

III. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

(THEOLOGY¹ PROPER)

Can you discover the depths of God?

Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?

They are high as the heavens, what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol, what can you know?

Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. (Job 11:7-9)

Introduction

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) The Bible was not written to prove the existence of God. It begins with the assumption that He is. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

During our ministry years among the Nambiquara Indians in the interior of Brazil, not far from Bolivia, we spent a lot of time with the people, doing things with them. When in the woods, we were amazed at their knowledge of nature. They knew what animals ate, where and how they lived, the mating seasons, etc. When on the trail they would stop to turn over a leaf to show us a dangerous bug that was hiding there out of our sight. They spotted animal tracks while walking those narrow trails that I could not see until they would point them out to me, sometimes after they had moved a few leaves. They knew the difference between deer and pig tracks and cat and wolf tracks, things that took me time and effort to learn.

God left His signature all around us. We learn as we observe and study His creation. God is revealed through nature, even the fact that He is good. But, His grace, mercy, and love, and plan of redemption are not. God left his prints in the conscience of man and wrote His moral laws there, but that does not tell us how to get free of our sin and guilt. Though nature and the human heart reveal God and what is morally right, it is God's written revelation that communicates the truths so necessary for instructing us in knowing and walking with Him.

As noted in the chapter on "The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures," in the *Declaration of Independence*, the founding fathers of the United States spoke of truths that are "self-

¹ The word "theology" is composed of two Greek words **θεός** (Theos, meaning God) and **λογία** (from **λογιον** meaning words, instruction). Theology is the study of divine truth and theology proper is the study of God.

evident.” In their writings they often referred to Nature and Nature’s God. Evidence indicates that they were basing their actions on common sense laws that everyone knew because of God’s footprints in His Creation and because His moral laws are written on the human heart.

In Romans 2:14-16 Paul wrote:

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

We know that the conscience cannot be fully trusted because we humans have developed ways to excuse and deaden that inner voice. The revealed will of God, in the written Word of God, the 66 books of the Bible, is a stable and trustworthy revelation of God and of what is true, right and good. It is through the Holy Scriptures that we learn more about God and His will and plan for man. In this chapter we will go to the Scriptures in an effort to learn more about God.

A. The Attributes of God Reveal His Person

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Timothy 1:17)

The Bible teaches us that God is **Holy**. In Leviticus we read, "you shall be holy [קדוּשׁ *qadosh*],² for I am holy [קדוּשׁ]." ³ The word “holy” (קדוּשׁ *qadosh*), though it has the sense of being pure, sinless, and sacred, means to set apart, to separate, to dedicate, to consecrate. Anything separated unto God should be pure and pleasing to Him. In this verse God expresses His desire that His people, in this case Israel, be separated unto Him and different from the nations around them because of their dedication to the Lord. Holy (קדוּשׁ *qadosh*) was used of Israel,⁴ of the inner rooms of the tabernacle,⁵ of water,⁶ of men,⁷ of days,⁸ of the temple,⁹ etc. Applying Leviticus 11:44-45, as Peter did in 1 Peter 1:16, we conclude that God wants us to be different and separated from the world and fully dedicated unto Him. We are to stand out as different from our surroundings.

² The Hebrew language is read from right to left.

