

Systematic Theology
Maranatha Bible Church
Woman's Training Course

Systematic Theology #2

THEOLOGY PROPER
The Existence of God
The Attributes of God
The Trinity
The Decree of God
The Problem of Evil and Theodicy

Theology Proper:

- The Doctrine of the existence and being of God.

I. The Existence of God.

- Two schools of thought concerning the existence of God

- The Presuppositional View.
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- The Evidentialist View.
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- The Presuppositional view is based on their belief on Scriptural assertions.¹

A.) Scriptural Assertions:

Only reliable proof of the existence of the true God.

1.) Proof from the Requirement to Believe in His Existence.

Hebrews 11:7, Psalm 14:1; 53:1, Psalm 10:4.

2.) Proof from the Assertion that God is Eternal.

Genesis 21:33; Deuteronomy 32:40, Psalm 90:2, Isaiah 41:4; Romans 1:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 1:12; Revelation 1:8.

¹ Dr. James Mook, TH 605 *Theology I Class Notes* (Sun Valley CA: The Masters Seminary, 2014), 160.

3.) **Proof from the Assertion of God's Self-Existence.**

Exodus 3:14; 6:3; John 5:26 (life to raise the dead); Acts 17:24-28; Romans 11:36; 1 Timothy 6:15-16.

- The Evidentialist approach is based on natural proofs.

B.) Natural Proofs:

We do not begin with natural proofs; they must align with Scripture.

1.) **The Cosmological Argument.**

This argument argues from the created realm to an ultimate cause for it all.

2.) **The Teleological Argument.**

This argument is an argument from design.

3.) **The Ontological Argument.**

God's existence is proved by man's thought that God exists as the perfect being.

4.) **The Moral Argument.**

Ethical phenomena in mankind, implies a moral being who created and maintains the moral order.

II. The Perfections of God.

Perfections = God's necessary divine characteristics. They are absolutely perfect. Without any of these perfections as perfections, God would not be God.

Essence = The essence of something is what constitutes it intrinsically.

- we cannot divorce God's _____ . Each perfection characterizes God's complete essence simply and eternally.

1. Communicable Perfections:

- Attributes/perfections that have analogy to some extent with God's creatures, specifically humans. These attributes include:

Spirituality and Invisibility

- The perfect lack of material in the Divine essence, because of which God cannot be essentially perceived by physical senses.

Psalm 90:1-2; John 4:24; Romans 1:20; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Colossians 1:15-16)

Wisdom

Job 9:4; 37-38; Psalm 19:1-7; Proverbs 8:22-31; Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 10:12.

Truthfulness

Isaiah 44:8; 45:5; Numbers 23:19; John 14:6

Goodness, including Love, Grace, Mercy and Longsuffering

- God's goodness is His nature as the perfect sum, source and standard (for himself and His creatures) of the wholesome (conducive to well-being), virtuous, beneficial, and beautiful. 1 Chronicles 16:34; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Psalm 34:8; Matthew 5:48; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2 Corinthians 1:3; 1 Peter 3:20; 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Peter 3:9,15; Revelation 6:9-11 Deuteronomy 4:37; Isaiah 43:4; Jeremiah 31:3; Malachi 1:2; 1 John 4:8; John 3:35; John 16:27; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 9:7.²

² John Frame, Systematic Theology: *An introduction to Christian belief*. (Phillipsburg NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 231-256.

Holiness

- Indicates God is absolutely morally separate from sin.
 - _____, Exodus 15:11; Psalm 5:7; Proverbs 30:3; Isaiah 5:16; Mark 1:24; John 17:11; Revelation 4:8.³
 - _____, Leviticus 11:44; Joshua 24:19; Job 34:10; Psalm 5:5; 1 Peter 1:15-16.

Justice (Righteousness)

- God shows absolutely no partiality in judgment. Two categories of God's justice.⁴

Categorization and Scriptural Proof

- A. _____ = This magnifies his absolute legislative moral rule. It acknowledges His place as perfect lawgiver and judge of the entire world. Gen. 18:25, Deut. 4:8; 2 Sam. 23:3; Ps. 50:6; Luke 1:6; Rom 1:32, 2:12; 14-15.
- B. _____ = God's moral rightness executed in the carrying out of the law in distributing reward and punishment. This execution is divided into both aspects as well.
 - 1. _____ = God inflicting punishment for disobeying His Law. Gen. 3:11-19; 2 Chr. 12:6; Dan. 9:4; Rom. 1:32; 2 Thess. 1:8.
 - 2. _____ = God distributing of rewards for obeying His Law. Deut.7:9, 12, 13; Matt. 25:21; Rom. 2:7; Heb. 11:26.

