

# Xenos Christian Fellowship Christian Principles Unit 1 Foundations of Spiritual Growth

## Week 2: Theology Proper

### Introduction

#### Definition:

### The Practical Importance of Theology Proper

- 

#### Moses' request:

**(Ex. 33:18-19)** Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you;

**(Ex. 34:6-8\*\*)** 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) And Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.

- 

- 

### Contrasting Views of God

- **Monotheism** (also called "theism"):  
There is one infinite-personal-righteous God. This view of God is found only among religions which are based on the Bible. Judaism and Islam are both monotheistic, but differ from Christianity in many important areas. In this system, man's dilemma is true moral guilt before a righteous God. Our guilt requires cleansing or forgiveness.

- **Deism:**  
Deists recognize that a Supreme Being exists who created the universe, but view him as uninvolved with human affairs. Deism was an 18th century way-station between theism and atheism. Many Americans are still practical deists.
- **Atheism:**  
No God exists. Reality is confined to that which can be empirically verified. This view is also called "naturalism," emphasizing its denial of the supernatural. This is a very recent world-view and it undergirds much western scientism.
- **Animism:**  
Spirits inhabit animate and inanimate matter. They are the cause of most good and ill fortune, and humans must placate them or control them to succeed in life. Most tribal religions (including Native American spirituality) is animistic. Most animism is occultic in the sense that humans can control the spirit world through attaining certain knowledge, sympathetic ritual, etc. Man's problem: placating and controlling the spirits. Solution: ritual sacrifice, occultism, sympathetic magic, etc.  
Note: Anthropological research suggests that human religions evolved from belief in a single creator God to animism (see *Eternity in Their Hearts*, by Richardson)
- **Polytheism:**  
There are many personal (but not infinite) gods. The Greek and Roman pantheons are well-known examples of polytheism. This belief appears to be a projection of human characteristics (including limitations and character flaws). The gods are personal yet finite anthropomorphic projections of fallen humanity.
- **Pantheism/monism:**  
God is the impersonal life-force that permeates the world. God is infinite, yet impersonal. Ultimate reality is oneness; all distinctions (including persons) are illusory. Classical Hinduism and Buddhism are well-known examples of pantheism. Western notions of the ultimate state in pantheistic religions are often mistaken. Nirvana (Buddhist) and Moksha (Hindu) are not personal, conscious states of bliss but a loss of individual personality when we are merged with the all.
- **Dualism:**  
Ultimate reality is equal opposing forces or persons. Dualism recognizes the moral and personal distinctions that pantheism denies, but elevates them to ultimate reality. For example, Zoroastrianism (Ahriman and Ohrmazd were opposing persons). Some people think of Christianity this way with Satan and Jesus as the equal and opposing persons. Taoism's yin and yang, and Star Wars' "The Force" are examples of theological dualism. The problem in Dualism is imbalance between forces and the solution is balancing forces. We see this today in some forms of Alternative medicine in which the medical problem is thought to center on an imbalanced energy field (Therapeutic Touch, Ayurvedic Medicine).
- **New Age:**  
A combination of pantheism, animism, dualism, occultism and western individualism. Problem: we don't realize we are God or God's. Solution: Realize you are God and create your own reality. Read Jame Sire's, *The Universe Next Door*, for more information on this. Note: An ecological spirituality often flows out of animism and pantheism. As Christians, we understand the need to respect and value our environment as God's precious creation which he gives us stewardship over. In some cases, we will need to refute the misconception that the Bible justifies our destruction of the environment for our selfish gain.
- **Post-modernism:**

Ultimate reality is purely a matter of individual/social perception. There is nothing "out there" independent of human/social construction. Therefore, western monotheism and eastern pantheism, though logically contradictory, are mutually "true" in the sense that they are the paradigms through which different society's construct reality. It should be obvious why this view is more sympathetic to eastern religions (which assert that all religions are imperfect attempts to describe ultimate reality)--both deny the ability to have "the truth" about God and reject the law of non-contradiction.

Remember: You will probably not meet people who are purists in any of these areas--but you'll hear hints of many of these views in what they say. Part of our job as evangelists is to help people sort through and understand their own beliefs and see key ways the biblical world view is different.

## The Self-Revelation of God:

### Speculation:

### Revelation:

General Revelation	Special Revelation

## What can be known about God from general revelation?

**(Rom. 1:19,20)** ...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. 2:14,15)** 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:**

**What are the limitations of general revelation?**

- 
- 

**Special Revelation: The Unity & Diversity Of God**

**What is meant by the “trinity?”**

- 
- 
- 
- 

We use analogies to try to understand and illustrate the tri-unity of God. Bear in mind that these analogies are limited--they tend to emphasize either God's unity or his diversity.

- **Diagram**
- **Other Illustrations**

## Scripture's emphasis on the *unity* of God

**(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; apart from me there is no God.

**(1 Timothy 2:5)** For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

**(James 2:19)** You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

## Scripture's emphasis on the *diversity* of God

**(Genesis 1:26,27)\*** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**(Joshua 5:13-15)** Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" (14) "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" (15) The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

**(Matt. 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 Attributes of God

### Omniscient (unique)

#### Definition:

#### Scriptural Evidence: (Ps. 147:5; Is. 40:28)

(Psa. 147:5) Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

#### Application:

### Omnipresent (unique)

#### Definition:

#### Scriptural Evidence: (Ps. 139:7-10)

(Psa. 139:7-10) Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? (8) If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. (9) If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, (10) even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

#### Application:

### Omnipotent (unique)

#### Definition:

#### Note:

**Scriptural Evidence:** (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17). "Almighty God" (El Shaddai)

**(Jer. 32:17)** "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

**Application:**

**Sovereign (unique)**

**Definition:**

**Scriptural Evidence:** (Gen. 14:19; Acts 17:24-28; Ps. 24:1ff)

**(Acts 17:24-28)** "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. (25) And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. (26) From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. (27) God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. (28) 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

**Application:**

**Loving (common)**

**Definition:**

**Note:**

**Scriptural Evidence:** (1 Jn. 4:8,16)

**(1 Jn. 4:8,16)** Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love . . .(16) And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

**Application:**

**Righteous (common)****Definition:****Scriptural Evidence:** (Mk. 10:18; Job 34:10; Hab. 1:13)**(Hab. 1:13)** Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.**Application:****Immutable (unique)****Definition:****Note:****Scriptural Evidence:** (Heb. 13:8; James 1:17; 1 Sam. 15:29)**(1 Sam. 15:29)** He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.**Application:****Veracity (common)****Definition:****Scriptural Evidence:** (Heb. 6:18; Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2; 2 Tim 2:13)**(Heb. 6:18)** God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.**(Titus 1:2)** . . . a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time . . .**Application:**

## Self-Existent (Unique)

### Definition:

**Scriptural Evidence:** (Ex. 3:14; Jn. 8:58; Is. 40:28; Acts 17:25)

**(Ex. 3:14)** 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.'"

### Application:

## Just (Common)

### Definition:

**Scriptural Evidence:** (Rom. 2:2,5; Gen. 18:25; Ps. 19:9)

**(Rom. 2:2,5)** Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth . . . (5) But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

**(Gen. 18:25)** Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

### Application:

### Note:

## Eternal

### Definition:

### Scriptural Evidence:

(Psalm 90:1-12) - Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

90:3 Thou dost turn man back into dust, And dost say, "Return, O children of men." 4 For a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night...

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.

### Application:

## 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

**Read Gen. 3, 4, 6, 9, 11 and answer the following questions in the form of a table (see example):**

1. Choose five examples of the sinfulness of human nature in these chapters. Supply the references (chapter and verses) where the examples occur AND give a brief *description* of each one.
2. For each citation from above, provide an example from society.
3. Then provide a personal example.

Scripture	Description of sin	Example in society	Personal Example