³ Leviticus 11:44-45, 20:26

⁴ Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2 & 21

⁵ Leviticus 7:6

⁶ Numbers 5:17

⁷ 2 Kings 4:9

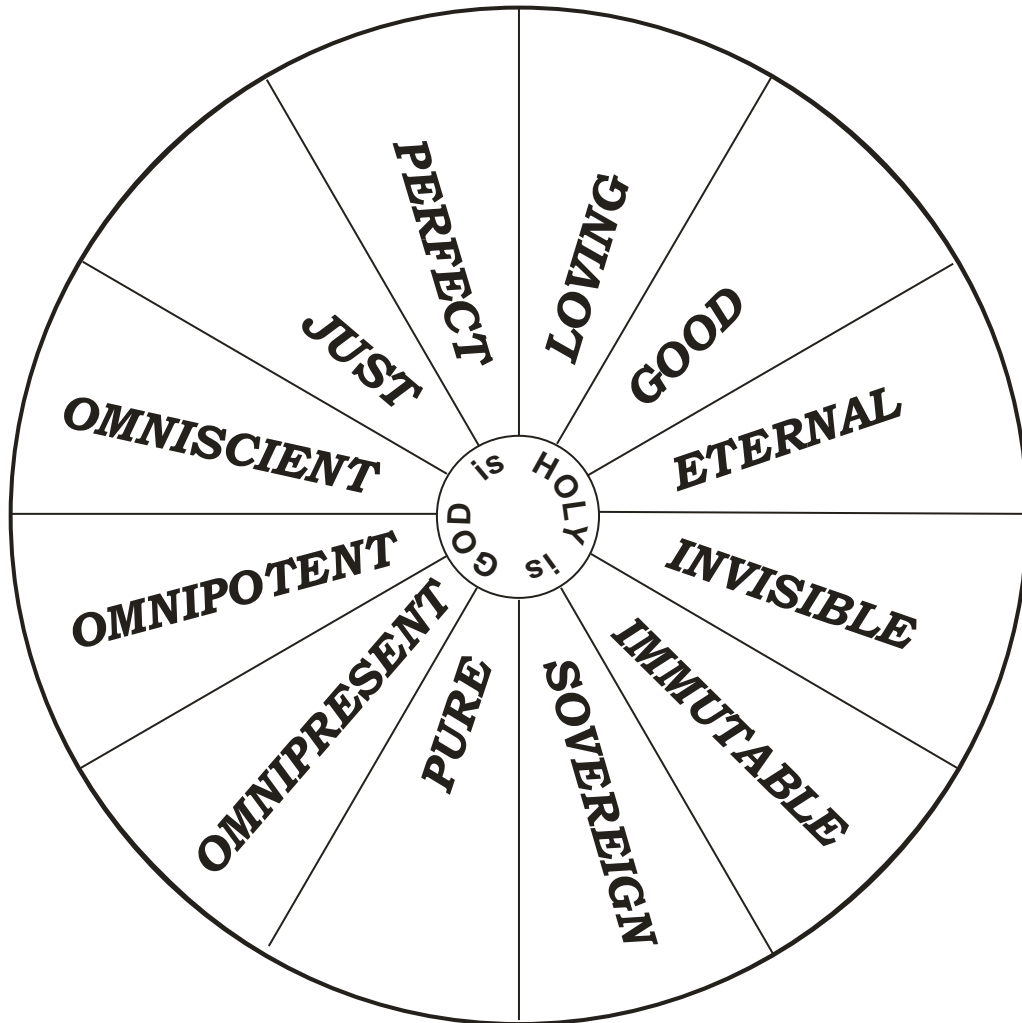
⁸ Nehemiah 8:9

⁹ Psalm 65:4

When the Scriptures use the word “holy” (קדוש) to describe God, the significance is slightly different because God has no sin. He is distinctively different from everything else in the highest of the heavens, in all of the universe, in the world, and in all living beings. God is unique. He is holy.

The attributes of God, as defined in the Scriptures, flow from His holiness and reveal truths about God that help us understand Him. The Holy God and His attributes show us that He is sinless, unique, different, pure, and *more*.

“God is holy” has been placed in the center of the circle. This is because God is uniquely different from all His Creation and all other living beings. There is no other being like Him. One of the ways we get to know God is through a study of His attributes that reveal different elements of His uniqueness.



1. God is Pure

By pure we mean that God is unmixed, consists of one thing, and is uncombined with other elements. God is pure Spirit, nothing more, nothing less. He cannot be divided into parts, because He is not made of anything—He is pure Spirit.

The planets and stars of the universe are composed of a variety of material elements. The angels, though the Scriptures give us very little detail, are spirits with limitations. From Ezekiel chapter 28 we read of God using material elements to describe the creation of Satan, a covering cherub, or angel of a high position. Man was made of the dust, and God breathed the breath of life into him; and he became a living soul. Man's physical body is composed of material elements. He has a spirit, a soul, and a physical body. Unlike God, all of these are complicated, usually reducible to simpler forms, and have limitations. They are very different from the Holy God¹⁰ that made them.

The simple purity of God should not be confused with the fact that God is a Trinity.¹¹ The truth that God is one, but also three, is a revealed truth that is beyond our comprehension. God is three persons in one, but He cannot be divided into parts because He is one pure Spirit. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons in a singular, simple, and pure God.

2. God is Omnipresent

God is immense. He is present everywhere. The Bible reveals that God is without limitations, that there does not exist a place where He is not present. One of the themes of Psalm 139 is the omnipresence of God (see Acts 17:29).

The fact that God appeared between the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies and that He is present in His church¹² does not limit His omnipresence. In Job chapters 1 and 2 the angels appear before God to give an account and Satan is among them. This does not indicate that God is limited. These are manifestations of the God who is present everywhere. God the Holy Spirit indwells every believer while He is in all places at the same time.

