

LD – 6.1 – Discipleship Studies – Who is God?

Excerpts from www.authenticdiscipleship.org Pathway Biblical Literacy/Theology/Theo 1-Triune God

INTRODUCTION – THE ULTIMATE QUESTIONS:

1. Does God exist?
2. What can be known about God?
3. Can I somehow engage the Spiritual Life?
4. Is it possible to encounter and have a relationship with God?
5. What is the nature and character of God? – Trinity
6. Was a mediator really necessary for a relationship with God? – Jesus
7. What does God want/expect from His redeemed people? – Spirit

A. IDENTITY – Who Are You?:

1. The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology in its article on the “Arguments for the Existence of God” says that such desire for the awareness of God constitutes one of the finest attempts of the human mind to break out of the world and go beyond the sensible or phenomenal realm of experience. Certainly the question of God’s existence is the most important question of human philosophy. It affects the whole tenor of human life, whether man is regarded as the supreme being of the universe or whether it is believed that man has a Supreme Being that he should love and must either obey or defy.
2. Question – If someone asked you to explain who God is from a Christian perspective, to someone who seems open to the concept of God but knows nothing about who He is... what would you say?
Personally, I would start by explaining who God is follows the same logic of explaining who any person is... and it essentially falls into 3 main categories:
 - a. Witness of what you have accomplished or created speaks as a remembrance or testimony of yourself.
 - b. Self-Disclosure – what you have to say about yourself – Micah 6:1-8; John 15:15-26; Ezekiel 2:1-5.
 - c. Witness of what others who know you say about you.
3. When it comes to the question of God’s identity, the same 3 categories apply:
 - a. The first category is what God has accomplished that remains as a remembrance is Creation – and this is what we call “General Revelation” – Q – what is general revelation?
Psalm 19 1-4 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. [cr Ps 148:3-14]
AC 14:16-17 “In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good [things for all people] and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”
Ro 1:18-22 “But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves. For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God.” [Living Translation]

When we look at the created world and universe we find beauty, order, symmetry, and the evident symbiotic interconnected relatedness... all are indications of the purposeful and creative

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mind of God. These things speak or bear witness to a God we cannot otherwise see... they are essentially God's "Fingerprints."

b. The second category is God's Self-disclosure – this is what we call "Specific Revelation" Q – what is specific revelation? It is the Word of God... AKA "Scripture... or The Bible":

PS 77:14 You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.

PS 98:2 The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.

PS 103:7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel.

PS 111:6 He has made known to His people the power of His works, In giving them the heritage of the nations.

JN 15:15 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

AC 2:28 'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.'

RO 16:26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading to* obedience of faith;

God gave humanity an integrated reference of Himself that serves as a love letter and introduction to meeting with and knowing who God is. It is a wonderful introduction of the complex Person revealed as God who in the Scriptures has expressed His Presence and reveals His nature and character.

c. The third category is the witness of God's People – Q – how is this displayed? God's Identity is planted in His people that they may disclose Him to the world:

EPH 1:9 [Jesus] made known to [God's] people the mystery of [God's] will, according to [God's] kind intention which [God] purposed in [Christ Jesus]

2PE 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

d. JN 15:26-27 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you *will* testify also. [cr 1 John 1:1-3; Luke 24:44-49]

Knowledge about God is expected to lead us to personal relational experience with God, the result of knowing Him Personally and experientially is that we love Him for who He is, and we exhibit His character, nature, and priorities in our life.

4. Question – what does God reveal about Himself?

a. God is "One" – meaning an integrated complex Being:

Dt 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Mk 12:28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor

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as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

- b. God is Trinity – although the ancients did not have an understanding of God in Three-Persons as Trinity in the Old Testament, from a New Testament standpoint we can see evidence of the Trinity throughout Scripture:**

^{GE 1:1-2} In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

^{GE 1:26-27} Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

^{2Co 13:14} May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

- c. God’s Witness of Himself – “I AM:**

^{Ex 3:13} Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

^{Jn 8:53-58} Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?” Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies Me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” “You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

B. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY:

- 1. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the distinctive concepts of Christianity, but it is also often one of the most confusing. The idea that God can simultaneously be “One Being,” and yet exist in “Three Persons” is a mystery. Question – when you explain God to others how do you reconcile God as Trinity? Both the Old and New Testaments discuss God in plurality directly and indirectly, and the New Testament discussed God specifically as Father, Son, and Spirit – each fully God and with distinct roles.**

- a. As Christians we can approach the study of the Trinity: 1) from an intellectual level, 2) from a Spiritual level, and 3) from a relational level.**
- i. *Intellectual studies* abound from noted theologians – however interesting these are when presented, knowledge alone may be helpful but knowledge rarely will lead to a satisfactory understanding of God that would lead to personal transformation.**
 - ii. *Spiritual studies* also are common – the problem is that however real the spiritual world becomes, without grounding experience with the mental awareness of Biblical Literacy, spiritual awareness alone rarely leads to personal transformation.**
 - iii. *Relational awareness* is really the purpose of Scripture – this is where 1) Biblical Literacy or knowledge about God, is coupled with 2) a spiritual awareness in Spiritual Formation,**

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which in turn helps foster a personal and vital relationship with Him. To know God and to love Him from a perspective of relational intimacy is the goal of Christian Discipleship.

