

Biblical Theology

Unit 2: Doctrine of God – Lesson 1: Existence and Knowability of God

Key Terminology

- Important Terms Regarding the Doctrine of God
 - Theism – Belief in a god
 - Atheism – Belief that there is no god
 - Agnosticism – Belief in possibility of god, but certain he cannot be known.
 - Monotheism – Belief in one god
 - Polytheism – Belief in multiple gods
 - Pantheism – Belief that all matter is god.
 - Universalism – Belief that all religions lead to heaven.

Traditional Arguments of God's Existence

- Characteristics of the Traditional Arguments for God's Existence
 1. **Cosmological Argument**
 - Everything must have a cause.
 - Existence points toward origin
 - Infinite regress is logically impossible.
 - An uncaused Creator must be the origin of cause.
 2. **Teleological Argument**
 - Observation strongly indicates that all things work toward an end / goal / purpose.
 - If every component of nature serves a purpose, the universe as a whole must serve a purpose.
 - All evidence points to design.
 - Design points to designer.
 3. **Moral Argument**
 - Moral facts exist.
 - Moral facts have the properties of being objective and non-natural (conscience).
 - The best explanation of there being objective and non-natural moral facts is provided by theism.
 - Therefore the existence of moral facts provides good grounds for believing theism is true.

Biblical Arguments of God's Existence

- Biblical Basis of God's Existence
 1. **Man's Inner Awareness**
 - *Genesis 1:26 - Image of God*
 - *Ecclesiastes 3:11 - Eternity has been placed in the human heart.*
 2. **Evidence in Nature / General Revelation**
 - *Romans 1:20 - God is understood from what has been made*
 - *Psalm 19:1 - The heavens declare the glory of God*
- Only God can overcome sin and enable man to believe in his existence.
 - *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God...For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. - 2 Cor 4:4;6*

Knowability of God

- Biblical Basis for Knowability of God
 1. **God makes himself known and knowable.**
 - *Romans 1:18-20 - ...what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.*
 - *John 1:18 – Christ has made God known.*
 2. **Man can never fully understand God.**
 - *Psalms 145:3 - His greatness is unsearchable.*
 - *Romans 11:33 - How unsearchable his judgments...his paths beyond tracing out!*
 - *Isaiah 55:9 - ...higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
 - *Psalms 139:17-18 – Vastness of God's thoughts.*
 3. **We can know God truly and personally.**
 - Though we cannot know God exhaustively, we can know true things about God.
 - *Jeremiah 9:23-24 - "...let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord...*
 - *John 17:3 - ... that they know you, the only true God...*
 - *1 John 5:20 - ...so that we may know him who is true...*
 - *Philippians 3:7-11 - ... everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...*
- According to scripture, not only can God be known, but he is the greatest thing or person that can be known.

Discussion Questions

1. Define the following terms:
 - Theism:
 - Atheism:
 - Agnosticism:
2. Which of the Traditional Arguments of God's Existence resonates most with you? Why?
3. Have you ever struggled with the existence of God? Share how you processed through this struggle and how the Lord used it in your relationship with him.
4. Sometimes people say that heaven sounds boring. How does the fact that God is incomprehensible yet knowable help to answer that objection?
5. What is the difference between incomprehensible and knowable as it relates to what we can know about God? How can God be both?

Reading Assignment

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 11: The Character of God: "Incommunicable" Attributes (Stop reading when you arrive at the third Incommunicable Attribute: Eternity)