



The Essentials: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine
Class #2 – God

I. **The Importance of Studying God**

- a. A.W. Tozer – “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...your worship can go no higher than your knowledge of God...man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God”
 - i. As believers, it is absolutely vital and essential that we know who God is, what God is like, and what God desires from His creation (His Will)
 - ii. How can we properly and accurately worship, serve, and proclaim a God we don’t know?
 - iii. A.W. Pink – “An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, nor worshipped”
 - iv. Joseph Holden – “Idolatry can be either metal or mental”
 - v. If your view of God is inaccurate, there is a very high probability that your view of worship, morals, salvation, the Bible, the Son of God, etc. will also be inaccurate – everything flows from your knowledge and understanding of God
- b. Therefore, let us approach this sacred topic with great reverence and fear as we understand its importance, but also, with great passion and diligence as we understand its benefits – “God has revealed Himself, let’s get to know Him”

II. **The Views of God**

- a. Let’s look at the various views and concepts people have of God
 - i. We refer to these views of God as “worldviews” – a worldview is simply the way someone views the world in which they live
 - ii. They are the lenses, or glasses, by which you see and interpret everything around you (how you interpret the data of life)
 - iii. Let’s take a look at some of the major worldviews:
- b. Theism
 - i. This worldview believes in the existence of one infinite, personal God who is the Creator of all things
 - ii. He is beyond the universe (transcendent), but He is also in the universe (immanent) – He is in the world but not of the world
 - iii. Judaism, Islam, and **Christianity** each have adopted theism as their worldview, however, they differ on what exactly this infinite, personal God is like and what His will for His creation is
- c. Deism
 - i. This worldview believes in the existence of one infinite, personal God who is the Creator of all things
 - ii. He is beyond the universe (transcendent), but He is not in the universe (not immanent) – He created the universe but remains distant from it and is not actively involved in it
 - iii. This view believes God simply wound up the universe like a clock and allows it to run on its own
- d. Atheism

- i. This worldview believes in the existence of no God anywhere in the universe or beyond it – it denies God’s existence altogether
- ii. The universe is all there is and arose purely by chance without any intelligent cause whatsoever (i.e. no Creator)
- e. Agnosticism
 - i. This worldview believes the existence of God is unknowable – conclusions about God are impossible to prove or disprove
 - ii. Agnostics hold to the view – “*We cannot know anything about God*”
- f. Pantheism
 - i. This worldview believes God is identical with the universe (God is the Universe) – there is no distinction between the Creator and creation
 - ii. Pantheist believe God is all and all is God – all is one substance
- g. Polytheism
 - i. This worldview believes in the existence of many finite gods beyond and in the universe
 - ii. The gods are usually named after natural phenomena’s or human traits – god of war (Ares), sea (Poseidon), beauty (Aphrodite), wisdom (Athena), the sun (Apollo), etc.

III. The Revelations of God

- a. Let’s look at how God has revealed Himself to His creation
 - i. How can we know God? How can we know what He is like? How can we know He exists? How can we know His will for our lives?
 - ii. The Bible teaches us that God has revealed Himself to us in two different ways – two types of revelation:
- b. First, General Revelation – this type of revelation reveals to us the existence of God and a few of His attributes
 - i. 1) God has revealed Himself through Nature
 - ii. **Psalm 19:1-4a** – “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world...*”
 - iii. **Romans 1:19-20** – “*Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.*”
 - iv. 2) God has revealed Himself through Providential Care
 - v. **Matthew 5:45b** – “*...for He (God) makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*”
 - vi. **Acts 14:15-17** – “*...we preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*”
 - vii. 3) God has revealed Himself through Conscience
 - viii. **Romans 2:14-15** – “*For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law of themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them*”
- c. Second, Special Revelation – this type of revelation reveals to us the existence of God, most of His attributes, His will and plan for mankind, His plan of salvation, etc.

- i. 1) God has revealed Himself through the Holy Scriptures
- ii. **Amos 3:7** – “*Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets*”
- iii. **Hebrews 1:1** – “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets*”
- iv. **2 Peter 1:21** – “*For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*”
- v. **2 Timothy 3:16a** – “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*”
- vi. 2) God has revealed Himself through His Son – Jesus of Nazareth
- vii. **John 1:18** – “*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*”
- viii. **Hebrews 1:1-2a** – “*God, who at various times and various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...*”
- ix. **Revelation 1:5a** – “*...from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness...*”

IV. The Attributes of God

- a. Let's look at what God is like
 - i. God has revealed Himself to us, therefore, we are able to get to know Him and learn what He is like by studying His attributes
 - ii. An attribute is simply a characteristic, quality, or essential trait that can be attributed to someone (something true about their nature)
 - iii. Thus, an attribute of God is a characteristic, quality, or essential trait that can be attributed to God (something true about God's nature)
 - iv. God's attributes reveal His nature, thus, by studying the attributes of God we can understand what He is like
- b. The attributes of God generally fall into two categories:
 - i. **1)** Metaphysical Attributes also known as Incommunicable Attributes – these are attributes that God does not share with us
 - ii. **2)** Moral Attributes also known as Communicable Attributes – these are attributes that God does share with us
 - iii. Therefore, let's look at some of the Metaphysical and Moral Attributes of God and let's get to know our Creator – “*...the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you*” Cf. **Acts 17:23b**

