

# The Doctrine of God

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There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful and all-knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. *(Baptist Faith and Message, 2000)*

## I. THE NAMES OF GOD

- A. Elohim – Lord or Master
- B. Adonai – term of respect, lord, helper in time of need
- C. Yahweh – I am that I am, Redeemer
- D. Jesus – Yahweh is Salvation

## II. THE PERSONHOOD OF GOD

- A. Dualism – good and evil principles of equal power
- B. Pantheism – God is identified in everything
- C. Polytheism – there are a lot of different gods
- D. Monotheism – there is one God (This is our belief.)

## III. THE TRINITY

- A. Defined – God is revealed to us as a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. The Persons have a common intelligence, will, and power. The Three are one. There is one God. The one Godhead exists in three modes of being at the same time. The three persons have an indivisible substance.
- B. The Trinity is a unity. All three Persons of the Trinity share the same essence, nature, will, and mind. Any distinctions in the Trinity are manifest in such a way that the essential quality of the Persons is evident.
- C. The Trinity is an expression of diversity. While the three Persons have the same essence or nature, they are nevertheless distinct and unique in their Persons. All three persons are necessary for an accurate understanding of God.
- D. The Persons of the Trinity have different functions in relation to salvation. The Father sends the Son, the Son reveals the Father, and the Holy Spirit enables men to receive the Son's revelation of the Father.

- E. The Trinity is eternal. The Persons of the Godhead are eternal. Their distinctions did not come to be as the result of an imminent need or an economic mission.

#### IV. HERESIES SURROUNDING THE TRINITY.

- A. Unitarianism – The focus of this heresy is the Person and work of Jesus. Though it has appeared in various forms, Unitarian thought never regards Jesus as truly divine. He is regarded as being uniquely supernaturally endowed, He is sometimes seen as a supernatural being but a little less than God, but His divinity is always denied.
- B. Modalism – This heresy has taken many forms over the years. Sabellianism is one of the more ancient forms of this heresy. Oneness Pentecostalism is a more recent expression of this heresy. Modalism teaches that God is one person who manifests Himself in three different offices or modes: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C. Arianism – Arius, the Bishop of Alexandria, whose views were condemned by the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, taught that God the Son did not exist at one time and was created by the Father. He is similar to the Father but does not have the same nature. The Son is a heavenly being, but He is not divine.

#### V. IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRINITY

- A. The work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is each the work of God.
- B. Their work is inclusive rather than exclusive.
- C. The word “persons” is used to draw distinctions and should be used with qualifications.
- D. The Trinity is an eternal reality, not a man-made, temporal construction.

#### VI. SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TRINITY

Matthew 3:16, 17	Matthew 28:19	John 14:26	2 Corinthians 13:14
Genesis 1:26	Genesis 3:22	Genesis 11:7	Isaiah 6:8
Ephesians 4:4-6	1 Peter 1:2	Jude 20, 21	1 John 5:7

#### VII. GOD THE FATHER

- A. The Father reigns in providential care over the universe.
- B. God is the Father in a general sense in that He is the Creator of all things. He is the origin of all life, and He extends His grace, mercy, and love to all created things.
- C. God the Father is the unique father of the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the only begotten of the Father.
- D. God is the Father of the redeemed in a particular sense in that He adopted the believer into His family based upon the work of Jesus, His son.

## VIII. GOD THE SON

- A. The biblical names for the Son
  1. Christ – the equivalent of the Messiah or anointed one
  2. Jesus – Yahweh is salvation
  3. LORD – God in the flesh, the personal name of God
  4. Word – open, speaking manifestation of God, the Agent of creation; Greek philosophy – the governing principle of the universe
  5. Son of Man – Jesus' favorite self-designation, a Messianic title
  6. Son of God – stresses the deity of Christ; eternal sonship – proclaims some kind of activity of the divine Father and passivity of the Son
- B. The Incarnation
  1. Jesus is a human being
  2. Jesus grew and developed as a man
  3. Jesus is the only sinless man
- C. The Supernatural Character of Christ
  1. The Virgin birth
  2. His miracle-working ministry
  3. The Resurrection
- D. The Divine nature of Jesus
  1. The eternal sonship of Christ
  2. The ability to forgive sins
- E. Jesus as Lord and Savior  
Mark 2:5      John 1:1-18      John 5:17      John 8:58      John 20:28  
Romans 9:5      Phil. 2:5-11      Col. 1:15-20      1 Pe. 1:11, 20      John 14:6
- F. The Work of the Son
  1. Incarnation
  2. Obedience
  3. Substitutionary Death
  4. Resurrection
  5. Judgment
  6. Reign

