

MELBOURNE TRAINING DAY

Session 1. Nature of God.

The Key Issue: Who Is God?

- What you believe about God is absolutely foundational.
- Muslims and non-Christians tend to assume that the God of the Bible and of the Qur'an are essentially the same. Is this actually true?
- We need to examine the character of God in the Bible and compare it with Allah in the Qur'an.
 - The biblical God is holy
 - The biblical God is relational
 - The biblical God has made himself known
 - The biblical God is love
 - The biblical God is Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- In contrast to the Trinity, Islam teaches the doctrine of *tawhid* (Allah's utter one-ness)
 - Muslims love to debate and attack Christians on this topic
 - But the Trinity is actually a point of strength for the Christian faith
- Problems with the Islamic concept of *tawhid*
 - The problem of the Qur'an's "uncreated" nature
 - The "Mu'tazilite controversy"
 - The problem of Allah's 99 names
 - "The Loving" — but love requires subject and object
 - Allah ends up needing his creation — to be loving and to be relational
- The power of the Trinity
 - The biblical God is loving without requiring his creation
 - The biblical God can create without having to change his nature
 - Human beings are relational because we're made in the image of the biblical God
 - Conclusion: Two very different God's
 - What you believe about God will effect the kind of society you build