Section: Doctrine of God

Lesson 4: Wednesday, September 14, 2022

Q4. Does God have a beginning or an end?

Q5. Does God have a body?

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Greeting:**

Good evening church! It is truly a blessing to be here with you all on this day that the Lord has made for us to study and seek Him together! If we haven’t met yet, or you are new or visiting tonight, my name is Justin Ader. I am the Youth Director and a member of the teaching team here at Disciples Church. I have been given the privilege to deliver Matt’s lesson on our next catechism question and answer. Before we dive in, will you please join me in prayer.

**Introduction:**

Tonight, it’s a two for one! …we have the pleasure to focus on the next 2 catechism questions and answers. There is much to discuss within these 2 questions, so let’s jump right in and start by reading our 2 Questions and Answers.

**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.

My goal in this lesson is to work through these two questions and focus on 5 main things:

1. The eternality of God
2. The aseity of God
3. (Some) Helpful reading techniques related to understanding God in the Bible
4. The spirit nature of God
5. (And finally) The good news that Jesus Christ took on flesh

Our first question tonight—Question 4—of the Catechism sets us up to focus on both the eternality of God and the Aseity of God.

To the question, Does God have a beginning or an end?

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

Our answer clearly states that God “is eternal.”

That is something Christians often affirm, but not all understand the depths of this truth.

So let’s first try to define the eternality of God, see your notes for the definition: 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 implications of His eternality are that: God was not created, He did not come into being, He will never cease, He cannot pass away.

Again, confirming that God is eternal is generally standard practice among Christians. But explaining what is meant by that biblically—is where some complication for some comes into play.

With the help of Dr. James Dolezal, a great Theology Proper theologian (among other things), we’ll try to obtain some clarity regarding the eternality of God.

Often, when people affirm God being eternal, they merely have in mind that He is “endless” (for example unendingly passing through time). But God being eternal has much more depth to it. It’s better understood as God being “timeless.” Unlike us, God is not passing through time. With God there is no before, after, there is no progression or succession in God. God does not have a “history.” Instead, He is timeless…above time—outside of time.

We (mankind) are temporal. That’s how we understand things—from a temporal default—a temporal mode. And that’s the pitfall most of us fall into when we begin to think about God being eternal. We attach our temporal understanding to the doctrine of God, but we need to put that away—we need a new category in our minds for understanding God’s existence.

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

This is important, let me say it again: God being eternal is not a different way of being temporal.

Let me explain this: We have a beginning. But more than that we experience things “in-time.” We experience progression, we experience change, we experience things as they happen—but God does not. It is not that we have a “kind of time” and God has a different “kind of time.” We must not bring temporal things into our efforts to understand God’s eternality. This can be hard because we only know our temporal kind of reality—meaning we do not have experience in the reality of God’s eternal nature. In a non-temporal, non-in-time reality.

Now, because of the Bible, we can know true things about the reality of God’s eternal nature, and in this we see this is one of the many ways that God is “other” than us. He is not like us. God’s eternality is one of the things we learn about in Scripture, but we cannot fully know it. We can rightly know it, but not fully know it. John Owen declared, “How inconceivable is this glorious divine property unto the thoughts and minds of men!” Owen is right. “How inconceivable is this glorious divine property unto the thoughts and minds of men!” This doctrine should humble us, and thrust us into God’s word for truth He disclosed for us to know.

So, Divine eternity is not a kind of being temporal. It is not that we have a certain “kind of time” and God has a different “kind of time.” Rather, God is timeless, He is above time.

Herman Bavinck, an old dead theologian whose work to teach God’s attributes is among some of the best in print, said this:

“… [T]ime—intrinsic time—is the mode of existence that is characteristic of all created and finite beings. One who says “time” says motion, change, measurability, computability, limitation, finiteness, creature. Time is the duration of creaturely existence. “Time is the measure of motion in a movable object.” Hence, there can be no time in God. From eternity to eternity he is who he is. There is in him “no variation or shadow due to change” [James 1:17]. God is not a process of becoming but an eternal being. He is without beginning and end, but also knows no earlier and later. He can neither be subjected to measuring or counting in his duration.

… God’s eternity, accordingly, should be thought rather [of] as an eternal present without past or future. Augustine said, “To God all things are present. Eternity itself is the substance of God, which has in it nothing that is changeable.” Concerning God’s eternity Boethius stated that “God comprehends and at the same time possesses a complete fullness of endless life.”