## IX. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. Meanings of Spirit
  1. *Ruah* or *pneuma* – wind or breath
  2. The animating force of all living things
  3. The inner reality of the being of God
  4. The energy or power of God working toward a divine purpose
  5. The personal presence of God as manifest in the Church
- B. The Work of the Holy Spirit
  1. Scripture – revelation, inspiration, illumination, preservation
  2. Empowering Agent – in Jesus and the Church

3. Conversion – convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment
4. Sanctification – indwelling presence and power for a holy life
5. Ministry – grants success in evangelism, discipleship, and missions
6. Salvation
  - a. Convicts of sin – John 16:8
  - b. Gives new birth – John 3:3
  - c. Gives assurance to the saved – Romans 8:14-17
  - d. Seals the believer for eternity – Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30

X. RELATIONS WITHIN THE TRINITY

Perichoresis - The concept that each Person within the Trinity seeks as His highest good and purpose to exalt, glorify, and bless the others. It is a mutually beneficial self-giving of Self to Another who is an equal. There is no diminution implied.

XI. GOD'S RELATIONSHIP TO CREATION

- A. Deism – God is an impersonal force who is detached from His creation and is unknowable apart from creation and natural laws.
- B. Providence – God's personal and continual involvement in creation in which He maintains their existence and function, in which He along with moral agents work to accomplish His purpose, and in which He absolutely guarantees the fulfillment of His design.
- C. Compatibilism – The absolute sovereignty of God is compatible with human significance and real human choices.
- D. Contingency – God uses the free acts of man to infallibly accomplish His purpose.

XII. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- A. An attribute is a permanent quality that cannot be gained or lost.
- B. There are two types of attributes of God: incommunicable and communicable.
- C. The Incommunicable Attributes of God – those which of necessity cannot be bestowed but which of necessity exist only in God
  1. Self-existence – God does not depend upon another for His existence
  2. Eternality – God has not beginning or end
  3. Omnipresence – God is unlimited by space and time
  4. Omnipotence – God possesses all power or unlimited power
  5. Omniscience – God knows all things; extends to actual and contingent knowledge
  6. Immensity – God cannot be contained conceptually or spatially
  7. Immutability – God does not change His character, nature or purpose. He is incapable of change either in duration of life, nature, character, or will.
    - a. Enter a new, sometimes radical phase of God's plan

- b. Apparent due to the result of man's move in a different relationship with God
    - c. Anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms
  - 8. Unity – never conflicted or divided as to purpose
- D. Communicable Attributes of God – those which to a limited degree are bestowed on men
  - 1. Attributes of Being – spirituality and invisibility
  - 2. Attributes of Intellect – knowledge, wisdom, and faithfulness
  - 3. Attributes of Morality – goodness, love, mercy, holiness, peace, righteousness, justice, and wrath
  - 4. Attributes of Purpose – will, freedom, moral agency

### XIII. THE WILL OF GOD

- A. Defined – That power inherent in God's nature, by which He purposes and chooses any end or object, and determines its existence. It is dictated by God's nature, not just arbitrary choice.
- B. Distinctions of God's Will
  - 1. Decretive – The will of God by which He purposes and decrees whatever shall come to pass, whether He wills to accomplish it Himself effectively, or causally, or to permit it to occur through the unrestrained agency or will of His creatures. This category of God's will is always fulfilled.
  - 2. Preceptive – That category of God's will in which God prescribes what is to be done through human agency. This category may be disobeyed or unfulfilled.
  - 3. *Eudokia* – What shall certainly be done stemming from God's good pleasure
  - 4. *Euarestia* – What pleases God to be done
  - 5. *Beneplicitum* – A will of God which is confined to Himself until He makes it known by some kind of revelation or by an event itself.
  - 6. *Signum* – A will of God which has been made known
  - 7. Secret – The will of decree which for the most part is hidden in God
  - 8. Revealed – The will of precept as disclosed in the Bible
- C. Summary
  - 1. Nothing frustrates God's decree
  - 2. Nothing escapes God's decree
  - 3. Nothing conditions God's free choice
  - 4. God is not the immediate cause of sinful acts
  - 5. The doctrine of God is the central point for much of the rest of theology