

Adonai, Elohim, El Shaddai, Yahweh

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Theology Proper

Almost every theological error, heresy, cult, or false religion starts with a wrong view of God, man, and/or salvation. We will spend the next month looking at the Biblical description of God and what it means to us. In the words of Jesus,

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made.

John 17:1-5 (RSV)

This passage is the beginning of the real Lord's Prayer, the prayer Jesus prayed to the Father on the night He was betrayed. What is often called the Lord's Prayer is actually the Disciples' Prayer, in that it is the prayer used to teach them to pray. In any case, several things jump out, first is the emphasis on God's glory. We will look at this in more detail in the fifth lesson, but it is important to see the importance that Jesus puts on God's glory. We often take for granted going to church and worshiping God. Songs become a formality, Sunday school a nice bonus if we can make it. Jesus puts glorifying God as a primary goal even the night before He is to be crucified!

The second and primary point for us is what it says about eternal life. Eternal life is to know God. The word rendered "know" is *ginosko*, a particular form of *gnosis* or knowledge. It suggests ongoing knowledge, or knowledge that is based on continual personal experience. Eternal life consists of getting to know God better and better. Besides being a great reassurance, in that God is the only one who never disappoints, this has great bearing on the here and now. We do not need to wait till Christ returns, we can start the joy of Heaven here and now by studying, knowing, trusting, and walking with God in the here and now!

Chapter 2

Trinity

The key points of the Trinity can be expressed in 5 points

1. There is only one God.
2. The Father is God.
3. The Son is God.
4. The Holy Spirit is God.
5. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct.

2.1 There is only one God

Deuteronomy 6:4 Shema Yisrael, YHWH Elohim echawd YHWH Listen Israel, the LORD God is one LORD.

Deuteronomy 4:35-39

Note these two passages put book ends on the retelling of the Law. What are the first two commandments? The first command tells us that we are to worship God alone, the second tells us that we are not to make an idol. In other words the first says worship only God and the second says not to twist who He is to our ideas. Or you could say, don't make something else out to be God, and don't make God out to be something else.

2.2 The Father is God

This is almost never debated (atheists and agnostics being the only exception that comes to mind), but correcting error is not the only purpose in studying the nature of God. We should study because we want to know Him.

Read II Corinthians 1:1-4

2.3 The Son is God

Denial of the deity of Jesus is one of the oldest heresies. One of the most famous proponents of this position was Arius, who lived in the 4th century. The Arians swept almost all of the church,

leaving one man Athanasius and a few faithful to fight Arius. An interesting note is that one of the faithful was a man named Lucifer, who was placed in charge of re-admitting elders and preachers who recanted of the heresy. He required them to study and wait till they showed themselves to be faithful before being allowed to serve again, and some in the church felt he was too strict. One who disapproved of the period of probation was Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin. When Jerome came upon Isaiah 14:12, where “Heylel”, literally the Shining-One, appears he put in Lucifer, literally Light-Bearer. Lucifer is not Satan’s name, it is the slandering of a faithful saint’s name. The Arian heresy was ultimately condemned in two councils (Nicea and Orange) and in the two resulting creeds (Nicene and Athanasian). While the heresy was condemned, it is still with us today in the form of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4

2.4 The Holy Spirit is God

In our modern day we have quite a few people who claim to be Christian but they deny that the Holy Spirit is God. They claim that He is an it, specifically that He is a force. The movement is called the Faith Movement, and it is very prominent in “Christian TV”. Leading proponents like Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, and Kenneth Haagen, proclaim that faith is a force, and they speak of the Holy Spirit as the power God gives. Note they do not say the Holy Spirit exercises power in the will of the Father, rather they claim He is the power. This removes the personhood (intellect, volition, etc.) of the Holy Spirit. This is just the start of the problems. Anyway to combat this we have the greatest weapon imaginable, God’s Word!

Read Acts 5:1-11.

2.5 The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are Distinct

The above is still not sufficient to be orthodox. Many take these beginning points and then propound the Oneness Movement’s heresy. They claim that the Father is the God of the Old Testament and He becomes the Son, who leaves and becomes the Holy Spirit. Why is this so bad to believe? Remember the first two commandments?

Read Matthew 3:7-4:11.

I do not use I John 5:7-8 because the phrase “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth” does not appear in any Greek manuscript before the 5th century, and even then it is only in two. It was only added to the Textus Receptus by the rashness of Erasmus, who said that he would add it if a single example could be produced. The second case (from the 16th century, i.e. a recently doctored copy) was produced and Erasmus was obliged to add it. The doctrine of the Trinity does not depend on this, so it is best left out.

Chapter 3

Attributes of God

Any study of God must stay focused on the goal for which we study. We do not have the goal of knowing “about” God, rather we want to know God. The difference is important. Our study must stay aimed at knowing God better not in facts but in personal walk. What we study should be what we think on, pray on, praise about, . . . love! As we go through do not settle for a deeper understanding (or less!), rather put the knowledge into practice to know God Himself more.

