

Faith Bible Church

“Problem” of Evil-8: Job and Suffering

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, ¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; ¹⁶ because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

- God's commands are derived from His character. God issues commands that He does because He is the kind of God that He is.
- E.g., God commands that we love, ultimately not because "love makes the world go 'round", but because He is that kind of God. God is love, 1 John 4:8.
- E.g., we are to be grace oriented because He is (2 Cor. 8:7-9), forgive others because of His forgiveness in Christ (Eph. 4:32).
- All spiritual virtue is derived from God.

Any Questions?

These slides are available
at <http://www.fbcweb.org/sermons.html>

Philosophical/Theological/Doctrinal & Spiritual Foundations

Bible Doctrines

Eschatology
 Thanatology
 Ecclesiology
 Israelology
 Dispensationalism
 Doxology
 Hodology
 Soteriology
 Hamartiology
 Natural Law
 Anthropology
 Angelology
 Pneumatology
 Christology
 Paterology
 Trinitarianism
 Cosmology
 Theology Proper
 Bibliology
 Prolegomena

Broad and deep understanding of BD

The nature and importance of maturity (τέλειος, teleios).

Maturity is always related to Bible doctrine/divine viewpoint working under the salubrious ministry of God the Holy Spirit (enlightening and empowering).

One of the primary goals of FBC is to equip believers to be systematic Christian thinkers, instead of superstitious and pagan minded

Logos Philosophy

- Logic (32)
- Truth (16)
- Metaphysics

1 Corinthians 2:9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.

Enough BD to be overcomer

1 John 2:14, "you are strong, and the word of God abides in you"

Lacks BD, DV

Eph 4:14, children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming

Mature Believer – Level 3- Metaphysical Maturity

- High abstract metaphysical understanding of BD; Esse, HU, Trinity, Evil, Good,
- Enormous capacity for synthesis of BD and grasping of spiritual realities.
- Required to understand Trinity, free will, evil, good, the human soul, the hypostatic union, substances and properties, philosophy of mind.

Young adult – Level 2- Doctrinal conceptualization

- Cf. Doctrine of evil
- Systematic understanding

Baby – Level 1 = Basic Bible verses

- Basic passages on evil, good, God.
- Limited to isolated Bible verses
- Compare this level of understanding in the sciences where one starts with only the particulars of science.
- Lack of cohesion
- Empirically oriented (empiricism always leads to skepticism)

Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ The 6 contemporary views of truth
 - Coherence
 - Pragmatic
 - Functional
 - Existential
 - Fragmented: Fundamentalist (transcendentals), Scientism (materialism)
 - ✓ CORRESPONDENCE = Total Truth (the correspondence truth does have very powerful, pragmatic and existential qualities; the only difference is that they are real); Esse; Total Reality.

Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

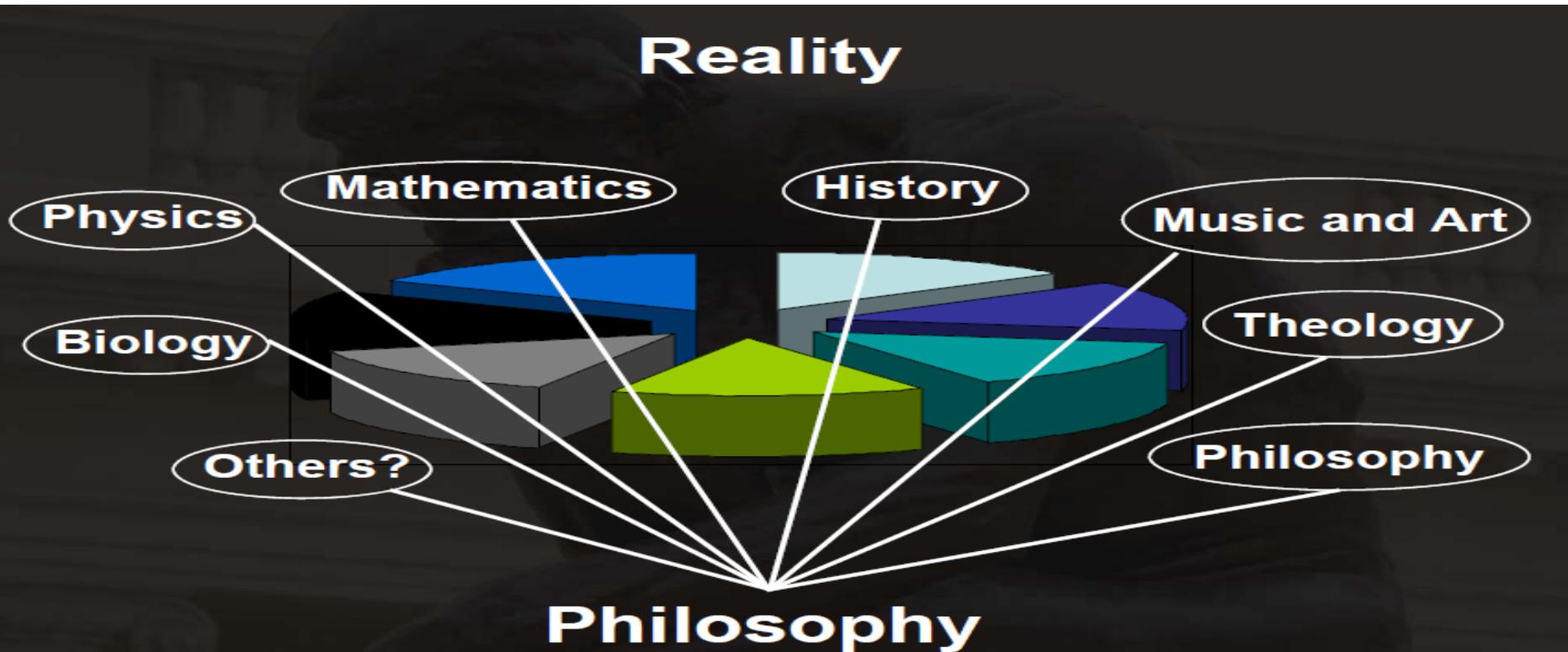
- ❖ Not only do our postmodern unbelieving friends lack the correspondence view of truth with it comes to God and spirituality, many contemporary believers likewise view God and spirituality only in functional or pragmatic ways. No personal love for God can be developed with such an attitude.

Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ There are great many philosophers and theologians who maintain that many of today's movements (mostly Charismatic) are pagan in philosophy (e.g., they want the benefits of God but not God as such), and are actively repressing knowledge of God: they do not really want God, they want the health, wealth, prosperity and the "best life now." This is but a pagan philosophy with Christian *trimmings*. Where is the development of the nature and being of God today among them? What is it all about today? Consider just how pagan churches have become simply by appealing to pagan "needs."

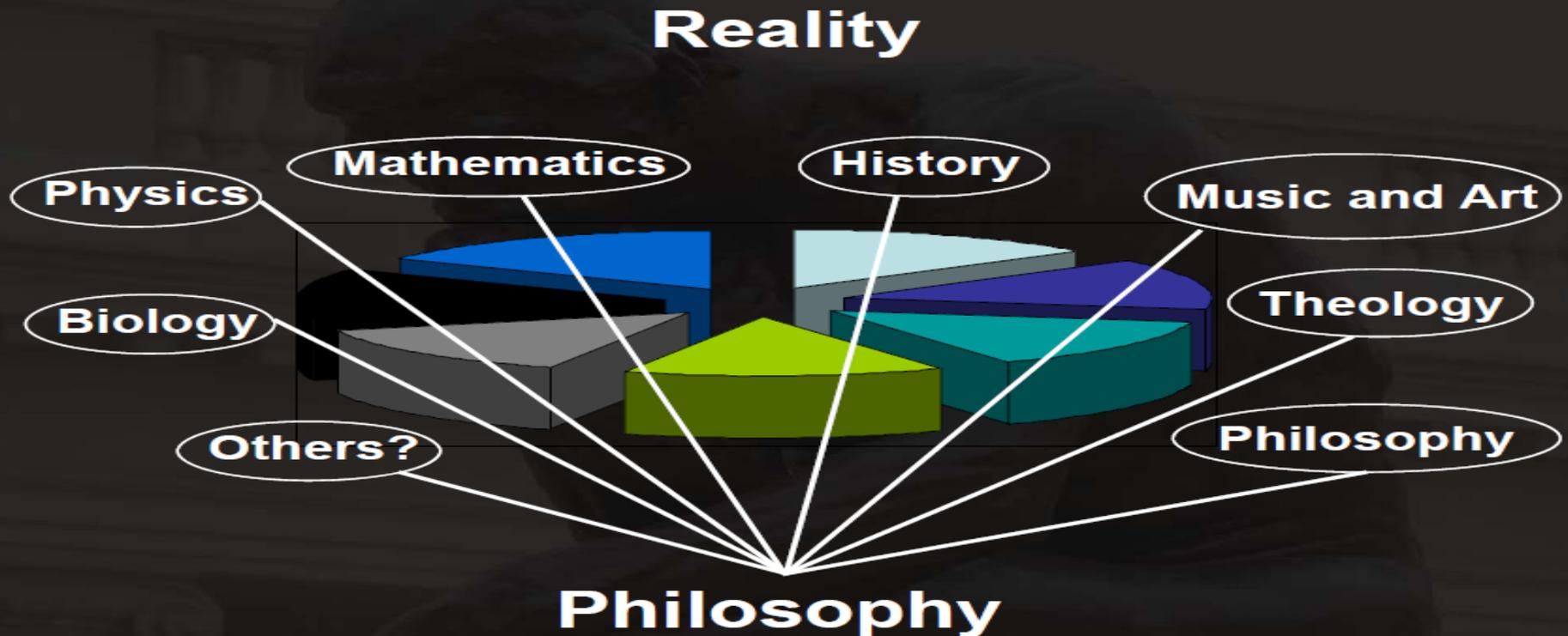
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ Regarding Truth and society. As we have noted, the great error in history has been people taking appropriate tools of analysis from one discipline and illicitly using them to analyze another slice of reality. Where do you find these slices of reality?



