

2 God: The One True God, Creator, Sovereign Lord, and Holy Trinity

Sixbert Sangwa

Open Christian University, Sacramento, California, United States.

Correspondence: ssangwa@openchristian.education

Publication Info

Accepted: May 13, 2026

Published: May 16, 2026

Publication note: This chapter is published in the special series "Foundations of Christian Faith" in Open Journal of Science, Philosophy and Theology, 2(3), 2026, and is intended for later inclusion in the edited volume Foundations of Christian Faith, edited by Placide Mutabazi and published by Open Christian Press, an imprint of Open Christian University.

Copyright © 2026 by the author. Published by Open Christian University under its Open Christian Press imprint. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, unless otherwise stated.

Scripture quotations marked CSB have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Abstract

This chapter presents the doctrine of God as the living center of Christian faith, worship, mission, ethics, education, and discipleship. Scripture reveals that God is not an impersonal force, not the universe, not an idol made by human imagination, not a tribal deity, and not a projection of human desire. He is the one living and true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the self-existent Lord who declares, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14), the Holy One who is worshiped by the heavenly host (Isaiah 6:1-3), and the sovereign Lord from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things (Romans 11:36). He is eternal, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, just, righteous, loving, gracious, merciful, patient, faithful, and good. The chapter affirms biblical monotheism and the doctrine of the Trinity: there is one God in one divine essence, eternally existing in three distinct Persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This doctrine is not produced by philosophical speculation or ecclesiastical invention; it arises from the whole counsel of Scripture. The Bible teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; yet there is only one God. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father. The three Persons are coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial, one in glory, will, divine nature, and saving purpose. The chapter also addresses God's creation and providence, His transcendence and immanence, His sovereignty and human responsibility, the unity of His attributes, and the pastoral importance of knowing Him rightly. It exposes errors such as polytheism, pantheism, panentheism, modalism, tritheism, deism, process theology, open theism, religious pluralism, self-deification, manifestation spirituality, and cultural redefinitions of God. It responds to apologetic objections against biblical theism while insisting that human reason serves Scripture and does not judge Scripture. Finally, it applies the doctrine of God to worship, prayer, holiness, mission, family discipleship, theological education, pastoral ministry, and readiness for the return of Christ.

Keywords: Doctrine of God, Theology Proper, Biblical Monotheism, Creator God, Sovereignty of God, Holy Trinity, Divine Attributes, Sola Scriptura, Christian Apologetics, Spiritual Discernment.

Recommended citation: Sangwa, S. (2026). God: The One True God, Creator, Sovereign Lord, and Holy Trinity. Open Journal of Science, Philosophy and Theology, 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.65655/openchristianpress.120>

Learning Outcomes

1. Define biblical monotheism and explain why Scripture reveals one living and true God.
2. Explain from Genesis 1:1, Acts 17:24-31, and Romans 11:33-36 that God is Creator, Sustainer, Lord, and final goal of all things.
3. Describe the meaning of God's self-existence, eternity, infinity, sovereignty, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.
4. Distinguish communicable and incommunicable attributes while avoiding the error of dividing God into separate parts.
5. Explain why God's holiness, justice, wrath, love, grace, mercy, and goodness must be held together biblically.
6. Articulate the doctrine of the Trinity as one God eternally existing in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
7. Identify and reject modalism, tritheism, polytheism, pantheism, panentheism, deism, process theology, open theism, and religious pluralism by testing them against Scripture.
8. Explain the relationship between God's transcendence and immanence without reducing God either to distance or to absorption into creation.
9. Discuss God's sovereignty and human responsibility in a biblically faithful way that avoids fatalism, autonomy, and speculation beyond Scripture.
10. Apply the doctrine of God to worship, prayer, ethics, mission, education, discipleship, family life, pastoral ministry, and spiritual readiness.

Key Terms with Definitions

- **Theology Proper:** The study of God Himself, including His existence, names, attributes, works, unity, and triune life as revealed in Scripture.
- **Revelation:** God's act of making Himself known. Creation displays God's eternal power and divine nature (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:19-20), while Scripture gives authoritative special revelation concerning God's character, will, works, salvation, and final purposes.
- **Biblical monotheism:** The doctrine that there is only one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; John 17:3).
- **Creator:** God as the one who made all things by His will and power, without depending on pre-existing matter or any created helper (Genesis 1:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Revelation 4:11).
- **Providence:** God's wise, holy, and sovereign preservation, governance, and ordering of all things toward His purposes (Psalm 103:19; Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 1:17).
- **Aseity:** God's self-existence and independence. God depends on nothing outside Himself for life, being, knowledge, goodness, or glory (Exodus 3:14; Acts 17:24-25).
- **Eternity:** God has no beginning, no end, and no dependence on time. He is God from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17).
- **Infinity:** God is unlimited in His being and perfections. No created mind can exhaustively comprehend Him (Job 11:7-9; Romans 11:33-36).
- **Immutability:** God is unchanging in His being, character, promises, moral perfection, and covenant faithfulness (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17).

- **Omniscience:** God knows all things truly and completely, including the past, present, future, hidden motives, and all possible realities according to His perfect wisdom (Psalm 139:1-6; Isaiah 46:9-10; Hebrews 4:13).
- **Omnipresence:** God is fully present everywhere, not as creation itself, but as the Lord who fills heaven and earth and is never absent from His world (Psalm 139:7-13; Jeremiah 23:23-24).
- **Omnipotence:** God is almighty and able to accomplish all His holy will. His power is never separated from His wisdom, holiness, truth, or goodness (Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:17; Luke 1:37).
- **Holiness:** God's absolute moral purity, majestic otherness, and separation from all evil. God is not merely better than creatures; He is the Holy One (Isaiah 6:1-3; 1 Peter 1:15-16).
- **Justice and righteousness:** God's perfect moral governance by which He always does what is right, judges evil, vindicates truth, and upholds His holy law (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 89:14).
- **Wrath:** God's holy opposition to sin and evil. Divine wrath is not sinful anger, impatience, or cruelty, but the righteous judgment of the holy God against rebellion (Romans 1:18; Revelation 19:1-2).
- **Love:** God's self-giving goodness and covenant faithfulness by which He seeks His glory and the true good of His people (1 John 4:8; John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- **Grace:** God's undeserved favor toward sinners, supremely displayed in salvation through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11).
- **Mercy:** God's compassionate kindness toward the miserable and guilty, not because they deserve it, but because He is gracious and compassionate (Exodus 34:6-7; Ephesians 2:4-5).
- **Trinity:** The biblical doctrine that the one God eternally exists as three distinct Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each fully God, yet not three gods (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
- **Essence or being:** What God is. In the doctrine of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in divine essence.
- **Person:** Who God is in the triune relations. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, not merely roles, masks, or temporary appearances.
- **Transcendence:** God's exalted otherness over creation. He is not contained by the universe and is not dependent on it (Isaiah 40:22-26; Acts 17:24).
- **Immanence:** God's nearness and active presence with His creation and people. He is not distant or absent (Psalm 139:7-10; Matthew 1:23; John 14:16-17).
- **Modalism:** The false teaching that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not distinct Persons but merely different modes, roles, or manifestations of one divine Person.
- **Tritheism:** The false teaching that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate gods.
- **Pantheism:** The belief that God and the universe are identical. Scripture rejects this by distinguishing the Creator from creation (Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:25).
- **Panentheism:** The belief that the universe is in God or part of God while God is more than the universe. Scripture rejects any view that makes God's being dependent on creation.
- **Deism:** The belief that God created the world but does not personally govern, speak, redeem, judge, or act within it. Scripture reveals the opposite (Acts 17:26-31; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- **Religious pluralism:** The claim that all religions are equally valid paths to God. Scripture rejects this claim by affirming one God and one mediator, Jesus Christ (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5).

2.1. Introduction

The doctrine of God is not a detached academic topic. It is the foundation of worship, prayer, salvation, holiness, ethics, mission, church life, family discipleship, and human identity. What a person believes about God determines what that person ultimately trusts, fears, loves, obeys, and worships. If God is imagined as an impersonal energy, then prayer becomes technique. If God is reduced to a helper of personal dreams, then worship becomes self-improvement. If God is treated as merely loving but not holy, sin loses its seriousness. If God is treated as wrathful but not loving, grace is obscured. If God is made dependent on the universe, then God is no longer the sovereign Lord revealed in Scripture. If God is defined by personal feelings, then the self becomes the final authority.