Before we get into a more in depth look at God’s attributes we should understand what we mean. The simplest definition I know was given by Dr. Tozer as, “Whatever God has revealed as being true about Himself.” This brings up some important points. The first is that our knowledge of Him comes from His revelation (i.e. the Bible). When dealing with the nature of God it is easy to fall into idolatry - making God out to be less than He is. We must be careful to have Scriptural support for all our statements. Second, God’s attributes are true. We cannot ignore ones we don’t like and get a right picture. We cannot emphasize one over another and have right understanding. We must cling to the truth. Finally, God’s attributes tell us about Him. The character, quality, nature, essence, feelings, etc. of God are His attributes. They uniquely identify Him. It is important to note that since God is His attributes they cannot be in conflict like ours are. My mercy and justice can and often do but heads, but that is because I have them imperfectly. God does not suffer from this because He is perfect in all things.

Below is a list of the attributes of God as covered in the table of contents of some of my favorite books on the attributes of God. I don’t think it would surprise anyone that love appears on all of them. Some of the other common themes deal with the infinities of God (His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, wisdom, . . . ; i.e.: those attributes of God which he has in infinity but which we have in finite).

The attributes of God are typically broken into two categories: incommunicable and communicable. To communicate is to pass something on. If something is incommunicable then it can’t be passed on. Thus the incommunicable attributes of God are those which He alone possesses. The communicable attributes are those which creatures can possess in finite amounts, while God has infinite amounts of them.

3.0.1 Self-existence

Read John 5:17-30. The passage starts with a statement of the equality of the Father and Son. It is in reference to Jesus healing on the Sabbath. The passage quickly goes into a discourse on Jesus’ authority over life. In verse 26 we see an interesting statement,

Jeffery	Pink	Sproul	Packer
sovereignty	solitariness	self-existence	immutability
foreknowledge	decrees	omnipresence	majesty
holiness	knowledge	spirit	wisdom
providence	foreknowledge	knowledge	truth
immutability	supremacy	truth	love
omnipotence	sovereignty	immutability	grace
wisdom	immutability	justice	justice
goodness	holiness	omnipotence	wrath
wrath	power	faithfulness	goodness
love	faithfulness	love	severity
grace	goodness	names	jealousy
patience	patience		adequacy
glory	grace		
	mercy		
	love		
	wrath		

Table 3.1: Attributes of God

Incommunicable	Communicable
self-existence	knowledge (omniscience)
providence	wisdom
immutability	goodness
simplicity	love
adequacy	justice
infinities	grace
independence	mercy
immensity (omnipresence)	wrath
eternality	holiness
solitariness	power (omnipotence)
foreknowledge	truth
supremacy	sovereignty
	patience
	faithfulness

Table 3.2: Communicable and Incommunicable Attributes of God

“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;”.

In the context of life and death, Jesus says that He and the Father have life in Themselves. What does that mean to have life in yourself? This is hard to understand because we do not have it. We are alive but we don’t have life in ourselves. If we are deprived of oxygen, water, or food we will die. We need many things outside us for life, God does not. God needs nothing. God has always been. God will always be. God is. That is the very meaning of His name, YHWH. A name is used to uniquely identify someone. For God the identifier was that He is the one who exists in and of Himself.

Read John 1:1-4. Compare this with Genesis 1:1. Note again that God is before all things. He is not made. He did not make Himself (whatever that means). God always was because He cannot fail to be.

Read Acts 17:22-31. God does not need us. He did not create out of a want of something. If He did not have it, how could He give it to His creation? No. God is self-sufficient.

3.0.2 Immutability

Malachi 3:1-6. Israel was unfaithful. God was announcing the certainty of the coming of Christ. Christ was not going to be easy though. He is Holy, they were not. He was a consuming fire and was going to make it right. Verse 6 gives the assurance of the prophesy: God’s unchanging nature. What does it mean not to change? Let’s discuss a few things.

Hebrews 6:9-20. In the context of the assurance of our salvation we see the reassurance of our souls is based on the immutability of God (here His counsel or purpose, and His oath or truth).

James 1:13-18. God does not have a shadow of turning. This is in the context of temptation and accusing God. James points out that we know God only gives good gifts and He doesn’t change. This passage brings out an important aspect of God’s immutability. It is a safeguard against wrong thinking.

3.0.3 knowledge

Hebrews 4:11-16. No creature is out of God’s vision. God knows our hearts.

John 21:15-19. Peter confesses Jesus knew all things

Isaiah 40:12-17. No one has instructed Him.

Isaiah 46:5-13. None like God. Declares end from beginning.

3.0.4 faithfulness

Deuteronomy 7:1-11.

Lamentations 3:21-36.

II Timothy 2:8-13.

