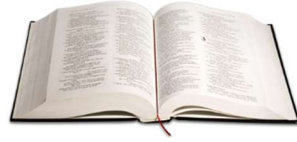


# *Foundation for Christian Education*

## *Open Study Bible Academy*



*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*  
*Hosea 4:6*

## **Part-Time Course in Biblical Theology**

### **Theology I**

*from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*  
*2 Timothy 2:2*

Author: Arthur F Green, PhD  
Revision: 2.00  
Date: December 2023

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## **Biblical Theology Course**

### **Subject: Theology I – The Doctrine of God**

#### **Lecturer's Notes**

**Author: Arthur F Green**

#### **Course Introduction: Aims:**

- 1. To Introduce the Student to the Theology and Doctrine of God**
2. To Study the Doctrine of God the Father
3. To Study the Doctrine of God the Son
4. To Study the Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit
5. To Study the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity

#### **Teaching Topics: Lessons:**

1. The Existence of God
2. The Knowledge of God
3. The Nature of God
4. The Non-Moral Attributes of God
5. The Moral Attributes of God
6. The Names of God
7. Bibliography

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## Lesson 1. The Existence of God

On January 7th 1855 the young twenty year old minister of new Park Street Baptist Church, Southwark, opened his morning address as follows:

“It has been said by someone that the proper study of mankind is man, I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God’s elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his father.”  
Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Any study of theology must have as its beginning a study of God. Ryrie says,

“Unquestionably the knowledge of God is desirable; the religious yearnings of Mankind attest to that. But is it possible?”<sup>1</sup>

The very word theology comes from the Greek word *theos*, meaning **God**, and *logos*, meaning **word** or **systematic discourse**. Therefore theology is a discourse about God. Theology is a very wide term, covering the entire field of Christian belief: the study of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Old Testament prophets, Eschatology, Angels, and so on. However, the term used of the study of God the Father is known as **theology proper**.

For the Christian, the knowledge of God is essential. But how do we know there is a God? There are several arguments that attempt to prove and disprove the existence of God.

### I. FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

#### A. The Cosmological Argument.

The term cosmological comes from the Greek words *cosmos*, meaning **world**, and *logos*, meaning **word** or **systematic discourse**. This argument is inductive and a posteriori, based on the fact that a cosmos, or world, exists; we take the facts of existence and reason from there to a conclusion. Simply stated, the argument is,

“Everything that has a beginning must have an adequate cause.”<sup>2</sup>

Because something cannot come from nothing, there must be an original cause that is the reason for the existence of the world. That cause we believe is God. Hebrews 3:4 says,

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> J. Oliver Buswell Jr., *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), pp. 82-84. Buswell discusses the necessity for the cosmological argument. The only other option is the eternality of the universe, which can be refuted by the Second Law of Thermodynamics.



“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.”

## **B. The Teleological Argument.**

As in the previous case, the teleological argument for the existence of God is inductive and a posteriori. Teleological comes from the Greek words *telos*, meaning **end**, and *logos*, meaning **word** or **systematic discourse**. Thiessen sums up this argument for us,

“Order and useful arrangement in a system imply Intelligence and purpose in the organizing cause. The universe is characterized by order and useful arrangement; therefore the universe has an intelligent and free cause.”<sup>3</sup>

The world everywhere demonstrates intelligence, purpose, and harmony. There must be a Master Architect behind all this evidence. The Psalmist sees the magnificence of God’s Creation and recognizes that it is all a witness to His existence (Psalm 8:3-4; 19:1-4). God’s designed harmony is observable throughout the world and the universe: the earth is the right distance from the Sun to support life; the sun has a regulated output within narrow limits; the moon is the right distance to move the ocean tides; the ecology of the biosphere is an integrated self-regulating system; and so on.

The conclusion is that God, the Master Architect, has created the universe and everything in it. The alternative, that the world came into being from nothing, and organized itself by random chance, is impossible and a contradiction in terms.

## **C. The Anthropological Argument**

The anthropological argument is also inductive and a posteriori, is based on the Greek words *anthropos*, meaning **man**, and *logos*, meaning **word** or **systematic discourse**. In opposition to the secular humanist, who sees man as a biological machine, the Biblicist sees man as created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7). The image of God in man is spiritual, not physical (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10).

Man is not simply a physical being, but also a moral being with a conscience, intellect, emotion and will. Chafer states:

There are philosophical and moral features in man’s constitution which may be traced back to find their origin in God...A blind force...could never produce a man with intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, and an inherent belief in a Creator.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. by Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary, 1947), pp. 1:155, 157.



#### D. The Moral Argument.

The moral argument is related to the anthropological argument, sometimes they are combined, and can be seen as a further development of that argument. The moral argument is based on the fact that man has an innate awareness of right and wrong, a sense of morality, or conscience. The question is, where did this sense of moral justice, or righteousness, come from? If man is only a biological machine, why does a sense of moral exist? Recognition of moral standards and concepts cannot come from any random evolutionary process. On the contrary, morality assumes a pre-existing ethical order to which human race is subject, even when deliberately contravened, in contradistinction to all other creatures. Romans 2:14-15 shows that Gentiles who have had no revelation of the law, have an inner, moral witness placed there by God.

Strong sums up this argument as follows,

“Conscience recognizes the existence of a moral law which has supreme authority; known violations of this moral law are followed by feelings of ill-desert and fears of judgement; this moral law, since it is not self-imposed, and these threats of judgement, since they are not self-executing, respectively argue the existence of a holy will that has imposed the law, and of a punitive power that will execute the threats of a moral nature.”

Scripture appeals to this argument for proof of God’s existence in Romans 1:19, 32; 2:14-16.

#### E. The Ontological Argument

The ontological argument differs from the preceding arguments in that it is deductive and a priori: it begins with an assumption and then attempts to prove that assumption. The term ontological comes from the Greek present participle *ontos* of the verb to be, *eimi* (literally: I am), meaning *being* or *existence*, and *logos*, meaning *word* or *systematic discourse*.

