

## **The Baptist Faith And Message**

### **Article 2: God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

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The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Remember the difference between a confession and a creed.

A creed is seen as a top down authoritative document where churches are required to ascribe to that creed. Our Baptist confession of faith does not have that role in our church.

Within denominational entities, the convention does have the authority to treat the confession somewhat like a creed. As I mentioned last week employees of seminaries, NAMB, IMB all must sign documents stating they are in agreement with the BFM

It's important for us to make the distinction that though the convention can ask SBC entities to sign the confession, but not local churches. Churches can individually require employees or members that they must adhere to it. The SBC does not have that credal position with churches.

We degrade God too much describing to him our own ideas. People in our culture tend to make God as a glorified Dr. Phil. We can be guilty of projecting our images upon God. But God has revealed himself to us.

There is some debate about whether a doctrinal statement should begin with this point or with Scripture. As mentioned a couple weeks ago, its good to start with Scripture because that is the way God revealed himself to us. It's impossible for us to speak about God outside His revealed word.

#### **I. A Mono-Theistic statement.**

*There is one and only one living and true God*

He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.

#### **Poly theistic – Hinduism, Buddhism,**

You can be monotheistic without being Christian. Jewish, Muslim, Christian. The difference comes when we begin to discuss what this monotheistic God is like. You can be a monotheist but not be a Christian, but you can't be a Christian who is not a monotheist. It is important that we stand firmly in the biblical idea that God is one.

Deuteronomy 6:4 *Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!* Deuteronomy 6:4

– What the Jews call the Shema. It is a defining statement of the Jewish faith. Jesus quotes the Shema in an answer to one of his critics, greatest commandment.

This is a great point of contention for Christian missionaries in Muslim countries. Muslims say you Christians do not believe in one God, you believe in three. They say that because of our belief in the Trinity. Muslim apologists would claim in debate with a Christian that it's a simple matter of math. Father, Son, Holy Spirit – three – you are polytheistic. But the Christian belief is that God has revealed himself in three distinct persons, but he is fundamentally one. There are not three Gods, but One.

## **II. The Description of His Attributes**

He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.

This helps us to understand when Genesis speaks that man was created in the image. That means we bear the semblance, the likeness of God. Think, feel, reason, love. It doesn't mean that we become God, it means that God has placed his unique mark upon us. Similar to a painting of Picasso. You see the image of the artist on his creation. God presses his image upon us.

Altruism of Human nature confirms the fingerprint of our maker and refutes the survival of the fittest law to describe our origin.

### **A. Intelligent.**

One of the debates in the school systems is to determine if science teachers should be required to teach the theory of intelligent design. Now we as Christians obviously believe that to be true. That God is intelligent.

### **B. Spiritual**

This is important. We are saying something positive about God, and saying something negative. By saying he is spiritual we are affirming what Jesus said in John 4, *God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.* John 4:24

But also, by saying that God is spiritual we are affirming that he is not physical. God is not confined to the limitations of a physical body. Contrary to what some may visualize of God that he is an old man that sits on top of a cloud a la Monty Python.

Now Jesus did incarnate into the flesh, but he is Spiritual. Now Mormonism disagrees with this statement. They believe that God is physically in the heavens, a fleshly view of God. But we agree with the Scriptures description of God as spiritual.

### **C. Personal**

This is a statement against deism. Deism believes that there is a God who is Creator, but he simply created, got everything going, and now he sits back and observes and has no interaction with his creation. That is obviously not biblical. God manifested himself in personal ways all throughout the Bible.

### **D. Creator, Redeemer, Preserver**

Get your own dirt.

Now trying to summarize all that God is in a little paragraph is an impossible task. You couldn't explain who God is if you could fill all the books in all the libraries in all the world. So it is a daunting task to say the least.

Thomas Watson, Puritan Pastor: When some of the other petitions of the Lord's prayer shall be useless, and out of date, for we shall not need to pray in heaven, "give us this day our daily bread," because there shall be no sin, nor "lead us not into temptation," because the old serpent is not there to tempt. Yet the hallowing of God's

name will be of great use and request in heaven. For we will forever be singing “Hallelujah,” which is nothing more than the hallowing of God’s name.

In heaven we will be enraptured and see in ways we can’t see now.

### **III. The Completeness of his attributes**

God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections.

Not only is God intelligent, but he is perfectly intelligent, he has all intelligence. Not only is he spiritual, but he is perfectly spiritual. It’s one thing to say that God holds these attributes, its another to say that he holds them in absolute completely unflawed perfection. You and I, even in our sinfulness, are occasionally able to hit on in some way at least one of those attributes. We’re capable of occasional moments of intelligence, and being creative, or being redemptive.

The one attribute that sets him apart from all other attributes is his holiness. When we say God is holy we are saying he is who he is without any blemish or spot or wrinkle. He is perfectly God.

Holiness is the perfection of all his other attributes – Jerry Bridges

When we say that God is holy we affirm what the Bible says.

*And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is the LORD God, the ALMIGHTY, who was and who is and who is to come.*

Revelation 4:8

His infinite holiness means that he is intelligent in a way that no one else is. He is alone in the way he is.

It is less an injury to God to deny his being then to deny the purity of His being. One makes him no God, the other a deformed, unlovely, detestable God. He that says that God is not Holy speaks much worse than he who says there is no God at all.

It would be better to say that He is not there than to say that he is deficient or incomplete in some way in His holiness.

### **IV. The Sovereignty of God Expressed**

*God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures.*

*I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. Job 42:2*

<b>Sovereignty:</b> God’s unlimited rule of and control over His creation
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### **IV. Our RESPONSE**

*To him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.*

What do we owe God? Reverence, obedience and love. You show me a church that has forgotten what it means to be reverent to God, obedient to God, and loving to God and I'll show you a church that has forgotten who God is.

How we act inevitably comes from whether or not we think God is great. You show me a church that fights and squabbles all over the place, and I'll show you a church that has forgotten who God is! We owe him the highest love, reverence and obedience. When it says reverence that means, "Holy fear." We realize we're in the presence of an awesome God, and the way we act should reflect that.

They love thee little, if at all who do not fear thee much  
If love is thine attraction, Lord fear is thy very touch – F.W. Favor

That means we appreciate God's majesty and grandeur and we reflect that in our reverence, fear and respect. God is a great God.

*From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Romans 11:36*

#### **V. The TRINITY Of God Confirmed**

The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

The trinity is extremely important if we are going to understand the Jesus whom we love. Jesus came with authority of God because he is God. If Jesus is not the second person of the trinity, then he was ill-equipped to fulfill his purpose for coming to this earth of redemption on the cross.

I heard of one pastor who was preaching a message on the Trinity and one of his elderly members came up to him and said, "I wish you'd stop preaching all this Roman Catholic stuff." The Trinity has been a staple of Baptist doctrine since the beginning. There have been little pockets of Baptists who have rejected the trinity, but they were all rejected as heretics and have faded from existence in Baptist life.