Solomon, in his prayer, declared a great truth when he said, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27) God manifested Himself in Solomon's Temple, but that manifestation did not limit His omnipresence.

God is infinite. He is without limitations in perfection, love, knowledge, abilities, location, etc.

We need to be careful not to fall into a pantheistic belief about God. Pantheists believe that all is God, the waterfalls, the trees, the frogs, the birds, etc. God created all things,

¹⁰ John 4:24; Acts 17:28

¹¹ "Trinity" is used of God, though the term is inadequate in explaining God. The doctrine of the Trinity will be covered shortly.

¹² Exodus 15:17 & 25:8; Matthew 6:9; Hebrews 1:3; Ephesians 2:22; Psalm 113:5

invisible and visible, such as angels, the universe, animals, man, etc.; but the created is not God, even though He exists everywhere. Paul said that, “in Him we live and move and exist.” (Acts 17:28)

Though God has no limitations, He does not do what is contrary to His nature. The Lake of Fire (hell) is a place for those who disobeyed and turned their backs on God. God is not present there,¹³ because that would be contrary to His nature.

3. God is Omnipotent

God is all powerful. God can do anything that does not conflict with His nature and will. From nothing He created the universe and all that is in it—solely by the word of His mouth. He is the Author of life in His creation, in all living beings. (Genesis 17:1; Jeremiah 32:17 & 27; Matthew 19:26)

4. God is Omniscient

God knows everything. He knows all about atoms, DNA, physics, astronomy, the laws of nature, etc. All is in His mind (using a human metaphor, because God does not have human parts). All that science desires to learn and understand God knew from eternity past and always knew. He sees and hears all that the living beings do. Nothing escapes His knowledge. He knows the past, present, and future, all at the same time. (2 Chronicles 16:9; Job 9:4 and 10; Psalm 139; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Hebrews 4:13)

5. God is Just

God is right and impartial in all that He does. All His acts are just. God always does what is correct. God cannot sin because that would be contrary to His nature. God’s justice is manifest in his reign over the universe and all living beings. His laws are just and good for all. (Deuteronomy 10:17-18; 32:4; 1 Samuel 2:3; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Job 34:10-12; Psalm 9:8; 11:7; 19:9; 89:14; 97:2; Isaiah 45:21; Acts 17:31; Romans 9:14; Revelation 15:3) In matters that we do not understand and where the Bible gives no answer (e.g., “Where do children go when they die?”), the just nature of God gives us assurance and confidence that He will always do what is right.

6. God is Perfect

God is incomparably perfect and without defect or sin of any kind. His perfection is seen in His works, which are always right and good and without defect of any kind. God can do only what is right. It is His nature. (Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 22:31; Psalm 18:30; Isaiah 6:3-4; Habakkuk 1:13; Matthew 5:48, 19:17; James 1:17)

7. God is Loving

First John 4:8 declares: “God is love.” The Greek word for love in this verse is (*ἀγάπη*) *agape*. Agape is a love that places others before oneself so much so that one would die, if necessary, for the benefit of the other. John 3:16 explains this level of love. God is willing to give of Himself for the benefit of others. God is a supremely loving being.

¹³ 2 Thessalonians 2:9

God did not learn to love. He does not think about it and get in the mood to love. Love is part of His eternal nature. In the same way that He is light¹⁴ and Spirit,¹⁵ He is love. Without the attribute of love, God would not be God. All of His attributes teach us something about God's eternal qualities and are expressions of His nature.¹⁶

The love of God is not a passion or emotion. It is an eternal attribute. God is distinctively different; He is holy. All that He does is right, good, and just. To love a sinful man is difficult for us human beings to understand, but it is natural for God.¹⁷

The love of God was manifested in the Garden of Eden when the Lord God worked with Adam and Eve to bring them to confess their disobedience and when He announced to them and to Satan His plan of Salvation.¹⁸ Divine love was the motivating influence behind the Trinity's plan for the salvation of fallen man and is what caused the Son of God to do for man what man could not do for himself.¹⁹ The greatest manifestation of God's love is in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁰

Because God is loving, it does not mean that He is a "pushover," "a sugar daddy." This attribute of love must be balanced with His justice and righteousness. God is unable to do what goes against His nature.

Attributes associated with His love are patience (long suffering), grace and mercy.

Patience: Because he understands and knows man's weaknesses, God will often delay justifiable action.²¹ In 2 Peter 3:9 we learn that God is "patient" with man because He desires that none "perish but for all to come to repentance."