3.1 Sovereignty of God

What does sovereignty mean? We often think of kings and emperors as sovereigns, and in a lesser or conditional sense they are. True sovereignty refers to supremacy in power, authority, and rank

that is effectually utilized. A connotation of this is total independence, which looks to self-existence (covered last time). A true sovereign must be the greatest in three areas:

Rank Looks to the innate or natural superiority of being, i.e.: the fitness to rule. This most strongly points to the self-existence.

Authority The right to exercise rule over others. This implies that it is correct for the sovereign to exert his will over his subjects.

Power The ability to bring about ones will. This looks at the capability to ensure that decisions are enacted.

All this is still insufficient if the one to whom it refers does not act. Someone who is fit, has authority, and power to see the authority carried out but does nothing is not sovereign. Humans can only fulfill this in a relative sense. God is the only one who can and does fulfill it in the absolute. When we say God is sovereign we say that because of who He is, He has the right and ability to reign, and that He exercises that rule in all things. Easton put it this way when defining the sovereignty of God, "His absolute right to do all things according to his own good pleasure."

Read Daniel 4. This chapter contains a great exposition on God's Sovereignty. It starts with a dream given to the most powerful man on the face of the planet. He ruled from Egypt to India. He had all he wanted and no one could restrain his hand. Or so he thought. God told him that he should respect the real sovereign. God said to exercise power as He wanted. God was reminding Nebuchadnezzar of his place. Nebuchadnezzar did not listen. What does Nebuchadnezzar say that God punishes? What really is pride? Pride seeks to deny God's sovereignty over us. Notice the ending condition is Nebuchadnezzar learning that God is sovereign. This clearly points to the violation being a denial of sovereignty - pride. How does this apply to us? Read James 4:11-17. We think of the foolishness of Nebuchadnezzar but are we not also guilty of pride in taking for granted our own ability? Does this mean that we shouldn't plan? No! What does verse 15 say? Basically, Lord willing we will do what we plan. We need to plan but still recognize that God might have something else in mind. James does not say, "God will send me where He wants so I will just see what He wants to do." That sort of passive laziness is not known in the Bible. For instance, Read Romans 1:8-15. Paul planned and prepared and if God chose to do something else Paul obediently went there.

Now let's look in particular at Daniel 4:34-35. Notice first what follows understanding: blessing and praise to God. We must praise God in knowledge, and if we know Him we will praise Him. We are commanded to sing a new song unto the Lord. God is praised by singing of who He is and what He does. When we study about Him we will want to sing for the joy of who He is and what He does. Which will inspire us to learn more of our great God of wonders. Don't miss this. This is a never ending upward spiral of love toward God.

Getting back to the main point I wanted to speak on, look at how Nebuchadnezzar identifies God. He first looks to the eternity of God (lives forever), then he looks at how God's sovereignty is immutable. Let's stop here for a minute. Some who claim to be Christians say that God lost His authority over man or even the earth when Adam sinned. The argument goes that because Adam was granted authority over the earth, and sinned becoming a slave to sin and the devil, then the Devil had authority over man and the earth. The argument continues by saying that Jesus paid the debt on the cross to Satan. This is rank heresy. God had full authority in Nebuchadnezzar's day. God's sovereignty is immutable, thus He cannot lose it or it would be mutable sovereignty.

Nebuchadnezzar realized this. Second, we are described as the slaves of sin in John 8:34 and Romans 6 and 7. But nowhere are we slaves of the Devil. Finally, Jesus went to the cross at God's will, to be punished by God for the debt we owed God. Salvation is a payment by God, to God to redeem us from God's wrath.

Verse 35 has one of the hardest sayings for mankind to hear. Even Christians run from the full weight of what is being said. Three main points can be found in it.

1. We are nothing and count for nothing.
2. God does what He wants everywhere.
3. We cannot stop Him or call Him to account.

Let it sink in for a second. Every fiber of our body screams that we are free and our freedom must be honored. Lets see how this plays out in some scriptures.

Read Job 1. Job feared God. God allowed all Job's children to die and all his possessions to be lost. Job had no right to question.

Read Lamentations 3:37-41. God gives good and evil (referring to good and bad events). Be careful because God does not do evil or tempt us. Read James 1:13-18. We cannot reprove Him.

Read Isaiah 45:5-10. God makes the good times and the bad. We cannot strive with Him.

Read Amos 3:1-8. Do we have any wiggle room?

The part that really gets us relates to salvation.

Romans 9 is one of the hardest passages to deal with, so let's go through it slowly.

