

III. Theology Proper: *Study of God*

A. Defining Theology Proper

1. Theology Proper is the study of God. Theology is the combination of the Greek *theos* (meaning "God") and *logos* (meaning "word, discourse, teaching, study"). Theology in a broad sense has come to be understood as a holistic worldview in which all things are seen and understood through the lens of the Divine. However, theology in a narrow sense, or theology proper, is the study of God Himself—His being, character, and works.
2. A typical study of theology proper includes topics such as:
 - a) The existence of God
 - b) The ontology (or nature of His being) of God
 - c) The Trinity (which falls under 2.b., but is usually regarded as a separate study due to its uniqueness and significance)
 - d) The knowability of God
 - e) His works and purposes in creation (including His providence and miracles)
 - f) The names of God
 - g) His incommunicable attributes
 - h) His communicable attributes

B. Existence of God

1. Evident in Creation (General Revelation)

a) Philosophical Argument:

(1) Cosmological Argument

(a) Premise 1: Everything

that began to exist has a cause.

(b) Premise 2: The universe began to exist.

(c) Conclusion: The universe has a cause.

(2) Teleological Argument:

(a) The complexity of the universe

necessitates an intelligent and

intentional design.

(b) "Watchmaker" Argument

b) Biblical Support:

(1) Job 39

(2) Psalm 8:1

(3) Romans 1:19-20

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2. Evident in the Human Heart (General Revelation)

a) Philosophical Argument: Moral Law Argument

- (1) There is an observable moral law that is acknowledged across all cultures and history
- (2) If there is a moral law, there must be a Law Giver.

b) Biblical Support:

- (1) Psalm 139:14
- (2) Acts 17:24-28
- (3) Romans 1:21-22)

3. Evident in Scripture (Special Revelation)

a) God's Self-Disclosure

- (1) Psalm 119:30
- (2) Romans 10:9-10

b) Preconditions for Understanding Special Revelation

- (1) Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 2:10
- (2) Repentant - John 12:40
- (3) Diligent - Psalm 119:10
- (4) Desiring - Psalm 119:14, 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 174

NOTES:

4. Limitations in Acknowledging God's Existence
 - a) Limitations of Philosophical Argumentation
 - b) Limitations of Human Finitude; Isaiah 55:8-9
 - c) Limitations of Sin; Psalm 14:1; Romans 1:21;
1 Corinthians 2:13-14

C. Purposes

1. Relation to Creation
 - a) Reasons for Creation - For His glory
 - (1) Colossians 1:16
 - (2) Revelation 4:11
 - (3) Nehemiah 9:6
 - (4) Psalm 148:2-5
 - b) Reasons for Redemption
 - (1) Romans 9:14-24
 - (2) Ephesians 1:3-6
 - (3) 1 Timothy 1:15-17
 - (4) Revelation 5:8-14

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c) Names of God

(1) The names of God could be placed under the study of His attributes as they reveal what He is like. However, they also function under the study of His relation to creation as they reveal how His attributes function in the created realm.

(2) Hebrew Names in the Old Testament (a sampling)

(a) El, Elohim, Elyon - God, Most High God; Genesis 1:1

(b) Adonai - Lord; Isaiah 25:8

(c) Yahweh - I Am, I Am who I AM, covenantal name of God disclosed to His people, Israel. (Rendered "LORD" in English translations.); Exodus 3:13-14

(d) Jehovah - The translated name of "Yahweh" in old English (ex. KJV), which is derived from an error in understanding the Hebrew vowel points. The Tetragrammaton, YHWH, had the vowel points for the Hebrew Adonai to signify that the reading of Yahweh was to be vocalized as Adonai so as to preserve the sacred Name.



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(e) Numerous Compounds:

(i) El-Shaddai - God Almighty;

Genesis 17:1

(ii) Jehovah Jirah - LORD Provides;

Genesis 22:14

(iii) Yahweh Sabaoth - LORD of Hosts;

Psalms 84:3

(2) Greek Names in the New Testament

(a sampling)

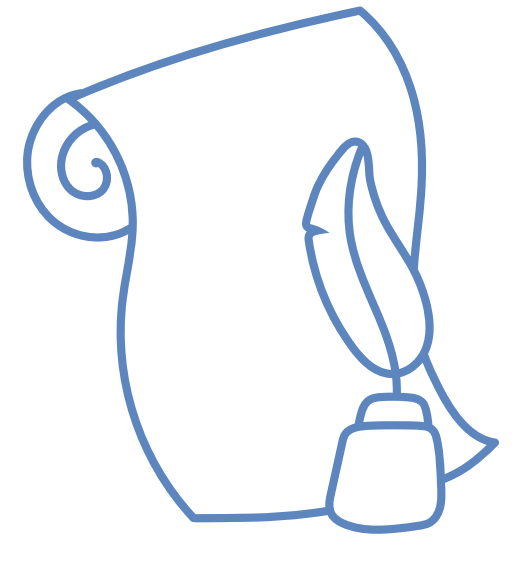
(a) Theos - God (used to translate Hebrew

