
Christian Apologetics

Doctrines of God

Questions We Face

- Who is the God of the Bible?
 - What is the Trinity?
 - How is Jesus also God?
 - What makes your God different from all the others?
 - Why should I worship your God and not another?
 - Why is the God of the OT different from the NT?
 - What does it mean that God is love?
 - If God is all-powerful, ...[insert question]?
 - If God is all-knowing, ...[insert question]?
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Agenda

- Intro
- The Trinity
 - God is One
 - God is One in Three Persons
 - Trinitarianism and Unitarianism
- God's Character
 - Holy
 - Unchanging/Immutability
 - Love/Grace/Mercy/Justice
 - Faithful
 - Truthful
- God's Sovereignty
 - Infinite
 - Omniscient/Omnipotent/Omnipresent
 - Transcendence and Immanence

Introduction

“It has been said by someone that “the proper study of mankind is man.” I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God’s elect is God – the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity...”

Introduction

“It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity – so deep that our pride is drowned in its infinity...No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind, than thoughts of God...But while the subject *humbles* the mind it also *expands* it. He who often thinks of God will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this narrow globe...Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity.”

- Rev. C. H. Spurgeon / A sermon delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 7, 1855

Introduction

“We have been brought to the point where we both can and must get our life’s priorities straight. From current Christian publications you might think that the most vital issue for any real or would-be Christian in the world today is church union, or social witness, or dialogue with other Christians and other faiths, or refuting this or that –ism, or developing a Christian philosophy and culture, or what have you...”

Introduction

“But our line of study makes the present-day concentration on these things look like a gigantic conspiracy of misdirection. Of course, it is not that: the issues themselves are real and must be dealt with in their place. But it is tragic that, in paying attention to them, so many in our day seem to have been distracted from what was, is, and always will be the true priority for every human being – that is, learning to know God in Christ.”

- J.I. Packer / In his book *“Knowing God”*

John 17:3 – “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

Introduction

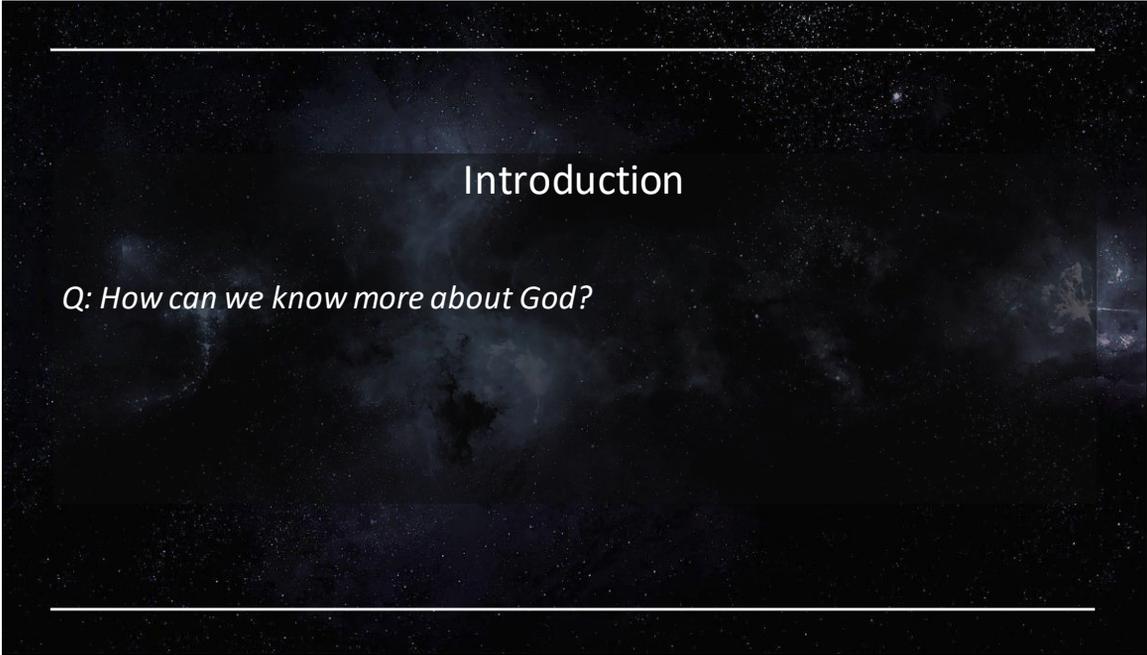
“There is a great difference between *knowing about* God and *knowing* God. Knowing about God is primarily a matter of information, whereas knowing God involves a first-hand personal experience and involvement. To illustrate: suppose that you are a single young man and I had a crystal ball into which I could look and reveal to you what the woman you will someday marry is like. I could tell you what she looks like, her likes and dislikes, her strengths, her weaknesses, her talents, her intellectual abilities, and her spiritual maturity. You would know all about her. But could you truly say that you know her?...”

