

St. Joseph's
Episcopal Church

The Rev. Canon Dr. Winfred B. Vergara

TEN BIBLE DOCTRINES

Session 2 | Theology: The Doctrine of God



Prayer Before Bible Study

Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which You have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

—Collect for Proper 28: Book of Common Prayer, page 236)

Introduction

What is Theology?

The etymology of the word theology comes from two Greek words:

- *Theos*, which means *God*
- *Logos*, which has two meanings:
 1. logos literally means *word or words* in Ancient Greek
 2. logos is also a concept; it is *reason*, that in ancient Greek philosophy is the controlling principle in the universe

Therefore, the literal meaning of theology is *God's Word*, which can be understood as *the study of God*.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. –John 1:1

Introduction

The beginning of the Gospel according to John identifies God as the Word, who was God, and was with God. While it alludes to the nature of God that we will discuss further later this evening, it also calls back to the word theology.

Theology is *the study of God as the controlling principle in the universe*; it is the study of the nature of the divine.

Introduction

Why do we study Theology?

Theology, our study of God, reveals to us the infinite greatness of God, that which guides our morals, beliefs, and day to day life.

“Everyone has a doctrine of God, that is, of ultimate reality, which will influence every aspect of life—the emotions, the decisions of the will, the hopes of the future, and day-to-day behavior.”

– Broughton Knox, *The Everlasting God*

What Does Theology Reveal?

What does our study of God and God's Word reveal?

1. God is infinite and incomprehensible to the human mind. His thoughts are unfathomable and we cannot begin to understand his secrets—or what we do not know of Him.

*Surely God is great, and we do not know him;
the number of his years is unsearchable* (Job 36:26).

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:33-36).

What Does Theology Reveal?

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to observe all the words of this law (Deuteronomy 29:29).

2. God is both immanent, or fundamental, and transcendent, or incomparable

*For thus says the high and lofty one
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
I dwell in the high and holy place
and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the humble
and to revive the heart of the contrite.*

–Isaiah 57:15

What Does Theology Reveal?

3. God is a Being

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” –John 4:24

*Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer,
who formed you in the womb:
I am the Lord, who made all things,
who alone stretched out the heavens,
who by myself spread out the earth;*

–Isaiah 44:24

God Exists

Is God real?

In today's world, some are reluctant to believe in a being they cannot see, hear, taste, or touch. However, God cannot be dealt with in the laboratory. He must be dealt with in the courtroom. It is impossible to generate *proof* of His existence, so we must look for *evidence* of God's existence. We cannot handle God the way we can handle a fish, we cannot see God the way we can see bacteria in a microscope.

But while the Bible simply assumes that God exists, it also provides excellent evidence, so that believing in God's existence is an intellectually reasonable thing to do.

God Exists

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. –John 1:1

“The biblical God is the supreme being of the universe—eternal, unchangeable, infinite. He is self-existent, self-authenticating, and self-justifying. He depends on no other reality for his existence, or to meet his needs.” –John M. Frane, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*

When God reveals himself to Moses in Exodus, he explains simply, “I Am who I Am.” His existence does not depend on the perception of human beings; He is eternal.

God Exists

Ever since the creation of the world, his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. –Romans 1:20

The reality of God's creations confirms God's existence. We learned in Genesis that God created darkness and light. From a formless void he called the earth into being, molding land and sky, sea and stars. He made the flora and fauna and finally, created humankind in His image.

God's Attributes

Who is God?

God is a Being and as such, has individual characteristics that distinguish God from all other beings. These characteristics are called *attributes*. Some of God's attributes are shared by humankind, since God created man after God's own personal image. These are called *personal attributes*. God's other characteristics, however, are divine—which go beyond man and are truly of God alone.

1. God is Omniscient | All-Knowing

God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. —1 John 3:20

God's Attributes

2. God is Omnipotent | All-Powerful

Ah Lord God! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. –Jeremiah 32:17

3. God is Omnipresent | Everywhere

Am I a God near by, says the Lord, and not a God far off? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord. – Jeremiah 23:23-24

God's Attributes

God is more: He is holy, perfect, and glorious; God is Spirit, and Spirit made flesh; He is love, peace, and mercy; He is good, true, and faithful; He is wise, patient, and kind; He is infinite and eternal. God is.

Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can 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 settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me fast.

–Psalm 139:7-10

God is Sovereign

God can do whatever God wills.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. –Romans 13:1

*The Lord has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.*

–Psalm 103:19

God is all-powerful/omnipotent and has the ability to do whatever God wills. This sovereignty is only exercised in harmony with God's goodness, righteousness, and other attributes, and it extends to the entirety of creation for all time.

God is Sovereign

God's sovereignty is rooted in His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. God has determined everything that has happened and will happen, and yet has done so in such a way that man has true volition or free will. This is one of the mysteries, or inexplicable facets, of Scripture.