Nevertheless, God’s eternity, should not for that reason, be conceived as an eternally static, immobile moment of time. On the contrary: it is identical with God’s being and hence with his fullness of being. Not only is God eternal; he is his own eternity.” End quote

So much good stuff in that Bavinck quote (and sub quotes within it). He takes the wonder of God and lays it in front of us. So good. “God’s eternity should be thought of as an eternal present without past or future.” “Not only is God eternal; he is his own eternity.”

Consider our definition of the eternality of God again: 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.

Hopefully you see how our answer and catechism definition lines up with historic Christian theologians on these things.

NOW….The other attribute of God that is closely related to this attribute, and needs to be discussed in conjunction with His eternality, is less familiar to many, but of equal importance. This attribute is the Aseity of God.

Let’s read the definition for that as well and then seek to understand all these things better.

Aseity: 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.” The term designates a divine attribute by which God is “whatever He is by His own self or of His own self.” Since God is a se, He is not like the idols that depend their existence on materials, craftsmen, and ritual offerings…nor is He like anything else in creation, depending on an outside creator and sustainer. This means that God has no needs from creation at all. Therefore, the terms self-contained, self-existent, self-sufficient, and independent are often used as synonyms for Aseity.

The AW Pink quote you have next in your notes helps us see how these two things are so tied together:

‘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 (The Attributes of God book)

What we have said so far contains some overview of these things, let’s look now at Scripture to where we find these truths.

* God is Eternal

God has always been in existence.

God was already present as we read in Gen. 1:1 “In the beginning, God…”

Unlike human beings, God does not have a time or place of origin. He is everlasting-eternal. Look at our next passage:

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

This passage is teaching the eternality of God, and using figurative language right? God is not an actual stone rock, but He is everlasting. In context this passage tells us that those who trust in God and keep their focus on Him, will experience security because of His eternal nature and they will know Him as their peaceful, unchanging foundation….in this way He is like a “rock.”

You have a few more passages there about God being everlasting-eternal….

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.

We see just how incredible the eternal existence of God is there, before anything was created (before He formed the earth), God was……and He was eternally…“from everlasting to everlasting”

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

God’s eternity should be thought of as an eternal present without past or future.

God was and is and is to come!

Of course then, we know God will never cease, He cannot pass away:

Isaiah 57:15 (NIV1984) says, speaking of God: he who lives forever

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

Some of this language is “Anthropomorphic” (which I’ll define in a moment), but basically, we already noted that God is TIMELESS, so He doesn’t have years. He is above time, outside of time—years don’t apply. But Scripture uses human concepts and terms to still make a point. And we get that point in this passage, don’t we?

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

We know what God means when He uses the Psalmist to say His Years Have No End. The temporal reality of YEARS, and the idea of there being NO END to God, these things said in the Psalm communicate a layer of God’s eternality to us, we get it. God will never cease, He cannot pass away.

God’s existence and rule over all things is everlasting. In Psalm 93:2 we read: Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. At no point has God not ruled as God! At no point did God not exist!

Now consider our next point in your notes there:

* God is the Eternal Source of All Things

The finite universe owes its existence to the infinite, eternal, a se God.

It’s important to note, as we saw in Psalm 90:2, that before the creation of time and space, the triune God existed eternally without anything else or anyone else. Though alone, God was not lonely, for God does not lack anything! The three persons of the Trinity enjoyed perfect satisfaction, fellowship, and delight in one another.

The one true God—the eternal God—created the universe not by necessity but to display Himself, to display His power and glory. God was not under any need to bring anything else into existence.

Remember a portion of the AW Pink Quote?...

...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 (The Attributes of God book)

In the fact that God created, we can see in Scripture and conclude that:

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. In Him is the source of life.

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. Don’t miss that amazing truth. The triune God has life in Himself!

As His creatures, our life, has God as its source, we read in Acts 17:28 for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’… This Acts passage is so important; compared to the prior 3 passages we read, it shows a great difference between us and God: namely, we depend on Him. And: He depends on nothing outside of Himself! God has life in Himself—we have life only because God created and sustains us.

\*\*Scripture also declares this reality this way: “when you[, Lord,] take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.” Psalm 104

Our life indeed has God as its source.

Look at Romans 11:34-36 to see these points reiterated:

34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” 35 “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” 36 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 ultimate means of all things. He is the sustainer and sovereign one.

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

Therefore, All of creation is utterly dependent on God. We read in Hebrews 1:3...he upholds the universe by the word of his power...

