

# Classical Theism (9) – The true nature of God, the trinity, the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the problem of evil



Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him."

Acts 2:23

**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 73:22-26; Matt. 22:37-39; 15:8-9.** Theocentric versus anthropocentric (legalistic, entitlement) view of life.

**Preparation for the Word of God.** While confession of sin is an important part of our daily walk with the Lord, the modern confessional conduit model cannot be supported in the Word of God. Moreover, there is not one place in the entire Word of God where anyone is ever told to confess before teaching as if that was the main issue. Why?

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

Part I: Spiritual basics: The nature of love for God that translates to love for the Word of God.

Part II: Philosophical foundations. POL: Frege's *Begriffsschrift* and modern symbolic logic.

Part III: Doctrinal development: Classical theism 9: The true nature of God, crucifixion, and the problem of evil.

**Part I: Basics: Love for God translated to love for God's Word.**

1. Love is the root, hinge, and fruit of all virtues (1 Cor. 13). How does love for God translate to love for His Word?
2. Matthew 22:37-39. 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.'
3. Psalm 19:7-14 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward. 12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. 13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.
4. John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, & We will come to him & make Our home with him.
5. John 15:10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.
6. 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

5: Hermeneutics

4: Language-89

3: Epistemology 32

- Existence 50
- History 50

2:Metaphysics 32

- Trans. 50

1: Reality

- Logic 32,
- Truth 32

# Part 2: Philosophy of Language (89)

## 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.

HISTORY OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

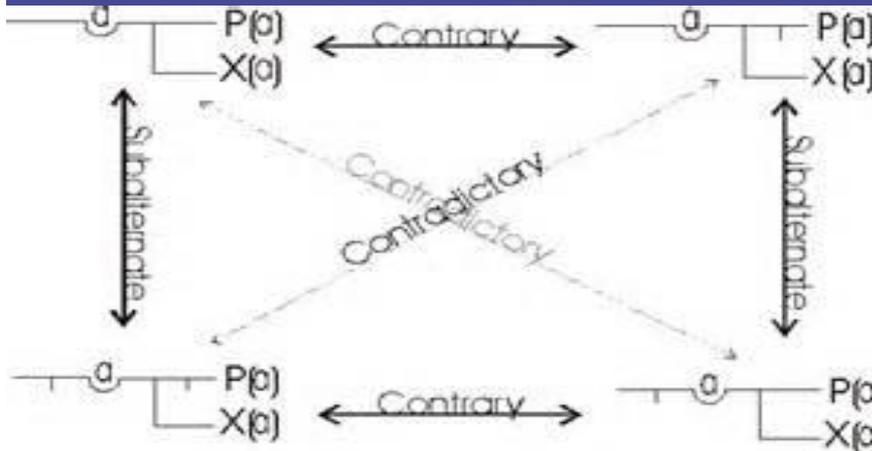



$$f(x) = gx$$

$$\hat{z}fs = \hat{z}gz$$

FREGE'S NOTATIONS

WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY MEAN



1. A crucial question that needs to be answered regarding PR and enemies of Christianity is why I would be very uncomfortable with a doctrinal believer who is not grounded in realism reading atheistic material but not worry if the doctrinal believer was also a Realist.
2. It is my contention that modern versions of Christianity actually make believers more stupid, weak, selfish, and superstitious.
3. Philosophy of Language: Frege's Begriffsschrift and modern logic and analytical philosophy .
4. Aristotelean logic vs. modern logic and the existential import.
5. What do we assume about every proposition as far as truth values?
6. So, is the proposition "All adult unicorns have a horn" true or false?
7. Analytical Christian philosophy falls into the trap of modern logic and ends up treating things that are not real as if they were real beings.
8. My goal in illustrating the problems with the following doctrinal formula is to advance us into realism and out of modern analytical/math philosophy:  
 $[FHS + HIQ = SIQ] + Z + E = P/MGG$

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

## Classical Theism (9) – The true nature of God, the Trinity, the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the problem of evil

1. There is a real need to regain the true nature of God (*Esse*, simplicity) to recover the beauty of classical theism.
2. There is a real need to regain an understanding of the beauty of natural theology as per Romans 1:20 to recover the classical attributes of God.
3. There is a real need to regain a grasp of the Trinity to recover the beauty of the Godhead as only found in classical Christianity.
4. There is a real need to grasp the incarnation to recover the beauty of God's immanent grace as only found in classical Christianity.
5. There is a real need to understand the Cross of Jesus Christ to recover the beauty of God's grace as only found in classical Christianity.
6. There is a real need to understand the problem of evil to recover the classical view of God as only found in classical theism of *Esse*.