Grace: In Titus 2:11 Paul wrote, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men." Jesus is God dressing Himself in a human body because He is gracious. He shed His blood on the Cross so that all might be saved. Because of God's love for man, He has gone the extra mile, so to speak. Ephesians 2:5 tells us that "by grace you have been saved." Grace is divine favor toward man. It is God giving to man what man cannot achieve by himself and does not deserve. Salvation is the product of God's grace.

Mercy: Because God is a loving God, He is by nature merciful. God's justice must be satisfied. His grace caused Jesus to give His life to save man. Mercy is the act of God that imparts to repentant persons the "mercy of the court," giving them what they do not deserve—forgiveness and freedom. Our God of love has done everything necessary to save man from that which he justly deserves. God is

¹⁴ 1 John 1:5; I believe light is a metaphor for righteousness.

¹⁵ John 4:24

¹⁶ Psalm 85:10

¹⁷ Romans 5:7

¹⁸ Genesis 3:15

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:19

²⁰ Revelation 13:8; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:16

²¹ Jonah 3:10

patiently waiting for men to repent so that they might experience His grace and mercy and be saved from the penalty of his sins—eternal death.

8. God is Good

God is benevolent, merciful, forgiving, patient, kind, and long suffering. Because He is good, God causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. God had mercy on sinful man and sent His Son to pay the sin debt so that man could be free to do what is right. God's goodness must be balanced with His justice. (Exodus 33:19; 34:6; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Psalm 17:7; 25:18; 33:5; 52:1; 68:19; 86:5; 107:8 and 43; 145:9; Joel 2:13; Matthew 19:17; Romans 2:4; Titus 3:4; James 1:17; 1 John 4:8)

9. God is Eternal

God is without beginning or end. He always existed. He was not created or born, and did not evolve from some other form. He does not age and will never die. He is the Creator of all things and is outside of the limits of space, time, and all that is material. Because man is a prisoner to space and time, it is hard for us to understand the eternity of God. God is different from the material. (Exodus 3:14-15; Deuteronomy 32:40; 33:27; Job 36:26; Psalm 90:2 & 4; 93:2; Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; Revelation 1:8; 10:6)

10. God is Invisible

Because God is pure Spirit, He cannot be seen by the eyes of man. First Timothy 6:16 states: “. . . who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see.” John 1:18 reads: “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”

Referring to Jesus, Colossians 1:15 declares: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”²² Cover to cover, the Bible affirms that God is invisible. It is Jesus, the incarnate Son of God—God in a human earth suit—who reveals God to us. In the Old Testament the pre-incarnate Son of God appeared in the Garden of Eden, to Abraham, to Moses, to Isaiah, etc. The Angel of Jehovah is the pre-incarnate Jesus.

All of the illustrations we use to describe some truth about God are faulty. However, in an effort to illustrate, we will imagine ourselves in the deepest jungles of South America. In the woods it is rare that one sees the leopard. However, we can see its tracks and sometimes even smell it. In the night we may hear its cry. God is there, though we cannot see Him. We can see His prints all over the place and sometimes have that feeling that He is present. When we read the written Word of God we can hear His voice, but we can never see His form. God is pure Spirit.

²² “Firstborn” does not refer to being created but to our Lord's position. He has the place of the firstborn. He is first in authority and responsibility. He has the right to be the head of the family.

God is different from all other beings. Because He is Spirit and cannot be seen, one would be very wrong to make an image and bow down to it as though it were God.²³ It is impossible to make a true representation of a spirit.

11. God is Immutable

God does not change. He is always the same.

The Bible teaches that God does not change, that He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. This truth brings security and rest to the followers of the Lord. With certainty, we can have confidence in God, in His love, mercy, honesty, justice, and Word, because He is consistent and dependable. (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Psalm 102:24-27; Isaiah 40:28, and 46:9 &10; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17)

God is not like man, who changes with his mind because of feelings and with circumstances, and who often does not honor his word but changes it to his own advantage.²⁴

The Bible says that God repented (Genesis 6:6; 1 Samuel 15:11 & 35). Repentance means to have a change of mind. These verses seem to be in conflict with Numbers 23:19 and 1 Samuel 15:29, where it is stated that God does not repent. Though God is *immutable*, He is not *immovable*. Since God is just and always acts justly, His reactions to man's moral choices will change.

God's unchanging holiness obligates him to treat the wicked differently from the righteous. When the righteous become wicked, his treatment of them must change. The sun is not fickle or partial because it melts the wax but hardens the clay. The change is not in the sun but in the object it shines upon. The change in God's treatment of men is described anthropomorphically, as if it were a change in God himself. . . .²⁵ (See Hermeneutical Rule 1.)

