

**MILILANI COMMUNITY CHURCH
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES
January 26, 2003**

LESSON 2: GOD: Part 1: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AND THE NATURE OF GOD

There is no greater subject that can occupy the mind than the study of God and of man's relationship to Him. As our knowledge of God increases (not just knowledge about God), so will our peace, our strength and our joy!

"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me" Jeremiah 9:23ff.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God. The fact of God's existence is assumed throughout the Scriptures. The first verse of the Bible is an example: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" Genesis 1:1. The man who says that there is no God is called a fool in Psalm 14:1.

The simple statement of Genesis 1:1 refutes:

Materialism – which says everything that exists, can be explained by natural causes (eternity of matter)/In the beginning God created...

Atheism – which excludes the existence of God/universe created by God

Polytheism – which says there are many gods/One God created all things

Pantheism – which says God and the universe are identical/God created

Agnosticism – which says we can have no definite information on creation or other matters relating to God and man.

Humanism – Genesis teaches that God not man is the ultimate reality

Evolution – which teaches the progressive development from chaos to cosmos/Genesis tells us God created all things.

Note: Someone has said that if you can believe Genesis 1:1 you won't have trouble believing any other miracle in the Bible.

2. Even apart from the Bible, there are certain evidences for the existence of God.
 - a. All people have an inner intuitive sense of the existence of God (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:18-32)
 - b. Creation must have a creator. The universe could not originate without a cause.

If something now exists (the cosmos) then either it came from nothing or it came from something that must be eternal. The something eternal could either be the cosmos itself, which would have to be eternal, or chance as an eternal principle, or God the eternal Being.

(1) To say the Cosmos is self-created out of nothing is a logical contradiction.

(2) If the Cosmos did not generate itself then something eternal caused it:

- (a) The Cosmic process itself is eternal. Second Law of Thermodynamics refutes this theory.
 - (b) The Cosmos caused by an eternal principle of random chance or blind intelligence. But the mathematical probability of random chance producing the universe is Zero! (How Now Shall We Live, 73).
 - (c) A living, powerful, intelligent Being caused the universe
 - Living- non-life cannot produce life
 - Powerful – seen by the very nature of what is formed
 - Intelligent – order and arrangement of the universe
- c. The wonderful design which we see in creation demands an infinite designer.

Examples of the argument from design:

- 1) William Paley’s watchmaker/The faces on Mt. Rushmore
- 2) Irreducible complexity of the cell

The cell—the very basis of life—is staggeringly complex.

“If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possible have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.” Charles Darwin, in The Origin of the Species.

“To Darwin, the cell was a “black box”—its inner workings were utterly mysterious to him. Now, the black box has been opened up and we know how it works. Applying Darwin’s test to the ultra-complex world of molecular machinery and cellular systems that have been discovered over the past 40 years, we can say that Darwin’s theory has ‘absolutely broken down.’” Michael Behe, biochemist and author of Darwin’s Black Box

Illustration of “irreducible complexity”—the mousetrap

- 3) The “Anthropic Principle” (states that the physical structure of the universe is exactly what it must be in order to support life)

Examples of the Anthropic Principle:

- d. Since man is an intelligent, moral being, his creator must have been of a much higher order in order to create him.

Man has a sense of right and wrong and of the need for justice to be done. Therefore there must be a God who is the source of right and wrong and who will someday mete out justice to all people.

3. Nevertheless, men as a whole have refused to have God in their knowledge (Romans 1:18-32). Sin has so distorted their vision and corrupted their hearts that they reject the evidence and go on without God or set up gods of their own creation.

Leading non-Christian world views about God (see handout):

Atheism – The universe is all there is or was or ever will be. No God exists.

Deism – God is transcendent over the universe but not supernaturally active in it

Pantheism – God is the universe (or the All) and the universe is God.

Polytheism – There are many finite gods in the universe who influence it

Naturalism vs. Theism

Theism is the world-view that says that the physical universe is not all there is. There is an infinite, personal God beyond the universe who created it, sustains it, and who can act within it in a supernatural way.

Naturalism (a corollary to atheism) is the belief that natural causes alone are sufficient to explain everything that exists. Naturalism holds that life arose from a chance collision of atoms, evolving eventually into human life as we know it today.

The dominant world-view today is Naturalism. This has created a culture in the West that is both post-Christian and post-modern.

Post-modernism says that if nature is all there is, then there is no transcendent source of moral truth, and we are left to construct morality on our own. In contrast, the Christian believes in a God who has spoken, who has revealed an absolute and unchanging standard of right and wrong, based ultimately on His own Holy character.

BIBLICAL WORLD VIEW

God exists

Universe created by a transcendent God who loves us and has a purpose for us

God has spoken and revealed his truth to us in the Bible

Moral commands of the Bible give us an objective basis for right and wrong

NATURALISTIC WORLD VIEW

God exists only in the minds of those who believe in him

Universe is the product of blind, purposeless forces

Truth is something we invent for ourselves

There is no ultimate objective basis for right and wrong. Humans create their own standards based on preferences and cultural conditioning

THE NATURE OF GOD

1. God is a spirit (John 4:24). This means that God does not have a body. He is invisible (Deut. 4:15-19; John 1:18). The Second Commandment is based on the incorporeal (having no bodily form) nature of God (Ex. 20:4). However, He can reveal Himself to man in visible form. In the person of Jesus Christ, God came into the world in a body of flesh (John 1:14; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3).
2. God is infinite and personal. God is infinite in that he is not subject to any of the limitations of humanity or of creation in general. He is far greater than everything Has made. But He is also personal. He interacts wit us as a person and we can relate to him as persons. We can pray to Him, worship Him, obey Him, and love Him.

Apart from the true religion found in the Bible, no system of religion has a God who is both infinite and personal. For example, the gods of ancient Greek and Roman mythology were personal (they interacted with people), but they were not infinite. They had weaknesses and frequent moral failures. On the other hand Deism portrays God as infinite but far too removed from the world to be personally involved in it. Pantheism holds that God is infinite (since the whole universe is thought to be God), but such a God can certainly not be personal or relate to us as persons.

3. The Unity of God. Scripture teaches that there is one God (I Timothy 2:5). The false teaching that there are many gods is contrary to reason. There can only be one Supreme Being.
4. The Trinity. The Bible teaches not only that there is one God, but also that there are three persons in the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is a mystery to the human mind, but although it cannot be understood, it can be believed because God’s Word says it is so. The word “trinity” is not found in the Bible, but the truth of the Trinity is revealed in the Bible.

Definition of the Trinity: “God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.”

Defense of the Trinity: To make the case for the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity you must show that the Bible teaches three things:

- 1) God is three persons
- 2) Each person is fully God
- 3) There is one God

Next week, in part two of this study on the Existence, Nature and Attributes of God, we will present a biblical defense of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Central passage on the Trinity: Matthew 28:19.