

Doctrine of God

by Steve Macias

This sermon delves into the distinction between doctrine and dogma, emphasizing the importance of deriving teaching from the early church fathers and Holy Scriptures. It explores the Anglican perspective of relying solely on scriptural doctrine, contrasting with the Roman Catholic emphasis on dogma defined by the church's authority. The sermon discusses the nine foundational doctrines of God outlined in the Scripture and the role of creeds in defending the faith. It also touches on the challenges of councils, magisterium, and the boundaries of doctrinal authority within different Christian traditions.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:20, Deuteronomy 6:4, Hebrews 13:8, 1 John 4:8, Ephesians 1:11, John 4:24, Genesis 1:27, Matthew 28:19, 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Doctrine vs. Dogma", "Authority of Scripture"

Description

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Transcript

Lesson two has a couple of just basic ideas about doctrine. And the difference here is one that really matters, because the distinction you're going to make in this book is between the idea of doctrine and the idea of dogma, and where the source of our teaching comes from. And this is going to put a great distinction between Anglicans, Baptists, Catholics, especially, when we talk about what it means to be Anglican.

In our last lesson, we talked about the idea that we have no theology of our own. The Anglicans don't pretend that we have our own new way of reading the scripture, but rather that we go to the church of the early fathers, which I think is really important. And there's a Latin phrase that you should know that is crucial to the idea of the Reformation and is *ad pontem*, or to the sources.

And whether you look at Calvin or Luther, whether you look at any of the reformed theologians of the medieval period, who we would call of our camp, their goal was always to return back to the undivided church for several centuries. So whether we talk about John Calvin, if you read the Institutes of Christian

Religion, who does he quote as his sources? First of all, he goes to the holy scriptures. We know that Calvin believed the scriptures to be the authority.

But then, to suppose his idea of the understanding of those scriptures, he uses the early fathers. So how can the early church be understood? In the scriptures, it is through what has been received and recounted by the fathers. And that's a very reformed way of saying it.

The church started out in the Pentecost. It existed throughout the centuries. Somewhere, it got off track.

And the Reformation was going to find the place where it got off track and restart there. Now, there are different views on how to do that. So one of them might be a very Baptist view, something we might call restorationist, to say that at the time of these holy scriptures, we had the perfect church of the apostles.

But after the apostles died, the church goes off the rails. And the only way to restore the true church is if we only trust what we can deduce from the scriptures, ignoring creeds, ignoring the fathers, ignoring the institutional church. And you can imagine what issues that might have, because we see the divisions amongst Baptists today, where wherever you translate the scriptures to me becomes the authority of your Bible, your church.

So that's why we have one Baptist church that believes in a dispensational idea that Christ could come at any moment, and Russia is now the new Antichrist, or something like that. Or you can go back 100 years, and the Baptist church can be completely different, because they're not grounded in a historic view of the church, but what they believe today and can argue from the scripture becomes their authority. That restoration view is very dangerous.

It's also the view held by Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, not just our Baptist friends. But on the other extreme of that idea of how you come up with doctrine are people like the Roman Catholics, or the Eastern Orthodox, to some extent. The Roman Catholics have the idea that the church is the bearer of authority in some sense.

The Roman Catholic church today would say that we receive the scriptures as a product of the church, of the product of the teaching ministry of the church, of the apostles, and that the scriptures are an authority, but throughout history, those scriptures have been not only interpreted by the fathers, but there is a separate ministry of the Roman church called the magisterium that can infallibly define what doctrine is. And that kind of infallible definition is called dogma. So they're able to not only say what's clearly in the scripture, but also to go beyond what's in the scripture by a certain authority.

Now today, that's much different than maybe the Roman Catholic church of 1,000 years ago, or even 500 years ago. And we'll get to that when we talk about dogma. But I want you to have in your mind as we go through this those two extremes, where does your doctrine come from? Is it the individual and how they read the scripture, or is it the collective, how the church as an institution reads the scripture? And the Anglican view is neither of those.

