

Understanding the Doctrine of God

Introduction

What do we believe to be true about God?

Thinking About God

- The church has a long and rich history of thought and conversation about who God is and what is true about God.
- In the Christian tradition, this discussion is referred to as **Theology**.



Thinking About God

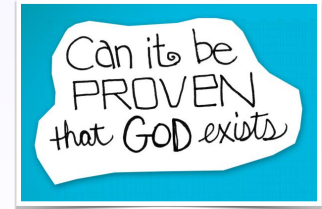
- **Theology** is a combination of two Greek words:
 - **Theos** which is the Greek word meaning God
 - **Logos** which is the Greek word meaning discourse.



How would you prove to someone that God exists?

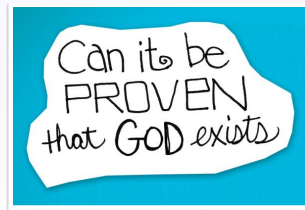
Proving the Existence of God

- There have been many efforts to prove the existence of God.
- While you should be familiar with these efforts, we understand that the existence of God is something that must be accepted by faith.



Proving the Existence of God

- His Existence is a matter of **FAITH**
- But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. **Heb. 11:6**



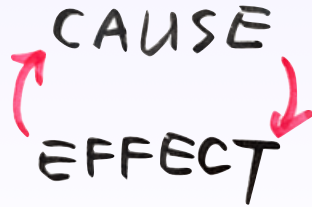
Proving the Existence of God

- However, there are five ancient ways that were considered proofs of the existence of God.



Existence of God

- The Cosmological Argument
 - Every effect has a cause.
 - There cannot be an infinite series of causes.
 - There must be a first Cause which begins the series of effects.
 - This first cause is God.



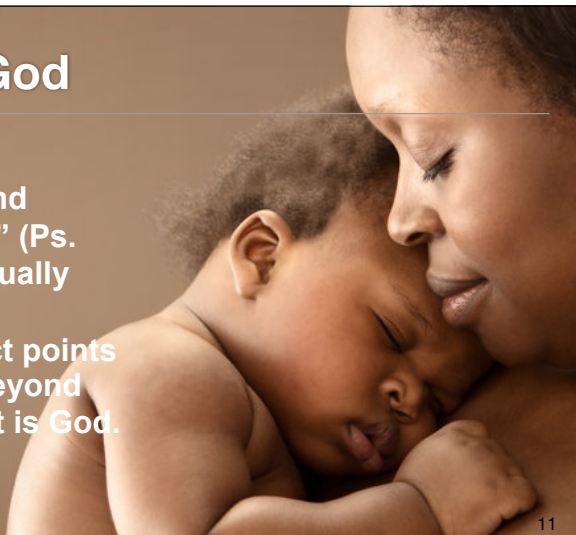
Existence of God

- The Teleological Argument
 - **Telos** means purpose or goal.
 - Universe exhibits intentional design.
 - Is not self-produced.
 - Designer must have made the universe!
 - That Designer is God.
 - **Read Psalms 8.3-4 and 19.1-4**



Existence of God

- The Anthropological Argument
 - Man is “fearfully and wonderfully made,” (Ps. 139:14), both spiritually and physically.
 - Our spiritual aspect points us to something beyond ourselves, and that is God.



Existence of God

- The Moral Argument
 - Everyone has a sense of right and wrong.
 - Example, most cultures understand murder is wrong.
 - Where does this universal moral sense come from?
 - **Read: Romans 2.14-15**



Existence of God

- **The Ontological Argument**
- We have the idea of the “greatest being” in our minds.
- To be the greatest being, the idea must also be real.
- The greatest being is called God and to be the greatest God must be real.



Proofs of God's Existence

- Are these proofs convincing to you?
 - Is so, why?
 - If not, why?
- Do you have another way you would prove the existence of God to an unbeliever?
- Do you believe it necessary to prove that God exists?
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Anti-Theistic Perspectives

- There are some who do not believe in the existence of a personal God.
 - Atheistic
 - Agnostic
 - Polytheistic
 - Pantheism
 - Deism



How do you come to know anything about God?

