God Revealed – The Father

The word ***theology*** comes from the Greek word *theos*, meaning "God," and *logos*, meaning "word, discourse, declaration." Thus, theology is a study about God. The broader study of theology examines God's nature and our relationship with Him. *Systematic Theology* covers the Biblical study of God, His creation, the study of Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, salvation, and all doctrines of the Bible.

We will be considering the study of theology proper which is the study of God the Father.

The first person of the divine Trinity is the Father. God has revealed Himself as the Father, (Ephesians 1:3; John 17:3). Jesus spoke of His eternal glory with God the Father before the creation, (John 17:5). He did not become the Father of the Lord Jesus at the incarnation and earthly birth. All of the attributes, character, and essence of God the Trinity are related to the Father. He is the cause of all things, yet is caused by nothing. He always was and ever shall be God. He is the eternal, imminent, and immutable God.

The Fatherhood of God is related to children.

All of mankind is God's creation, yet, all people are not children of God. The supernatural birth that is a result of salvation causes a person to become a *"son and if a son, then an heir of God and joint-heir through Christ,"* (Galatians 4:7).

On the cross, Jesus cried, Matthew 27:46 *"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"* Notice that Jesus called Him "*God"* not *"Father."* He did this because He had become sin for us and was taking the place of the sinner. All our sins were laid on Him, the Just dying for the unjust. While on the cross with all of our sins laid upon Him, He could only use the title *"God."*

He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, (Ephesians 1:3). The fatherhood of God represents a central theological claim that anchors the doctrine of the Trinity and the believer's relationship with God. In the Old Testament, God's fatherhood remained restricted to Israel, His chosen people. In the New Testament, all believers receive the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15) God did not become Father by the act of creation, but has revealed Himself as the eternal Father.

NAMES OF GOD

ELOHIM

Elohim is used more than two thousand times in the Old Testament and is a "plural of majesty" and the general name for God. The plural name Elohim reveals the action and person of the Divine Trinity. It is derived from the abbreviated name, *EL*, meaning "to be strong, the Strong One, or Almighty," (Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; Joshua 3:10). In English translations, *EL* is usually translated "God" or "Almighty God." *Elohim* emphasizes God's transcendence, that He is above all others who are called god. *Elohim*, the plural form of *EL,* was introduced in Genesis 1:1, *"In the beginning God…"* As we have seen, Elohim represents the fulness of the Divine Trinity. *EL* and *Elohim* appear to be interchangeable (Exodus 34:14; Psalms 18:31; Deuteronomy 32:17, 21). *EL* is the singular form of *Elohim*.

The Hebrew word "EL" is connected to many names in the Bible.

- "Beth-el" meaning "house of God," (Genesis 12:8) — Jacob built an altar where God had appeared to him and called it EL Bethel ("God to the House of God").
- "Dani-el" meaning — "God is my judge," (Daniel 1:6).
- "El-ijah" meaning — "my God is Jehovah," (1 Kings 17:1).
- "Immanu-el" meaning — "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14).

When "EL" is used at the beginning or ending of a name, it always means "God."

ADONAI

Adonai (Hebrew — *Adhon* or *Adhonay*) means "lord" or "master" and is usually translated "Lord" in English Bibles. *Adonai* occurs 449 times in the Old Testament and 315 times in conjunction with Yahweh. In Genesis 24:9, "*Adhon"* emphasizes the servant-master relationship Abraham had with his servant. "*Adhon"* (aw-done) suggests God's authority as Master; One Who is sovereign in His rule and has absolute authority, (Psalms 8:1; Hosea 12:14).

Jehovah is Adhon (Lord). *Adonai* should be understood to mean "*Lord of all*," (Joshua 3:11).

Deuteronomy 10:17 For the LORD (Yâhovah) your God ('elohiym) is God ('elohiym) of gods and Lord (adhon) of lords, the great God ('el) mighty and awesome…

YAHWEH

The name *Yahweh* translates the Hebrew tetragrammaton (four lettered

expression) YHWH. The name was originally written without vowels and still has an uncertain pronunciation. *Yahweh* is the unspeakable name of God due to the reverence and fear of almighty God. The American Standard Version translates it "Jehovah." Most modern translations render it "LORD" (to distinguish it from *Adonai*, "Lord"). Jewish scholars generally pronounced the unspeakable name as *"Adonai"* instead of actually pronouncing YHWH, out of respect for the sacredness of the covenant name.

