


Classical Theism:

Part 8 – Classical Theism (8) – Crucifixion, the problem of evil, and the true nature of God



**THIS JESUS, DELIVERED UP ACCORDING TO
THE DEFINITE PLAN AND FOREKNOWLEDGE
OF GOD,
you
CRUCIFIED
AND KILLED BY THE HANDS
OF LAWLESS MEN.**

ACTS 2:23

Classical Theism (8) – Crucifixion, the problem of evil, and the true nature of God

Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

T/G/B

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

Psalm 73:24-26; Matt. 22:37-39; 15:8-9.

Preparation for the Word of God. The Holy Spirit. There is a reason why the Holy Spirit does not receive the same level and kind of attention that is focused on the Father and the Son: It is not His purpose to attract that kind of attention to Himself. Just the Son voluntarily chose to take the role of Suffering Servant to redeem God's people, so, too, the HS has chosen to take the role of Sanctifier to raise men's minds and wills to God. We are not orient to Him as conduit power. **3**

Parts to Bible Class: Each part is designed to move the believer into biblical and philosophical realism.

Part I: Spiritual basics: Love for God vs. sensed loves.

Part II: Philosophical foundations. POL: Frege, the *Begriffsschrift*, doctrinal formulas, and analytical philosophy.

Part III: Doctrinal development: Classical theism 8: Crucifixion, the problem of evil, and the true nature of God.

Part I: Basics: Spiritual foundations: Love for God (1 Cor. 13; Gal 5:13-15; 22-23).

1. Review of love: will's desire for a good, licit or illicit; God's analogical love; intrinsic and extrinsic analogical predication; love for God is the root, hinge, and fruit of all spiritual virtue.
2. Jesus Christ on the two greatest commands:
Matthew 22:37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 "This is the first and great commandment. 39 "And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."
 - a. The religious leaders were likely expecting one of the Ten Commandments written by God on stone.
 - b. We could extend the reference to "Law and Prophets" to the rest of the New Testament.
 - c. Why did Christ pick this command over all of the others?
 - d. Just as in the Old Testament, any attempt at the spiritual life that is not governed by love for God will default to programs, systems, and eventually legalism, cf., Jesus in Matthew 4.
 - e. The first command deals with all commands and exhortations with reference to God.
 - f. The second command deals with all commands and exhortation with reference to others.
 - g. The 2 commands work together, *1 Jn 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*
 - h. Love for God means putting Him and His Word above anything and everything else. This means that love for God is to a commitment and higher priority than any sensed goods, Gen. 3:1-7; 1 John 2:15-16; Matt 4:1-4; 16:19-24; Cor. 9:24-27; Heb. 11.
 - i. Neither love for God or Truth is "feeling based." The feeling one experiences from sensible objects of love are often far stronger than any experience toward God. Moreover, false doctrine is often far more stimulating than Truth. Never judge love toward God or teaching based on feelings.
 - j. It was love for God that enabled believers like Abraham, Daniel, Job, and David to grow.
 - k. Love is a virtue and like all virtues it is developed by habituation under the Holy Spirit.

5: Hermeneutics

4: Language-88

3: Epistemology 32
- Existence 50
- History 50

2: Metaphysics 32
- Trans. 50

1: Reality
- Logic 32,
- Truth 32

Outline

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ What is philosophy of language?
- ✓ Theories of meaning
- ✓ Plato's *Cratylus*
 - Hermogenes
 - Cratylus
 - Socrates
- ✓ Aristotle (384-322 BC)
- ✓ Transition to modern philosophy of language
- ✓ Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)

Gottlob Frege (1848-1925)

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).

W. V. O. Quine (1908-2000).

Noam Chomsky (1928-)

Realist view of meaning.

Foundation of meaning.

Communication of meaning.

Elements of language.

Function of language

Meaningful God-talk.

