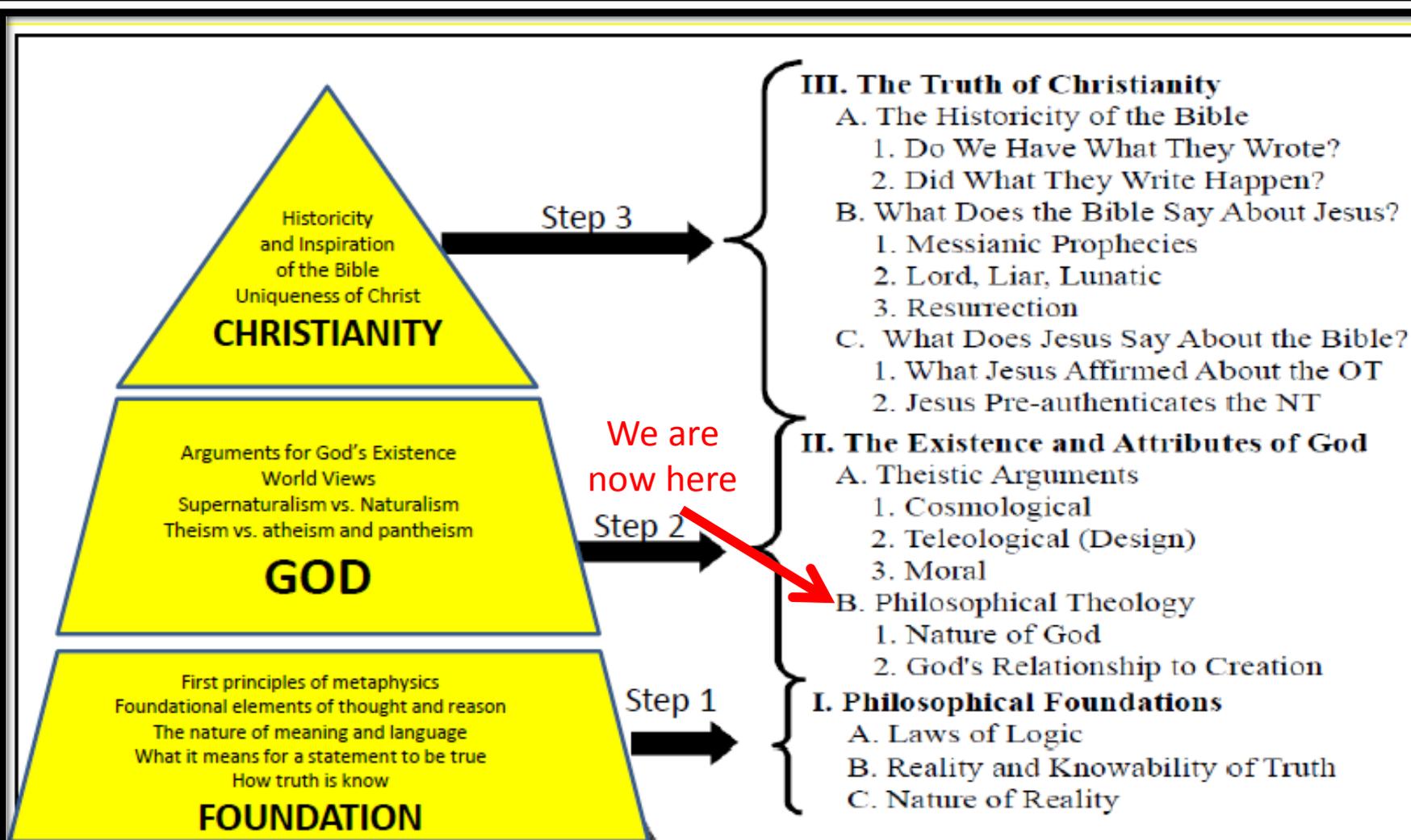


APOLOGETICS 56

Philosophical Theology: The Nature of God and His Relationship to Creation (DDR #605)