The argument is philosophical rather than inductive. The argument goes that if man could conceive of a perfect, maximally great God who does not exist, then he could conceive of another being greater than that, which is logically impossible. Therefore God exists.

Alvin Plantinga restates the argument like this:

“Existence in reality is greater than existence in the understanding alone.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 98.



The argument rests on the fact that everyone has an awareness of God. Because the concept of God is therefore universal, God must have placed the idea within mankind. Anselm (1033-1109) was the first to propose this argument. It has received many criticisms over the centuries, although no-one has managed to dismiss it entirely. Many commentators think that this argument has limited value, and not many would accept its usefulness in bringing people to a saving knowledge of God.

Having looked at the arguments in favour of the existence of God we must now look at those which deny the existence of God, or provide a substitute.

## **II. AGAINST THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**

### **A. Atheistic Argument**

The term atheist comes from the Greek word *theos*, meaning **God**, with the prefix ‘*a*’ (Greek alpha), which negates the following word. Literally, ***atheos*** means ***no God***. Therefore the term atheist means someone who does not believe in God.

Ephesians 2:12 translates the term ἄθεοι (*atheoi*) as ‘without God’ to explain the status of unsaved Gentiles in their attitude towards God.

Atheists can be placed into three categories:

- (1) The Practical Atheist who lives as if there is no God;
- (2) The Dogmatic Atheist who openly repudiates God;
- (3) The Virtual Atheist who rejects God by terminology. For example, the liberal theologian Paul Tillich refers to God as the “Ground of all Being.” This classification also includes those who deny a personal God.

Atheists tend to argue from a negative point of view, refusing to consider the arguments for the existence of God, frequently citing issues such as the existence of evil in the world as proof of God’s non-existence. There is a stubborn refusal to contemplate the existence of God; it is spiritual blindness masquerading as rationality, whereas it is, in fact, an emotional position.

### **B. The Agnostic Argument**

The term agnostic comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning **knowledge**, accompanied by the prefix ‘*a*’. Therefore ***agnostic*** literally means one who ***lacks knowledge of God***. An agnostic would say that we cannot know if God exists or not. The term was first coined by Sir Thomas Huxley, and covers varying degrees of skepticism.

Agnostics are followers of Naturalism; their belief in something has to be scientifically verifiable, or based on evidence from the natural world. Because God is not scientifically verifiable, since He is not part of the natural world, but supernatural, they tend to leave



Him out of their discussions.

This is a very limited viewpoint, since all discussion is restrained to the natural world, and they refuse even to discuss any supernatural evidence or argument.

### **C. Evolution**

Evolution is a Naturalist approach to life and its origins. It is a deductive and a priori theory, brought to the discussion fully formed. It begins with the premise that there is no God and subsequently seeks to establish that life could have occurred without recourse to creative action from any god. The consequences of this viewpoint are serious. If God created human beings, then they are morally responsible beings, responsible to God; if humans are the product of random evolution, they are only biological machines and not morally responsible for their actions, since higher authority does not exist.

### **D. Polytheism**

The term polytheism comes from the Greek words *poly*, meaning *many*, and *theos*, meaning *God*, so the term polytheism means many gods, or a belief in many gods, or, at the very least, more than one god. History records many nations and cultures that were polytheistic, from simple tribal communities to great civilizations. The Egyptians worshipped a great many gods, such as the sun, the Nile, frogs, etc.; so too the Romans, who were also animists.<sup>6</sup> The people of India are both polytheistic and pantheistic (see below), and, underneath the veneer of Hindu religion, ancient animism runs strong.

### **E. Pantheism**

The term pantheism comes from the Greek words *pan*, meaning *all*, and *theos*, meaning *God*, so the term pantheism means that all, or everything, is God and God is everything: “God is all and all is God.” Seneca said,

“What is God? ... He is all that you see and all that you do not see.”<sup>7</sup>

There are different forms of pantheism:

- (1) Materialistic Pantheism, held by David Strauss, which holds to the eternity of matter, and that matter is the cause of all life;
- (2) Hylozoism, the modern form held by Leibnitz, which holds that all matter has

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<sup>6</sup> Animism has two aspects: (1) The attribution of a living soul to plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena, e.g.: earthquakes; thunder and lightning; (2) The belief in a supernatural power that organizes and animates the material universe.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary, 1947), pp. 1:174.



a principle of life, or psychological properties;<sup>8</sup>

- (3) Neutralism, which says that life is neutral, neither mind nor matter;
- (4) Idealism, which says that ultimate reality is really mind, either individual mind or infinite mind;
- (5) Philosophical Mysticism, which is absolute monism, teaching that all reality is one, or a unity.

## F. Monism

Monism is the view that attributes oneness or singleness (Greek: *μόνος*) to a concept (e.g., existence). Various kinds of monism can be distinguished:

- (1) **Priority Monism** states that all existing things go back to a source that is distinct from them (e.g., in Neoplatonism everything is derived from The One). In this view only one thing is ontologically basic or prior to everything else.<sup>9</sup>
- (2) **Existence Monism** posits that, strictly speaking, there exists only a single thing (e.g., the universe), which can only be artificially and arbitrarily divided into many things.<sup>10</sup>
- (3) **Substance Monism** asserts that a variety of existing things can be explained in terms of a single reality or substance.<sup>11</sup> Substance monism posits that only one kind of stuff (e.g., matter or mind) exists, although many things may be made out of this stuff.

## F. Deism

The term deism comes from the Latin word *deus*, meaning **God**. This is a completely different view of God from **theism**. Deists believe that there is no personal God to whom mankind can relate. An impersonal God created the world and afterward divorced Himself from the human race and left mankind alone in his created world. Deists accept only the transcendence of God, they reject His immanence.