General Revelation

- Revelation is the way that God conveys truth about God's self to humanity.
- Revelation means unveiling or disclosure.
- Revelation is God's disclosure to humanity about God's self.
- Otherwise humanity would know nothing about God.



General Revelation

- Ways God Provides General Revelation
 - Psalms 19.1-6 - General revelation through nature.
 - Romans 1.18-21 - General revelation to humanity making us accountable to God



General Revelation

- Ways God Provides General Revelation
 - Matthew 5.45, Acts 14.15-17 Revelation through God's provision and control.
 - Romans 2.14-15 - Revelation through our conscience



Special Revelation

- Everyone is the recipient of general revelation.
 - Not everyone receives special revelation.
- Many examples in Scripture of special revelation.
 - Can you name a few?



Special Revelation

- Two primary examples of special revelation
 - God's self-revelation through Scriptures.
 - God's self-revelation through Jesus Christ. (**John 1.18**)



What are the attributes of God?

Attributes of God

- Attributes of God can be defined as:
 - Those distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature that are inseparable from the idea of God and which are the basis for his various manifestations to God's creation.

GOD IS...

Attributes of God

- Attributes of God can be defined as:
 - God's attributes are different than God's works.
 - God's attributes do not add anything to God. They reveal God's nature.

GOD IS...

Attributes of God

- When studying the attributes of God it is important not to exalt one attribute over the other.
- All of the attributes must be taken together to understand the nature and Person of God.

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Spirituality**
 - God is spirit (not a spirit) and does not have a physical form. (John 4.24)
 - This also means that God is the source of all life.
 - How do we make sense of all the places in Scripture that reference God's physical being?

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Self-Existence**
 - God is independent of everything. Even his virtue, decrees and works depend on God.
 - This is emphasized in Exodus 3.14.
 - Everything that is depends on God.
 - **Read Dan. 5.23 and Acts 17.28.**

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Immutability**
 - God is perfect and unchanging. Neither God nor God's works nor God's purposes and promises change.
 - Improvement or deterioration is not possible for God.
 - **Read: Malachi 3.6 and James 1.17**

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Unity**

- God is one. This belief set Israel apart from other nations. (Deut. 6.4)
- This is what is meant by **monotheism**.
- God cannot be divided.
- **Read 1 Tim. 2.5 and 1 For. 8.6**

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Truth**

- This means that God is perfectly reliable in God's revelation and that God always sees things as they truly are.
- He is the true God and there is none like God. (Isaiah 44.8-10; 45.5)

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Truth**

- God is the truth and his revelation is reliable. (Num. 23.19; Rom. 3.3-4; John 14.1,2,6; Heb. 6.18; Titus 1.2)
- God is the beginning and end of all knowledge.

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Love**

- 1 John 4.8 declares that God is love while verse 10 of that chapter declares how God's love is revealed.
- This is not simply emotional, but a rational, voluntary affection grounded in God's truth and holiness and exercised in free will.

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Love**
 - **Agape** is the word often translated as love.
 - It means a reasoned-out love, rather than emotionally based love (but not devoid of emotion).

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Love**
 - **Agape** means that loves the object of their affection irrespective of the worth of the object,
 - And loves even if that love might not be returned.

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Goodness**
 - God is essentially, absolutely, and constantly good. (Mark 10.18 and Luke 18.19)
 - God's goodness incorporates many aspects such as benevolence which describes God's affection towards people.

GOD IS...

Absolute Attributes of God

- **Holiness**
 - Means separated or set apart.
 - When applied to God it suggest that God is absolutely distinct from all of God's creation.
 - Also implies God is set apart from all moral sin and evil.

GOD IS...

Questions

- **For each of the attributes discussed, can you name ways in which you have personally experienced these attributes?**
- **How have you witnessed these attributes on display in the world around you?**
- **How would you communicate these attributes to someone unsaved?**