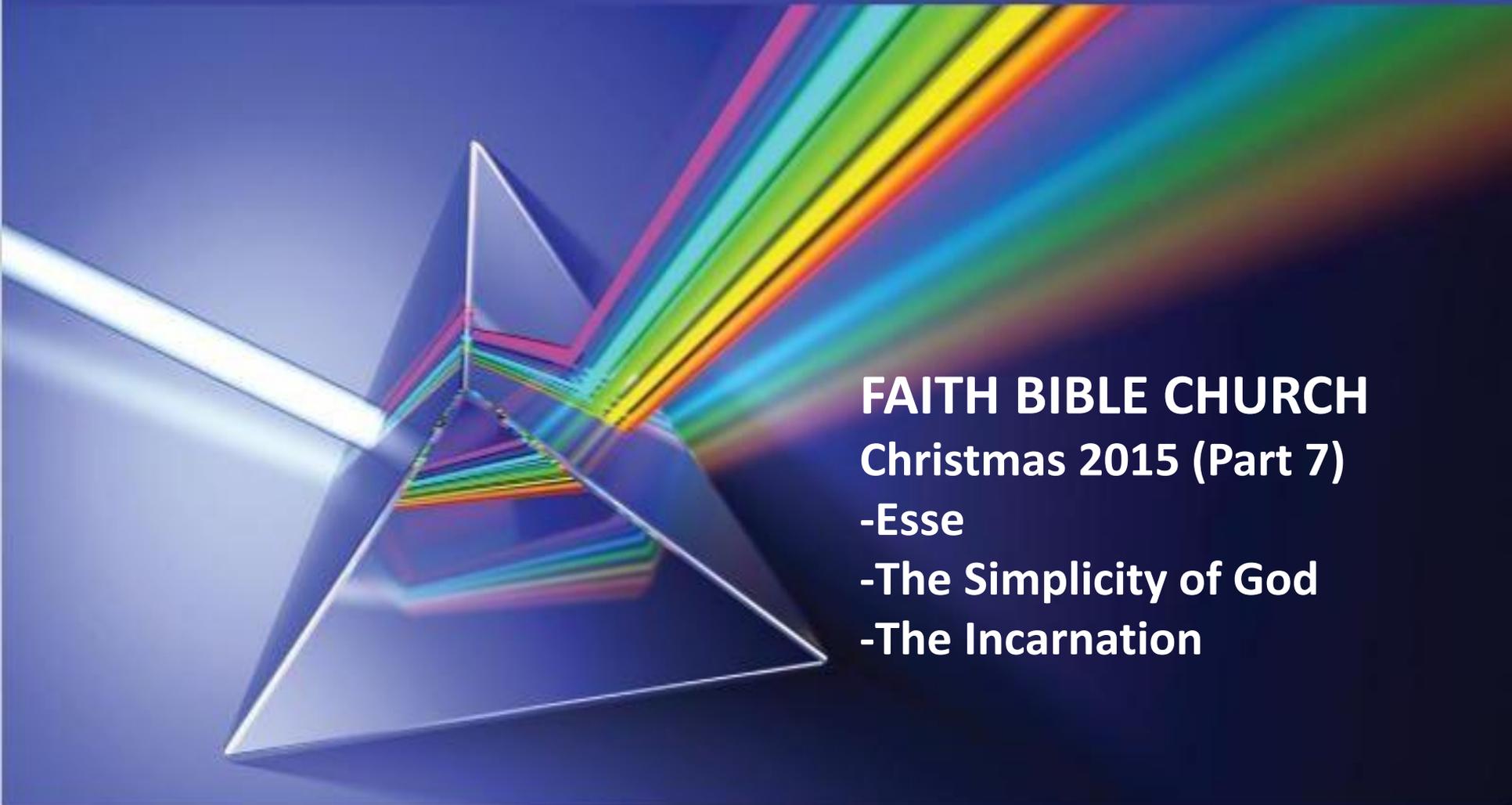


God without Parts

Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God's Absoluteness



FAITH BIBLE CHURCH

Christmas 2015 (Part 7)

-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

The transcendent life, Psalm 73:24-25; Matt. 28:19-20

Prayer: The focus of fellowship is Christ/the Light, not sin and performance (Law), e.g., commitment to JC, Heb. 12:1-2.