Introduction

"I don't think so at all. There is no personal relationship between you and her. In fact, you might even say upon hearing my revelation, "Wow, I can't wait to get to know her!" There is a huge difference between knowing about someone and actually knowing that person. Through the crystal ball you might know all about her, but then someday she will walk into your life, and you'll get to really know her on a personal level."

- William Lane Craig / Defenders Podcast: Series 3 - "Doctrine of God"

The same goes for God. The goal should be for each person to be in a personal relationship with their creator and truly get to *know* God and then to encourage those whom you are engaged in apologetics with to do the same.



Introduction

Q: How can we know more about God?

A: God has revealed Himself to us through Scripture! If we want to know more about what God is like, His attributes, His thoughts, His very nature, we need to turn to the Bible.

Doctrines of God

- Doctrine – A belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a church, political party, or other group
 - Doctrines of God: The Trinity
 - God is One
 - God is One in Three Persons
 - Trinitarianism and Unitarianism
-

Polytheism

- Polytheism – The belief in or worship of more than one god
- Ancient Greeks – Twelve gods: Zeus(god of the sky), Hera(goddess of marriage, women, and family), Artemis,(goddess of the hunt)



Doctrines of God: God is One

Polytheism

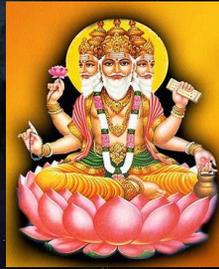
- Ancient Egyptians – Over 2000 deities in the pantheon: Isis(god of love, healing, etc.), Osiris(god of the underworld), Ra(god of the sun)



Doctrines of God: God is One

Polytheism

- Hinduism – 33 million gods: Vishnu(god of preservation), Brahma(god of creation and knowledge), Shiva(god of death and dissolution)



Doctrines of God: God is One

Henotheism

- Henotheism – The belief in many gods and worship in one
- Hinduism – 33 million gods: Vishnu(god of preservation), Brahma(god of creation and knowledge), Shiva(god of death and dissolution)



Doctrines of God: God is One

Monotheism

- Monotheism – The belief that there is only one God
 - Three major ones are the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- Q: *What is your reason for holding to the doctrine of monotheism?*
 - *Psalm 82:1 – “God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.”*

Doctrines of God: God is One

“Bible clearly doesn’t describe monotheism. There are many instances describing other gods.”

A: Psalm 82:1 – “God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:”

- a. Divine council – divine beings
- b. God’s place among these spiritual beings is Judge.
- c. These “gods” are the divine/spiritual beings that were appointed by God to be responsible for ruling the nations justly
 - i. This will be the case many of the times this argument is brought up. Other ways “gods” will be expressed are in the things we put first in our lives; money, idols, etc.

The Bible affirms that God is One

- Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”
- Deuteronomy 5:4 – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”
- Isaiah 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; besides me there is no god.”
- 1 Corinthians 8:6 – “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one LORD, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”

Doctrines of God: God is One

Question

- *Q: Outside of the Bible, do you have any reasons to hold to monotheism?*
- Argument from order – multiple creators and authorities would be chaos
- Perfect being theology & Maximally great being – The view that God is the greatest conceivable being or the most perfect being

Doctrines of God: God is One

Argument from order – Says who!? Who is making the claim that multiple, perfect beings can't coexist in an orderly fashion?