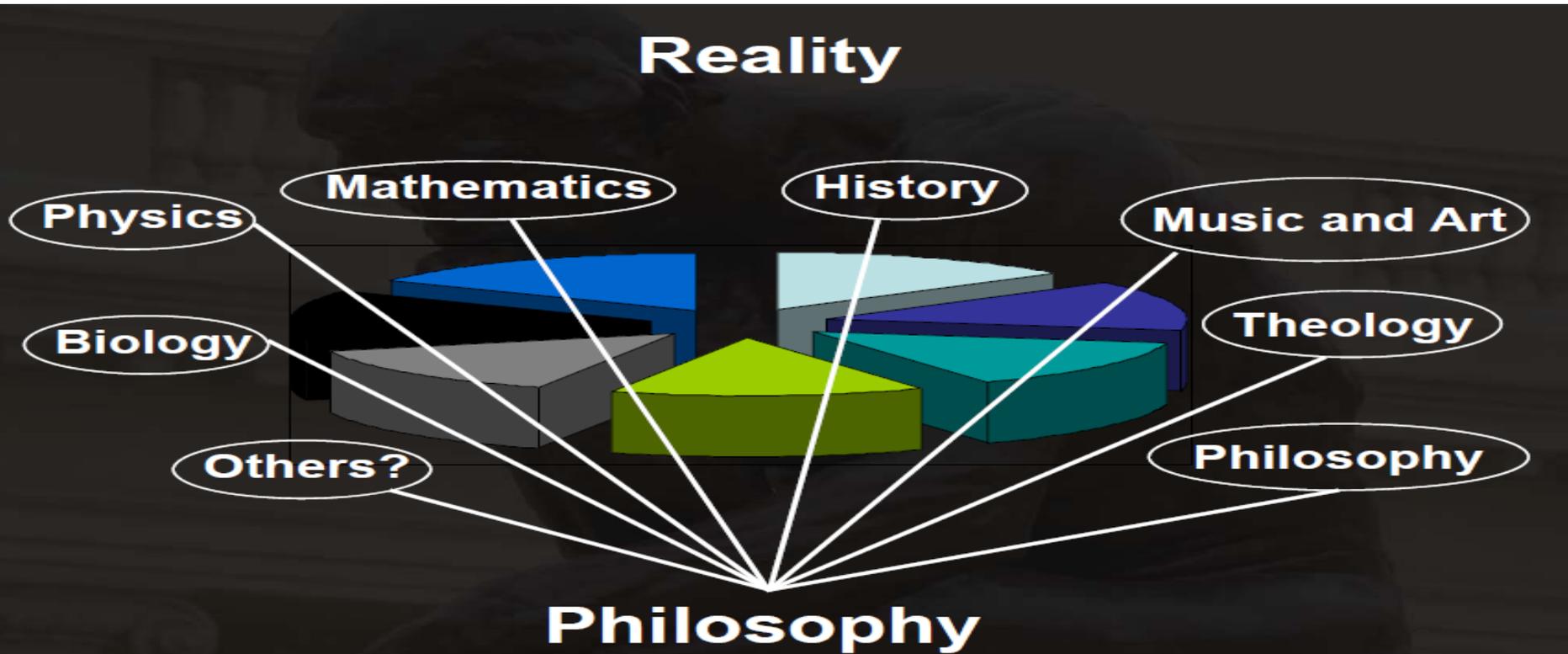
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ Important to keep things in the proper order. For example, consider literary criticism in dealing with the Old Testament prophecy of Cyrus in Isaiah.



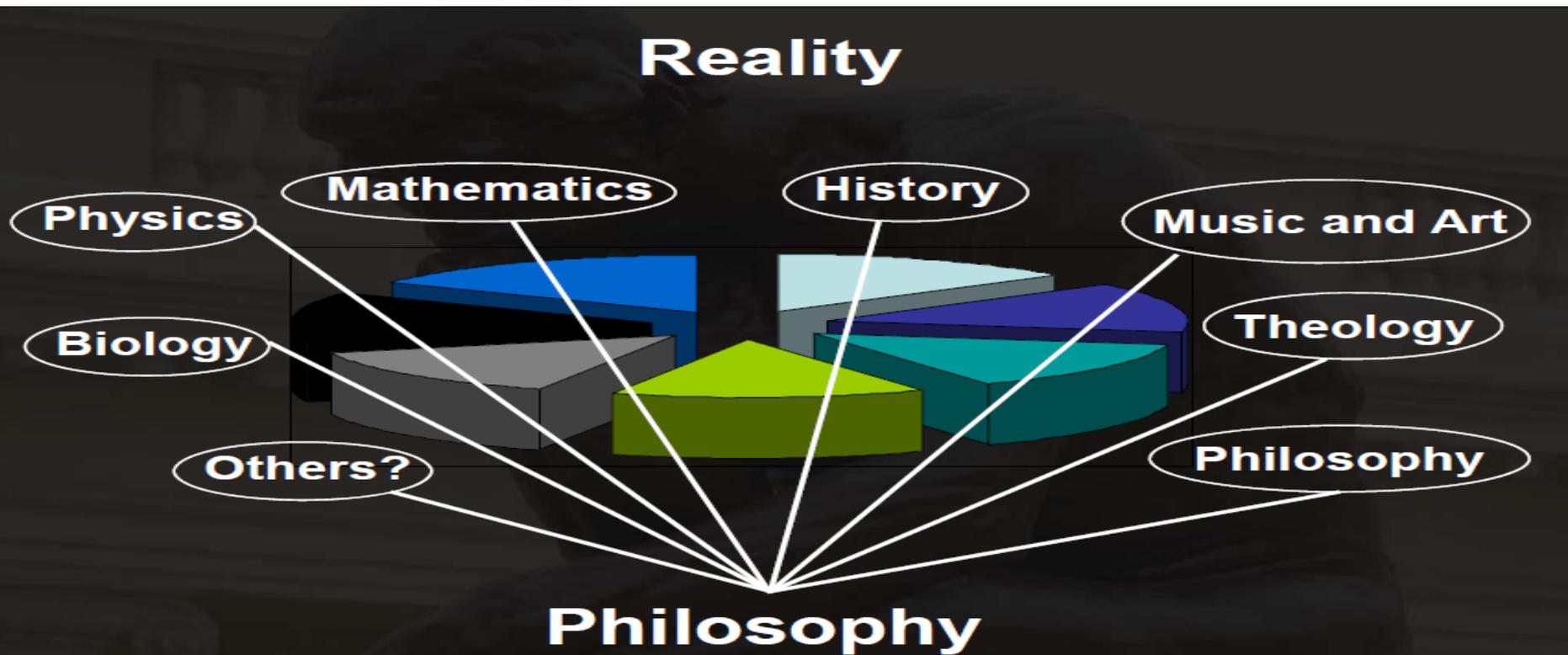
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

