

God and Creation -3

“He makes grass grow for
the cattle, and plants for
man to cultivate bringing
forth food from the earth.”

Psalm
104:14 (niv)

**The “Problem” of Evil and Suffering in the Presence of an
All-knowing, All-good, All-loving, and All-powerful God (56):
Job 38: God and Creation-3 (Divine Simplicity)**

<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

Consider the metaphysics of Acts 17:22-28.

1. Baby view of God.
2. Young adult view of God.
3. Sage/Christian metaphysician : deep and profound view of God.

Prolegomena: **P.R. - 32**

- Hermeneutics
- Linguistics
- Epistemology
- Metaphysics -2
- Reality -Logic 32, Truth 32

These enable the believer to have objective understanding of the Bible and reality as such.

Stage 3 - Metaphysical understanding of Reality conveyed by the Bible verses.

Stage 2- Systematic understanding of Bible verses

Stage 1- Isolated understanding of Bible verses

Metaphysical (Refined) Christian-Level 3:

- True understanding of Ultimate Reality God's Word, 'Ehyeh, Esse, Exod. 3:14; Acts 17:28; Matt. 6; Col. 1:17.
- Christian metaphysician understands how God can be said to be present to all things and modalities in Acts 17. He also understands the nature of free will and predestination in context of timelessness of God.

Doctrinal Maturing Believer- Level 2:

- Systematic/organized understanding of biblical passages.
- Views God with a bit more sophistication.
- Young adult. Believer recognizes figures of speech but not sure what is communicated in Acts 17:22-28.
- Believer does not grasp how he can be free and yet predestined.

Baby Bible believer - Level 1 -

- Limited to isolated Bible verses.
- Baby view of God: spatial-temporal terms ; can still appreciate the PPOG.

Philosophical Foundations for Biblical Objectivity



5- Hermeneutics – how do we understand that which is?

4- Linguistics – how is that which is communicated?

3- Epistemology – how do I know that which is?

2- Metaphysics – what is that which is? (2)

1- Reality – that which is (Logic 32, Truth 32)

Biblical Objectivity

PR 32

Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

1. Metaphysics is the study of reality from the standpoint of it being reality. This is known as “being *qua* being.” It is the study of the whole natural world of change available to human experience.
2. Metaphysics is the foundational science for all others, because all other particular sciences presuppose their particular subject matter *as already existing*. The existence of self and things are presupposed.

Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

3. Metaphysics is the study of the world—using reason alone—of finite, changing, at least partly material open to our experience and intellectual investigation, considered precisely insofar as they are *beings*.

Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

4. There are two main divisions of metaphysics:
 - a. The first division is the inquiry into the meaning of being (i.e., transcendent attributes proper to beings as such, such as unity, activity, truth, goodness, beauty, act and potency, and the one and the many beings).
 - b. The second division is the inquiry into the ultimate cause(s) or Source of all being, in that the entire realm of finite and changing things is discovered to be not self-sufficient, self-explanatory, that is, not adequate to render intelligible its own actual existence, and hence requires an ultimate self-sufficient First Cause and the attributes that is required for it to pull this all off.

