

Bible Doctrines

Review: All men know of God's existence and a basic idea of who God is (Rom. 1:19–25). Nature witnesses to a creator (Ps. 19:1–6; Rom. 1:20). The Scriptures assume the existence of God (Gen. 1:1).

Important Definitions:

- The word **doctrine** comes from the Greek word *didachē* (referring to the content of teaching) and *didaskalia* (referring to the activity of teaching).¹ *Biblical Doctrine*, then, is the teaching of Scriptural truths. Another word we use for this is *theology*.²
- *Systematic Theology* is the process of organizing the biblical data in an orderly way. "Systematic Theology answers the question, what does the completed canon of Scripture teach about any one theme or topic?"³
- *Exegesis* is the process of mining out the truths of Scripture. We utilize certain *hermeneutics* (i.e. ways of studying and interpreting the Bible) to do that exegetical work.

Categories of Doctrines / Systematic Theology

- *Bibliology* — the doctrine of the Bible and its inspiration
- *Theology Proper* — the doctrine of God and His existence
- *Christology* — the doctrine of Jesus Christ
- *Pneumatology* — the doctrine of the Holy Spirit
- *Anthropology* — the doctrine of mankind
- *Hamartiology* — the doctrine of sin
- *Soteriology* — the doctrine of salvation
- *Angelology* — the doctrine of angels, demons, and Satan
- *Ecclesiology* — the doctrine of the church
- *Eschatology* — the doctrine concerning the end times (including heaven, hell, judgment seats, last things, etc.)

Theology Proper

Theology proper is the study of God and His existence. There are some premises that we must hold to as presuppositions:⁴

¹ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 40.

² The word *theology* comes from the Greek words for "God" (*theos*) and "word" (*logia*). "Christian theology is the study of the divine revelation in the Bible" (MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 34). In other words, every Christian who studies the Bible is a theologian.

³ MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 36.

⁴ A *presupposition* is something we assume to be true without necessarily seeking to argue for it as such.

1. *God exists* — The Bible assumes God’s existence (Gen. 1:1). Those who deny that God exists are described in Scripture as fools (Ps. 14:1; 53:1).
2. *God is knowable* — God can be known (John 17:3; e.g. Adam and Eve walking with God, Gen. 3:8), yet not exhaustively (e.g. no one can see God and live, Ex. 32:20; the depths of God are only known by God, 1 Cor. 2:11).
3. *God is perfect in all of His attributes* — There is no imperfections with God. Every attribute (or, another way of saying it, “every perfection”)⁵ is an essential characteristic of His nature. “Because these characteristics are necessary to his nature, all his attributes are absolutely perfect and thus rightly called perfections. Further, since these perfections are essential to God’s nature, if any one of them were denied, God would no longer be God.”⁶ With regards to His perfections, it is important to note that:
 - A. God is fully each of His perfections. He is totally in His essence. If God is not fully and absolutely holy, or not fully and absolutely love, or not fully and absolutely good, then He cannot be fully and absolutely God.
 - B. God’s perfections are active. If God is only loving one moment, but then changes to being only good and not also loving, then God has effectively ceased to be fully God. He must be active in every perfection at all times because it makes up His essence (i.e. who He is).

The only way that we can truly know the attributes of God is through special revelation (i.e. Holy Scripture).

Classification of Attributes

There are two primary ways to classify God’s perfections.

- *Incommunicable Attributes* — These are the attributes that can only be true of God (i.e. they are unique to God). Such attributes include:
 - Independence (or, aseity). God is the self-existent One (Ex. 3:14; John 5:26).
 - Immutability. God is unchanging (Ps. 102:25–27; Mal. 3:6; James 1:16)
 - Infinite. God transcends the boundaries of all time and space (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:24–28).
 - Eternal. God existed before creation (Gen. 1:1). He is “from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. 90:2; 93:2). He is eternal (Is. 40:28). He inhabits eternity (Is. 57:15 KJV). He has no beginning and no ending (Rev. 1:8).
 - Omnipresent. God is present with Himself everywhere (Ps. 139:7–10).
 - Omniscient. God knows all things concerning Himself and outside Himself in one eternal and simple act (2 Chron. 16:9; Is. 40:13; Ps. 139).

⁵ Throughout the course of these notes I will use *perfections* and *attributes* interchangeably.

⁶ MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 161.

- **Omnipotence.** God is able to do all things that are consistent with His nature (Gen. 18:14; Job 42:2; Ps. 62:11; Is. 46:10; Matt. 3:9; Luke 1:37; Eph. 3:20).

Next Week:

- **Communicable Attributes** — These are the attributes that are transferable in part to human beings. These attributes include: Goodness

There is One God

God is one. There is not a pantheon of gods. Nor is there any other deity that rivals the One True God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one!

Isaiah 46:9–11 ⁹Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' ¹¹Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken *it*; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed *it*; I will also do it.

Yet God exists in three persons. He is one Divine essence, yet three in personhood.

Notes / Questions:

