

Theology Proper (Biblical Teaching on the subject who God is)

Introduction

- The greatest of all the studies

- Theology Proper

- Can we know God?
 - God is incomprehensible

 - God is knowable

- What is the source of true knowledge?

I. Who is God? What is He like?

- A. Definition: "God is the infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support and end." A. H. Strong

1. God is . . . (Genesis 1:1)

2. God is Spirit (John 4:24)
 - a. Life
 - b. Personality
 - c. Unity of being
 - d. Tri-unity

3. God is infinite: He possesses . . .
 - a. Eternality
 - b. Self-existence
 - c. Immutability
 - d. Immensity
 - e. Omnipresence
 - f. Omniscience
 - g. Omnipotence
 - h. Sovereignty

4. God is perfect: demonstrated in His moral attributes
 - a. Holiness (Righteousness and Justice)
 - b. Truth (faithfulness)
 - c. Love (Grace, Mercy and Goodness)

5. God is the source of all things (His work of creation)
6. God is the support of all things (His work of preservation and providence)
7. God is the end of all things (His eternal purpose is to bring glory to Himself)

B. Biblical descriptions of God

1. God is Spirit (John 4:24)

2. God is a Consuming Fire (Hebrews 12:29)

3. God is Light (1 John 1:5)

4. God is Love (1 John 4:16)

II. The Existence of God

A. The basic assumption of Scripture (Genesis 1:1)

B. The bold statement of Scripture

1. Old Testament: Psalm 14:1; Psalm 53:1

2. New Testament: Romans 1:18-23

C. The argument from human reasoning

1. The evidence of intuition

2. The evidence of creation
 - a. The Cosmological Argument

 - b. The Teleological Argument

 - c. The Anthropological Argument

III. The Nature of God (God is Spirit)

A. The essence of God's nature is spirit

1. God is invisible
 - a. Scripture

- b. Visible manifestations of God

2. God is incorporeal
 - a. Scripture

- b. Verses that speak of God's body

B. God is Life

1. Scripture

2. Concept

C. God is a Person

1. Definition of personality, "Personality exists where there is intelligence, mind, will, reason, individuality, self-consciousness and self-determination." W. Evans in his book *Great Doctrines of the Bible*

2. Psychology of personality

3. Self-consciousness and Self-determination

4. Scripture

D. Unity of Being

1. Statement of Scripture

a. Deuteronomy 6:4

b. John 17:3

c. 1 Corinthians 8:4

d. Ephesians 4:5-6

e. 1 Timothy 1:17

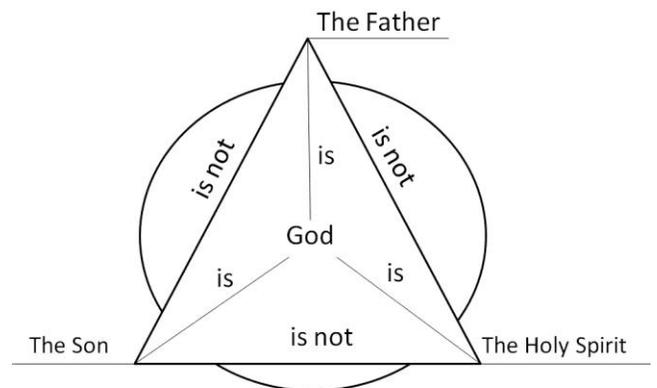
2. The concept

IV. The Triune nature of God

A. Concept and definition

1. Concept

Chart on the Trinity:



2. Definition: Within the nature of the One True God there are three distinct, persons that are revealed in the Bible as coequal and coeternal in their deity: The Father, The Son & The Holy Spirit.

3. Why do we believe this doctrine?

B. Revelation of the Triune God

1. Old Testament intimation

a. The Old Testament name of God "Elohim"

b. God speaks of Himself in the plural (Genesis 11:7)

c. The Bible declares that Jehovah has a Son.

