

The Doctrine of God: Bricks & Mortar – Week 3

Challenge 1: Write down questions as you think of them.

HOOK

Scammers are getting clever. They used to use the ruse of being an African Prince who just wanted to pass off money to you. Then, they pretended to be your loved one in some sort of trouble. Often, scammers will grab someone's pictures and info to set up a very realistic account and pose to be you.

This is the clever and insidious strategy of the false teachers who are capturing the attention of Christians all over the United States right now. They set up a profile picture of the God of Christianity and use a lot of the same Biblical words in the bio. But subtly "his" posts and likes and follows begin to line up the culture and what we kinda want to believe. His posts aren't divisive or offensive. Instead, they're really compassionate and inclusive. It seems so right. "Isn't the god of the Bible really loving? Man, he is a likable guy!" If we're not on our guard, we'll believe the scam and follow the imposter.

The scammer behind this false image of God is **Progressive Christianity** and their lens of God is completely absent the **life-giving knowledge** of God.

The followers of this scam are left confused, answerless, empty, floating, hopeless, and without any stability to hold on to when life gets hard. For most, it's **an exit** from Christianity because they haven't found anything in this god that's greater than themselves, so they leave to worship the most important god they know - self.

- **The U.S. Treasury example. Tonight: The doctrine of GOD.**

LOOK

How would you answer if asked, "**WHO IS GOD?**" How does a Christian view GOD?

A.W. Tozer – "What comes into our minds when we think of GOD is the most important thing about us."

- If we are to be right anywhere it **MUST** be here.

We can't grow to know GOD more fully if we have misrepresentations of who GOD is, if we're following a fake profile. **Where do we begin? At the beginning.**

GOD IS CREATOR (WHO IS GOD?)

Genesis 1:1 – "*In the beginning, GOD created the heavens and the earth.*"

- **1)** God is eternal, **2)** The Originator of all things, and **3)** The source of all life.

1) GOD is Eternal

At the “state of beginning-ness...” Before creation, He was already in existence.

Psalm 90:2 - *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

- God exists eternally in both directions on the timeline.
- GOD is uncreated. Uncaused. Self-existent. Self-sufficient. **Eternal.**

We all had a beginning (See your birth certificate, add 9 months). We can't imagine anything that always will be and always was, but **God isn't limited to what we understand**. Our Savior who died on the cross has no origin story. However far back you can imagine “beginning-ness,” He was already there.

- **John 1:1** - *In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Eternality is even expressed in **His NAME**. Moses asked God for His name to give the Israelites. **Exodus 3:14-15** - *God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. [...] “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.”*

- “LORD” in your Bible = YAHWEH
- **Gen.1:1/Ex.3:14** - At the point of beginning-ness, there was the great I AM.

2) GOD is the Originator of All Things

Genesis 1:1 – *“In the beginning, GOD created the heavens and the earth.”*

- God created all that is, seen and unseen.

Genesis 1:3 – *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.*

Psalm 33:6,8-9 - *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. [...] Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him! For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.*

Through merely the power of speech, God brought into existence time, matter, space, the physical laws that govern the universe, and even the incorporeal spiritual realms. The volume of each star, the speed of light, and the positions of each circling planet were perfectly calculated according to His wisdom. He has fashioned works of art which no human will see in their lifetime, yet He created them out of joy and to His glory.

Further, He is set apart from creation; transcendent above it.

- **Pantheism** is the belief that everything IS god, and god is everything. **Scripture paints a very different picture.**

Isaiah 6:3 - *And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"*

- **Holiness** = literally "to cut off," "to be separated from," "other than," "set apart from."

God is not like us but better or like the arc angels but bigger. He is in a category all of His own. **God is wholly separate and unique from His creation.** Our recognition of God's holiness – that God is nothing like us, wholly different and set apart from us – **magnifies God's grace** (unmerited favor).

3) GOD is the Source of life

- **Genesis 2:7** - *...the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*
- **Nehemiah 9:5b-6** - *Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.*

To have Him is to have life. To be without Him is to be without life.

- And, the eternal, transcendent, Creator loves you.

