

DOCTRINES

DRAMA

DOCTRINE

DOXOLOGY

DISCIPLESHIP

**GOD'S INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES**

In his victory over the idols, Yahweh shows himself to be Israel's Lord and the world's only sovereign.

Immutable, eternal life-in-himself, independent of the world, simple, impassible.

Praised for his incomparable greatness, confided in as the only object of faith and worship.

"No other gods." When we worship what God has made instead of God himself we become slaves of lords that cannot liberate.

**GOD'S COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES**

God acts in judgment and mercy, goodness and grace, wrath and love, displaying his comprehensive knowledge, wisdom, and power.

God is loving, merciful, just, good, righteous, omniscient, and omnipotent.

Swept into his covenant of grace, we find ourselves crying out to God in trials, casting ourselves on him, and reveling in his generosity.

Our lives are founded in God's love, yet subject to God's righteous will. God's attributes never clash; we can always trust in his promises as we glorify and enjoy God.

**THE TRINITY**

Throughout God's mighty acts in history we meet three distinct actors who are nevertheless identified as God.

God is "one in essence, three in persons." In every external act of the Godhead, the Trinity is undivided and yet each person's agency is distinct.

Baptized into the triune name, we pray to the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit. Creation, redemption, and the consummation come to us from the Father as origin, in the Son as mediator, through the Spirit as perfecter.

Created in God's image, our lives should reflect his unity and diversity. Especially in the church, we are one body with many members. So our lives are intended for community—not because we are all the same, but precisely in the difference that contributes to the upbuilding of Christ's body.

**CREATION**

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," with human beings as his covenant partner. The eternal and unchanging God created the world with time and change. The Father created everything "visible and invisible" in the Son and by the Spirit.

*Ex nihilo* creation: The world is neither eternal nor necessary, but came into being as a free act of the triune God. We are not our own (autonomous), but depend for our existence and knowledge on God.

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." Since God created us for his glory, we realize the purpose of our existence in trusting delight in our dependence on him. Our prayers invoke God for security and strength and praise him as Creator and Redeemer.

No longer treating the world as a given but as a gift, we listen to God's Word—both his commands and his promises—to learn how to live generous and responsible lives that contrast sharply with the autonomy, meaninglessness, and idolatry of a nihilistic culture.

**ANTHROPOLOGY**

The goal of Adam's representative trial was to lead creation into God's Sabbath rest. Violating the covenant of creation, Adam plunged the human race into sin and death.

Creation in God's glorious image measures the tragedy of the fall. Original sin means that we are all conceived in sin: guilty and corrupt image-bearers of God.

Our worship is characterized simultaneously by praise for our nature and lament for our lives in a fallen world and confession of our own sin against a holy God.

We live in the awareness of our solidarity with all human beings in Adam and our union with Christ as the Last Adam. Autonomy is exchanged for dependence on God not only for our creation but for our redemption and renewal.

**THE PERSON OF CHRIST**

In the fullness of time, God sent his Son, conceived by the Spirit, yet of the substance of the virgin Mary from the line of David.

In the incarnation, the eternal Son (Word) assumed our humanity. In this hypostatic union, Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human (yet without sin).

At last we can celebrate the arrival of the one who is both the Covenant Lord who commands and promises and the Covenant Servant who obeys and fulfills. We worship Christ as God incarnate.

Christ is unique in his person and work. While we are called to follow his example, more importantly we are beneficiaries of his incarnation and saving work. Our lives are therefore first and foremost a matter of being united to Christ rather than merely imitating his example.

**THE WORK OF CHRIST: SUBSTITUTION**

As our covenantal head, Christ fulfilled all righteousness in our place and bore God's wrath in our place on the cross.

The active obedience of Christ (in his life) and passive obedience (on the cross) form the ground of our salvation.

We praise God for all his works, but even these works of God assume a lively color when Christ's redeeming work is the centerpiece of our worship.

When forgiveness and reconciliation with God are the basis rather than the goal of our lives, we are free to live as secure heirs rather than as slaves. Further, we are free to forgive others rather than record their offenses.

**THE WORK OF CHRIST: VICTORY**

As the beginning of the resurrection from the dead, Christ was raised bodily by the Father in the power of the Spirit on the third day. Glorified, he was exalted in his ascension to the right hand of the Father.

Jesus "was crucified for our sins and was raised for our justification." In his resurrection, he has triumphed over Satan, death, hell, and the powers and principalities that held us in bondage. His ascension assures us that as he is now, we will one day be—raised in glory.

Our worship centers not only on the forgiveness of sins, but also on the new creation that Christ inaugurated by his victory.

Christ's work frees us not only from sin's guilt but also its power. We live not toward victory, much less as something that we bring about, but from the victory that Christ has already accomplished for us. Sin *cannot* reign over us, because Christ is King!

**THE SPIRIT'S APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION: UNION WITH CHRIST**

At Pentecost, the Spirit descended to apply the benefits of Christ's work to sinners, unite the elect to Christ as his body, and expand his church to the ends of the earth.

Those whom the Father chose in Christ are called effectually to Christ. United to him through faith, we inherit justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification.

The Spirit is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. As the perfecting (completing) agent of all God's works, he is praised for taking what is Christ's by right and making it ours by gift.

We live in the power of the Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead. The Spirit is the down payment on our final redemption, indwelling us so that we are now citizens of the new creation. It is the Spirit who makes us cry out, "Abba! Father!" through the mediation of the Son.

