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Section: Doctrine of God

**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q4. Does God have a beginning or an end?**

No. God is eternal, self-existent, and self-sufficient. He is not subject to time, and He has no beginning and no end.

**Q5. Does God have a body?**

God is spirit.

God the Son, Jesus, took on flesh at the incarnation and will have that body forever.

* **The Eternality of God *and* the Aseity of God**

**The Eternality of God**: God is timeless, having always existed, and without measure or limit in greatness or duration. He transcends time and has no beginning and no end. God is infinite in essence—absolutely perfect. There are no constraints upon Him from outside of Himself.

God was not created, He did not come into being, He will never cease, and He cannot pass away.

With God there is no before, no after, and there is no progression nor succession in the life of God. God does not have a “history.” Instead, He is timeless—above time—outside of time.

God being eternal is not a different way of being temporal.

We do not have experience in the reality of God’s eternal nature.

But, because of the Bible, we can know true things about the reality of God’s eternal nature.

“God’s eternity, accordingly, should be thought rather as an eternal present without past or future.” - Herman Bavinck

“Not only is God eternal; he is his own eternity.” - Herman Bavinck

**The Eternality of God**: God is timeless, having always existed, and without measure or limit in greatness or duration. He transcends time and has no beginning and no end. God is infinite in essence—absolutely perfect. There are no constraints upon Him from outside of Himself.

**The Aseity of God**: God does not owe His existence to anything or anyone outside Himself, nor does He need anything beyond Himself to maintain His existence. He is self-contained, self-existent, self-sufficient, and independent.

The term *aseity* comes from the Latin phrase *a se*, meaning “from or by oneself.”

*“There was a time, if ‘time’ it could be called, when God, in the unity of His nature (though subsisting equally in three Divine Persons), dwelt all alone. ‘In the beginning, God.’ There was no heaven, where His glory is now particularly manifested. There was no earth to engage His attention. There were no angels to hymn His praises; no universe to be upheld by the word of His power. There was nothing, no one, but God; and that, not for a day, a year, or an age, but ‘from everlasting.’ During a past eternity, God was alone: self-contained, self-sufficient, self-satisfied; in need of nothing. ...God was under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create. That He chose to do so was purely a sovereign act on His part, caused by nothing outside Himself, determined by nothing but His own mere good pleasure; for He ‘works all things after the counsel of His will’ (Eph. 1:11). That He did create was simply for His manifestative glory.”* - AW Pink

* God is Eternal

***Genesis 1:1*** *In the beginning, God…*

***Isaiah 26:4*** *Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.*

***Psalm 90:2*** *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

***Revelation 4:8*** *... “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”*

***Isaiah 57:15*** *(NIV1984) For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy …*

***Psalm 102:27*** *but you [God] are the same, and your years have no end.*

***Psalm 93:2*** *Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.*

* God is the Eternal Source of All Things

God is the source of all life.

***John 1:4*** *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

***John 14:6*** *Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life ...”*

Because He is completely self-existent, He is not caused by or dependent upon anything outside Himself.

***John 5:26*** *For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.*

As His creatures, our life, has God as its source:

***Acts 17:28*** *for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’…*

***Romans 11:34-36*** *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

That all things are “from” God expresses that He is the source of all things.

That all things are “through” God expresses that He is the means of all things.

That all things are “to” God expresses that He is the goal of all things.

All of creation is utterly dependent on God.

***Hebrews 1:3*** *... he upholds the universe by the word of his power. ...*

**Q5. Does God have a body?**

God is spirit.

God the Son, Jesus, took on flesh at the incarnation and will have that body forever.

* **Bible Reading Tools (*Hermeneutics*)**

**Didactic**: Instructive, teaching a fact of truth in a clear, direct method.

***Ephesians 1:5-6*** *(In love) he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

***James 1:19*** *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger*

***John 4:24*** *“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

**Anthropomorphic**: Ascribing a human body, appearance, functions, or parts to something that is not human.

**Anthropopathic**: Ascribing human feelings/passions to something that is not human.

***2 Samuel 22:7*** *In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I called. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry came to his ears.*

We must use clear, direct (didactic) teachings in Scripture to interpret figurative teachings in Scripture.

