OUR PLAN We all do theology Why is theology important? Systematic Theology Biblical Theology We will be covering roughly 3 chapters each time we meet. Our sessions should serve as an introduction and Pilgrim Theology can help you go further.

KNOWING GOD

"Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god."

Acts 17:22-23a

Immanent- God is present in the material world Transcendent- beyond apprehension

KNOWING GOD

Stoicism- Nature itself is divine and every living thing has the spark of divinity in it.

Epicureanism- God (or the gods) is distant and unconcerned with this world. Nature and fate rule the world.

Platonism- God (or the gods) if perfect cannot come in contact with this world. The spiritual is thus disconnected from the physical world.

KNOWING GOD

Worldview Paradigms

- Polytheism Belief in many gods
- Pantheism All is divine
- Panentheism All is within divinity; the divine and worldly principles are mutually dependent
- **Deism** God created the world but does not intervene miraculously within it
- Atheism God does not exist

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

- God's transcendence is sometimes referred to as his incomprehensibility
- God's distinction from his creation is not merely *quantitative* ("more than"), but *qualitative* ("different from")
- We cannot ascend to God's incomprehensible majesty
- God stoops to our capacity, accommodating his speech to our understanding

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

How We Know God

- God has revealed himself to us through everyday language, like divine "baby talk"
- God's knowledge is **archetypal** (original), while ours is **ectypal** (a finite copy of the original)
- Just as God is fundamentally different than his creatures in his being, so too he necessarily differs in the knowledge he possesses

KEY DISTINCTION

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

How our knowledge compares to God's

- Not **Univocal** (meaning exactly the same as if God's knowledge and creatures' knowledge are identical)
- Not **Equivocal** (Bearing no relationship as if God's knowledge and creatures' knowledge have *nothing* in common)
- It is Analogical A copy/analogue (creatures' knowledge is a copy of God's knowledge, being both similar and dissimilar to it)

KEY DISTINCTION

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

In many ways getting to know God is like meeting a stranger

God is a stranger to us in three senses:

- I. Ontologically In his very being, God is different from his creatures
- 2. Ethically God's perfect holiness and our sinful condition make him a stranger to us
- 3. Redemptively God comes to us as a stranger who redeems us in spite of our human rebellion

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

General and Special Revelation

- •General revelation God's revelation of himself to us through his works in creation and providence
- Special revelation the particular knowledge of God that we attain through the illumination of the Spirit in the written Word of God

KEY DISTINCTION

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

The Death of Reason

The modern age has been characterized by radical swings between rationalism and irrationalism

- Rationalist deism elevated reason so that special revelation was both nonexistent and unnecessary (Immanuel Kant)
- Panentheism God comes to realize his own existence through the world (G.W.F. Hegel)
- Romanticism we are unable to know God, but we experience him through a feeling of absolute dependence (Friedrich Schleiermacher)

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

- Modern criticism is at odds with Christian faith by denying that God actually speaks and acts within human history
- Modern criticism has attempted to do away with special revelation
- But special revelation is critical to the Christian faith in revealing the gospel

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

- God has revealed himself again and again within history
- No other religion bases so much on datable facts
- Including the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. All with specific times, places, and people.
- Our God who is amazing (trancendant) has come near (immanent).

GOD'S WRITTEN WORD

- God has revealed the gospel by special revelation (The Bible).
- God's Word is counterintuitive and offensive to us because of our sinful nature.
- Jesus spoke with the authority of God, not as someone mediating the words of God like Moses
- Since he certified his claims by his resurrection, Jesus' view of Scripture must also be our view
- Jesus treated the Old Testament as the Word of God and said that to hear to apostles is to hear him (Mt 16:16-20)

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- Scripture is authoritative because it is God's Word, not because the church or we believe it.
 - There is still, however, a place for secondary arguments and evidences.
- Holy Spirit illumines us to receive, perceive, and respond to God's Word in faith.
 - Spirit's inward witness is the source of our faith in the Bible's authority.

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Inspiration – Scripture is God-breathed • Because Scripture is inspired, it is infallible and inerrant Illumination – Our interpretation is illumined by the Spirit • Our interpretations are always fallible and subject to revision in light of Scripture KEY DISTINCTION

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

God is the ultimate author of scripture... also known

Verbal-plenary Inspiration – God inspired the words (verbal), as well as the entirety (plenary), of the Bible

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THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- God does act upon the world, but he also acts in it
- Biblical writers drew on their eyewitness testimonies, cultural contexts, and unique personalities
- The Bible grew organically out of the history of God's redemptive acts

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

What does it mean to say the Bible is inerrant?