When Moses asked God's name, the LORD told him to tell the people, "I AM WHO I AM...The LORD…I AM has sent me to you. This is My name forever" (Exodus 3:14–15). "Jehovah" the eternal "I AM" is the common designation of God in the Old Testament and is used 6,828 times.

Yahweh has particular significance to the "I AM" claims of Christ (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1).

Christ's statements claimed equality with Yahweh. This emphasized the unity of the triune Godhead.

By the name *Yahweh*, God identified His personal relationship as the "Redeemer" of His people, Israel. This is the name by which Abram acknowledged the Abrahamic Covenant, (Genesis 12:8). By the name *Yahweh*, God brought Israel out of Egypt, delivered them from bondage, and redeemed them (Exodus 6:6; 20:2).

Whereas *Elohim* and *Adonai* were names known to other cultures, the revelation of *Yahweh* was unique to Israel.

Compound Names of God

There are a number of compound forms of the name of God involving the names El (or Elohim) and Yahweh.

- ***El Shaddai*** — "God Almighty," suggests the power or strength of God. By this name, God is also seen as a covenant-keeping God (Genesis 17:1–8).
- ***El Elyon*** — "God Most High," emphasizes God's supremacy. He is the true God and Creator of heaven and earth, Who is above all so-called gods (cf. Genesis 14:18–22). Melchizedek recognized Him as "God Most High" the possessor of heaven and earth (v. 19).
- ***El Olam*** — The "Everlasting God," stresses His unchanging character (Genesis 21:33; Isaiah 40:28).

Some names of God describe Him or His actions.

- ***Jehovah-Jireh*** — The LORD Will Provide, (Genesis 22:14)

- **Jehovah Rapha** — I am the Lord who heals you, (Exodus 15:26).
- ***Yahweh-Nissi*** — The LORD Our Banner, (Exodus 17:15)
- ***Yahweh-Shalom*** — The LORD is Peace, (Judges 6:24)
- ***Yahweh-Sabaoth*** — The LORD of Hosts, (1 Samuel 1:3)
- ***Jehovah M'Kaddesh*** — Jehovah is our Sanctifier, (Leviticus 20;7 8; Exodus 31:13; Deuteronomy 14:2)
- ***Jehovah Elyon*** — Jehovah Most High, (Psalms 7:17)
- ***Jehovah Ra ah (Roi)*** — Jehovah is my Shepherd, (Psalms. 23:1)
- ***Yahweh-Tsidkenu*** — The LORD Our Righteousness, (Jeremiah 23:6).
- ***Yahweh-Adonai*** — Sovereign Lord, (Genesis 15:2).
- ***Jehovah Shammah*** — Present, (Deuteronomy 31:6)
- ***Jehovah Goel*** — Redeemer, (Isaiah 47:4; 44:6)
- ***Jehovah Mepalti*** — Help and Deliverer, (Psalms 40:17)
- ***Jehovah Izzûz Gibbôr' —*** Strong and Mighty (Psalms 24:8)
- ***Jehovah Anî Tsûr*** — Rock (Psalms 19:14; 144:1-2)

The Nature Of God

When referring to the nature of God, it is necessary to consider God the Trinity. What is said in reference to God the Father is also indicative of God the Son and Holy Spirit.

God is Spirit

John 4:24 NIV "God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

The spirituality of God refers to His invisibility, immensity, and omnipresence. God's essence is free from the limitation of time and space. "God is spirit" acknowledges that God is the source of created life and recognizes God as the Living One. Throughout the Old Testament, God is referred to as a spirit being, although He is attributed with anthropomorphic terms. (Human-like form or terms)

Almighty God revealed Himself in various ways.

Although He manifested Himself to Moses in a burning bush, (Exodus 3:4) God was not the burning bush. He revealed Himself as a Pillar of Cloud and a Pillar of Fire to the whole house of Israel, (Exodus 13:21) but God was not the pillar of cloud or fire. In the New Testament, the Father revealed Himself in His Son's life, actions, words, miracles, etc.., yet the Father is not the Son.

Theophanies

The visible appearances of God are called "*Theophanies*" - a visible manifestation of God. *Theophany* comes from the Greek words "theos" (God) and "phano" (to appear). A theophany is an appearance of God to a person or group when to some degree, He shows Himself as He truly is. A theophany can be a physical, visual, or audible manifestation of God in His full glory and power.

