

Week Five

The Existence of God
The Knowability of God

How do We Know God Exists?

- Humanity's Inner Sense
 - Rom 1:21
 - Rom 1:25
 - Rom 1:19
 - Some deny their inner sense
 - Ps 14:1, Ps 53:1, Ps 10:3-4
 - Rom 1:18, Rom 1:20
 - Sin leads people to think irrationally and to deny God's existence

How do We Know God Exists?

- Evidence in Scripture and Nature
 - The world exists – Gen 1:1
 - The heavens (skies & space) – Ps 19:1-2
 - Rain, seasons – Acts 14:17
 - Man – created in God’s image – Gen 1:26
 - All things exists – Rom 1:20
 - If our minds were not so blinded by sin, it would be impossible for us to look closely at a leaf from any tree and say, “No one created this: it just happened” (pg 142-143)
 - For those correctly evaluating the evidence, *everything* in scripture and *everything* in nature proves clearly that God exists and that He is the powerful and wise creator that scripture describes Him to be (pg 143)
 - **Some people reject this – that does not mean that the evidence is invalid in itself, but it is being evaluated wrongly**

How do We Know God Exists?

- If it is true that sin causes people to think *irrationally*, then any logical proofs are attempts to get people to begin to think *rationally* (or correctly) about God's existence
- There are four basic arguments
 - Cosmological argument
 - Teleological argument
 - Ontological argument
 - Moral argument

Cosmological Argument

- We live in a causal universe, so what caused the universe?
- Horizontal Argument the universe had a first cause
 - Everything that had a beginning had a cause
 - The universe had a beginning
 - Therefore, the universe had a cause

Cosmological Argument

- We live in a causal universe, so what caused the universe?
- Vertical Argument
 - At least one *contingent* being exists (me); that is a being exists but can *not* exist
 - A *Necessary* Being is one that exists but cannot not exist

Vertical Argument

- Whatever exists but/could not exist needs a cause for its existence, since the mere possibility of existence does not explain why something exists. The mere possibility for something is no-thing.
- But no-thing cannot produce something
- Therefore, something necessarily exists as the ground for everything that does exist but can not exist. In short, it is a violation of the principle of causality to say that a contingent can account for its own existence

Teleological Argument

- Why do we see harmony, order, and purposeful design in the universe?
- All design imply a designer
- There is great design in the universe
- Therefore, there must have been a Great designer of the universe
- The *watch* imply a watchmaker

Ontological Argument

- If we can conceive of God, then He must exist
 - God is by definition an absolutely perfect Being
 - Existence is a perfection
 - Therefore, God must exist
 - If God did not exist, then he would be lacking one perfection, namely, existence
 - But if God lacked any perfection, then He would not be absolutely perfect
 - And God is by definition an absolutely perfect being
 - Therefore, an absolutely perfect (god) must exist – God

Moral Argument

- How do you define right and wrong? Where does morality and justice come from?
 - Moral law implies a Moral Lawgiver
 - There is an objective moral law
 - Therefore, there is an objective Moral Lawgiver

Uses of Such Arguments

- These arguments cannot:
 - Bring people to faith in God
 - Faith only comes by the word of God
- Such arguments can:
 - Remove intellectual stumbling blocks
- God must enable us to be persuaded
 - 2 Cor 4:4, 1 Cor 1:21, 1 Cor 2:5

Arguing with an engineer is like wrestling with a pig: it's messy, it's dirty, it's ugly, and after a while, you realize that the pig actually likes it!

The Knowability of God

- If we are to know God at all, it is necessary that He reveal himself to us
 - Rom 1:19
 - Matt 11:27
- God is not known through human wisdom
 - 1 Cor 1:21
 - 1 Cor 2:14
 - 2 Cor 4:3-4
 - John 1:18
- Sinful people misinterpret the revelation about God found in nature (Rom 1:18, 21, 25)
- We depend on God's active communication to us (normally through Scripture) for our true knowledge of God

God is Incomprehensible

- Definition – unable to be *fully* understood
– NOT unable to be understood
- Ps 145:3 – His greatness is unsearchable
- Ps 147:5 – His understanding is beyond measure
- Ps 139:6 – Such knowledge is too wonderful for me
- 1 Cor 2:10-12 – No one comprehends the things of God except the Spirit of God

God is Incomprehensible

- The previous verses let us also state that we can never fully understand any single thing about God
 - Ps 145:3 – His greatness
 - Ps 147:5 – His understanding
 - Ps 139:6 – His knowledge
 - Rom 11:33 – His riches, wisdom, judgments, and ways
 - Isa 55:9 – His thoughts
 - Job 26:14 – His power
- We may know *something* about each of these attributes of God, but we can never know them completely or exhaustively
 - None of the verses attribute the lack of understanding to sin
 - For eternity, we will be able to quote Ps 139:17-18

What Does this Mean?

- We can never know too much about God
 - Lifetime of learning
 - “And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God” – Col 1:10
- The prospect of a lifelong habit of regular Bible study, and even the prospect of a lifetime of theology...should be a very exciting prospect to us (pg 151)

What *Can* We Know Then?

- Even though we cannot know God exhaustively, we can know *true* things about Him
 - 1 John 4:8 – God is Love
 - 1 John 1:5 – God is light
 - John 4:24 – God is spirit ... and so on
- More significantly, though, is that we can know God *Himself*
 - “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.” – Jer 9:23-24

We Can Know God Himself

- The source of our joy and importance ought to come not from our own abilities or possessions, but from the fact that we know Him (pg 152)
 - John 17:3
 - Heb 8:11
 - 1 John 5:20
 - 1 John 2:13
- We have a far greater privilege than mere knowledge of facts about God

Reading For Next Week

- Chapter 11
 - Incommunicable Attributes of God
 - Homework – questions 1-8 (all of them)