1. **Read Romans 8:26-39.** What issue is the apostle taking up? What are we assured of. What is the context of Romans 9?
2. **Read Romans 9:1-5.** What does Paul desire for the Israelites? How deep is his desire? What gifts and kindnesses had God bestowed on them? Would Paul be so concerned if they were saved? What conclusion can we draw as to the state of the Jews as a whole? If God gave them all these signs did He fail? Was it not enough? Was their will to great for Him? Foolishness!
3. **Read Romans 9:6-13.** How does the Holy Spirit through Paul answer this? What does it mean for not all Israel are Israel? Read Romans 2:28-29. How about not all the seed of Abraham are children? Read Luke 3:7-9. What does John the Baptist indicate here? Paul uses two different cases to show the truth of this. Keep in mind the context: the salvation of individuals in a nation (Israel), this is important because many try to avoid what Paul is saying here. First Paul considers the two sons of Abraham, to show there is nothing special about his children. Some Israelites did not consider Ishmael to be an acceptable comparison due to his mother being an Egyptian and a slave. To answer this Paul gives the case of the twins Jacob and Esau. What do verses 11-13 say? Some note that verse 13 quotes Malachi 1:1-5. Note in the Malachi passage that it is a reference to nations not individuals. This is where people claim that Paul is just indicating that God uses some nations specially. If this is the case then no one would be upset. Paul would not be indicating that we have no part in our salvation, rather he would be saying that God picks particular nations to serve Him in particular ways. If Paul meant that we have no part in our salvation, that even the faith and ability to respond is from God then we would feel it to be unfair. That would mean that

all those who don't come were not given the same benefits or chance. The stage is set, how does Paul feel they will respond. . .

4. **Read Romans 9:14-24.** Why does Paul ask the question about the righteousness of God if not that we would cry "foul" and "no fair?" How does Paul answer it? What does verse 16 indicate about the effect of the human will on the salvation of our souls? This is hard for us to take so let's look at another passage to make sure we have it right. Read John 1:1-14. Verses 11 and 12 seem to make us feel we are reading Romans wrong. But what does verse 13 say in explanation. Note what it says about our will. Does a baby will his birth? John is saying that we are the baby, and God the father who willed our spiritual birth. If this were not true you would have had a hand in your salvation and thus it would not be all Jesus. It gets tougher in Romans though. What does it say about Pharaoh? Note some try to escape this by noting that Pharaoh hardened his heart against God as well as God hardening his heart. Note that here Paul indicates that Pharaoh was put there for that very purpose. That is unfair we scream. That can't be right. What response does Paul expect? How does he answer it? Paul indicates that God has the right to do with us as He wills. Is this at odds with what Jesus says? Read Luke 13:1-9. Notice that Jesus does not shy away from the is God unfair questions. How does He answer them? What does the parable of the fig tree say to us? Who gets the credit for salvation? Can God be blamed for all those who don't come? Read Romans 1:16-32. What does this say?

Is this just an anomaly of Paul?

Read John 6:28-71.

3.2 Holiness of God

We have seen much about God so far, but none so highly commended in scripture as what we are about to cover. No passage more fully describes the attribute of holiness than Isaiah 6. We will read it one paragraph at a time.

1. Isaiah 6:1-4 (Triskelion) Only holiness is thrice repeated of God's attributes. It is used to amplify His other attributes (Ps 98:1, Ps 105:42, Ps 145:17, etc.) and His name (Lev 20:3, Lev 22:2,32, I Chronicles 16:10,35, Ps 111:9, etc.).
2. Isaiah 6:5-8 (making holy) Read I Thes 5:16-28.
3. Isaiah 6:9-13 (rejection and the Holy one) Followed by Isaiah 7:14, the Immanuel prophesy. Note an interesting thing contained here. First we see God hardening, blinding, and stopping the ears so they won't repent. Isaiah 6:9-11 is quoted in Matthew 13:14-15, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, John 12:40, Acts 28:26-27, and Romans 11:8. Read Matthew 13:9-19. What does this say about sinners and God's feelings towards them? Read Ps 5:1-6, Ps 7:10-17, Nahum 1:1-8, Hab 1:12-17, Ephesians 2:1-5. What does God think of sinners?

Now let's look at one more passage that covers the idea of holiness in a different perspective. Read Hebrews 12:18-29. Keep in mind I John 1:5-7. The Hebrews passage points out two perspectives of meeting God's holiness. First, the reaction of sinners is seen. Finally the reaction of God's elect is seen.

Only Holy One - Rev 15:4, I Sam 2:2

Light/Darkness - I John 1:5
 Holiness - Ex 15:11, Ps 22:3, Ps 30:4, Ps 89:35, Ps 99:5,9, Ps 111:9
 Beauty of Holiness - I Chronicles 16:29, II Chronicles 20:21, Ps 110:3
 Hating Evil - Hab 1:13, Prov 15:26, Nahum 1:2, Ps 5:5, Ps 7:11, Is 64:6
 Holy, Holy, Holy - Is 6:3
 Holy Attributes - Ps 98:1, Ps 105:42, Ps 145:17
 Holy Law - Ps 19:8-9, Romans 7:12
 Be Holy - Lev 11:44-45, I Peter 1:15-16, I Thes 5:23
 Our Response - Is 6, Rev 1:13-17

