

Theology Proper

The Study of God

The Great Tension

*Knowing
God*

⇔ *Versus* ⇔

*Knowing
about God*

Application of Theology Proper

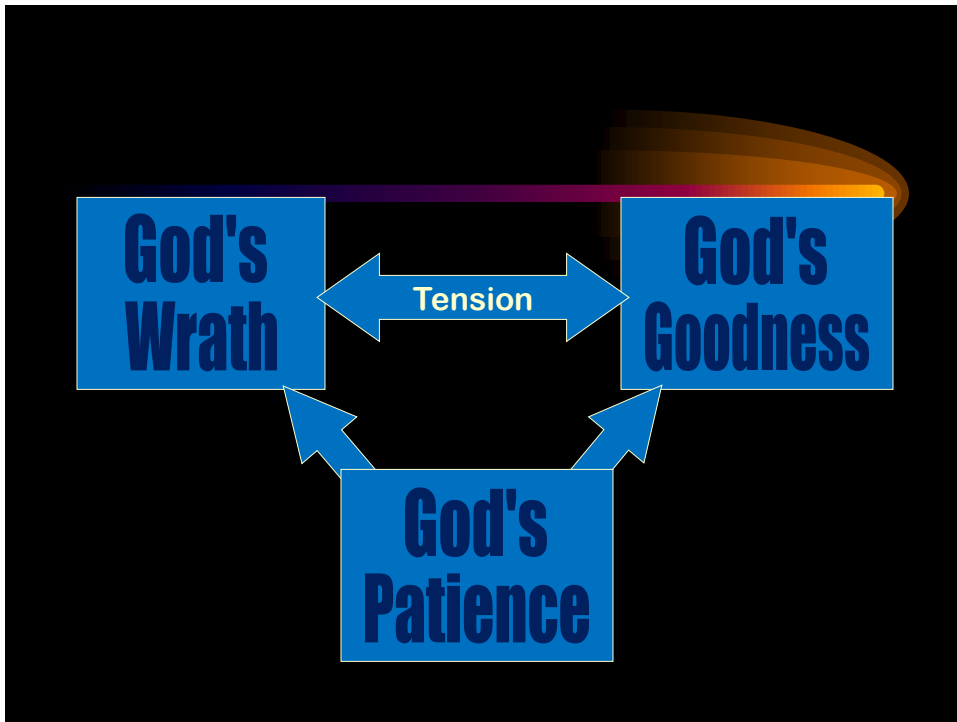
- We get to know folks by spending time with them. Each time we get together we learn something new until one day we know that person.
- As we discuss this lecture, consider all that we learn “about” God and strive to understand each tidbit in order that you know God.

Incommunicable Attributes

- Self-existence
- Infinity
- Unity
- Perfection
- Immutability
- Omnipotent
- Omnipresent
- Omniscience

Communicable Attributes

- Holiness
- Righteousness
- Love
- Grace
- Mercy
- Patience
- Goodness
- Truthfulness
- Faithfulness



God's Incomprehensibility & Knowability

- God is both knowable & incomprehensible but neither in an absolute sense.
- We cannot know everything about God, but we can indeed know God.
- Both truths are affirmed in Scripture: His incomprehensibility (Job 11:7; Isaiah 40:18) & His knowability (John 14:7; 17:3; and 1 John 5:20)...

Incomprehensibility

- Question expecting a “no” answer:
“Can you discover the depths of God
Can you discover the limits of the
Almighty?” (Job 11:7)
- To whom then will you liken God? Or
what likeness will you compare with
Him? (Isaiah 40:18)

Knowability

- If you had known Me, you would have known
My Father also; from now on you know Him,
and have seen Him” ... “This is eternal life,
that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”
(John 14:7; 17:3).
- We know that the Son of God has come, and
has given us understanding so that we may
know Him who is true; and we are in Him
who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is
the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Purposes of Knowing God

“You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. BEFORE ME THERE WAS NO GOD FORMED, and there will be none after Me” (Isaiah 43:10).

Purposes of Knowing God

- To lead folks to the possession of eternal life (John 17:3; 1 Tim. 2:4).
- To foster Christian growth (2 Pet. 3:18), w/ doctrinal knowledge (John 7:17; Rom. 6:9, 16; Eph. 1:18) and with a discerning lifestyle (Phil. 1:9–10; 2 Pet. 1:5).
- To warn of judgment to come (Hos. 4:6; Heb. 10:26–27).
- To generate true worship (Rom 11:33-36)

How God Makes Himself Known

- If God did not initiate the revelation of Himself, we could not know Him
- God gave language in order that He might communicate His instructions to man (Gen. 1:28–30) and that they might communicate with Him (3:8–13).
- He created man in His image
- Gave His Spirit to reveal the things of God (John 16:13–15; 1 Cor. 2:10).

