, Righteous, Kind

#	Verse	Attributes
18	The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.	Lord, omnipresent, omniscience
19	He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.	Rewarder, just, near (immanent), savior
20	The Lord keeps all who love Him; But all the wicked, He will destroy.	Protects, preserves, just, wrathful
21	My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord; And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.	Lord, Blessed, holy, eternal

V. ERRORS ABOUT GOD

- A. **Pantheism:** The belief that all of creation is God, i.e. the trees, rocks, sky, etc.
- B. **Polytheism:** The belief that there are many gods.
- C. **Limiting God:** The practice of thinking God cannot do something He can. To doubt God's ability is to limit God. God is the God of the supernatural. He is by definition limitless.
- D. **Comparing God:** We often err when we compare God with men, or Satan, or any other created things. God being infinite makes all comparisons futile.
- E. **Living like God doesn't exist.** There are some who call themselves Christians who live like God doesn't exist. They claim to be in God's army but rely on their own ability and resources. They are practical atheists.
- F. **Thinking God is like man.** We err when we think of God in man centered (anthropocentric) terms. God is not like fallen man nor does He act like fallen man.
- G. **Living like God is always mad at you.** Some err when they live their lives like God is mad at them. Every time something goes wrong in their life they think God is punishing them. God disciplines believers but He always does it out of love.
- H. **Using God only for emergencies.** Many Christians live for themselves and their own pleasure. They only turn to God in tragedy. God to them is like an spare tire kept in the trunk in case of a blow out.
- I. **Failure to get to know God.** An eternally damning error is not to get to know God. Jesus died that we might know God but many are satisfied in just saying

they believe in Him. They put more time into reading the morning paper than their Bibles.

- J. **Thinking that knowing about God is the same as knowing God personally.** Many have some knowledge of God and think that knowledge will save them. But Satan also believes in God that way. It is one thing to know the president and quite another to be his close friend.
- K. **Rejecting the Trinity.** Some err when they deny the trinity. They try to merge the three persons of the trinity into one. If the godhead is not composed of three persons then the Bible is in error and cannot be trusted.
- L. **Not having faith in God and His Word.** Many say they have faith in or believe God but they never get around to finding out who God is and what God wants them to do. This knowledge is only found in the Bible which many treat as an antique to be admired but not to be studied.
- M. **Thinking you can define God any way you want.** Another common error is to define God in contradiction to the Bible. Some will claim God is Love, and so He is, but He is not only love.

Resources for Further Study

A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* and *The Pursuit of God*

J. I Packer, *Knowing God*

A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*