

# Systematic Theology Pt. 10

## Theology Proper (A)

### Introduction-What is Theology Proper?

- It is the study of God.
- His existence.
- His nature.
- His attributes.
- His acts.

## I. The Existence of God

### A. How do we know that God exists?

1. The existence of God is taken for granted by the Scripture.

- Why? It's God's autobiography. Gen. 1:1
- So we believe in the God revealed in the Bible!

2. Humanity's Inner Sense of God

- Rom. 1:18-19 & Psa. 14:1 'the fool.....

3. The Cosmological Argument

- Greek word "cosmos" meaning "world".
- What's the original cause of the "cosmos"?
- "Every effect must have a cause".

4. The Teleological Argument

- Greek word "telos" meaning "end"; so it argues that order and useful arrangement in a system imply intelligence, design, and purpose. The universe is characterized by order and useful arrangement; therefore, the universe has an intelligent and free cause." Ps. 8:3 & Ps. 19:1-4.

5. The Anthropological Argument

The anthropological argument is based on the Greek word *anthropos*, meaning "man". Contrary to the secular humanist who sees man simply as a biological being, the biblicist sees man as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). The image of God in man is spiritual, not physical (cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Man is not simply a physical being, but also a moral being with a conscience, intellect, emotion, and will. Chafer states: "There are philosophical and moral features in man's constitution which may be traced back to find their origin in God. ...A blind force ... could never produce a man with intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, and inherent belief in a Creator."

## 6. The Moral Argument

The moral argument is related to the anthropological argument (some combine the two) and can be seen as a further consideration of that argument. The moral argument acknowledges that man has an awareness of right and wrong, a sense of morality. Where did this sense of moral justice come from? If man is only a biological creature why does he have a sense of moral obligation? Recognition of moral standards and concepts cannot be attributed to any evolutionary process. The biblicist recognizes that God has placed a sense of moral justice within the human race in contradistinction to all other creation. Romans 2:14-15 indicates that Gentiles who have had no revelation of the law have an inner, moral witness placed there by God.

### **B. Aniti - Theistic Theories**

#### 1. Atheistic View

The term *atheist* comes from Greek word *theos*, meaning “God,” and the prefix *a* (Gk. alpha), which in Greek negates the preceding statement. Therefore, it means a nonbeliever in God. Ephesians 2:12 uses the term (translated “without God”) to explain the status of unsaved Gentiles in their relationship with God. Atheists can be classified into three categories: (1) the *practical* atheist who lives as if there is no God; (2) the *dogmatic* atheist who openly repudiates God; (3) the *virtual* atheist who rejects God by his terminology (e.g. Paul Tillich: God is the Ground of all being”). This classification would include those who deny a personal God.

#### 2. Agnostic View

The term *agnostic* comes from Greek *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge,” accompanied by the *a* prefix. Therefore, an agnostic means one who lacks knowledge of God. Hence, an agnostic is one says we cannot know that God even exists. The term, first coined by Thomas Huxley, covers varying degrees of skepticism. Agnostics are followers of pragmatism; their belief in something has to be scientifically verifiable, and because God is not scientifically verifiable, they leave Him out of their discussion.

#### 3. Evolution

Evolution is an antismatural approach to life and its origin. It begins with the premise that there is no God and then seeks to explain life apart from any involvement by God. The implications are serious: if God created man, then man is a morally responsible being; if man is the product of evolution, then he is only biological and is not morally responsible to any god.

#### 4. Polytheism

The term *polytheism* comes from the Greek word *poly*, meaning “many,” and *theos*, meaning “God”; hence, it involves a belief in many gods, or in a plurality of gods. History has noted many nations and societies that were polytheistic: early Romans were animistic; the people of India were pantheistic as well as polytheistic; Egyptians worshiped a multiplicity of gods, including the sun, the Nile, frogs, and even gnats.

## 5. Pantheism

Pantheism means that everything is God and God is everything. “God is all and all is God.” Seneca said, “What is God? . . . He is all that you see and all that you do not see.” There are a number of different forms of pantheism: *materialistic pantheism*, held by David Strauss, which believes in the eternity of matter and that matter is the cause of all life; *hylozoism*, the modern form held by Leibniz, which holds that all matter has a principle of life or psychical properties; *neutralism*, which says that life is neutral, neither mind nor matter; *idealism*, which suggests that ultimate reality is really mind, either individual mind or infinite mind; *philosophical mysticism*, which is absolute monism, teaching that all reality is a unit.