The history of the West can be summed up as going from one fragmented view of reality/metaphysics (biology) to another (scientism).



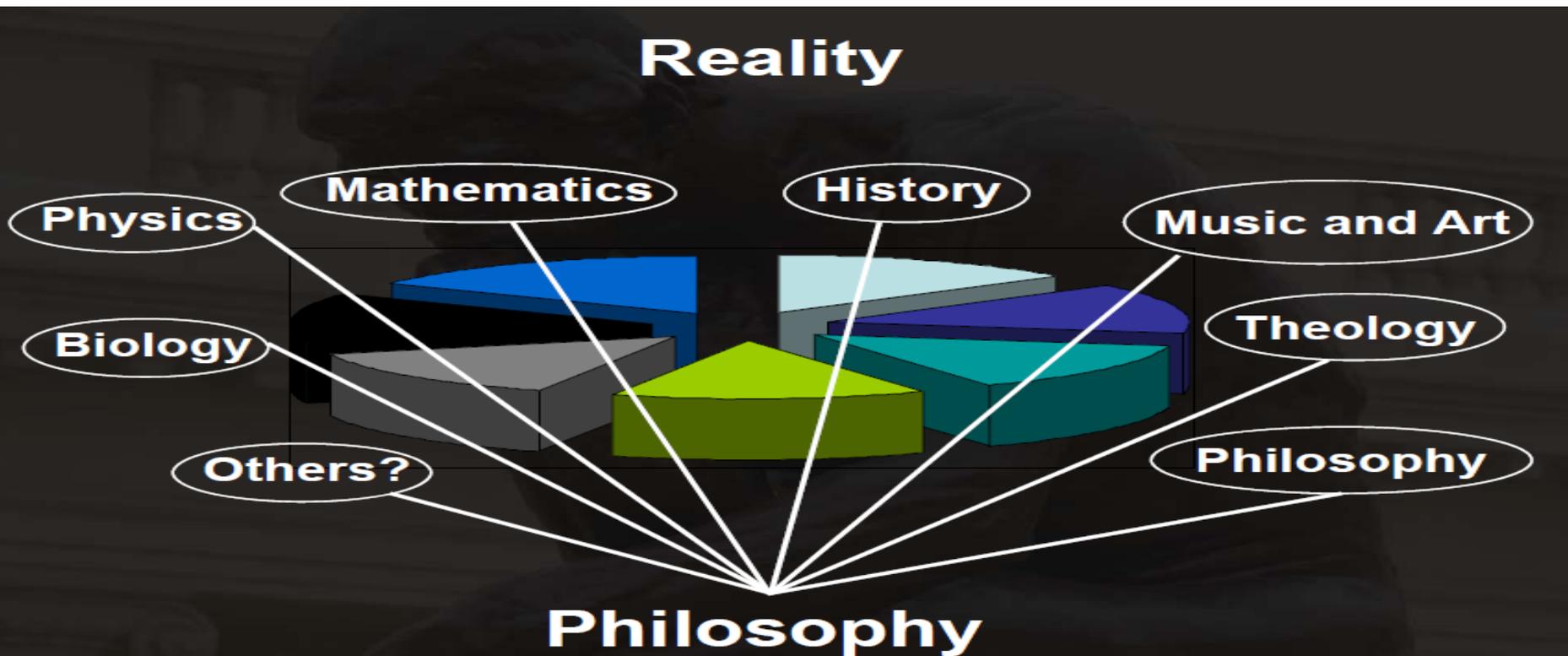
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

However, science is no more Total Reality than biology. We now live under the priesthood of science where is it better to be a buffoon regarding God and theology than a buffoon with regard to science. The scientist is far more respected than the theologian or philosopher. We need both! By the way, God is making a comeback in academia—due to philosophy (cf. Francis Collins vs. Jim Watson of Human Genome Project) discoverer of the double-helix structure of DNA.



