



The “Problem” of Evil and Suffering in the Presence of an All-knowing, All-good, All-loving, and All-powerful God (44):

Job 33: Elihu Rebukes Job

<http://www.fbcweb.org/sermons.html>

Philosophical/Theological/Doctrinal & Spiritual Edification

Bible Doctrines

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

This chart 1) addresses the anti-intellectual crisis that is ubiquitous in contemporary Christianity, 2) provides a plan for mental, spiritual, and doctrinal edification and 3) enables believers to really grow their minds in God, the things of God, and reality as such.

Why is such a plan so absent in churches today?

Sacred Theology
Book 2
(2 Tim 3:16-17)

Prolegomena
P.R. for objectivity (21)
Foundations!

- Hermeneutics
- Linguistics
- Epistemology
- Metaphysics
- Reality -Logic 32, Truth 32

Natural Theology
Book 1
(Rom 1:18-20)

Broad and deep understanding of BD

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 - Extremely powerful believer

- High abstract metaphysical understanding of BD; Esse, natural law
- Enormous capacity for synthesis of BD and grasping of spiritual realities.
- Metaphysical understanding of the attributes of God, cf. omniscience.

Young adult - Level 2- Doctrinal conceptualization

-Systematic understanding of --God's Word/Truth, e.g. systematic understanding of attributes of God (omniscience)