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<sup>8</sup> Hylozoism is the philosophical point of view that matter is in some sense alive. The concept dates back at least as far as the Milesian school of pre-Socratic philosophers. The term was introduced to England by Ralph Cudworth in 1678.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Bruggen, (ed.) *Diccionario de Filosofia* (Barcelona: Herder, 1972), art. dualismo, monismo, pluralismo.

<sup>10</sup> M. Dries, & P. Kail, (eds), *Nietzsche on Mind and Nature* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), art. G. Strawson, "Nietzsche's Metaphysics?"

<sup>11</sup> F.L. Cross, & E.A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: OUP, 1974), art. *monism*.





**Conclusion:**

This concludes our brief review of the anti-theistic views of God, arguments put forward by philosophers since earliest times. These arguments come from the mind of man and not from the revelation of God. They inherently deny the supernatural aspects of existence and life as we know it, and the revealed fact that God sustains life in the entire biosphere, including that of Mankind (Job 12:9-10; 33:4; John 6:63; Acts 17:25).

Having examined the arguments for the existence of God, we must now define God, and this we shall do first by considering the possibility of the knowledge of God. Can we know God, and if so, how?

**End of Lesson 1**



## Lesson 2. The Knowledge of God

The knowledge of God comes about from its source, its content, its gradual revelation and its purpose. We cannot know God by starting from ourselves and our earthly existence, and reasoning our way to Him. We are dependent on His revelation to us. The biblical term ‘revelation’ comes from a Greek word *apocalupsis*, which means *unveiling*, or *disclosure*.

In order to make theology possible, God must make some form of revelation about Himself which is freely available and accessible to all mankind, in all times and all places. Divine Revelation may be described as:

“...that act of God whereby he discloses himself or communicates truth to the mind, whereby he makes manifest to his creatures that which could not be known in any other way. The revelation may occur in a single, instantaneous act, or it may extend over a long period of time; and this communication of himself and his truth may be perceived by the human mind in varying degrees of fullness.”<sup>12</sup>

Revelation is therefore God’s disclosure to us in which He reveals truths about Himself that *we could not otherwise know*. God reveals Himself in two ways:

### A. General Revelation

General revelation is preliminary to salvation, and reveals certain aspects of God and His nature to humanity, so that we all have an awareness of His existence. Psalm 19:1-6 is the primary passage of the general revelation of God, through the visible aspects of the universe and nature. The heavens tell us of God’s glory, because no-one less than an infinite and majestic God could have brought all of it into existence. The earth, in all its beauty, harmony and integrated complexity reveals the work of God. It could not have happened by accident and we cannot get something from nothing.

Romans 1:18-21 stresses the general revelation of God and the fact that we are accountable to Him:

18 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

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<sup>12</sup> Henry C. Theissen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. by Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 7.



God has also revealed Himself through His providence and provision for our needs and control of nature (Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:15-17). Therefore mankind ought to respond with gratitude to a gracious God.

God has also revealed Himself through conscience, which exists in every human being, pointing to the existence of a holy God (Romans 2:14-15) where every human being has an innate knowledge of Him.

## **B. Special Revelation**

Special revelation is more exclusive than general revelation. All mankind is able to perceive general revelation, not all are able to perceive special revelation. Of those that do perceive it are aware of it, only some of them really understand and receive it.

There are many examples of special revelation. God revealed Himself through dreams and visions to selected people. He appeared physically embodied (known as a theophany) to some people and spoke and interacted with them. A theophany is a physical manifestation of God, usually in the Old Testament. Some examples are:

- Abraham in Genesis 12:7; 15:4-5;
- Joshua in Joshua 5:13-15;
- Gideon in Judges 6:11-23.

The greatest emphasis on special revelation is God's Word: the written word of Holy Scriptures, and the living word of Jesus Christ. The biblical writers were carried along by the Holy Spirit in writing the Scriptures, assuring us of the accuracy and inerrancy of the written word. An inerrant record of God's revelation is of the utmost importance in having true knowledge and understanding of God's nature, His works and His requirements of mankind.

This inerrant record also reveals the Messiah, Jesus Christ. In turn, Christ has revealed the God the Father to us. The word *exegesis*, meaning **to draw out; to explain**, is derived from the Greek word *exegesato* in John 1:18, meaning **explained**. In the text of John's Gospel, this expression emphasizes that through His teachings and His works (miracles) Christ has explained the Father to mankind.

It is a major emphasis of John's Gospel that Christ came to reveal the Father.

A further way of looking at this issue is to recognize that knowledge of God comes about from its source, its content, its gradual revelation and development, and its purpose.



### **C. Its Source**

God is the source of all we know about Him. Only true truth comes from God. Since the Fall and the arrival of sin, mankind creates that which he calls truth, but is not true truth; it has been corrupted. For us in our time, the only infallible measure of truth is the written Word of God. Nature reveals something of God, but is limited and is subject to misinterpretation by a mankind that is limited and darkened by sin.

One of the purposes of the Incarnation was to reveal God (John 1:18; 14:7). The coming of the Holy Spirit after the Ascension included further revelation concerning Jesus and the Father (John 16:13-15; Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit opens the Word of God, Holy Scripture, for the believer, so that he can know God more fully.

### **D. Its Content**

Complete knowledge of God must be both factual and personal. To know facts about a person without knowing that person is limiting. To know a person without knowing the relevant facts about that person is superficial. God's Word is full of propositional content, verifiable facts, which make possible a close personal relationship with Him. God has not only revealed facts about Himself, but has also made it possible to have a personal relationship with Him. Just as with human relationships, a divine-human relationship cannot begin without some factual truths about God, in this case divinely revealed. Subsequently, the personal relationship generates a desire to know more, which in turn deepens the relationship. This cycle of deepening knowledge and personal relationship, should be the experience of every student of theology.

### **E. Its Gradual Development**

Knowledge of God, His purposes and activity in history was revealed to mankind progressively and systematically, and gradually developed through many lessons. The most obvious example is the development of incomplete Judaism into the fuller revelation of Christianity, where we see development of doctrines such as the doctrine of God and the Trinity, Christology, the Holy Spirit, Resurrection and Eschatology.

