

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: Key Protestant
Reformation Doctrines

The Heights Church April 22, 2018

The Enlightenment - The Age of Reason (18th Century)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. (Romans 1:18 - 26a)

The Enlightenment - The Age of Reason (18th Century)

- It was especially strong in England, France and Germany.
- While reason was always present in Christendom, what distinguished the Enlightenment was the belief that humans had come of age intellectually and by pure reason could discover truth and escape from Christian myths that had suppressed previous generations. This greatly diminished the value of the Bible.
- Augustine's view of original sin was replaced with the idea that humans are essentially good and not born with a fallen sin nature.
- Descartes (1596 -1650) is considered the father of rationalism. ("I think therefore I am") He appeared to separate revelation from reason because it now seemed humans could achieve total intellectual certainty by their own reason. Hence Descartes embraced *a priori* knowledge meaning all humans are born with an innate knowledge before any experience.
- Isaac Newton (1642/1643 – 1726/1727) published "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy" in 1687 which would be extended beyond physical science to the belief in "natural law" (revelation) in theology, government, social issues etc.

The Enlightenment - The Age of Reason (18th Century)

- John Locke (1632 – 1704) is regarded as the father of modern empiricism (5 senses). In 1690 he published *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Locke saw knowledge as ***a posteriori*** so that all knowledge comes after experience. He said we are born as a blank slate and learn everything by experience.
- Locke said all law is grounded in natural law which is rooted in God's law. Civil law is then formed by combining public opinion on morals with natural law.
- In 1695 he published *The Reasonableness of Christianity* which argued that because Christianity is a rational religion it can endure the most severe examination.
- Since Christianity was rational it must be possible to derive the fundamental principles of Christianity purely by reason. While we do not physically sense God our reflection on all we do sense physically leads to the necessity for God to exist. Hence God is not observable but known by the demonstration of Him in nature.
- The net effect was Liberalism's conclusion that reason was superior to revelation opening the door to judge the validity of the Bible based upon human reason.

The Enlightenment - The Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

That, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

That, whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government and to provide new Guards for their future security.

The Enlightenment - The Age of Reason (18th Century)

- David Hume (1711 – 1776) was the ultimate skeptic declaring that we cannot be sure of the Law of Causality (every effect has an antecedent cause and every cause produces an effect). Hume said our experience simply results in ***customary relationships***. If this were true then scientific method would be impossible.
- Immanuel Kant (1724 -1804) sought to save science from Hume and postulated that there are two realms: *Phenomenal* (observable by our senses) and *noumenal* (not perceived by our senses).
- Kant's most important work was *A Critique of Pure Reason* was published in 1781.
- God is in the noumenal so we cannot be sure he exists.
- Kant is one of the earliest proponents of the idea that perpetual peace could be secured through universal democracy and international cooperation.
- Kant reformulated the Golden rule to, "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become a universal law of nature."
- Kant is said to have kicked God out of the front door and let him in the back door by his categorical imperative (everyone has a universal sense of "oughtness") which lead to his moral argument for the existence of God.

The Enlightenment - The Age of Reason (18th Century)

- Kant's moral argument for the existence of God is as follows:
 1. If there is not perfect justice ethics/the categorical imperative is meaningless.
 2. We know there is not perfect justice in this life.
 3. Therefore, for ethics/ the categorical imperative to be meaningful, perfect justice would require an afterlife governed by a perfect, morally blameless judge.
 4. A perfect judge would also be all knowing, completely objective and incapable of error in judgements.
 5. The perfect judge must also be able to always enforce every part of his perfect judgements thus making ethics/morality meaningful.
- In 1859 Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species*. This was the final nail in the coffin for inerrancy for the intellectual elite of the enlightenment giving "scientific proof" that Genesis 1 -2 was incorrect and thus the Bible was not inerrant. Note: an important problem remained in that evolution required a hospitable earth with all the building blocks for life to evolve.