PBT/MGB – What about "perfection" or being "maximally great" leads to the conclusion there is "one" God?

It is ok to allow the thoughts and questions to remain unanswered in the moment. When engaging in apologetics, I would rather you be honest in saying the logical argument presented to you for why someone believes monotheism is false, especially from arguments outside of the bible, do in fact makes sense (if they in fact actually do), than for you to fabricate something just to force your argument.

We are called to give OUR REASON for believing and so we should point to all the things we have talked about in past classes. Revelation, witness of the Holy Spirit, Jesus and His resurrection, and Biblical inspiration and inerrancy. These are the basis for the reasons WE have for our faith.

The Trinity

- This term is not explicitly stated in the Bible.
- It is a systematic summary of what the Bible indicates to be the nature of God; that there is exactly one God and that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

Clear Distinction of Persons

- Galatians 4:4-6 “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

We see clear distinctions between Father, son, and Holy Spirit in this verse. It tells us that each is recognizably different from the others.

God is our Heavenly Father

- Psalm 89:26 – “He shall cry to me, ‘You are my Father. My God, And the Rock of my salvation.’”
- Isaiah 63:16 – “For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LOORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.”
- Matthew 6:9 – “Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be your name...”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

We see in the OT and in the NT reference to the Father as God.

In Matt 6, Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray to God and in doing so, regarding Him as Father.

The Son is God

- Colossians 1:15-19 – “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

These passage are speaking of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Son is God

- Colossians 2:9 – “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily...”.
- Mark 1:9-11 – “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

These passage are speaking of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son

- 1 Corinthians 8:6 – “yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one LORD, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

Both God the Father and LORD Jesus Christ are clearly differentiated, and both are described in having a part in all things and our existence, FROM God and THROUGH Jesus Christ.

God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son

- “Jesus is *ho theos*” = “Jesus is Father/God”
- “Jesus is *kyrios*” = “Jesus is LORD”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

The writers of the NT were very careful to describe Jesus. You won't see a direct statement that “Jesus is God.” This would be “Jesus is *ho theos*” in the Greek which would mean “Jesus is Father:”

They instead refer to Jesus as “*kyrios*” meaning LORD in the Greek. “*kyrios*” is the translation of the OT name of God – Yahweh.

God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son

- Romans 10:9 – “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is LORD and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
- Romans 10:13 – “For “everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”
- Joel 2:32 – “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

Here we see Paul stating the “Jesus is LORD(*kyrios*)”

He then provides verse 13 as a proof text and this is pulled from the OT in Joel 2:32

This is Paul connecting a passage about God of the OT to Jesus in the NT

This was a clever way of saying Jesus is God, but also acknowledging God the Father is distinct from Jesus the Son, who is also God.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Mac brought up a challenging verse during one of breaks in class. I thought I'd add that to the notes. In reference to the Messiah: Isaiah 9:6 - "...and his name shall be called Wonder Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." How is Jesus Christ, the *Son* of God, to be called "Everlasting Father"? Take some time to find the answer! If you'd rather not...then the answer can be found in the notes on the "Sources" slide, the final slide of the powerpoint.

The Holy Spirit

- John 14:16-17 – “ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”
- John 15:26 – “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

As we have seen in previous passages, there are plenty available to us to show distinction between the three persons of the Trinity.

We see the Holy Spirit is given the masculine pronouns “he/him”, ascribing personhood.

The Holy Spirit

- John 16:13-14 – “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

The Holy Spirit acts in the name and authority of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit

- Romans 8:9 – “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

He is so closely identified with Jesus Christ, he is often referred to as the Spirit of Christ or Spirit of the Son.

This passage also unifies the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as one in the same

All these passages point us to an understanding of the Trinity. They point to the distinct persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Trinitarianism

- Teaching that God has revealed Himself in three co-equal and co-eternal persons.
- The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons and of one “substance”, God.

