

Christian Ministry Unit 1

Introduction to Theology

Week 1 – Theology Proper

Introduction

“Theology” refers to the general study of the (biblical) God.

Why do we need an accurate view of God?

Psalm 16 ¹ Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You. ² I said to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.” ³ As for the saints who are in the earth, They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight. ⁴ The sorrows of those who have bartered for another *god* will be multiplied; I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, Nor will I take their names upon my lips. ⁵ The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot. ⁶ The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me. ⁷ I will bless the LORD who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. ⁸ I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. ¹⁰ For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. ¹¹ You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Ps. 16. Three reasons why David prizes accurate knowledge about God:

- (Ps. 16:9,11).

Ps. 146:1-7. The Psalmist reminds himself to keep praising God throughout his life. Why?

¹ Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! ² I will praise the LORD while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. ³ Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. ⁴ His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish. ⁵ How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God, ⁶ Who made heaven and earth, The sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever; ⁷ Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free.

Moses asks God to see his glory (Ex. 33:18)—his magnificence. Ex. 34:6-8**

⁶ Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; ⁷ who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” ⁸ Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.

-

Psalm 16: ⁴The sorrows of those who have bartered for another *god* will be multiplied; I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, Nor will I take their names upon my lips.

1 John 5: ²¹Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

Rom. 1:18-32 ...²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

EXAMPLE

-

Ps. 16:1,8 (above)

cf. Psalm 46: ¹For the choir director. *A Psalm* of the sons of Korah, set to Alamoth. A Song. God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;

How do we learn about God?

How can we find accurate information about who God is and what he is like? There are only two options:

- SPECULATION:

EXAMPLE:

- REVELATION:

GENERAL REVELATION:

SPECIAL REVELATION:

General Revelation	Special Revelation

- **What can be known from general revelation?**

Romans 1: ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Rom. 1:19, 20 says that from creation, we know that God is:

○

○

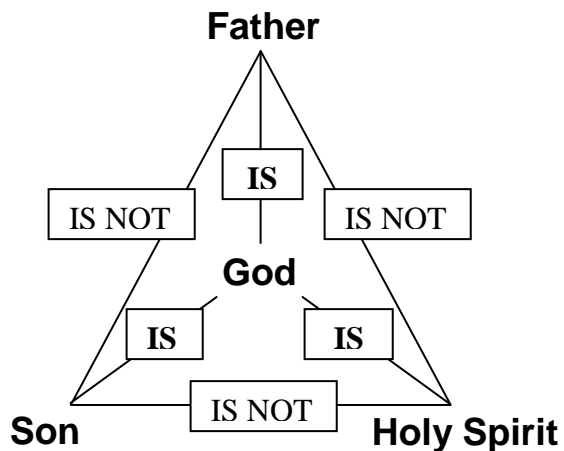
○

Romans 2:¹⁴ For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them

Note: *General revelation contradicts many of the central tenets of other religions.*

Note: Christians disagree whether general revelation is sufficient for a saving knowledge of God.

The unity & diversity of God



- Many biblical passages teach the unity and diversity of God:

UNITY:

Deut. 6: ⁴ "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

Isaiah 45: ⁵ "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me;

DIVERSITY:

Old Testament:

Gen. 1:26,27** ²⁶ 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." ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 2: ²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Isaiah 48: ¹²“Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. ¹³“Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together. ¹⁴“Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; he will carry out His good pleasure on Babylon, And His arm *will be against* the Chaldeans. ¹⁵“I, even I, have spoken; indeed I have called him, I have brought him, and He will make his ways successful. ¹⁶“Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit.”

New Testament:

Matthew 28: ¹⁹“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

- Why is the Trinity important?

The Trinity resolves the tension between God’s love and his self-existence.

John 17: ⁵“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. ²²“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;...²⁴“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

The Trinity provides a basis for personal love relationships.

The Trinity provides the basis for unity and diversity in human community.

The Attributes of God

“Attributes” means “characteristics.”

