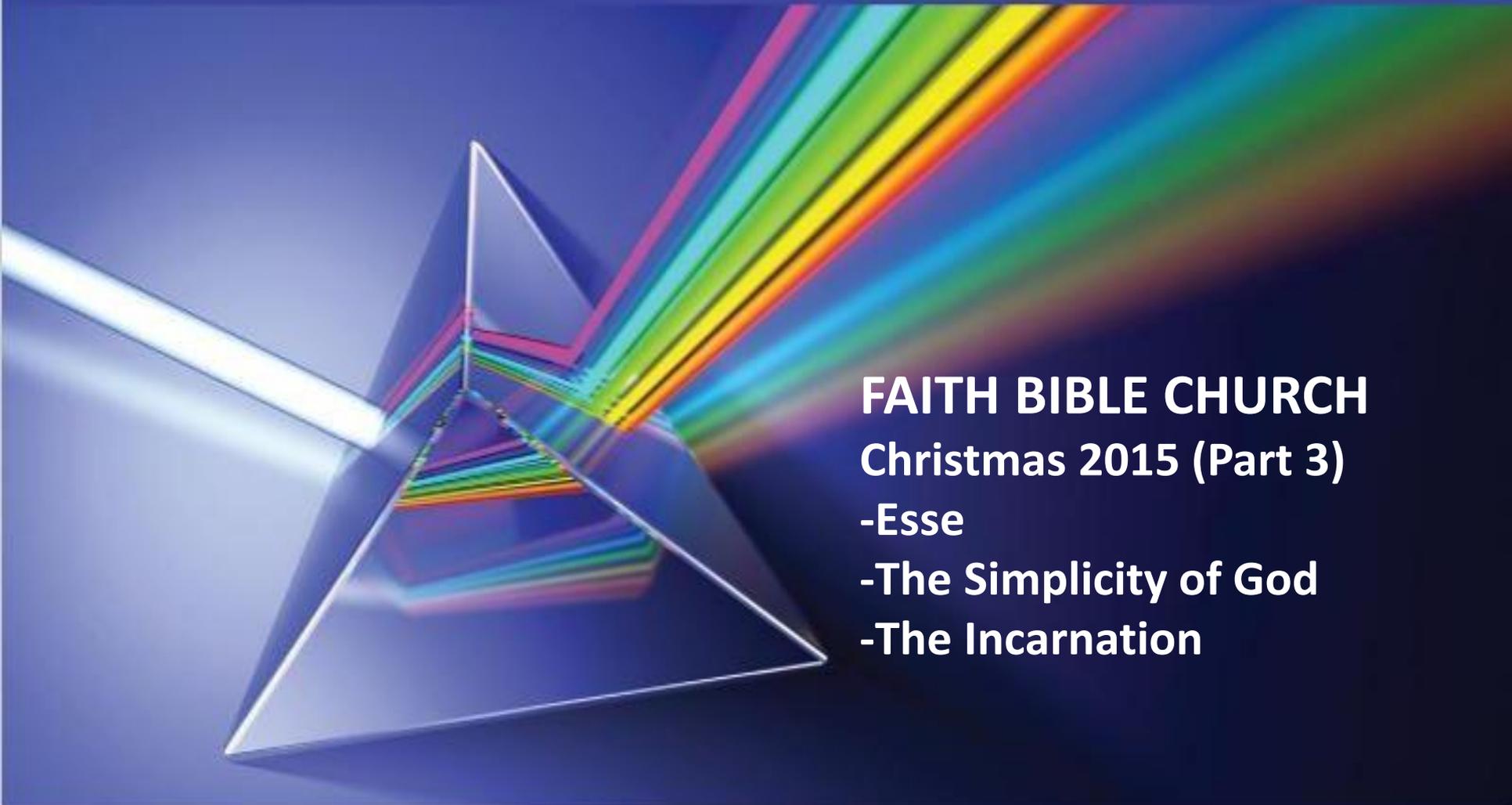


God without Parts

Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God's Absoluteness



FAITH BIBLE CHURCH

Christmas 2015 (Part 3)

-Esse

-The Simplicity of God

-The Incarnation

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 73:23-28. Life with God brings desire to know more about God. Lack of desire signifies evil/sin, Heb 5:11-6:9.

Prayer: Fellowship is all about our attitude in, by, and toward the Lord and His light, 1 Jn. 1:7.