So…How does this all affect how you go about your life? I hope it is humbling you, I hope you’re already seeing many amazing reasons to worship God based on these truths surrounding His eternal and “a se'' existence. He is so grand and vast—totally above and beyond us…we struggle to comprehend the concept of eternality, yet God is eternal.

Our lives depend fully on the one true eternal God.

And if we have saving faith in Jesus, we can be sure that we will enjoy God forever, because He will not change or cease to be.

Eternal, self-contained, self-existent, self-sufficient, and independent is the one true God…He is worthy of all praise!

Now, these things lead us to ask….If God existed eternally before the creation of time, Heaven, et cetera…then: What about God-Does God have a body? That’s a natural question, because we must rightly conclude that a body is a created, material thing, and yet we see that God existed before anything was created.

So now we turn to our next Catechism question-Question 5. I’ll read it again and then we’ll unpack it:

**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.

Many of you who are well read in God’s word may be thinking, ‘well, wait a minute, I read about God’s eyes, arm, ears…and about Him looking, hearing and so on…If God doesn’t have a body like man then how do I understand these things?’

We’ll answer that in the remainder of this lesson.

To begin, we need to discuss some important Bible reading tools…also known as hermeneutics.

God ordained that His revealed Word (the Bible) uses various forms of literary styles to teach truths to us. At this moment, we need to focus on the difference between when God’s word teaches something directly, literally, and plainly, compared to when the Bible uses figurative types of language to reveal truth.

The Bible reading tools we need to be familiar with here boil down to 3 main concepts or terms. They are in your handout, and in the glossary at the end of your catechism book.

Let’s look at the definitions…the first term is:

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

These kinds of passages fill the Bible and a few examples are:

Ephesians 1:5-6 (In love) he predestined us for adoption 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. – This is clear teaching, no figurative language there.

James 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger – This is clear instruction, no figurative language there.

And a key didactic verse for the spirit nature of God:

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

“God is spirit” in John 4:24 here is a literal, clear, direct declaration of fact.

These 3 passages teach directly and clearly, without the use of analogies, symbols, figurative language, etc.

Now, on the other hand, our next two terms are in your notes, let’s read those now:

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

And next:

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

Since God saw fit to teach us about Himself, He chose to teach us in terms of what we can understand, often these are human likeness type teachings. So, passages in this “Anthropomorphic” category use human things we are familiar with to communicate a reality behind the language.

God graciously addresses us in our terms and in our own language…..perhaps in a way like a parent speaking slow and simple when talking to an infant.

We call that “baby talk;” but something intentional is communicated.

In her communication development phases, little one-year old Layla (mine and Krista’s fifth child) responds to the “baby talk” words we say to her, unlike when we talk in full mature English language—which are beyond her comprehension.

Likewise, God condescends to us to speak in ways (such as using terms of human-likeness or temporal concepts) that communicate things we can understand.

These kinds of anthropomorphic passages are all throughout Scripture, one example is:

2 Samuel 22:7 which says: 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.

This passage talks about God, who does not have a body, as having ears.

But if we rightly understand the use of Anthropomorphic language, then we can avoid the error of thinking that God’s existence is like mankind’s existence—or anything else physical in creation. In this case, the cry having come “to his ears” means that God heard the calling out—with the rest of Scripture we know that God has known of this calling out eternally for He knows all things eternally.

Since we are told didactically in John 4:24 that God is a spirit, we know to not take the “ears” in 2 Samuel as literal-physical ears.

Another example of this is when we read in Isaiah 66:1 that the heavens are God’s throne and the earth is His footstool…if we imagine a massive physical deity seated in heaven, resting His feet on the earth then we are misunderstanding the truth being revealed there, for God doesn’t have a body.

Scripture not only speaks figuratively (anthropomorphically) of God having physical attributes but also anthropopathically, figuratively speaking of emotional attributes or passions. For example, we read in places of narration of God “repenting” (Genesis 6:6-7, Deuteronomy 9:7-8, 1 Samuel 15:11, Jonah 3:10), yet in the Bible we are told didactically that God does not repent (Numbers 23:19-20, 1 Samuel 15:29, Malachi 3:6, James 1:17), we’re told He doesn't change His mind. There is no change in God, period. When it speaks of Him repenting, therefore, it is communicating something else—something that is not an actual change in God.

God is figuratively described in human-likeness in certain instances in the Bible because it helps us understand Him and/or His work in the storyline of redemptive history. But we must be careful to rightly understand the anthropomorphic language by using the didactic truths Scripture gives us. This is the key takeaway here: We must use clear, direct (didactic) teachings to interpret figurative teachings.