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

Trinitarianism

- Ontological Trinity – This indicates that in the Trinity there are three persons who together are one being that exists in and of itself apart from God’s relationship to creation.
- Economic Trinity – This tells us how the Trinity engages with humanity. The Father sends the Son who submits to and does the Father’s will. The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son in speaking and declaring what He hears.

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

Ontology – A study dealing with the nature of existence/being

The best analogy to describe economic trinity would be that of marriage. Two distinct persons are joined to be one unit. In this unit there is an economy. The wife submits to the leadership of her husband, and both are equally image bearers of God. The wife is not inferior to the husband. It is a matter of order.

Unitarianism

- Primary rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and deity of Christ. Jesus was a prophet, teacher, etc. and fully and only human.
- Modalism – Teaching that God is one being with different “modes”. God is one person assuming the three roles, wearing different “faces” as needed within His relationship with humanity. When God is the Son, there is no Father. It was the Father who became incarnate as the Son and suffered and died on the cross.

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

This is an opposing viewpoint on the Trinity of God.
God is one and only one.

To hold to either of the Unitarianism views presented, you would have to completely change what the Bible says. While modalism accepts the deity of Christ, a vast number of passages would simply make no sense.

Trinitarianism – Psalm 2:7 – “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

Modalism – Where is their Psalm 2:7? – “I am my own Son; today I have begotten me.” There is no verse that speaks in this “I/me” manner. It is always in a “you/I” manner.

When Jesus prays to the Father, they would have to say that it was the human nature praying to the divine side of himself. They would also have to explain what is occurring when Jesus says to the Father in Luke 22:42 – “...not my will, but yours, be done.”

Application

- *How do we apply the Doctrine of the Trinity to our lives?*
 - *The doctrine of the Trinity helps us to order our prayer lives correctly.*
 - *The Trinity provides a very healthy model of the family and the marriage relationship.*

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

1. Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount taught His disciples to pray to the Father. “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.” Our prayers are to be directed to the Father.
2. Jesus said, “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” When we pray, we go to the Father in the person and the authority of the Son. Hebrews 4:16 – “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence...” This is only possible because of Christ Jesus, the Son of God.
3. We pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:26-27 – “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
4. When we don’t know the words to use, what to pray, how to pray, if what we are praying for is correct, whatever it may be, we have the Holy Spirit within us interceding for us.
5. When we pray, we pray to the Father, under the authority of the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Application

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Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

1. *When looking at the economy of the Trinity, we come to understand the roles of each person of God and their roles in salvation. There is a form of submission within the Trinity and yet they are co-equals.*
2. The same can be said for families and marriage.
 1. Galatians 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
 2. In a marriage, husband and wife become one flesh and the wife is called to submit to her husband’s leadership. From there, children are called to submit to their parents. In all this, they are all co-equals in Christ and as image bearers of God. This is not a measure of value and worth, but of order.

Application

- *How do we apply the Doctrine of the Trinity to our apologetics?*
 - *How is our God any different from ones of other religions?*
 - *Which one of the “three gods” am I supposed to worship? “Sure sounds a lot like polytheism!”*

Doctrines of God: God is One in Three Persons

When we come to understand what the Bible tells us about the Trinity, we can begin to answer these questions.

God is Holy

- Isaiah 57:15a – “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:”
- 2 Peter 3:8 – “But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the LORD one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”
- Isaiah 55:8-9 – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
- 1 Peter 1:16 – “...you shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Doctrines of God: God's Character

Holy means to be “set apart” or “separate”. When we say God is Holy, we say He is separate from His creation in all aspects. It refers to Him being not of creation. It also sets the standard of living we as Christian are called to.

God is Unchanging/God's Immutability

- Psalm 102:25-27 – “Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.”

Doctrines of God: God's Character

God's being, attributes, and ethical commitments He has given, cannot change. Not “does not change” as if he chooses, but “cannot change” out of necessity. His very nature is unchanging. He cannot do evil, because he *is* good.

Unchangeable in existence

God exists, eternally. He does not disappear one moment and reappear the next. He is there permanently. This should all bring incredible assurance and peace of mind. No matter what trial you are going through; no matter what calamities occur in this world; God is the same for all of eternity.

