

Theology Matters

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4. Knowing God's Truth – Part 1

"Nowhere is a mistake more dangerous, nowhere is the search more laborious, and nowhere is the discovery more advantageous."

Augustine, when speaking on the pursuit of understanding God

Big idea: God allows us to know him in relationship so that we may understand him in a lifelong pursuit

Aim: Look at God's incommunicable attributes and the trinity.

*Discussion: What is something that you love that has molded you into who you are today?

Exodus 34:6-7

Framework:

1. Existence of God: How do we know he exists?
 - a. Human inner sense of God
 - i. All people everywhere have a deep inner sense that God exists, that they are his creatures, and that he is their Creator
 1. **Rom 1:21** *"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened."*
 2. **Rom 1:25** *"because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."*



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3. **Romans 1:19** *"For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them."*
 - ii. People deny the inner sense of God and deny that God exists
 1. **Psalms 14** *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.;*
 2. **Psalms 10:3-4**, *"For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."*
 - a. Sin leads us to think irrationally and to deny God's existence, therefore leading us to say "there is no God".
 - iii. Sin causes people to deny their knowledge of God
 1. **Rom 1:18-20** *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."*
 - b. Believing in the Evidence in Scripture and in nature
 - i. Assumed evidence of God exists: Gen 1:1 "in the beginning God"
 - ii. Nature gives abundant evidence of God's existence
 1. **Rom 1:20, Ps 19:1-2** *The heavens declare the glory of God,*
 2. *and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*
 - iii. Man, being made in the image of God, gives witness to the existence of God
 - iv. When we believe that God exists, we are basing our belief not on some blind hope apart from evidence, but on the overwhelming evidence of reliable evidence from God's words and God's works.
 - c. Only God can overcome our sin and enable us to be persuaded of his existence

2. Knowability of God: How can you really know God?

- a. We can never fully understand God: marriage- life long pursuit of a person
 - i. **Rom 1:19**- "what God has shown to them", **Matt 11:27** *"All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."*
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- ii. **Psa 145:3** "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable", **147:5** Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure., **139:7** "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?"

1. 2 Cor 4:4 "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.", **1 Cor 1:21** "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe."
2. This doctrine of God's incomprehensibility has much positive application for our own lives. It means that we will never be able to know "too much" about God, for we will never run out of things to learn about him, and we will thus never tire in delighting in the discovery of more and more of his excellence and of the greatness of his works.

- iii. We can KNOW God

1. **John 17:3** "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.", **1 John 2:13** "I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father."
2. Our invitation is not to have a great knowledge of God but a personal relationship with God and is the greatest blessing in the Christian Life.

3. Incommunicable attributes of God: How is God different from us?

- a. Independence- God does not need us for anything, rather we and the rest of creation can glorify him and bring him joy.

- i. **Acts 17:24-25** "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.", **Ps 50:10-12** "For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine."

b. Immutability

- i. God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently
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in responses to different situations. Also called the immutability of God.

- ii. **Ps 102:25-27** *"Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end."*, **Mal 3:6** *"For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed"*
- iii. However, God's attitude will change as positions change- **Jonah 3**.

c. Eternal

- i. **Psalm 90:2** *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."* **Revelation 1:8** "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
- ii. Therefore God sees all time equally- God isn't held under time.
 - 1. **Psalm 90:4** "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night."
2 Peter 3:8: "But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

d. Omnipresence

- i. Present everywhere- **Jer 23:23-24**: *"Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord."* **Psalm 139:7-10**: *"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, 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."*
- ii. Satan is not these things- Job

e. Unity

- i. God is not divided into different parts, nor do His different attributes conflict with each other
 - 1. **Exodus 20:5** vs **1 John 4:8**
 - a. **Exodus 20:5** *"You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God..."*

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- b. **1 John 4:8** "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

4. Trinity

3 Statements to summarize The Trinity:

- a. God is three distinct persons
 - i. Jesus is not the spirit- **John 16:7** "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."
 - ii. Jesus is not the father- **John 6:44** "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."
 - iii. Father is not the spirit- **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."
- b. Each person is fully God
 - i. Father is God in the consistent representation in the Old Testament
 - ii. Jesus is God- **John 20:28**: "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'" **John 10:30**: "I and the Father are one." **Hebrews 1:3** "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power." **Colossians 2:9** "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."
 - iii. Spirit is God- Matt **28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.", **1 Cor 3:16** Spirit of the Lord dwells in you ""Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"
- c. There is 1 God
 - i. **Deut 6:4-5, James 2:19, Rom 3:30, 1 Tim 2:5**

*Errors in looking at The Trinity:


1. Modalism: claims that there is one person who appears to us in 3 different forms
 2. Arianism: denies the full deity of the son and Holy Spirit
 - a. False teaching #1: Son was subordinate to the father
 - b. False Teaching #2: Jesus lived as an ordinary man till baptism when he "became God"
 3. Tritheism: Denies that there is only one God
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Application:

1. Discipleship doesn't have an end: We can spend our whole lives trying to understand God and never know it all
2. God invites us into a relationship with him so that we can understand him
3. Man's analogies of the trinity will always come up short.
4. Our act of learning to understand God is an act of worship

Homework:

Watch this at home and remind yourself how you are a theologian:

 [Why We're all Theologians — Jen Wilkin and J. T English](#)