- b. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity asserts that God is “One Being” or a Being of “One Essence” who exists eternally in three distinct co-equal “Persons.” The doctrine of the Trinity follows from the Self-revelation of God in redemptive history, where salvation purposed by the Father, secured by the Self-Sacrifice of the Son, and sustained by the convicting and sanctifying action of the Spirit are recognized equally as God.
 - c. Question – when you pray or think of God, is there one person of the Trinity you think about? Do you note that all Three Persons on the Trinity are “all-in” actively involved in the redemption of humanity?
 - d. The conventional roles ascribed by Scripture to God as the Trinity have the Father as Sovereign Creator, the Son as the actualizing means for implementing the Father’s Will, and the Spirit as the nurturing and sustaining element that integrates and holds together all of creation as well as integrating and holding the Church together.
 - e. Each human who has received Jesus as Savior and Lord has the Biblical promise that they have a new identity recognized by the Father, purchased through the Son, and with the indwelling Holy Spirit as a down payment for the eternal Hope of resurrection-life in the coming new Heaven and earth.
 - f. Scripture clearly teaches this as an objective Truth... something that is real, experiential, and transformational. While the Scriptural mandate is clear, it is the relational experience of God where the Biblical and Spiritual “rubber meets the road.” Relational experience guided by Biblical principles and Spiritual reality provide the way to dialogue with those who have not yet entered into this relationship with God.
2. The problem with conventional methods of interaction and understanding is that we can only know in part this great mystery – our understanding is seeing through a mirror darkly [1 Cor 13:12]. There are many mysteries we may attempt to solve, but for many we must be content for a partial solution this side of heaven... with faith bridging the gaps between our faith, hope and love.
- a. The Scriptural basis for God as Trinity is very strong and very old in the history of the church. The actual theological word “Trinity” is not employed in Scripture, but the Persons of Father, Son, and Spirit are often employed as co-equal, eternal God.
 - b. The relational basis for God as Trinity is experientially true – we may enter in to this relationship with God and enjoy intimacy with Him because of the work performed by Him to secure our relationship, with each Person of the Trinity involved in this process.
 - c. The philosophical basis for God as Trinity is plausible – we can use our reason to conceive of how God may exist and relate as three Persons. Scripture employs a unity metaphor in the notion of the marriage of two separate human beings described as becoming “one flesh.” The two distinct individuals becoming one is a Spiritual/physical/emotional reflection of an elemental union in the Godhead. Thus, there are numerous ways to reflect upon the notion of the unity of God as

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Trinity, but the matter won't be completely solved until we see God in Heaven and these mysteries are finally revealed.

C. Theology of the Trinity: There are a number of faith groups that promote concepts of God in a supposedly "Christian" context that are actually false teachings. Question – are you aware of any of these false claims? Classic Christian Theological Approach compared to 2 modern Heretical variants:

1. **Arianism** – is like Jehovah's Witnesses – Jesus is considered as an angel, not God. Jesus is a created being... maybe even the chief of created beings, but not fundamentally and essentially God. This is not Christian faith... and they have rewritten Scripture to justify their heretical thinking.
2. **Modalism** – 'Oneness Pentecostalism' – T.D. Jakes of the United Pentecostal Church – Jesus is "one" with God, but God has "3 manifestations" rather than "3 distinct Persons."
 - a. Jesus becomes "God" at his baptism when the "Spirit" descended upon him. Biblical Scripture reports that all 3 Persons of the Trinity were involved... Father speaking from Heaven, Spirit descending from Heaven, and the Son having entered history from Heaven.
 - b. The three distinct Persons co-equally eternal God of the Trinity, are reduced to temporary manifestations.
 - c. In regard to the cross & resurrection & Pentecost, Modalist's hold that Jesus was an ordinary man and "became God" when the Spirit came upon him at his baptism. Then the Spirit left him on the cross which is why he cried "why have you forsaken me?"
 - d. Though not orthodoxy, and not Biblical – these folks do understand the atonement and the need for redemption.
3. **Trinitarianism** – God is a complex integrated Supreme Being revealed in Scripture as Three co-eternal and co-equal Persons:
 - a. The Father is the Creator – Abba/Daddy.
 - b. The Son is the Redeemer – Friend.
 - c. The Spirit is the integrator and nurturer – Comforter/Advocate.
4. Question – how perfect does your theology really have to be to be saved? The extremes – 1) the Rich Young Ruler who was a Jewish leader and elder... his theology was excellent, yet he left his encounter with Jesus "sad" and presumably unjustified... though we don't know what happened later that wasn't recorded [Matt 19:16-22]. 2) The thief crucified with Jesus... we know nothing of his theology, yet he threw himself completely on Jesus' mercy and grace... and Jesus said to him, "today you will be with me in paradise" [Luke 23:39-43].