It says the scripture is sufficient. We'll talk about what that means. And that the scripture is the only authority, and the only authority to do a couple of things we're gonna talk about, too.

So in your outline, we have what is doctrine? Or as my friend, Dr. Rushton, would say, doctrine, what is doctrine? The formal teaching of the church, obviously, from this Latin idea. Do we have some papers up here? We have some for you. You just missed me talking about the Roman Catholic church, but you

already know all of it.

So Mr. Zahn, is it doctrine or doctrine? Doctrine. Doctrine. Unless it has an L at the end, then it's doctrinal, right? Just kidding.

So the Latin word, docere, or to teach. So when we talk about doctrine, it is what does the church teach? What does the minister teach? What do families teach? What does the individual teach? What is taught when we say we are Christians? So doctrine, therefore, is important and inescapable. How we live our lives is in accordance with our doctrine, what we've been taught, and what we do teach.

So we can't be non-doctrinal Christians. If we just ignore doctrine as a study, we just follow whatever the common doctrine is of our age. So we have to be intentional about how we define what it is we teach, and where we give our authority to believe what we believe.

If we go to Walmart today, we could find a nice little Christian section there at Walmart, and at the top of the bestseller and Christian section at Walmart, you'll see Sarah Young, Jesus Calling, in seven or eight different versions. And if you don't have an idea of what doctrine is, or authority is, or source of teaching is, you might believe that that's Christian. Now, the second part here, what does doctrine be, says the Anglican church.

And when we say the Anglican church, we mean those of the Anglican way. So those of us who are Episcopalian, Anglican, use the Book of Common Prayer, historically the Church of England. The church, Anglican church, has no special or private doctrine.

This was a big issue in the early church, with the Gnostics, the idea that we might have secret knowledge, or an issue today with special cults, who have a new prophet, whether it's Muhammad or Joseph Smith, who has a special revelation from an angel, or a new prophet, or a new word of God, that comes down to them. The Book of Revelation tells us not to add to it. St. Paul says that whether an angel himself comes to you, we cannot teach something contrary to what we received.

Now, the teaching of our church is the teaching of the ancient, undivided church, Jesus Christ, as found in the Holy Scriptures. Now, that's a loaded statement, because how do you know exactly what the church, those undivided, believes, or teaches? And how do you define the undivided church? In our last lesson, we had the picture of the tree, where the trunk of the tree was Jesus, and he found it under his 12 disciples, and over a few centuries, he saw it divide from east and west, and the various branches of Protestantism, or different Protestant denominations. But when we go back into our history, our doctrine finds a common point between Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants of all denominations, and that can be seen in the Church of the Creeds.

So, if you look at 325, 1st Nicaea, 381, Nicaea II, you go through Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, all of these early councils of the church, you have a church that is undivided, east and west together, and this church appeals, not to itself as its authority, but if you read the arguments of the men of these early councils, whether it's Athanasius or Basil, they argue that their authority did not rest in the miter they had on their head, if they did wear one, or the persuasiveness of their philosophy, but on what they received from apostles via Holy Scripture. How do we know that God is triune? The Scriptures teach so. How do we know that there's incarnation? The Scriptures teach so.

So, the primitive church, or the ancient undivided church, is the church that believes the Scriptures, and you can see clearly, as the centuries go on, that the idea of doctrine being defined by Scripture only changed and transformed as the Church divides. So, where do we get this standard? It's from the Bible itself, 2 Peter 1 and 20 says, no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. So, Mr. Cyril, or Mr. Athanasius, or Mr. Augustine, or even Mr. John Calvin, or even Mr. Martin Luther, or even our blessed Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, they can't come up with, this is what I believe the Scripture might say, and so we always understood this as, the Scripture can't come up with new interpretations, no new private interpretations.