### **F. Its Purpose**

The purposes of both the gradual development of the knowledge of God and the personal divine-human relationship that grows from it are fourfold:

- (1) To lead people to eternal life (John 17:3; 1 Timothy 2:4);
- (2) To foster Christian growth (2 Peter 3:18) in knowledge of the great doctrines of the faith (John 7:17; Romans 6:9, 16; Ephesians 1:18) and in a righteous lifestyle (Philippians 1:9-10; 2 Peter 1:5);



- (3) To warn of the judgment to come (Hosea 4:6; Hebrews 10:26-27);
- (4) To generate true worship of God (Romans 11:33-36).

## **End of Lesson 2**



## Lesson 3. The Nature of God

First of all we need to define what we mean by God:

“God is the essence or the substance of being. God is being. He is not an idea or the personification of an idea.”

This definition will become much clearer once we examine the different aspects of this divine essence or substance. There are four things to consider:

### A. God is Spiritual

God is not a material substance such as a mineral, or a compound of chemicals, or even protoplasm. He is a spiritual essence (John 4:24). As such He is invisible, immaterial and incorporeal. John 1:18 says,

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

In Luke 24:39, the incarnate (corporeal) post-resurrection Jesus shows that He was not a ghost or a disembodied spirit.

### B. God is Self-Existent

God has the basis of His own existence within Himself, unlike humans who are created beings and therefore have the basis of their existence outside themselves (Exodus 3:14; 6:3). God does not depend upon any external being or thing for His eternal existence.

### C. God is Eternal

By this we mean that God is infinite in relation to time. He is without beginning or end. He is free from all limitations of time and entropy, because He is the Creator of all of it, *ab initio et ex nihilo* (Psalm 90:2; 102:27).

### D. God is Infinite

God is not in any way limited or circumscribed by space or time, on the contrary, all finite space and time are dependent upon Him (Isaiah 66:1; Jeremiah 23:24; Acts 17:28).

These four things define for us the essence or substance of that which is God. However, they are all impersonal statements and do not tell us much about His personality. His personality is revealed in His attributes, to which we now turn.



God's attributes are to be kept distinct from His works; they do not add anything to God; they reveal His character and personality. All this can be brought together in a comprehensive statement about the nature of God:

“God is an invisible, personal, and living Spirit, distinguished from all other spirits by several kinds of attributes: metaphysically God is self-existent, eternal and unchanging; intellectually God is omniscient, faithful and wise; ethically God is just, merciful and loving; emotionally God detests evil, is longsuffering and compassionate; existentially God is free, authentic and omnipotent; relationally God is transcendent in being, immanent universally in providential activity, and immanent with His people in redemptive activity.”<sup>13</sup>

God's attributes are usually classified under two categories. The pairs of titles used for the categories depends on what the particular theologian wants to emphasize. The ones used most frequently are:

Absolute	and	Relative
Communicable	and	Incommunicable
Moral	and	Non-Moral

In listing or categorizing God's attributes it is important not to consider any one attribute as more important than the others; we must not create a hierarchy of attributes. If we do, we will arrive at a caricature of God. It is all the attributes taken together that provide an understanding of the Nature and Person of God.

### **End of Lesson 3**

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<sup>13</sup> Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), art. Gordon R. Lewis, *Attributes of God*, p.451.



## **Lesson 4. The Non-Moral Attributes of God**

The Non-Moral Attributes are integral with the essence of God's being, and describe His innate characteristics:

### **A. Omnipresence**

This term means that God is simultaneously everywhere present (Psalm 139:7-12; Acts 17:27-28). This does not mean that He is diffused throughout the universe, partially present everywhere, but His whole being is everywhere present at once.

### **B. Omnipotence**

This term means that God is all-powerful. The basis for the concept of omnipotence is the term *almighty*, which is only ever used of God in the Scriptures (Genesis 17:1; Job 42:2; Luke 1:37). However His omnipotence includes limitations of two classes, self-imposed limitations, and inherent limitations. His self-imposed limitations are related to the exercise of his sovereign will. This can be seen in the choices He makes, which determine a certain course of action that automatically prohibits another course. For example his, choice of Israel and his subsequent promises to her, impose limitations in respect to His dealings with others. Inherent limitations are those things which God cannot do because they would be contrary to his nature. He cannot lie, deny Himself, sin, or act contrary to His Word.

### **C. Omniscience**

This term means that God knows everything. A W Tozer said, "God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and matters, all mind and every mind, all being and every being." Therefore because He knows all things perfectly, He knows no one thing better than any other thing. He is never surprised, amazed, or left to wonder about anything (Hebrews 4:13).

### **D. Immutability**

This term means that God is unchangeable (James 1:17). He can be relied upon absolutely. Some have anticipated a difficulty here with respect to the references of God repenting. Charles Ryrie says in response to this objection, "Most understand these verses as employing anthropomorphism; i.e., interpreting what is not human in human terms."

It should be understood that it is God's nature that doesn't change, and that His ultimate purposes do not change. However, what we do on earth makes a difference to the outworking of history and God's redemptive purpose, because God gave us free will. Therefore he will adjust his approach ultimately to accomplish His will and purpose, despite our best efforts to go our own way. This does not affect His nature nor His sovereignty over the universe.





## E. Unity

There are two aspects to the unity of God. Firstly, it is an emphasis that God is one numerically. It is this belief that set Israel apart from her polytheistic neighbours. Part of Israel's daily worship was recitation of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) which says, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is **one**!" The Shema is a declaration of monotheism, affirming that God is one in essence and cannot be divided. It further declares Him as absolutely unique; there is none that can be compared with Him (Exodus 15:11).<sup>14</sup> The emphasis on God as being numerically one is also found in 1 Timothy 2:5 and 1 Corinthians 8:6

Secondly, the unity of God emphasizes that God is not a composite being and cannot be divided into parts. The Shema can also be translated, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is **unity**!" It stresses the "inner and qualitative unity" of God.<sup>15</sup> Because the Lord alone is God, no other can share His glory or receive the praise rightfully due to Him, hence the prohibition "Guard yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:2).

