

The Nature and Character of God

Perceptions of God

- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Polytheist
- Pantheist
- Deist

God the Father

- the Trinity is a separate issue for a later session
- it will be tricky to separate descriptions of 'God' from 'God the Father'

God is Uncreated

- Eternal
- Everlasting
- Unchanging (?)
- Questions:
 - Who made God?
 - Where did God come from?
 - Eternity: Timelessness or Unending Time?
 - Does God know the future ('Open Theism')? Does God learn?

God is Infinite

- Omnipresent
- Omniscient
- Omnipotent
- Questions:
 - Where is God?
 - Does God have any limits? e.g.
 - Can He create a rock so big that He cannot lift it?
 - Can He be tempted to do wrong? Can He lie?
 - Why doesn't he destroy Satan?
 - Why doesn't he end evil and suffering?

God is Spiritual

- Questions:
 - What is Spirit?
 - What does it mean to have been created "in God's image"?
 - Does God have a body?
 - Has anyone ever seen God (and lived)?

God is Glorious

- Questions:

- What is the “glory of God”?
- How can creation and created beings give God glory?
- How can created beings share in God's glory?
- How can we “fall short” of God's glory?
- Isn't it vain, selfish, and egocentric for God to demand our worship?
- Does God require our praise?

God is Creator

- Questions:
 - How could God create something out of nothing?
 - Did God create sin? Did God create the Devil?
 - How could an all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing God create an imperfect Universe?
 - How can an unchanging God create anything?
 - What about Evolution? Who is creating now?

God is Loving

- God has a mind and He thinks
- He reasons
- He remembers
- He has emotions
 - He grieves
 - He can be angry
 - He shows mercy
 - He rejoices
 - He suffers
- He has choices and make decisions
- Questions:
 - Is God is loving then why do the innocent suffer?
 - If God is love, then how can He be angry?
 - If God is good, then how can He be jealous?
 - How can an all-powerful being suffer?
 - How can God “regret” decisions He has made?
 - Why does God love the world but tell us not to love it?
 - Is God masculine or feminine?

God is Active in History

- God changes His actions when people change
- God tests people and responds to their response
- God's future decisions appear to be future to Him
- Questions:
 - Is the past/present/future all the same to God?

God is Holy

- Questions:
 - What does it mean to be 'holy'?
 - What does God mean when he asks us to be holy?

Names/Titles of God

- El/Eloah: God "mighty, strong, prominent"
 - El Elyon: "Most High"
 - EL Shaddai: "God Almighty"
 - El Roi: "God of Seeing"
 - El-Olam: "Everlasting God"
 - El-Gibhor: "Mighty God"
- Elohim: God "Creator, Mighty and Strong" (plural of El)
- Adonai: "Lord" (substitute for YHWH)
- Yahweh/Jehovah/YHWH: "LORD" (true name/Tetragrammaton)
 - Yahweh-Jireh: "The Lord will Provide"
 - Yahweh-Rapha: "The Lord Who Heals"
 - Yahweh-Nissi: "The Lord Our Banner"
 - Yahweh-M'Kaddesh: "The Lord Who Sanctifies, Makes Holy"
 - Yahweh-Shalom: "The Lord Our Peace"
 - Yahweh-Elohim: "LORD God"
 - Yahweh-Tsidkenu: "The Lord Our Righteousness"
 - Yahweh-Rohi: "The Lord Our Shepherd"
 - Yahweh-Shammah: "The Lord is There/Present"
 - Yahweh-Sabaoth/Tzevaot: "The Lord of Hosts"
 - Yah/Jah: (first letter of YHWH, used in peoples' names)
- Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh "I am that I am" (or other variations)
- HaShem: "The Name" (substitute for Adonai)
- Abba: "Father/Pappa/Daddy" (NT)