Scripture does not allow the Church to invent God. The Bible begins, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Before creation exists, God is. Before humanity thinks, speaks, builds, sins, suffers, doubts, prays, or worships, God is. He is not introduced as a philosophical possibility but revealed as the living Lord who creates all things by His will. The Christian doctrine of God begins not with human imagination but with divine revelation.

The Bible reveals that God is one. Moses confesses, "Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Isaiah declares that there was no God before Him and there will be none after Him (Isaiah 43:10-11). Jesus prays to the Father as "the only true God" and identifies eternal life with knowing the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent (John 17:3). Paul proclaims to the Athenians that the God who made the world does not live in temples made by hands and does not need anything from human beings (Acts 17:24-25). Biblical faith is therefore not polytheistic, pantheistic, or pluralistic. It is the worship of the one living and true God.

Yet Scripture also reveals God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus commands baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Paul blesses the Church with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14). The Father sends the Son, the Son accomplishes redemption, and the Spirit applies redemption to believers. Prof. Sixbert SANGWA summarizes this doctrinal center by confessing one God, Creator of all, revealed in three distinct Persons while remaining one in essence, being, and glory (Sangwa, n.d.). The Trinity is not an optional complexity for advanced students; it is the biblical identity of the God Christians worship.

This chapter is written under Sola Scriptura. Historical theology, creeds, councils, academic books, and philosophical categories can serve the Church when they submit to Scripture. They become dangerous when they replace Scripture or correct it. The aim, therefore, is not to make God fit an inherited system or a modern ideology. The aim is to hear and obey what God has revealed about Himself in His Word.

Biblical Revelation of God

God is known because God has made Himself known. Human beings may reason from creation, conscience, order, moral awareness, and the longing for meaning, but fallen humanity suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18-23). Scripture teaches that creation truly reveals God's eternal power and divine nature, yet creation does not preach the full gospel, identify the incarnate Son, explain the cross, or provide the apostolic doctrine necessary for saving faith. For this reason, Christian theology must receive God's self-revelation in Scripture as supreme.

The Bible reveals God in His works, names, words, attributes, covenants, judgments, promises, and saving acts. In creation, God is the sovereign Maker (Genesis 1:1). In the Exodus, He is the covenant Lord who hears His people

and reveals His name (Exodus 3:14-15). In the law, He is holy and righteous (Leviticus 19:2). In the Psalms, He is refuge, shepherd, king, judge, and faithful covenant keeper (Psalms 23:1-6; Psalms 46:1; Psalms 103:19). In the prophets, He exposes idols, judges sin, promises restoration, and reveals His glory among the nations (Isaiah 44:6-8; Ezekiel 36:22-28). In Christ, God reveals Himself climactically, for the Son is the exact expression of God's nature (John 1:18; Hebrews 1:1-3). In the sending of the Spirit, God dwells with and within His people as the Spirit of truth, holiness, adoption, and mission (John 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-16; Acts 1:8).

This means that the doctrine of God is not a collection of abstract attributes added to the Bible from outside. God's attributes are known in the history of His self-disclosure. He is not merely said to be powerful; He creates, sustains, delivers, judges, raises the dead, and will make all things new. He is not merely said to be holy; He reveals His holiness at Sinai, in the tabernacle and temple, through the prophets, in the cross of Christ, and in the call for His people to be holy. He is not merely said to be love; He gives His Son for sinners and pours His love into believers' hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5-8).

Because revelation is God's gracious initiative, humility is essential. The finite creature cannot master the infinite Creator. Paul ends his meditation on God's saving purposes not with triumphal human control but with worship: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" (Romans 11:33). True theology ends in doxology. If study of God makes a person proud, argumentative, cold, or careless about obedience, that person has misunderstood the purpose of theology. The doctrine of God must produce reverent fear, worship, repentance, mission, and hope.

2.2. The Oneness of God

Biblical monotheism stands at the heart of Christian faith. The Shema of Israel declares, "The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This confession does not merely deny the existence of rival deities; it calls God's people to exclusive love and covenant loyalty: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). The oneness of God demands the undivided devotion of His people.

The prophets repeatedly confront idolatry by appealing to the uniqueness of the Lord. Isaiah records God's declaration: "No god was formed before me, and there will be none after me. I - I am the LORD. Besides me, there is no Savior" (Isaiah 43:10-11). God is not one member of a divine class. He is not the highest among many gods. He is not a local deity competing against other tribal powers. He alone is God. The idols of the nations are lifeless, powerless, and dependent on human hands (Isaiah 44:9-20). The Lord, by contrast, made heaven and earth and rules history.

The New Testament does not weaken monotheism. Jesus affirms the greatest commandment by citing the Shema (Mark 12:29-30). Paul writes, "there is no God but one" (1 Corinthians 8:4), and then speaks of one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things exist (1 Corinthians 8:6). The apostolic witness does not abandon Jewish monotheism; it reveals that the one God is known through the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is why the doctrine of the Trinity is not a denial of monotheism but the fullness of biblical monotheism as revealed in Christ and the Spirit.

The oneness of God rejects polytheism, which divides ultimate reality among many gods; henotheism, which worships one god while admitting other real gods; and religious pluralism, which treats contradictory beliefs about God as equally valid. Different religions do not simply use different names for the same God while meaning the same truth. Some deny the Trinity, some deny creation, some identify God with the universe, some deny the incarnation, some reject the cross, and some deny personal judgment. These are not minor differences of vocabulary. They are conflicting truth claims. Scripture teaches one God and one mediator between God and

humanity, the man Christ Jesus ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). Therefore, Christians must speak with humility toward all people while refusing the false comfort that all religions worship the same God in a saving way (Sangwa, 2024d).

The oneness of God also confronts the practical idolatry of the heart. A person may verbally confess one God while functionally serving money, power, reputation, pleasure, politics, technology, nation, family, ministry success, or personal autonomy. Biblical monotheism calls for total allegiance. If God is one, He cannot be one loyalty among many ultimate loyalties. He must be loved with all the heart.

2.3. God as Creator and Sustainer

The first verse of Scripture is foundational for Christian theology: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" ([Genesis 1:1](#)). This statement distinguishes God from everything else. God is uncreated; the heavens and the earth are created. God exists before creation; creation exists by His will. God is not the universe; the universe is the work of His hands. God is not dependent on matter, energy, time, space, or natural processes. He is Lord over them.

Creation is not a divine accident, not a struggle among gods, not the result of blind necessity, and not an extension of God's being. The Bible repeatedly presents creation as the free and sovereign work of God. "*The heavens were made by the word of the LORD*" ([Psalm 33:6](#)). "*He commanded, and they were created*" ([Psalm 148:5](#)). All things were created by God's will ([Revelation 4:11](#)). The doctrine of creation protects both God's transcendence and creation's goodness. Creation is not God, but it is good because God made it ([Genesis 1:31](#)).

The New Testament reveals that creation is Trinitarian. The Father creates through the Son and by the Spirit. John writes that all things were created through the Word and that apart from Him not one thing was created ([John 1:1-3](#)). Paul teaches that all things were created through Christ and for Christ ([Colossians 1:15-17](#)). Hebrews says that God made the universe through the Son ([Hebrews 1:2](#)). The Spirit of God is present in the creation account ([Genesis 1:2](#)), and the Psalmist says that when God sends His Spirit, creatures are created and the surface of the ground is renewed ([Psalm 104:30](#)). Creation is therefore not merely a doctrine about origins; it reveals the triune God.

God also sustains creation. Deism imagines a god who starts the universe and then leaves it to operate independently. Scripture rejects such distance. In God "*we live and move and have our being*" ([Acts 17:28](#)). Christ holds all things together ([Colossians 1:17](#)) and sustains all things by His powerful word ([Hebrews 1:3](#)). The regularity of creation is not evidence of God's absence but of His faithfulness. Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night continue because God preserves the created order ([Genesis 8:22](#)).

Creation also establishes accountability. Paul tells the Athenians that the Creator "now commands all people everywhere to repent" because He has fixed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness through the risen Christ ([Acts 17:30-31](#)). The Creator is not a passive observer. The Maker of all is the Judge of all. Human beings are not autonomous owners of themselves. They are creatures who owe God worship, gratitude, obedience, and repentance.