What we believe today must be in conformity with what was handed down in the Apostolic period, which was held through the early centuries of the Church, received through the councils, and came up through the undivided Church. So, there is such a thing. There is such a thing as an ancient undivided Church, where they have a common view of the Scriptures.

Now, the second portion here comes to the idea of dogma. Now, dogma's a fun word, and it includes those things, those things that must be believed as matters of great authority, must be believed as matters of great authority. On page 15 of Tosca Tama's book, he says, dogma is the most basic or fundamental sense of principles taught by the authority of the Church as the necessary beliefs for salvation.

Another way to say this is, the dogma are the things that we must believe to be considered. He should say, these are the things we must believe to be considered Christians. So, if you put something in the category of dogma, it's required.

There's no wiggle room in dogma. So, for example, God is a trinity. There's a dogmatic idea.

You can't come up with, well, sometimes we believe that. So, those are required dogmas. Dogma itself comes from the Greek word *dokaion*, which means to think, believe, or consider, and it's cognate in Latin, not cognate, I guess, but its equivalency in Latin is the idea of the word *credo*, or I believe.

So, dogma and creed are the same idea, one expressed in Latin, one expressed in Greek. So, when we come together on a Sunday and we say the Nicene Creed, we are confessing this is the dogma of what we believe. Or, if we confess during our daily offices, this is the Apostles' Creed, this is the dogma of what it means to believe in the faith.

So, of course, we talked about the creeds in the past, but the creed being Apostles' Creed, a baptismal creed, what must you do to enter the church? The Nicene Creed being the institutional creed of the church, what must you do to be a part of the church? Now, 2A here, I've added my favorite Congress figure that I see all over Berkeley throughout the years. Dogma in 2A says, my karma ran over your dogma. Has anyone seen this mockery sticker before? What? What? Quickly, I still haven't seen it.

Karma ran over your dogma. Now, there's a couple of senses which can be understood. Like, people who have a relativistic view of religion, you know, the idea of karma, that our good works, our positive vibes, is more important than what we actually believe.

Our actions are more important than some set of beliefs written on a book or on a wall, which is the prevalent view of modern existential or semi-rational or experiential people, but it also gets to the point of dogma is largely maligned in our culture as something like stuffy or prohibitive, but dogma's very important for us to understand. I think it's funny because it also plays on the idea of a car running over a dog. So, the

karma ran over your dogma.

But what's the difference then between the various doctrines of the church and the dogma of the church? So, for example, if you open up your Geneva Bible, so in 1599, the reformers in Geneva, Switzerland, came up with an English translation of the scripture with notes smuggled into England, Geneva Bible, and inside it was the first Bible that had not only the scripture translated faithfully, but also certain notes, commentary sections, below the actual text. And this Geneva Bible was at one time banned in England, but it had certain ideas that were peculiar to the Geneva church, reform doctrines, the doctrines of grace, but some of them were peculiar just to Geneva. For example, when it gets to the idea of, say, Michael the Archangel, there's a little note in the Geneva Bible that says that is Jesus, meaning Jesus is Michael the Archangel.

I mean, that's not something that we confess, say, dogmatically, right? There are some ideas that teachers in the church come up with that can be defended scripturally that don't need to be believed by everybody to be considered Christian, right? We all recognize those things. So, that's the main difference between a doctrine and a teaching of the church, and a dogma, a required tenet of the faith. Now, this distinction between doctrine and dogma is understood differently in different churches.

So, for example, I have here the Roman Catholic view, and I've taken this actually from Mr. Aitken's book, so some of you guys know, is it John Aitken, Jimmy? Jimmy Aitken, Jimmy Aitken. Jimmy Aitken is a Catholic apologist, so this is their best defense of their distinction. He says, dogma is divine, infallible, by Bible and or magisterium.

Doctrine is taught by the church, but subject to error. So, the idea in Jimmy Aitken's mind is that Roman Catholics have dogma, similar to we do, but then they also put down doctrine or ideas that may be true or may be changed in the future. So, some examples of Roman Catholic dogmas that have been introduced to the undivided church since the Reformation.