3.3 Love of God

The final area we will look at is the love of God. We are all, no doubt, familiar with John 3:16. Young children are taught the song “Jesus loves me this I know”. Probably one of the strongest statements is in I John 4:7-16. Only a few places do we see “God is” statements. John 4 tells us God is spirit- that is it tells us the nature of His being. John 3 tells us God is true, i.e. He does not and cannot lie. Deuteronomy 4 tells us God is a consuming fire and a merciful God. Deuteronomy 6 tells us God is one Lord and a jealous God. II Chronicles 30 tells us God is gracious and merciful. Job 36 tells us God is great and mighty. The list goes on. In them we see that what is described are things which characterize all of God’s actions. There is never a time when God is not true, or not mighty. God is never less than a consuming fire. So what does it mean for God to be love? To understand this we have to keep in mind what love is. Let’s read I Corinthians 13. This was written in the context of chapter 12, people seeking to be exalted by receiving gifts. Paul corrects them and gives a definition of agape - the word for love (charity in KJV) both in I Corinthians 13 and I John 4. You will notice in the Corinthians passage that love is contrasted with tongues, prophesy, faith, charity, and sacrifice in the beginning of the chapter and it is exalted over prophesy and tongues in the end. Why? Love is not an action but a lifestyle. God does all things in love. God created out of love. God saved in love. God leads us in love. God judges in love.

Love is not the weak failing affections that we ascribe to it. In the Bible love is powerful and conquering. Love does not compromise because compromising the truth is not loving. Would it be loving to fail to warn someone you cared about, that they were in danger? What if that person did not want to hear it? Would it be loving then? If all you feel for a person is emotions, and you just want acceptance then you do not love them. The Greeks had four words for love: storge (parental affection), phileo (brotherly love or good friendship), eros (desire and lust), and agape (love not based on the one loved). The Greeks did not recognize the desire for acceptance, that we call love as love, nor should we. The love that we recognize as true love is agape, which to the Christian is love conditioned on God. This brings us to a key area of the Christian walk, how we are to love. I love my wife because God loves me. God’s love cannot change so my love for my wife must not. If my love for her was based on her looks, or her kindness, or something else it could change and my wife would have no assurance. Since my love is based on the unfailing love of God, she has assurance. How can I do what I Corinthians 13 commands? By God’s helping and out of a desire to be like Him and glorify Him. I passionately desire to love like my God so that I may be a good servant, so I passionately desire to to all things in love. This is the Christian walk.

If we desire to love like God then it is reasonable to ask what God loves most. If we want to imitate how He loves, we should want to imitate what He loves, and foremost should be what He

loves most. The answer to what God loves most will probably shock most of you. I have not met anyone whose first answer was correct (including myself), but the real answer has been one of the most life-changing truths I have ever known. What does God love most? God loves God most! Let's look to scripture. In particular we will look at God's love for Himself in John, concentrating only on direct statements.

1. John 3:35
2. John 5:20
3. John 10:17
4. John 14:31
5. John 15:9

This does not even count the times when the Son says it is His food to do the will of the Father (recall that Jesus says those who love Him will keep His commandments). This does not count how the Spirit comes to magnify the son (sign of love), or how Jesus says it is better if the Spirit comes (exalting the ministry of the Spirit). If you think about it, God must love God most. If God loved anything greater than Himself, then since God does all things true, that thing would have to be greater than God. God loves most what should be loved most. We are not to love ourselves most because we are not best. I am not worthy of to be loved as that which is best because I am not best. It would be wrong for me or anyone else to love me above all else because I sin and am not the best. God is best. God is perfect. God deserves to be loved most. It is actually out of the overflow of God's love for Himself that He loves us.

Now let's look at God's love in salvation. Read Isaiah 48:9-15 to see why God says He does things. Now read Isaiah 53. Is this only an Old Testament view (as if such an argument has value)? Look at Ephesians 1:1-14. What we see is a passion of God for Himself that becomes the basis for our salvation. Why does Jesus love us enough to die for us? We are a gift from the Father and Jesus values the gift for the Giver. Why does the father accept us? The beloved Son died for us, making us precious. Why does the Spirit enliven and lead us? He loves the Father who decreed it and the Son who bought us? Why does God not forsake us? The Son's blood and the deposit of the Spirit are too important to be disregarded. Why are we to love each other? Christ died for the brethren! Why are you saved? God loves God. Why can Christians not lose their salvation? God loves God. Why do we love? God loves God.

The love of God for Himself is fundamental to all we do. We are to love God with a consuming passion and thus we will love others. God's love for Himself is not bad because in it He seeks to give what is best, Himself. When we really get a taste of God we want others to know the surpassing Joy of knowing Him and so we witness. The foundation of evangelism is worship. The foundation of worship is love.

Chapter 4

Theophanies

A theophany is when God manifests Himself to men. The biggest case of this is in the life of Christ, God the son, but there are others that are mentioned in the old testament.