This doctrine speaks directly to modern confusion. If God is the Creator, then human beings are not self-made. If God is the Sustainer, then life is not independent. If God is the Owner, then bodies, families, churches, institutions, economies, and nations are accountable to Him. If God made all nations from one man and determined their times and boundaries ([Acts 17:26](#)), then ethnic pride, racism, imperial arrogance, and national idolatry are all judged by the Creator. If all things are created through Christ and for Christ, then education, business, science, art, politics, and technology must not be treated as religiously neutral domains beyond the Lordship of God.

2.4. God's Self-Existence, Eternity, and Independence

When Moses asks for God's name, the Lord answers, "*I AM WHO I AM*" ([Exodus 3:14](#)). This divine name reveals God's self-existence, covenant faithfulness, and sovereign freedom. God is not defined by something outside Himself. He does not become God through creation, human worship, or cosmic process. He simply and eternally is.

Paul proclaims the same truth in Athens: "*The God who made the world and everything in it - he is Lord of heaven and earth - does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things*" ([Acts 17:24-25](#)). God does not need temples, rituals, offerings, institutions, nations, angels, or human achievements to complete Him. He gives; He is not dependent on receiving. He sustains; He is not sustained by creation. He is worshiped not because He lacks praise but because creatures owe praise to the One who is infinitely worthy.

God's eternity means that He has no beginning and no end. "*From eternity to eternity, you are God*" ([Psalm 90:2](#)). Human life is brief and fragile. Generations rise and pass away. Empires are born and collapse. Technologies appear and become obsolete. Human theories change. God remains. This is not mere duration. God's eternity means that He is not trapped within creaturely limitations. He knows, purposes, promises, and acts as the Lord of time.

God's independence corrects modern views that make Him dependent on the world. Process theology, in various forms, describes God as affected by and in some sense developing with the world. Academic descriptions of process thought often contrast it with classical theism by saying that God is temporal, mutable, and passible in relation to the world's processes, and that God does not exercise sovereign power in the biblical sense (Hustwit, n.d.). Scripture does reveal that God grieves, loves, has compassion, responds to prayer, and enters covenant relationship; but these biblical descriptions must not be twisted into the claim that God is incomplete without creation or morally developing through history. The God of Scripture is living and relational without being needy, changing in character, or dependent on creation for His being.

God's self-existence also humbles human reason. We may know God truly because He reveals Himself, but we cannot know Him exhaustively. A god fully contained by human categories would be an idol of the mind. "*Can you fathom the depths of God or discover the limits of the Almighty?*" ([Job 11:7](#)). The Christian answer is no. Yet this does not lead to agnosticism, because God has spoken truly. The incomprehensibility of God means not that God is unknowable, but that He is never exhaustively knowable by finite creatures.

2.5. The Attributes of God: Communicable and Incommunicable

An attribute of God is not a detachable quality added to God, as if God were made of parts. God is not partly holy, partly loving, partly wise, and partly powerful. Scripture reveals one living God whose perfections are unified. His love is holy love. His wrath is righteous wrath. His power is wise power. His mercy is just mercy. His sovereignty is good sovereignty. When Christians speak of attributes, they are naming what God has revealed to be true of Himself.

Theologians often distinguish between incommunicable and communicable attributes. This distinction is useful if handled carefully. Incommunicable attributes are perfections that belong to God uniquely, such as self-existence, eternity, infinity, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. Communicable attributes are perfections reflected in creatures in a limited and dependent way, such as love, goodness, wisdom, justice, truthfulness, mercy, and holiness. The distinction does not mean that humans possess these qualities in the same way God does. It means that human beings, made in the image of God, may reflect God's character creaturely, dependently, and imperfectly.

2.5.1 Incommunicable Attributes

God is **self-existent**. He has life in Himself (John 5:26). Created beings receive life; God possesses life eternally and originally. This means God cannot be manipulated by religious technique. He is not a force to be tapped, a cosmic battery to be accessed, or a spiritual resource controlled by human words.

God is **eternal**. He is "*the King eternal, immortal, invisible*" (1 Timothy 1:17). His plans are not improvised. His covenant faithfulness is not fragile. His promises do not expire because time cannot overcome Him.

God is **immutable**, unchanging in His being and moral perfection. "*Because I, the LORD, have not changed, you descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed*" (Malachi 3:6). This does not mean God is lifeless or inert. It means He does not improve, decline, learn righteousness, become more loving, or change His moral character. His covenant dealings in history are real, but they flow from His unchanging faithfulness.

God is **omnipresent**. David asks, "Where can I go to escape your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" (Psalms 139:7). The answer is nowhere. God's omnipresence comforts believers and warns sinners. No suffering place is outside His reach, and no secret sin is hidden from His sight.

God is **omniscient**. David confesses that God knows when he sits and stands, understands his thoughts from far away, and knows a word before it is on his tongue (Psalms 139:1-4). God does not guess. God does not learn the future. He declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10). Open theism argues in various forms that future free decisions are not fully settled or not fully knowable as definite future realities (Sijuwade, 2023). Christians should treat those debates with care, but Scripture will not allow the conclusion that God is surprised, mistaken, or dependent on creaturely decisions to know His own future purposes.

God is **omnipotent**. Nothing is too difficult for the Lord (Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:17). Omnipotence does not mean God can lie, sin, deny Himself, or act contrary to His nature (Numbers 23:19; 2 Timothy 2:13; Titus 1:2). Such acts are not expressions of power but contradictions of God's perfection. God's power is holy power.

God is **sovereign**. He does whatever He pleases in heaven and on earth (Psalms 115:3). His throne rules over all (Psalms 103:19). He works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11). Divine sovereignty is not cold fatalism; it is the personal reign of the wise, holy, and good God.

2.5.2 Communicable Attributes

God is **wise**. His judgments are unsearchable and His ways are untraceable (Romans 11:33). Human wisdom becomes folly when it resists God's revelation. True wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7).

God is **truthful**. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). His Word is truth (John 17:17). Therefore, doctrine is not optional speculation but a response to the God who speaks truthfully.

God is **faithful**. He keeps covenant and shows faithful love (Deuteronomy 7:9). Believers may trust His promises when circumstances appear dark because His faithfulness rests in His character, not in human strength.

God is **good**. The Lord is good to everyone, and His compassion rests on all He has made (Psalms 145:9). God's goodness is not sentimental permissiveness. It is His perfect generosity, kindness, righteousness, and benevolence toward His creatures.

God is **loving**. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). This does not mean love is God, or that human culture may define love and then impose that definition on God. Scripture defines love by God's action in sending His Son as the atoning sacrifice for sins (1 John 4:9-10).

God is **merciful and gracious**. He reveals Himself as compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in faithful love and truth (Exodus 34:6-7). Mercy does not deny justice; it is displayed most fully through the cross, where God remains just and justifies the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:25-26).

God is **holy**. Holiness is not one attribute among many in the sense of being optional or secondary. The heavenly beings cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Armies; his glory fills the whole earth" ([Isaiah 6:3](#)). God's holiness marks all His attributes with majestic purity.

2.6. The Holiness, Justice, Wrath, Love, Grace, Mercy, and Goodness of God

Modern people often separate God's attributes according to personal preference. Some want a God of love without holiness and judgment. Others speak of wrath without tenderness, patience, and mercy. Both distortions are unbiblical. Scripture reveals one God whose attributes are perfectly united.

God's holiness is the starting point for understanding sin. Isaiah sees the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the seraphim cry, "Holy, holy, holy" ([Isaiah 6:1-3](#)). Isaiah does not respond casually. He says, "Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips" ([Isaiah 6:5](#)). True encounter with God's holiness exposes human uncleanness. This is why worship that removes reverence, repentance, and trembling has lost touch with the biblical vision of God.

God's justice means He always does what is right. Moses confesses, "*The Rock - his work is perfect; all his ways are just. A faithful God, without bias, he is righteous and true*" ([Deuteronomy 32:4](#)). Abraham asks, "*Won't the Judge of the whole earth do what is just?*" ([Genesis 18:25](#)). The expected answer is yes. God's justice gives hope to the oppressed and warning to the wicked. A universe without divine judgment would not be morally safe; it would mean evil finally escapes accountability.

God's wrath is His holy opposition to sin. Scripture says that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness ([Romans 1:18](#)). Divine wrath is not temper, cruelty, or loss of self-control. It is the settled and righteous response of the holy God to evil. To deny God's wrath is not to make God more loving. It makes evil less serious and the cross less necessary.