F. Attributes of God – are usually differentiated in terms of Commutable [those that humanity shares in some aspect] and non-commutable [exclusive to God alone]. Humanity as being made in the Image of God [*Imago Dei*] means we share some of these commutable attributes in some measure... but only God has each in completeness and in perfect expression and in perfect balance all the time. Humanity instead exhibits these commutable attributes inconsistently, imperfectly, and out of balance. There are several approaches to this manner of God's Self-disclosure, but for our purposes we'll discuss the commutable and non-commutable:

1. **Non-Commutable Attributes** – these apply only to God:

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- a. **Eternal** – God exists forever, meaning he has no beginning or end (cf. Psalm 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17). He has always existed in the same way: fully and completely as God. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:8)
 - b. **Holy** – To say that God is holy is to say that He is eternally separate and distinct from all impurity. The term holiness in Hebrew, has the notion of separation, of uniqueness, of one-of-kindness as it were.
 - c. **Unchanging** – Also called immutability, this means that God never changes in his being (who he is) or promises (cf. Mal.3:6; James 1:17; Heb. 6:17).
 - d. **Impassable** – God is not overwhelmed by any emotion, he is not incapacitated or weakened or stifled by any event or any amount of grief or love. Rather, God is totally self-controlled. While God does grieve, and does passionately love, he does so completely on purpose.
 - e. **Infinite** – God is not subject to any of the limitations of humanity or his creation.
 - f. **All-powerful** [omnipotent] – God is all powerful. He can exercise dominion over the entire universe, carry out the purposes of his wisdom, govern the hearts of men, and even create things out of nothing.
 - g. **Everywhere-present** [omnipresent] – God is everywhere at the same time - Jer. 23:24; Psa. 139:7-10; 1 Kings 8:27. "This is not to say that God's form is spread out so that parts of Him exist in every location. God is spirit; He has no physical form. He is present everywhere in that everything is immediately in His presence. At the same time He is present everywhere in the universe. No one can hide from Him and nothing escapes His notice."
2. **Commutable Attributes** – while God alone exhibits these attributes in complete perfection and constantly in balance with all His other attributes, humanity does reflect these though at best imperfectly and inconsistently.
- a. God alone is **All-wise**:
 - i. God is the wellspring of wisdom. He works everything out for the good of his people, and for the display and enjoyment of his glory. This involves countless factors and people and events and decisions and all sorts of things that would drown any strategist. But not God. Even when things look the worst, God is carrying out his perfect wisdom. He never fails, never lacks any foresight, and never estimates. He knows all, and plans all, and he loves to display the glory and beauty of his wisdom by accomplishing the seemingly impossible.
 - ii. Humanity may know wisdom, and may recognize and apply wisdom, but it is a gift from God not an inherent attribute of humanity.
 - b. God alone is **All-knowing**:
 - i. God knows all things - 1 John 3:20; Psa.147:5; Heb.4:13. This includes the past, the present, and the future. It includes actuality, and contingencies. That is, he knows what will happen, and he knows what "could" happen. There was never a time when God did not know anything. The greatest and deepest and most fascinating thing that God knows

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is himself, for his is infinitely deep in character and substance and beauty and wisdom. "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11:34)