- •Inerrancy pertains to the original autographs, not our translations
- · Inerrancy does not cancel human agency
- Human authors were not omniscient or perfect in their understanding
- Inerrancy does not mean that authors were exhaustive or exact

• It is imperative to identify the scope of each passage • E.g., Jesus and mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32)'the smallest of seeds' • Jesus' example was tailored for its intended purpose and the scope of his parable

SCOPE AND CLARITY

- The scope of Scripture is the law and the gospel, with Christ at the center
- The whole Bible focuses on the unfolding drama of redemption
- The drama of redemption is executed in history through various covenants

SCOPE AND CLARITY

Common errors related to scope of Scripture

- Bible as collection of predictions
- Bible as a catalogue of morality
- Bible as a science textbook
- Bible as a biography of heroes ("Dare to be a Daniel")

FORM AND FUNCTION: COVENANT CANON

- It is important to distinguish between the Spiritinspired canon and the Spirit-illumined community
- The canon is *inspired* by the Holy Spirit
- This same Spirit *illumines* the community of God's people to understand, embrace, interpret, and obey the canon

FORM AND FUNCTION: COVENANT CANON

Regulative principle – the Reformed teaching that only what the Bible commands regulates faith, practice, and church worship

- Distinguish between *elements* and *circumstances*
 - *Elements* are expressly set down in Scripture or deduced from it (like the trinity)
 - Circumstances are not determined by Scripture and may be discerned by godly wisdom (like smoking, alcohol, or politics)

FORM AND FUNCTION: COVENANT CANON Views of Scripture Roman Catholic Protestant · Church is the Scripture is church's mother of Scripture constitution • The word creates the • Church creates the church word • Bible has authority • Bible and tradition • Tradition is there only have authority to help

THE LIVING GOD

- God's attributes can be classified into two categories: incommunicable and communicable
- His *incommunicable* traits are those that cannot be said to be true, even analogically, of humans
- God's *communicable* attributes are shared analogically with human beings because we are his image bearers

KEY DISTINCTION

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Incommunicable Attributes

- Simplicity- undivided and indivisible (opposite of being complex or composed of different parts)
- Aseity- self-existent and independent from his creation (latin- 'from-himself-ness')
- Immutability- changeless
- Impassibility- without passions
- Eternal

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Simplicity

- God's simplicity means he is undivided and indivisible
- God is not complex or composed of different parts
- God's attributes are not different aspects of his essence; they are descriptions of his unified being
- There is no ranking of God's attributes

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Aseity (latin- 'from-himself-ness')

- Acts 17:24-25, Psalm 115:3, Romans 11:35-36
- •God is perfectly self-existent and independent from his creation
- God is in no way dependent on creation for his being or happiness
- The world adds nothing to God

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Immutability and Impassibility

- God's immutability is his unchangeableness
- His impassibility is his incapacity for being overwhelmed by suffering
- •Group- How would you explain Immutability and Impassibility in light of Gen 6:5-6, Ex 32:14, Jonah 3:10, or 2 Sam 24:16?

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Eternity and Omnipresence

- The immortality of our soul is dependent upon God's eternity because we are made in his image
- God transcends time in his eternity
- God transcends space in his omnipresence

COMMUNICAB Attributes we share	LE ATTRIBUTES • Justice
with our creatorWisdomKnowledgePowerHoliness	 Jealousy Wrath Goodness Love
• Righteousness	Mercy

COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Wisdom, Knowledge, and Power

- Wisdom The power to discern truth from error & righteousness from unrighteousness
- Knowledge Possession of truth, including contingencies
- Power Ability to act as a free agent

COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Holiness, Righteousness, and Justice

- Holiness As glory is a weightiness, holiness is a separateness from all unrighteousness and injustice
- Righteousness Similar to justice, righteousness is integrity
- Justice Conforming desires, actions, and judgments to the standard of truth rather than expediency, favoritism, or personal advantage

COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Jealousy and Wrath

- Jealousy In God's case, a love for his people that zealously binds them to himself, over against both the involuntary servitude and voluntary embrace of other lords
- Wrath In God's case, the righteous and holy response to transgression
 - God's jealousy and wrath are exercised in the context of a covenantal violation of his holiness, righteousness, and justice

COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Goodness, Love, and Mercy

- Goodness Faithful to his own character, God also seeks the welfare of his people
- Love Favor toward and regard for the other
- Mercy God's favor toward those who deserve his wrath
 - Again, God's goodness, love, and mercy are demonstrated through his covenantal works with human beings in history