So, the post-Reformation Council of Trent, for example, introduces dogmatically as matters that must be accepted by those who call themselves Roman Catholics the idea of transubstantiation. So, they move it from the category of doctrine. There were some people in the medieval period that believed that the body and blood of Christ were transformed to no longer being bread and wine, to now completely being the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the accidents and all of that.

Aristotelian logic that followed it became a matter of dogma. So, the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Council met, and they transformed this doctrine, this idea that was held by some people, into the category of, if you don't believe this, you are not a Christian. And the word they like to use is, if you don't believe this, you are anathema, which is to say, a curse for destiny to hell.

They also added the doctrine of purgatory to be a dogmatic thing at the Council of Trent as well. So, prior to the Council of Trent, meaning prior to the Reformation, there was no dogmatic statement in the Western Church or the Eastern Church that said you had to believe in transubstantiation or that you had to believe in purgatory. And the Roman Catholic Church changes that understanding.

So, you see development, largely in response to the Anglican Church and the Protestant Reformation, which is largely what Trent was. Now, more recently, in the last, let's see, 1860s, I think is when Vatican I happened, Vatican I issued a infallible decree, a matter of dogma, that the Pope does possess the idea of infallibility. There are some things that the Pope speaks from his chair or ex-cathedra that become

infallible.

Now, mind you, from the time of the Apostles to 1860s, it's a pretty long time to not have this as a dogma. It says papal infallibility or papal infallibility. But as a consequence, the Roman Catholic Church moves further and further away from what we describe as the source of our doctrine, which is the teaching of the ancient, undivided Church of the Scripture.

There's no doctrine of papal infallibility in the Scripture, not even in the history of the Roman Church itself. But with that, they're able to move even further away. Now that the Pope can speak infallibly, Pope Pius IX was able to, pardon the typo here, proclaim the immaculate conception of Mary, not Mark, the immaculate conception of Mary.

Now, we all believe in the immaculate conception of Christ, but they took it a step further and they said, well, Mary herself must be immaculately conceived as well. Now, you can talk about these ideas, and there are ideas that are called pious doctrines or pious thoughts about the early Church. So you can go back to the Church, and maybe you can find a writer who talks about or confesses that they believed that Mary was assumed bodily into heaven.

Or maybe you can find a writer who believed in maybe the immaculate conception. But it is not until Pope Pius IX gets this declared a matter of dogma that if you don't believe that Mary was immaculately conceived, then you are anathema. So this is a big difference, the bucket of doctrine and the bucket of dogma.

The bucket of dogma says this is the benchmark of what it means to be a Christian, to be Orthodox, to be Catholic. And you can see, just in these examples of the Roman Catholic Church, of ways they've added to it. Now, we can find other doctrines within the Anglican world that could also fit in this category.

For example, the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Latin Congress makes this big statement on contraception, which is contrary to the history of the Church. So we anathema with that. But then there's also the recent, more recent in the last 30 years, the acceptance of, say, females and oars and other breaks of Anglicanism, which we can also say anathema to that.

But by what standard do we say dogma and doctrine? Is it the magisterium, as the Roman Catholics do? Is it the pope? Is it the cardinals, the church teachers? Or is it something greater? And so the Anglicans must say it is the scripture, the Holy Scripture. And so the Anglican view of doctrine versus dogma, here on number four, it says, the Anglican Church, as did all the undivided Church, has committed itself to scriptural doctrine only, which is the distinction. But that's what makes us a Protestant or a Reformed Church, is that our authority is the scripture.

Now, over the period of the Reformation, period of several decades, the Church produced the Articles of Religion, began with 10, went to above 39, went back down to 39, arguing, and eventually published after Thomas Panamner died. But in here we give a good definition of what it means to have an Anglican view. And this is also described to by our particular parish and the ministers here and membership here.