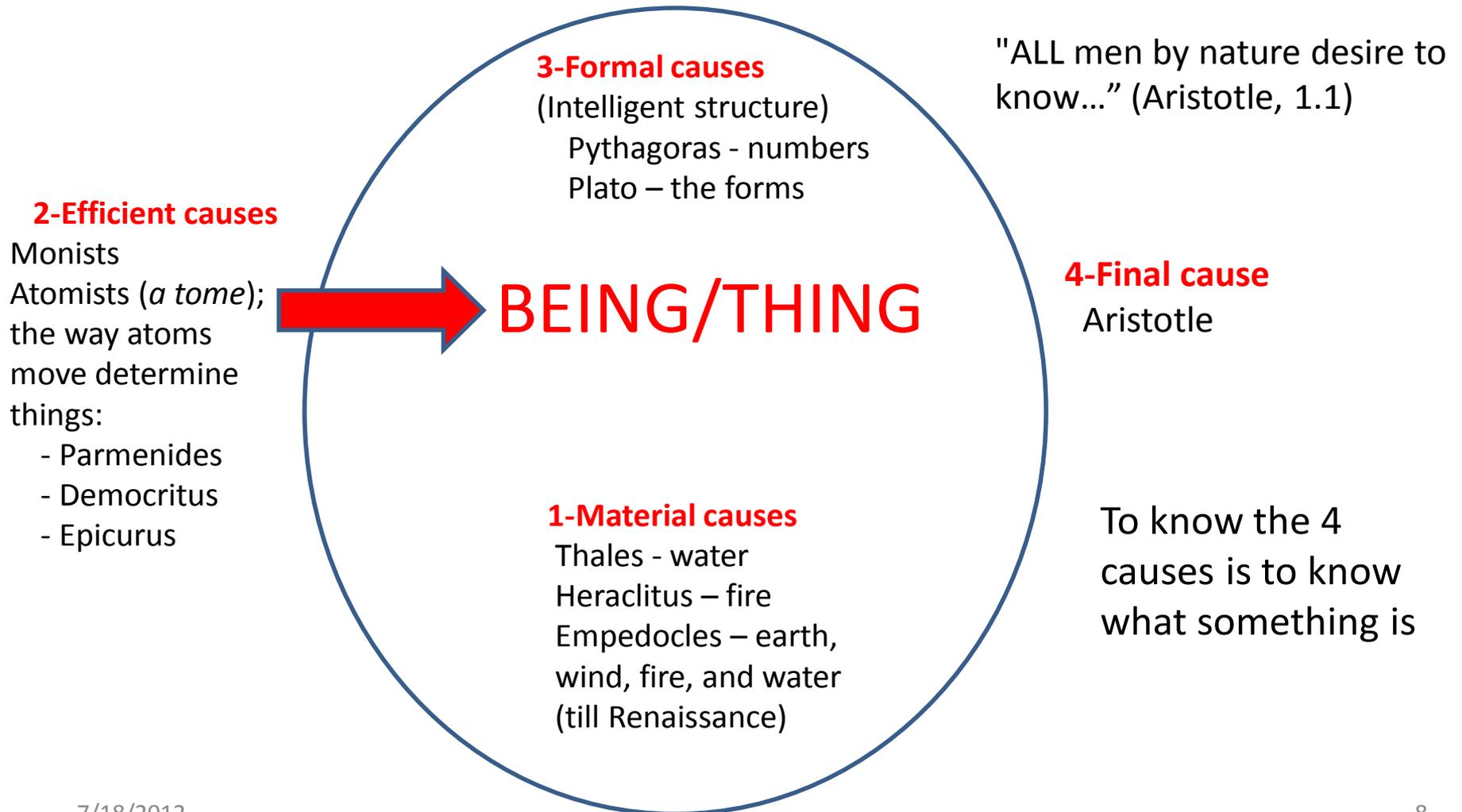
Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

5. It was Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC) who made the first most significant contribution to metaphysics (τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά).



Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

6. Aristotle's history lesson. It is impossible to underestimate the significant contributions of Aristotle and the lunacy that has resulted from the rejection of his formal and final causes by modern materialists.



Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

7. Your metaphysics determines how you think about God and reality. If people criticize you for studying metaphysics, you can ask them how their metaphysics is coming along since everyone does it. Most Christians are either materialistic or Platonic in their outlook on reality and the Bible.

Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

8. Understanding the four causes gives us an explicit systematic account of what we all know intuitively, and the avoidance of certain deep and widespread modern philosophical errors. Rejection of formal and final causes in nature today has led to perplexity and idiocy in many areas of science today.
 - a) Material cause is the underlying stuff that a thing is made out of.
 - b) Formal cause is the form or structure that matter exhibits.
 - c) The efficient cause is what brings a thing into being—it actualizes a potentiality in a thing.
 - d) Final cause is the end, goal, or purpose of a thing.

Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

9. In combination, these four causes provide a complete explanation of a thing. The four causes apply throughout the natural world.

10. It was the abandonment of Aristotelianism that has brought about the precipitous decline in philosophical understanding and destruction of true science as indicated in the confusion and idiocy that has resulted in rejecting Aristotle's goal-directedness in nature.

Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

11. Aristotle's teleology has been replaced by mechanical nonsense devoid of formal and final causes. Welcome to the modern world of problem, paradoxes, and absurdities:
- ✓ Blind laws of nature with no formal or final causes, inherently meaningless and purposeless physical particles and the like. What a mess. Everything no matter how complex now boils down to random motions.
 - ✓ Destruction of the moral code and with it the very definition of marriage and family. Destruction of the unborn is no big deal because it had no inherent purpose.
 - ✓ Metaphysical structure of reality has been destroyed in society. It is really weird. Its incoherency is breathtaking as they blather, "it is just in our minds."
 - ✓ They should thank Aristotle for the discovery of the DNA, but they remain blinded by the Newtonian world. They are like idiots who stare at the finger that points to the moon.

Metaphysics-2 (The 4 causes of things)

12. God is not the direct object of metaphysics (cf. Avicenna vs. Averroes).
13. God is studied indirectly because as we study these finite beings (living as well as artifacts) we run into their cause. Through creation we can see God. We go from finite creation to Infinite Creator.

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.

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

Job 38

1. Let's look at some passages on God and creation (Job 38:4-18; 12:7-12; Neh. 9:6; Psalm 19:1-4; 33:5-6; 97:6; 147:7-9; 148:1-6; 7-10 ; Isa. 11:6-9 Matt. 10:29; John 1:3; Rom. 1:20; Heb. 1:3). What kind of power would it take to pull all of that off? What does creation reveal about God?

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

2. The goal in this series is to enable the believer understand the nature of God and be able to define, describe, and be conversant on divine simplicity and attributes with unbelievers and Christians. On such a level the believer will be able to move great appreciation, adoration, and love of God.

❖ Simplicity:

- The goodness and perfections of God (metaphysical claims).
 - The timelessness of God (see chart on next page).
 - The omnipotence of God (and what it does not mean).
 - The omniscience of God (and counterfactuals).
 - The omnipresence of God (it means what it says).
 - The immutability of God (denied by most Christians).
 - The holiness of God (rejected by most people).
 - The impassibility of God (denied by most Christians).
 - The love of God (misunderstood by most Christians).
 - The justice of God (ignored by most people).
 - The infinity of God (generally not thought about).
- ❖ The Trinity. God is three-personed (misunderstood by most).
- ❖ The incarnation (misunderstood by most Christians).
- ❖ The nature of the will of God (most Christians confused)