God is just, and this cannot change. His justice will cause Him to change His plans for man when an unjust man repents and does right. The story of Jonah is a prime example (Jonas 4:10-11). God had compassion for Nineveh, and when the people repented of their evil deeds, God spared them the coming punishment. God changed His proposed action because the Ninevites moved from their sin in repentance. God is merciful, desiring that none perish.

The truth of the immutability of God does not mean that Christians should not pray. God grew tired of the rebellious hearts of the Israelites and their constant complaining. He told Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed, it is a stubborn people. Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than

²³ Exodus 20:2-6

²⁴ Psalm 15

²⁵ Chafer, Lewis Sperry, *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1, pages 218-219, quoting from Strong, some thoughts in this paragraph are expressed by Dr. Chafer. See also Ezekiel 33:1-21.

they.”²⁶ The prayers of Moses on behalf of the people caused God to change His plan. Hezekiah became ill and God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell him that he would die. Hezekiah prayed, and Isaiah returned to announce that God would give him fifteen more years. Prayer changed God’s announced plan. After reading about those fifteen years, my conclusion is that perhaps God’s first plan might have been better. It is always wise to seek God’s will first.²⁷

David prayed in hopes that God would repent and save the life of his son. When that son died, he told his servants, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.” (2 Samuel 12:15-23) David knew that God is just, but he also knew that He is merciful.

12. God is Sovereign

God is supreme over all. God has unrestricted authority. God is the absolute power. All is subject to Him. He is the Creator and has dominion over all (1 Samuel 2:6-8; 2 Chronicles 29:11-12; Psalm 50:10; Matthew 6:13; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10).

The sovereignty of God does not mean that He is a tyrannical dictator who manipulates everything and controls even the decisions of the angels and man. God’s sovereignty is so great that it is not threatened by the free will of angels and man. God created these beings with the freedom of choice, and still He is able to maintain His sovereign position and to realize His purposes.

Salvation is for all who obey the gospel,²⁸ indicating that each individual has the freedom to choose.²⁹ The free will of man is no affront to God’s sovereignty. The sovereign Lord is so great, so powerful, and so knowledgeable that He can give man the privilege of choice and yet accomplish every detail of His purposes.

B. The Names of God Reveal His Person³⁰

“God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel.” (Psalm 76:1)

EL (אֱלֹהִים), God, the Strong One: EL is a general word that is translated “god”. It expresses force and power. Daniel 11:36 says, “[T]he king . . . will speak monstrous things against the God (אֱלֹהִים) of gods (אֱלֹהִים).” In Deuteronomy 3:24 we read, “O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your

²⁶ Deuteronomy 9:13-29; Numbers 12:9-16; 14:10-35; 21:4-9

²⁷ 2 Kings 20; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 38; the attitude of the king and the stories of the sons born during those years have brought me to this conclusion.

²⁸ Acts 5:29 & 32; Hebrews 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8

²⁹ Acts 7:51

³⁰ This is not an exhaustive list of God’s names.

greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?”

ELOIM (אֱלֹהִים), God (plural), Strong Ones: ELOIM is the plural form of EL (אֵל). ELOIM is used more than 2,000 times in the Old Testament for the God of the universe. It is used 30 times in the book of Genesis where it speaks of His power in creation. Though the plural is used to indicate one in an exalted position, we believe that the plural form is used because God is three persons in one.

EL-ROI (אֵל רֹאֵי), God who sees: Speaks of the God who sees and knows all (Genesis 16:13).

EL-SHADAI (אֵל שַׁדַּי), God Almighty: Speaks of God as the high and powerful One who keeps His covenants (Genesis 17:1).

EL-ELYON (אֵל עֲלִיוֹן), God Most High: Speaks of the supremacy of God (Genesis 14:18-22).

EL-OLAM (אֵל עוֹלָם), God Everlasting: Speaks of the eternity and immutability of God (Genesis 21:33).

EL-GIBOR (אֵל גִּבּוֹר), Mighty God, God a Mighty Warrior: Speaks of God as one who is strong in battle (Isaiah 9:6-7).

EMANUEL (עִמָּנוּ אֵל), Emanuel, God with us: Speaks of God as one who comes to our defense, and speaks of the incarnation (Isaiah 7:14, 8:8 & 10; Matthew 1:23).

ADONAI (אֲדֹנָי), LORD, MASTER: Adonai was used of God 449 times in the Old Testament and 315 of these appear with God's name Jehovah. Adonai speaks to God's authoritative position. He is the Lord of the universe Who deserves all respect (Deuteronomy 10:17; Joshua 3:11; Psalm 8:1; Obadiah 14:12, compared with John 13:13; Revelation 17:14, and 16:16).