What do we mean by change? God is not utterly and totally immutable. We shouldn't look at this as a “vertical” change but “horizontal” one. We should understand that God does not become less or more loving in change, but He does love differently at different times for different people. How God shows me love is not the same as He might show you. This is a “change” in how He loves, but that doesn't mean His love has lessened for one vs the other.

God is Love

- 1 John 4:16b – “God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- *Q: What do you mean when you say God is Love?*
- *Q: Can we also say Love is God?*

Doctrines of God: God's Character

To say that God is love is to describe how He is in His very nature. When we look at the Trinity, we see a tri-personal being, whose very being “embodies” love. God is essentially loving.

God is Love

“Consider the love relationship between the members of the Trinity! Since intra-Trinitarian relations are not based on physical influence chains or rooted in any material substrata, but are, as it were, purely telepathic, the response of the Son to the Father’s love entails neither change nor temporal separation. Just as we speak metaphorically of two lovers who sit, not speaking a word, gazing into each other’s eyes as “lost in that timeless moment,” so we may speak literally of the timeless mutual love of the Father, Son, and Spirit for one another....”

Doctrines of God: God’s Character

God is Love

“Within the fullness of the Godhead itself, the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit enjoy the inter-personal relations afforded by the Trinity which God is. As a Trinity, God is eternally complete, with no need of fellowship with finite persons. It is a marvel of God’s grace and love that He would freely create finite persons and invite them to share in the love and joy of the inner Trinitarian life of God.”

- William Lane Craig / In his article “Divine Timelessness and Personhood”

Doctrines of God: God’s Character

God is Gracious

- Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
- Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our LORD.
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Doctrines of God: God's Character

Grace is best described as “undeserved favor”, which can be made manifest in the workings of God. God's nature is to delight in giving unmerited favor to those who are undeserving.

His grace is clearly shown to us in salvation through the work of Jesus Christ.

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are fully responsible for the death we deserve and we certainly are undeserving of salvation. However, God's grace is freely and abundantly shown in His providing atonement and forgiveness for our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

God is Merciful

- Ephesians 2:4-5 – “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”
- Titus 3:5 – “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

Doctrines of God: God's Character

Mercy is the gift of God's undeserved kindness and compassion. It is often expressed in God withholding something, such as punishment for sin.

God is Just

- Romans 2:5-6, 11 – “But because of you hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgement will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his work’s...For God shows no partiality.
- 2 Corinthians 5:10 – “For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil?”
- Romans 3:25-26 – Christ Jesus...”whom God put forward as a propitiation ... It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Doctrines of God: God’s Character

For justice to exist there must be a moral standard with which all moral creatures are judged. God, as creator of this universe, determines the standard. In being just, His righteous judgement will show no partiality.

It would be an unjust for God not to hold sinners accountable for all they are guilty of having done.

God is Just

- Retributive Justice – The punishment of the guilty is justified because the guilty deserve punishment
- Restorative Justice – This aims to evaluate the harm done and to determine what can be done to repair that harm, while still punishing the guilty and restoring, and rehabilitating them in the process.

Doctrines of God: God's Character

Restorative justice - Biblically this showed as restitution. As the guilty party, you would pay the victim back and then some. This can come in the form of possessions, years of servitude, etc. The guilty would pay for the crime and the victim would "be made whole."

The political left's view of restorative justice, unfortunately, tends to head in the direction of the exclusion of accountability or alternative to punitive measures. The guilty party goes to a group once a week for some time period, sits in a circle and talk about things and acknowledges their wrongdoing, but in the end they pay no punitive price for their crime.

God is Just

- *Q: If God is all-powerful, why doesn't He just pardon everyone?*
- *Q: Did Jesus have to die? Why bother with all the torture and death of an innocent man?*
- *Q: If God is loving and just, what about all the good people who have never heard the Gospel?*

Doctrines of God: God's Character

A1: I think the need for justice creates a line and enforces it. What is good, remains good. What is evil, remains evil.

