



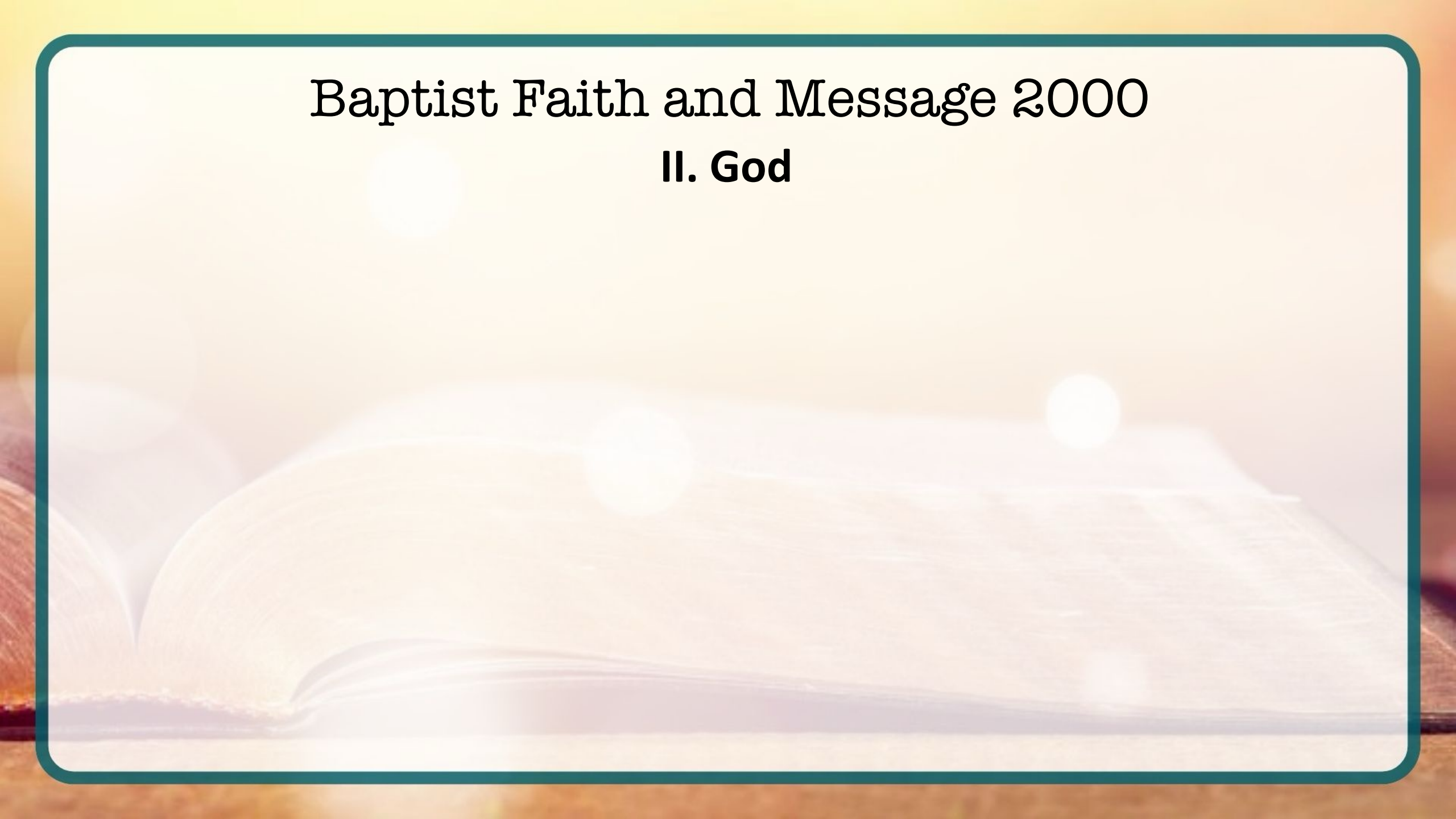
FIRST BAPTIST
MERIDIANVILLE
REAL. FAMILY.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

THE
BAPTIST
FAITH &
MESSAGE
2000

Baptist Faith and Message 2000

II. God



Article II

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Key Texts

Isaiah 45:5-6: "I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other."."

Key Texts

1 Corinthians 8:6: "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

Psalms 147:5: "Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure."

Major Theological Observations

When we think about God, two important questions naturally arise.

- First, does God exist?
- Second, what is God like?

Does God exist?

Cosmological Argument: This argument posits that everything that begins to exist has a cause, and since the universe had a beginning, it must have a cause. This cause is often identified as God.

Teleological Argument (Argument from Design): This argument is based on the idea that the universe exhibits order, purpose, and complexity, which suggests the existence of an intelligent designer, namely God.

Ontological Argument: Proposed by St. Anselm, this argument suggests that the very concept of God implies existence. In other words, God, by definition, is that than which nothing greater can be conceived, and existence is greater than non-existence.