ADONAI YAHWEH (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה), LORD JEHOVAH: Jehovah is the supreme authority (Genesis 15:2).

AHYAH (אֲהִיָּהּ -), I AM: He who always is, the all present and all capable One. This verb, used as a name, is in the future tense. God called Himself, “I will be who I will be.” Hebrew does not have the present tense. However, because the sense is present, it is translated as “I AM.” This name speaks of the self-existence of God, the eternal Being Who is able in all (Exodus 3:14-15). Jesus identified Himself with this name, recorded in John 8:58-59.

YAHWEH (יהוה) JEHOVAH: This name for God, including the abbreviated form YAH, is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament, 1,300 in the Pentateuch. Our word

“Jehovah” is the pronunciation that results from the vowel symbols, added to the Hebrew text around 900 AD. Because it was a very majestic name, the Jews would not say it. When writing it, they placed the vowel marks for Adonai (Lord) under this name and read it as Adonai. Many translations today use “LORD” for this name of God to distinguish it from “Lord” (adonai). Yahweh (Jehovah) identifies God as the self-existent one who personally involves Himself with His people to redeem them from their troubles (Genesis 12:8; Exodus 3:15; 6:6-8; 20:2)

YAHWEH -ELOIM (יהוה אלהים), Jehovah-God: The almighty, self-existing One (Genesis 2:4; 3:21 & 22)

YAHWEH-JIRÉ (יהוה ירצה), Jehovah-Jireh: God will provide (Genesis 22:14).

YAHWEH-NISSI (יהוה נסִי), Jehovah-Banner: God our banner (Exodus 17:15).

YAHWEH-RAFA (יהוה רפא), Jehovah-Healer: God our healer (Exodus 15:26).

YAHWEH-SHALOM (יהוה שלום), Jehovah-Peace: God our peace (Judges 6:24).

YAHWEH-SABAOTH (יהוה צבאות), Jehovah-Hosts: Lord of Hosts, the all existing One over the multitudes (1 Samuel 1:3; Psalm 24:10).

YAHWEH-SHAMÁ (יהוה שמה), Jehovah-Present: God who is there (Ezekiel 48:35).

YAHWEH-MACAESHCEM (יהוה מקדשכם), Jehovah-Separates: God our sanctification, sets apart (Exodus 20:12, 31:13; Leviticus 20:8; Ezekiel 37:28).

YAHWEH-TSIDKENU (יהוה צדקנו), Jehovah our Righteousness: God who justifies (Isaiah 45:24; Jeremiah 23:6, 33:16)

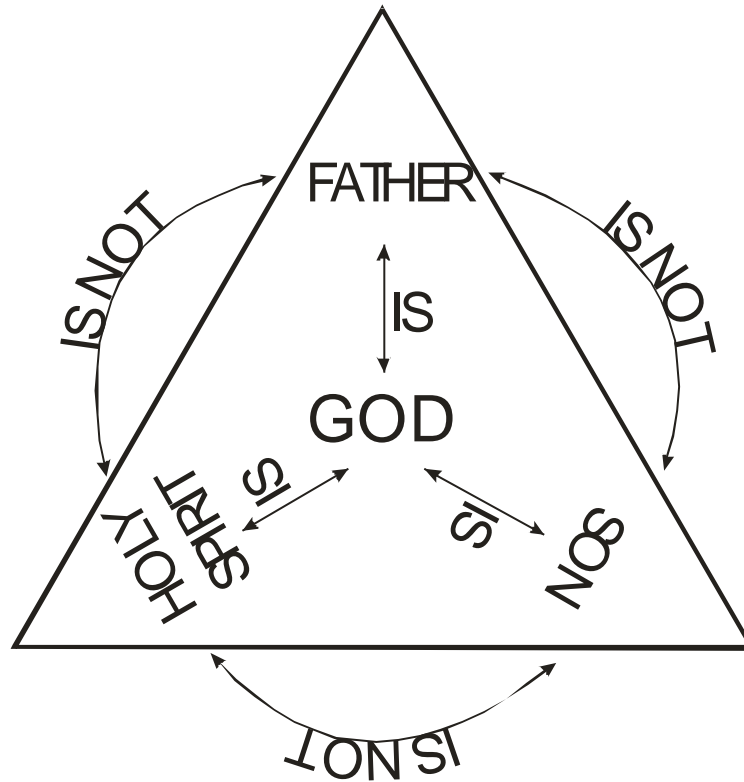
JESUS (Ἰησοῦς), Greek for Joshua meaning savior (Matthew 1:21).