Because of these Bible ready tools, we can affirm God’s clear teaching that His nature is spirit, and know that the Bible is not contradicting itself when it ascribes human body parts or likeness to God.

We’ll see more of these anthropomorphic examples in a few moments in our lesson.

Now, with that foundation, let’s move on with the Spirituality of God…In this section I’m going to quote and summarize some of Lawson’s and Grudem’s work on this topic.

People have often wondered; what is God made of?

Is He made of flesh and blood like ourselves? Certainly not.

Is God made of matter at all? Or is God pure energy? Or is He in some sense pure thought?

The answer of Scripture is that God is none of these.

Rather, we read in John 4:24 that “God is spirit.”

Thus, we should not think of God as having size or dimensions, even infinite ones. We should not think of God’s existence as spirit as meaning that God is infinitely large….it is not part of God but all of God that is in every point of space (we will further discuss God’s omnipresence next week).

Nor should we think that God’s existence as spirit means that God is infinitely small….no—no place in the universe can surround Him or contain Him—so to speak.

Therefore, in how we understand His existence as “spirit,” God’s being cannot be rightly thought of in terms of space or physical matter at all. “God is spirit.”

God’s essential mode of existence is different from everything that He has created. To think His being is actually like anything else in the created universe is to misrepresent Him, to limit Him, to think of Him as less than He really is.

While we must say that God has made all creation so that each part of it reflects something of His own character, we must also affirm that to picture God as existing in a form or mode of being that is like anything else in creation is to think of God in a misleading and dishonoring way.

“God is spirit.” God does not have a physical body, nor is He made of any kind of matter like much of the rest of creation.

God is not merely energy or thought or some other element of creation.

He is also not like vapor or steam or air or space, all of which are created things: God’s being is not like any of these.

We have a spirit, but let’s be clear that God’s being is not even exactly like our own spirits, for the human spirit we each have are created things that are finite—for example only able to exist only in one place in one time.

Instead of all these ideas of God, we must simply say that God is spirit.

Now, this is important: We may ask why God’s being is this way. Why is God spirit?

What we can say is that this is the greatest, most excellent way to be! If God is this, then it is the best.

His existence is far superior to anything we know. It is amazing to meditate on this fact. It is a kind of existence that is unlike anything else in creation. It is a kind of existence that is far superior to all our material existence. Therefore, His kind of existence is not less real or less desirable than our own existence. Rather, it is more excellent and more desirable than the existence of all creation.

And His own being is so very real, so very excellent, that it was able to cause everything else to come into existence!

And let’s note that God has always existed as spirit. Remember, there is no change in God.

At this point we should review our catechism definition of God’s spirituality and work out some of the details…

Look with me at your notes to our definition…

**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.

Let’s focus in on those 3 “I” words: immaterial, infinite, and invisible.

First immaterial.

* **The Immaterial God**

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

When Scripture attributes human anatomy to God, it does so figuratively. (As we have seen, this is called “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.

Rather than being a limitation, God’s absence of a physical body is part of what makes Him the divine Lord of all. Since He has no body, God is not subject to spatial constraints. As such, God can be present in all places at all times.

Because God is spirit, we can be assured that wherever we go and no matter how alone we may feel, God is with us still. It is because God is not limited to a physical body that He is able to keep His promise to be with His people…we are told in Hebrews 13:5 “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (cf. Matt. 28:20).

The next “I” word to cover is Infinite…

* **The Infinite God**

As a spirit being, God has no ontological boundaries or limits. In Revelation 1:8 we read: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

The fullness of His being permeates every part of time and space. God’s greatness surpasses all of creation and human understanding.

The infinity of God ought to heighten our sense of worship.

We see this response in passages like:

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.

Because He is beyond human comprehension, He humbles us in wonder and amazement. While we can know Him rightly, we can never know God completely, so there is always room for us to grow and deepen in our understanding of Him. We get this sense when we read a passage like:

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.

The Final “I” word to cover is Invisible…

* **The Invisible God**

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

You may recount mentions in Scripture where God was “seen” by a relative few, however these occurrences are what is called a THEOPHANY or a CHRISTOPHANY which mean an outward symbolic manifestation of God.

Whether this was a pillar of cloud, or a burning bush, or human-like manifestation, or (more specifically) a figure that wrestled with Jacob…all of these were not the spirit God being seen in His fullness, rather each occurrence was an outward symbolic manifestation of God.