3 Parts to Bible Class:

Part I: Basics: The supernatural virtues of love and joy.

Part II: Philosophical foundations. POL: Review of the key figures: A-A realism vs. Kant’s meat grinder.

Part III: Doctrinal development: Christmas Special 3- ‘Ehyeh – personal theism vs. classical theism.

Part I: Basics: Spiritual foundations: love, joy, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 13; Gal 5:13-15; 22-23).

1. Review of the nature of ‘Ehyeh’s concurrence as the First Cause of all second causes in beings and beings’ activity.
2. Love for God is the root, hinge, fruit, and form of any and all spiritual virtue and the foundation of fellowship and the spiritual life. When the believer is in love with God, he has a great desire to walk with Him, before Him, and after Him. He consents to all of God’s goodness. It is impossible to walk with God with a bad or apathetic attitude. One of the most dangerous evils is one of apathy toward the WOG and spiritual growth, Heb. 5:11-6:9.
 - a. 1Jo 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
 - b. 1Jo 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?
 - c. 1 John 4:12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.
 - d. 1 John 4:16 And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
3. Supernatural Joy in God is caused by supernatural love for God—all in concurrence of 1st Cause with 2nd causes.
 - a. Like supernatural love, this supernatural joy should never be confused with natural joy that is simply a pleasurable state of mind due to obtaining pleasurable circumstances. Moreover, this joy should never be reduced to a natural joy about DOL because one trusts God that the DOL will turn out “favorable.”
 - b. Spiritual joy is the delight that one experiences when one attains an awareness of union with God and a His amazing grace resources.
 - c. This Christian joy is nothing less than the experience of the supernatural intellectual grasp of God and all of His grace benefits. This supernatural joy involves living in awareness that one has been forgiven and saved.
 - d. 1 Peter 1:5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

5: Hermeneutics

4: Language-76

3: Epistemology 32

- Existence 50
- History 50

2:Metaphysics 32

- Trans. 50

1: Reality

- Logic 32,
- Truth 32

Part 2: Philosophy of Language (76)

1. The superiority of Aristotle and Aquinas over all others.
 - a. Realism in science and metaphysics.
 - b. Realism in language and reality.
 - c. The two truths of Aquinas: nature and grace; natural and special revelation.
2. The false charge against Aquinas of a double truth theory (by Francis Schaeffer).
3. The anti-realism, anti-science of Kant and Saussure in society and evangelicalism.
4. The need move away from POL of Augustine, Descartes, Kant, and Saussure.

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)

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

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.

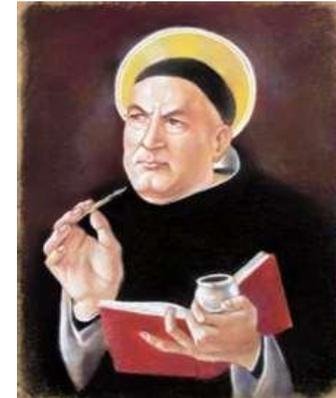
Metaphysical analogy.



Aristotle – The Pagan Realist
384-322 B.C.



Augustine – Christian Illuminist
354-430



Thomas Aquinas – Christian Realist
1225-1274



Rene Descartes – D. Innate Ideas
1596-1650



Immanuel Kant - Meat Grinder
1724-1804



Ferdinand de Saussure – Pagan Community Man
1857-1913

Exodus 3:7-17. Ehyeh-asher-Ehyeh, Yahweh, BE.

1. Ehyeh/Yahweh is the most proper name of God for three reasons.
2. First, this name (BE/IS) is the most proper name of God because it does not signify any particular form or thing but the act of being (*Esse/BE*) itself. God's act of being is identical with His essence. This is not true of any other being. Moreover, He cannot be conceptualized. He is the verb BE in nature.
3. Second, this name (BE/IS), is the most proper name of God because it determines no mode of being, it is the Wholly Other, indeterminate with respect to all. *Esse* in and of itself has no limitations. He is infinite ocean existence not bounded by any essence as per the rest of creation.
4. Third, this name (BE/IS) is most proper name of God because of what it signifies. It signifies to exist in the present, for there is neither past nor future with God.

Passages on Ehyeh's present sustaining activity along with His efficient & final causation.