## F. Tri-Unity

God is one God. He is a unity, but, as intimated previously, He is a unity that is tri-unity, or better expressed, He is a trinity in unity. There are three eternal distinctions in the one divine essence which is God. These distinctions are persons not offices—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**This is a trinity, a triunity in unity neither confounding the persons, nor separating the substance.**

This doctrine is clearly supported by the scriptures. Evidence for the trinity can be deduced from the plurality of certain of God's names, and from passages where God speaks of Himself:

- (1) With plural pronouns, cf. Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8;
- (2) From passages where there is a clear distinction made between persons in the Godhead, cf. Genesis 19:24; Hosea 1:7; Isaiah 59:20-21; 63:9-10;
- (3) From passages where the three persons are clearly linked together, cf. Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 5:7.

We will discuss the Doctrine of the Trinity in depth in a dedicated section.

## End of Lesson 4

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<sup>14</sup> S. R. Driver, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy in The International Critical Commentary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: Clark, 1978), p.90.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), p. 62.



## Lesson 5. The Moral Attributes of God

These are the attributes of God that make moral demands upon His Creation:

### A. Holiness

The basic meaning of holiness is ‘set apart’ or ‘separate’ or ‘completely other’ (Hebrew *qadosh*; Greek *hagiazō*). Many see holiness as the foremost attribute, since all other attributes are pervaded by holiness, and it is consistent with all He is and does.

Several ideas are combined in the holiness of God. It has a *transcendent* emphasis:

“He is absolutely distinct from all his creatures and is exalted above them in infinite majesty.”<sup>16</sup>

Exodus 15:11 explains that in His holiness God is awesome and totally without equal or peer. Isaiah 57:15 describes His transcendence. He is ‘high and exalted,’ living on a ‘high and holy place.’ Also, holiness has an ethical dimension, showing:

“He is separate from moral evil or sin. Holiness points to God’s majestic purity, or ethical majesty.”<sup>17</sup>

The foundation of this emphasis is found in Leviticus 11:44-45,

“For I *am* the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. <sup>45</sup> For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.”

Because God is morally pure, He cannot condone evil or have any relationship to it (Psalm 11:4-6). In his holiness God is the moral and ethical standard. He is the law. He sets the standard.<sup>18</sup>

God is Holy. “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” (Leviticus 19:2). This means that, negatively, He is separated from all that is unclean and sinful; and positively, that He is pure and set apart, and so therefore distinct from everyone and everything. Because God is holy, sinner cannot approach Him unless they are first made holy.

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<sup>16</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), p. 73.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Nashville: Nelson, 1980), pp. 1:362-363. Reprint.



## B. Righteousness

This attribute is to do with the Law and Morality. In relation to Himself, God is righteous; there is no law, either within His own being or of His own making, which is violated by anything in His nature. In relation to His creatures He is righteous, because there is no action which He takes that violates His innate attributes of morality and justice (Psalm 11:7; Isaiah 45:21).

## C. Justice

Justice is sometimes taken together with the righteousness of God. The justice of God means that God is completely and comprehensively correct in all His dealings with humanity. His justice acts in accordance with the contravention of His law. The justice of God is therefore related to the sins of mankind. God's law reflects God's perfect standard, therefore God is righteous and just when He judges mankind for their violations of His revealed law.

The justice of God is sometimes divided into two categories:

- (1) The **rectoral justice** of God recognizes the principle of God as the supreme moral ruler, who imposes His moral law on the world, and promises reward for the obedient and punishment for the disobedient (Psalm 99:4; Romans 1:32).
- (2) The **distributive justice** of God relates to the actual application or operation of the law in terms of reward and punishment (Isaiah 3:10-11; Romans 2:6; 1 Peter 1:17).

The distributive justice is both positive and negative. Positively, it is called **remunerative justice**, an expression of divine love which rewards the obedient (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 58:11; Romans 2:7). Negatively, it is called **retributive justice**, an expression of divine wrath which punishes the disobedient (Genesis 2:17; Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10; Romans 6:23).

Since God is perfectly just and perfectly righteous, the punishment of evildoers is appropriately dispensed because they receive the absolutely just and perfect penalty due for their sins.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, pp. 1:365-85, for a full and profound discussion of the subject.



## D. Goodness

The Hebrew word **tob** means the absolute goodness of God. God's being consists of His goodness.<sup>20</sup> The Greek word **agathos** means that God is "essentially, absolutely, and consummately good" (Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19).<sup>21</sup>

The goodness of God is a very wide concept, and includes a number of aspects such as benevolence, love, mercy, and grace. God's benevolence is expressed as His affection towards people, which is greater than any goodness one person can show another.<sup>22</sup> It is seen in many aspects of life for both believer and unbeliever (Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17).

God abounds in goodness towards His creatures (Exodus 34:6). His goodness is even shown towards animals (Psalm 36:6; 104:21; 145:16; Matthew 6:26).

God's goodness is also shown in His mercy, as He withholds His wrath from His creatures who through sin are fully deserving of it.

God's goodness is also demonstrated in love, which is greater than one human being can show to another (Psalm 27:10).<sup>23</sup> To Jeremiah, the love of God signified "both national and personal salvation" (Jeremiah 8:15; 14:11, 19; 17:6).<sup>24</sup> Ultimately, God's goodness in love is shown to undeserving humanity by sending His only Son as the sacrificial Saviour of the world (John 3:16; Ephesians 3:18-19; 1 John 4:10).<sup>25</sup>

## E. Love

God's love is expressed in His selfless provision of all things for the creature's highest good, in harmony with God's holiness, justice and perfection.