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

d. The Spirit of God is distinguished from God

e. The Angel of Jehovah

i. The titles of the Angel of the Lord

ii. He is identified as Jehovah and God

iii. He is identified as separate from Jehovah

iv. Jesus is identified as both Jehovah and God and also distinct from Jehovah at the same time

2. New Testament revelation

a. How was the Trinity revealed?

i. The New Testament teaches that there is only one True God

ii. In the New Testament three persons appear and each is recognized as God

iii. Jesus, the Son of God, reveals the Triune God.

b. The Baptism of Jesus the Son of God

c. The Prayer of Jesus the Son of God (John 14:16, 17)

d. The Command of Jesus regarding Baptism of His followers (Matthew 28:19)

e. The revelation of God from His Throne (Revelation 5:5-7)

i. The One who sits on the throne.

ii. The One who takes the scroll out of the right hand of the one who sits on the throne.

iii. The One who is the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 5:6; 4:5)

f. The teaching the Apostle Peter

i. 1 Peter 1:1-2

ii. 1 Peter 3:18

g. Apostolic greetings in the epistles

h. Apostolic benediction in the epistles

C. Three Divine Persons

1. The Old Testament makes a distinction between the three.

2. The New Testament distinguishes each person of the Trinity from the other.

3. The New Testament reveals that each is Divine.

D. Three Eternal Persons

E. Three Equal Persons

F. Conclusion

1. Negative considerations

- a. The Trinity is not merely functional or “Modalism.” In AD 250 Sabellius taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were just different *manifestations* of the the one True God. This is the heresy of Modalism. This type of thinking considers God play acting in different roles.
- b. The Trinity is not Unitarianism. In A.D. 325 Arius taught that the Father was the only eternal, divine being. He taught that Jesus, the Son, was the first created being and that he was called God because He possessed divine powers. He taught that the Holy Spirit was also created.

2. Positive considerations

- a. The expression of God as Triune gives us the correct, biblical understanding of Who God Is. It helps us to see that God is truly Supreme and independent and self sufficient. Two examples are given:
 - i. God does not need creation to demonstrate His love. God expresses perfect love and union within Himself (John 17:24).
 - ii. God’s glory is shared in common by the three persons of the Godhead (John 17:5; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- b. The expression of God as Triune gives us the full picture of the work of God in creation and redemption. A fuller consideration of this will be seen later in our study as we consider the works of God.

V. God is Infinite (God's non-moral attributes)

A. Introduction

1. Definition of an attribute

- a. An attribute of God is something that we know to be true about God because He has revealed it to us.
 - i. Each of the attributes of God describes something that is true about God.
 - ii. His attributes are often called His perfections. An attribute is not a character trait or an ability of God. The attributes are not component parts that make up God. Each attribute describes the entirety of God's being.
 - iii. All of God's attributes are true of Him at all times in perfect harmony. As we shall see, God does not change from one attribute to another as man might change from one emotion to another. God works in various ways at various times to accomplish His will all the while in perfect harmony of expression of who He is!
- b. As we discuss the attributes of God we are looking into those things that God has revealed to us about Himself. God is infinite and it then follows that there may be more attributes or truths about God that are not revealed to us. We must be careful not to limit God by our human understanding.
- c. God has used three modes of revelation to express the knowledge of Himself.
 - i. Creation
 - ii. The written Word of God
 - iii. The living Word of God (Jesus)

2. The infinity of God

- a. Infinity means without limit of time, space and/or matter.
- b. When we speak of the infinity of God, we mean that God is beyond the realm of time, space and matter because He has created all of these. God is without limit or bounds.
- c. Scripture: Psalm 145:3
- d. God is the creator of the universe and is therefore separate from it. God is free and exists apart from the universe that He has created. God is greater than the universe. The universe has limits, but God has no limits.
 - i. Pantheism wrongly teaches that god is in everything. According to Pantheism god and nature are equal they are one and the same.
 - ii. Panentheism wrongly teaches that creation is inside of God. This new doctrine is a modern day attempt to blend together New Age teaching, that god is nature and that nature is god, with the God of the Bible.