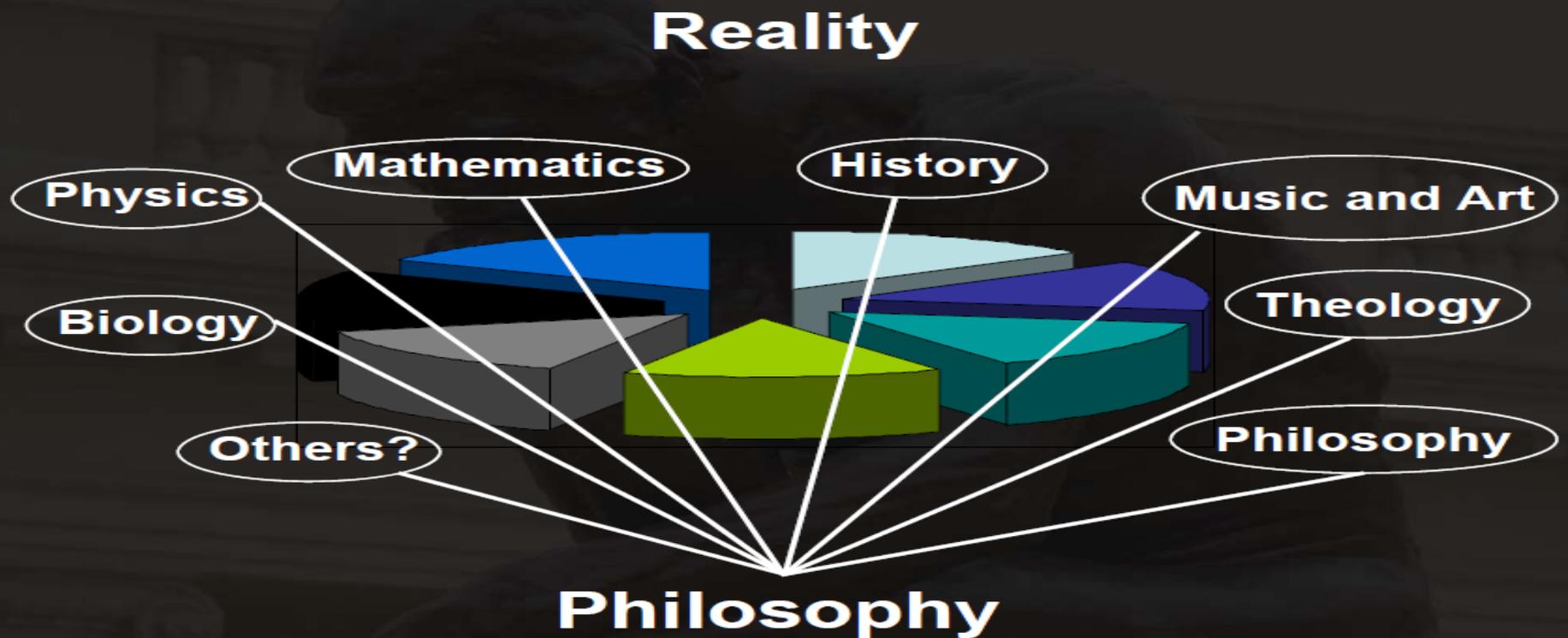
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ The natural sciences languished for over 1,000 years when the biology slice of life was made the paradigm of reality. While the Christian worldview explains to some degree why science flourished in the West and not in the East, why did it not flourish until the 16th century? What was the Christian world doing for 1500 years?



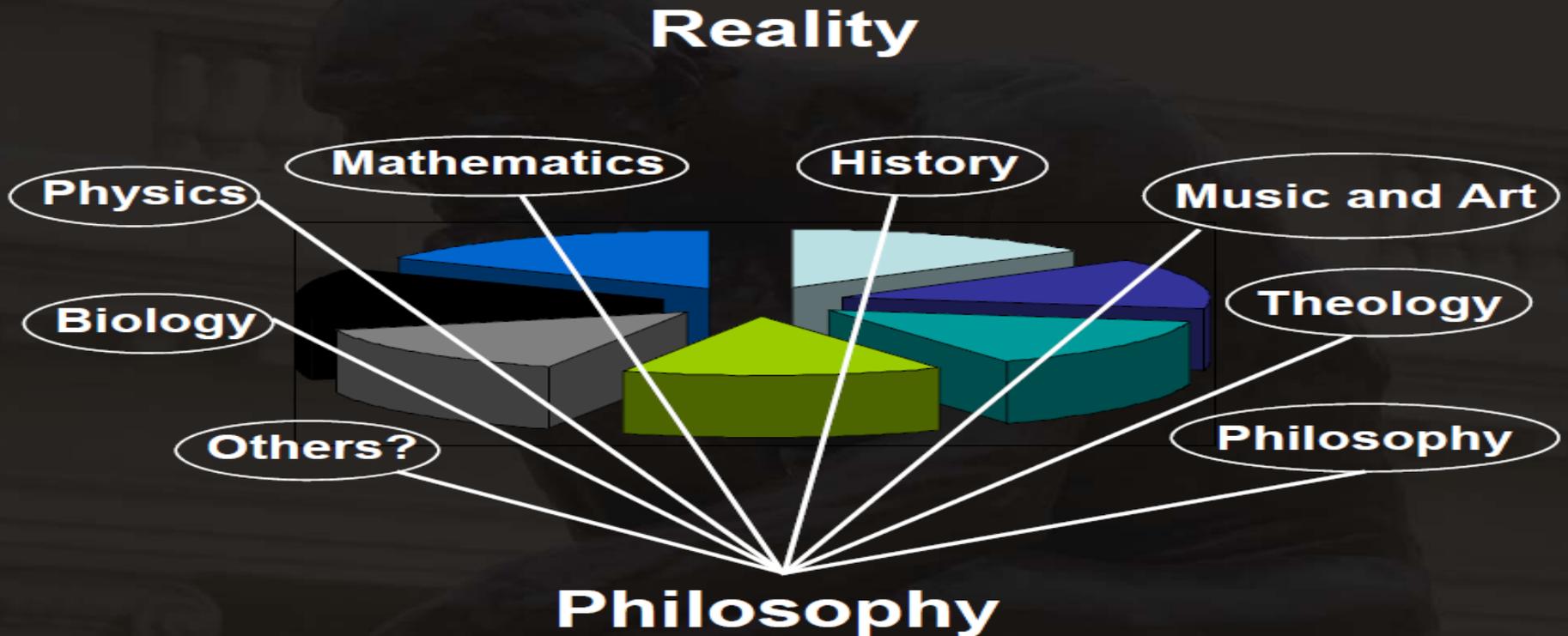
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ In Western thought we go from virtually no natural science (but a robust metaphysics climaxing in the Middle Ages) to science where there is no understanding of metaphysics (today). This “switching out” has resulted in the loss of the nature of man and God. We have cars and air conditioners but no true understanding of man or God or the transcendentals.