4.1 Adam

4.2 Torch at Sunset

4.3 Three Visitors

4.4 At Isaac's Sacrifice

4.5 Burning Bush

4.6 Pillar of Cloud and Fire

Ex 13:21 and Jehovah is going before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give light to them, to go by day and by night; Ex 13:22 He removeth not the pillar of the cloud by day, and the pillar of the fire by night, from before the people. Ex 14:24 and it cometh to pass, in the morning watch, that Jehovah looketh unto the camp of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubleth the camp of the Egyptians, Nu 14:14 and they have said it unto the inhabitant of this land, they have heard that Thou, Jehovah, art in the midst of this people, that eye to eye Thou art seen O Jehovah, and Thy cloud is standing over them, and in a pillar of cloud Thou art going before them by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. Ne 9:12 And by a pillar of cloud Thou hast led them by day, and by a pillar of fire by night, to lighten to them the way in which they go. Ne 9:19 and Thou, in Thine abundant mercies, hast not forsaken them in the wilderness the pillar of the cloud hath not turned aside from off them by day, to lead them in the way, and the pillar of the fire by night, to give light to them and the way in which they go.

Chapter 5

Decrees of God

Question 12: What are the decrees of God? Answer: God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he has, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained: Whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men. Question 13: What has God especially decreed concerning angels and men? Answer: God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, has elected some angels to glory; and in Christ has chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extends or withholds favor as he pleases), has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice. Q. 7. What are the decrees of God? A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass [a]. [a]. Ps. 33:11; Isa. 14:24; Acts 2:23; Eph. 1:11-12 The only place to start: Job 38:1-11, 40:1-14, 42:1-6, Romans 11:33-36

Is this found in scripture? Read Ephesians 1:3-14 " His eternal purpose (v. 9,11) " According to the counsel of His will (v.5, 9, 11) " For his own glory (v. 6, 9, 12, 14) " He hath foreordained (v.4, 5, 11) " Whatsoever comes to pass (v.11) His eternal purpose. Does God change His mind? Numbers 23:19, Psalm 33:10-11, Isaiah 40:7-8. What does He purpose? Read Romans 8:28-30 If God chooses to elect some does He not also choose not to elect others? Romans 9:1-13 Does God keep people from believing who otherwise would? John 6:35-45 What is the chief end of man? Why does He tell us of this purpose? According to the counsel of His will. On what basis does God choose? Isa. 14:24 Is God unjust? is man accountable? Romans 9:14-14 Does God tempt man, and is He the author of Sin? James 1:12-18 Why pray? 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Ephesians 6:10-20. James 5:13-18. For His own Glory What is God's chief end? Isaiah 43:25, John 17:1-5 He hath foreordained. Not just foreknew, but also determined. Romans 3:9-18. Is Romans 9 just looking at nations? Malachi 1:1-5. Why be a missionary? Matthew 28:16-20 Whatsoever comes to pass Does God bring about the troubles? Isaiah 45:6-7 How about with Job? What about discipline? Hebrews 12:7-13.

5.1 Week 1: The Trinity

5.1.1 Study

1. John 17:1-5.
2. Deuteronomy 6:4 (Hebrew Shema)
3. Deuteronomy 4:35-39
4. II Corinthians 1:1-4
5. Hebrews 1:1-4
6. Acts 5:1-11
7. Matthew 3:7-4:11

5.1.2 Weekly Personal Studies and Starter Questions

Thursday Why study theology?

Read John 17

Note how frequently glory, know, name, and truth appear. Who are those who know? Who are those who do not know? What does verse 3 mean? How about verse 8? What does it mean to be sanctified in the truth (verse 17)?

Friday There is only one God!

Read Deuteronomy 6. Verse 4 is called the shema (literally hear or listen). How do the rest of the verses in the chapter start (i.e. what phrases are used)? Note how all are showing dependency to verse 4 by using phrases like “And thou shalt” or “Then thou shalt” or “Ye shalt”. How is the uniqueness of God so central? Why do we owe Him obedience if He is the only Lord and the only God?

Read Ephesians 4:4-6, Isaiah 43:10-12, and Isaiah 44:8. What do each of these verses say about God? Is there any room for another God?

Saturday The Father is God.

Read Matthew 6:5-15. Who is prayer to be directed to? Does any but God ever accept prayer, sacrifice, or worship? Read Revelation 19:5-10, 22:6-9.

Read Ephesians 1:1-6, 1 Peter 1:1-5. Who is God the Father, father of? How do the other members of the Trinity referred to? What is the purpose of the introductions to these letters? Why the heavy focus on God in all of them? What did the Apostles and ultimately God want us to get from these introductions?

Sunday The Son is God.

Read John 1:1-18. This is probably one of the most beautiful passages on the Deity of Jesus. Who is the Word? How do you know? What does it mean that nothing was made apart from Him? The J.W.'s altered this verse to read that the word was “a God”, and that “nothing

else was made apart from him”. How does this change things? If Jesus is another god (a junior partner in their thinking), how does this square with what we studied on Friday?

