

Systematic Theology: Theology Proper

Nature and Existence of God (Based on notes from Dr K Bauder)

What does GCBC teach?

We teach that there is but one living and true God,¹ an infinite, all-knowing Spirit.²

What are we talking about?

_____ is the direct study of _____.

What has the Church throughout history taught?

_____ argument, argument from cause

_____ argument, the argument from design

_____ argument, the argument from human nature

_____ argument, the idea of an infinite and perfect being

From Augustine:

“What art Thou then, my God?

Most highest, most good,
most potent, most omnipotent;
most merciful and most just;
most hidden and most present;
most beautiful and most strong,
standing firm and elusive,
unchangeable and all-changing;
never new, never old;

ever working, ever at rest;
gathering in and [yet] lacking nothing;
supporting, filling, and sheltering;
creating, nourishing, and maturing;
seeking and [yet] having all things.

And what have I now said, my God, my life, my holy joy?
or what says any man when he speaks of Thee?
And woe to him who keeps silent about you,
since many babble on and say nothing.”³

¹Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4

²John 4:24

³Augustine, *Confessions* 1.4.4.

What does the *Bible* say?

But what does God Himself say about Himself in Scripture?

1. _____ . God is a _____. John 4:24
 - a. The nature of spirituality.
 - i. A note about the Greek grammar: **THE** God is **A** spirit.
 - ii. Negatively, spirit is *not*:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - iii. Positively, spirit is:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - b. Problems Connected with God's Spirituality.
 - i. Men who saw God.
 1. Exod. 24:9-11. Exod. 33:21-23, cf. Exod. 33:20.
 2. Jn. 1:18.The solution:
 - ii. Anthropomorphic language. Ascribe bodily parts to God to stand for certain things He possesses.
2. _____ - _____. The question is whether God is _____ , _____ , or _____ - _____ .
 - a. The Nature of Self-Existence
 - b. Scriptural Demonstration of Self-Existence.
 - i. From the proper name of God (*YHWH*).
 - ii. From the name, "I AM."

Isa. 6 – *Adonai* addressed as *Yahweh*
Jn. 12:38-41 – John makes it clear that what Isaiah saw on the throne was the Lord Jesus Christ.
Phil. 2:9-11 – Paul is quoting Isa. 45:20-23.
 - iii.
 - c. God not only lives; God _____. Everything that lives derives its life from Him.
Jn. 1:3-10 –
Jn. 5:26 –

3. _____ **and** _____.
 - a. The nature of simplicity
 - b. Demonstration of simplicity.
Deut. 4:39 –
Deut. 6:4 –
Jn. 10:30 –
 - c. Implications of Simplicity and Unity

What does this mean?

What we say about God is conditioned by the smallness of our mind. This means that all of our descriptions fall short of the ultimate reality.

How does this doctrine relate to the Gospel?

What difference does it make?

Tozer famously opened his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, with this:

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.

For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. ...

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.⁴

How should we respond?

⁴A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, special edition for Insight for Living (New York: HarperCollins, 1961), 1-3.

ANSWER KEY

What are we talking about?

Theology Proper, God Himself.

What has the Church throughout history taught?

Cosmological

Teleological

Anthropological

Ontological

What does the *Bible* say?

Spirituality, spirit

Self-existence, caused, uncaused, self-caused.

IS life.

Simplicity, Unity.

What does this mean?

smallness