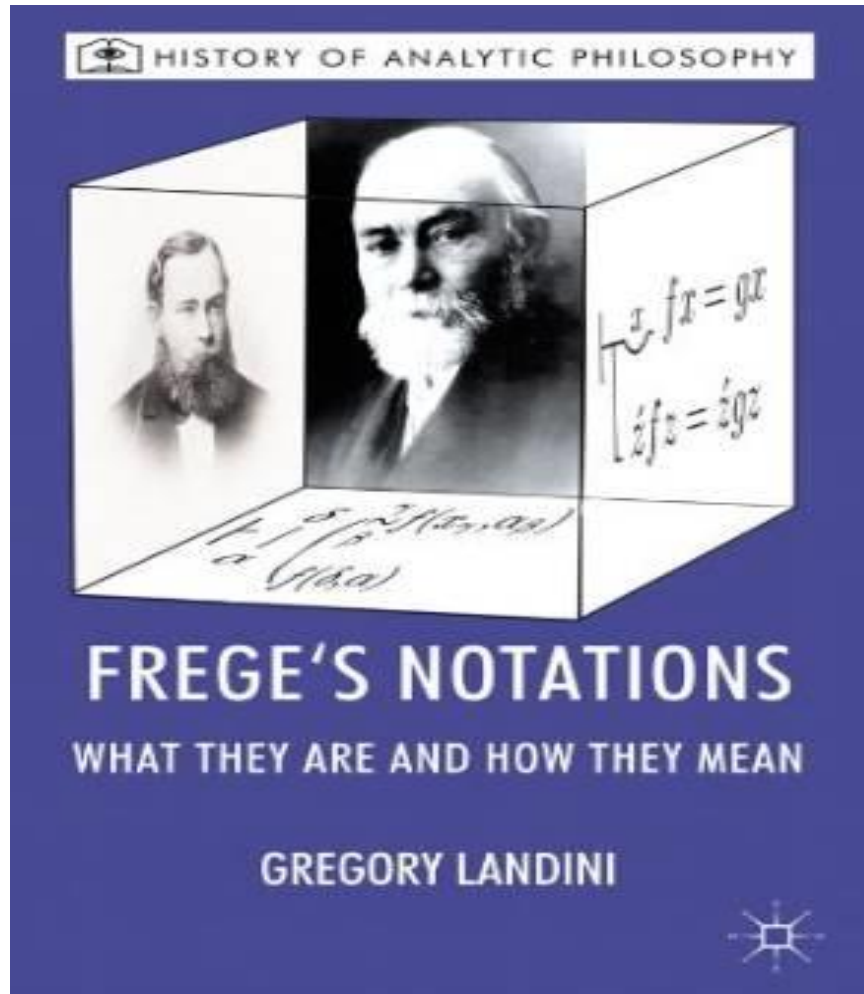
Analytic Philosophy

Conclusion.

Analogy.

Metaphysical analogy.

Part 2: Philosophy of Language (88)



1. Frege is the father of analytical philosophy and modern logic, which replaced classical Aristotelean realistic logic.
2. With Frege making the concept as the direct object of knowledge rather than reality becomes a greater problem as illustrated in his *Begriffsschrift*.
3. There are serious problems in attempting to take function and argument in math and apply them to propositions about reality.
4. One cannot capture statements about reality with mathematical equations without losing a great deal of what is real.
5. Illustrations of problems in using a *Begriffsschrift* schema:
 - a. Plantinga, GC \rightarrow PW
 - b. Doctrinal movement, [FHS + HIQ = SIQ] + Z + E = P/MGG

Table: G (God), C (state of affairs), PW (world), FHS (filling HS), HIQ (human IQ), SIQ (spiritual IQ), Z (metabolism of BD), E (epignosis), P (pleroma), MGG (maximum glorification of God).

Classical Theism (8) – Crucifixion, the problem of evil, and the true nature of God

1. Given our recent studies on the nature of God (simplicity, analogical language with respect to terms used of the Trinity, the ubiquitous problem of making God into a Big Person) we are going to move into the problem of evil, which, more than any other doctrine, demonstrates that the God is not like us. He is radically different. Virtually no modern evangelical has a correct view of God (except Geisler and a few others). This is an outrage! This study of evil will include the evils of the crucifixion of JC.

Classical Theism (8) – Crucifixion, the problem of evil, and the true nature of God

2. Review of passages on the Triune God and discussion false doctrines such as henotheism, Nestorianism, modalism.

Isaiah 45:5 *I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me.*

Isaiah 45:23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath. **Philippians 2:10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Trinity

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

John 17:5 "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

Trinity

Hebrews 1:8 But to the Son *He says*: "Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your Kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." ¹⁰ And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily

The Cross of Christ and the POE

1. Note the evil that was all part of God's predestined plan, Acts 2:22-23.
2. Note some of the details of evil, Matt. 26:57-27:46.

