

Lesson 3
The Doctrine of God: What is God Like?
His Attributes and Trinitarianism

Objective: To recover and restore the centrality and weightiness of God as God in our lives and as Trinity. To understand the contours of his attributes and his Tri-unity.

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us... For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like... This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech.” – A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*

I. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

“God explicitly forbids univocal comparisons (Nu 23:19; 1Sa 15:29; Isa 40:25; 44:8-9; 46:5; Hos 11:9)” – Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 240

Not direct, unfiltered, transparent revelation (Ex. 33.20; Jn. 1.18; 1 Tim. 6.16). Instead, God has spoken to us *analogically, anthropomorphic*

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 7. *What is God?*

A. God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

II. ATTRIBUTES

A. Incommunicable Attributes

Attribute	Description
Simplicity	As infinite spirit, God is not made up of different parts; his attributes are identical with his being; God is not the sum total of his attributes but is simultaneously everything that all of his attributes reveal; God’s attributes also cannot be ranked or one made more “essential” to God than another
Aseity (Self-Existence) Acts 17:24-25 Romans 11:35-36.	Independence from his creation; God has no need outside of himself, rather he has life, blessedness, goodness, and all things in and of himself
Immutability James 1:17 Ps 102:26-27	God is pure act, with no potential; he is pure being, never becoming; because he is perfect in every way, his essence does not and cannot change
Impassibility Psalm 46:1-3	God is not subject to anything outside of himself; he cannot suffer or being overwhelmed by the world he created
Eternity Psalm 90:1-12 Is 40:27-31	God transcends the very category of time; this is not a denial of his involvement in time, rather he freely involves himself in time as one who is not restricted by it as creatures are

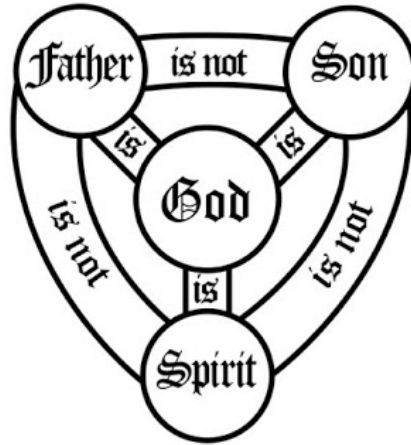
III. TRINITARIANISM

LC-Q. 9. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*^[SEP]

There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.

A. Seven Statements¹

1. There is only one God (Deut. 6.4; Isa. 44.6-8 45.5, 18, 22; 46.9; 1 Tim. 2.5; Gal. 3.20; Rom. 3.30; Jas. 2.19)
2. The Father is God (Eph. 4.6; 1 Cor. 8.6)
3. The Son is God (Matt. 14.33; 16.16; Mk. 1.1; Lk. 1.32, 35; Jn. 1.1; 5.18; 20.21)
4. The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5.3, 4)
5. The Father is not the Son (Jn. 1.1; 17.1-5; Mt. 3.16-17)
6. The Son is not the Spirit (Jn. 14.15-17; 16.7; Acts 2.33; Mt. 3.16-17)
7. The Spirit is not the Father (Jn. 14.15-17; Acts 2.33; Mt. 3.16-17)



B. Heretical Views of the Trinity

“It is only when you grasp what it means for God to be a Trinity that you really sense the beauty, the overflowing kindness, the heart-grabbing loveliness of God... What we assume would be a dull or peculiar irrelevance turns out to be the source of all that is good in Christianity. Neither a problem nor a technicality, the triune being of God is the vital oxygen of Christian life and joy.” – Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*, 18

IV. APPLICATION

¹ Taken from Kevin DeYoung in *The New City Catechism Devotional*, 26.