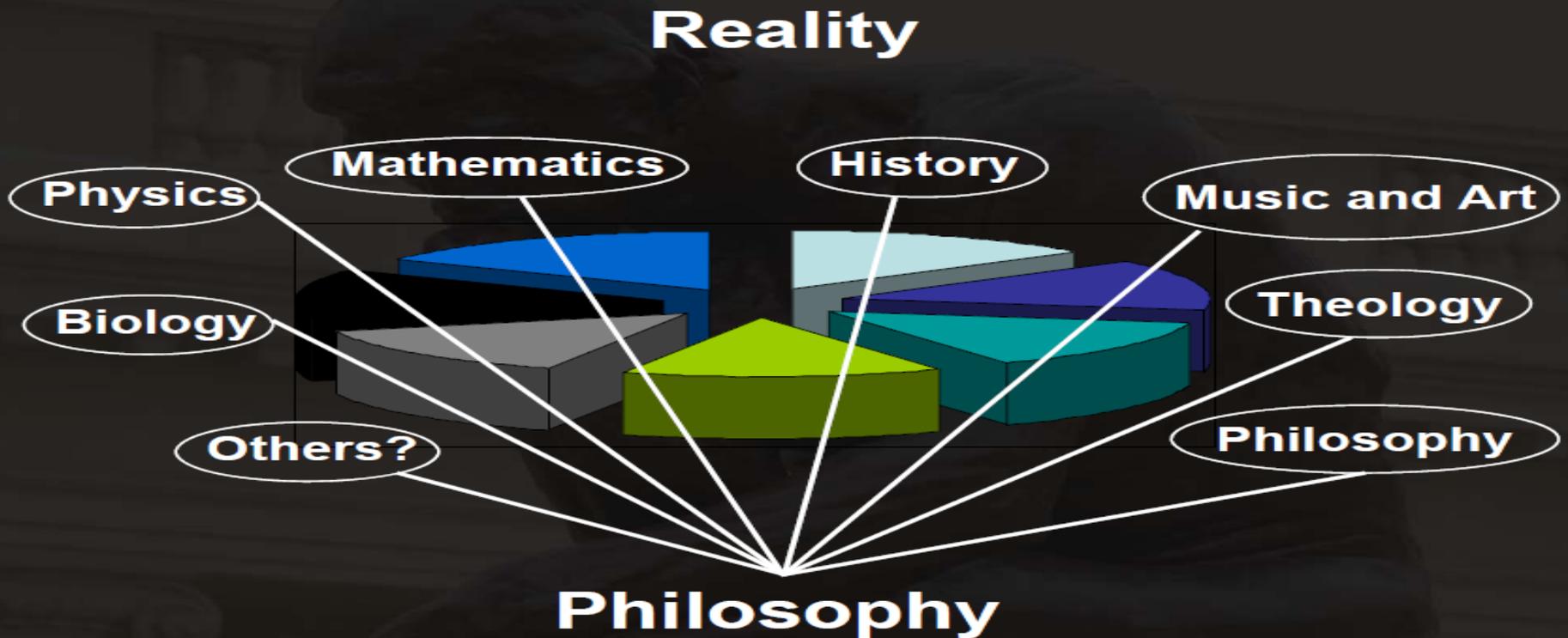
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ The solution to the problem of fragmentation of truth is the study of reality as such, metaphysics: being as being—not being as living or being as moving, or being a quantifiable or being as beauty, but being as such: metaphysics, the science of being or reality—this is what they all have in common: reality, existence.