B. His attributes: God is infinite

1. Eternality

a. Definition

- i. Eternality is infinity in relation to time. Time (as we reckon it in our physical world) came into existence when God created the universe.
- ii. God has no beginning, and He has no end. God did not come into existence. He has always existed, and He always will exist.
- iii. God is not bound by the limits of time. He exists eternally in the present.

b. Scripture

i. Psalm 90:2

ii. Genesis 21:33

iii. Daniel 7:9

iv. Revelation 1:8

2. Self Existence

a. Definition

- i. Since God has no beginning and He has no end, it is His nature to exist. God does not exist because He wills to exist. It is the very nature of God that He is existence.
- ii. God does not depend on His creation for His existence. He is free from His creation in relation to His existence. On the other hand, His creation depends completely upon Him for its existence. Apart from God creation would cease to exist (Psalm 104:2-30; Colossians 1:16-17).
- iii. God is life

b. Scripture

i. Exodus 3:14

ii. John 8:58

3. Immutability

a. Definition: God is unchangeable and so He is unchanging.

i. All of God's creation changes, but God does not change.

ii. Since God is infinite, He is perfect. It is impossible for God to change to be any better than He is for He is perfect. God does not develop; there is no growth within His being.

b. Scripture

i. Malachi 3:6

ii. James 1:17

iii. Hebrews 1:10-12

c. The LORD does not change

i. His plans and purposes (Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 46:9-10)

ii. His promises (1 Kings 8:56; 2 Corinthians 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:13)

iii. Nature (His attributes)

d. Scriptural considerations

i. The Lord repents/ The Lord does not repent

a) The Lord does Not repent (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Psalm 110:4)

b) The Lord repented
(Genesis 6:6; Exodus 32:14; 2 Samuel 24:16; Jonah 3:10)

c) Answer to the dilemma

- The meaning of the Hebrew word translated repent

- The God ordained principle by which He deals with man

ii. The incarnation of Christ

4. Immensity

a. Definition: God is not limited by time or space.

i. The immensity of God refers to the infinity of God in relation to time and space.

ii. God is not limited by time or space. Man is limited by both. God created both time and space and is not bound by either of them.

b. Scripture

i. 1 Kings 8:27

ii. Isaiah 57:15

iii. Jeremiah 23:24

5. Omnipresence

a. Definition: God is everywhere present in the entire universe. God is present in every place of His creation at every time and at all times.

b. Scripture

i. Psalm 139:7-10

ii. Jeremiah 23:23

iii. Acts 17:27

c. Positive considerations

d. Negative considerations

e. Blessed reality of the Omnipresence of God

6. Omniscience (this includes the Wisdom of God)

a. Definition:

i. Omniscience: God knows all things whether real or potential in one act of knowing.

ii. Wisdom: The special knowledge of God for the purpose of accomplishing the highest goal or the best in all that God does.

b. Scripture: Omniscience

i. Psalm 147:5

ii. Isaiah 40:13-14

iii. Isaiah 46:10

iv. Matthew 10:30

c. Scripture: Wisdom

i. Psalm 104:24

ii. 1 Timothy 1:17

iii. Revelation 5:11-12

d. The nature of omniscience

i. It is eternal

ii. It is immediate

iii. It is simultaneous

iv. It is clear

v. It is true

vi. It is complete

e. The scope of omniscience

i. God knows Himself and only He can know Himself

ii. God knows all that exists

iii. God's knows all that is possible

iv. God knows the future

f. The application of omniscience

i.

ii.

iii.

7. Omnipotence

a. Definition

i. God has all power; His name is the Almighty (Genesis 17:1)!

ii. God is able to do all that He wills to do; His power is infinite.

b. Scripture

i. Psalm 62:11 (Revelation 4:5)

ii. Romans 1:20

iii. Ephesians 1:19

iv. Revelation 19:6

c. The Divine prerogative of Omnipotence

i. The Lord does whatever He pleases to do (Psalm 115:3).

ii. The Lord is able to do the impossible (Genesis 18:14).

d. The limitation of Omnipotence

i. God cannot do that which is contrary to His nature.

ii. God does not exercise all of His power in doing His will. His power is infinite; it is without limit. It is never exhausted!

iii. Human free will is not excluded because God is Omnipotent. He allows man to exercise his free will by exercising His Omnipotence in a demonstration of wisdom and mercy and justice and grace. All mankind will one day bow down and worship God yielding their will to God's will (Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26)

e. Practical application

i. God's care for His own

ii. God can stop evil at any time.

