

BIBLE TRAINING INSTITUTE

To proactively accelerate the spiritual growth of Grace Bible Church for the purpose of knowing God more intimately and becoming more effective servants of God in the world

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Theology Proper I

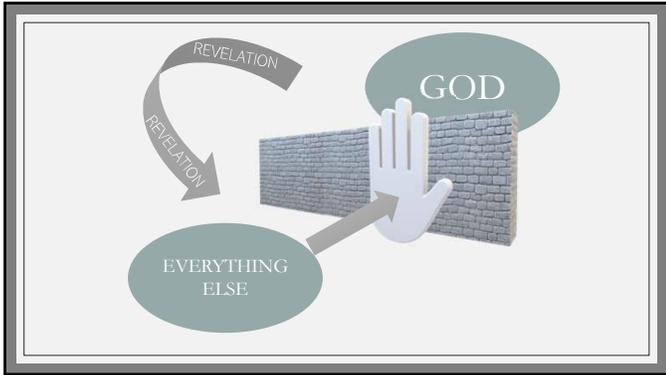
The Existence and Knowability of God

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Incomprehensibility of God

- ✓ "Because God is infinite and humans are finite, human beings can never fully understand God" (Grudem, 149).
- ✓ Ps 145:3; Is 40:28; Rom 11:34
- ✓ We can never fully understand any single thing about God, but we can know something
- ✓ We can know God partially but truly
- ✓ Incomprehensibility is the inability to know God unless He reveals Himself.

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Traditional "Proofs" for God

- ✓ Cosmological Argument
 - ❖ Argues from cause and effect ("Cause-mological")
- ✓ Teleological Argument
 - ❖ From "telos" (goal or end)—there must be a Designer because of observed design
- ✓ Anthropological (moral) argument
 - ❖ Innate sense of right/wrong had to have origin
- ✓ Ontological argument (ontology = the study of existence or being)
 - ❖ All humans conceptualize a Greatest Conceivable Being

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Evaluating the "Proofs"

- ✓ No one will come to Christ because of these arguments, but they demonstrate the existence of God to be the logical belief.
- ✓ They show that theistic belief is not irrational
- ✓ Rational arguments tend to minimize sin
- ✓ Can imply that God's revelation of Himself is insufficient
- ✓ KEY: Ultimately, **The Christian must reason FROM Scripture, not TO it.**

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Evaluating the "Proofs"

John R. W. Stott: "In evangelism, then, we shall need to recognize that the men to whom we preach have minds. We shall not ask them to stifle their minds, but to open them, and in particular to open them to receive a divine illumination in order to understand the divine revelation. We shall not seek to murder their intellect (since it was given to them by God), but neither shall we flatter it (since it is finite and fallen). We shall endeavour to reason with them, but only from revelation, all the while admitting our need and theirs for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit."

quoted in J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, 137

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General Revelation of God

- ✓ **Definition:** The disclosure of God in nature and the constitution of man whereby all people gain an introductory knowledge of God (i.e. God has made Himself known).
- ✓ Revelation of God in nature
 - ❖ Impacts the unbeliever—Rom 1:18–21
 - ❖ Impacts the believer—Psalm 19:1–6
- ✓ Revelation of God in man's constitution—Rom 2:14–15

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General Revelation of God

- ✓ Why is this called "General" Revelation?
 - ❖ Universally available to all
 - ❖ It is introductory knowledge
 - ❖ It demonstrates that God exists as my Creator and Judge
 - ❖ The knowable existence of God makes the human race accountable to Him
 - ❖ Causes worship for the believer and tells of the existence of God to the unbeliever

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Special Revelation of God

- ✓ **Definition:** God's disclosure of Himself through the living and written Word so that we might know Him in salvation (L. Pettigrew)
- ❖ Personal Nature of Special Revelation
 - He tells us His name
 - He enters into personal relationship with us
 - He makes himself known in ways we understand
 - He identified with us fully in Christ

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Special Revelation of God

- ✓ Types of Special Revelation
 - ❖ The Living Word, Jesus Christ
 - ❖ The Written Word
 - Divine speech
 - Dreams and visions
 - Theophanies and Christophanies
 - Internal thoughts to prophets/apostles
 - Acts of angels
 - Jesus' life and teaching
 - Miraculous acts of God recorded in Scripture
 - ❖ Miracles

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