El / Elohim); John 1:1

(b) Kurios - Lord, (used to translate Yahweh);

Acts 15:40

(c) Pater - Father; Matthew 6:9



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2. Sovereignty & Providence

a) Sovereignty

(1) Definition: "God's right and power to do all that He wills." (Piper, Providence, 2020)

(2) Biblical Support:

(a) Psalm 115:3

(b) Jeremiah 32:27

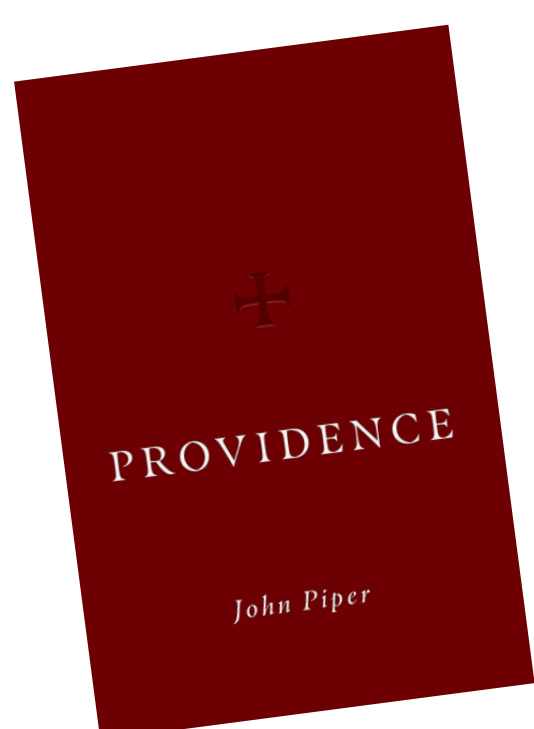
(c) Luke 1:37

(d) Ephesians 3:20

b) Providence

(1) Definition: "God's purposeful providing for, or sustaining and governing, the world." (Piper, Providence, 2020)

(2) Definition: "God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy." (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646)



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(3) Forms:

- (a)** Preservation
- (b)** Concurrence
- (c)** Government
- (d)** Examples of God's Provision:
 - (i)** Answered Prayers
 - (ii)** Miracles
 - (iii)** Provision for Normative Function of Universe
 - (iv)** Holy Spirit

(4) Biblical Support:

- (a)** Genesis 22:8
- (b)** Job 38-41
- (c)** Isaiah 46:10
- (d)** Matthew 10:29
- (e)** 2 Peter 1:3-4

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D. Trinity

1. Biblical Support for the Oneness of God

a) Old Testament:

(1) Deuteronomy 6:4-5

(2) 1 Kings 8:60

b) New Testament:

(1) Romans 3:30

(2) James 2:19

(3) Romans 1:19-20



2. Biblical Support for the Person of the Father

a) Old Testament:

(1) Genesis 1:1

(2) Psalm 31:14

b) New Testament:

(1) John 17:1-3

(2) Ephesians 1:3

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3. Biblical Support for the Person of the Son

a) Old Testament:

(1) Exodus 3:2-6

(2) Judges 2:1-2

b) New Testament:

(1) John 20:28

(2) Titus 2:13

4. Biblical Support for the Person of the Holy Spirit

a) Old Testament:

(1) Genesis 1:1

(2) Isaiah 63:10

b) New Testament:

(1) John 14:26

(2) Rom. 8:27



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5. Trinitarian Texts:
 - a) Isaiah 48:16
 - b) Matthew 3:16-17
 - c) Matthew 28:19
 - d) John 1:1-2
 - e) 2 Corinthians 13:14

6. Seven Orthodox Affirmations on the Nature of the Trinity
 - a) The Father is God
 - b) The Son is God
 - c) The Holy Spirit is God
 - d) The Father is distinct from the Son and Spirit
 - e) The Son is distinct from the Father and Spirit
 - f) The Spirit is distinct from the Father and Son
 - g) There is only one God

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7. Main Trinitarian Heresies

- a) Modalism - The claim that there is one person who appears to us in three different forms.
- b) Arianism - The denial of the full deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- c) Tritheism - The denial that there is only one God.

8. Implications of a Triune God

- a) Essential for God to be Love
- b) Essential for God to be Self-Sufficient

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