CHRIST (Χριστός), Greek for Messiah, the Anointed One (Matthew 26:63, compare with Daniel 9:26).

ALPHA and OMEGA (Ἄλφα και Ὠ), The beginning and the end, everything (Revelation 1:8; 21:6 & 13)

C. The Doctrine of the Trinity is Revealed through the Scriptures.

An illustration ³¹



“Hear, O Israel! The Lord [יהוה; Yahweh] is our God, the Lord [יהוה; Yahweh] is one!” (Deuteronomy 6:4)

In this verse the word for “one” is ehad (אֶחָד) in Hebrew. “This word occurs 960 times as a noun, adjective, or adverb, as a cardinal or ordinal number, often used in a distributive sense. . . . It stresses unity while recognizing diversity within that oneness.”³² When in Genesis 2:24, God called Adam and Eve “one flesh,” this Hebrew word is used. In Genesis 34:16 Shechem proposes to the sons of Jacob that they intermarry and become “one people,” he used ehad (אֶחָד). In Genesis 27:44 has the expression “a few days,” and the word is ehad (אֶחָד). In Isaiah 65:25 we read, “The wolf and the lamb will graze together,” where ehad (אֶחָד) is translated “together” meaning “graze as one”. Though ehad (אֶחָד) is the number “one,” there can be diversity in that number. Adam and Eve were two, but they were one unit (אֶחָד). The family of Jacob and those living in the village with Shechem were many, but had they agreed to intermarry, they would have

³¹ Though this is the author’s design, it is similar to that found in *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, by Paul Enns, ©1989, Moody Press, page 201.

³² Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999, ©1980). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (Page 030). Chicago: Moody Press.

become one. The wolf and lamb are two different animals but in the millennium they will have new habits, living as though they were “one” species. God is one in substance and person; and yet the Bible teaches that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three persons in one.

Genesis 1:26 God said, “*Let Us make man in our image.*” The three persons of the one God were having a discussion and used the first person plural objective pronoun, “us.” In Genesis 6:3 God refers to the Spirit (with this see Isaiah 48:16, and 63:10-11). In Proverbs 30:4, Agur talks about the Son of God. In the New Testament the revelation becomes clearer because the Son of God appears in a human body as Jesus Christ. During His short time on earth, He spoke of His Father and of the Holy Spirit. The baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 is the final chapter in the progressive revelation of the one God who is three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in and expound this truth because the Bible teaches it, not because we understand it.³³

1. The Doctrine of the Father

The Father is the first person of the Trinity. The words “first person” are not employed to imply that there is a hierarchy with God the Father at the top. The Bible teaches that God is one. The fact that there are three persons in one does not mean that one is the chief. Those three persons function in complete harmony, so much so that no chain of command is necessary.³⁴ The Father is the first in the listing of the persons.³⁵

The Bible teaches that the Father reveals Himself through the Son.³⁶ The Father glorifies the Son.³⁷ The Son submitted Himself to the will of the Father.³⁸ The Son will hand over His kingdom to the Father.³⁹ The Spirit glorifies the Son.⁴⁰ From these phrases one might conclude that God the Father is the head when in reality God is one. All of these descriptions are divine accommodations (see hermeneutical rule number one in the first chapter). God is using human terms to transmit divine truth to a mind that has many limitations. They also relate to a truth that is beyond human understanding—the incarnate Son of God. Jesus, as man, was submissive to the will of the Father. There is no need for a boss in the Godhead, though the descriptions of these actions may seem to imply such to our human minds and experiences.

2. The Doctrine of the Son

The Son is the second person of the Trinity. By using “second” our objective is not to make Jesus appear inferior to God the Father or to imply that He is second in command. The Son is the second person in the list.⁴¹ God is uniquely pure in substance — He is

³³ Hebrews 11:1-3

³⁴ John 10:30

³⁵ Matthew 28:19

³⁶ John 1:18, 14:9-10

³⁷ John 8:54, 12:28; & 13:32

³⁸ John 6:38-39

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:24

⁴⁰ John 16:14

⁴¹ Matthew 28:19

spirit, no more, no less. God is uniquely united in purpose.⁴² The three persons are fully united in all that God does, no votes, no debates, no majority rule. The Son is eternal. (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-14, 8:58; 1 Timothy 6:14-16; Hebrews 1:1-8; Revelation 1:8; 22:12-16)