God bestows His love on His underserving Creatures, even though they cannot earn it by themselves (1 John 4:8; Ephesians 2:4; Titus 2:11). 1 John 4:8 states that God is love, then John goes on to say in verses 9-10 how God shows His love:

9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

We can define God's love then, as:

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<sup>20</sup> Gerhard Kittel, ed., Geoffrey W. Bromley, trans., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), art. Walter Grundmann, *agathos*.

<sup>21</sup> W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1940), p. 2:163.

<sup>22</sup> W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Nashville: Nelson, 1980), pp. 1:385-386. Reprint.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1:387.

<sup>24</sup> Grundmann, *TDNT*, p. 1:14.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, abr., ed. Edward N. Gross (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), p. 157.



“That perfection of the divine nature by which God is eternally moved to communicate Himself. It is not a mere emotional impulse, but a rational and voluntary affection, having its ground in truth and holiness and its exercise in free choice.”<sup>26</sup>

The Greek word *agape*, usually translated *love*, is frequently used to denote God’s relationship with humanity (John 3:16; 5:42; Romans 5:5, 8; 8:35, 39; 1 John 4:9-11; Revelation 1:5).<sup>27</sup> The term *agape* means a reasoned-out love rather than an emotionally based love, a love that loves the recipient irrespective of the worth of the recipient and continues in the full knowledge that it may not be returned. This is a selfless love that expects no reward, but is offered out of the holy nature of God. This love of God is not without emotion, but is not based on emotion. It is part of God’s nature and attributes.

## **F. Truth**

The concept of truth is very simple in that the facts must conform to reality, and truth identifies things as they are. Truth means ‘agreement to that which is represented’ and includes the concepts of faithfulness and consistency. To say that God is always truthful, is to say that He is consistent with Himself, that He is all that He should be, and that He has revealed Himself as He truly is, and that He and His revelation are completely reliable.

“God’s truthfulness means that He is the true God, and that all His knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.”<sup>28</sup>

Scripture supports this understanding, and states that God is the only true God (John 17:3), and cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and is always reliable (Romans 3:4; Hebrews 6:18). This has implications: because God is true (or truthful) He can do nothing inconsistent with Himself. His promises can never be broken or unfulfilled (2 Timothy 2:13), and the Bible, His revealed Word, must also be inerrantly true. In relation to God, truth can be defined as:

“...that perfection of His being by virtue of which He fully answers to the idea of the Godhead, is perfectly reliable in His revelation, and sees things as they really are.”<sup>29</sup>

## **End of Lesson 5**

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<sup>26</sup> Henry C. Theissen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. by Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 86.

<sup>27</sup> See Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), for a definitive discussion of the biblical nature and meaning of love.

<sup>28</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Nottingham: IVP, 1999), p. 89.

<sup>29</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 62.



## Lesson 6. The Names of God

The many and various names of God in Scripture provide additional revelation of His nature and character. These are not names or titles assigned by people, but are His own descriptions of Himself, even when spoken by a human being.

Even if no particular name is used, the phrase “the name of the Lord” shows us something of His character. For example:

- To call upon the name of the Lord is to worship Him (Genesis 21:33).
- To take His name in vain is to dishonour Him (Exodus 20:7).
- Not to follow the requirements of the Law involves profaning His name (Leviticus 22:2, 32).
- Priests performed their service in the name of the Lord (Deuteronomy 21:5).
- His name pledged the continuation of the nation of Israel (1 Samuel 12:22).

### I. ELOHIM

#### A. Usage

The term *elohim* occurs in the general sense of deity about 2,570 times in the Old Testament. About 2,310 times it is a name for the true God. The first occurrence is in the first verse of the Bible. It is used in reference to false deities in Genesis 35:2, 4; Exodus 12:12; 18:11; 23:24.

#### B. Meaning

The meaning of *elohim* depends on its derivation. Some understand that it comes from a root that means fear and indicates that the deity is to be feared, revered, or worshiped. Others trace it to a root, *El*, that means strong, indicating a deity of great power. Though not conclusive, the evidence seems to point to the latter derivation signifying, in the case of the one true God, that He is the Strong One, the Mighty Leader, the Supreme Deity.

When used of God Himself, *Elohim* emphasizes God’s transcendence: He is above all others who are called god.

#### C. The Plural Form

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*Elohim*, a plural form, is peculiar to the Old Testament and appears in no other Semitic language. Generally speaking there are four views as to the significance of this plural form:



**1. It is a polytheistic plural;** i.e., the word originally had a polytheistic sense and only later acquired a singular sense. However, the monotheism of the Old Testament was revealed and not developed from polytheism.

**2. It is a Trinitarian plural;** i.e., the Triune Godhead is seen, or at least intimated, in the use of this plural form. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, to conclude this necessitates reading New Testament revelation back into the Old Testament. The plural may allow for the subsequent revelation of the Trinity, but that is quite different from saying that the plural indicates Tri-unity.

**3. It is a majestic plural;** the fact that the noun is consistently used with singular verb forms, and with adjectives and pronouns in the singular affirms this. This plural of majesty denotes God's unlimited greatness and supremacy.

**4. It is a collective noun;** all heavenly beings have the generic term *elohim*; however, there are differences among these beings: Elders (Revelation 4:4; Psalm 107:32), Sons of God (Job 38:7), Cherubim (Genesis 3:24; Psalm 80:1), Seraphim (Isaiah 6:2, 6), Angels (Psalm 91:11; Matthew 16:27), and so on. Each of these beings has a place in the hierarchy of heaven, or the hierarchy of *elohim*. However, none is like the One, True, and Most High God, *El Elyon* (see below), the creator of all the heavenly beings, the universe, the earth and mankind (Deuteronomy 6:4).

#### D. Relationships of This Name

If this name of God means the Strong One, or the Mighty One, and occurs in a majestic plural, one would expect that it would be used in relation to His greatness and mighty works.

