

BIBLE DOCTRINES

the doctrine
of
GOD

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Table of Contents

I. The Existence of God.	1	F. God is omnipotent (all-powerful).	10
A. Some arguments for the existence of God.	1	G. God is omniscient (all-knowing).	11
B. Scriptural arguments for the existence of God.	2	H. God is wise.	13
II. The Definition of God.	2	I. God is immutable	13
III. The Names of God.	2	J. God is sovereign	13
A. Elohim	2	K. God is incomprehensible	14
B. El	2	L. God is inscrutable. (unsearchable)	15
C. Adonai	3	M. God is holy	15
D. Jehovah	4	N. God is righteous and just.	17
IV. The Nature of God.	5	O. God is true	19
A. God is Spirit.	5	P. God is faithful.	19
B. God is a Person	5	Q. God is Light.	21
C. God is One.	6	R. God is good	22
D. God is a Trinity	6	S. God is merciful	22
V. The Attributes of God	9	T. God is gracious.	23
A. God is self-existent.	9	U. God is Love.	24
B. God is self-sufficient.	9	VI. God as Father.	25
C. God is eternal.	9	A. He is the Father of all life.	25
D. God is infinite	10	B. He Is the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.	26
E. God is omnipresent. (everywhere present)	10	C. He Is the Father of All Believers.	29
STUDY QUESTIONS			32

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS BLOCK:

1. **Read all the material** for this block.
2. **Look up and read all the verses** in the material as you read through the material.
3. **Fill in the answers** to your **STUDY QUESTIONS** ahead of time so you will be better prepared for the EXAM during the final hour.
4. **T-H-I-N-K** as you read this material. **It will be a blessing to you.**
It will also change your life.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

I. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

The greatest and most profound idea the human mind can ever conceivably entertain concerns the possibility of the existence of a personal God. The sheer importance of man's response to this idea cannot be exaggerated, for it will not only govern his life down here but also determine his ultimate destiny. Unless one satisfactorily answers the *who* question, he cannot possibly solve the *how, why, when, and where* problems of his own existence.

A. Some philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

1. *The universal belief argument:*

All mankind has some idea of a supreme Being. This argument has often been challenged but never refuted (proven wrong). While the concepts of God found among many cultures and civilizations differ greatly on the number, name, and nature of this supreme Being, nevertheless the idea remains. A classic example of this is the amazing story of Helen Keller (1880-1968). From the age of two, Miss Keller was blind, deaf, and without the sense of smell. After months of agonizing and fruitless attempts on the part of her teacher to communicate with this young girl, a miracle occurred. One day Helen suddenly understood the concept and meaning of running water! From this humble foundation Miss Keller built a lofty tower of thought, including the ability to use her voice in speaking. She became an educated and articulate human being. Sometime after she had progressed to the point that she could engage in conversation, she was told of God and his love in sending Christ to die on the cross. She is said to have responded with joy, "I always knew he was there, but I didn't know his name!"

2. *The cosmological argument:*

Every effect must have an adequate cause. Robert Culver writes:

"One of the great names of British science, mathematics, and philosophy is Sir Isaac

Newton (1642-1727). Sir Isaac had a miniature model of the solar system made. A large golden ball representing the sun was at its center and around it revolved smaller spheres, representing the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and the others. They were each kept in an orbit relatively the same as in the real solar system. By means of rods, cogwheels, and belts they all moved around the center gold ball in exact precision. A friend called on the noted man one day while he was studying the model. The friend was not a believer in the biblical doctrine of divine creation. According to reports, their conversation went as follows:

Friend: 'My, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?'

Newton: 'Nobody.'

Friend: 'Nobody?'

Newton: 'That's right! I said nobody! All of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits with perfect timing!'