8. Sovereignty

a. Definition – God is the supreme authority in all of His creation; He is over all.

b. Scripture

i. Revelation 19:6

ii. Psalm 103:19

iii. Daniel 4:25, 35

iv. Romans 9:20

c. The basis for the sovereignty of God

i. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; He is infinite and eternal.

ii. Creation is completely dependent upon God (Romans 11:36)

d. Perceived objections to the sovereignty of God

i. The existence of evil or sin

ii. The free will of man

e. Reality of The sovereign God

i. For the believer

ii. For the unbeliever

VI. God is Perfect (God's moral attributes)

A. Introduction

1. The attributes of God that are *infinite* express the nature of God in a *quantitative* manner. God is without limit!
2. The attributes of God that are *moral* express the nature of God in a *qualitative* manner. God is complete without flaw. He does not lack for anything and in Him there is no imperfection!

B. His attributes: God is Perfect

1. Holiness

a. Definition

- i. God is absolutely pure! He is complete and free from any sin.
- ii. The word holy in both the Old and New Testaments carries with it the idea to separate or to set apart. God is set apart from all else and He is set apart to Himself. Both of these are true at the same time; they are two perspectives of the same truth.
- iii. "He (God) is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is." ~A.W. Tozer

b. Scripture

- i. Isaiah 6:3
- ii. Exodus 15:11
- iii. 1 Peter 1:15
- iv. Revelation 4:8

c. Positive consideration

- i. When we think of the holiness of God, we must think in terms of the positive and not only the negative. Holy is not only the absence of sin or evil or imperfection; it is an energy towards purity.
- ii. Illustration: what does it mean to be healthy?

d. God is holy and this becomes a requirement of all His creation

i. The requirement: Leviticus 10:3

ii. The provision: Romans 3:24; Hebrews 10:22

2. Righteousness & Justice

a. Definition

i. To be righteous is to do that which is morally just and good. Righteousness is the performance of the holiness of God.

ii. Holiness has to do with the intrinsic nature of God. He perfect in His nature and character.

iii. Righteous has to do with the absolute behavior of God. He is just and right in all that He does.

iv. The law of God – God’s law contains the righteous standard that is based on His holiness.

v. God always acts in accordance with His righteous nature. Therefore He is just in all that He does.

b. Scripture

i. Deuteronomy 32:4

ii. Psalm 11:7; 89:14

iii. Acts 17:31

iv. 2 Timothy 4:8

3. Truth

a. Definition

i. God is consistent with Himself.

ii. Truth is that which is consistent with reality or that which does not change from reality (Illustrations).

b. Scripture

i. Jeremiah 10:10

ii. 1 Thessalonians 1:9

iii. 1 John 5:20

c. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)

4. Faithfulness

a. Definition: God always keeps His word.

i. God will fulfill all of His promises.

ii. The faithfulness of God is the expression of His truthfulness. It is very closely related to His immutability. God cannot change so, He is faithful. He does all that He says that He will do.

b. Scripture

i. Isaiah 25:1

ii. Lamentations 3:23

5. Love

a. Definition: that which seeks God's will in the object loved.

i. Love is the seeking of the greatest good for the object loved.

ii. God's love is that which seeks God's will in the object loved according to Dr. Charles Ryrie (Survey of Bible Doctrine pp. 20, 21).

iii. Since God's will is the greatest good for anyone, then the loving thing to do for anyone is to seek God's will for their life.

iv. The greatest good that exists in the direction of God is His glory. Therefore to love God is to seek His glory first and foremost!

v. If we genuinely love God, then we will obey His Word (Deuteronomy 11:1, John 14:15).

- b. Scripture
 - i. Deuteronomy 7:8

- ii. Jeremiah 31:3

- iii. Matthew 22:37

- iv. 1 John 4:8, 16

Introduction: The goodness and grace and mercy of God are expressions of His love.