**1. In relation to His sovereignty.** Elohim is used to describe Him as the "God of all the earth" (Isaiah 54:5), the "God of all flesh" (Jeremiah 32:27), the "God of heaven" (Nehemiah 2:4), and the "God of gods and the Lord of lords" (Deuteronomy 10: 17).

**2. In relation to His work of Creation.** He is the Elohim who created all things (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18; Jonah 1:9).

**3. In relation to His judging.** (Psalm 50:6; 58:11).

**4. In relation to His mighty works on behalf of Israel.** (Deuteronomy 5:23; 8:15; Psalm 68:7).





## E. Compound Names

**1. *El Elyon*.** This name, the Most High God emphasized God's strength, sovereignty, and supremacy. It was first used by Melchizedek when he blessed Abraham (Genesis 14:19), though if Isaiah 14:14 records Satan's attempt to usurp the supremacy of God, this would be a prior use. After these early occurrences, its use recedes until about 1000 B.C., where it appears again in poetic and exilic literature (Psalm 9:2; Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, 27).

**2. *El Olam*.** This name means "the Everlasting God" from an original form meaning "the God of eternity" (Genesis 21:33). It emphasizes God's unchangeableness (Psalm 100:5; 103:17) and is connected with His inexhaustible strength (Isaiah 40:28).

**3. *El Shaddai*.** Most commentators accept that *shaddai* derives from the Hebrew word *shad*, meaning *breast*. This conveys the idea that God provides all our needs and sustains us in this life, like a mother's breast milk which provides all a baby's requirements. It was the name by which God appeared to the patriarchs to give comfort and confirmation of the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 35: 11; Exodus 6:3; Psalm 91:1-2).

Another derivation of this word is that *shaddai* is connected with an Akkadian word that means mountain. Thus this name of God pictures Him as the Almighty One standing on a mountain. A mountain is one symbol for the home of God, or heaven. Therefore in this case *El Shaddai* would mean the *Mighty God of Heaven*.

This name is also sometimes used in connection with the chastening of God's people. It is used this way in Ruth 1:20-21, in an ironic fashion, where Naomi complains that the Almighty comforter and sustainer has brought her to the point of ruin and left her with nothing.

**4. *El Roi*.** "God who sees" (Genesis 16:13). Hagar gave this name to God when He spoke to her before Ishmael's birth.

## II. YAHWEH

The second basic name for God is the personal one, the Lord, or *Yahweh*. It is a translation of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, YHWH. Because the name was originally written without vowels, it is uncertain how it is pronounced. The American Standard Version translates it as *Jehovah*, by combining the Tetragrammaton with the vowels from *Adonai*, whereas most modern translations render the Tetragrammaton as "LORD" to distinguish it from *Adonai*, "Lord."

It is the most frequently used name, occurring about 6,828 times in the Old Testament.

### A. Origin of the Word





The name apparently comes from the root *hawa*, which signifies either existence (as of a tree trunk where it falls, Ecclesiastes 11:3) or development (as in Nehemiah 6:6). Perhaps both ideas can be combined in the significance of God's name by saying that it denotes Him as the active, self-existent One.

## **B. Revelation of the Name**

*Yahweh* was used by Eve (Genesis 4:1), people in the days of Seth (v. 26), Noah (9:26), and Abraham (12:8; 15:2, 8). But it was to Moses that the deep significance of the name was revealed. God said that even though He appeared to the patriarchs He was not known to them by His name *Yahweh* (Exodus 6:3).

The meaning of the name was not known in its fullest and deepest sense. This revelation came to Moses at the burning bush when God identified Himself as "I AM WHO I AM" (3:14), the principal idea being that God was present with the people of Israel. Whereas *Elohim* and *Adonai* were known to other contemporary cultures, the revelation of the name *Yahweh* was unique to Israel.

## **C. Sacredness of the Name**

Since *Yahweh* was God's personal name known only to Israel, in post-exilic times it began to be considered so sacred that it was not pronounced. Instead the term *Adonai* was usually substituted, and by the sixth to seventh centuries A.D. the vowels of *Adonai* were combined with the consonants *YHWH* to remind the synagogue reader to pronounce the sacred name as Adonai. From this came the artificial word Jehovah. But all of this underscores the awe in which the name was held.

## **D. Significance of the Name**

Several facets seem to be included in the significance of the name *Yahweh*.

1. It emphasizes God's changeless self-existence. This may be supported by the etymology and from the Lord's use of Exodus 3:14 in John 8:58 to state His claim to absolute eternal existence.
2. It assures God's presence with His people. See Exodus 3:12.
3. It is connected with Godly power to work on behalf of His people and to keep His covenant with them, which was illustrated and confirmed by His work in their deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 6:6).

## **E. Compounds with the Name**



1. ***Yahweh Jireh***, “the Lord Will Provide” (Genesis 22:14). After the Angel of the Lord pointed to a ram to use as a substitute for Isaac, Abraham named the place “the Lord Will provide.”
2. ***Yahweh Nissi***, “the Lord is My Banner” (Exodus 17:15). After the defeat of the Amalekites, Moses erected an altar and called it Yahweh Nissi.
3. ***Yahweh Sabbaoth***, “the Lord of hosts” (1 Samuel 1:3). This is a military figure that pictures Yahweh as the Commander of the angelic armies of heaven as well as the armies of Israel (1 Samuel 17:45). The title reveals the sovereignty and omnipotence of God and was used often by the prophets (Isaiah and Jeremiah) to remind the people during times of national crisis that God was their Leader and Protector.
4. ***Yahweh Shalom***, “the Lord is Peace” (Judges 6:24).
5. ***Yahweh Maccaddeshcem***, “the Lord who sanctifies you” (Exodus 31:13).
6. ***Yahweh Roi***, “the Lord is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1).
7. ***Yahweh Tzidikenu***, “the Lord our righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6).
9. ***Yahweh Elohim Israel***, “the Lord, the God of Israel” (Judges. 5:3; Isaiah 17:6).

Strictly speaking, these compounds are not additional names of God, but designations or titles that often grew out of commemorative events. However they do reveal additional facets of the character of God.