So it's important for us to know it. The Anglican view on doctrine and dogma is outlined here at page 603. So if you go to the back of your prayer book, it lists out all of the Articles of Religion.

And it's similar to, say, like the Westminster Confession, but it has a different intention. So the Articles are not an exhaustive answer to every theological question you might have. These are, again, questions of

dogma.

What is the minimum we have to believe to be considered Reformation Christians? So here on page 603, Article Number Six, which is called Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scripture for Salvation, it says, Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation. Now, if you are an Anglican and you're born 10 years before the First Vatican Council, you didn't believe all things necessary to salvation according to Roman Catholics, because you don't believe in papal infallibility. It hasn't been a requirement yet, right? Or the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

If you were born before the reign of Pope Pius IX, you don't believe all things necessary for salvation because Roman Catholic has added some things to that to be necessary to believe. So the Anglican view goes back to the Scripture. But it also goes on and says, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man.

Not to be required of any man. I think that's a helpful distinction, too. It says, how do you handle something like papal infallibility? Well, if you can't prove it from the Scripture, if it's not in the history of the Church as the understanding of the Scripture, then it can't be required as a doctrine of your belief.

So this is a big distinction that we have in what makes our Church truly scriptural and reformed. The final word here before it gets the list of the books of the Bible, it says, thought to be requisite or necessary for salvation. So that's an interesting distinction here, too, because there are things and doctrines that we may believe that are not necessarily related to our salvation.

So, for example, if I say I believe the book of Revelation was written prior to 70 AD, does that affect my spirituality whatsoever? I think it would affect how you live your Christian life. But if somebody believed that the book of Revelation was written after 70 AD, whatever error that may be, they're not losing their salvation. We don't establish dogma on things that are not explicitly written in the Scripture.

Now, the next section here in the book focuses on the creeds, which is important, because just as we talk about our doctrine coming from the Scripture, we believe the creeds be the faithful exposition of that Scripture. So I often describe it as a bowling alley. So if you've ever gone to a bowling alley with kids, inside the gutters, you put these little containers, I can't remember what they're called, but they're like gutter posts.

Sometimes they fill them with piping, or sometimes they have little posts that pop out of the lanes. But the creeds function like gutter posts. They protect us.

So we're standing down looking at the lane of the bowling alley, and out at the end are the pins of salvation. Here I am, the bowling ball of the Christian life. And as I go down this lane, I have on my right side the Scripture, protecting me from falling into the gutter.

And then I have here on my left side the creeds. And as long as those things are held in the proper tension, no matter where my ball goes in these various doctrines, those dogmatic statements keep me out of the gutter, out of the perdition, out of hell. So the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are helpful for understanding that.

If you look on page 18 of Tarsotano's book, the creeds do not develop necessarily as an extension of the Scripture. They don't mean to be adding to the Scripture. The creeds are a response to the Scripture.

So first of all, the Apostles' Creed is established so that we might, who believe the Scriptures, confess our belief in the Scriptures. So the Apostles' Creed was all that was required for someone to be baptized. But then what if we had doubts about the nature of Christ or arguments about the body of Christ or the incarnation of Christ? The creeds were not taking the Scripture and going next chapter, next book.

The creeds were, how do we defend what the Scripture has said? And so the councils of the church, beginning at Nicaea, gathered together all the bishops of the world, east and west, and they began to debate. Now, many of you already know the history of the Council of Nicaea, where Deacon Athanasius is there and it's Constantine the Great calling the council, Saint Nicholas punching Erebos, all those details that come with the council. But the council produces the creed in a response to Aryan heresy or to Gnostic heresy.

So the creeds are meant to protect the Scripture, not continue to develop doctrine. The creeds are meant as a defense of what we already believed, not an addition to the Christian faith. Sometimes the restorationists, Baptists or Mormons, will say that the church changed at Nicaea, that suddenly there are bishops after this point, or suddenly after this point, the church has come under Constantinian captivity.