3 Parts to Bible Class: Each part is important if we hope to get away from sloppy thinking about God

Part I: Spiritual basics: God-talk and love.

Part II: Philosophical foundations. POL: More on Saussure’s Cave

Part III: Doctrinal development: Christmas Special 7- Simplicity of God and the Incarnation.

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

1. A universal definition and understanding of love is not restricted to an instance of love. Rather, it is what love is always. It is one thing to recognize an instantiation of love, another to understand the permanent nature of love.
2. Before one can correctly understand God’s love, he must understand both nature of God (simplicity, immutability, atemporality) and the nature of how language, God-talk.
3. Since God is the wholly other, radically different than any creature, the manner in which language is used with reference to God, i.e., God-talk, is important to understand.
4. God’s radical otherness does not render Him utterly indescribable. We can still speak of the incomprehensible God, even the highest truths of God as per the Trinity and the Hypostatic Union.
5. The question arises as to how can we predicate love of God/Esse since He is so radically different. In a nutshell, what is the nature of God-talk given His nature, i.e., His simplicity, incorporeality, immutability, and eternity.
6. There are three options for Christians regarding God-talk and love.
 - a) Univocal, in which God’s love and man’s love are of the same kind, just different in degree.
 - b) Equivocal, in which God’s love is totally different than man’s love, cf. the use of “bank.”
 - c) Analogical in which God’s love is different in some respects and the same in other respects as human love.
7. Upon careful analysis of the Word of God, the nature of God, and the nature of man, the only viable option for the Realist is the analogical approach. Here are some reasons why the analogical approach is the proper method:
 - a. God does not fall in and out of love. His love is atemporal and incorporeal.
 - b. God’s simplicity: His love is but what He is, which is also all other attributes.
 - c. The universal definition of human love does not fit divine love in that divine love is not dependent or vulnerable with respect to the object of love. God’s happiness is not tied to His love for humans.
 - d. Human love is about seeking a good outside of self. This does not apply to God. God’s love is not due to being attracted to a good in the object. His love is the cause of the good in the first place.
 - e. In human love directed toward humans there are two separate characteristics. This first one is always possible. The second aspect is not always possible due to the nature of the object of love.
 - 1) Love for the good of the beloved.
 - 2) Love to be united with the beloved.
 - f. These two characteristics are one in God: wills our good and He wills to be united to us.

5: Hermeneutics

4: Language-80

3: Epistemology 32
 - Existence 50
 - History 50

2: Metaphysics 32
 - Trans. 50

1: Reality
 - Logic 32,
 - Truth 32

Part 2: Philosophy of Language (80)

3

Outli...