We now move to God's nature and His sustenance of all of Creation

1. God is the original Cause of Creation, Gen 1:1; 2:3; 5:1-2; 6:7; Dt 4:32; 18:11-12; Psa 89:11-12; 148:5; Isa 40:26; Mal 2:10; Mk 13:19; Rom 1:20; 1 Cor 11:8-9. These passages deal with His original creation of the universe.
2. God is the Operating Cause in Creation, Psa 104:10-30; Amos 4:13; Heb 1:3; Col 1:17; Rev 4:11. These passages deal with His continuing activity of sustaining our world.
3. The world was created by God, and the world has its being through God, Rev 4:11. The doctrine of creation is not limited to discussion of its past origin; it also includes its present sustenance and operation.
4. God has direct and indirect roles in creation. While He is the *primary Cause* of all things, He also works through *secondary causes*. What we commonly refer to as the processes of nature are in reality God's indirect work through natural causes. God is the ultimate cause, but nature is the immediate cause of most happenings. God is the original Commander, but He works through a chain of command when acting through natural laws.

5. God's sustaining causality is derived from the very nature of creation itself. Once its created and contingent nature is understood (as per vertical cosmological argument), the need for God's continual sustaining activity is comprehended
6. The failure to make distinction between the origin and operation of the universe has led to much misunderstanding in the ongoing debate between creationists and evolutionists. This misunderstanding is especially pronounced in the areas of microevolution and macroevolution. Microevolution (change within species) is part of operational science because it is about a continual process that can be observed in the present. Macroevolution is not scientific, in fact, the empirical evidence as per lack of fossil transitions and sudden abruptness of life speaks powerfully against it.
7. Singularities, an origin event, such as the Creation of the universe, is the result of an immediate, abrupt, discontinuous action of a primary Cause (God)---it is an unrepeated singularity. It moves from nothing to something and continues to defy science and mystify scientists---who attempt to get around it with quantum physics and "imaginary time."

8. The God of the Gaps vs. the Nature of the Gaps.

a. God of the Gaps.

This is used by well-meaning but non-informed Christians. The bumble bee provides an illustration. There was a time when science could not explain how the bumble bee could fly. Its weight, size, and speed of wings seemed to make it defy the laws of nature. Some Christians would say that Jesus makes the bumble bee fly to teach us the limits of science and that miracles continue. Of course now we know that the bee can fly because of the way it uses muscles on its back. This God of the Gaps charge is made repeatedly by atheists and, at least in my experience, they do not understand the issue of singularity and the creation of the universe ex nihilo---how it is a violation of hard science. When we say that God created the universe out of nothing, we are not invoking a God of the Gaps argument due to science's inability to answer the question. Whatever happened at creation ex nihilo is understood by all knowledgably scientists as an event that violates all laws of physics and as such is transcendent---a singularity. They understand that science will never answer this question due to its singularity---it is outside the realm of science for something to come from nothing.

8. God of the Gaps vs. Nature of the gaps.

b. Nature of the Gaps. Regarding Nature of the Gaps, Geisler notes (*Systematic Theology*, 2:511):

“There is another equally harmful mistake that may be called the Nature of the Gaps error, not a folly of supernaturalists but of naturalists. Here the temptation is not to interject a supernatural cause into the regularities of the world (as in God of the Gaps), but rather to assume there is always a natural cause for singularities in the world. However, it is no more justifiable to presume there is always a natural cause for unexplained regularities in nature than it is to necessarily plead a direct supernatural cause for unexplained singularities. Indeed, a continuous regular process, by its very nature, can be assumed to have a nature cause---this is so even if we do not know what it is---and, thus, the God of the Gaps fallacy has no place in operational science. On the other hand, if there is an abrupt, discontinuous singularity or origin, then it is wrong to presume it must have a natural cause. The Nature of the Gaps presumption has no place in origin science.