

Theology

The Biblical Study and
Doctrines of God

GOD

(Theology – The Biblical Study and Doctrine of God)

Introduction:

We began our Foundational Doctrine series with **Bibliology**, the study of **The Bible**. That would seem somewhat unintuitive since God was and is at the beginning of everything we know, but we could not really know God without His revealed word. That's not to say we couldn't know some things "about" God, for instance, His existence through all creation. But we need His Word to really know all He wants us to "know" concerning His nature, character, will and plan. And, most importantly, how we may have a personal relationship with Him. Therefore, we began first with the doctrine of **The Bible** as God's written revelation, telling us all we need to know concerning every other doctrine we will study.

But now we must turn our attention to the doctrine of God Himself, which is properly called **Theology** – The doctrine and study of **God**. The question of God's existence is at the core of our very being and all the questions of humankind, such as where did we come from, how did life begin, what is the purpose of life, why am I here, how did our world, our solar system and the universe come in to being? All these questions can only be satisfactorily answered when we deal with the reality of God's existence.

If one can accept by faith the very first sentence in the Bible, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1), then everything else will fall into its proper place. To have an accurate biblical worldview we must begin with God. To this point the writer of Hebrews says, "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him (God), for he who comes to God must believe that He is (exists), and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*" **Hebrew 11:6**

As we begin this important study, pray that God Himself will open your heart and mind to the reality of His existence and establish you in the assurance of His truth. But let's not stop there, let's *diligently seek* to grow in our knowledge of Him to the point that we find we do have a relationship with Him. "*And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD...*" **Jeremiah 29:13-14**

A. How Do We Know God Exists?

Simply put, we know God exists because He wants us to know He exists. If God did not want us to know He exists, He could easily remain anonymous and conceal His presence. But, He does want to reveal His existence to us, and He has done so by what's referred to as General and Special revelation.

1. By General Revelation.

God reveals His existence by general revelation to all mankind through the natural realm of creation and the rational mind of man. General revelation is enough to reveal God's existence and enough of a basis for His judgment but it is limited in that it does not reveal God's will or salvation plan.

a) All of creation and all that can be observed reveals God's existence.

"He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea; He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number." **Job 9:8-10** (Job 38 & 39)

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?" **Psalm 8:3-4**

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day (it) utters speech, and night unto night (it) reveals (His) knowledge." **Psalm 19:1**

"For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth, The LORD God of hosts is His name." **Amos 4:13**

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead," **Romans 1:20**

"Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things (idols) to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." **Acts 14:15-17**

b) Our rational mind and inner conscience tell us God exists.

The Psalmist in **Psalm 14:1** states, "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 53:1)

The Psalmist is clear, it is foolish to deny God's existence or suppress the knowledge of His existence. The apostle Paul states that such a

person has no excuse to deny God's existence and that God's wrath is on that person.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened." **Romans 1:18-21** (also 25-28)

In the end, God's General Revelation through creation provokes the rational mind to consider and accept God's existence.

2. By Special Revelation.

General revelation is limited to the natural and does not reveal God's intentions or plan of salvation. God reveals these more specific spiritual truths to mankind through what we refer to as special revelation.

"But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets..." **Daniel 2:28**

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." **Amos 3:7**

a) In the Past

1) God spoke directly to specific men, for example Moses.

God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations." **Exodus 3:15**

2) God spoke through messengers such as prophets.

"In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD": "Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live." **Isaiah 38:1**

b) In the Present

God speaks primarily through His written word, the Bible. Words empowered by the Holy Spirit, and ultimately the recorded words concerning Jesus His Son, who is Himself the "Living Word" and the "express image" of the invisible God. "For in Him dwells all the fullness

of the Godhead bodily.” **Colossians 2:9**

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person...” **Hebrews 1:1-3**

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” **John 1:14, 18**

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. **1 John 1:1-3**

3. With the Help of the Holy Spirit

As Christians, this special revelation of His recorded word concerning Jesus is received and understood, whether through reading or proclamation, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” **1 Corinthians 2:12-13**

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” **Hebrews 11:6**

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” **1 Corinthians 2:14**

Only a sinful mind blinded by Satan would cause a person to deny God’s existence and reject the Good News Concerning Jesus. The Apostle

Paul said it this way:

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**

B. Who Is God?

God has made known all that He wants us to know about Himself by revelation as recorded in the bible. We must be willing to seek and find what the bible says. Although we can never fully understand everything concerning God, since God is infinite and we are finite, we can know what He wants us to know and we can have a personal relationship with God through Jesus. The bible tells us:

1. God is Spirit.

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” **John 4:24** (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

2. God is the Creator of Everything.

“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.” **Isaiah 44:24** (Genesis 1:1, 2:4; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3)

You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”
Revelation 4:11

3. God is the Author of All Life.

“I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.” **Psalms 139:14-16**

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”
Genesis 2:7

4. God is a Triune God. (Trinity) - Father, Son and Holy Spirit

It is a mystery to our minds, but God is revealed in the bible as three persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Not three

separate Gods but one God, perfectly unified in essence and purpose, a triune God. Many verses speak to this truth.

a) In Genesis chapter 1 and 3 we see plural pronouns used.

“Elohyim” is the Hebrew word translated “God” and is plural.

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” **Genesis 1:26** (Isaiah 6:8; 48:16; 63:10)

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.” **Genesis 3:22**

b) At the baptism of Jesus.

We see Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father all present and uniquely identified.

“Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice (the Father) came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.” **Luke 3:21-22**

c) At Jesus’ commissioning of His disciples.

They are told to baptize in the names of the triune God.

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

d) At Jesus’ explanation of the Holy Spirit’s work.