Read Colossians 1:15-23. Is there anything that is left out of the list? Why is Paul so precise? Colossians was written to combat a denial of the deity of Christ. It was called the Colossian Heresy, and was the progenitor of the Arian Heresy.

Monday The Holy Spirit is God.

Read John 14:15-27, 15:26-16:15. What does the Holy Spirit do for us? Can a force do that?

Now Read II Corinthians 3. What does the Holy Spirit do here? What do verses 16-18 say about the Holy Spirit?

Now Read I Timothy 4:1-5. What does the Spirit do here?

Finally Read I Corinthians 12. Note how Spirit, God, and Lord are used to refer to the same one. Particularly look at verses 13 and 18.

Tuesday The Members of the Godhead are distinct.

Read Luke 1:26-38, 3:21-22, Matthew 28:16-20. Now see if you can read them replacing all references (including pronouns) to a member of the Godhead with “God” or “The Father” or “Jesus”. Does it make any sense? Why? The distinction between the members of the Trinity is necessary to preserve the clear, logical reading of the text. All through Scripture there are subject-object distinctions between the members of the Trinity.

Read John 14:28-31. What things in this passage make it impossible for Jesus and the Father to be without distinction?

Finally Read II Corinthians 13:14. Note all the members of the Trinity are mentioned in the passage.

5.2 Week 2: The Attributes of God

5.2.1 Study

1. John 5:17-30
2. John 1:1-4
3. Acts 17:22-31
4. Malachi 3:1-6
5. Hebrews 6:9-20
6. James 1:13-18
7. Hebrews 4:11-16
8. John 21:15-19
9. Isaiah 40:12-17
10. Isaiah 46:5-13
11. Deuteronomy 7:1-11
12. Lamentations 3:21-36
13. II Timothy 2:8-13

5.2.2 Weekly Personal Studies and Starter Questions

For each day read the Psalm listed and find all the attributes of God in the Psalm? What do the attributes mean? What do they tell us of God? Why are they mentioned? How do the attributes affect us? What is the purpose of the Psalm and how do the attributes relate to it?

Thursday Psalm 19

Friday Psalm 33

Saturday Psalm 90

Sunday Psalm 92

Monday Psalm 93

Tuesday Psalm 139

5.3 Week 3: The Sovereignty of God

5.3.1 Study

1. Daniel 4

2. James 4:11-17

3. Romans 1:8-15

4. Job 1

5. Lamentations 3:37-41

6. James 1:13-18

7. Isaiah 45:5-10

8. Amos 3:1-8

9. Romans 9:1-24

10. John 6:28-71

5.4 Week 4: The Sovereignty of God, Part 2

5.4.1 Study

1. Romans 8:26-39
2. Romans 9:1-5
3. Romans 9:6-13
4. Romans 2:28-29
5. Luke 3:7-9
6. John 8:31-45
7. Malachi 1:1-5
8. Romans 9:14-24
9. John 1:1-14
10. Luke 13:1-9
11. Romans 1:16-32
12. John 6:28-71

5.4.2 Weekly Personal Studies and Starter Questions

Thursday Philippians 3:1-14. What was circumcision a sign of? Ref Genesis 17:1-14. Why does Paul list his qualifications under the Old Testament Law? How does he compare his righteousness to Christ? Does he say his righteousness plus Christ? What part does he take credit for? How does this relate to us? What is Paul's attitude in light of this?

Friday John 8:31-59. Who is the audience, per verse 31? What does Jesus say that offends them? How does Jesus respond? If these are those who believed in Him, how are they seeking to kill Him? Are there people who claim to believe but don't? What does verse 37 seem to say in regard to this? Who does Jesus indicate are the children of Abraham? Why does Jesus say they want to kill Him? What truth is it He is referring to? Reference the second question of this study. Who does Jesus say they follow, i.e. whose son are they? What does this mean? How do they react? What do they claim of Jesus? Recall who these are, they are not the Pharisees! How does Jesus respond and what does Jesus indicate the ultimate issue is? What does Jesus say that causes them to try and stone Him?

Saturday Ephesians 1:1-14. What is the theme of this passage? List all the references to God's sovereignty (will, counsel, predestination, working, etc.) Where do we fit in? Why does God do it? Count the references to His glory, pleasure, etc.

Sunday Ephesians 2:1-10. What was our state in our sins? Can a dead man do anything for Himself? Who saves us? Well at least was it our faith? Did we have any part? What does God do and why? How are we to respond?

Monday John 10: 22-42. What do the Jews ask? How does Jesus respond? Why does Jesus say they don't believe? What does Jesus say will happen to His sheep? What do they try to do and why? In Jesus' response He seems to deny that He is God. In fact He challenges their truthfulness, they don't have a legal basis for stoning Him rather they are trying to kill one they hate and cover it up under pretence of serving God. Jesus shows their hypocrisy.