God's love is revealed supremely in Christ. "But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" ([Romans 5:8](#)). God's love is not mere affirmation of human desire. It is holy, saving, sacrificial, and transforming. It rescues sinners from condemnation and conforms them to Christ. Any message that says, "God loves you, therefore you need not repent," contradicts the love of God revealed in the gospel. The love of God leads sinners to life, not to comfortable rebellion.

God's grace is undeserved favor. Salvation is by grace through faith, not from works, so that no one can boast ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). Grace is not divine indifference to sin. Grace reigns through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord ([Romans 5:21](#)). Grace trains believers to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age while waiting for the blessed hope ([Titus 2:11-14](#)).

God's mercy is His compassionate action toward the needy and guilty. Because God is rich in mercy, He made believers alive with Christ even when they were dead in trespasses ([Ephesians 2:4-5](#)). Mercy is not earned by human misery; it flows from God's character. This comforts broken sinners: no one is too guilty for God's mercy if he comes to Christ in repentance and faith. It also humbles proud sinners: mercy is received, not controlled.

God's goodness fills creation and redemption. He gives life, breath, rain, fruitful seasons, food, and gladness ([Acts 14:17](#)). Every good and perfect gift comes from Him ([James 1:17](#)). His goodness is not limited to immediate comfort. Sometimes His goodness disciplines, corrects, refines, and leads His people through suffering toward holiness ([Hebrews 12:5-11](#)).

These attributes meet at the cross. There God's holiness exposes sin, His justice judges sin, His wrath is satisfied, His love gives the Son, His grace saves the undeserving, His mercy rescues the guilty, and His goodness brings life from death. Any doctrine of God that cannot explain the cross is not yet biblical.

2.7. Historical and Doctrinal Witness to the God of Scripture

The doctrine of God did not begin with later church councils. It begins with Scripture. Yet the Church's historical confessions show how believers defended biblical truth against distortions. Creeds and councils are not authorities over Scripture; when faithful, they are servants that summarize what Scripture teaches.

The early Church faced serious errors concerning God and Christ. Some denied the full deity of the Son. Some blurred the distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit. Some divided God into three beings. The Nicene Creed confessed one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and one Lord Jesus Christ, "true God from true God," of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made (Nicene Creed, n.d.). This confession was an attempt to guard the apostolic witness that the Son is not a creature but fully divine.

The Athanasian Creed later stated the matter with careful precision: Christians worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confusing the Persons nor dividing the essence. It confesses the Father as God, the Son as God, and the Holy Spirit as God, yet not three gods but one God (Athanasian Creed, n.d.). Such language does not replace Scripture; it protects readers from two opposite errors. Modalism confuses the Persons. Tritheism divides the essence.

Augustine's extended reflection on the Trinity also sought to uphold the equality of Father, Son, and Spirit while confessing one God (Augustine, n.d.). Later theologians continued to explain divine attributes, creation, providence, and the Trinity. Bavinck emphasized the Creator-creature distinction and the triune God as the God of Christian confession (Bavinck, 2004). Frame addressed God's lordship, names, attributes, and acts in relation to Christian life (Frame, 2002). Letham and Sanders have offered contemporary evangelical treatments of the Trinity rooted in Scripture and historical theology (Letham, 2019; Sanders, 2016).

The value of this historical witness is not that it gives new revelation. It helps the Church avoid old errors wearing new clothes. Many modern distortions are not new discoveries. Modalism reappears when people say Father, Son, and Spirit are merely three masks of one Person. Tritheism appears when people speak as though the Father, Son, and Spirit are three independent centers of deity. Arian-like teaching appears when Jesus is treated as exalted but not fully God. Pantheism and panentheism appear when people replace the Creator with "the universe" or imagine all beings as parts of God. The Church must be biblically anchored and historically alert.

2.8. The Trinity: One God in Three Persons

The doctrine of the Trinity can be summarized in three biblical affirmations: there is one God; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully God; and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons. Remove any one of these affirmations and the biblical doctrine collapses.

2.8.1 There Is One God

As already shown, Scripture teaches one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; 1 Corinthians 8:4; James 2:19). Christianity is not tritheism. Christians do not worship three gods who cooperate. There is one divine being, one divine essence, one divine nature, one divine glory, and one divine will. The triune Persons are not parts of God, as though each possessed one-third of deity. Each Person is fully God, and the one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2.8.2 The Father Is God

The Father is repeatedly identified as God. Jesus prays to the Father as the only true God (John 17:3). Paul speaks of "one God, the Father" (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Father sends the Son (John 3:16-17), raises the Son (Galatians 1:1), adopts believers (Ephesians 1:3-6), hears prayer (Matthew 6:9), and gives the Spirit (Luke 11:13). The Father is not a created source or a higher deity above the Son and Spirit. He is fully God.

2.8.3 The Son Is God

Scripture identifies Jesus Christ as fully divine. John begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" ([John 1:1](#)). The Word became flesh ([John 1:14](#)). Thomas confesses the risen Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" ([John 20:28](#)). Paul says that in Christ "the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily" ([Colossians 2:9](#)). Hebrews calls the Son the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of His nature ([Hebrews 1:3](#)), and applies the language of divine throne and creation to Him ([Hebrews 1:8-12](#)). Jesus says, "I and the Father are one" ([John 10:30](#)). This oneness does not erase personal distinction, because Jesus also prays to the Father and is sent by the Father. It reveals unity of divine nature and saving work.

The deity of Christ is essential to the gospel. If Jesus is merely a creature, He cannot reveal God perfectly, bear divine judgment sufficiently, conquer death as Lord, receive worship without idolatry, or save sinners to the uttermost. Prof. SANGWA rightly warns new believers that Jesus is not merely a great teacher or prophet but God Himself who became incarnate to save sinners (Sangwa, 2024a). The biblical Christ is not a symbol of consciousness, a moral example only, or one manifestation among many spiritual masters. He is the eternal Son who became flesh.

2.8.4 The Holy Spirit Is God

The Holy Spirit is not a force, energy, vibration, or impersonal influence. He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Peter tells Ananias that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God ([Acts 5:3-4](#)). The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God ([1 Corinthians 2:10-11](#)). He speaks ([Acts 13:2](#)), teaches ([John 14:26](#)), guides ([John 16:13](#)), intercedes ([Romans 8:26-27](#)), distributes gifts according to His will ([1 Corinthians 12:11](#)), can be grieved ([Ephesians 4:30](#)), and sanctifies believers ([2 Thessalonians 2:13](#)). These are personal actions, not impersonal forces.

Sangwa's teaching on the Holy Spirit emphasizes that the Spirit is not a distant concept or abstract power but fully divine, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son, and personally active in regeneration, indwelling, empowerment, spiritual gifts, and sealing believers for the day of redemption (Sangwa, 2024b). This is pastorally important. Christians do not use the Spirit; they depend on, obey, and walk by the Spirit. The Spirit does not lead believers away from Christ or Scripture. He glorifies Christ and guides into truth ([John 16:13-14](#)).

2.8.5 The Persons Are Distinct

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father. At Jesus' baptism, the Son is baptized, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father's voice speaks from heaven ([Matthew 3:16-17](#)). Jesus prays to the Father ([John 17:1-5](#)). The Father sends the Son ([John 3:17](#)). The Father and Son send the Spirit ([John 14:26](#); [John 15:26](#)). The Son intercedes before the Father ([Romans 8:34](#)), and the Spirit intercedes within believers ([Romans 8:26-27](#)). These biblical relations are not theatrical appearances. They reveal real personal distinctions within the one God.

Modalism fails because it cannot account for these distinctions. If Father, Son, and Spirit are merely modes of one Person, then Jesus' prayers become divine self-address without real relation, the baptism scene becomes a staged appearance, and the sending of the Son and Spirit loses its biblical meaning. Prof. SANGWA's critique of Oneness theology identifies this problem by showing that Scripture portrays Father, Son, and Spirit as simultaneous and relationally distinct, not merely successive manifestations (Sangwa, 2024c).

Tritheism fails in the opposite direction. It treats Father, Son, and Spirit as three gods. But Scripture says God is one. The Great Commission uses the singular "name" of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ([Matthew 28:19](#)). Christian baptism is into the one divine name, not three competing divine names. The triune God is one in essence and three in Persons.

2.8.6 The Trinity and Salvation

The doctrine of the Trinity is not an abstract puzzle. Salvation is Trinitarian from beginning to end. The Father chose and predestined believers for adoption, the Son redeemed them by His blood, and the Spirit sealed them as the down payment of their inheritance ([Ephesians 1:3-14](#)). Through Christ, believers have access by one Spirit to the Father ([Ephesians 2:18](#)). Christians pray to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. The Father initiates, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies redemption, yet the work is the one saving work of the one God (Sangwa, 2024a).