1. Heb. 2:10. *“for whom are **all things**, and through whom are all things”* (δι’ ὃν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα),
2. Hebrews 1:3 *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds** all things by the word of His power* (φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως).
3. Romans 11:36 *For of Him and through Him and to Him are **all things**, to whom be glory forever* (ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα).

4. 1 Corinthians 8:6 *yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are **all things, and through whom we live*** (ἕξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς **δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ**).

5. Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and **in him all things hold together** (καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ **τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν**).

6. Acts 17:28 "for in Him we live and **move** and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said (ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ **κινούμεθα** καὶ ἐσμέν).
7. The scientific "laws" scientists discover in nature fits perfectly with what we find in the *Ehyeh* existence framework:
 - a. God is not distant. He is intimately present in the being and action of each being. His action is not called "intervention" since that term fails to represent the intimacy of His presence.
 - b. Every creature in its being and action is a sign of God's continual action in the world, since none could exist or act apart from His abiding influence as the source of all being and actuality.
 - c. First and secondary causes can be compared to a student who writes with a pencil: the words produced on the page are wholly from him and from the pencil. There is no work on the page that he did not write and no mark that the pencil did not make. They both produce one effect.

Understanding Esse's present sustaining power of all things

1. There are two different kinds of causal series that the believer needs to understand to appreciate God as the right now direct sustainer of all things.
 - a. Causal series *per accidens* (accidentally) in which the cause is no longer needed.
 - b. Causal series *per se* (essentially) in which the cause continues to be needed.
2. When God and creation is viewed in the causal series *per accidens* (accidentally), we have the God of deism. In this series of causation the effect no longer needs the cause. Illustration: Abraham begat Isaac and Isaac begat Jacob, and so on. Isaac no longer needs Abraham, and Jacob no longer needs Isaac for existence.

3. When God and creation is viewed in a causal series *per se* (essentially), we have the *Esse* of Exod. 3:14. This is the God who keeps on holding all things together, right now—everything! This type of causation can be illustrated by the hand that pushes the stick, which pushes the rock, which pushes the leaf. The leaf is utterly dependent on the hand and everything in between is instrumental second causes. This is the way God works through creation both as far as motion as well as existence itself.

4. Existential causal series *per se* illustrated: The potentiality of the hand for movement is actualized here and now by the flexing of muscles of the hand, the potential of the muscle to flex is actualized here and now by the firing of certain motor neurons, the potential of the motor neurons to fire is actualized here and now by the firing of other neurons which is actualized by the overall state of the nervous system, which is actualized by molecular structure, which is actualized by atoms, which is actualized by sub-atomic particles, which is actualized by electromagnetism, gravitation, the weak and strong forces, and so one and so forth, all simultaneously, all here and now.

5. *'Ehyeh* teaches us that God is the primary cause and the creature is the secondary and instrumental cause of whatever actuality the act entails. God is involved in every creaturely act as He is its very source of being. God is the source not only of the being of things but also of their mode of being. Our actions are free not despite God's involvement but precisely because of it.
6. God is involved in all creaturely activity without depriving it of its essential character. Likewise God is involved in our free actions without depriving us of our freedom.
7. As far as miracles, God's influence is not contrary to nature since God is the primary agent of all beings and causation in nature. God cannot go against nature because He is the Author of all nature.

'Ehyeh reveals God's unique aseity

1. The aseity of God refers to the fact that God is self-existing and necessary being.
2. Application of God's aseity: If anything exists, something, somehow, must have the power of being in it.
3. If nothing has self-existent being, nothing could possibly be.
4. If there ever was a time when there was nothing, what could there possibly be now, except nothing?
5. So, if there is something, then there must be something with the power of being or nothing would be.
6. That which has the power of being ultimately cannot be dependent or derived or contingent being because if any being is caused by something other than itself, the infinite regress leads to absurdity.
7. God is eternal and cannot not BE. He has the power of being within Himself. This means that He exists by the necessity of His own being. He is Pure Being with no potentiality--Pure Actuality. He does not have the power of not being for He is eternal self-existing being and self-sufficient.
8. He is the "I AM," "BE."

Language: God Talk

1. It is important to understand how language maps on reality with respect to God. Some Christians have lost their faith or justify their rejection of God through false views of God (cf., Bart Ehrman and many atheists).
2. The difference between '*Ehyeh* and man is not a matter of degrees, rather the difference is one of kind—God is self-sustaining Being, we are derived contingent beings. He is simple in that He is His attributes. We, on the other hand, have separate qualities known as accidents. God is Creator and we are creatures.