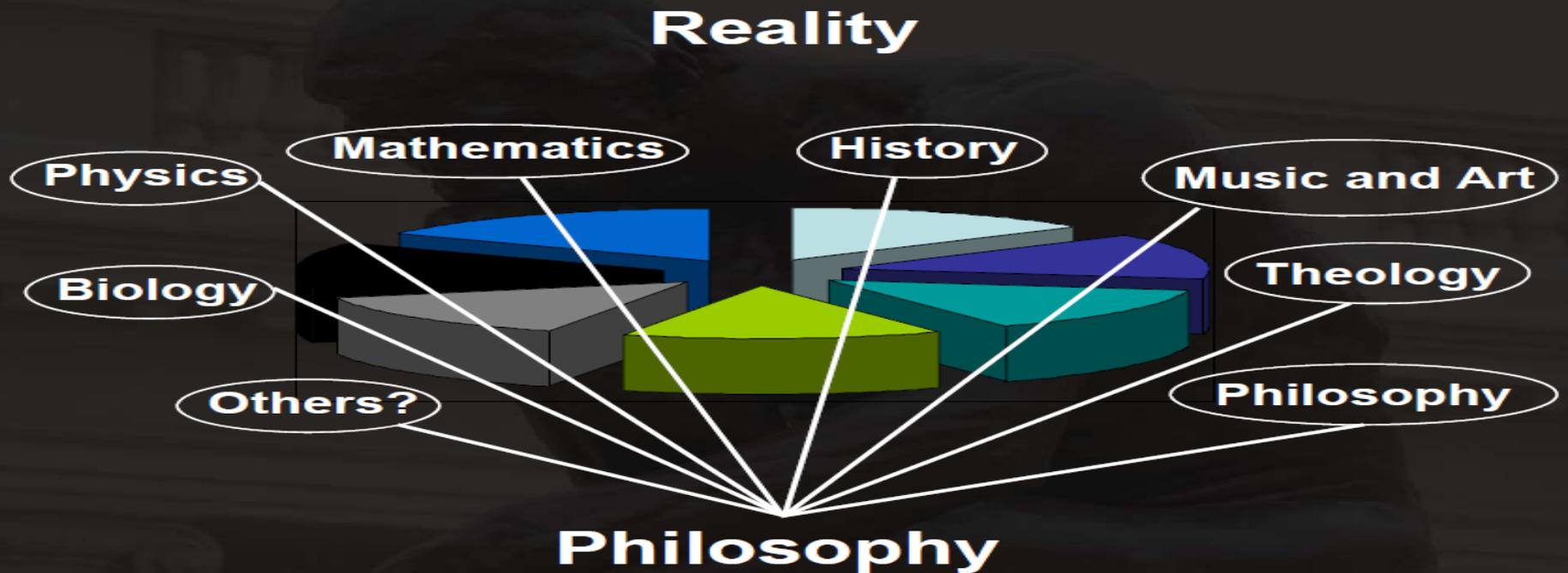
Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ When one does his philosophical analysis and starts unpacking the concept of being and existence of sensible objects, he runs right into God! Because He is being. He is the one whose nature it is to be! Everything else that exists exists because He gives them existence. You realize that there has to be a being whose nature it is to exist. Behind sensible reality is existence, whose essence it is to exist, and necessarily all of the classical attributes of God inevitably cascade. They all flow out of Esse, existence.



Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ Science is no more the be-all or end-all or do all of Truth than any of the disciplines. There are many slices of reality/Truth. All science is the *empirical* study of physical entities—no more or no less. The more scientism molds one's thoughts, the more radical one's empirical orientation is, the more skeptical he will be about God and the things of God (due to diminished capacity for rationalism/logic).



Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ The Total Truth, Ultimate Reality of God, Rom. 1:18-20. Reality (metaphysics) both on an intuitive level as well on the high abstract level *proves* the existence of God. This proof is so powerful that God says that man stands without excuse, Rom. 1:18-32. Therefore, it is not a matter of “probability.”
- ✓ **Romans 1:20** 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.

Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ Again, all men know there is a God.
 - ✓ **Romans 1:18-22** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **repress the truth** in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is **known** about God is **evident** within them; for God made it **evident** to them. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ For 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. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Truth-16 – Total Truth; Total Reality; Metaphysics; God

- ❖ It is fallen man's nature to *repress* the truth concerning God's *true* nature.
 - ✓ **Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who repress the truth in unrighteousness (τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικία κατεχόντων,
 - Repression is the process by which unacceptable desires and impulses are excluded from consciousness and thus being denied direct satisfaction are left to operate in the unconscious.
 - The truth of God is actually “held” in an evil way.
 - The confessions of famous atheists are very revealing about their former self-delusion as a result of repression (cf. J. Budziszewski).

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

Job 1:1; 12-22, and the issue of Theodicy.

- Theodicy: θεός (God) + δίκη (justice).
 - ✓ Theodicy is the vindication of God's goodness and justice in the face of the existence of evil.
 - ✓ Theodicy is the branch of theology that is concerned with defending the goodness, the justice, and the power of God in light of physical and moral evils of the world.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

- Theodicy: θεός (God) + δίκη (justice)
 - ✓ Epicurus (Greek philosopher, 341-270 BC), “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?”