A2: Jesus on the cross allows for God's love, grace, mercy, AND justice to be played out.

A3:

- Those who have never heard do not go to hell because they have never heard of, nor believe in Jesus.
 - We are all judged for our sin. It is each person's sin, breaking God's moral law that sends them to hell.
- God has not hidden Himself from anyone
 - Revelation in Nature - Romans 1:20 – "For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."
 - Revelation in Consciousness – Romans 2:14:16 – "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that

day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.”

- Share the gospel with this individual.
- Either God pays for our sins or we do.

God is Faithful

- Psalm 119:89-90 – “Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.
- 2 Timothy 2:13 – “If we are faithless, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself.”

Doctrines of God: God's Character

God's faithfulness means He keeps His word and always fulfills His promises. It endures to all generations. His faithfulness is eternal.

We are called to be faithful in our lives to God and to others and even when we are not, we have a God who is. Faithfulness is part of God's very nature. To be otherwise would be to deny Himself or to stop Himself from being who He is.

God is Truthful

- Titus 1:2 – “in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.
- Hebrews 6:18 – “so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie...”

Doctrines of God: God's Character

The Scriptures are clear that in God there is no falsehood.

God represents things as they really are. Everything He says can be trusted because God guarantees the truth of everything He tells us. The call for humans to be honest and not to bear false witness is rooted in the utter truthfulness of our Creator. Telling the truth is one way we bear the image of God, whose Son is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

There are a lot of misconceptions about the character of God out there. A lot of viewpoints on how evil can exist, the injustices in the world, the seemingly different God of the OT vs the NT, if He is Love why does it seem to be for only some people, etc. The list goes on and on, and when we know the character of God we can begin to help them understand these questions in life and we can point them to a God who is Holy, unchanging, loving, gracious, merciful, just, faithful, and truthful. And so, I would encourage you to dive even deeper into knowing more about these attributes and begin to build reasons you can look back to when discussing the character of God. How has God's Love been revealed to you? How has God been faithful in your life? Etc.

God is Infinite

- Job 11:7-9 – “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven – What can you do? Deeper than Sheol – What can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.”
- Psalm 147:5 – “Great is our LORD, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.”

Doctrines of God: God's Sovereignty

God being infinite means that there are no boundaries on His qualities and existence.

When we talk of infinity, we are not talking quantitatively. If I added a quarter every minute into an infinitely capable jar and did so for eternity, I would have an infinite number of clearly defined and countable objects, quarters.

When we talk about the infinite attribute of God, we are talking qualitatively. God is not made up of an infinite number of defined and countable “things.” What we mean is that God’s attributes extend eternally. As we will dig into a little more, God is All-powerful, All-knowing, etc. These attributes of God are conceivably, inconceivable. They are all encompassing.

God is Omniscient

- 1 John 3:29 – “for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.”
- Psalm 139:4 – “Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, I LORD, you know it altogether.”
- John 37:16 – “Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge...?”

Doctrines of God: God's Sovereignty

Omni = “all”

Scientia = “knowledge”

Scripture teaches that God is all-knowing

God is Omniscient

- Natural Knowledge – God knows all that COULD be.
 - God knowing all possibilities, including all necessary truths, such as the laws of logic, all the possible individuals as well as all possible actions and reactions of they might take and all possible worlds he could create.
- Free Knowledge – God knows all that WILL be.
 - This knowledge is the result of the free act of God’s will. God knows all things that are going to happen and this knowledge is contingent upon His free creative will.

Doctrines of God: God’s Sovereignty

God is Omniscient

- Middle Knowledge - God knows what every individual **WOULD** do
 - God knows what free choices individuals would make in whatever circumstance they might find themselves in.

Doctrines of God: God's Sovereignty

The knowledge God has extends to all things past, present, and future and it is perfect and complete.

God is Omnipotent

- *Q: Who here has ever said God is all-powerful? What did you mean by it?*
- While all-powerful is the first thing we attribute to God's omnipotence, we need to also take into consideration the range of omnipotence.