- ii. Humanity may know and learn, but knowledge is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but rather learned and limited. Some of the best known minds of humanity may adequately master some field of knowledge, but it is beyond our ability to know and integrate all things.
- c. Essential in Essence:
 - i. "The simplicity of God means that God is a unified being – He is One Essence. God is not composed of a variety of substances. In this sense he is different from humans who are made up of matter and spirit. Jesus is not an exception to this truth. While he took a human body while here on earth he is still absolute spirit in his essence. The simplicity of God reminds us that God needs nothing else to exist neither did he come about by a number of forces or substances joining together. This reassuring fact will encourage us to worship him as the unchanging God."
 - ii. Humanity's essence is as a created being derived from common materials [earthly] and imbued with the Heavenly Breath of God [Spiritual]. We are a hybrid physical & Spiritual being.
- d. Self-existent:
 - i. God's self-existence means that he does not need us or the rest of creation for anything. While everything other than God depends on God for everything, God depends on no one for existence. He is absolute reality, with whom we have to reckon.
 - ii. Humanity's existence is a personal gift from God.
- e. Self-sufficient:
 - i. The Scriptures allude to the fact that God does not need anything that we humans need to survive. He requires no water, air, food, sleep or money. Counselors, supervisors, and advisors of any kind are of no need to Him. He is self-sufficient in all capacities this is hard for the human brain to consider, that someone does not need what we do to survive."
 - ii. Humanity has a sufficiency in dependency upon God.
- f. Immaterial [Spiritual in nature]:
 - i. God is not fundamentally composed of matter, for he is spirit, and he created all matter (and all spirit other than himself). This does not mean that God is absolutely nothing ("immateriality" as a word can sometimes mean this); rather it means that God is nothing physical. "The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24)
 - ii. Humanity are spiritual beings living out our existence in a physical plane. Because of our physicality, humanity cannot exist without the material world.

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g. Good:

- i. God's Character is fundamentally Good... ALLGOOD. There is no evil, no falseness in Him whatsoever.
- ii. Humanity is capable of good, but also of evil.

h. Love:

- i. God's nature is characterized by Love perfectly expressed all the time... "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." 1 John 4:8 (NKJV) God is concerned for his creatures, and especially his people. He is tender toward them, and does not take pleasure in their suffering or condemnation. He seeks the best for us, and he offers up his Son in love as a substitution for sin. He loves to love people through His.
- ii. Humanity is capable of love, but inconsistently and imperfectly.

i. Gracious:

- i. God loves to give us what we don't deserve. He loves to pardon sin and lavish us with his goodness. He takes pleasure in giving gifts to people to display the glory of his resourcefulness, patience, and mercy.
- ii. Humanity is capable of graciousness as the Spirit works Grace out in us and through us.

j. Merciful:

- i. God shows his mercy by not giving us the punishment we deserve. Mercy as used in the Bible frequently has a much wider sense which may be translated "loyal love" [*Hessed*].
- ii. Humanity is capable of mercy, but not defined by it.

k. Just:

- i. God is deeply concerned with making wrongs right. He expressed justice and forgiveness in a loving and balanced manner.
- ii. Humanity is capable of being just or at least recognizing it, but we aren't defined by it. Humanity is defined by Sin, and God's justice requires a fitting penalty for it, or a fitting substitutionary atonement.

l. Sovereign:

- i. God is completely Sovereign, as His Will must prevail.
- ii. Humanity has free will which is a reflection of sovereignty.

m. Jealous:

- i. God has jealousy in the positive sense of loving so completely and perfectly that He holds everything close to Himself amid the freedom to give without measure.
- ii. Humanity has jealousy mostly in a negative sense, we hold things to ourselves to exclude others.

3. Further Development of the Attributes of Goodness and Justice:

a. God as Good – the idea that things are 'Good' is a major theme in Genesis – 1:4 et al.

- i. Good is a moral communicable attribute in classic theology. But what does 'goodness' mean?

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1. Without fault – no error
 2. Satisfied – complete and whole
 3. Perfect and right – cannot be improved upon
 4. Pleasing – brings pleasure and satisfaction
 5. Anything that can be identified as good – is of God
- ii. God's Goodness means that He has the ability to evaluate His work and determine it to be 'good'.
1. This means that God has knowledge – a communicable attribute.
 2. God has the ability to know from a complete and total perspective – God knows all the facts... that which 'was', 'is', and 'will be'... this is past, present, and future.
 3. This evaluative aspect that we share as being made in God's Image – *Imago Dei* – allows us the ability to figure stuff out – to plan and devise solutions.
- iii. Foreknowledge – God already knows what you need before you ask for it.
1. Prayer is not about giving God knowledge about you or what you need.
 2. Prayer is about coming into relational alignment with God.
 3. This is why prayer is so important – it moves us into God's context.
- iv. What did it mean for man being alone to 'not be good'? What does this say about God's goodness?
1. Man was incomplete – he was out of balance. Thus we weren't yet completely made in God's image.
 2. God's image includes male and female characteristics. Father and Son are obviously male in nature, while the Spirit is more maternal in nature due to the nurturing aspect of holding things together.
 3. Goodness has a relational aspect because it is for the benefit of someone else. Man was the beneficiary of all of God's creative efforts.
 4. Creation was not done for God's need – it wasn't an itch He had to scratch. Rather, it was done for humanity and for the relational intimacy God wanted with us. God being Spirit didn't need a physical reality; we being physical in a material world did... and are fundamentally dependent upon it.
- v. The opposing theme [antithesis] of good in creation is the curse of Gen 3.
1. Sin [rebellion against God's Way] elicited judgment – the curse.
 2. Jesus mission was restorative – to place humanity back into relational context with God.
 3. Jesus healed people in different fashions... but why the difference on entering the Kingdom?
 - a. The rich young ruler was told to sell everything and give it to the poor, then come and follow Jesus, but he was interested in what thing he could 'do' to satisfy the requirement and benefit himself, not who Jesus wanted him to

