

A Study of God – One Living & True God

Various Texts

June 5-6, 2010

- Doctrinal Statement = We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.

Introduction

- Open your Bibles to Exodus 3:13-14
 - 13 *Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"*
 - 14 *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*
- Charles Lowry = *"The doctrine of the Trinity is the most comprehensive and the most nearly all-inclusive formulation of the truth of Christianity. It is in and of itself a not inadequate summation of the principal teachings of the Christian religion. This doctrine is the view that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit of Scripture and the Creeds and the universal continuing consciousness of the Christian Church, ever to be worshipped and glorified as distinct, individual, personal determinations and centers of Godhead, are nevertheless one God – one single, unified Divine essence or being."*
- Doctrinal Statement = *"We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption."*

Exegesis

- **One God... Three Persons**
 - **Unity – One in Essence**
 - Essence or Substance or Being
 - Deuteronomy 6:4

- 4 *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*
 - Central creed of Judaism
- Deuteronomy 4:35, 39
 - 35 *You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other.*
 - 39 *Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.*
- Isaiah 45:5-6
 - 5 *I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me,*
 - 6 *so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.*
- 1 Corinthians 8:4-6
 - 4 *So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.*
 - 5 *For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),*
 - 6 *yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*
 - Affirmation in the New Testament of the Unity of God
- Not multiple (essence and personality) = Hinduism, Mormonism
- Not polytheism = Multiple gods
- One in being, consciousness, will, heart, desire, knowledge, power, etc.
- Example: Species, family, nation, mankind
- Example: “There is in fact no human analogy that is more than weakly partial or faintly suggestive when we come to the Unity of the Trinitarian God.” (Charles Lowry)
- **Trinity – Three in Persons**
 - Persons or Individuals
 - Matthew 28:19
 - 19 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

- While not a statement of definition, this statement demonstrates the diversity (three persons) and unity (equality) of God (the Godhead)
- Matthew 3:16-17
 - 16 *As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.*
 - 17 *And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*
 - There is definitely a distinction of personality in this episode
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6
 - 4 *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.*
 - 5 *There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.*
 - 6 *There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.*
- 2 Corinthians 13:14
 - 13 *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*
- Not singular (essence and personality) = Islam, Judaism, Jehovah's Witnesses
- Not absent (personality) = Buddhism
- Not modalism = God in successive modes
- Example: Multiple personality disorder
- Example: "Each Divine person was entirely and perfectly God. He partook without addition or subtraction of the Divine essence or being. He had every attribute of the Godhead. He differed from the other two Persons only in having a distinct subsistence (= absolute existence, such as only God has)." (Charles Lowry)

❖ **We believe in one God who exists in unity of essence (or being) and in trinity of person.**

➤ **Eternally Existing**

• **Arguments for Existence**

- We believe that God exists
- Psalm 90:2

2 *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

- Revelation 1:8
 - 8 *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."*
- "The whole of His existence is one indivisible present." (Barackman)
- Cosmological Argument
 - Argument = Every event has a cause, there must be a First Cause. (Cp. Hebrews 3:4, "*For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.*")
 - Weakness = The argument does not require an eternal, infinite, independent cause.
 - Example = Big Bang
- Teleological Argument
 - Argument = The design and purpose manifest in nature point to an intelligent Designer.
 - Weakness = The argument does not point to a specific designer, a limited number of designers or a personal designer.
 - Example = Artificial Intelligence
- Ontological Argument
 - Argument = We have a concept of a perfect Being (God) so this Being must exist otherwise He wouldn't be perfect.
 - Weakness = The argument rests on real existence necessarily coming from abstract thought.
 - Example = Martians
- **Foundation of Faith**
 - Doctrinal Statement = "We believe..."
 - Hebrews 11:1, 3, 6
 - 1 *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*
 - 3 *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*
 - 6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*
 - Faith is faith. It may be supported by reason and facts but not produced by reason or facts.

- “Observe that these rational arguments do not prove with mathematical certainty the existence of God... While these arguments do not compel belief they do give a rational explanation for our belief in God’s existence.” (Barackman)
- The arguments for the existence of God serve as a confirmation to those that believe that their faith is reasonable but they are insufficient to cause faith.

❖ **We believe, with reason not by reason, that God exists**

➤ **Divine Perfection**

• **Definition:**

- “...those essential qualities that belong to His nature and that outwardly reveal this substance.” (Barackman)
- Usually referred to as His attributes but perfection seems to be a better word since attribute has the idea of assigning something to an entity
- Example: Quick, cheap, two-legged, white

• **Listing:**

- Life – the quality of being alive
 - Psalm 36:9, “...*fountain of life...*”
 - John 1:4, “*In him was life...*”
- Immutability – the quality of being changing
 - Psalm 102:25-27, “...*you remain the same...*”
 - Hebrews 13:8, “...*the same yesterday and today and forever.*”
- Omnipresence – the quality of being everywhere present
 - Psalm 139:7-10, “...*you are there...*”
 - Hebrews 13:5-6, “...*Never will I leave you...*”
- Omnipotence – the quality of being all-powerful
 - Isaiah 40:26, “...*his great power and mighty strength...*”
 - Ephesians 1:19-23, “...*his incomparably great power...*”
- Omniscience – the quality of knowing everything
 - Isaiah 46:10, “*I make known the end from the beginning...*”
 - Job 23:10, “...*he knows the way that I take...*”

- Truth – the quality of being real and reliable
 - Jeremiah 10:10, “...*the Lord is the true God...*”
 - 1 John 5:20, “...*we are in him who is true...*”
- Holiness – the quality of being set apart
 - Isaiah 6:3, “...*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty...*”
 - 1 John 1:5, “...*God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*”
- Righteousness – the quality of being and doing right
 - Psalm 7:9, “*O righteous God...*”
 - 1 John 2:29, “...*he is righteous...*”
- Justice – the quality of being fair
 - Isaiah 61:8, “...*I, the Lord, love justice...*”
 - 2 Timothy 4:8, “...*the Lord, the righteous [just] Judge...*”
- Love – the quality of providing for the well-being of others
 - Psalm 86:15, “...*a compassionate and gracious God...*”
 - 1 John 4:8, “...*God is love.*”
- Grace – the quality of dealing favorably with undeserving people
 - Romans 5:15, “...*God’s grace...*”
 - Titus 2:11, “...*the grace of God...*”
- Mercy – the quality of showing compassion
 - Ephesians 2:4, “...*who is rich in mercy.*”
 - Luke 1:50, “*His mercy extends...*”
- Longsuffering – the quality of being patient
 - Exodus 34:6, “...*slow to anger...*”
 - Romans 9:22, “...*bore with great patience...*”
- Sovereignty – the quality of being supreme
 - Deuteronomy 10:14, “*To the Lord your God belong the heavens...the earth and everything in it.*”

- Ephesians 1:20-23, “...*God placed all things under his feet...*”

❖ **We believe that the divine perfections are the essential qualities of God**

Response

- **As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to know about God that we could better know God.**
 - Observers = Come by faith to see God
 - Disciples = Know about God so that you can know God
- **J. I. Packer = “How can we turn our knowledge about God into knowledge of God? The rule for doing this is demanding but simple. It is that we turn each truth that we learn about God into matter for meditation before God, leading to prayer and praise to God.”**