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 10:9-10 - *I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. [...] I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

- God, the source of all life, out of His great love and will, gave life to clay, mankind. When we reject God as being the Master of our lives, we are rejecting Life, itself. **What is there left but death?**
- **Are you united with Jesus? Are you united with Life?**

Who is GOD? He is THE eternal CREATOR and Sustainer of life.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN (WHO IS GOD? 1. GOD IS CREATOR)

Sovereignty – “Supreme in power, rank, and authority; holding the position of ruler.”

1 Chronicles 16:31 - *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, “The LORD reigns!”*

- **What does a throne represent? What does a kingdom represent?**
 - **A kingdom is the realm where a king has total authority.**
- Since GOD is the Creator of all things, He has absolute authority over His universe. This attribute is what it is to BE GOD. At all times, He is presiding, reigning, and directing all the affairs of His creation.
 - He is sovereign over **1) Creation, 2) History, and 3) Salvation**

1) He Is Sovereign Over Creation

Psalm 103:19 - *The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.*

Colossians 1:16-17 - *For by him (Jesus) 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.*

- **R.C. Sproul** - "There are no maverick molecules in the universe."

2) He Is Sovereign Over History

Isaiah 46:9b-10 - *I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose....’*

- **Rom. 13:1** - GOD appoints, directs, and dethrones kings, governors, and rulers.

Prov. 16:1,9,33 - Not only did He created **the stage of the universe**, but God has written the entire plot, choreographed what takes place, and is directing the participants involved (**believers and unbelievers**).

- Every prophecy of the Bible is God’s declaration that He’s in control. Every fulfillment of prophecy is proof He’s right.

Elephant in the Room: This is uncomfortable because so many atrocities have taken place in history. Or some really bad things might have happened to you in your life. I won’t attempt to minimize them in a patronizing attempt as making you feel settled. But, a deep recognition of God’s sovereignty gives peace not instability in suffering.

Charles Spurgeon – “There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of GOD’s sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all.”

3) He Is Sovereign Over Salvation

Ephesians 2:1-2,3b-5,8 - You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air... and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4. 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... 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...

- **In what state did God find us?** Dead in our sin. **Where was our loyalty?** To satan.
- There is nothing a man/woman can do to be saved. **How does a drowned person resuscitate themselves?** **There must be an outsider (holy).**
- It is by God’s love toward His enemies anyone is saved. It is an unmerited gift.

While we don’t attempt to reach Him (“*Does anyone seek God?*”). He sovereignly chooses to make up the distance and come to us, to remove the blindness from our eyes, and call us to Himself. **The sovereign Creator reigns over every step in the saving of His people.**

If God is sovereign over creation, history, believers and unbelievers, and even salvation itself, what do we have control of? Nothing.

Here is a self-evaluation. Does hearing this frustrate you or give you rest? It’s an indicator of where your heart is. If it irritates you that I’ve said God is ruling over your life, even against your will, Jesus may not be your King yet. Someone who has submitted their life to Him feels no flinch in God’s sovereignty over them. It was given it freely, and this knowledge gives incredible peace especially in suffering.

That GOD is sovereign means:

Fate or karma or luck **doesn’t** reign, the government **doesn’t** reign, our circumstances **don’t** reign, the people around us **don’t** reign, addiction **doesn’t** reign, satan **doesn’t** reign, we **don’t** reign – **YHWH GOD reigns!**

Who is GOD? He is THE eternal, sovereign King over all that was, is, and will be.

GOD IS TRINITY (WHO IS GOD? 1. GOD IS CREATOR 2. GOD IS SOVEREIGN)

We see God's self-revelation as Trinity throughout the Bible.

Gen. 1:26 – (right at the beginning) *“Then God said, let Us make man in Our image...”*

Isaiah 61:1-2 – *“The (1) Spirit of the (2) LORD God is upon (3) Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives...”*

- Jesus quoted this about Himself, and they tried to throw Him off a cliff.

Mark 1:9-11 – Jesus' Baptism: Father speaking, Son being baptized, Spirit descends.