Though people in our modern times sometimes claim to have seen God, the truth is that He is invisible. You have a few key passages to this point in your notes, let’s read them:

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.

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

So….God is spirit. He is an invisible, immaterial, and infinite being.

Now……We want you to see our teaching as it relates to respected theologians through church history. There is a section in the historic 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith that 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.”

Lots of good stuff there. Clearly set forth.

In all of this…You may be wondering…“What about Jesus, doesn’t He now have a body?” Yes! That leads to our next point and gospel focus for tonight….

Our catechism answer says, “Jesus took on flesh.” In Jesus Christ, the eternal, invisible [second Person of the triune] 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- the God-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).

Do you see what happened there? The declaration is that God the Son, Jesus Christ, would take on flesh, and not just take on flesh, but live and walk and be seen among mankind on earth…”God with us” Immanuel! We sing that name often at Christmas time, but if you hadn’t known the depth of this before, you can sing it even more fully, knowing that the invisible God took on flesh to dwell among man, and complete His work.

We see this also in our next few passages:

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

And finally, Colossians 1:15 [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God...

This is a powerful verse, and one that hopefully is making sense to you now… Connect this verse and the one before it: Christ (God the Son in flesh) in his human body, is the visible display of the invisible God. Jesus “images” God, He puts God on display.

Jesus took on flesh at the incarnation while still being 100% 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—fully man and fully God—is a biblical fact and critical for salvation.

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith again, says it this way: 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.

Very important and helpful clarities there.

Jesus had to be born as a human being for several reasons, a few are as follows:

As seen in 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.”

Humans are born under God’s moral law, and only a human being could redeem other human beings born under the same moral law. Post fall, only Jesus Christ could perfectly keep the law and perfectly fulfill the law, making Him able to redeem His people from their disobedience. This is one reason the confession said there that Christ Jesus is, “the only mediator between God and humanity.”

Another reason Jesus had to be fully human is that God established the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins, you can see this in Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22. The blood of animals was insufficient for the permanent remission of sin because, as we are told in Hebrews 10:4 “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, sacrificed His human life and shed His human blood to cover the sins of all who God would save based on His grace, His sovereign gift of salvation—faith in Jesus.

Another reason is that the humanity of Jesus allows us to have comfort in the fact that He relates to us in a way that the angels or animals never can. Hebrews 4:15 tells us: “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." This is a high and powerful comfort! Jesus sympathizes in your weakness, in your temptation.

And, let’s not be mistaken: Jesus taking on a body was not a temporary thing. As our catechism answer also states: Jesus “will have that body forever.” Critical to the gospel is that: Jesus rose bodily from the grave. He walked among many people in His resurrected body, proving to them His promise kept, we read in 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.

Consider this…with the truth we saw in 1 Timothy 6:16, namely that “…[God] dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see,” and this truth that Jesus will have His body forever, we can rightly understand how we will SEE God at the final judgment and in the new creation. It is not the spirit nature of God we will see, for that is impossible. The spirit essence of God remains invisible forever. Truly present, but invisible.

Rather 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. Amazing. So amazing. How blessed are we that we receive the grace to fellowship with God forever!

Now, to wrap up, let’s close briefly with some important takeaways in understanding God’s spirit nature:

Because God is invisible, and Jesus has ascended to Heaven, Christians now (in this time and place) must be informed by the Bible and must live by faith…for as we are told in Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. While we cannot actually see God until Jesus returns, He did not leave us without His revealed will, He blessed us with the perfect word, the Bible, nor did He leave us without the Holy Spirit to rightly illuminate it’s truths to us...we must know Him accurately through His revelation to us in the Bible by the power and work of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Rob taught this truth in question 6 of this series—how God has ordained that we know Him accurately and more fully through the Scriptures.

And finally, studying the Spirit nature 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 preordained 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—paying their penalty, and rising again from the grave claiming victory, thereby justifying God in Him extending His sovereign saving grace to give new life and saving faith to His people.

The invisible God planned, ordained, and providentially accomplished that—in Jesus Christ. Jesus had to take on flesh, and remain fully God, to become the perfect human substitute to take the wrath due His people. This study shows us that the incredible eternal God made a way to show grace to save undeserving sinners. What a great reminder of the gospel!

And THAT is the reason to worship! AMEN?!

I hope this time in this lesson was helpful for you to further understand the important truths within our 2 catechism questions for this week.

Let’s Pray.