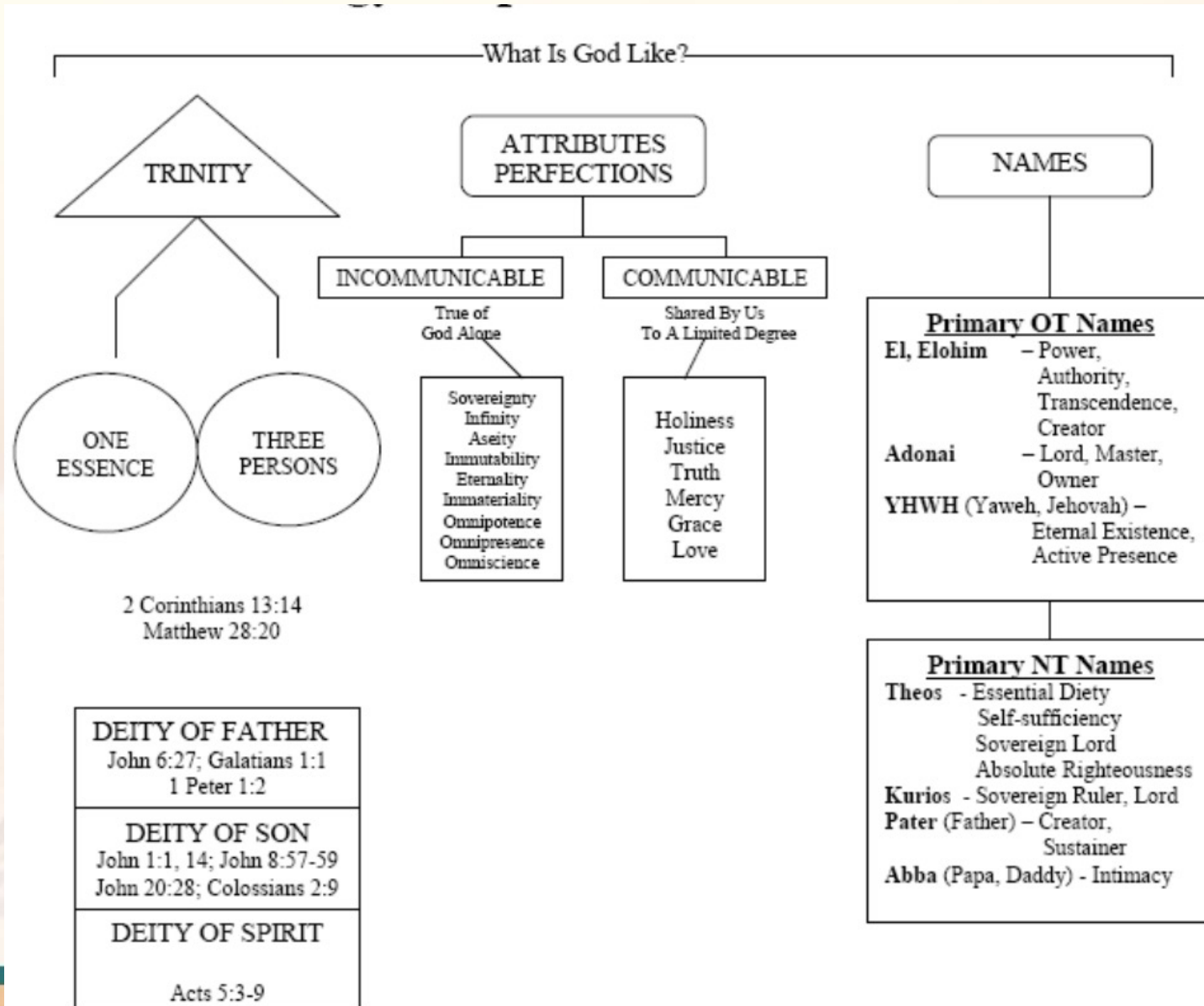
Does God exist?

Moral Argument: This argument asserts that the existence of objective moral values and duties in the world points to the existence of a moral lawgiver, who is God.

Argument from Consciousness: This argument suggests that the existence of consciousness and subjective experience cannot be adequately explained by purely physical processes, and therefore implies the existence of a transcendent consciousness, which is often identified as God.

Argument from Religious Experience: Some argue that personal experiences of the divine, such as mystical experiences or encounters with a transcendent reality, provide evidence for the existence of God.

What Is God Like?



What Is God Like?

6

Seven Major Views of God

Atheism: A World Without God



Theism: A World Plus an Infinite God



Pantheism: A World That Is God



Deism: A World On Its Own Made by God



Finite Theism: A World With a Finite God



Panentheism: A World In God



Polytheism: A World With Many Gods



Major Theological Observations

1) The Baptist Faith and Message article affirms “there is one and only one living and true God.” This cancels out atheism and polytheism.

Major Theological Observations

2) This God is “intelligent, spiritual and personal. He is Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler.” This rules out pantheism, panentheism and deism.

Major Theological Observations

- 3) Our God is “infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing.”
- God has no beginning or end. He lacks nothing. He is perfect and pure with no taint of sin or evil. He is omnipotent (all powerful) and omniscient (all knowing).

Major Theological Observations

4) “His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present and future, including the future decisions of his free creatures.”

This sets aside finite and open theism.

Major Theological Observations

Our God is also utterly unique from the theological conceptions of all other religions, for the Bible reveals him to be a Trinity of three eternal persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and yet still one – a unity.

Qne God, distinct in person “but without division of nature, essence or being.”

Major Theological Observations

The Christian God is personal and more (a tri-unity). In other world religions like Buddhism, God is less than personal. Islam views God as utterly transcendent and basically unapproachable. Mysticism and its New Age offspring see God as wholly immanent.

Major Theological Observations

The Bible says the one true God is both (transcendent and immanent). He is above us and separate from us, and yet he is also a God who can be known, truly and genuinely known, in a personal relationship.