1. One of the greatest obstacles people cite as keeping them from believing in God and Christianity is the problem of evil.
2. The problem of evil is one of the most effective weapons used by atheists. They charge that since an all-good God would want to destroy evil, and an all powerful God is able to destroy evil, the existence of evil proves that no all-good, all powerful God exists.

3. The problem of evil has been exacerbated in our modern age by anthropathizing and –morphizing God as modern Christians continue to make God in their image. The views that modern Christians have regarding God borders on idolatry and blasphemy.
4. It is not enough just to say, or believe, it is all a mystery. The Christian realist understands and is able to defend the existence of an all-good and all-powerful God. There is no virtue in fideism and anti-intellectualism.
5. The goal in this series is to gain wisdom, not clichés. With that in mind, we are going to look at the various contemporary attacks and defenses of God in light of evil (Mackie, Rowe, Swinburne, Plantinga, Craig, Hick, Aquinas, Davies).

6. In approaching the problem of evil it is important to distinguish between a philosophical problem (Mackie) and psychological problem (Dawkins).
7. The believer who gains even the basics of classical theism will see right away that very much that is said about God and evil, by foes and friends of God, are besides the point, just plain wrong, or even morally dubious. Why is it that I would feel comfortable with a realist Bible believer reading the *God Delusion*, but not for any other Bible believer.
8. To understand the classical view of God changes the entire shape of the conversation on God and the problem of evil. What one reaps after working through the arguments is the God of the Bible.

9. Some benefits to and detriments of the classical approach to the problem of evil.
 - a. The benefit is that this starts with universal truths rather than anecdotes and the psychological framing of the issue. However, this can also be a detriment in dealing with those who are emotionally devastated.
 - b. The fact that the classical approach is very theoretical, it can be insensitive to personal situations. It is one thing to talk about scores thousands who starve in Africa, quite another to talk about it with someone who lost a child.
 - c. Classical theism is grounded in theology proper and philosophical theology. We really do live in modern dark ages with respect to theology and philosophy. This good theology keeps one from talking nonsense about God.

10. The almost ubiquitous fatal error among evangelicals is to portray God in an anthropomorphical manner—this only makes the problem worse. To make that move, dooms one to nothing but *ad hoc* strategies in defense against skeptics and atheists.

Attacks on the existence of God in light of the problem of evil

1. The logical attack (J.L. Mackie):

“In its simplest form the problem is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good, and yet evil exists. There seems to be some contradiction between these propositions, so that if any two of them were true the third would be false. But at the same time all three are essential parts of most theological positions: the theologian, it seems, at once *must* adhere and *cannot consistently* adhere to all three.”

2. Mackie's thesis can be thus stated:

The theist belief:

- 1) God exists, and is omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good, is logically consistent with
- 2) Evils exist.

But it seems that

P1) A perfectly good being would always eliminate evil so far as it could.

P2) An omniscient being would know all about evils
and

P3) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

3. It seems that the 1, 2, P1, P2, and P3 forms an inconsistent quintet. It seems like we cannot hold to all five. To affirm four is to deny one. It is important to note that logical problems are a priori, which means no amount of empirical data is relevant.

4. Evidentialist attack on existence of God in light of evil (William Rowe)
 - 1) There exists instances of intense suffering that an omnipotent being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
 - 2) An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse (cf., fawn burning in a forest fire).

Modern Theistic Responses

1. The 'we know that God exists' argument. There is no evil that could ever be used as evidence against God. We just believe (average evangelical).
 2. The unreality of evil argument (Mary Baker Eddy).
 3. The free will defense (Alvin Plantinga).
 4. The means and ends approach (Richard Swinburne, John Hick).
 5. The 'we can't see all the picture' argument (William Alston, Demea).
- ❖ How the classical view differs from all other approaches both biblically and philosophically. The entire conversation is redirected as the believer brings in the God of the Bible, who resolves all issues—as we shall see.