### III. ADONAI

Like *Elohim*, *Adonai* is a plural of Lord, or majesty (Hebrew *Adhon*, *Adhonai*). The singular means lord, master, owner (Genesis 19:2; 40:1; 1 Samuel 1:15). *Adonai* occurs 449 times in the Old Testament—315 times in conjunction with *Yahweh*.

It is used, as might be expected, of the relationship between men (like master and slave, Exodus 21:1-6). When used of God’s relationship to men, it conveys the idea of the servant-master relationship (Genesis 24:9), and so describes God’s authority as Master, who is sovereign in His rule and has absolute authority (Psalm 8:1; Hosea 12:14). Joshua recognized the authority of the Captain of the Lord’s hosts (Joshua 5:14), and Isaiah submitted to the authority of the Lord, his Master (Isaiah 6:8-11). The New Testament equivalent is *Kurios*, meaning “Lord.”

Adonai should probably best be understood as meaning “Lord of All” (Deuteronomy 10:17; Joshua 3:11). It is more an office, or title, than a name. It is also possible to understand



Adonai as a personal address meaning “my Lord.”

#### IV. GOD (THEOS)

##### A. Usage

*Theos* is the most frequent designation of God in the New Testament and the most common translation in the Septuagint for *Elohim*. It almost always refers to the one true God, though sometimes it is used of the gods of paganism, in the reported words of pagans, or by Christians repudiating these false gods (Acts 12:22; 14:11; 17:23; 19:26-27; 1 Corinthians 8:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). It also refers to the devil (2 Corinthians 4:4) and sensuality (Philippians 3:19). Most importantly Jesus Christ is designated as *Theos* (though some of the passages are disputed). Review Romans 9:5; John 1:1, 18; 20:28; and Titus 2:13.

##### B. Teaching

The uses of the word teach a number of important truths about the true God:

**1. He is the only One True God** (Matthew 23:9; Romans 3:30; 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Galatians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19).

This fundamental truth of Judaism, the unity of God, was affirmed by Christ and the early church.

**2. He is unique.** He is the only God (1 Timothy 1:17), the only true God (John 17:3), the only holy One (Revelation 15:4), and the only wise One (Romans 16:27). Therefore, believers can have no other gods beside the one true God (Matt. 6:24).

**3. He is transcendent.** God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Lord of the universe and Planner of the ages (Acts 17:24; Hebrews 3:4; Revelation 10:6).

**4. He is Saviour.** (1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:13; 3:4). He sent His son to be the Redeemer (John 3:16) and delivered Him to death for us (Rom. 8:32).

##### C. Christ as God

Christ, the Son of God, is called God in several New Testament texts:

**1. In John.** The Johannine teaching includes the following passages: John 1:1, 18, where some manuscripts read, “the only begotten God;” see also John 20:28, where Thomas used both Kurios and Theos of Jesus, and also 1 John 5:20.

**2. In Paul.** Titus 2:13 seems to be the clearest designation of Christ as God in Paul’s



writings, since Romans 9:5 is questioned by some. However, it is linguistically proper and contextually preferable to ascribe the phrase “God blessed forever” to Christ.

## **V. LORD (KURIOS)**

### **A. Usage**

The majority of the 717 occurrences of *Kurios* in the New Testament are by Luke (210) and Paul (275) since they wrote to people of Greek culture and language.

### **B. Meaning**

The word emphasizes authority and supremacy. It can mean ‘sir’ (John 4:11), owner (Luke 19:33), or master (Colosians 3:22), or it can refer to idols (1 Corinthians 8:5) or husbands (1 Peter 3:6). When used of God as Kurios it:

“expresses particularly His creatorship, His power revealed in history, and His just dominion over the universe...”<sup>30</sup>

### **C. Christ as Kurios**

During His earthly life Jesus was addressed as Lord, meaning Rabbi or Sir (Matthew 8:6). Thomas ascribed full deity to Him when he declared, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Christ’s resurrection and exaltation placed Him as Lord of the universe (Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:11). But:

“...to an early Christian accustomed to reading the OT, the word ‘Lord,’ when used of Jesus, would suggest His identification with the God of the OT.”<sup>31</sup>

This means, in relation to a verse like Romans 10:9, that:

“...any Jew who publicly confessed that Jesus of Nazareth was ‘Lord,’ would be understood to ascribe the divine nature and attributes to Him.”<sup>32</sup>

Thus the essence of the Christian faith was to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the Yahweh of the Old Testament.

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<sup>30</sup> Cohn Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), art. H. Bietenhard, *Lord*, p. 2:514.

<sup>31</sup> S. E. Johnson, *Lord (Christ)*, in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1976), p. 3:151.

<sup>32</sup> W.G.T. Shedd, *Romans* (New York: Scribner, 1879), 318



## **VI. MASTER (DESPOTES)**

### **A. Meaning**

*Master* connotes the idea of ownership, whereas *kurios* emphasizes authority and supremacy.

### **B. Usage.**

God is addressed in prayer as *Despot* by Simeon (Luke 2:29), by Peter and those with him (Acts 4:24), and by the martyrs in heaven (Revelation 6:10). On two other occasions Christ is called *Despot* (2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4).

## **VII. FATHER**

One of the distinctive New Testament revelations is that of God as Father of individuals. Whereas the word “Father” is used of God only fifteen times in the Old Testament, it occurs 245 times of God in the New. As Father, He gives His children grace and peace (a regular salutation in the Epistles; e.g.: Ephesians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1), good gifts (James 1:17), and even commandments (2 John 4). We also address Him as Father in prayer (Ephesians 2:18; 1 Thessalonians 3:11).

To sum up: a name in Bible times was more than an identification; it was descriptive of its bearer, often revealing some characteristic of a person.

**“O Lord, our Lord how majestic is Thy name in all the earth.” (Psalm 8:1, 9).**

## **End of Lesson 6**



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