- ✓ 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

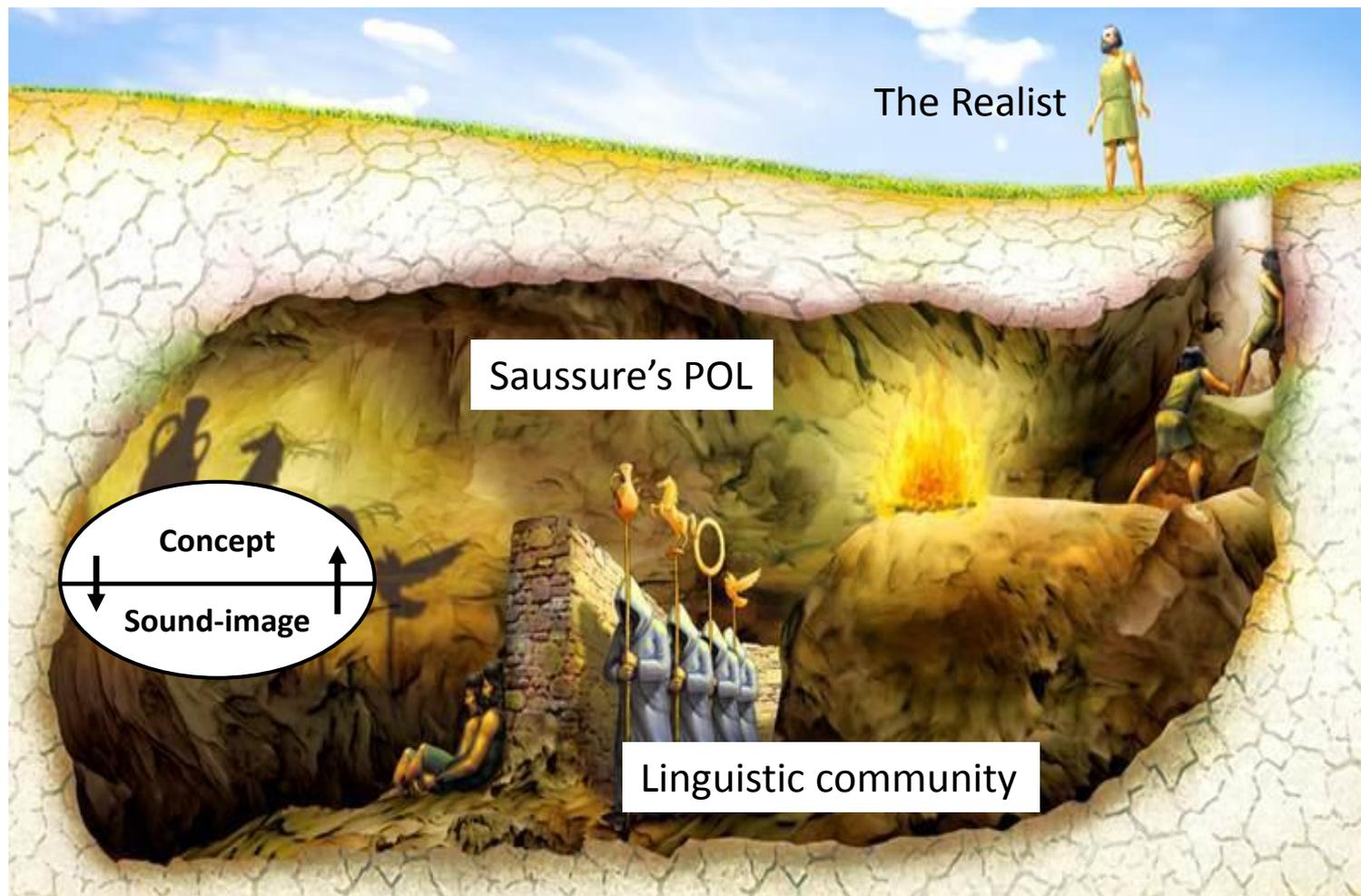
Conclusion.

Analogy.

Metaphysical analogy.

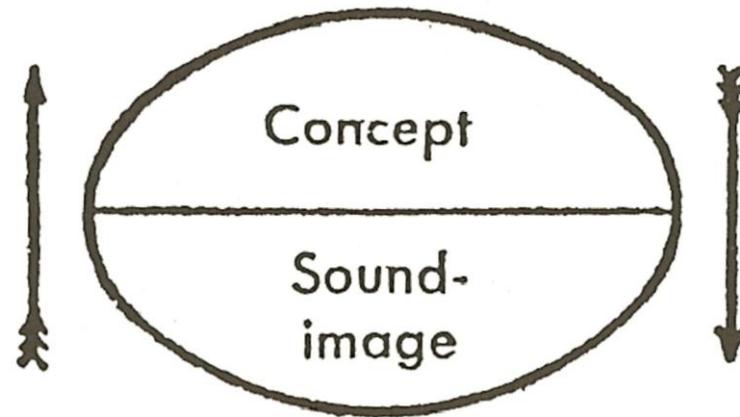
Consider the paradox of the moderns—what an illustration of the modern project.

1. We know that Aristotle's view of language and reality is the natural/real way.
2. Yet, when it comes to how we moderns think, we are evidence, to some extent, for the Saussurean view. How did this happen?