This truth protects worship. Christians do not worship a generic deity plus Jesus and the Spirit as additions. Christian worship is worship of the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. It also protects mission. The Church baptizes in the triune name and makes disciples who obey Christ's commands ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)). The Great Commission is grounded in the authority of the risen Son and the revelation of the triune God.

2.9. God's Transcendence and Immanence

God is transcendent. He is exalted above creation. "Who will you compare God with?" asks Isaiah ([Isaiah 40:18](#)). The nations are like a drop in a bucket before Him ([Isaiah 40:15](#)). He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth ([Isaiah 40:22](#)). He is not contained by heaven and earth, much less by human buildings ([1 Kings 8:27](#); [Acts 17:24](#)). Transcendence means God is not part of the created order, not subject to creaturely limits, and not available for manipulation by rituals, formulas, or spiritual technologies.

God is also immanent. He is near to His creation and to His people. David cannot flee from God's presence ([Psalm 139:7-10](#)). The Lord is near the brokenhearted ([Psalm 34:18](#)). In Christ, God comes near in the incarnation: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" ([John 1:14](#)). By the Spirit, God dwells in believers and in the Church ([1 Corinthians 3:16](#); [1 Corinthians 6:19](#)).

Biblical faith holds transcendence and immanence together. If transcendence is emphasized without immanence, God may be imagined as distant, cold, and uninvolved. This tends toward deism. If immanence is emphasized without transcendence, God may be absorbed into the world, confused with human feelings, or reduced to inner experience. This tends toward pantheism or panentheism. Scripture reveals the Lord who is high and exalted yet dwells with the humble and contrite ([Isaiah 57:15](#)).

The relationship between transcendence and immanence is especially important in prayer and worship. Believers may approach God with confidence because Christ is their High Priest ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#)), yet they approach with reverence and awe because God is a consuming fire ([Hebrews 12:28-29](#)). Intimacy without reverence becomes casual presumption. Reverence without intimacy becomes fearful distance. The gospel gives both: adopted children cry, "Abba, Father," by the Spirit ([Romans 8:15](#)), and redeemed worshipers bow before the Holy One.

2.10. God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

Scripture teaches that God is sovereign over all things. He rules over creation, nations, kings, history, salvation, judgment, and the future. "The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all" ([Psalm 103:19](#)). He removes kings and establishes kings ([Daniel 2:21](#)). He works all things according to the counsel of His will ([Ephesians 1:11](#)). Not even a sparrow falls to the ground apart from the Father's will ([Matthew 10:29](#)).

Scripture also teaches human responsibility. Human beings make real choices, obey or disobey real commands, commit real sins, and face real judgment. Joshua calls Israel to choose whom they will serve ([Joshua 24:15](#)). Jesus commands people to repent and believe the gospel ([Mark 1:15](#)). Paul says God commands all people everywhere to repent ([Acts 17:30](#)). No one may excuse sin by appealing to God's sovereignty.

The Bible places divine sovereignty and human responsibility together without embarrassment. Joseph tells his brothers, "You planned evil against me; God planned it for good" ([Genesis 50:20](#)). The crucifixion of Christ occurred according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, yet those who crucified Him were guilty ([Acts 2:23](#); [Acts 4:27-28](#)). These passages do not invite careless speculation. They teach that God's sovereign purpose does not cancel human responsibility, and human responsibility does not threaten God's sovereign rule.

Christians have debated how best to articulate this relationship. Reformed, Arminian, Molinist, and other evangelical traditions differ in their accounts of predestination, foreknowledge, grace, and freedom. Those disagreements should be treated carefully and fairly. However, several boundaries are required by Scripture. God is never ignorant of the future. God is never morally responsible for evil. Human beings are genuinely accountable. Salvation is by grace, not human boasting. God's purposes cannot fail. Any model that denies one of these biblical truths must be corrected by Scripture.

Open theism claims, in various forms, that the future involving free creaturely decisions is partly open and not exhaustively known by God as definite future reality. Its proponents often intend to protect human freedom and the sincerity of relationship with God. Yet Scripture repeatedly portrays God as declaring the end from the beginning, knowing all things, fulfilling prophecy, and accomplishing His counsel ([Isaiah 46:9-10](#); [Psalm 139:4](#); [John 21:17](#); [Acts 15:18](#)). Human freedom must not be defined in a way that limits God's omniscience or makes God dependent on creation.

Pastorally, God's sovereignty comforts believers. Suffering is not meaningless. Persecution is not outside God's rule. Mission is not hopeless. Prayer is not futile. History is not random. The return of Christ is not uncertain. At the same time, human responsibility keeps believers from passivity. God commands prayer, evangelism, holiness, repentance, justice, compassion, discipline, and endurance. Trusting sovereignty should produce obedience, not fatalism.

2.11. Common Misconceptions and Disagreements

2.11.1 "God is merely a force."

Scripture reveals God as personal. He speaks, wills, loves, commands, judges, grieves, promises, hears, sends, and saves. An impersonal force cannot say, "I AM WHO I AM" ([Exodus 3:14](#)), enter covenant, love sinners, or judge the world in righteousness. The Holy Spirit is not a force but a divine Person who speaks, wills, teaches, and can be grieved ([Acts 13:2](#); [1 Corinthians 12:11](#); [Ephesians 4:30](#)).

2.11.2 "All religions worship the same God."

This claim sounds peaceful but ignores truth. Scripture teaches one God and one mediator, Jesus Christ ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). Jesus says no one comes to the Father except through Him ([John 14:6](#)). A religion that denies the Son does not know the Father in the saving way Scripture requires ([1 John 2:23](#)). Christians should love neighbors of every religion, defend religious liberty, speak with humility, and reject coercion, but they must not deny the exclusive claims of Christ.

2.11.3 "The Trinity means three gods."

The Trinity does not mean three gods. It means one God in three distinct Persons. The Father, Son, and Spirit are not separate divine beings. They are one in essence, glory, will, and nature. The Athanasian formulation is helpful here: not confusing the Persons and not dividing the essence (Athanasian Creed, n.d.). Scripture itself requires both truths: one God ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#)) and three divine Persons ([Matthew 28:19](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#)).

2.11.4 "The Father, Son, and Spirit are merely three modes of one Person."

This is modalism. It cannot explain the baptism of Jesus, the prayers of Jesus, the sending of the Son, the intercession of the Son, or the sending of the Spirit. Scripture reveals real relations among Father, Son, and Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:26-34).

2.11.5 "God is loving but not holy."

A god of love without holiness is not the God of Scripture. God's love saves sinners from sin; it does not bless rebellion. The same Bible that says God is love also says God is light and there is absolutely no darkness in Him (1 John 1:5; 1 John 4:8). God's love and holiness meet in the cross.

2.11.6 "God is wrathful but not loving."

A message of wrath without God's love, patience, mercy, and grace is also distorted. God does judge sin, but He delights in mercy and sent His Son for sinners (Micah 7:18; Romans 5:8). Biblical preaching must warn truthfully and invite sinners sincerely.

2.11.7 "God does not judge."

Scripture says God has fixed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness through Christ (Acts 17:31). Final judgment is not an embarrassment to Christian faith. It is necessary for moral reality, vindication of the oppressed, exposure of evil, and the public triumph of God's righteousness.

2.11.8 "God learns the future or changes morally."

God interacts with His creatures in history, but He does not learn in ignorance or improve morally. He declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). He does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17). His moral character is eternally perfect.

2.11.9 "God is limited by human freedom."

Human choices are real, but human freedom is not ultimate. God accomplishes His purposes even through the free and sinful actions of creatures, without becoming the author of evil (Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23). Any view of freedom that makes God weak, uncertain, or dependent on humanity contradicts Scripture.

2.11.10 "God is the universe, and human beings are divine."

Pantheism and self-deification repeat the ancient temptation: "you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5). Scripture distinguishes Creator and creature. Human beings are made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27), which gives dignity and responsibility, but they are not God. Salvation does not awaken hidden deity within humanity; it reconciles sinners to God through Christ.

2.11.11 "Personal feelings define who God is."

Feelings matter as part of human experience, but they are not the final authority. The heart is not a reliable creator of theology. Scripture warns that the heart can be deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9). God defines Himself by His Word. Human feelings must be brought to Him in honesty and submitted to His truth.