It was God the Son Who became the God-man—God incarnate—the Lord Jesus Christ. No one fully understands this biblical truth. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, submitted to the will of His Father, shed His blood to redeem sinful man, and will one day return to earth as the God-man Who will be the eternal King-Priest in fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

It was God who instructed Joseph and Mary to name Him Jesus, which is the Greek word for Joshua and means Lord-Savior.⁴³ It was God the Son who appeared throughout the Old Testament period as the Angel of Jehovah.⁴⁴ It was He who walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the Garden, with Abraham as recorded in Genesis 18, and with Moses as recorded in the book of Exodus. Jesus is the Son of God.⁴⁵ Jesus is the Christ (Greek for Messiah)—the anointed One promised to Israel.⁴⁶

Jesus is the God-man, the mediator between God and man.⁴⁷ He never sinned.⁴⁸ He died for the sins of the human race and each individual in it.⁴⁹ He was buried as a dead man and rose bodily from the dead to life; and He ascended to the third heaven where He, as man, is seated at the side of the Father interceding for the saints.⁵⁰ Jesus is the Redeemer, Mediator, and Lawyer for each of the saved; and one day He will return to the earth for His own.⁵¹

Throughout the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is Jehovah (יהוה - *YAHWEH*). The proofs of this truth are many. For some examples see Isaiah 6:1-3 with John 12:41; Isaiah 8:13-14 with 1 Peter 2:8; Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 with Matthew 3:3 and Mark 1:1-3; Isaiah 44:6 with Revelation 22:13; Jeremiah 23:5-6 with 1 Corinthians 1:30; Joel 2:32 with Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13.

⁴² John 10:30

⁴³ Matthew 1:21

⁴⁴ Genesis 16:7, 18:1-33, 32:24-30; and John 8:58

⁴⁵ Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:27; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-19; Tito 2:13

⁴⁶ Matthew 26:63-64

⁴⁷ 1 Timothy 2:5-6

⁴⁸ Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15

⁴⁹ 1 John 2:1-2

⁵⁰ John 20:16-17; Acts 1:3 & 9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Ephesians 1:20, 4:10; 1 Timothy 2:5

⁵¹ John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11

3. The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. There is no hierarchy in God, and the Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son. God is one and yet three persons who are fully united in all that they do.⁵² The Holy Spirit is the third in the list.⁵³

The Spirit is a person, not a mere influence. He possesses personal qualities, such as intellect,⁵⁴ will,⁵⁵ and wisdom.⁵⁶ The Spirit does personal acts, such as work,⁵⁷ search,⁵⁸ teach,⁵⁹ love,⁶⁰ and pray.⁶¹ The Spirit is Eternal,⁶² Omniscient,⁶³ Omnipotent,⁶⁴ and Omnipresent.⁶⁵ He is God.

One of the objectives of the Holy Spirit is to reveal and exalt the Son and Savior.⁶⁶ The Spirit convinces man of righteousness,⁶⁷ sin, and coming judgment.⁶⁸ He does the following works for those who appropriate salvation through faith in Jesus Christ: He baptizes each into the Body of Christ.⁶⁹ He seals each for God.⁷⁰ He indwells each.⁷¹ He prays for each.⁷² He sanctifies each daily and for eternity.⁷³ He controls the person who yields his life to the will of God.⁷⁴ He enables the disciples of Christ for service by giving each special gifts or abilities.⁷⁵

D. The Bible Reveals that God is the Creator and Sustainer of All Things.

God created the universe and all that is in it. He holds it together. Without Him it would self-destruct (Genesis 1:1; Proverbs 16:4; John 1:3; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).

⁵² John 10:30

⁵³ Matthew 28:19

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:11

⁵⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:11

⁵⁶ Romans 8:27

⁵⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:11

⁵⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:10

⁵⁹ John 14:26

⁶⁰ Romans 15:30

⁶¹ Romans 8:26

⁶² Hebrews 9:14

⁶³ 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; John 14:26

⁶⁴ Luke 1:35

⁶⁵ Psalm 139:7-10

⁶⁶ John 16:14

⁶⁷ As emphasized in this section and that of the Scriptures, the truths of God's existence and power and of the moral law are revealed in nature and the human heart so that no person will stand before God with an excuse (Romans 1:18-19).

⁶⁸ John 16:8-11; not only does the creation and human conscience do this, the Spirit adds to it.

⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 12:13

⁷⁰ Ephesians 1:13

⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 2:12, 6:19-20; John 14:16-17

⁷² Romans 8:26-27

⁷³ Romans 8:2, 13; Galatians 5:17-24

⁷⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 5:18

⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:3-8