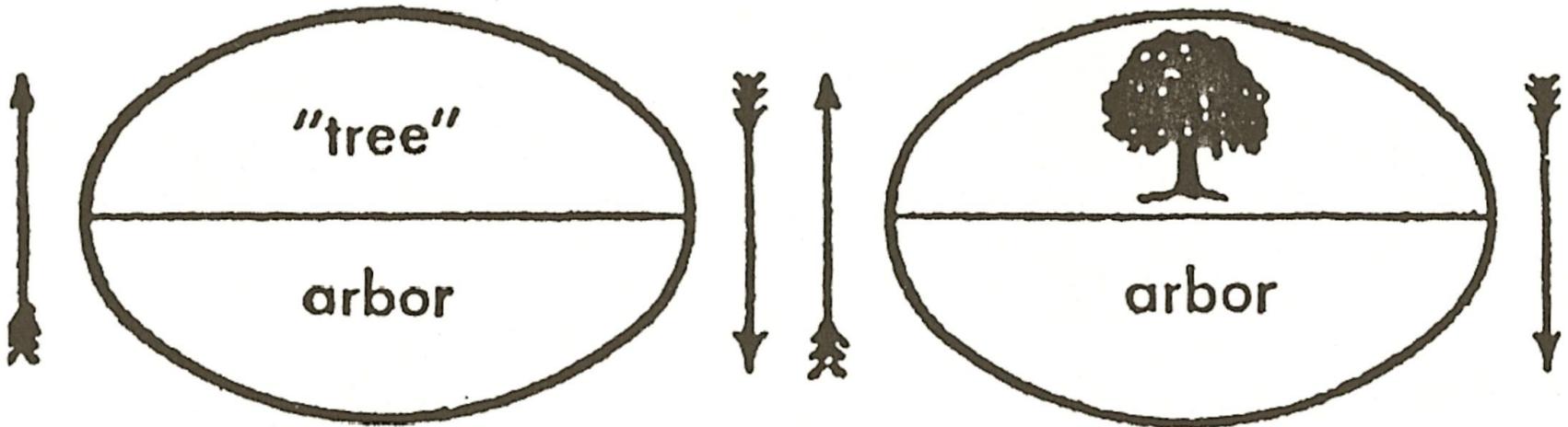


Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)

1. Saussure taught that language was but a system of signs in which the only essential thing is the union of meanings and sound-images, and in which both parts of the sign are psychological.
2. Saussure taught that linguistic signs were basically psychological, not abstractions. They are but associations which bear the stamp of collective approval. The linguistic sign was but a two-sided psychological entity.



3. The two elements are intimately united, and each recalls the other. So, there is no pre-established essence “tree” to which a linguistic sign points or to which it refers. Rather, the linguistic sign is composed of the sound image, ‘a-r-b-o-r,’ and the linguistic sign ‘arbor,’ as the following diagram illustrates. What Saussure has accomplished is the effective application of a Kantian approach to the notion of the linguistic sign, and, consequently, to language as a whole. Since neither the concept nor the sound image are produced by the imposition of the world upon the intellect, how then does one acquire the concepts and sound images that one does? This is the product of one’s language community. The language of one’s language community provides the structure in which one’s sound images and one’s concepts have meaning, or, in Saussure’s terminology, “value.”



Comparison of neo-theism and classical theism

Neo-Theism

Lacks real commitment to God
and Truth as such

God changes in time

Conflict within God's attributes

God is view in human terms
(substance, accidents, emotions)

Man/problem centered sermons

Rejection of classical metaphysics

Pastors are church managers

Grew out of tent-revivalism

- Evangelicalism
- Many denominations
- Cults (Word of Faith)
- Mormons
- Arians

Classical Theism

Commitment to God
and Truth as such

God is atemporal

Simplicity of God

God is viewed as wholly other

God/Truth centered sermons

Robust view of metaphysics

Pastors are scholars to help believers

Historical orthodox Christianity

- Christian orthodoxy
- Roman Catholic Church
- Reformation (1517-)

The Simplicity of God (7)

Exodus 3:5, 14-15 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground." 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.'" Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* My name forever, and this *is* My memorial to all generations.'

1. We desperately need to regain our classical Christian heritage in order to gain the capacity for deep understanding and an awe-inspiring love for the Lord. Esse in this passage forms the foundation of the doctrine of divine simplicity. Lose simplicity always leads to loss of other attributes of God; one by one the other classical attributes are currently being rejected in modern evangelicalism and open theism.
2. Without the doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS), we end up making God into some Zeus-like person or Problem-solving Figure with separate attributes much like a human being albeit with more power, wisdom, and presence—even though nowhere does Scripture say that God is a person.

3. The doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS) is built on God's revelation of His name and character in 'Ehyeh of Exodus 3:14.
4. God does not possess attributes at all. Rather, He is just all of those perfections. All in God is God. He does not have separate attributes like man.
5. God is simply "that by which" He exists. God's power is His essence. God's love just is His essence. God just is all of those things that we predicate of Him.