Doctrines of God: God's Sovereignty

God is all-powerful

God has limits! God has complete power and authority over His creation, but anything outside of God's nature or beyond the realm of possibility, He cannot do. Sin would go against His nature and so God cannot sin. God is truthful and so He cannot lie.

As Christians, we can find peace in the understanding that God has no lesser degree of good, love, grace, mercy, etc. God is all-powerful in these things and in the absolute fullness of these things. In that God is also unchanging, He will never be or do anything else!

God is Omnipresent

- Psalm 139:7-12 – “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,” even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

Doctrines of God: God's Sovereignty

God is all-present

God's omnipresence refers to His presence in all time and all places simultaneously.

God is present wherever we are. There is no thing that occurs in all of creation that He is unaware of; no sin, injustice, hurt, etc. There is no place in space or time where God's knowledge and power do not reach.

God is Omnipresent

- God's omnipresence is also a deterrent for sin.
- God's omnipresence should change how we live our lives in worship to Him.
- Immensity of God – This viewpoint says that God is literally present in all points of space in time in His creation.
- *Q: How does God's omnipresence affect your view of hell?*

Doctrines of God: God's Sovereignty

We see the effects of the lack of law enforcement in cities across America. Theft and destruction of property, with no repercussion. How much crime can be prevented by the simple presence of law enforcement? One of the things I challenged my Wednesday Bible study was whether they truly saw their relationship with God as "real" in the sense of tangibility. Would you commit a crime with an officer beside you? And yet we sin...

We mustn't think God is only there when we are at church, when in the presence of other believers, or only when "I" go to Him. When we also think of God, many will have a picture of a physical human God sitting on a throne in heaven. While God may present Himself in certain ways in certain times and places, this does not take away from His omnipresence.

God is Transcendent and Immanent

- Isaiah 55:8-9 – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Doctrines of God: God's Sovereignty

God's transcendence refers to Him being distinct from, and independent of, all of creation.

God's greatness, power, goodness, beauty, etc. transcend human comprehension. It also means that God is outside of humanity's full experience, perception or grasp. What we experience is simply a reflection/echo of all that He truly is. His transcendent nature makes Him superior in every way. However, God is also Immanent!

When we say that God is immanent, we mean God is knowable, perceivable, and/or can be grasped by His own doing. God is not some distant, aloof, impersonal God, but one who is very much personal and intimately involved in His creation, yet distinct. God reveals Himself to us in creation and through Scripture and Jesus Christ. He wants a personal relationship with His creation and the Bible is clear that He is present and actively involved in it.

Question of the Day

Q: If knowing God, experientially, is what's important, why then should we spend our time knowing about God?

A1: When we know that God is faithful, we can be assured that He will be with us always. When we know that God is unchanging, we have a firm foundation to stand on; a foundation that is unwavering and will not suddenly turn to sand. When we come to know that God is omniscient, we can place our trust in Him and the direction He is leading us in life. When we come to know these things *about* God, then we can begin to understand how to navigate our relationship *with* God.

Benediction: To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:17)

SOURCES

- Study Bible(ESV)
- Biblehub.com
- Gotquestions.org
- Christianity.com
- Reasonablefaith.org
- Knowwhyyoubelieve.org
- Ligonier.org
- Atheists.org
- The Gospel Project, *The 99 Essential Doctrines*. LifeWay Christian Resources, 2018.

In reference to the Messiah: Isaiah 9:6 - "...and his name shall be called Wonder Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

The word for Everlasting Father/Father of Eternity is "abi ad".

"abi" means "(my) father is"

"ad" means perpetuity or eternal/forever

The article below references all the names with "abi". The writer uses Abigail(abi gayil) as an example. If it is translated HER name exactly like we do in Isaiah 9:6, the HER name would be Joyous Father/Father of Joy. SHE is clearly not a man nor a father and so her name, and all the ones who share "abi" should be understood as descriptors of their father. So a correct translation for Abigail would be (my) Joyous Father/(my) Father is Joy and so "abi ad" SHOULD be translated as (my) Father is Eternal.

<https://bib.irr.org/everlasting-father-in-isaiah-96-descriptive-of-messiah-or-his-father>