V. The Metaphysical Attributes of God

- a. Attribute #1 – “Unity”
 - i. God is One – He has no equal, rival, or counterpart (we believe in the existence of only one God and not many gods)
 - ii. **Isaiah 45:5a** – “*I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God beside Me...*”
 - iii. **Isaiah 46:9** – “*Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me*”
 - iv. Argument for the Unity of God:
 - v. 1) If two or more Gods existed they would have to differ
 - vi. 2) In order to differ, one must have what the other lacks (or else there is no difference, thus, they would be identical)
 - vii. 3) An absolutely perfect being can't lack anything
 - viii. 4) Therefore, there can be only one absolutely perfect being
- b. Attribute #2 – “Tri-Unity”
 - i. God is Triune – He is a Trinity (we believe in One God eternally existence in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit)

- ii. Each Person within the Godhead possesses the same divine nature (co-equal, co-eternal), yet they are distinct in their personhood, function, and position
- iii. **Matthew 28:19** – “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” Cf. Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14
- iv. Argument for the Tri-Unity of God:
- v. 1) The Bible declares that there is only One God Cf. 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 3:30; James 2:19; Galatians 3:20
- vi. 2) However, the Bible identifies three distinct Persons as God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
 - 1. The Father Cf. Romans 1:7; Galatians 1:1; John 17:3; John 6:27
 - 2. The Son Cf. John 1:1; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1
 - 3. The Holy Spirit Cf. Acts 5:3-4; Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Hebrews 10:15-17; 2 Corinthians 3:17
- vii. 3) Therefore, we can deduct from the evidence of Scripture that God is Triune (a Trinity)
- c. Attribute #3 – “Pure Actuality”
 - i. Actually simply means *that which is*, therefore, when we say that God is pure actuality we mean that God is *pure being and pure existence*
 - ii. God does not have potential (potential simply means *that which can be*) – if He had potential, He would not be perfect
 - iii. In **Exodus 3:14**, God declared, “*I Am who I Am*” – He is the ever present one, He who continuously is, He is in the pure present tense
 - iv. God does not have the potential to be stronger, wiser, holier, no potential to love you more, improve Himself, etc.
 - v. He is fully and perfectly strong, wise, holy, He cannot love you more than He already does, He cannot improve for He is perfect, etc.
- d. Attribute #4 – “Self-Existent”
 - i. God is self-existent (i.e. Aseity) – He is the only self-sufficient, self-existing, necessary Being
 - ii. God’s existence is not dependent upon anything or anyone outside of Himself
 - iii. Every living thing is dependent on someone or something else (food, water, oxygen, sun, etc.), but God is independent and existent in Himself
 - iv. **John 5:26** – “*For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.*”
 - v. **Acts 17:28a** – “*For in Him we live and move and have our being*”
 - vi. We need God, but God does not need us (God needs nothing)
- e. Attribute #5 – “Infinite”
 - i. God is without limits or bounds – He is unbounded and limitless
 - ii. **Psalms 147:5** – “*Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite*”
 - iii. **Romans 11:33** – “*Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*”
 - iv. Because God is a simple being (no parts) His attributes correspond to one another – infinite love, infinite mercy, infinite grace, etc.
 - v. Now, even though God is infinite (without limits), He is still limited by His nature – He must always act in accordance to His Nature (He cannot act or operate contrary to His nature), thus, He cannot lie, He cannot be illogical, He cannot look with favor upon sin, etc.
- f. Attribute #6 – “Eternal”

- i. God is without beginning or end – He is outside of time, He dwells in a timeless domain (not limited or bound by time)
 - ii. With God there is no distinction between the past, the present, and the future – but He sees everything at once, “One Big Now”
 - iii. **Deuteronomy 33:27** – “*The eternal God is your refuge*”
 - iv. **Psalm 93:2** – “*Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting*”
 - v. Who made God? Nobody, God was never made, caused, nor created, but He is the eternal, uncaused, uncreated Creator of all things
- g. Attribute #7 – “Immaterial”
 - i. God is pure spirit – He is not matter or material (no body)
 - ii. **John 4:24** – “*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*”
 - iii. **Luke 24:39** – “*...a spirit does not have flesh and bones...*”
 - iv. Be careful with anthropomorphic language in Scripture – expressions that represent God having body parts such as hands, eyes, ears, etc.
 - v. This is figurative language giving God human characteristics used to attempt to make Him understandable
- h. Attribute #8 – “Immutable”
 - i. God cannot and does not change – He is unchangeable in His essence, attributes, consciousness, will, purposes, and promises
 - ii. Change is always for better or for worse, but since God is absolute perfection, improvements or deteriorations are impossible for Him
 - iii. God can never be wiser, more holy, more just, more merciful, more truthful, etc. nor less
 - iv. **Malachi 3:6** – “*For I am the Lord, I do not change*”
- i. Attribute #9 – “Sovereign”
 - i. God is ruler over all – He is in complete control over all the affairs of creation and mankind
 - ii. **Psalm 115:3** – “*But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases*”
 - iii. **Daniel 4:35** – “*All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have you done?’*”
 - iv. God is going to fulfill His plans and purposes according to His good please, He is Sovereign, rest in His Sovereignty
- j. Attribute #10 – “Omnipotent”
 - i. God is all-powerful – He can do all things (the prefix ‘omni’ comes from the Latin word ‘omnis’ which means ‘all’)
 - ii. **Jeremiah 32:17** – “*Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.*”
 - iii. God is able to do whatever He wills, however, since His will is limited by His nature, God can only do that which is in harmony with His perfection (He cannot deny Himself, tempt or be tempted by sin, etc)
- k. Attribute #11 – “Omnipresent”
 - i. God is all-present – He is present everywhere at once (there is no escaping God’s presence)
 - ii. **Psalm 46:1-2** – “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore I will not fear*”
 - iii. **Hebrews 4:13** – “*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*”