## 6. Deism

Deists believe there is no personal God to whom man can relate. An impersonal God created the world and afterward divorced Himself from the human race and left man alone in his created world. Deists acknowledge only the transcendence of God; they deny His immanence.

### C. The Revelation of God

Remember God can only be known by revelation.

1. General Revelation - Ps. 19:1-6
2. Special Revelation - Jesus Christ & Scriptures

2 Cor. 4:4 “In whom the God of this world. . .”

Remember we can never fully understand God. God is “incomprehensible” Ps. 145:3

Yet we can know God truly! All that the Scripture tells us about God is true!

## II. The Nature of God

“The importance of thinking rightly about God”

A.W. Tozer  
“**Knowledge of the Holy**”

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. It is to worship what the foundation is to the temple; where it is inadequate or out of plumb the whole structure must sooner or later collapse. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.

Perverting notions about God soon rot the religion in which they appear. The long career of Israel demonstrates this clearly enough, and the history of the Church confirms it. So necessary to her worship and her moral standards declines along with it. The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God.

The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him and of her. In all her prayers and labors this should have first place. We do the greatest service to the next generation of Christians by passing on to them undimmed and undiminished that noble concept of God which we received from our Hebrew and Christian fathers of generations past. This will prove of greater value to them than anything that art or science can devise.

## **1. The Essence of God**

- What do we mean by essence?

It's the same as "substance" - to speak of God is to speak of an essence, a substance, not of a mere idea or the personification of an idea.

### **A. God is Pure Actuality**

By "actuality" is meant that which is. (Existence) - Pure actuality is that which is with no possibility to not exist or to be anything other than it is. Pure actuality has no potential for nonexistence and it has no potential for change.

#### 1. God Exists Independently of All Else.

- Gen. 1:1 & Col. 1:17. "He is before all things."
- Rev. 1:8 "I am the Alpha and Omega."

#### 2. God Gives Existence to Everything Else.

- Gen. 1:1 & Gen 1:21

#### 3. God is Pure Existence.

- Ex. 3:14. . . "I AM who I AM"
- Pure "I AM"-ness
- Jesus - John 8:59 "Before Abraham. . ."

### **B. The Spirituality of God (vs. materialism)**

- God is a substance, He is not however a material substance, but a spiritual substance.
- Jesus said, John 4:24. . . "God is Spirit".
- Luke 24:39 - "A spirit hath not flesh and bones. . ."
- Col. 1:15 - "the image of the invisible God"

- 1 Tim. 1:17, “Now unto the King incorruptible, invisible”.
- So God is invisible!
- So no graven images! Duet. 4:15-23
- John 1:8- “no man has ever seen God”.
- Ask? What did they see?
- Note - “anthropomorphisms”
- Ps. 8:3 - God’s fingers
- Ps. 31:2 God’s ear
- II Chron. 16:9 “eyes”

### **C. The Personality of God (vs. Pantheism)**

1. Attributes of personality are ascribed to God in the Scriptures.

- A. God grieves - Gen. 6:6
- B. God angry - 1 Kings 11:9
- C. God is jealous - Deut. 6:15
- D. God loves - Rev. 3:19
- E. God hates - Prov. 6:16
- F. God speaks - Gen. 1:3
- G. God hears - Ps. 94:9
- H. God is compassionate - Ps. 111:4

2. He is not like the gods of the heathen.

- Jer. 10:3-16; Acts 14:15; 1 Thess. 1:9; Ps. 94:9-10

### **D. The Immutability of God**

- God does not, cannot change!
- Malachi 3:6 “I, the Lord, do not change”. James 1:17

### **E. The Eternality of God**

- God is timeless!
- Ps. 90:2
- Job 36:26
- Rev. 1:8, 4:8
- II Peter 3:8

Also “infinity”, no limitations; only by His own nature! Also called “immensity”, his transcendence.

#### **F. The Unity of God** (vs. Polytheism)

1. In contrast to “Polytheism”
2. In contrast to “Tri-theism”
3. In contrast to “Dualism”
4. The Scriptures teach the unity of God.

- Deut. 6:4 - “Hear, O Israel . . . .”
- Isa. 44:6-8 - “first. . . last. . .”
- 1 Tim. 2:5 - “there is one God”.
- 1 Cor. 8:4, 6 - “there is none other God but one”.

5. The unity of God does not exclude the plurality of persons in the one God.