- Genesis 12:7, the LORD appeared to Abram.
- Exodus 40:34, the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
- Isaiah 31:4, the LORD of hosts came down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill.
- Luke 9:29, As Jesus was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, a cloud of glory appeared, and His clothing became dazzling white. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

Many of the *Theophanies* were *Christophanies* or a visible manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ. Theophanies are different in nature from visions or anthropomorphic revelations. Anthropomorphic revelations are descriptions of God using human characteristics, a bodily form, emotions, and actions to communicate divine truth. This anthropomorphic language regarding God was essential for God to remain accessible to people and enable worshipers to relate to a deity who could sympathize with human feelings, emotions and needs. They help us understand various encounters with God.

Anthropomorphic revelations

- **Soul** (My soul shall not abhor you) — Leviticus 26:11
- **Spirit** (Spirit of God moving across the waters) — Genesis 1:2
- **Eyes** (eyes of the LORD run to and fro; Open your eyes; His eyes examine) — 2 Chronicles 16:9; 2 Kings 19:16; Psalms 11:4; Hebrews 4:13
- **Ears** (Give ear, O LORD) — 2 Kings 19:16
- **Lips** (open His lips against you) — Job 11:5
- **Mouth** (every word from the mouth of the LORD)— Deuteronomy 8:3
- I will show them the **Back and not my face** — Jeremiah 18:17
- **Arms** (mighty hand and outstretched arm) — Ezekiel 20:33; Psalms 89:10; Isaiah 40:10
- **Hand — Arm** (KJV, LORD's hand waxed short) (NKJV, Has the LORD's

arm been shortened?) — Numbers 11:23
- **Right Hand** (Your right hand)— Exodus 15:16, Psalms 74:11
- **Finger** (the finger of God struck Egypt) — Exodus 8:19; (fingers of a man's hand wrote on the wall) — Daniel 5:5
- **Heart** (grieved His heart that He made man) — Genesis 6:6
- **Bosom** (take Your right hand out of Your bosom) — Psalms 74:11
- **Foot** (earth My footstool) — Isaiah 66:1

God is Light

1 John 1:5 NKJV This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

John 1:5 NIV The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

"God is light" refers to the fact that the Divine nature is of necessity self-revealing and entirely holy. There is perfect purity in every aspect of God's being and essence. His love is pure love. His power is almighty omnipotent power. His goodness has no shadow of evil. The unity of the Godhead is revealed when Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, said He was Light (John 11:12).

Revelation 21:23 NIV The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

The brightness of God's radiant glory surrounds His every appearance, (Ezekiel 1:27-28; 8:2; Psalms 50:2; Luke 2:9; Ezekiel 10:4; 2 Samuel 22:13; Matthew 17:5). He dwells in unapproachable light, (1 Timothy 6:16). This light radiates from within Him and permeates the atmosphere around His being. God is light and in Him is no darkness, (1 John 1:5).

God is Love

1 John 4:7-8 NKJV Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:9 NKJV 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.

John 3:16 NIV For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Love is the essential self-giving nature of God. God does actions of love because He is by nature, character, and essence Love. As with each expression of His divine nature, every disposition of God's fellowship

and relationship with His creation reveals His love, for God is love. God has demonstrated His love toward us through the death of His Son on the cross.

God is a Person

When God is called a person, it does not mean that God is a human being, but He possesses the personality and attributes of a person, and is a rational being with self-awareness.

God the Father has every aspect of an individual being with mind, emotions, and a will. When God loves, grieves, hates, rejoices, cries, provides, and cares, it indicates that He is a Person with a personality. We are made in His image and likeness. Jesus talked to the Father, a Person.

John 17:5 NIV And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began.

He is God the Father in relation to the Trinity. He is the Father, Jesus is the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Jesus clearly stated in John 8:41-47 what is meant by *"God the Father."*

How do we come to recognize the Fatherhood of God?

John 8:41 NIV You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

John 8:42-43 NIV Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on My Own; but He sent Me. Why is My language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

The Fatherhood of God refers to the relationship He has to the redeemed as a result of the new life through Christ. In this new life, we have been made 'sons of God' and 'joint-heirs with Jesus Christ,' (Romans 8:17). Jesus gave us the privilege of coming to the Father in heaven in prayer.

Matthew 6:9-10 NKJV In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:11-13 NKJV Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

In John 16, Jesus expanded the blessings we receive through this new relationship with the Father.

John 16:23 NKJV And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

Definitions—

Tetragrammaton — four lettered expression

Anthropomorphic — Human-like form or terms

Theophanies — a visible manifestation of God

Christophanies — a visible manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