

Theology Proper *The Study of God Himself*

Introduction: We established the study of theology as the study of God, His Word, His works, and His will for our life. Theology Proper, however, is the study of God Himself.

God's Name: God's name in the Bible is known as the tetragrammaton (יהוה). Though often pronounced "Yahweh," it is more accurately pronounced "ya-veh." The Jews would not even pronounce His name while reading the Scripture because they felt His name was too holy. Thus, they would use the word for "Lord," Adonai.
(Make mention that Jehovah is not in the Bible).

God has made Himself knowable to us, therefore, we can know about Him and know Him personally.

Two Key Aspects about God:

I. God's Transcendence: God is above and independent of creation.

- A. God is in a whole other category than us (Isa 6:1, 55:8-9).
- B. God is a whole other status than us (Isa 6:3).
- C. God is wholly perfect in goodness.
- D. **Implications:**
 - 1. God is incomprehensible to us (Ps 145:3).
 - 2. We will never be God.
 - 3. We should not be surprised by the possibility of the miraculous if God is truly over all.
 - 4. The only correct response is worship.

II. God's Immanence: God is attentive to His creation. He interacts with us.

- A. Everything is only in existence because of God's activity (Gen 1; John 1).
- B. Everything continues in existence because of God's activity (Acts 7:28).
- C. God cares about His creation, especially humans (image bearers).
- D. **Implications:**
 - 1. God works through "natural laws."
 - 2. We can know something about God from the natural world.
 - 3. Even the unbeliever can have conversations about God because He is near to His creation.
 - 4. The goodness of God in creation should make us stand in awe of Him.
 - 5. God cares for us and dwells within us.

Attributes of God:

Incommunicable: Attributes which are unique to God alone.

1. Aseity / Independence: God is a necessary Being. It is impossible for Him to not exist. He is dependent upon nothing else and is of Himself (Ex 3:14-15; Acts 17:24).
2. Immutability: God never changes (Jas 1:17; Isa 46:8-10).
 1. This does not mean that God is unmoving (Greg Allison).
 2. God is constant and consistent. He always stands true to His word.
 3. He is perfect.
 4. Some will say, “what about when God ‘changed His mind?’” The best answer to that is that it was the use of anthropomorphisms. Others may go to *process theology* which says, “God is always changing and evolving.” That is not true either.
3. God’s Infinity: There are no external limitations on God. Only limitations of His own character.
4. God’s Eternality: There has never been a time when God was not. There will never be a time when He will not exist.
 1. We say that God is above all time, yet works and moves within time.
 2. God is able to see past, present, and future fully, truly, and perfectly, all the time, all at once (2 Pet 3:8).
5. Omnipresence: God is present everywhere, even when we do not know it. He has extensive presence (Ps 139:7-10).
6. God’s Simplicity: God is not composed of parts; He is the fullness of His attributes in His entire being.
7. God’s Spirituality: There is no material component to God. He is uncreated Spirit.

Communicable: Attributes that are shared with His image bearers.

1. Personality: He is a conscious, thinking, willing, relating, sentient Being. He is not impersonal, He relates to Himself (Trinity) and to us (as a person).
2. Knowledge: God is rational, therefore, God is rational since He created us and we are made in His image. How can something rational come from something irrational?
 1. God is perfect in His knowledge. He never has to figure things out or worry about forgetting something (although I do).
 2. Ps 139:1-6; Heb 4:13; 1 Jn 3:20; Jer 38:21; Matt 11:21.
 3. Discuss God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility (open theism, molinism, etc.)
3. Wisdom: “God always wills the greatest goals and the best means to achieve these for His glory and people’s good” (Greg Allison).
4. Truthfulness: God cannot tell a lie.
5. Faithfulness: God keeps His promises.
6. Love: Self-giving nature for another’s good. This is not just a feeling but a reality. He has eternally existed in love. The two greatest commandments deal with love.
7. Goodness (Benevolent Kindness): He works in a way worthy of praise and is the standard of goodness.
8. Mercy: God’s goodness expressed to those who are afflicted.
9. Grace: God’s goodness expressed to those who deserve condemnation.
 1. Common Grace: God’s kindness toward all people as Creator. This does not include salvation. (God causes it to rain on the just and unjust).

2. Special Grace: God's goodness and kindness shown to the redeemed. He shows this to us as our Savior.
10. Patience: God's goodness in withholding punishment.
11. Holiness: God is ontologically holy (absolutely separated from creation; Holy other) and ethically holy (completely without sin).
12. Righteousness: God is the standard for right and wrong and is morally perfect.
 1. **Four Aspects of God's Righteousness:**
 1. Mandatory: Since God is righteous, we are called to be righteous.
 2. Punitive: Since God is righteous, He justly will punish sin.
 3. Redemptive: Since God is righteous, He desires to redeem sinners and reconcile them to Himself.
 4. Remunerative: Since God is righteous, He rightly rewards those who seek Him.
13. Jealousy: God is protective of His honor.
14. Wrath: God judges sin justly (1 Thess 1:10; Rom 1:18; Jn 3:36).
15. Power: God is omnipotent (Isa 14:27; Matt 19:26; Lk 1:37).
 1. "God can do everything which it is possible for Him to do without ceasing to be God, good, and wise. We cannot back ourselves into a corner when we say 'God can do all things.'" - Origen
 2. "It'd be better to say such things cannot be done than that God cannot do them." - Aquinas.

Any questions, thoughts, etc?

Let's pray!