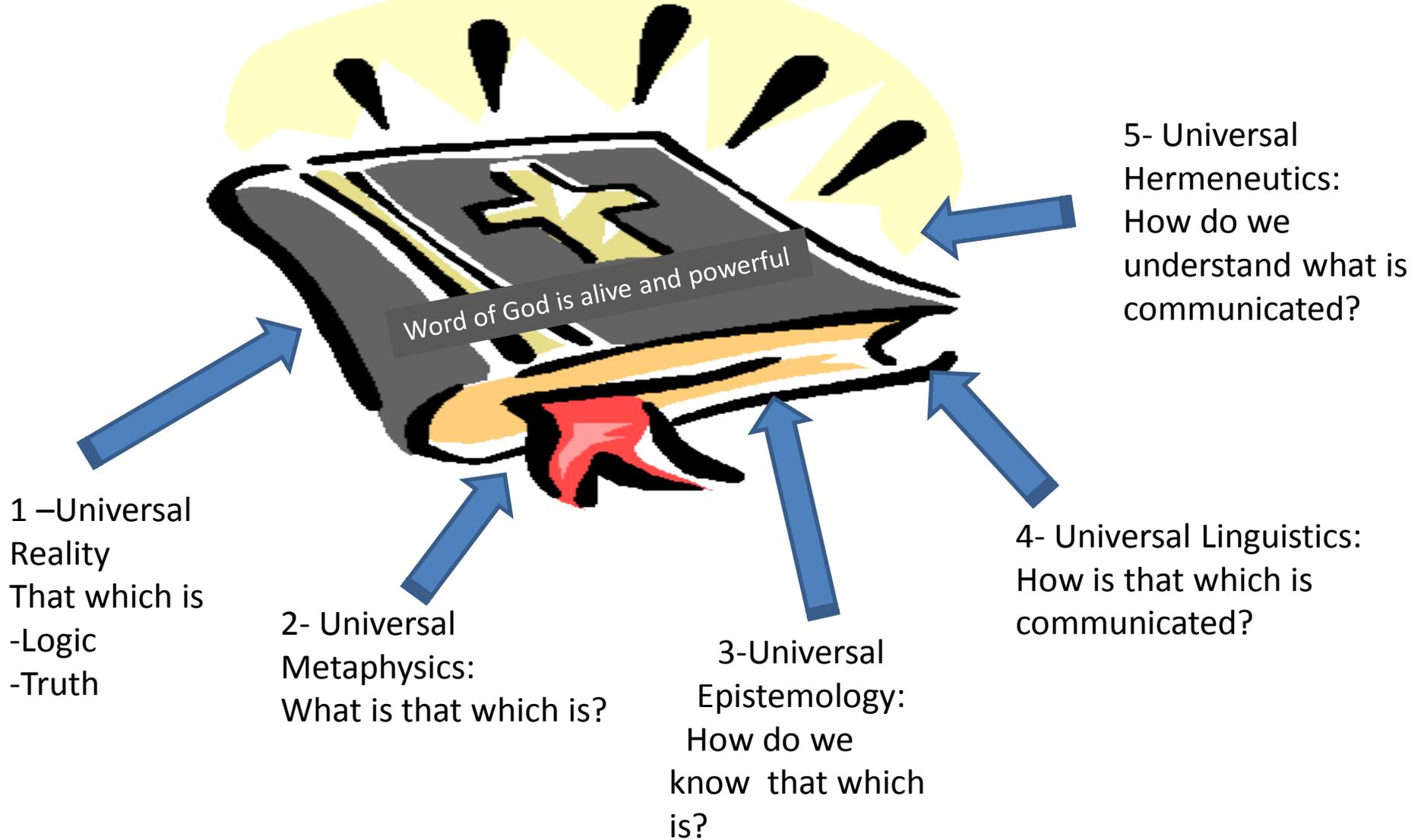
Baby believer - Level 1 -

- Limited to isolated Bible verses
- Unable to apply doctrine or divine viewpoint to *all* the issues of life
- Fragmented understanding of truth, e.g., fragmented view of attributes of God, cf. omniscience of God

Foundations: the Need for Philosophical Realism for Objective Biblical Interpretation.

1. Biblical interpretation is facing a crisis of objectivity.
2. This crisis cannot be resolved by traditional hermeneutics.
3. The only way to get to biblical and doctrinal objectivity is through the five universal principles of philosophical realism.

4. Philosophical Realism is the only universal method that transcends all cultures and backgrounds and can guarantee biblical and doctrinal objectivity.



5. The failure of traditional (non-philosophical) hermeneutics illustrated.

Van Kampen

Finis Dake

The first principle is that all Scripture is to be taken in its customary, natural and normal sense (i.e. literal), allowing, of course for obvious symbolism, and figures of speech.

Both men claim to take the Bible in normal, literal meaning.

Remember this: Take the Bible literally whenever it is at all possible. When the language can not be taken literally then we know it is figurative. Then get the literal truth conveyed by the figurative language as if it were expressed in literal language without the use of figures.

The Need for Philosophical Realism for Objective Biblical Interpretation (21).

Van Kampen

The second principle has to do with the context of a word, phrase, or larger passage. Sometimes that involves careful understanding of the complete Bible book being studied, carefully interpreting a given idea or principle in the light of the overall thrust and nature of the book as well as in the light of its immediate context.

Finis Dake

Often to fully understand a passage of Scripture, the scope or plan of the entire book must be known . . . If the definite purpose of the book is not stated, the purpose of the book must be gotten from the contents and from the design of the Bible as a whole as is clear in John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17.

Both men claim to understand the Bible in its context

The Need for Philosophical Realism for Objective Biblical Interpretation (21).

Van Kampen

The *third principle*, equally important as the first two, is that of comparing Scripture with Scripture

Finis Dake

One of the most fundamental rules of interpretation is that of comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Both men compare Scripture with Scripture

The Need for Philosophical Realism for Objective Biblical Interpretation (21).

Van Kampen

Finis Dake

Fourth, antimonies are never accepted, and the importance of this principle cannot be overstated. An “antinomy” is a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles. . . If God’s Word is inerrant, it cannot be self-contradictory.

The Bible cannot contradict itself. Its teachings in one part must agree with its teachings in another part. Therefore, any interpretation which makes the Bible self-inconsistent must rest upon false principles.

Both men claim to hold to the law of non-contradiction

The Need for Philosophical Realism for Objective Biblical Interpretation (21).

Van Kampen

Finis Dake

Fifth, it is recognized that many passages of Scripture, in both Testaments, have both near and far implications. In other words, prophecy operates on two levels of fulfillment.

In some passages two distinct persons are referred to, the visible person addressed and the invisible person who is using the visible one as a tool.

Both men share the same hermeneutics with regard to prophecy. However, each man comes up with different interpretations.

Both men are totally unaware of how their own preunderstandings, and preconditional frameworks *determine* their respective divergent interpretations.

Foundations: Holy Spirit

1. God the Holy Spirit provides the believer with an *inner* absolute certainty of the truths of Christianity. No believer should feel intimidated or naïve for believing in Jesus Christ before examining all of the evidence. You are within your epistemic rights (cf. Alvin Plantinga).

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

1 John 3:24 And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 4:13 By this we know (γινώσκομεν) that we abide in Him and He in us, (ὅτι) because He has given us of His Spirit.