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- be. God's fundamental desire is with our 'being', not necessarily in our 'doing'.
 - b. The thief on the cross asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His Kingdom... Jesus said that day he would be in paradise. The thief threw himself on Jesus mercy.
 - c. It would seem that the thief was at the end of himself... he was broken and humbled, he just believed by faith. The rich young ruler was attempting to justify himself through the law/OT and not the new covenant Jesus was ushering in.
- vi. The relational aspect is key – Jesus' question posed to the rich young ruler was a clue... 'why do you call me good? Only God alone is good.'
- 1. 'Good' is relational – it always seeks to benefit others. Doing good works is thus intended to be relational, not self-justifying. This was a major misunderstanding of the Jewish Law and even continues into modern practices in both Catholic and Protestant camps.
 - 2. The book of James is all about this relational aspect of love and grace... it is not about the law.
 - 3. Mercy, Justice, and doing good for others is a communicable attribute of God. This helps define who God is... and all of God's Justice is balanced by Mercy.
 - 4. We tend to think in terms of moral goodness, but what God appears to be focusing on is relational goodness... doing good for others.
 - 5. In God's economy, 'doing' comes as a result of our 'being' – this is the message of the Book of James. Those who focus on 'works' make the same mistake the ancient Jews made... works do not justify [render us acceptable before God].
- vii. The curse in Gen 3 is a reversal of the original intended created order.
- 1. The curse sets up antagonistic relationships within creation, which is the antithesis of what is good.
 - a. Life and death are introduced.
 - b. Enmity between serpent and the seed of humanity also has a Spiritual context that isn't merely earthly.
 - c. Contention between Satan & seed [Jesus].
 - d. Contention between husband and wife.
 - e. Contention between man and earth.
 - f. Contention between woman and childbirth.
 - 2. The curse sets in motion suffering.
- b. **God as Just** – Justice is an attribute of God brought into focus because of suffering.
- i. Justice comes into play because of the curse.
 - ii. Justice is another communicable attribute. Man is the only creature that has an inherent

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sense of justice – a result of *Imago Dei*.

iii. God's sense of justice has a certain and ultimate resolution:

1. Satan will be destroyed.
2. The world will be restored.
3. Man's relationship with God will be restored.
4. Death will be destroyed.

iv. Thus, almost all of God's just judgment is overturned by God's mercy.

v. Amos' prophecy – 'for 3 or 4 I will not relent' – these judgments show that God's expectations of His people's justice greatly exceeded that of the neighboring nations.

1. ^{AM 1:3} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they threshed Gilead with *implements* of sharp iron.
2. ^{AM 1:6} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they deported an entire population To deliver *it* up to Edom.
3. ^{AM 1:9} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they delivered up an entire population to Edom And did not remember *the* covenant of brotherhood.
4. ^{AM 1:11} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, While he stifled his compassion; His anger also tore continually, And he maintained his fury forever.
5. ^{AM 1:13} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead In order to enlarge their borders.
6. ^{AM 2:1} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Moab and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.
7. ^{AM 2:4} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Judah and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they rejected the law of the LORD And have not kept His statutes; Their lies also have led them astray, Those after which their fathers walked.
8. ^{AM 2:6} Thus says the LORD, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*, Because they sell the righteous for money And the needy for a pair of sandals.

vi. Hope accompanies each threat of judgment – it is as if God is hoping they will turn from their ways so that He may relent.

1. While other prophets focused on idolatry, Amos focuses on the results of idolatry – meaning moral and ethical confusion and the resultant loss of relational integration with God in community.
2. There is a variable accountability between the world and God's people – God's standards are high and He expects His people to stand taller than the nations.
3. Whenever a nation became known for atrocities and oppressions – God raised up another nation to destroy them.
4. In accordance with God's expectations of His people – the church is subject to a more strict accountability... churches and Christian nations have a greater blessing and accountability.