Common

Unique

- **Loving**

Definition:¹

Scriptural Evidence:

1 Jn. 4: ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ¹⁶ We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

(Isaiah 30:18-21;49:14-16)

Applications:

(1 Jn. 4:10)

(Rom. 5:6-8)

(Heb. 12:4-11)

(Rom. 8:15).

(Rom. 12:2)

- **Righteous**

Definition:

¹ God’s love does not erase his other attributes—such as his righteousness and justice. Because God is loving, he satisfies the demands of his righteousness through Jesus’ death on the cross—so that he can remain just, yet justify sinful people who believe in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

Scriptural Evidence:

Mark 10: ¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

(Job 34:10; Hab. 1:13)

Applications:

(2 Cor. 5:21).

(Rom. 14:17; 2 Cor. 3:18)

(1 Thess. 3:12,13)

- **Just**

Definition:**Scriptural Evidence:**

Rom. 2: ¹ Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ² And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. ³ But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴ Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

(Gen. 18:25; Ps. 19:9)

Applications:

(Romans 3:25-26)

(1 Jn. 1:9-2:2).

(Rom. 12:14,17,19)

(Eph. 4:32)²

- **Omniscient**

Definition:

Scriptural Evidence:

Ps. 147:⁵ Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.

Isa. 40:28

Applications:

(Heb. 4:12-16)

(Ps. 139:23,24)

- **Omnipresent**

Definition:

Scriptural Evidence:

Ps. 139:⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

Applications:

(Jn. 4:21-24; Heb. 10:19-22)

(Col. 3:17)

² Legal/civil justice is valid, but it is always partial and imperfect, and left to the civil authorities to execute (Rom. 13:4).

- **Omnipotent**

Definition:³

Scriptural Evidence:

Gen. 18:14 “Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

Genesis 28:3 “May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.

Applications:

Even though we are sinful...

Even though we are weak...

(2 Cor. 3:6; 12:10; Phil. 4:13).

Even though Satan is more powerful than us...

(1 Jn. 4:4)

- **Sovereign**

Definition:

Scriptural Evidence:

Psalms 24:¹ ...The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. ² For He has founded it upon the seas And established it upon the rivers.

(Gen. 14:19; Acts 17:24-28)

³ God cannot do things that are logically impossible (e.g. make a square circle), violate his own character (e.g. act cruelly, fail to do what he has promised, etc.), or undo the past (though he may release us from its consequences and even the memory of it).

Applications:

(1 Cor. 6:19,20)

(Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28)

(Eph. 1:9,10)

- **Immutable**

Definition:⁴

Scriptural Evidence:

Heb. 13: ⁸ Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.

(James 1:17; 1 Sam. 15:29)

Applications:

(EG. Rom. 8:1)

(Psalms: “God is my Rock;” Heb. 13:5,6,8).

- **Veracity**

Definition:

⁴ God does changes in his emotional reactions. He also introduces changes in his redemptive program.

Scriptural Evidence:

Heb. 6: ¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

(Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2; 2 Tim 2:13)

Applications:

(Jn. 17:17)

(Heb. 13:5,6,8; 2 Tim. 2:13)

- **Self-Existent**

Definition:**Scriptural Evidence:**

Ex. 3: ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

(Jn. 8:58; Isa. 40:28; Acts 17:25)

Applications:

(Gen. 3:6; Isa. 14:14)

God does not need us

Our prayers cannot

- **Infinite**

Definition:**Scriptural Evidence:**

Ps. 90: ² Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Applications:

(Heb. 10:10,14)

(Eph 2:7); (Rom 11:33)

Memory Verses

Ex. 34:6-8** - God's character is awesome and worthy of worship. God is both just and merciful in his dealings with humans.

Gen. 1:26,27** - God exists as more than one Person.

Assignment

Phil. 2:1-13 (due next week)

1. Make a brief list of the imperatives.
2. How do they relate to us having an evangelistic lifestyle?
3. What are the key indicatives that we should trust in order to live this way?

The Church Visitation assignment (see handout) is due the 6th week of class if you are taking module 1 only or the 10th week of class if you are taking modules 1 and 2.