Jealousy

- God's jealousy is his zealous protectiveness of all that belongs to him. Ex.34:14; Ex. 20:50; Josh. 24:19; Ezek. 23:25; Isaiah 42:13; Nahum 1:2; Zech. 1:14.

³ John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An introduction to Christian belief*. (Phillipsburg NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 231-256.

⁴ Dr. James Mook, *TH 605 Theology I Class Notes* (Sun Valley CA: The Masters Seminary, 2014), 171-228.

Will

- God's will is his perfect determination and sovereign ordination of all things, pertaining both to himself and to his creation, all unto the magnification of his glory. **Ps. 135:6; Jer. 18:6; Dan. 4:17, Rom. 9:15-16; Eph. 1:11-12; Luke 22:42; John 1:13.**⁵

What about seeming contradictions?

- God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (**1 Tim. 2:4**). God wills that some be hardened (**Rom 9:18, 22-24**).
- What is the solution these types of issues? To understand this, we need to understand the nuances of God's will.
 - **Decretive will** = (what God causes or allows) The Decretive Will of God is His eternal unchangeable decree in which He has foreordained all things
 - **Preceptive will** = (what God desires for people) The Preceptive Will of God is the will of God for man. This is revealed through his Law (**Exodus 20:1-17**) It is also God's preceptive will for us to be holy, to repent, to love, etc. (**1 Peter 1:16; Acts 17:30; John 13:34**).⁶

2. Incommunicable Perfections:

Perfections that have little to no analogy in creatures.

Independence (including self-existence)

- God is not dependent on anything outside of Himself, He is self-sufficient in every respect. (**Exodus 3:14; John 5:26; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Joshua 7:9**).

Immutability

- God is unchanging in His being, purpose, and promises. (**Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 41:4; Malachi 3:6; Romans 1:23; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8; 1 Timothy 1:7**).

Infinity

- God transcends all limitations of time and space. (**Colossians 1:16; John 1:3**).
 - a.) _____.
 - b.) _____. (**Ch. 2 in The Attributes of God**)

⁵ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Biblical Truth*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 179-188.

⁶ Dr. James Mook, *TH 605 Theology I Class Notes* (Sun Valley CA: The Masters Seminary, 2014),

- c.) _____. God is all present to everyone and everything all the time
(Ch. 7 in *The Attributes of God*).

Omniscience

- God knows all things perfectly. (Psalm 139:1-4; 147:4; Matt. 10:29; 1 Cor. 2:10-11)⁷

Omnipotence

- God is all powerful, He can do anything that is consistent with His nature.
(Genesis 18:14; Jer. 32:27; Job 42:2; Psalm 115:3; Matt. 19:25; 26; Luke 1:37.)

Is there anything God cannot do?

- 1.) _____. (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18)
- 2.) _____. (James 1:13)
- 3.) _____. (Mal. 3:6; James 1:7; Num. 23:19)
- 4.) _____. (2 Tim. 2:13)
- 5.) _____. (Hab. 1:13)

Unity

a.) Numerical Oneness

God is not more than one essence, and there is not more than one Divine essence.
(Deuteronomy 4:35, 6:4; Psalm 18:31; Isaiah 80:14; Mark 12:29)

b.) Simplicity

God's one essence is neither composed of parts, nor divisible. (Jer. 10:10; 23:6; John 1:4, 5,9; 4:24; 14:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16)

III. The Trinity

- There is one essence in the Godhead and this one essence wholly and equally pervades each of the three persons in the Godhead without division or multiplication.
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a. Scriptural Support for Unity and Plurality

⁷ Dr. James Mook, TH 605 *Theology I Class Notes* (Sun Valley CA: The Masters Seminary, 2014), 171-228.

⁸ Todd Dykstra, Notes on The Trinity. From Theology class at Maranatha Bible Church.

Unity

- Unity within the Trinity can be seen clearly in these passages.
Deut. 4:3; 6:4, Isaiah 45:5; 46:9, Mark 12:29, Eph. 4:6, John 10:30; 14:9, Rom. 8:9-10.