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

Evidences for the Existence of God

*The fool has said in his heart,
“There is no God.”
(Psalm 14:1)*

Evidences for the Existence of God

- **The Cosmological Argument**

*For since the creation of the world His
invisible attributes, His eternal power
and divine nature, have been clearly
seen, being understood through what
has been made, so that they are
without excuse (Romans 1:20).*

Cosmological Argument

- We know God exists b/c that which exists has only four options for its existence:
 1. It is illusion
 2. It is self-created
 3. It is eternal
 4. It was created
- The world is clearly created, so unless it is illusion, it requires God

Evidences for the Existence of God

- The Cosmological Argument
- The Teleological Argument

*The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
and their expanse is declaring the work of
His hands. Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard (Psalm 19:1-3).*

Evidences for the Existence of God

- The Cosmological Argument
- The Teleological Argument
- The Ontological Argument

Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Romans 1:21).

Evidences for the Existence of God

- The Cosmological Argument
- The Teleological Argument
- The Ontological Argument
- The Moral Argument

The Moral Argument

- “Think of a country where people were admired for running away in battle, or where a man felt proud of double-crossing all the people who had been kindest to him. You might just as well try to imagine a country where two and two made five” (C.S. Lewis).

The Logic of the Moral Law

- All have an innate sense of right & wrong, whether taught or not.
- Moral Law:
 1. Every law has a law giver;
 2. There is a Moral Law;
 3. Therefore, there is a Moral Law Giver.

Romans 2:14-16

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

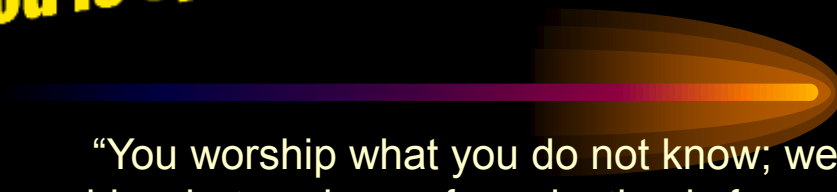
Evidences for the Existence of God

- The Cosmological Argument
- The Teleological Argument
- The Ontological Argument
- The Moral Argument
- The Argument from Scripture



Scriptural Attributes of God

God is Spirit



“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. **God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth**” (John 4:22-24).

Infinite and Eternal



“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Psalm 90:1-2).

Infinite and Eternal



“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8).

Holy

God is separate from all that is common; distinct

“I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory’ ” (Isa 6:1-3).

Righteous

Whereas holiness relates to God’s separateness, His righteousness relates to His justice.

For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face (Psalm 11:7).

Immutable

God does not & will not change; is neither inconsistent nor growing nor developing

*For I, the Lord, do not change (Mal 3:6)...
Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow (Jas 1:17)*

Problem w/ Immutability

- Did not God repent? (Gen. 6:6; Jon. 3:10)
- His repentance is merely an anthropomorphism; i.e., interpreting what is not human in human terms. Only from the human viewpoint does there appear to be change in God's plans.
- Yet God is sorry and at times grieved.

Infinite

“Of old You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. Even they will perish, but You endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end” (Psalm 102:25-27).

Love

Seeks good for the objects of His affection—the perfection of holiness, the highest good & glory of His own perfections.

God is love (1 John 4:8).

Not “God is the love.” Yet the presence of the article before “God” (literally, *the* God is love) shows that the statement is not reversible; it cannot read, “Love is God” (i.e. Christian Science)

Notes on God's Love

- God who is love allows Himself to love sinful people. That is grace (Eph 2:4-8).
- That love of God has been poured out into the believer's heart (Rom 5:5).
- In trials God shows His love toward His children (Heb 12:6).

Heresy of Universalism

- Universalism teaches that since God is love He will ultimately save all people. But God's perfection of love does not operate apart from His other perfections, including holiness and justice. Therefore, love cannot overpower holiness and save those who reject Christ and die in their sins. Furthermore, universalism in reality does not have a proper definition of love, since it sees only the affection aspect of love and not the correcting aspect.

Freedom

God is independent of His creatures

Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding?

(Isaiah 40:13-14)—Thus, God is not obligated to us in any way unless He chooses to initiate an obligation. We cannot put Him in our debt.

Immensity

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him? (Isaiah 40:12-13)

Immensity



With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding? And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge And informed Him of the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust (Isaiah 40:14-15).

Immensity



Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in (Isaiah 40:21-22).