Foundations: Holy Spirit

2. All other evidence (apart from inner testimony of the HS) is external. This external evidence enables the believer to better understand his faith and demonstrate its veracity to others. The external evidence provides common ground for the believer and the unbeliever when the gospel is challenged by the unbeliever.
 - a. For Jews, the Christian should focus on the common ground of the Old Testament when Christianity is challenged.
 - b. For the various cults, the Christian should focus on common ground of New Testament when Christianity is challenged.
 - c. For all others, the Christian should focus on philosophy when the truths of Christianity are challenged.
 - d. Philosophy is the 2nd order discipline that is the handmaiden to theology/metaphysics, the queen of sciences.
 - e. There are no defeaters to Biblical Christianity.

Job 33: Elihu Rebukes Job

1. Elihu requests that Job listen to and engage him, 1-7.
2. Elihu reviews Job's charges against God, 8-11.
3. Elihu's refutation of Job's charges, 12-13.
4. God is not silent, 14. He speaks through
 - a. Dreams, 15-18.
 - b. Pain, 19-22.
 - c. Angelic help, 23-24
5. The blessings of restoration to fellowship with God, 25-33.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

1. Elihu is correct in that God does speak through suffering and pain. It has been said that God whispers to us in our blessings, but uses the megaphone in our sufferings and pain. The problem is that man is intractable and does not listen.
 - a. Suffering is a means of human flourishing and therefore compatible with God's character as loving.
 - b. All suffering is designed by the love of God to make the sufferer into a better person and to bring him closer to God.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

- c. Because being closer to God is the best thing for human beings, it is worth suffering, however bad the suffering.
- d. God's allowance of suffering for the sake of human flourishing with God is part of God's love, not contrary to it.
- e. The suffering that is designed to make a person *objectively* better does so by bringing psychic integration, which is requisite for any goodness, flourishing, and life with God.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

- f. Often it is only suffering that will remove the obstacles that keep a person from even willing to let God be closer to him.

- g. We have empirical evidence (1st book of revelation) of the role of great suffering where 'trauma,' as the psychologist call it—bring about spiritual and moral “regeneration.” The study of how trauma effects people is a recognized subdiscipline of psychology.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

- h. The phenomenon of positive change following trauma is known as posttraumatic growth, PTG. The empirical evidence for PTG is sound.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

- i. The introduction of the term 'posttraumatic growth' was a consequence of a surprising finding involving patients with cancer. The experts say:

“Most people diagnosed with cancer report that they experience positive changes in their lives as a result of their disease, and may say their experience with cancer was more positive than negative.” (Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 763 (2008), 811.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

(What they are saying about PTG)

“ Positive changes following adversity have long been recognized in philosophy, literature, and religion. They have been reported empirically following chronic illness, heart attacks, breast cancer, bone marrow transplants, HIV and AIDS, rape and sexual assault, military combat, maritime disasters, plane crashes, tornadoes, shootings, bereavement, injury, recovery from substance addiction, and in parents of children with disabilities . . . clinicians should be aware of the potential for positive change in their clients following trauma and adversity” (*Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 17 (2004), 11-21).

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

(what they are saying about PTG and integration)

“ One way of explaining quantum change experiences is that they represent . . . a turning point in the life journey where major change simply must occur because the person is unable or unwilling to continue in his or her present course. It is a point of desperation, a breaking point where ‘something has to give’ —and it does. The result is a new dramatically reorganized identity . . . strained and separate aspects of identity are reordered.”

“Evidence suggests that religious and spiritual beliefs and behaviors may lead to posttraumatic growth, but also that posttraumatic growth leads to a transformation in religion and/or spirituality.”

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

- j. In light of the positive effects of suffering that is acknowledged in kosmos diabolicus, it is ironic that some Christians become more disintegrated (have less psychic integration), distant, and become morbidly worse in the face of traumatic suffering—even in the last moments of death. They have become pathological.
 - 1. Pathology in contemporary Christianity: the believer fails to appreciate the fact that there is no reason whatever to think that an all-powerful and all-good God would prevent suffering, seeing that it is part of His infinite goodness that He should allow it and produce out of it incredible goodness.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

2. Pathology in contemporary Christianity: the believer fails to appreciate how the here-and-now is but a trivial blink of the eye compared to the eternity we are to enter.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

3. Pathology in contemporary Christianity: the believers fails to see that there is no limit to the good result in the next life that can be made out of the worst evils we suffer in this one.
4. Pathology in contemporary Christianity: the believer fails to appreciate the fact that even the worst evils we suffer are finite.

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES

5. Pathology in contemporary Christianity: the believer fails to see that even the greatest horror that can be imagined pales in insignificance to the beatific vision.

Romans 8:18 For I consider (Λογίζομαι) that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.