Language: God Talk

3. The very term “holiness” refers to God’s complete otherness. Although holiness is usually translated in terms of morality, that is not the universal meaning. Holiness does not refer to the morality, righteousness or holiness of God.

4. Because of God’s otherness, we do not know exactly what “goodness” is in God, for this would require a knowledge of His essence (*Esse*). We only see darkly as in a mirror. This does not mean that we do have no idea of goodness as such, though. We know that goodness is from God and that anything is good in that it is created by God. We know that God puts the quality of goodness in things, but we do not grasp what that quality is in God Himself precisely because His nature goes beyond our capacity. We know goodness in man but man is a composite. God is not composite. He is simple. He does not have accidents. He is goodness/wisdom, etc.

Language: God Talk

5. There are three major views on language with respect to God.
 - a. Univocal. A word is used to describe two beings and the meaning is the same—a radical unity. This would mean that goodness or morality for God and for man are the same. God is just an infinite man. Since all of our knowledge is related to sense experience, we end up reducing God’s attributes to sense experience.
 - b. Equivocal. The same words have totally different meaning—radical discontinuity. This would be like the word “dog” that is predicated of the dog star and a mammal. With this view, we know nothing of God.
 - c. Analogical. The language of analogy is according to being, cf. good people, good steak, good shoes. This is the basis on which we can communicate about God. When the Bible calls God “Father,” it does not mean that He is a literal Father. However, the differences are not so vast that there is no connection (equivocal). There are similarities between God’s fatherhood and our natural fatherhood. Because of similarities between us and God there can be meaningful communication. So, when we talk about analogy we talk about things that are similar to other things. Not identical but similar.

Language: God Talk

6. We are human beings, He is supreme Being. He is necessary being.
7. The difference between the Supreme Being and the human being is being.
8. We do not have the power of being within ourselves. There is no logical necessity for any of us existing. Our lives are not necessary concepts. We can conceive of any of us as never being born.
9. Only supreme Being has a necessary being. Human beings are dependent, derived, contingent, dependent upon something that does have independent being.
10. Even though I am not Supreme being, there is some analogy of being that exists between God and human beings. We are in His image. There is some point of similarity. This becomes vital to the issue of any meaningful statement about God can be made by creatures such as us.
11. If there is no similarity between God and us, then there are no grounds for meaningful discussion about God.

Classical theism vs. neo-theism (personal theism).

1. Classical theism. Overview of Church history (the Roman Church through Reformation (1517): vital and essential doctrines were developed throughout church history which were maintained by the RCC and the Reformers, e.g., hypostatic union, the Trinity, and the simplicity of God. The Reformation put emphasis on doctrine and the centrality of God in all Christian theology. The focus was never on using God to solve problems or power systems.
2. Neo-theism (personal theism, God as the Infinite Man). In this modern view, God is just an invisible larger Person with more power. This is a natural consequence of rejection of philosophical realism and *Esse* and mentality of the tent-revivalists. There was a conscious decision to get away from doctrine and to focus on personal growth and solving problems.

3. A look at Neo-theism (personal theism).
 - a. Historical overview: Post-reformation period: from tent-revivalism to Bible church to the doctrinal movement. Many of the movements were properly motivated with the desire to get away from theological liberalism. However, due to getting away from philosophical realism, they took on the post-Kantian culture and this led to an anti-intellectual spirit as personal pleasure, power, and solving problems became the “philosophy of ministry” in the Christian churches. Problem solving problems and power models varied according to the different sects and their views of the abundant life.

- b. Finis Dake: *“Remember this: Take the Bible literally wherever it is at all possible. When the language cannot 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.”*

- c. Finis Dake on John 4:24: *“God is a Spirit Being, not the sun, moon, stars; nor an image of wood, stone, or metal; and not beast or man. He is not the air, wind, universal mind, love or some impersonal quality. He is a person a personal spirit body, a personal soul, and a personal spirit, like that of angels, and like that of man except His body is a spirit substance instead of flesh and bones (Job 13:8; Heb. 1:3).*

- d. Finis Dake, “God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, each angel and man, and every separate person in the universe has a personal body, soul, and spirit, which are separate and distinct from all others . . .”
- e. Finis Dake on Ex. 33, “Verse 11 says that ‘the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh with a friend.’ This proves that Moses saw God with the eyes,
- f. Psalm 11:4 The LORD *is* in His holy temple, The LORD'S throne *is* in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

- g. Isaiah 65:5 Who say, 'Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These *are* smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.
- h. Job 4:9 "By the breath of God they perish, And by the blast of His anger they come to an end.
- i. Genesis 6:6 The LORD repented that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.