*For I know that the Lord is great;
our Lord is above all gods.
Whatever the Lord pleases he does,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.*

–Psalm 135:5-6

The Trinity of God

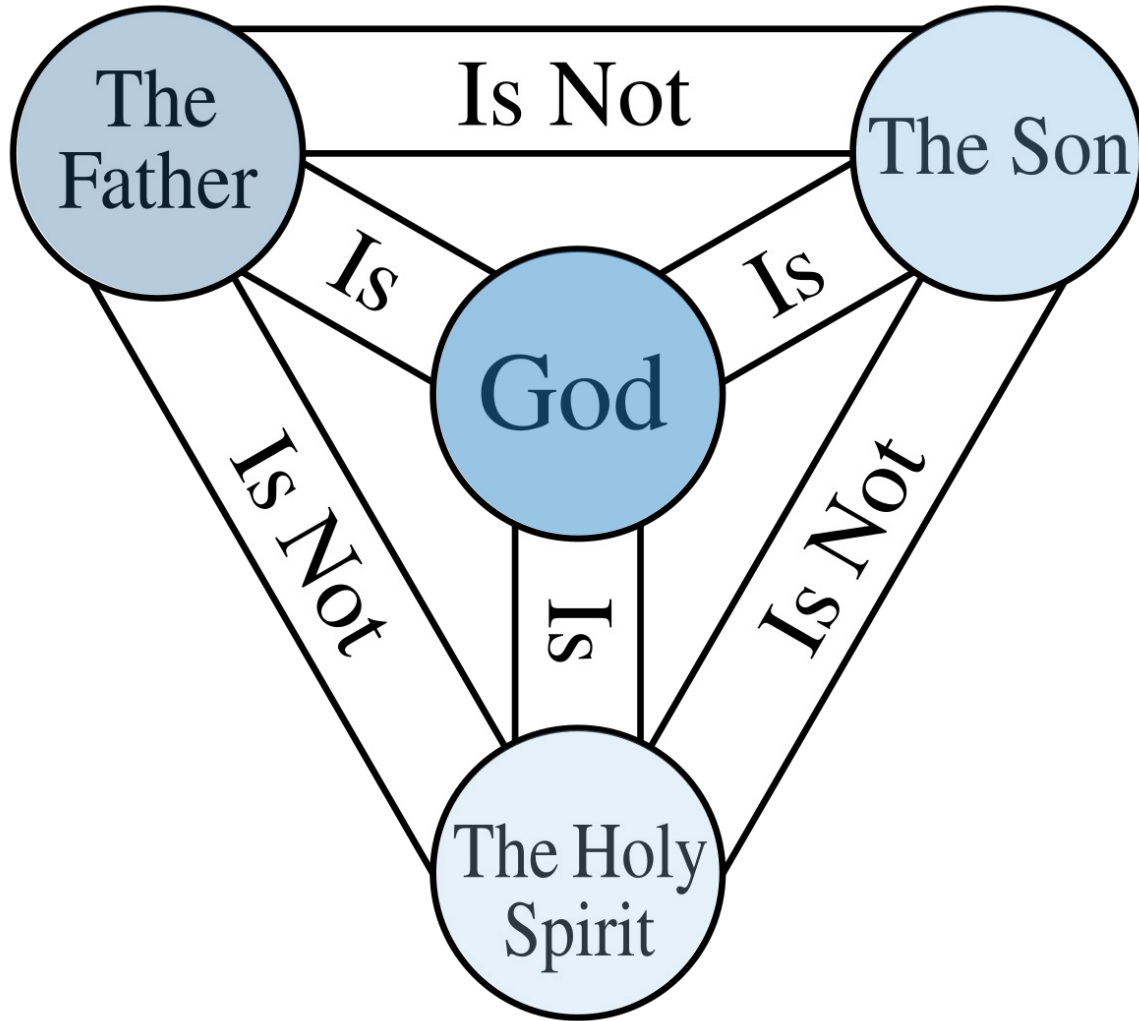
God is three Persons, yet One Being.

As Episcopalians, we believe in a mystery of Scripture that is the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 6:4, “*the Lord our God is one Lord.*” However, the Bible also clearly states that a man, Jesus Christ, claimed equality with God the Father, as well as claiming the existence of God the Holy Spirit, equal to the other two beings.

How do we explain that God is three beings?

Historically, the concept as been termed the *Trinity*. This has been a fundamental teaching of Christianity from its beginnings.

The Trinity of God



There is **one** God who exists in **three** Persons. Together the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are God, and individually, they are God, but they are not each other.

The Trinity of God

1. The Father is God

Jesus said to her, “Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” –John 20:17

2. The Son is God

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. –John 1:14

3. The Spirit is God

Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? –1 Corinthians 3:16

The Trinity of God

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

–2 Corinthians 13:14