- iv. What a comfort to know that God will never leave us nor forsake us, but He has promised to be with us even to the end of the ages
- l. Attribute #12 – “Omniscience”
 - i. God is all-knowing – He knows all things perfectly from all eternity, He knows all things immediately, simultaneously, and exhaustively
 - ii. **Psalm 139:4** – *“For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether”*
 - iii. **1 John 3:20** – *“For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.”*

VI. The Moral Attributes of God

- a. Attribute #1 – “Holiness”
 - i. God is holy – He is morally pure and completely set apart from sin, evil, and His creation
 - ii. **Psalm 22:3** – *“But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.”*
 - iii. **Revelation 4:8** – *“The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come’”*
 - iv. Because God is holy, He cannot condone, overlook, or have relationship with sin Cf. Habakkuk 1:12-13a; Isaiah 59:1-2a
 - v. Because God is holy, we must also be holy Cf. 1 Peter 1:16
- b. Attribute 2 – “Just”
 - i. God is just – everything He does is lawful, fair, and righteous (His dealings with humanity are entirely correct and impartial)
 - ii. **Psalm 33:5** – *“He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord”*
 - iii. **2 Chronicles 19:7** – *“Now therefore, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no partiality, nor taking bribes”*
 - iv. Because God is just, He will judge and punish all sin one day – either Christ takes your judgment or you will receive the judgment of your sin
- c. Attribute #3 – “Jealous”
 - i. God is a jealous God – jealous for His glory, jealous for His name, jealous for what rightfully belongs to Him
 - ii. Not all jealousy is sin – it is okay to be jealous and zealous for something that rightfully belongs to you (e.g. parents are jealous for their children)
 - iii. **Exodus 20:4-5a** – *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God...”*
 - iv. **Exodus 34:14** – *“For you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”*
 - v. God is jealous, zealous, and passionate for His people and He is not willingly to share them with anyone or anything else
- d. Attribute #4 – “Truth”
 - i. God is truthful (He is truth) – everything God does and says is perfectly accurate, consistent, and legitimate
 - ii. He is faithful to His word and promises – He cannot lie for He is truth

- iii. **Numbers 23:19** – *“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”*
- iv. **John 14:6** – *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*
- v. In a world full of lies, it is comforting to know that we have the truth found in the Person of Jesus Christ
- e. Attribute #5 – “Merciful”
 - i. God is merciful – He is patient with mankind not immediately giving them what they deserve
 - ii. His mercy is manifested through His goodness and faithfulness poured out upon sinful man
 - iii. **Exodus 34:6-7a** – *“And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty...’”*
 - iv. **Lamentations 3:22-23** – *“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassion fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness”*
 - v. Has the Lord been merciful to you? To your family? To your children? Don’t ever take the mercy of God for granted...
- f. Attribute #6 – “Love”
 - i. God is love – He is a loving, compassionate, caring, kind, tender, longsuffering, gracious Creator
 - ii. **1 John 4:8** – *“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love”*
 - iii. God’s love is an infinite love – a love that is limitless, measureless, and boundless, *“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him.”* Cf. **Psalm 103:11**
 - iv. God’s love is an unconditional love – a love that is not influenced by man, but is completely un-influenced (Agape Love)
 - v. God’s love is a sacrificial love – a love that seeks to give the maximum of itself for the highest good of the one who is loved (Cross), *“But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* Cf. **Romans 5:8**
 - vi. God’s love is a rescuing love – a love that has provided a way to rescue us from the wages of our sin, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* Cf. **John 3:16**
 - vii. God’s love is an un-ending love – a love that began in eternity past and reaches forward into eternity future towards His people, *“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* Cf. **Romans 8:38-39**
 - viii. God’s love is a free-love – it is not free for God or the Lord Jesus, but it is free for us, there is nothing we have to pay to receive it, but we receive it by faith as a free-gift of God
 - ix. God’s love motivates us to love others – if God has loved us in such a way, shouldn’t we love Him and others the same way, *“We love Him because He first loved us...beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love on another.”* Cf. **1 John 4:19, 11**