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

- Theodicy: θεός (God) + δίκη (justice)
 - ✓ Theodicy is one the most difficult problems especially for the Christian view of God. Probe an atheist or agnostic deeply enough about why they doubt God's existence, and he or she will likely recount for you the problem of evil. This problem is not only cited as the reason many unbelievers cannot accept the Christian God, it also rattles the faith of even the staunchest believers. It is not only an intellectual problem, it is also a very difficult experiential problem for many.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

- Theodicy: θεός (God) + δίκη (justice)
 - ✓ What makes theodicy difficult and complicated is because the solution is found in understanding the true nature of God as well as the true nature of goodness, suffering, and evil. The problem of evil cannot be solved apart from metaphysics of God and evil. The book of Job helps us grasp these truths. We will go through Job, Samson, and Mary, and then unpack metaphysics to tie it all together.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

- Theodicy: θεός (God) + δίκη (justice). Preliminary way to answer the problem of evil:
 1. There is suffering and evil in the world.
 2. There is an omniscient, omnipotent, perfectly good God.
 3. There is a morally sufficient reason for an omniscient, omnipotent, perfectly good God to allow suffering in the world. This proposition is eminently debatable. Simply by adding “morally sufficient reason” for God’s allowing suffering will need to be understood in light of Esse, good, perfection, evil, and even love.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

Review of wave 1 of Job's sufferings, 1:12-19. This all happened in one day.

1. Job lost all his animals and servants, by a combination of natural disasters and human depredations.
2. He lost all children as they are killed by a sudden storm.
3. Loss of property reduced him to instant poverty.
4. We have both great internal and external suffering—on the same day. The fact that they were from different causes also causes suffering of instability. He is losing control. This loss of control could very easily lead to a nervous breakdown.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

5. God's response to Satan is to "trust in" Job's goodness.
6. Satan strips Job of everything, including his children. Satan afflicts Job as much as he can, and much more than is necessary to try Job on Satan's charge.
7. What Satan is really after is not so much the property and children as much as the relationship between God and Satan. What Satan cares about most is Job's relationship with God.
8. Satan's real aim is to use suffering as a means to drive Job into alienation from God.
9. However, Satan's attempt fails as Job blesses God. Job does not fall into the pagan mentality. Instead, he becomes a greater believer.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

10. Why would God allow Satan to go this far? Why not limit the activity of Satan to property, and not include the children? This is the great theodicy question. For now, let's just say that what is accomplished by Satan's activities effects of great changes in Job.
11. Consider how the extent of suffering removed the indeterminateness regarding Job's motivations or dispositions as regards to God and prosperity.
13. In the aftermath of such suffering, Job takes his stand with God; and his love of God is only for God's own sake, not for the sake of wealth or other benefits. Job will not kowtow to the pressures.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

14. Not only does Satan's attempt at introducing enmity between Job and God fail, it has backfired. Job's manifold loss and his faithful response to God in the aftermath of those losses refined him by fire.
15. Because he is steadfast in his love of God under stress and in affliction, Job draws nearer to God instead of running away from him.
16. Furthermore, Job's steadfastness in suffering and his unambiguous adherence to God's goodness give Satan an example of goodness—virtue and love for God that was attacked by Satan's cynicism.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

17. Suffering and Pain. We noted that pain in and of itself is not what makes suffering evil (cf. women and natural childbirth--there is something about the process, with the pain, that she values as good for herself).
18. The stronger the human willing is that is violated the more evil a person seems to endure. Violating the will is a prima facie evil thing.
19. Suffering is also tied to failing to get the desire of one's heart. Job certainly lost desires of his heart as he lost his children. Yet, a person can thrive even when they lose a loved one.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

20. One does not have to understand why God has allowed him to go through suffering, or why he may be denied the desires of one's heart, cf. John Milton and Victor Klemperer.
21. Suffering is only evil or bad when it is wasted as per Satan.
22. Nothing guarantees that a person will be consciously aware of what constitutes his own flourishing during his suffering. We can be very confused about what suffering is producing in and for us.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

23. Suffering does not in any way militate against the unconditional love of God.
- ✓ God's love is infinitely superior to man's love (analogous, not univocal or equivocal).
 - ✓ God's love for man is not based on any intrinsic attractiveness in man. If love is based on attractiveness of the object, then what happens when the beloved no longer has those qualities? God does not have personal love for man in this way.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

- ✓ God's love is not *purely* volitional. Volitional love is a love that just decides to love the person without any reason. In volitional love there is no reason outside of the choice to love. Under this love a person could have just as easily loved someone else. God's love is not whimsical.
- ✓ God's love for man is related to the fact that man is made in the image of God. God's love for man stems from His own character and the image of God in man.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

- ✓ God loves all of mankind (John 3:16) and desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4).
 - **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life
 - **1 Timothy 2:3-4** This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

- ✓ God loves all mankind because all of mankind is made in the image of God. He loves believers because they are in union with Christ:

Romans 8:35-39 ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from **the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Problem of Evil-8, Job and Suffering

✓ In God's love there are two interconnected desires:

#1- the desire for the good of the beloved. The key term here is *good*. All human suffering is designed for the good of the sufferer—there are *no exceptions*!

#2- the desire for union with the beloved. Because God loves us so very much, He wants for us to be with Him in time and for all of eternity. The greatest evil in life is life without God in time and throughout eternity.