* **The Spirituality of God**

***John 4:24*** *“God is spirit ...”*

**The Spirituality of God**: God is spirit. He exists as a being that has no parts or dimensions, is not made of any matter, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence. He is an invisible, immaterial, and infinite being that is fundamentally distinct from visible, material, and finite creatures.

* Immaterial

God is spirit and therefore does not have a material body (John 4:24).

When Scripture attributes human anatomy to God, it does so figuratively.

“Anthropomorphic” language: The Bible speaks of God’s hands (Jer. 18:6), eyes (2 Chron. 16:9), lips (Ps. 89:34), arms (Isa. 53:1), ears (Ps. 130:2), and many other human body characteristics. When God describes Himself using human qualities it is in order to reveal Himself to us in ways that we can understand.

***Hebrews 13:5*** *… “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (cf. Matt. 28:20).*

* Infinite

As a spirit being, God has no ontological boundaries or limits.

***Revelation 1:8*** *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

***Jeremiah 32:17*** *‘Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.*

***Isaiah 40:28*** *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.*

* Invisible

Because God does not have a material body, He cannot be seen by human eyes.

In Scripture where God was “seen” by relatively few, these occurrences are what is called a “Theophany” or a “Christophany” which means an outward, symbolic manifestation of God/Christ.

***John 1:18*** *No one has ever seen God …*

***John 6:46*** *not that anyone has seen the Father except he [Jesus] who is from God; he has seen the Father.*

***1 Timothy 6:16*** *[God] who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*

***1 Timothy 1:17*** *To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

The historic 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith states, among other truths, the doctrine we are focused on tonight. It says, “The Lord our God is one, the only living and true God. He is self-existent and infinite in being and perfection. His essence cannot be understood by anyone but him. He is a perfectly pure spirit. He is invisible and has no body, parts, or changeable emotions. He alone has immortality, dwelling in light that no one can approach. He is unchangeable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, in every way infinite, absolutely holy, perfectly wise, wholly free, completely absolute.”

* **Gospel of Jesus Christ**

“*Jesus took on flesh” -* In Jesus Christ, the eternal, invisible God became visible when He took on flesh, being born of a virgin. Fully God eternally, and now (at the incarnation and onward) also, fully man.

***Matthew 1:23*** *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).*

***John 1:14*** *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

***Hebrews 1:3*** *He[Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*

***Colossians 1:15*** *He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God ...*

Christ (God the Son) in His human body, *is the visible display of the invisible God*.

Jesus took on flesh at the incarnation while still being fully, truly divine. The concept of the humanity of Jesus co-existing with His deity is difficult for the finite mind of man to comprehend. Nevertheless, Jesus, at the incarnation and onward, being fully man and fully God is a biblical fact and critical for salvation.

1689 Baptist Confession of Faith: “Two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without converting one into the other or mixing them together to produce a different or blended nature. This person is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and humanity.”

***Galatians 4:4-5*** *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons*.

***Hebrews 10:4*** *... it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

***Hebrews 4:15*** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

*Jesus “will have that body forever.”*

Critical to the gospel is that: Jesus rose bodily from the grave.

***Luke 24:39*** *[Jesus says:] “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”*

It is Christ in the flesh we will see. It is His face whom we will look upon. In glory, we will enjoy God purely and see Christ bodily.

* **Important Takeaways**

Christians now must be informed by the Bible and must live by faith:

***Hebrews 11:1*** *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Studying the spirituality of God reminds us of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

Mankind was helpless and spiritually dead in sin, each one of us deserving of eternal wrath; but the eternal, invisible God pre-ordained that Jesus would take on flesh and enter into time, live the perfect life we could not live, die a sacrificial death in place of His people by paying their penalty, and rise again from the grave claiming victory, thereby justifying God in His extending His sovereign, saving grace to give new life and saving faith to His people.

The eternal Jesus needed to become visible, take on flesh, remain fully God, and be fully man. What a great reminder of the gospel!