The Roman Catholic Church is born out of the church of Nicaea. That's not the case at all. Nicaea represents when the church could all agree that this is what the Scripture teaches.

And whether you were in Rome or Antioch or Alexandria, whether you were as far as southeast as Turkey or all the way to the Britain Islands, every single person could agree and confess the faith of the Nicene Creed. So that's something unique there. This gives us the boundary markers of what it means to be an ancient, undivided church.

And their initial draft of the Nicene Creed didn't include little bits about the Holy Spirit, and so the subsequent council in Constantinople in 381 included Basil's work on the Holy Spirit, which I also believe really goes to that entire paragraph is basically lived from Basil's work itself. So the Anglican view is we have the Scripture, and we defend the Scripture with the creeds, and the creeds define our dogma of what the Scripture teaches. But each point of the creed itself must stand wholly on the Scripture itself.

If something in the creed did not fit with Scripture, that's what they debated. They did not debate whether or not Athanasius believed this, or your party believed this, or the Antiochians believed this. They debated, does it say so in the Scripture? So that's an important distinction there, too.

So moving on from the two creeds, which hopefully we're reciting weekly, there are here listed out the nine doctrines of God that are evident in the Scripture that he felt were important to list out here, and I have them listed here at number six. God is alive, God is personal, God is unique, God is sovereign, God is free, God is one, God is changeless, God is a trinity, and God is love. Now these doctrines, as you read through this chapter, as you have read through this chapter, you'll recognize these define who God is according to the Scripture.

I think they're foundational in understanding the doctrine of God, because they're different and distinct from other religions. So for example, God is alive. Very different from the gods of the Old Testament, like Moloch, who were just a dead statue that you prayed to.

God is alive. God is personal. It's very different than Islam, where God is this impersonal force that gives your prayers and may have justice on you, but has no personal relationship with you.

But we know God is personal, as he revealed himself in the Scripture, spoken to us personally, gave his son to us personally, lived with us personally. We also know that God is unique. Now, good Reformed Christians, we recognize that the uniqueness of God is also part of this creature, creator distinction.

No one is like God, he is the creator, he is separate from his creation, he is unique from his creation. No part of humankind can be seen as the same as God. We remain after his image, after his likeness, we think his thoughts after him.

He is unique, we follow his pattern. D, God is sovereign. Now, this is a good Reformed work, right? There is, as Heidegger would say, not one square inch of all of human existence for God does not say mine, right? So every atom, as Ventile would say, belongs to God, God is sovereign.

He's sovereign over history, he's sovereign over salvation, he's sovereign over those sacraments, which means that you are not. So you don't save yourself, you don't grant yourself salvation, you don't pray yourself into heaven, you don't marry yourself, you don't celebrate sacraments on yourself, you don't create a church by yourself, God is sovereign, we are sinners. God is alive, we are dead.

So next one, E is free. A very important theological concept, the freedom of God, meaning God is not constrained by the natural rules of our world, that's why we can have miracles, but also, God is free, and the nature of the experience is His freedom expressed over us, not the other way around. One of the common apologetics questions that is tossed around in any introductory class is can God create a rock so big that He cannot pick it up, this or that one before, can God create a rock so big that He can't pick it up, which challenges the freedom of God.

Is He constrained to the natural recourses of this world, or is He something else? So God is free. Next one is God is one. God is one, this is obviously the call of the ancient Israel people, the Shema, believe what Israel did, our Lord, our God, is one, meaning that there is not a multiplicity of gods or any division in God.

God is one. Echoing Hebrews, our next doctrine is God is changeless. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, which is important, because this was also one of the reasons why the Nicene Creed hadn't been written, because there were ancient heretics like Marcion, not to be confused with Messias, right, Marcion, who said that there was a God of the Old Testament, and He was evil, and He was all about the material.

