***005 Theology Proper I: Introduction and The Essence of God***

1. Introduction:
   1. The indispensability of the knowledge of God for life:
      1. We are born with knowledge of God: Romans 2:14–15, "14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
      2. The knowledge of God is all around us through creation: Romans 1:18–20, "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 that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
      3. Denial of this knowledge makes us empty, rudderless, and moronic: Romans 1:21–23, "21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
      4. If we do not use our knowledge of God, our mind will become useless. Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
      5. Since we are commanded to worship Him, we must worship Him as He truly is.
   2. The key propositions of theology proper:
      1. The unity, or simplicity of the divine attributes:
         1. God is one. We can separate out individual attributes of God to study them, but He never acts according in a certain way while compromising any other attribute.
         2. He never makes a sovereign decree apart from His love or justice.
      2. Communicability of divine attributes. Human beings are made in the image of God, and called to imitate Him. Yet to call oneself equal to God is ultimate arrogance. This seeming contradiction is resolved by dividing the divine attributes into two categories, the communicable, and the non-communicable.
         1. Mankind is made in the image of God: Genesis 1:26–27, "26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
         2. The call to imitate God:
            1. Leviticus 20:26, "26 ‘Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.
            2. 1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.
            3. Ephesians 5:1, 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;
            4. 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,
         3. Satan’s arrogance to aspire to the place of God: Isaiah 14:12-14, 12 “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 ‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’
            1. Satan’s arrogance was to attempt to overthrow the sovereignty of God, and to become like Him in His very essence. He wanted to be God.
            2. Imitation of the character of God, His *way* of doing things, is how we are to imitate Him.
2. The non-communicable attributes of God, or The Essence of God, or the Core Attributes of His Being:
   1. Infinity. God is an infinite being related to space and time.
      1. Immensity means that He is infinite related to space, Romans 8:38-39, 8 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
      2. Eternity means He is infinite related to time.
         1. Job 36:26, Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know *Him;* The number of His years is unsearchable.”
         2. Psalm 90:2, Before the mountains were born, or thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.”
      3. Immanent – God enters into the physical universe and takes part in his creation.
      4. Transcendent – God is not dependent on the physical universe in any way.
   2. Spirit, God is not of flesh and bone, not in essence dependent on this physical universe in any way (see aseity).
      1. John 4:24 makes a definitive statement about the spiritual nature of God, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
      2. Jesus founded this provision on the truth that God is Spirit.
      3. God is Spirit. Though He created the physical world, and He is able to interact with the physical world, and though Christ has a physical body, God is Spirit.
      4. God is non-corporeal. He does not have a body. (Christ does).
      5. He is invisible, not detectable by the human senses:
         1. John 1:18, "18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.
         2. 1 John 4:12, "12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.
      6. God is detectable only through what He makes, what He does, and what He reveals about Himself.
   3. Life: God is a living person who intervenes in His creation (see also immanence). His intervention is always according to His holiness.
      1. Joshua 3:10, And Joshua said, By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.”
      2. Psalm 42:1-2, David is once again in a jam, 1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?”
      3. Life is intrinsic in the Father and the Son, John 5:26, "26 “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;
      4. We are to live even as God lives in the expression of His perfect character. John 10:10, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”
   4. Trinity: although God is one in essence, He is three persons.
      1. The first person of the Trinity is God the Father. The second person of the Trinity is God the Son. The third person of the Trinity is God the Holy Spirit.
      2. The three persons of the trinity possess identical essence in one being.
      3. This divine being is tripersonal, having three distinct persons which are autonomous from one another in soul function.
      4. This distinction in persons is more than just one God showing different facets or modes of His one person.
      5. God is plural: Genesis 1:26, Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
      6. God is three persons:
         1. Matthew 28:19, Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,”
         2. 2 Corinthians 13:14, The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”
      7. God is one: Deuteronomy 6:4-5, 4 Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”
   5. Perfection: God is Perfect in His Character, the Way that He Thinks, Speaks, Creates, and Interacts with the Universe He Created and the Creatures Who Live in It.
      1. Job 37:16, "16 “Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,
      2. Deuteronomy 32:4, “The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.”
      3. Psalm 19:7, "7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.