6. Since God identical with His own BE, then there cannot be any determination of being, such as an attribute or property added to Him. Accordingly, He does not possess attributes that determine His being.
7. Our tendency to formally distinguish God's wisdom, power, and other such attributes corresponds to the fact that we conceive of such perfections in creatures where they are formally distinguished.
8. Predications about God that differ in sense are linguistic and mental forms that reflect the ontological and epistemological capacity and situation of humans. That is just one reason that analogical predication is so vital to this whole discussion.

9. God Himself is the ultimate stopping place for explaining the divine existence and attributes. God is the most absolute reason and explanation for Himself.
10. God's attributes are not intrinsic determinations of His being, but rather they are just the many ways or truths about one indivisible and infinite existence and essence of God.
11. To insert separate attributes in God is to diminish God's absoluteness and to allow a soft Platonism to lodge within the Christian doctrine of God.

The Incarnation

1. There are three key doctrines that are essential in really appreciating the incarnation: the simplicity of God, the Trinity, and the Hypostatic Union—all of which have been neglected in much of modern Christianity (neo-theism). This neglect has serious consequences that tend to flatten out our view of life. There is nothing irrational about any of these doctrines. However, they all require categorical thinking that allows God in with an attitude that trusts God and His Word. The source for all of these three doctrines are the Word of God, special revelation.
2. Consider what is involved in the simplicity of God, the wholly and holy otherness of God, the Ultimate BEING in becoming a man of this order. This is not the case of simply an infinite being becoming a finite being. This is a truly amazing concept.

3. Consider what is involved in the Trinity and the inner blessed inter-trinitarian life and love that sought to share love with creation. Philosophy is one thing, metaphysics is another, the theology of the Trinity and the HU separates the men from the men. This is ultimate reality: the Father eternally begetting the Son, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. The only reason we believe in the trinity and incarnation is because of special revelation. Classical Christianity is built on the foundation of the triune God not on an angelic conflict.

4. Consider what is involved in the hypostatic union. The union of totally different orders. HU is far more difficult to grasp than the Trinity. As far as the HU, it is one thing to put all of the data on the humanity and deity of the Lord, but to put them together and still have one person is extremely challenging. The bottom line is that the union is in the divine person which means there was not a separate human person Jesus. There is no synthesis in the natures—there is one human nature and one divine nature in union by one divine person. Reflect on the implications, like the fact that the *only Person of the Godhead who really understands you as a human being is God the Son*.

5. The incarnation: a look at some of the whys? John 1:1-18.
 - a. 1: It is in the nature of God to communicate Himself to others. Christ is the perfect image, exact representation of the nature of God. He reveals God's perfections to all—friends and enemies. He made Himself equal with God and promised Hell for anyone who rejects Him.
 - b. 1-3: The revelation of the deity and nature of Christ as the Word in the Trinity. We need to do much work developing the nature of the Word in the OT and the NT as part of the loving Trinity.
 - c. 4-5: The revelation of *Esse* to human beings in human terms.

- d. 6-11: The revelation of man's natural hostility to God and the true nature of human evil and sin.
- e. 12-13: The revelation of God's grace to the undeserving. Our new birth was made possible by Him dying for us on the Cross. The nature of special revelation and faith and use of apologetics.
- f. 14: The revelation of the Eternal Word becoming flesh to give us grace and truth and to show us what God is really like and what human spiritual life should be like—what it is like to love and serve God. Imagine if there was no incarnation, what kind of example would we have? What image of God in humanity? The only begotten refers to Christ as the Son, the Word, throughout all of eternity, the eternal generation of the Son.
- g. 15-17: The fuller revelation of grace and truth.

- h. 18: Christ, from the bosom in Trinity to Supreme Revealer of God. Christ's exegesis of God brings the blessings of
- 1) Understanding what it means that "no one has seen Him"
 - 2) Understanding the eternal, transcendent God analogically.
 - 3) Understanding the nature of God's love—we do matter to God.
 - 4) Understanding the nature of evil as the world rejected Christ.
 - 5) The privilege of looking to Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith rather than focusing on sin and guilt.
 - 6) The privilege of living a committed life of the mind and will to the Lord Jesus Christ and His life in and for God.
 - 7) The privilege of following Christ's example, Philip 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-6; 12:1-2; John 14:9.
 - 8) It really is all about Jesus Christ, the manifest person of *Esse*.
 - 9) The best New Year's resolution really is the Christ-centered life, the very incarnation of *Esse*.