John 15:26 - *“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit (1) of truth who proceeds from the Father (2), He will testify of Me (3).”*

Matt. 28:19 - *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the (1) Father and of the (2) Son and of the (3) Holy Spirit...”*

- Christians **deny** both **“tritheism”** (3 gods = **Isaiah 45:20-24** – *“...there is no other God besides Me...”*) and **“modalism”** (a single person changing masks = **John 17:5** – Jesus isn't praying to Himself).

Historical, orthodox Christianity = Three persons, one substance (essence).

- **Insert the triangle pic:** *“Father is God, Father is not the Son...”*
- **Athanasian Creed** – *“We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither blending the Persons nor dividing the Substance.”*

Karl Barth – *“The trinity is not the final revelation of God, the final Word spoken, BUT the first before revelation is even possible. Its subject matter makes everything else we know about God possible.”*

- **If He loves, who was He loving before creation?**
- **If He speaks, who was He speaking to before creation?**

Before there was creation, there was already relationship within the Godhead. There was communication and affection contained in Him before the beginning. For Him to not be triune would mean He isn't immutable, isn't self-sufficient, or didn't exist before creation. Further, a God who is not diversity in unity could not execute righteous punishment for sin AND take our place to endure the punishment as our substitute. But He was both the Just and Justifier (**Rom. 3:26**)

- **Confusing? Augustine** - *“If you can comprehend it, it cannot be GOD.”*
- God's awesome complexity and majesty in mystery compels us to worship.

Who is GOD? He is THE eternal CREATOR and Sustainer of life.

Who is GOD? He is THE sovereign King over all the universe.

Who is GOD? He is diversity in perfect unity, three persons and one substance.

TOOK

Story: On a certain plane, all the passengers were headed home. A man sat next a little boy reading a book. It was obvious at take-off there was a storm coming, and when the plane encountered turbulence, the man got anxious. Every time the plane would shake, the man would grab his seat and close his eyes. The boy next to him would look out the window and go back to his reading.

Several times, the plane lost altitude and with the sudden drop, the man hollered and grabbed the seat tighter. The man couldn't help noticing that while he yelled or winced, the boy was cool and unbothered even glancing at him with a smile. Finally, the plane landed on the runway. The threat was over, and they were safe. The man finally asked, "How could you be so at peace when everything was going crazy?" The boy leaned over his lap and pointed down the aisle to the cockpit. "See the pilot? He's my daddy and he said we'd make it."

- **Is the Creator, Sovereign GOD your Father?** If so, you can rest. He's in charge!
- Don't "follow" the fake profiles that rob you of the truth of who He is or attempt to minimize His glory. There is nothing there but a life of anxiety, hopelessness, instability, a life without purpose.
- **Through the God of these attributes there is life... hope and purpose to all who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. Do you know Him?**

RECAP

- Who is God? God is Creator, Sovereign, and Trinity.
- His name is YHWH; "I AM"
- As Creator, He is eternal, the originator of all things, and source of life.
- Towards His creation, He is separate from it, and He loves it. He loves you.
- As Sovereign, He reigns over creation, history, and even salvation.
- As Trinity, He is neither blended in Persons nor divided in Essence: triune.
- Everything He does and everything that is exists for His glory.
- We cannot comprehend Him, but He's made Himself apprehend-able through Jesus who has made a way for anyone who believes to know Him and be saved.

Challenge 2: You've been writing down questions. This week, select 3 to answer this week.

eGroup Questions /// Who is God? Bricks and Mortar

Pray:

Key Verse: Genesis 1:1 – *“In the beginning, GOD created the heavens and the earth.”*

Questions:

1. A.W. Tozer said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” What does he mean by that? Do you think he’s right?
2. What is something you heard tonight which you hadn’t thought about before?
3. What’s something you were left totally confused about?
4. Who wrote down a list of questions? Where will you begin in looking for answers?
5. Why do you think people have a problem with God making decisions?
6. Is it possible to find rest in God’s sovereignty? How? Why?
7. On the Trinity, watch (YouTube): St. Patrick’s Bad Analogies by Lutheran Satire
 - a. You’ll never say the name “Patrick” the same again. I feel bad for our Elevate student, Patrick.
8. If God gets glory through all things. How does He receive glory in the terrible things of life like human suffering and sin?

Ask for prayer requests: Pray

Fill out student contact sheet if there are any new people.