We have a God of the New Testament, which is Jesus, and He's spiritual, so we don't need to read the Old Testament, but God is changeless. He is the same in Genesis, Exodus, even Leviticus, as He is in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and in the Revelation, so it's the same God, doesn't change, doesn't become something different, and that God expresses Himself in Trinity. I think we've talked about this a couple of times, but our friends in the CRSC have a great book on Trinity and unity, talking about how God could not express any of these characteristics, especially our last one, without being a Trinity.

How does a God who is one express the idea of love, which love requires an object of love, so God must be Trinity, and then we understand our world in terms of that Trinity, where there's a Father, there's a Son, there's a Holy Ghost, and their relationship becomes a pattern for our entire world. Their covenant becomes a model for the earthly covenant. Their life, the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier, or however you describe their roles in the Trinity also comes down to our life, our salvation.

And then finally, God is love, right? So God is love, that's why God enacts His history for God's soul of the world, the cosmos, everything that's created in it that He gave is only to God the Son, so God is love. The characteristics of God are expressed, each of these in the scripture. They're the nine documents of how we define who God is, and so if you use these characteristics as a kind of rubric to describe the God of other religions, most other religions, I can't think of any that off the top of my head that would pass this test, but can the God of Mormonism fit these nine characteristics? No, it changes, He's not unique, He's not sovereign.

Is the God of the Eastern Orthodoxy, does He fit these nine characteristics? I would say not today, maybe a thousand years ago. Or, like we said, Islam, you can use these nine documents of God and the fact that they're from scripture to apply them over any type of religious system that might hook its head up. So when you see even modern Christian uses, take the extreme Arminians, not Jacob Arminians, who are probably more Calvinist than most Baptists today, but the extreme Arminians who say, I pray myself to salvation, or I have worked my way to salvation somehow, those prayers, that theological system contradicts the sovereignty of God, or the unchangeable nature of God.

So these doctrines of who God is frame and protect our worldview. So they come from the scripture, they define who God is, and they feed back into how we defend and protect the faith. All right, so you guys have these.

If you want to read through the scripture proofs, Tarsitano gave a ton of scripture proofs on each of the nine doctrines, and I think they're helpful to understand. Hopefully we all know them already. But are there any questions today? And I can turn off the camera if I have some questions before we are dismissed.

Yes, so as far as dogma goes, we have decrees and these were made by the councils of the church. So the Episcopal church has continued to have councils, and that's where they have female orders. Kind of.

Yeah, so. But are we, do we do that? So there's a couple of issues with councils today. So who calls the first council of Messiah? There's an emperor involved, and there's the bishops involved, and there's the pentarchy involved, which is the archbishops of the various national churches.

You can have councils if you have those components. You have emperors, you have archbishops, you have bishops, and you agree to a council and you come together to do that. But after about 1000 AD, when you have this schism between the East and the West, you no longer have the components to call a council.

The West has to call a council that is not, by definition, ecumenical. So ecumenical means universal. We're having jurisdiction of the whole church.

Once the church is divided between East and West, I think of the late Civil War. Once North and South are divided, whatever legislation they pass in the North doesn't apply to the South, right? It doesn't represent the entire country. The same thing happens here in church history.

The East can develop doctrine and the West can develop doctrine, which they did, but it would not be binding on the entire church. Now, the Western church, particularly the Roman Catholic church, goes on to have many what they call ecumenical councils, I can't remember the exact number, but they're past double digits now, right? 22, I think. 22, yeah.

So we have five, we say, are infallible, seven that are commonly accepted councils of the undivided church, and then they've added another 15 or so. You said Roman Catholics, right? Yeah, yeah, yeah. So they've added another 15 ecumenical councils with these dogmatic statements.

Now, the Eastern church has tried to have pan-Orthodox synods, so where they try to get the various national churches to agree on things, but they have not had an ecumenical council on that. Now, in Western Eucharitarianism, it's not Roman Catholic, so say like the Anglicans. We have conferences of some authority, so there's like the Lambeth Conference, where the Anglican communion churches come together with resolutions, but there are no teeth behind those, right? So they stand only by consent.

