

Theology:

The study and doctrine of God

Introduction:

We began our Foundational Doctrine series with **Bibliology**, the study of **The Bible**. That would seem somewhat un-intuitive 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; 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

Therefore, 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 His truth. But, let's not stop there, let's *"diligently seek"* to grow in our knowledge of Him to the point that we will seek and find that we can 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?

1. **Special Revelation.** Simply put, we know that God exists because He wants us to know. If God did not want us to know He exists He could easily remain anonymous and concealed. But, He does want to reveal His existence to us and He does so primarily through His spoken and recorded Word, the Bible and ultimately through Jesus, His Son, the Living Word who is the "express" image of the invisible God.

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

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

Hebrews 1:1-3 "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 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; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person..."

John 1:14, 18 "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."

- a) **As Christians this Special Revelation** is understood and accepted with the help of God's Holy Spirit by faith.

I Corinthians 2:14 "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."

Hebrews 11:6 "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."

- b) **But for non-believers** God manifests His existence through other means.

2. **General Revelation.** Although a general revelation is enough to reveal God's existence and a basis for His judgment, it by itself does not reveal the good news of salvation. Here are some ways God's General Revelation is known.

- a) **All of creation reveals God's existence**

Amos 4:13 "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."

Psalms 19:1 "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." (Roman 1:20)

Acts 14:15-17 "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."

b) **Our rational mind and inner conscience tells us God exists**

The Psalmist in **Psalms 14:1** states, "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 53:1) So the reality is that someone would have to be a fool to even think that God doesn't exist or suppress the knowledge of His existence.

Romans 1:18-21 "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." (Also v. 25 & 28)

c) **Intelligence and design in all that can be observed**

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

3. **Only a sinful mind blinded by Satan** would cause a person to deny God's existence.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 "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."

In the end it is more rational to accept than to reject God's existence. The burden is on the one who would deny His existence to prove their position.

B. Who Is God?

God has revealed all that He wants us to know about Him in the bible. We must simply be willing to seek and find what the bible says. Although we can never fully understand God since God is infinite and we are finite, we can know about Him and have a relationship with Him. The Bible tells us:

1. God is Spirit.

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

2. The Creator of Everything

Isaiah 44:24 "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;" (Genesis 1:1, 2:4; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3)

3. The Author of All Life

Psalms 139:14-16 "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.

Genesis 2:7 "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.

4. **A Triune God** (Trinity) - Father, Son and Holy Spirit

It is a mystery to our minds but the God of the bible is revealed as three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; not separate but one, perfectly unified as the triune God. Many verses speak to this truth.

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

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

Luke 3:21-22 "Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 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."

Matthew 28:19 "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,"

John 15:26 "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."

A triune benediction; Isaiah 6:3 "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" (Revelation 6:8)

As sung in the Hymn of renown by Reginald Heber

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!

C. What Is God Like?

The bible has much to say about God's character and attributes. By looking at some of the most notable of these 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." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 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**

1. **God is Loving** – God unwaveringly and unchangingly loves Us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Romans 9:15 "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." (Exodus 33:19)

5. **God is Faithful** – He is unchangingly true

Deuteronomy 7:9 "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;" (2 Timothy 2:13)

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

Deuteronomy 32:4 “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.”

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

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

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

Isaiah 4:9-10 “Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 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,”

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

Psalm 33:6-9 “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.” (Psalm24:8; Ephesians 3:20)

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

Psalm 139:7-10 “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.” (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

D. What Should Be Our Response to God?

Even this brief glimpse into God’s 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 such knowledge? The bible gives us the answer.

1. Bow in Worship.

Psalm 95:6-7 “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.”

2. Serve with Gladness

Psalm 100:2-3 “Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. 3 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.

3. Proclaim His Salvation

I Chronicles 16:23-25 “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 Peter 2:9 “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;”

4. Live Godly and Wait Patiently

Titus 2:11-14 “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—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.

