

Bethel Gospel Chapel

Mid - Week Study

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY

This series of studies includes **Theology Proper, Christology and Pneumatology**, three studies dealing with the Person of God. The study will involve the revealed truth in the Bible that enlightens us about the Nature, Person and Actions of the Godhead. This study will be open ended built around the interest, curiosity, and questions of the participants. The leaders will respond to the interaction of the attendees. This handout is an outline of the direction the studies are intended to take.

The responsibility of the attendee will be to read the outline and do the suggested research, making a note of their questions, comments and concerns for class discussion. No time limit is set for these studies, they will begin on October 3rd, 2007 and continue as required to maximize their value to the participants.

Please remember that God can be known but some intricacies of His Being and Person have not been subjects of Revelation. The Bible student will be helped by remembering Deuteronomy 29: 29, *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the Words of this law."*

1 THEOLOGY PROPER

"Theology is a scientific investigation into what may be known of the existence, persons and characteristics of the Triune God." Chafer

The course will be divided into four sections:

- I. The existence of God
- II. The nature and attributes of God
- III. The question of Tri-unity
- IV. The decree of God

□ I. The Existence of God

Two questions must be faced in considering this section:

1. Is there a God?
2. What is God?

1. Is there a God? This question requires the consideration of Natural and Revealed Revelation.

A. Natural Revelation - *is the knowledge of God that can be gained by the study and observation of nature its action and interaction.*

Note - *Be sure you understand the above concept. What are some of the things in nature that might reveal God?*

B. Biblical Revelation - *This term refers to the knowledge of God that is revealed in the Bible and is gained by careful study of the Book.*

Note - *Think about some of the ways God is revealed in the Bible for class discussion.*

2. What is God?

A. The Christian view

“The belief in one personal God, both immanent and transcendent, Who exists in three personal distinctions, known respectively as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the position of Christian Theism. Thiesson

“God is one ... He subsists in a personality that is threefold indicated by relationship as Father , Son; by a mode of being as Spirit and by the different parts taken by the Godhead in manifestation and in the work of redemption. Scofield

*“In the nature of the one God there are three distinctions ... and these three are equal”;
Strong*

Note - *Read the above statement carefully and write down the points, you think, require discussion in class.*

B. The non-Christian view

- 1) Deism
- 2) Agnosticism
- 3) Polytheism
- 4) Pantheism
- 5) Atheism

Note - *Define each of the above terms and be prepared to discuss them in class. If you were to defend the faith to someone who held any of the above “isms’ how would you do it. Prepare to discuss your thoughts in class.*

□ II. The Nature and Attributes of God

1. The Nature of God: The nature of God is that which underlies all outward manifestations.

- A. His Personality - Personality involves
 - 1. Intellect - Psalm 147:5 ,Acts 15: 18
 - 2. Sensibility - John 3: 16, Jeremiah 31:1
 - 3. Will - Psalms 115: 3, Isaiah 46: 10
- B. He is self-existent - Exodus 3:14; cf. Exodus 6:3
- C. His immensity - I Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:24
- D. His eternity - Deuteronomy 33:27
- E. His Spirituality - John 4: 24
- F. His unity - Deuteronomy 6:4
- G. His immutability - Malachi 3:6; James 1:17

Note - *Be prepared to discuss why each of the above characteristics are important to the Biblical revelation of God.*

2. The Attributes of God

An attribute is an essential permanent characteristic without which the possessor could not be what it is, There are both natural and moral attributes to be recognized in God. A natural attribute refers to that which God is in Himself which is not communicable. A moral attribute refers to that by which God reveals Himself. Moral attributes are communicable.

Note - *Be prepared to discuss the differences between Natural and Moral attributes. Why are the natural attributes not communicable while the moral attribute are, be prepared to explain your answer.*

A. Natural attributes

- i. Omnipresence - Psalm 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:23, 24

Note - *Define omnipresence. How is it different that pantheism?*

- ii. Omniscience - Romans 11:33; Psalm 147:5

Note - *What does God know? Think about 1 Samuel 23: 7 - 13 as well as other verses in your answer.*

- iii. Omnipotence - Genesis 18:14; Matthew 19:26

Note - *Think through the implications if God was not omnipotent.*

B. Moral attributes

- i. Holiness - including Righteousness and Justice - Joshua 24:19; I Peter 1:15,16
- ii. Love - including Mercy and Grace - I John 4:8-10; John 3:16; Deuteronomy 7:7

Note - *Think about why all these attributes are essential for God to possess. Be prepared to explain the connection between holiness and righteousness \ justice , love mercy\grace*

III. The Question of Tn-Unity

1. The doctrine stated: In the Godhead, there are three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They are one true, eternal God, equal in power and glory.
2. The Bible's confirmation - Deuteronomy 6:4; Romans 1:7; Colossians 1:2; John 1:1; Hebrews 1:8; Acts 5:3,4

Note - *Examine the above verses and make note of the point to be drawn from them.*

3. Some comments about the Trinity -

Note - *Read through the attached supplement; "Some comments about the Trinity" and note items that you would like discussed in class. Be prepared to enter into the discussion.*

4. The opposition examined
 - A. Unitarianism
 - B. Arianism
 - C. Polytheism
 - D. Sabellianism

Note - *Be ready to discuss these "isms" in class. There are many opposing views to the Biblical doctrine of plurality, discuss your thoughts with the class.*

□ **IV. The Decree of God** (Decree - an official order that has the force of law)

“The decree of God is “the eternal plan of God by which He has rendered certain all events of the universe past, present and future.” Strong

“Divine decree is only another method of assigning to God the position of first cause of all that exists. There is one comprehensive plan in which all things have their place and by which they proceed” Chafer

1. The fact of God’s decree as seen in Scripture , Ephesians 1:11; Ephesians 3:11; Romans 8:28 ; Acts 15: 16 -18; 1 Peter 1: 20 - 21.

Note - *Read the above verses carefully and formulate a statement that brings together what is being taught in them. Be prepared to discuss your statement in class.*

2. The major manifestations of the divine decree

A. Creation - Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3; Nehemiah 9:6; Acts 17:24 -28

Note - *Be prepared to discuss the ramifications if these accounts are denied or misconstrued.*

B. The program of the ages - Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Daniel 2: 31- 45; Daniel 7:1-28; 9:24-27.

Note - *What is being suggested here? Are there other factors in to be considered under this heading?*

C. Preservation - Psalm 36:6; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrews 1:1-3

Note - *Think through the following statement, “ God maintains and completes the objects of creation, so that He can direct them toward the fulfillment of His eternal purpose”*

D. Providence - The unfolding of the divine plan in the affairs of the universe and man.

Note - *Define providence. It is sometimes suggested that providence and fate are the same thing, what do you think?*

E. Prayer and Miracles

Note - *We are inclined to think of prayer as a human exercise, if it is, why is it included under “ Manifestations of the Divine Decree.” Be ready to discuss miracles and God’s purpose for them.*

F. Grace and the Plan of Salvation.

Note - *The Bible teaches that human redemption is part of the original Divine plan. That plan involves God’s hatred of sin and His love for sinners, a Divine sacrifice, a Divine call to repentance through a Divine Gospel. The Bible also teaches that “whosoever will may come--” + John 3: 16, Romans 10: 9 -13, and many other texts invite people to receive God’s offer of Grace in Christ. These two truths have caused endless debate and seem unreconcilable to the human mind. However, there is a plan of salvation, another discussion about it will not settle the question but may allow for thanksgiving to God for that plan and its effectiveness for repentant sinners. So discuss away!*