- j. The intractable problem in neo-theism is its commitment to ontological univocism, which translates into thinking that man and God are of the same kind of beings, the only difference is that God is of a greater instance of the same sort of existence and attributes found in creatures.
- k. Given this outlook it is no wonder that the simplicity of God appears incoherent to many modern philosophers and theologians.
- l. With a univocal perspective, God could no more be identical with His existence and attributes any creature could be really identical with its existence and attributes.

4. Classical theism. This has been the dominant position throughout church history. God's being is the ground of all beings.
 - a. Though creatures bear the image of God's existence and attributes, their similarity to God is better understood as analogical rather than univocal (or equivocal)
 - b. The manner in which God exists and possesses attributes is so radically unlike anything found in creature that He cannot be classified together with them in a single order of being or as the highest link on a great chain of being.
 - c. As the one who ultimately accounts for being in general, as its first and final cause, God does not stand within that general ontological order.

- d. The correct view, according to classical theism, is that the language used of God is analogical—not univocal or equivocal.
- e. The analogy of being. We are human beings and God is the Supreme Being. The difference between the supreme being and the human being is being. We do not have the power of being in and of ourselves. I do not have necessary being as a creature. Only supreme being has that. Human beings are dependent, derived, contingent, dependent on something that does have eternal being.

- f. Even though I am not the supreme being, I am a human being and so there is some analogy of being that exists between God and us.
- g. The Bible talks about us created in the image of God. So there is some point of similarity. This becomes absolutely vital whether there can be any meaningful statement can be made about God by creatures such as us. If there is no similarity then there would be no grounds for meaningful discussion about Him.
- h. Analogical predication, enables us to bring together a way of thinking and speaking about divine unity and trinity that does justice to the manifold witness of Scripture and to ways of handling its apparent references to divine complexity and disunity in a way that considering each isolated passage could never do.

i. Passages that support the classical view of God.

Psalm 95:3 For the LORD is a great God, And a great King above all gods,

Psalm 145:3 Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable.

1 Tim. 6:16 who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

Exodus 3:14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, `I AM has sent me to you.'"

Malachi 3:6 "For I *am* the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning

1. In order to understand how divine simplicity accounts for God's absoluteness, it is necessary to consider exactly what simplicity means.
 - a. The doctrine of divine simplicity is that there are no physical, logical, or metaphysical parts in God.
 - b. Non-composition must characterize God inasmuch as every composite is a dependent thing that cannot account for its own existence or essence and stands in need of some composer outside of itself.
 - c. To be composite is to be composed by another and to be dependent upon part that enter into composition. Furthermore, composition signifies the capacity of a thing to change or even be annihilated.
 - d. If God is to be understood as "most absolute" all such composition must be denied of Him.
 - e. Nothing composite can be the reason for its own composition.
 - f. God's simplicity is the heart of the Creator-creature distinction.

2. All physical reality outside God is essentially of mixture of becoming and being. Of potential and actual. This is true whether we are examining the constitution of physical or of metaphysical being, the nature of these concepts of act and potency must be understood before we can proceed in the doctrine of the simplicity of God.

3. Act and potency illustrated: things go out of existence and others come into being, and existing things lose characteristics and take on new ones. Reality is, as it were, constantly in a state of being carved up in new and different ways. The only explanation for the fact that reality is able to take on new kinds of existence, is that some principle of potentiality inherent in reality.

4. So potency in a thing accounts for its ability to exist, become, and change while act is that by which the existence or change is brought about. An acorn has the potency to become an oak tree, and egg has the potent to become a chicken. No potency perfects itself or gives itself actuality. Potency comes from act. Potency is capacity that is unrealized, so it is lack of perfection.

5. We have the potential to understand the simplicity of God. In act we may only understand God as Esse. We respect to Esse of Exodus 3:14 we are in act but we are in potency with regard to a fuller understanding of Esse. We cannot know and not know the doctrine of simplicity at the same time.