“But when the Helper comes, whom I (Jesus) shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He (the Spirit) will testify of Me.” **John 15:26**

e) In a triune benediction recorded by Isaiah.

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” **Isaiah 6:3** (Revelation 4:8)

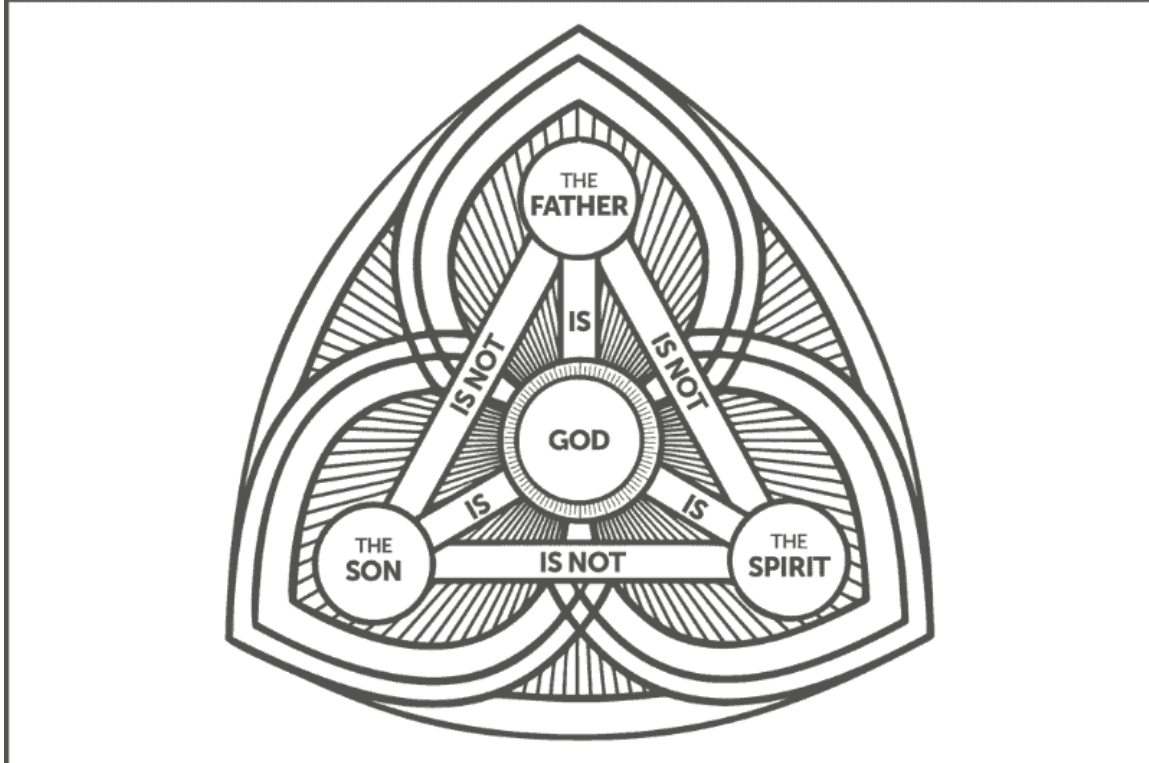
The famous hymn of by Reginald Heber builds on this proclamation.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

The Athanasian Creed states; *the Father is God, the Son is God and the*

Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God.

This graphic seeks to explain the trinity of God.



C. What Is God Like?

The bible has much to say about God's character and attributes. By looking at some of His most notable attributes we will see what God is really like.

Remember that Jesus perfectly displays the Father's character. He said, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father" **John 14:7-9**. Therefore, everything we need to know about God is displayed perfectly in Jesus. He is God in flesh and blood. (John 1:14)

1. God is Loving – God unwaveringly and unchangingly loves us.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." **I John 4:7-8**

2. God is Good – He is kind and full of good will.

"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;" **Psalms 34:8** (Psalm 145:9)

3. God is Gracious – God is inclined to spare the guilty.

"The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy." **Psalms 145:8** (Ephesians 2:8)

4. God is Merciful – He is compassionate and kind.

"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have
compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

Romans 9:15 (Exodus 33:19)

5. God is Faithful – He is unchangingly true.

"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who
keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who
love Him and keep His commandments."

Deuteronomy 7:9 (2 Timothy 2:13)

6. God is Just – He is right and perfect in all he does.

"He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of
truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He."

Deuteronomy 32:4

7. God is Immutable – He Never Changes. God always remains the same.

"For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O
sons of Jacob." **Malachi 3:6**

8. God is Omniscient – He is all knowing and knows everything there is to
know.

"Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I
am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, My counsel
shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure," **Isaiah 4:9-10**

9. God is Omnipotent – He is All Powerful, able to do anything He pleases.

"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of
them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea
together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth
fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

Psalms 33:6-9 (Psalms 24:8; Ephesians 3:20)

10. God is Omnipresent – He is always everywhere and present everywhere.

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, You
are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost
parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand
shall hold me." **Psalms 139:7-10** (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

D. What Should Be Our Response to God?

Even this study's brief glimpse into God's existence and greatness is incredibly humbling. David says: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it." **Psalm 139:6**

So, how should we respond to our knowledge of God?

The bible gives us the answer.

1. Bow in Worship.

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand." **Psalm 95:6-7**

2. Serve with Gladness.

"Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." **Psalm 100:2-3**

3. Proclaim His Salvation.

"Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised; He is also to be feared above all gods." **I Chronicles 16:23-25**

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" **I Peter 2:9**

4. Live Godly and Wait Patiently.

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, (Jesus return) the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. **Titus 2:11-14**

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." **Philippians 2:20-21**

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