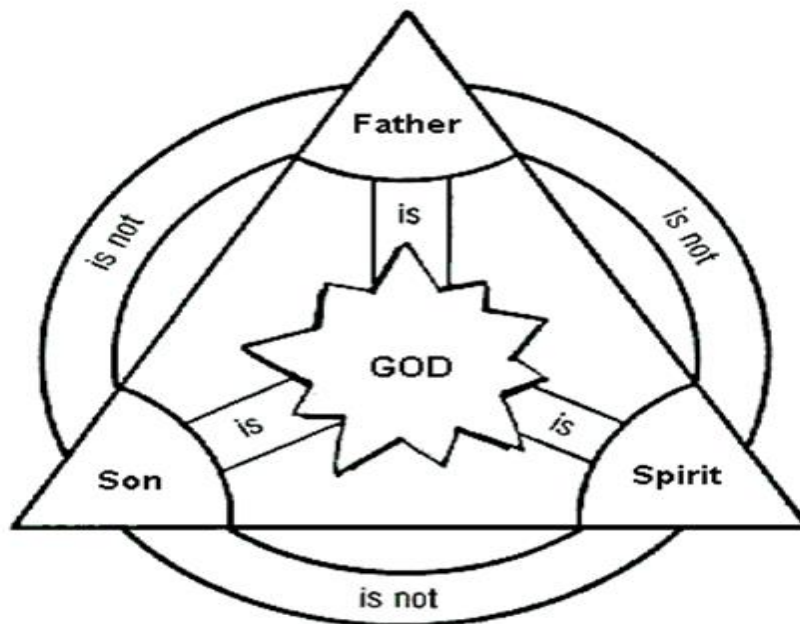
Plurality

Old Testament.

- Plural titles, pronouns, and verbs are used = Job 35:10, Psalm 149:2, Ecclesiastes 12:1, Isaiah 54:5, Gen. 1:26; 3:22, Isaiah 6:8, Gen. 20:13; 35:7, 2 Sam. 7:23.
- God's name is applied to more than one person in the same context = Psalm 45:6; 110:1, Hosea 1:7.
- The name Yahweh is applied to the angel of Yahweh (Theophany) = Gen. 22:11-12, Ex. 3:1-4, Judges 13:17.
- There are passages that suggest that "threeness" is related to the Godhead = Gen. 1:1-2, Isaiah 48:16; 61:6; 63:7,9,10.
- Yahweh is declared to have a Son = Psalm 2:7, Proverbs 30:4.

New Testament.

- The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all called God and associated as equals = Matt. 11:25; John 6:27, Matt. 1:23; John 1:1; 20:28, Rom. 9:5, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Cor. 3:16, John 14:16. Matt. 28:19.



- Scriptures clearly affirm that there is one God, but within the unity of the Godhead, there are three co-equal and co-eternal persons – the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. Some other passages that affirm this include, **2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Matt. 3:16-17, John 14:26; 15:26, Eph. 2:18, 1 Cor. 12:4-6.**

Trinitarian Heresies:

1. **Modalism** (Sabellianism) = Claims that there is one person who appears in three different forms (modes).

- ❖ Old Testament: God appeared as the Father.
- ❖ Gospels: God appeared as the Son.
- ❖ Post-Pentecost: God appears as the Spirit.⁹

- Modalism denies the personal relationship within the trinity thus it must be rejected as heresy. **John 17:22-24.**

2. **Arianism**

- Arias (336 AD) taught that God the Son was created by the Father and thus not fully equal to Him. (Arius was condemned at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Declared the Son to be “Very God of Very God” and of one substance” *homoousios* with the Father). This false doctrine relies heavily on texts that refer to the Son being “begotten” “First born” (**John 1:14; 3:16, 1 John 4:9**).

- 3.) **Tritheism**

- This view holds that there are three different Gods found in the three persons of the trinity.

⁹ Millard J. Ericson, *Christian Theology Third Edition* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013), 304

Breakout Session Questions For Theology Proper

- 1.) Name 4 of the “Natural Proof Arguments” for the existence of God. **Pg. 148-149**
- Do any of them prove the existence of God? If so, how, if not, why not?
 - Can these arguments ever be useful? **Pg. 150**

- 2.) Name the 2 classifications of God’s Perfections. Why are they called this? **Pg. 167**
Why must we be cautious in classifying God’s perfections? **Pg. 167**

- 3.) There are sometimes apparent contradictions found in Scripture.

EXAMPLE:

God wills what man **should** do (Matt. 7:21; 12:50; John 4:34; Rom. 12:2).

But he also wills what man **does** (Psalm 115:3; Dan. 4:17; Rom. 9:18-19).

How can we solve these issues concerning God’s will? **Pg. 187**

- 4.) What are some of the illustrations that have been used for the Trinity and what are there weaknesses? **Pg. 193**