6. Goodness (The expression of God's Love)

- a. Definition: Goodness is the benevolence or the affection that God expresses to His creation.

- b. Scripture

- i. Psalm 145:9, 15-16

- ii. Matthew 5:45

- iii. Acts 14:17

7. Grace

- a. Definition: God's favor shown to those who are not worthy; they are not deserving.

- b. Scripture

- i. Genesis 6:8

- ii. Exodus 33:16-17

- iii. Ephesians 2:7-8

- iv. Romans 5:20

8. Mercy

- a. Definition: God's withholding of His judgment and wrath that is justly deserved. Our condition is a miserable one and we are wretched, but God withholds His righteous judgment in a demonstration of the tenderness of His nature.

- b. Scripture

- i. Deuteronomy 4:31

- ii. 2 Chronicles 30:9

- iii. Ephesians 2:4

- iv. Hebrews 8:12

VII. The Works of God

A. Creation: The beginning of His work

1. Definition: The act of God to bring the entire universe and all that is in it into existence.
2. Two distinct types of creation
 - a. *Immediate creation* is the work of God to bring into existence all things visible and invisible instantaneously and out of nothing.
 - b. *Mediate creation* is the work of God to bring into existence (shape, form and transform) using materials that are already in existence.
3. Scripture
 - a. Immediate creation
 - i. Genesis 1:1
 - ii. Isaiah 45:12
 - iii. Colossians 1:16
 - iv. Revelation 4:11
 - b. Mediate creation
 - i. Genesis 2:7
 - ii. Genesis 2:19
 - iii. Genesis 2:22

B. Preservation: The continuation of His work

1. Definition: The ongoing work of God to sustain the existence of His creation.
2. God rested on the seventh day and His creation continues to function based on the natural laws that He has ordained. But creation is not eternal or self-existent. All of creation is continually sustained by the act of God.
3. Scripture
 - a. Nehemiah 9:6
 - b. Psalm 104:27-29
 - c. Hebrews 1:3

C. Providence: The continuation of His work

1. Definition: The ongoing act of God to make all things work together for His will and purpose.
 - a. The providence of God is the outworking of His sovereignty.
 - b. God is provident in the affairs of men without contradicting His provision of the free will of man. God brings His will to pass without coercion.
2. Scripture
 - a. God is provident in creation
 - i. Psalm 104:14
 - ii. Matthew 6:26

b. God is provident in the nations

i. Job 12:23

ii. Psalm 75:6, 7

iii. Daniel 4:25

iv. Acts 17:6

v. Romans 13:1

c. God is provident over all mankind

i. Psalm 139:16

ii. Jeremiah 1:5

d. God is provident over the details of life

i. Proverbs 16:33

ii. Matthew 10:30

D. Glorification: The end of His work

1. The final goal of God's creation and providence is His Glory

2. Definition of God's glory

a. God's glory is the manifesting of His attributes. It is the brightness of His excellence displaying His majesty

i. Revelation 1:16

ii. Revelation 4:3

iii. Revelation 21:10, 11, 23

b. God's glory is the expression of praise that brings honor to Him; it is worship.

i. Luke 2:14

ii. Revelation 5:11-14

3. The purpose of God's creation and His providence is His glory.

a. God's creation displays His glory

i. Psalm 19:1

ii. Isaiah 42:8

iii. Isaiah 43:7

b. God created all things that He might receive glory from them.

i. 1 Chronicles 16:29

ii. Psalm 148:13

iii. Romans 15:6

c. God provided salvation that He might receive the glory of the redeemed.

i. 2 Corinthians 4:5-7

ii. 1 Corinthians 6:20

iii. Revelation 5:9

d. God will punish all sin that He might receive the glory.

Philippians 2:9-11

4. God has prepared two special – from among men to bring glory to Himself.

a. The nation of Israel

i. Exodus 19:5-6

ii. Isaiah 43:7; 46:13

b. The church, the Body of Christ

i. Titus 2:14

ii. 1 Peter 2:9