

DOCTRINE 1

UNIT FOUR THE GOD WE KNOW (1)

INTRODUCTION: WHO GOD IS

- ↳ The God of the Gospel
 - The gospel tells us who God is and what his purposes are.
 - Our knowledge of God is true but incomplete.
 - Many aspects of God remain hidden from us.

- ↳ God's Identity and Character
 - Names are important – the names and titles of God reveal various truths about him.
 - When Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord, the Lord responded by proclaiming his name.
 - In doing so, he described activities which are characteristic of him.

- ↳ God's Attributes
 - Some attributes of God are not shared by humans (incommunicable), others are shared to some degree (communicable).
 - An example of the first would be “changelessness”, and the second “love”.
 - When thinking about this we must remember that God is not made up of a bundle of separate elements.

THE TRUE GOD, THE LORD

↳ God's Uniqueness

- God has no rivals – the gods of the nations have no meaning and no power.
- Other spiritual forces exist, but are God's creation, as is every material object.
- God has life from within himself and did not need to be created.
- God's 'oneness' is true of his inner life – there is no hint of disharmony or tension.

↳ The Glory of God

- The Lord's glory both reveals and hides.
- Moses requested to see the glory of the Lord – he was told that “you cannot see my face, for no-one may see me and live”.
- Afterwards he acted as mediator between the Lord and his people.

THE SOVEREIGN GOD, THE KING

↳ God is free from restrictions of any kind.

↳ Free in relation to space.

- We are limited by our bodies to one place – God can express his presence anywhere and everywhere simultaneously.
- There is nowhere that we can possibly go where God is not present (Psalm 139).

↪ Free in relation to time.

- We are the victims of time – uncertain memories of the past, inability to predict the future or to grasp the present.
- The Lord is regarded as the master of time – remembering the past perfectly, dominating the present and planning the future.
- God is 'eternal' and 'immortal' (1 Timothy 1:17) – he can never falter, fail, change or decay.
- When the Bible speaks of God 'repenting' or changing his mind it doesn't mean he is vulnerable to the actions of his creatures.
- God acts consistently, but recognises different circumstances.
- All of nature, time included, is created and sustained by God.
- God's creative power has not ceased since the creation – all things in nature move at his word of command.
- What some people call 'luck' or 'law of nature' is actually God's active working in the world.

↪ Free from ignorance.

- God has total insight and knowledge – humans have made many discoveries, but many just show us how little we know.
- Much will always be beyond us, especially any detailed knowledge of the future.
- We struggle to understand human personality – God has no such difficulties, knowing all words, deeds and thoughts.

↪ Free from other powers.

- God has no rivals in strength or wisdom, but both Satan and humans wish to work against him.
- Nations who believe they are strong are in fact ruled by God.
- Even demons are directed by God – he does not approve their motives but rather uses them to bring about good.

- ↪ The glory of God.
- The whole massive work of God is built on the foundation of his sovereign power.
 - There is no hint of God being limited or frustrated in any way.
 - Despite all this, God is not out of reach or disinterested in us – the glory of God is never more glorious than in his saving work on our behalf.

THE GOOD GOD, THE FATHER

- ↪ God is faithful.
- If God is free from all constraints, could he be free to do things which are wrong?
 - God has absolute power to do what is right – ‘limited’ only by his own nature.
 - God is by his very nature faithful and can’t lie or sin – this is not weakness but strength.
 - The Bible reveals that God is the faithful Father.
- ↪ God is both gracious and righteous.
- God’s love and righteousness are both faithful – harmonious aspects of his character.
 - Special emphasis is given to the way God loves those who do not deserve his favour.
 - The sacrifice on the cross is the greatest act of God’s love and the greatest revelation of that love.
 - God’s righteousness is active in love – part of this, however, remains his willingness to punish where there is no repentance.
 - To be true to himself and to remain faithful, God must be willing to reward the innocent and punish the guilty.
 - Without emphasising God’s anger against sin, we can not truly understand his love.

↪ The glory of God.

- Paul refers to what God has done “to the praise of his glorious grace” (Ephesians 1:6).
- Overemphasis on God's love at the expense of his wrath can trivialise the divine compassion.
- When we catch a glimpse of grace, we are struck by the glory of the incomparable God.