2.12. New Age, Occult, Secular, and Pluralistic Distortions of God

Contemporary culture often rejects biblical language while retaining spiritual desire. Many people no longer say "God" but speak of "the universe," "energy," "vibrations," "manifesting," "higher self," or "divine consciousness." Some of these phrases may sound harmless, but they frequently carry assumptions that contradict Scripture. Recent descriptions of New Age spirituality identify it as eclectic, often blending reincarnation, holism, pantheism, occultism, alternative healing, and consciousness exploration (Phillips & Singleton, 2025). Britannica likewise

traces New Age ideas through occult, metaphysical, theosophical, astrological, and esoteric currents that promised personal and global transformation (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2026).

2.12.1 "The Universe" Replacing God

When people say, "The universe gave me this," "the universe is guiding me," or "ask the universe," they often personalize creation while avoiding the Creator. Scripture never calls believers to trust the universe. The heavens declare God's glory; they are not God (Psalm 19:1). Creation points beyond itself to the Maker. Replacing God with "the universe" is a refined form of exchanging the truth of God for a lie and worshiping created things rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

2.12.2 Universal Divine Energy and Spiritual Vibrations

New Age spirituality often speaks of universal energy or vibrations that can be raised, balanced, or directed. Scripture does not reveal God as an impersonal energy field. God is personal, holy, sovereign, and speaking. The Spirit of God is not a vibration to be manipulated but the Lord who gives life and sanctifies believers (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Any spirituality that treats divine power as a technique under human control is closer to magic than biblical faith.

2.12.3 Manifestation Theology

Manifestation spirituality teaches that thoughts, words, emotions, or visualizations can attract desired realities. Some versions borrow biblical language about faith and prayer but redefine faith as mental power. Biblical faith is not confidence in one's own creative thoughts. Faith trusts the living God and submits to His will (1 John 5:14). Prayer is not a law of attraction. It is communion with the Father through the Son by the Spirit, shaped by Scripture, humility, repentance, and obedience.

2.12.4 Self-Deification and the Higher Self

The claim that human beings are divine contradicts creation, fall, and redemption. Humans are made in God's image, but they are creatures, not God (Genesis 1:26-27). Sin is not ignorance of inner divinity; it is rebellion against the holy Creator (Romans 3:23). Salvation is not self-realization but reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ (Colossians 1:20-22). SANGWA's work on New Age spirituality warns that such movements often replace sin and atonement with human divinity and spiritual evolution (Sangwa, 2025).

2.12.5 Goddess Spirituality and Feminized Deity

Some contemporary spiritualities reject the biblical revelation of God as Father and replace Him with goddess language or gender-balanced divinity. Scripture includes motherly images of God's compassion (Isaiah 66:13), but God reveals Himself by His own names and covenant identity. Christians do not have authority to rename God according to cultural preference. God is not male as creatures are male, because God is spirit (John 4:24), yet Scripture authoritatively teaches believers to pray, "Our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). The Church must not correct Jesus' language.

2.12.6 Cosmic Christ Ideas Detached from the Biblical Christ

Some systems speak of a "Cosmic Christ" as an impersonal principle, universal consciousness, or spiritual office that may appear in many teachers. This is not the Christ of Scripture. The biblical Christ is Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son made flesh, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised bodily, ascended, and returning in glory (John 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Acts 1:9-11). A Christ detached from Jesus, the cross, the resurrection, and final judgment is another Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4).

2.12.7 Interfaith Syncretism

Syncretism blends elements of different religions into a spiritually attractive mixture. It often claims to honor all faiths while quietly removing what Scripture says about sin, judgment, Christ, repentance, and exclusive salvation. The prophets condemned Israel when it mixed the worship of the Lord with the worship of Baal ([1 Kings 18:21](#)). Paul warns that believers cannot participate in the table of the Lord and the table of demons ([1 Corinthians 10:21](#)). Christian love for neighbors must never become spiritual compromise.

2.12.8 Astrology-Shaped Views of Providence

Astrology teaches people to interpret destiny, personality, relationships, or timing through stars and celestial signs. Scripture teaches that God made the stars ([Genesis 1:16](#)), names them ([Psalm 147:4](#)), and rules over them. Believers seek guidance from God through Scripture, wisdom, prayer, and providence, not through horoscopes. The nations may be terrified by signs in the heavens, but God's people must not be ([Jeremiah 10:2](#)).

2.12.9 Therapeutic Reduction of God

A subtler distortion reduces God to a therapist of personal dreams. In this view, God exists mainly to affirm identity, increase confidence, heal emotional discomfort, and help individuals reach their goals. Scripture certainly reveals God's compassion for the wounded ([Psalm 34:18](#)), but God is not a servant of self-fulfillment. He calls people to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ ([Luke 9:23](#)). True healing is not the enthronement of the self but restoration to God.

2.13. Apologetic Responses to Objections Against Biblical Theism

Christian apologetics must defend the truth with gentleness and reverence ([1 Peter 3:15-16](#)). It must not place autonomous reason above Scripture. Reason is a gift from God, but fallen reason must be corrected by revelation. The aim is not to win arguments for pride but to remove obstacles, expose false assumptions, proclaim Christ, and call people to repentance and faith.

2.13.1 "Who created God?"

This question assumes that everything must be created. Scripture teaches that created things require a Creator, but God is not a created thing. He is self-existent: "I AM WHO I AM" ([Exodus 3:14](#)). If God were created, He would not be God. The Creator-creature distinction is foundational. The universe begins; God does not. Creation depends; God does not. Human minds may find God's self-existence mysterious, but denying it does not solve the problem. It leaves finite reality without an ultimate ground.

2.13.2 "Is the Trinity a contradiction?"

The Trinity is a mystery, but it is not a contradiction. Christians do not say God is one Person and three Persons, or one essence and three essences. They confess one God in essence and three distinct Persons. The doctrine is revealed, not invented. Scripture forces the Church to confess all three truths: one God, three divine Persons, and real personal distinctions. Mystery begins where finite comprehension ends; contradiction begins where a statement denies itself in the same sense. The Trinity is above reason, not against reason.

2.13.3 "Does evil disprove God?"

The Bible never treats evil as an illusion. Evil is real, grievous, and judged by God. Scripture traces evil to creaturely rebellion, not to defect in God ([Genesis 3:1-19](#); [James 1:13-15](#)). The strongest Christian answer is not a philosophical slogan but the cross and resurrection. God enters human suffering in the incarnate Son, bears

judgment for sinners, defeats death, and promises final justice ([Acts 2:23-24](#); [Revelation 21:1-5](#)). Evil does not disprove God; it exposes humanity's need for the holy Judge and merciful Savior.

2.13.4 "Is the God of the Old Testament different from the God of the New Testament?"

No. The Old Testament reveals God's mercy, patience, covenant love, and compassion ([Exodus 34:6-7](#); [Psalm 103:8-13](#)). The New Testament reveals God's holiness, wrath, judgment, and final justice ([Romans 1:18](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:7-10](#); [Revelation 20:11-15](#)). The same God judges sin and saves by grace in both Testaments. The cross shows continuity: God is so holy that sin requires judgment, and so loving that He gives His Son.

2.13.5 "Does science disprove the Creator?"

Science studies the created order. It can describe patterns, processes, structures, and mechanisms within creation. It cannot rightly declare that the Creator does not exist, because that conclusion is philosophical and theological, not a laboratory result. Scripture does not oppose careful study of creation. It opposes suppressing the Creator while studying His works ([Romans 1:18-21](#)). A scientific explanation of a process does not eliminate God any more than explaining grammar eliminates an author.

2.13.6 "Is biblical theism oppressive because it requires obedience?"

Every worldview has an authority. Secular autonomy obeys the self, the market, the state, the academy, the tribe, desire, or cultural fashion. Biblical theism calls creatures to obey the Creator who is holy, wise, loving, and good. God's commands are not arbitrary oppression; they reflect His character and lead to life ([Deuteronomy 10:12-13](#); [1 John 5:3](#)). Sin feels like freedom while it enslaves. The service of God is true freedom.

2.13.7 "If God is sovereign, why pray?"

Prayer is not an attempt to inform or control God. It is an appointed means by which God's people depend on Him, align with His will, receive mercy, and participate in His purposes. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray for the Father's name to be honored, His kingdom to come, and His will to be done ([Matthew 6:9-10](#)). God's sovereignty gives confidence that prayer is meaningful, because the One who hears is able to act.

