



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 2.5 – The Doctrine of God

The Essence of God

God did not come into existence from some outside cause or force. He simply is and always has been and always will be. Moses said: **“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God”** (Psalm 90:1). Through the prophet Isaiah, God said: **“I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God”** (Isaiah 44:6).

God is totally self-sufficient: He is dependent on no one. He does not need our worship or gifts to sustain Him. The apostle Paul said: **“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things”** (Acts 17:24-25).

God is not limited by any concept of time or space. He is not bound by the so-called laws of nature. He is not restricted to laws of logic. He is infinite in every way and absolutely independent. After King Solomon had built the holy temple of God in Jerusalem, He said: **“But will God dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!”** (1 Kings 8:27). King David, Solomon’s father, likewise declared: **“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable”** (Psalm 145:3). God is above nature. The miracles that He does show us that fact. Many of the teachings of His Word are above and beyond the ordinary laws of logic.

The Hebrew word *“Elohim”* is plural, but there is no doubt that God is one: **“The LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him”** (Deuteronomy 4:35). **“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”** (Deuteronomy 6:4). The apostle Paul told the Christians in Corinth: **“We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live”** (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

Since God is always as He has always been, God does not grow. There are no parts or divisions in God. He is altogether the whole God wherever He is. Some false teachers claim that monotheism (the concept that there is only one God) is a gradual development from an earlier time when people believed in many gods. But polytheism (the concept that there are many gods) is not a lower stage of development that gradually evolved into monotheism. Adam and Eve believed that there was only the one true God, and they taught their immediate descendants that there was only one God. Polytheism came later. It is a degeneration from the monotheism that was the religion of Adam and Eve and their immediate descendants. Paul explained the rise of polytheism in this way: **“Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things”** (Romans 1:21-23). Jesus said: **“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”** (John 4:24).

Because of God's revelation of Himself in creation, conscience, and Holy Scriptures, we cannot teach or tolerate false views of God, such as the following:

- Polytheism, the idea that there are many gods
- Dualism, the idea that there is one good god, and one bad god, equally eternal
- Monism, the idea that there is no difference between God and His creatures, that all is one thing
- Pantheism, the idea that God is everything and that everything is God
- The idea that God is an impersonal force rather than a personal Being
- The Mormon idea that God has a body like a human body and was once a man.

The Bible speaks of God's hands, eyes, or ears, but this does not mean that God has a body like a human body. This is figurative language. It uses human terms to help us understand things about God that we could not understand otherwise. **"The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry"** (Psalm 34:15). This means that God sees all and hears all, especially the activities of those who believe in Him, those who are righteous. Speaking of the God of Israel, Balaam said to King Balak: **"God is not a man"** (Numbers 23:19). This, and other verses, show us that God does not have a body like ours.

Questions

1. Why do we need God, but He does not need us?
2. What does it mean that God has no parts or divisions?
3. Why do we say that God is unlimited?
4. What is wrong with the theory that polytheism evolved into monotheism?
5. What Bible passages prove that God does not have a human body?
6. What is meant by God's eyes and ears and hands?
7. What is the main idea of God in your native country?
8. If this idea of God is contrary to Bible teaching, what Bible passage teaches you that it is false?