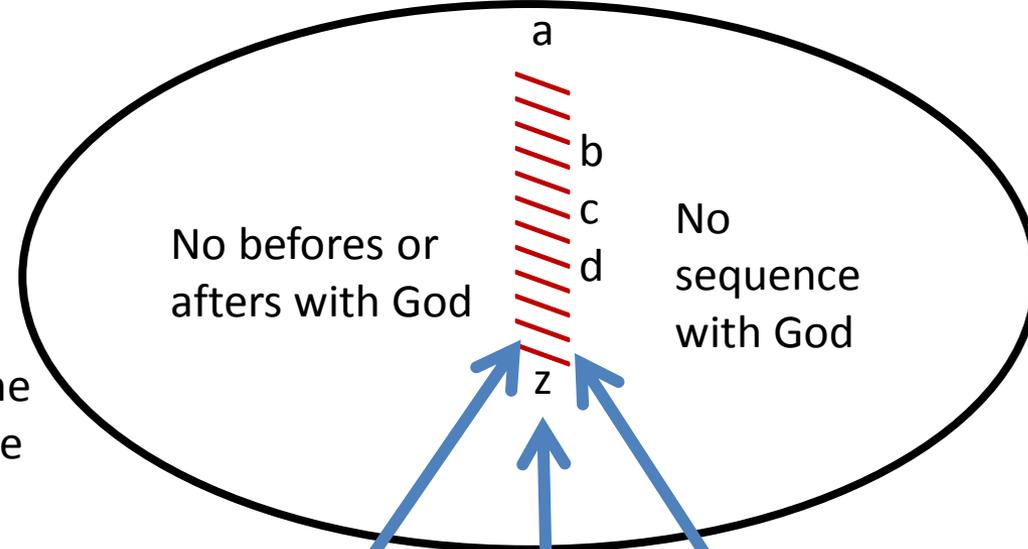
Illustration of the Timelessness of God

Eternal God

Illimitable life

All events in time
are lit up at once
before God.

God is eternally
present



Eternal God

Outside of time

Immutable

Lord of time

Esse – Pure Act

(Abraham)
b

(Jesus death)
c

(Tomorrow's sins)
d



Time, Temporality (a-z)

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

3. The Bible is filled with metaphorical statements about God that are designed to teach some spiritual truth rather than provide a description of God as He is.
 - a. The depth of God refers to His power over hidden things.
 - b. His height refers to His transcendence “over” all things.
 - c. His length points to His everlasting existence.
 - d. His eyes points to the fact that He sees all things.
 - e. Him sitting depicts Him as Ruler in charge.
 - f. He is said to stand because of His activity against evil.
 - g. Human body parts (anthropomorphisms) and human emotions (anthropopathisms) simply express some action in human terms.

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

4. The most difficult, most misunderstood, yet most foundational and critical concept to understand is God's divine simplicity. Even great scholars, due in no small part to Platonic influences, analytical philosophy, and lack of 'Ehyeh metaphysics, end up rejecting divine simplicity, which in turn leads them to reject divine timelessness and divine immutability.
5. The simplicity of God as understood as Pure Act removes all limitations and imperfections. Simplicity must be grasped before one can understand the attributes of God.

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

6. The first and most important starting point for the simplicity of God is with ‘Ehyeh (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה), Exodus 3:14. Apart from metaphysics, one cannot get this.
 - a. Apart from understanding ‘Ehyeh, it is impossible to grasp the basic nature of God. Those who reject simplicity start somewhere else—e.g., a desire for God to be more relatable or come up with concept to solve problems (analytical philosophy).
 - b. This is the name God gives Himself—and it is the verb to be in the present tense: “I am the Is-ing One,” that is “the One Who Always is,” “Esse,” “‘Ehyeh.”

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

- c. Although we cannot grasp exactly what He is in Himself now, one day will know what continuing present existence is, 1 John 3:2.
- d. His life is a present illimitable life, whereas ours is a continuous fleeting present existence.
- e. The blessings of grasping the metaphysics of 'Ehyeh—Ultimate Reality, are incalculable.
- f. God is pure actuality, *Esse*. God is self-existent, and creates and transcends the world. He is non-contingent; everything is contingent upon God, Exodus 3:14; Acts 17:24-26; Col 1:16-17; John 1:3; Rev 4:11; 1 Cor 8:6.

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

- g. Pure Act means that God is underived. He is the uncaused Cause of everything other than Himself. He simply is. He does not have his existence given to Him by another. He never becomes more of something, He is the very thing that He is.
- h. God is a necessary Being. God cannot cease to exist. He cannot not exist.

God and Creation-3 (Simplicity of God)

7. Jesus Christ identified Himself as the 'Ehyeh, the "I am" of Exodus 3:14 in John 8:57-58.
 - a. Exodus 3:14 in MT: אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה
 - b. Exodus 3:14 in LXX: ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν
 - c. John 8:58 in GNT: ἐγὼ εἰμί
 - 1) God "became" a man, the I AM became a He; but He is still the I AM.
 - 2) Being became a being, the Subject became an object.
 - 3) He becomes in time what He is in eternity.
 - 4) Note His sense of humor in John 8:58.