2.13.8 "If God is love, why judge?"

Love without justice would be indifference to evil. A loving God must oppose what destroys His creatures and dishonors His glory. Scripture reveals that God's patience is meant to lead people to repentance ([Romans 2:4](#)), but patience is not the denial of judgment. The same God who is love will judge the world in righteousness.

2.14. Contemporary Application for Worship, Prayer, Ethics, Mission, Education, and Discipleship

2.14.1 Worship

True worship begins with the true God. Worship is not primarily about atmosphere, performance, personal taste, or emotional stimulation. It is the reverent, joyful, obedient response of redeemed people to God's revelation. The heavenly worship of [Revelation 4:8-11](#) centers on God's holiness, worthiness, creation, and sovereign will. Churches must therefore evaluate worship by Scripture, not by market preference. Songs, prayers, sermons, sacraments, and testimonies should honor the Father, exalt the Son, depend on the Spirit, confess sin, proclaim grace, and cultivate reverent joy.

2.14.2 Prayer

The doctrine of God shapes prayer. Because God is Father, believers come as children. Because God is holy, they come with reverence. Because God is sovereign, they pray with trust. Because God is omniscient, they do not pretend. Because God is merciful, they confess sins honestly. Because God is triune, Christian prayer is offered to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18). Prayer must not be reduced to manifestation, visualization, positive speech, or mystical technique.

2.14.3 Ethics

Ethics flows from God's character. "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). Human dignity rests on creation in the image of God, not on productivity, intelligence, wealth, race, age, health, or social status (Genesis 1:26-27). Justice matters because God is just. Truth matters because God is true. Sexual purity matters because bodies belong to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Compassion matters because God is merciful. Christians must resist moral relativism, not with arrogance, but with humble obedience to the God who defines good and evil.

2.14.4 Mission

Mission rests on the identity of God. There is one Creator of all nations, one Lord of history, one Savior, one gospel, and one coming judgment (Acts 17:24-31). The Great Commission is Trinitarian: disciples are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and taught to obey Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). Religious pluralism weakens mission by denying the urgency of Christ's exclusive saving work. Biblical monotheism and Trinitarian faith strengthen mission by proclaiming the one true God who saves through His Son and sends His Spirit.

2.14.5 Education

Bible Colleges and Christian schools must teach every subject under the Lordship of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). Education that excludes God may produce technical competence while forming spiritual rebellion. Christian education should not merely add chapel services to secular assumptions. It should train students to think God's thoughts after Him, test every worldview by Scripture, love truth, serve neighbor, resist deception, and use knowledge for God's glory.

2.14.6 Family Discipleship

The Shema connects the oneness of God to family discipleship. Parents are to teach God's words diligently to their children, talk of them at home and on the road, when lying down and rising up (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Families must therefore resist outsourcing spiritual formation entirely to churches or schools. Children need to hear who God is, why He is worthy, why idols are false, why Jesus is Lord, and why the Spirit empowers obedience. Family worship, Scripture reading, prayer, confession, and conversations about culture are practical acts of theology.

2.14.7 Pastoral Ministry

Pastors must preach God before they preach technique. Churches are not sustained by charisma, branding, entertainment, or organizational strategy. They are sustained by the Word, Spirit, and grace of the triune God. Pastoral counseling must not reduce God to a tool for emotional relief. Church leadership must remember that Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18), the Spirit distributes gifts as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11), and the Father seeks worshippers who worship in Spirit and truth (John 4:23-24).

2.14.8 Public Witness

The doctrine of God has public significance. Scripture's God is Creator and Judge of all, not merely a private comfort for religious individuals. Therefore, truth, justice, human dignity, marriage, stewardship, work, technology, economic life, and political authority all exist under God. Christians should not seek coercive domination, but

neither should they accept the secular claim that God belongs only in private feeling. The earth and everything in it belong to the Lord (Psalm 24:1).

2.15. Pastoral Exhortation and Spiritual Readiness

The Church must recover the fear of the Lord. Many believers are anxious because their view of God is too small. Many are careless because their view of holiness is too weak. Many are prayerless because their view of sovereignty is too thin. Many are vulnerable to deception because they have not learned to distinguish the living God from spiritual counterfeits.

Knowing God rightly produces humility. No ministry leader, scholar, pastor, prophet, activist, entrepreneur, or institution is ultimate. God alone is God. He does not share His glory with another (Isaiah 42:8). This humbles pride and frees believers from slavery to human approval.

Knowing God rightly produces courage. If God is sovereign, His people need not panic before cultural hostility, technological change, political instability, economic uncertainty, or spiritual deception. The nations rage, but the Lord reigns (Psalm 2:1-12). Christ is building His Church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it (Matthew 16:18).

Knowing God rightly produces holiness. The holy God calls His people to be holy in all their conduct (1 Peter 1:15-16). Grace does not train believers to blend into the age. It trains them to deny godlessness and wait for the blessed hope (Titus 2:11-14). A doctrine of God that does not produce repentance is being held in an unworthy manner.

Knowing God rightly produces discernment. The last days are marked by deception, false teachers, false prophets, lawlessness, and people with the appearance of godliness but denying its power (Matthew 24:4-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5). Believers must test the spirits (1 John 4:1), measure teaching by Scripture, and reject spiritual experiences that bypass the truth of Christ.

Knowing God rightly produces hope. The triune God who created all things will bring history to His appointed end. The Father has exalted the Son. The Son will return. The Spirit is the down payment of the inheritance. The Church waits not for the universe to evolve into light, nor for humanity to awaken its divinity, nor for political systems to save the world. The Church waits for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Conclusion

The God of Scripture is the one living and true God: Creator, Sustainer, sovereign Lord, holy Judge, merciful Savior, and blessed Trinity. He is not a force, not an idol, not the universe, not an idea, not a cultural projection, and not a servant of human dreams. He is eternal, infinite, self-existent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, immutable, holy, just, loving, gracious, merciful, and good. He is one in essence and three in Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This doctrine is not optional. If the Church loses the biblical doctrine of God, it loses worship, prayer, mission, ethics, discernment, and the gospel itself. If God is not holy, sin is not serious. If God is not just, judgment is not certain. If God is not loving, grace is not good news. If God is not sovereign, hope is fragile. If God is not triune, the gospel is emptied of its biblical shape. If God is not Creator, human beings no longer know who they are.

The proper response to the doctrine of God is worshipful obedience. Theology must become doxology. Knowledge must become holiness. Doctrine must become discipleship. The Church must confess with Israel, "The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4), baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew

28:19), and proclaim to the nations the God who made the world, commands repentance, raised Jesus from the dead, and will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:24-31).

Reflection Questions

1. Why must the doctrine of God begin with Scripture rather than human imagination, culture, philosophy, or personal experience?
2. How does Genesis 1:1 establish the Creator-creature distinction?
3. What does Deuteronomy 6:4 teach about God's oneness, and how should that shape worship and discipleship?
4. Why is it important to say that God is self-existent and not dependent on creation?
5. How do God's holiness and love belong together rather than compete against each other?
6. Why is divine wrath necessary for a biblical understanding of justice and the cross?
7. How would you explain the Trinity to a new believer without using misleading analogies?
8. What biblical passages show that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons?
9. What biblical passages show that the Son is fully God?
10. What biblical passages show that the Holy Spirit is personal and fully divine?
11. How does the doctrine of creation challenge pantheism, panentheism, and self-deification?
12. How should Christians respond to the claim that "all religions worship the same God"?
13. What is the difference between biblical prayer and manifestation spirituality?
14. How does God's sovereignty comfort believers without making them passive?
15. How should Bible Colleges teach the doctrine of God in a culture shaped by pluralism, secularism, and New Age spirituality?
16. What idols commonly compete with the worship of the one true God in your context?
17. How does the doctrine of the Trinity shape Christian worship and mission?
18. What pastoral dangers arise when churches preach God's love but neglect His holiness?
19. What pastoral dangers arise when churches preach judgment but neglect grace and mercy?
20. How does knowing God rightly prepare believers for suffering, deception, mission, and the return of Christ?

Multiple-Choice Assessment

1. Which statement best summarizes biblical monotheism?
 - A. There are many gods, but Christians worship only one of them.
 - B. God is the spiritual energy present in all religions.
 - C. There is one living and true God who alone is Creator, Lord, and Savior.
 - D. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate gods.
2. What does Genesis 1:1 most directly establish?
 - A. God is part of the universe.
 - B. God created the heavens and the earth and is distinct from creation.
 - C. Matter is eternal alongside God.