Of course, the visitor understood the unexpressed argument: 'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.'" (*The Living God*, pp. 29, 30)

3. *The ontological argument:*

"Man has an idea of a Most Perfect Being. This idea includes the idea of existence, since a being, otherwise perfect, who did not exist would not be as perfect as a perfect being who did exist. Therefore, since the idea of existence is contained in the idea of the Most Perfect Being, the Most Perfect Being must exist." (C. C. Ryrie)

4. *The anthropological argument:*

The conscience and moral nature of man demands a self-conscious and moral Maker. This built-in barometer supplies no information, and the information on which it passes judgment may be incorrect. But nevertheless, conscience tells us we ought to

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

do what is right regarding the information we have. Robert Culver writes:

"This sense of duty may be weak (1 Cor. 8:12), good (1 Pet. 3:16), defiled (1 Cor. 8:7), seared (1 Tim. 4:2), strong or pure (1 Cor. 8:7, 9). But it is never absent. The only adequate explanation is that the great Moral Being, who created us all, planted the moral sense in us. No other explanation is adequate."

(*The Living God*, p. 31)

B. Scriptural arguments for the existence of God. None.

The Bible simply assumes the existence of God. Psalm 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good!"

Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Clark Pennock aptly summarizes all this when he writes:

"For the Scriptures then, the existence of God is both a historical truth (God acted into history), and an existential (based on existence) truth (God reveals himself to every soul). His existence is both objectively (facts, logic) and subjectively (feelings, morals) evident. It is necessary *logically* because our assumption of order, design, and rationality rests upon it. It is necessary *morally* because there is no explanation for the shape of morality apart from it. It is necessary *personally* because the exhaustion of all material possibilities still cannot give satisfaction to the heart. The deepest proof for God's existence apart from history is just life itself. God has created man in his image, and man cannot elude (avoid) the implications (results) of this fact.

Everywhere their identity pursues them."

(*Set Forth Your Case*, p. 77)

II. THE DEFINITION OF GOD.

"There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite (no limits) in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable (unchangeable), immense, eternal, incomprehensible (cannot be understood), almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear (pardon) the guilty." (Westminster Catechism)

III. THE NAMES OF GOD.

A. Elohim

Used 2,570 times, it refers to God's power and might.

Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Psalm 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament (sky) sheweth his handiwork."

B. El

Four compounds of his name. There are two significant places where this name was used in the Old Testament. One came from the lips of Jerusalem's first sovereign, and the other from history's first sinner.

1. Elyon: The strongest strong One.

a. Jerusalem's first sovereign (Melchizedek)

Genesis 14:17-20: "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."

b. History's first sinner (Satan)

Isaiah 14:13, 14: "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

2. **Roi:** *The strong One who sees.*

In Genesis 16 an angered and barren Sarai had cast into the wilderness her pregnant and arrogant handmaiden Hagar. When all hope for survival had fled, this pagan Egyptian girl was visited and ministered to by El Roi himself--the strong God who sees. Genesis 16:13: "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"

3. **Shaddai:** *The breasted One.*

Used forty-eight times in Old Testament. The Hebrew word *shad* is often used to designate the bosom of a nursing mother. Genesis 17:1: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

This revelation of God came to Abraham at a much needed time in his life. His sin in marrying Hagar (Gen. 16) had doubtless prevented that full and unhindered fellowship which had previously flowed between him and God. In addition, he now was an old man, nearly 100, humanly unable to father the long-anticipated heir.

Psalm 91:1: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

4. **Olam:** *The everlasting God.*

Isaiah 40 is usually regarded as one of the greatest Old Testament chapters. The prophet begins by predicting both the first

and second advent (coming) of Christ. He then contrasts the awesome power of the true God with the miserable impotence of all idols. But carnal Israel had trouble accepting all this, wondering just how these wonderful events could transpire to answer their doubts. Isaiah declares:

Isaiah 40:28-31: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

NAMES OF GOD

Elohim

El

Adonai

Johova

C. Adonai: Master, Lord.

God owns all his creation. Malachi 1:6: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?" The Hebrew Old Testament name *Adonai* and its Greek New Testament counterpart *Kurios* describe the relationship between master and slave. *Adonai* thus carries with it a twofold implication.

1. *The master has a right to expect obedience.*

Robert Lightner writes:

"In Old Testament times the slave was the absolute possession of his master, having no rights of his own. His chief business was to carry out the wishes of his master. The slave had a relationship and responsibility different