1. God's predestined plan, which includes "evil," Acts 2:22-23.
  - a. God's thinking and planning is not discursive.
  - b. Things in the world cause our knowledge. God's knowledge creates things in the world.
  - c. His-story is God's story, planned and prepared by Him.
  - d. Consider God's story for Jesus, God's narrative for Jesus included that
    - 1) Jesus would be born in poverty.
    - 2) Jesus would thought to be a bastard child.
    - 3) Jesus would be out of step with His culture.
    - 4) Jesus would be misunderstood and rejected.
    - 5) Jesus would suffer at the hands of wicked men.
  - e. God chooses for Himself the narrative of history for His glory. His values are not like man's; He does not chose wealth and comfort as a priority. However, He does wish happiness for all, but that as only found in Him.
  
2. God's Story, Matt. 26:65-27:46.

3. Overview of the logical problem of evil (J.L. Mackie).
  1. God is all-powerful.
  2. God is all-loving.
  3. God is all-knowing.
  4. Evil exists.
  
4. How can one hold to all four given the extent of seemingly gratuitous evil? All of the modern theistic responses try to get out of the problem by changing one of the definitions. Consider how one could hold: 1, 2, 4 or 1, 3, 4 or 2, 3, 4. What about pain and suffering in the animal kingdom? What about the creation of Satan? Why did not God allow Hitler to be conceived? Why babies with cancer? Why not give all the beatific vision? If you were God would there be as much suffering and evil as there is today? What does that tell us?

5. Evidentialist attack on existence of God in light of evil: William Rowe: “In light of our experience and known of the variety and scale of human and animal suffering in our world, the idea that none of this suffering could have been prevented by an omnipotent being without thereby losing a greater good or permitting an evil at least as bad seems an extraordinary absurd idea, quite beyond our belief.”
- 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).

**Philo:** “The whole earth is cursed and polluted. A perpetual war is kindled among all living creatures. Necessity, hunger, want stimulate the strong and courageous. Fear, anxiety, terror agitate the weak and infirm. The first entrance into life gives anguish to the new-born infant and to its wretched parent. Weakness, impotence, distress attend each stage of life: And it is at last finished in agony and horror . . . The stronger prey upon the weaker, and keep them in perpetual terror and anxiety. . . Consider that innumerable race of insects, which either are bred on the body of each animal, or flying about infix their stings on him. These insects have others still less than themselves, which torment them. . . . every animal is surrounded by enemies, which incessantly seek his misery and destruction (After **Demea** tries to say it is not that bad because humans have triumphed over animals, Philo continues) Man is the greatest enemy of man. Oppression, injustice, contempt, contumely, violence, sedition, war, calumny, treachery; by these they torment each other.”

**Cleanthes:** He is the Christian who attempts to defend God by comparing God with morally good people. Philo then says either God is lacking in power or is morally bad. Thus, the problem of evil.

7. How not to exonerate God. Yet, the following are the modern ways evangelicals attempt to defend God. However, they all fail. Why?
  - a. 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). God continues to be viewed as a moral giant person.
  - b. The unreality of evil argument (Mary Baker Eddy).
  - c. The free will defense (Alvin Plantinga).
  - d. The means and ends approach (Richard Swinburne, John Hick).
  - e. The 'we can't see all the picture' argument (William Alston, Demea).

8. The classical view of God 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.
  
9. 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. It is no surprise that many Christians end up losing their faith, or give lip service to it, when major seemingly senseless tragedies hit them.

10. 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.
11. 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 in the face of the most horrendous evils. There is no virtue in fideism and anti-intellectualism.
12. 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 on and defenses of God in light of evil (Mackie, Rowe, Swinburne, Plantinga, Craig, Hick, Aquinas, Davies). We will look at evil, sin, divine knowledge, power, predestination, the source of sin, the sovereignty of God, etc. The only way to get rid of suffering is for God to give you Himself. Remember, He is not our Buddy, and He is never sad. He solves the problem by giving Himself to you. We do not change Him. He changes us.

13. In approaching the problem of evil it is important to distinguish between a philosophical problem (Mackie) and psychological problem (Dawkins).
14. 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.
15. To bring in the classical view of God in the face of attacks changes the entire shape of the conversation on God and the problem of evil.

16. 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 God's will with a mother who lose a child.
  - c. Classical theism is grounded in theology proper and philosophical theology. It is unfortunate that modern Christianity has become so anti-intellectual so as to enter the modern dark ages with respect to theology and philosophy. It is good theology that keeps one from talking nonsense about God.