So if Lambeth, for example, tomorrow says, we're gonna add another book of the Bible, the book of Justin Welby or something, every other Anglican church would be like, well, I don't consent, and we don't recognize that authority. So it's not the same as the Roman Catholic church. It says, oh, you don't accept papal invalidity.

You're no longer a Christian, and that happens to, during the first Vatican council, there were a number of national churches, so you might, if you read about history of the Catholic church in the late 19th century, you'll read about the National Polish Catholic Church or the National Hungarian Catholic Church that were basically excommunicated after the first Vatican council because they refused to consent to the idea of papal invalidity. So they created schism with their so-called ecumenical councils, but we don't need it either, right? So we have the sufficient definition of what it means to be a Christian here in the undivided church. We don't need to add anything to this.

We just need to go back to what we have. The problem is we're not sticking to what we already have decided on. So, for example, male orders.

What do you say? Does the ancient undivided church have male and female priests? No, they only have male priests. So, problem solved. We don't need a council.

So, but Father, you had something to add there. I have to correct myself. 21, ecumenical council.

21, okay, 21. Well, 22 is coming with Pope Frankie, as we must all reduce our carbon emissions by suicide or something like this. But any other questions on the idea of doctrine, doctrinal councils? What makes up the magisterium? Who is that comprised of? The magisterium is the Roman Catholic Church.

So the Magisterium of the Catholic Church is driven by the Roman Catholic Pope. And I can't pretend to be an expert in what the magisterium might be. But traditionally, you have the College of Cardinals.

You have the teachers of the church. When they come together in conclave, they have a certain authority. But then all of the bishops are synogal with the Roman Catholic Church, meaning that they gather together in council.

So if tomorrow Pope Francis called another ecumenical council, so he's gonna create that in his brief, he would call together all the bishops of the Roman Catholic Churches. And then if they could come to consensus with the Pope in agreement, then that would be the magisterium of the church speaking with authority. It's not so much the Jesuit order or the Dominican order or some college.

Although sometimes we see that kind of magisterium exist in Protestant world, right? When we say, well, if you look at institutes, John Calvin said, no paedocommunion. So that's the magisterium. No exceptions,

right? Or you also see it sometimes in the Anglican world.

In the 19th century, they only did communion once a month. So that's the magisterium, no more. In the Roman Catholic Church, it's supposed to be the authority of the church in consensus.

But the Roman Catholic Church today, its magisterium is really a mess because you have some folks who have spoken about the salvation of Muslims, of Muslims having the same God, of kissing Qurans. They also have statements about the assumption of marrying and marrying a co-redemptress. But they exist in a type of schizophrenia where many of these post-Vatican II theologians don't really confess their historical views, right? So Trent says, if you don't believe X, Y, and Z, you're anathema.

And then post-Vatican II, it's like, well, salvation is universal. So the idea of dogma needs to be worked out in the Roman Catholic Church as well, which is what happens when you move away from a immovable scriptural authority. Not to say that Anglicans are perfect, but the scripture that we worship, I mean, the God in the scripture, the God that we worship in the scripture is perfect.

And he has given us his perfect and fallible word, not his perfect and fallible church. So I think that's an important distinction. Anyone? Any other questions? Yeah? So we wouldn't consider the Mormon Church to be part of our grouping.

They're not. So it wouldn't, if the Catholics go too far, we're just like, you guys are out. So, or the Orthodox, for that matter.

So then we would say they're no longer part of the holy Catholic Church. Yeah, it's just us. I would say the Catholics went too far at Trent.

So Trent is when they make the big leap. So there were probably faithful Christians throughout Western Europe who could call themselves, you know, fit the same doctrines as us all the way up to Trent. And you could have been a Christian of good conscience in the Catholic Church up until Trent.

But at Trent, the Church has so substantially changed that it no longer is the same. So like you mentioned, Mormon.

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