- D. Creation is an illusion.
3. What does God's self-existence mean?
- A. God depends on worship to become complete.
 - B. God was created before the universe.
 - C. God exists from Himself and depends on nothing outside Himself.
 - D. God is identical with nature.
4. Which passage records God's self-revelation as "I AM WHO I AM"?
- A. Genesis 1:1
 - B. Exodus 3:14
 - C. Psalms 23:1
 - D. Matthew 28:19
5. Which option best defines omniscience?
- A. God knows all things truly and completely.
 - B. God knows only what humans freely decide.
 - C. God learns the future as events happen.
 - D. God knows spiritual matters but not ordinary details.
6. Which statement best describes God's holiness?
- A. God is morally flexible when love requires it.
 - B. God is absolutely pure, majestic, and separate from all evil.
 - C. God avoids judgment because judgment is unloving.
 - D. God is holy only in the Old Testament.
7. Why is God's wrath important to biblical theology?
- A. It shows that God loses control when sinners rebel.
 - B. It proves that God is not loving.
 - C. It is God's righteous opposition to sin and evil.
 - D. It replaces grace in the New Testament.
8. Which statement best defines the Trinity?
- A. One God eternally existing in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - B. Three gods united by agreement.
 - C. One Person appearing in three temporary roles.
 - D. One God who became Father in the Old Testament, Son in the Gospels, and Spirit in the Church.
9. Which passage most directly gives the triune baptismal name?
- A. Psalms 90:2
 - B. Matthew 28:19
 - C. John 3:16
 - D. Romans 1:18
10. Which error teaches that Father, Son, and Spirit are merely modes or roles of one divine Person?
- A. Tritheism
 - B. Modalism

- C. Polytheism
 - D. Deism
11. Which error teaches that Father, Son, and Spirit are three separate gods?
- A. Pantheism
 - B. Deism
 - C. Tritheism
 - D. Open theism
12. Which biblical event clearly shows the Father, Son, and Spirit distinguished from one another?
- A. The building of Babel
 - B. Jesus' baptism
 - C. David's anointing as king
 - D. Paul's shipwreck
13. Which statement best reflects the deity of Christ?
- A. Jesus is a created angel who represents God.
 - B. Jesus is a prophet but not divine.
 - C. The Word was God and became flesh.
 - D. Jesus became divine after the resurrection only.
14. Which statement best reflects the personhood of the Holy Spirit?
- A. The Spirit is an impersonal force.
 - B. The Spirit can speak, guide, will, and be grieved.
 - C. The Spirit is another name for human conscience.
 - D. The Spirit is created power sent by God.
15. What is pantheism?
- A. The belief that God created the universe but abandoned it.
 - B. The belief that God and the universe are identical.
 - C. The belief that there are three gods.
 - D. The belief that God does not know the future.
16. What is a biblical response to manifestation theology?
- A. Faith is mental power that creates reality.
 - B. Prayer should be directed to the universe.
 - C. Biblical faith trusts God's will rather than manipulating reality through thoughts or words.
 - D. Visualization is the same as prayer.
17. How should Christians view human reason?
- A. As the final judge over Scripture.
 - B. As useless in theology.
 - C. As a servant of Scripture, corrected and governed by God's Word.
 - D. As equal to mystical experience.
18. Which statement best expresses the relationship between God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
- A. God's sovereignty cancels human responsibility.

- B. Human freedom limits God's knowledge.
 - C. Scripture teaches both God's sovereign rule and real human accountability.
 - D. Human responsibility means God cannot fulfill prophecy.
19. Why is religious pluralism incompatible with biblical Christianity?
- A. It values humility.
 - B. It denies the Bible's teaching that there is one God and one mediator, Jesus Christ.
 - C. It encourages kindness to neighbors.
 - D. It studies different religions.
20. What is the proper response to the doctrine of God?
- A. Speculation without obedience.
 - B. Worship, repentance, trust, holiness, mission, and hope.
 - C. Replacing Scripture with personal feelings.
 - D. Treating God as a helper of personal ambition.

Answer Key with Brief Explanations

1. C. Scripture teaches that there is one living and true God, not many gods or one generic energy (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11).
2. B. Genesis 1:1 distinguishes the uncreated Creator from the created heavens and earth.
3. C. God's self-existence means He depends on nothing outside Himself (Exodus 3:14; Acts 17:24-25).
4. B. God reveals Himself to Moses as "I AM WHO I AM" in Exodus 3:14.
5. A. Omniscience means God knows all things truly and completely (Psalms 139:1-6; Hebrews 4:13).
6. B. God's holiness is His absolute purity, majestic otherness, and separation from evil (Isaiah 6:1-3).
7. C. Divine wrath is God's righteous opposition to sin, not sinful loss of control (Romans 1:18).
8. A. The Trinity is one God in three distinct Persons, not three gods and not one Person in three modes.
9. B. Jesus commands baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Matthew 28:19.
10. B. Modalism denies real personal distinctions within the Trinity.
11. C. Tritheism divides the one divine essence into three separate gods.
12. B. At Jesus' baptism the Son is baptized, the Spirit descends, and the Father speaks (Matthew 3:16-17).
13. C. John 1:1 and John 1:14 teach that the Word was God and became flesh.
14. B. The Spirit performs personal actions such as speaking, guiding, willing, and being grieved (Acts 13:2; Ephesians 4:30).
15. B. Pantheism identifies God with the universe, which Scripture rejects by distinguishing Creator and creation.
16. C. Biblical prayer submits to God's will; it is not a technique for manifesting desires (1 John 5:14).
17. C. Reason is God's gift but must serve Scripture rather than judge it.
18. C. Scripture teaches both God's sovereign purpose and human accountability (Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23).
19. B. Religious pluralism contradicts the biblical confession of one God and one mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).

20. **B.** Knowing God rightly should lead to worship, repentance, trust, holiness, mission, and hope.

References

- Athanasian Creed. (n.d.). *Athanasian Creed*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. <https://www.ccel.org/creeds/athanasian creed.html>
- Augustine. (n.d.). *On the Trinity* (A. W. Haddan, Trans.). New Advent. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1301.htm>
- Bavinck, H. (2004). *Reformed dogmatics: Vol. 2. God and creation* (J. Vriend, Trans.; J. Bolt, Ed.). Baker Academic. <https://books.google.com/books?id=TGJhyAEACAAJ>
- Christian Standard Bible. (2017). Holman Bible Publishers. <https://csbible.com/>
- Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2026, May 1). *New Age movement*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-Age-movement>
- Frame, J. M. (2002). *The doctrine of God*. P&R Publishing. <https://books.google.com/books?id=c40NAAAACAAJ>
- Hustwit, J. R. (n.d.). *Process philosophy*. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <https://iep.utm.edu/processp/>
- Letham, R. (2019). *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, history, theology, and worship* (Rev. and expanded ed.). P&R Publishing. <https://www.prpbooks.com/book/the-holy-trinity-revised-and-expanded>
- Nicene Creed. (n.d.). *Nicene Creed*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. <https://ccel.org/creeds/nicene creed.html>
- Phillips, D. W., III, & Singleton, L. A. (2025). New Age spirituality. In T. Shackelford (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of religious psychology and behavior*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-38971-9_2015-1
- Sangwa, S. (n.d.). *Statement of belief*. Sixbert SANGWA. <https://sixbert.openchristian.education/about/BS>
- Sangwa, S. (2024a, June 3). *What does the Bible teach about the Trinity?* Open Christian University. <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/trinity>
- Sangwa, S. (2024b, June 4). *Who is the Holy Spirit?* Open Christian University. <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/the-holy-spirit>
- Sangwa, S. (2024c, June 23). *Is Oneness Pentecostalism a departure from biblical orthodoxy?* Open Christian University. <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/oneness-Pentecostalism>
- Sangwa, S. (2024d, August 10). *Is every religion valid, or which is the true religion?* Open Christian University. <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/true-religion>
- Sangwa, S. (2025, May 8). *How has the New Age movement evolved into a push for a one-world religion?* Open Christian University. <https://learn.openchristian.education/blog/sangwa/the-new-age-spirituality-toward-one-world-religion>
- Sanders, F. (2016). *The triune God*. Zondervan Academic. <https://zondervanacademic.com/products/the-triune-god>
- Sijuwade, J. R. (2023). Elucidating open theism. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 94, 151-175. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-023-09874-1>