

SWORDS AND SHOVELS THEOLOGY CLASS



TOPIC 2: WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF ALL THEOLOGY?

*If the **focus** of all theology is to know and love God, then the most important thing that we must **know and study** is **God himself**.*

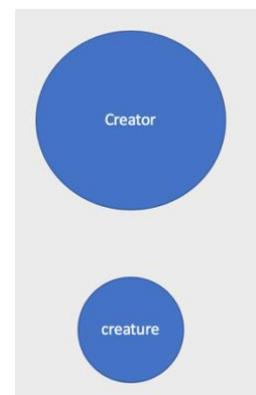
LESSON 1: GOD IS CREATOR AND LORD

- Goals:
 - To understand the centrality of the Creator-creature distinction
 - To understand the meaning of God's Lordship
 - To know ourselves in light of His Lordship

THE CREATOR-CREATURE DISTINCTION

What does it mean that God is Creator and that we are creatures? Why is this distinction important?

- Totally separate and distinct
- Creation *ex nihilo* – “out of nothing”
- All creation is totally dependent, defined and determined by the Creator
- Only Christianity maintains a true Creator – creature distinction



- Almost EVERY SINGLE truth about us as human beings STARTS with reaffirming the Creator-creature distinction – you will see this as we continue in our studies.

GOD, THE LORD

“13 Then Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”

14 God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

15. God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, “The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent you” This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.” (Exodus 3:13-15)

“The Lord”

- Lordship is a relationship between God and his creation.
- The central name of God describes his relationship to us.
- **Lord** and **covenant** are inseparable because his name as Lord is at the head of every covenant

What is included is the fact that he is Lord? There are three aspects:

1. ABSOLUTE CONTROL

- God both **possesses** and **exercises** the power to control all things.

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.” Ephesians 1:11

“Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?” Lamentations 3:37-38

- General implication: He controls the universe
- Specific implication:
 - a. He reveals himself to us
 - b. Without his self-revelation we cannot know him
 - c. He sets the terms of the covenant
- **Note the importance of the fact that his control is absolute** – his reign and kingship is inescapable.

2. ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY

- He alone has the **right** to control all things

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

***For** he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters."*

Psalm 24:1-2

- Because he is the supreme controller, he is the one and only **evaluator** of his creation.
- General: "And he saw that it was good."
- Specific:
 - His Word is our binding command and instruction
 - Love and obedience are inseparable
 - "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', and do not what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46)
- **Absolute:**
 - 1. Unquestionable
 - "The Lord said to Job: 'Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!'"
 - Then Job answered the Lord: 'I am unworthy - how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer.'" (Job 40:1-5)
 - 2. Above every other voice
 - "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods besides me." (Ex. 20:3)
 - 3. All of life
 - "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Col. 3:17

3. COVENANT PRESENCE

- He is present in all his creation as covenant Lord

"7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 9 If I take the wings of the

morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 even there your hand shall bleed me, and your right hand shall hold me.” Psalm 139:7-10

- “I will be with you...”
- God revealed himself to Moses and gave the law to dwell among Israel
- God revealed himself in Jesus and have the gospel that he might dwell in our hearts
- Covenant - To be with, to bless, to aid, to deliver, and to judge.

- Absolute -
 - Without him, there could be no meaning, no purpose, no significance to anything
 - He is the one with whom we have most to do.
 - All of life is before the face of God.
 - More important than anything else is our knowledge of him, love for him and obedience to him

Practical conclusions on lordship:

- Lordship is very unpopular
- Lordship crushes our pride
- Lordship helps us know ourselves and the world
- Lordship gives us confidence and courage in the face of difficulty
- Lordship helps us raise mature men - both humble and strong.

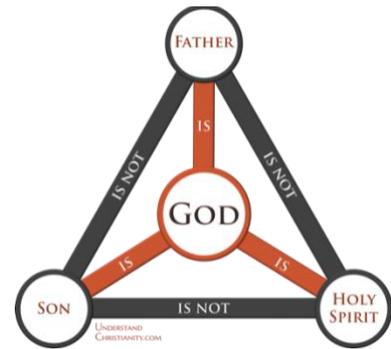
LESSON 2: ABSOLUTE TRIPERSONALY

“The revelation of the Trinity, as opposed to the implied unitarianism of Judaism, can be explained only by the transformation of perspective brought about by Jesus. The Trinity belongs to the inner life of God, and can be known only by those who share in that inner life. As long as we look at God on the outside, we shall never see beyond his unity; for

as the (early church fathers) and Augustine realized, the external works of the Trinity are undivided...This means that an outside observer will never detect the inner reality of God, and will never enter the communion with him which is promised to us in Christ. Jews may recognize God's existence and know his law, but without Christ they cannot penetrate the mystery of that divine fellowship which christians call the Holy Trinity." Gerald Bray, quoted in John Frame's Doctrine of God.

TRINITY BASICS

- God is one
 - Deuteronomy "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."
- God is three.
 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matt. 28:19)
- The three are each fully God
 - The Father is God
 - Jesus is God
 - And Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58)
 - The Holy Spirit is God
 - Acts 5 - "3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."
- Each of the three are distinct from one another.
 - The baptism of Jesus: Jesus is in the river, the Spirit descends, the Father speaks
 - John 14:16 - Jesus will send **another** counselor to them
 - John 17 - Jesus speaks to the Father about the love that exists between them
- The three are related to one another eternally as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. s



WHY IS THIS AN IMPORTANT DOCTRINE?

1. God is love

- a. Love and relationship is at the heart of who God is
- b. Creation is the love song of the Trinity

*"The Lord your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing."*

Zeph. 3:17

2. The Trinity is at the heart of the Gospel

- The Son came.
- The Son suffered.
- The Son paid the price.
- The Son healed and performed miracles.
- The Son lived among us.
- The Son died.
- The Son was raised in victory.
- The Son is the first to be raised to a new, resurrection body.
- The Father sent the Son.
- The Father heard the Son.
- The Father answered the Son.
- The Father glorified the Son.
- The Father poured out his wrath on the Son.
- The Father exalted the Son.
- The Spirit conceived the Son.
- The Spirit led the Son.
- The Spirit raised the Son.
- The Spirit was sent by the Son as a greater gift than himself.
- The Spirit intercedes for the saints with groaning too deep for words.

And this is just a small list of examples!

3. The Trinity and the life of the church

- Ephesians 4:1-7
 - a. The basis of unity
 - b. The basis of diversity
 - c. The foundation of love

4. The Trinity and Lordship

- Three aspects of Lordship, and three persons of the Trinity
 - i. Authority - Father
 - ii. Control - Son
 - iii. Presence – Holy Spirit

5. The Trinity and the Christian life

- True gospel faith cannot exist without the trinity
- True worship is consciously trinitarian
- Our prayer must properly understand the roles of the trinity
- Sanctification is the work of the trinity
- The trinity causes us approach relationships with awe and wonder
- The trinity causes us to marvel at the greatness of God's love to us as he reveals his heart with us

At the end of the day, the greatest news of all is who God is. The most powerful thing that can ever happen to us is to get caught up in who he is and what he is doing.