Tuesday John 12:27-43. What does the passage start with? Why does Jesus indicate it happened? What does Jesus teach in this context? What does Jesus command them to do? Do they? Why don't they? Did they not have enough evidence? What does the text say? What is the point of the passage from Isaiah? Many of the leaders believed He was the Christ. How do they react? If we deny Him before men what does that say of our salvation or lack thereof?

5.5 Week 5: The Holiness of God

5.5.1 Study

1. Isaiah 6:1-4
2. Isaiah 6:5-8
3. I Thessalonians 5:16-28
4. Isaiah 6:9-13
5. Matthew 13:9-19
6. Ps 5:1-6
7. Ps 7:10-17
8. Nahum 1:1-8
9. Hab 1:12-17
10. Ephesians 2:1-5
11. 12:18-29
12. I John 1:5-7

5.5.2 Weekly Personal Studies and Starter Questions

Thursday Revelation 15 How does the Revelation passage begin? The sea that is before the Lord is an image of the cleansing and uniting in Christ. How does the image of the sea tie in with what those on the sea did? What do they sing? To whom do they ascribe holiness? What is the response to this in heaven? What is the heavenly temple filled with? How does this relate to the holiness of God?

Friday I Peter 1:13-23 What are we exhorted to do in the beginning of the verse? Why? What do they mean? What do verses 15 and 16 tell us to do and why? Who is supposed to spend their lives in awe and respect? What great truth is the basis of this?

Saturday Isaiah 64 What does the coming of the Lord bring? How does creation stand against His holy majesty? (v.1-3) What does verse 4 say, and how does it relate to Isaiah 6? How can God judge those who He doesn't change? Put another way, how can God judge those He doesn't save? Do you see the illogic in the very statement, God's judgement is on all sinners whether He saves or not. God did not need to save to be just. God saves some out of grace not to defend His justice. What does Isaiah 64 say about us? What is the plea and how does God ultimately answer it?

Sunday Ephesians 5 What are we to do? What characterizes those apart from Christ? What does verse 6 tell us about how God feels about them? Make two columns and in one list what we are to do and in the other list what we are not to do. How does the chapter end? How does submission relate to God's holiness and just wrath for our sins?

Monday Psalm 99, 111 What is God praised for in these Psalms? How do God's attributes and actions relate to His holiness? Why does Psalm 99 link great and terrible with holiness? How are we to react? Notice how both parts of the Psalm end. Psalm 111 ends with a famous quote which immediately follows a reference to God's holiness, what is it? How should it be understood in light of God's holiness.

Tuesday I Chronicles 16:7-36, II Chronicles 20:1-30, Ps 110 What is God praised for in I Chronicles 16? Note the emphasis on God's holiness and glory. Read it again and see how you could praise God in similar ways for who He is and what He has done for you.

What is the scene that is set in II Chronicles 20? Could the people stand against it? Whose responsibility was the battle? How did the people react to the promise? How do the people march out? What does God do?

The third passage is the most quoted Old Testament chapter by the new, because it points to Christ as king and priest. What does it say about His priesthood? How about His kingship? What does it mean to us? If the Israelites praised God so greatly for defeating mortal men, how should we praise Him for defeating sin and death?

Now notice the phrase that is in I Chronicles 16:29, II Chronicles 20:21, Ps 110:3. In light of all of these passages, what is the beauty of holiness?

5.6 Week 6: The Love of God

5.6.1 Study

1. I John 4:7-16
2. 1 Corinthians 13
3. John 3:35
4. John 5:20
5. John 10:17
6. John 14:31
7. John 15:9
8. Isaiah 48:9-15
9. Isaiah 53
10. Ephesians 1:1-14

5.6.2 Weekly Personal Studies and Starter Questions

In the following passages note what God does and why. These passages come from a book (John Piper, “Let the Nations Be Glad”), and represent only a subset of the passages Piper quotes. Further looks into God’s love for Himself can be found in the excellent books (also by Piper) “The Pleasures of God”, and “Desiring God”. I have given you the central passage, take the time to read the context of what is around it. What is God concerned about? Why does God care so much for His glory and His name? Think about what this has to do with us and why we are to do things. Don’t just stop at thinking though, serve Him in thought, word, and deed!

Thursday Isaiah 43:6-7, Jeremiah 13:11, Habakkuk 2:14, Romans 9:22-23

Friday Psalm 106:7-8, Romans 9:17, Exodus 14:4, 17, 18

Saturday Ezekiel 20:14, I Samuel 12:20-22, II Kings 19:34, 20:6, Ezekiel 36:22-23, 32

Sunday Romans 3:25-26, Isaiah 43:25, Psalms 25:11, Romans 15:7, Philippians 1:11

Monday John 7:18, John 14:13, John 12:27-28, John 17:1, John 13:31-32

Tuesday Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12, John 5:44, I Corinthians 10:31, I Peter 4:11