



Theology Exam – Questions 5-8

Additional Notes:

Question Outline

As a reminder I want to repeat again how one should answer each question. Each answer must incorporate three ideas:

1. Define the terms used;
2. State your answer;
3. Present the biblical evidence for your position.

Questions 5 and 6 are very similar in organization so I would like to make a couple of comments about them together.

Question 5: Explain the doctrine of common grace relating the doctrine to the ability of secular psychologists to understand true information about the human condition.

Question 6: Explain the doctrine of the noetic effects of sin relating the doctrine to the ability of secular psychologists to understand true information about the human condition.

Question 5: Common Grace ...

A. Definition of CG: *Common grace is the grace that is experienced by all men and is distinct from saving grace.*

Both saving grace and common grace are undeserved merit from God. They are subsets of the grace of God if you will.

→ Saving grace results in the salvation on whom saving grace was given.

→ Common grace does not result in salvation, but expresses the many experiences of living in a world that God created and cares for and living as a human being made in the image of God.



Additional Notes:

Berkof puts it this way, "The origin of the doctrine of common grace was occasioned by the fact that there is in the world, alongside of the course of the Christian life with all its blessings, a natural course of life, which is not redemptive and yet exhibits many traces of the true, the good, and the beautiful."

B. The blessings associated with Common Grace

The fruits of common grace are meaningful and significant

- God's wrath has yet to be completely poured out (2 Peter 3:9). This time still results in opportunities to repent.
- Sin is restrained (Romans 13:1-4 compared to Revelation where restraints are loosened)
- Preservation of some sense of truth, morality, and religion (Acts 17:22, Romans 2:15)
- Performance of good and civil righteousness (Luke 6:33)
- Natural blessings (1 Tim 4:10, Matt 5:44-45)

C. Relate this doctrine to secular psychologists

This doctrine would seem to suggest positively speaking that the unregenerate psychologist could have a sense of truth about the human condition.

- He may, for example, argue for things that are actually found in the Bible ... but discover them and approach them through secular research
 - E.g., the importance of forgiveness
 - Communication techniques (understanding people's interests)
 - The importance of assuaging guilt

On the other hand, the doctrine of common grace does not give an automatic pass to "All truth is God's truth." There are at least 2 reasons for this ...



Additional Notes:

1. CG does not allow the unregenerate to represent their human condition with a robust anthropology. In other words they lack the interpretive grid to truthfully describe their struggle.
2. The unregenerate psychologist lacks the interpretative grid to rightly evaluate and prescribe solutions to those same struggles.

In other words, while we can appreciate the value of common grace, the fact that it does not result in regeneration and thus a new world view demonstrates that both the client and the psychologist are unable to describe the human condition with the appropriate robustness.

Question 6: Noetic Effect of Sin ...

A. Definition of the Noetic Effect of Sin

The noetic effect of sin means that man's ability to think and reason has been negatively impacted by the fall of man.

Romans 1:20-21 - *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. 21 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.***

2 Corinthians 3:14-15 *But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a **veil lies over their hearts.***

2 Corinthians 4:4 *In their case the god of this world has **blinded the minds of the unbelievers**, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

2 Tim. 2:24-26 *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and **they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.***



B. The results of the noetic effect

- Hearts are darkened
- Hearts are veiled
- Minds are blinded
- Ensnared by the Devil

C. Relate this doctrine to secular psychology

It is clear that the secular psychologist does not think of the human experience in his relationship to God or through the plan of God in salvation history.

→ This is not surprising because their hearts are veiled and darkened; their minds are blinded, and they are ensnared by the Devil.

He may make observations that accurately reflect the thoughts and behaviors of his clients. He may even be able to adjust those observations to his own worldview (which may be superior to his client's worldview).

→ But the thoughts and behaviors of his clients are given through their own interpretive scheme. His adjustments are made according to his interpretive scheme. Neither scheme is consistent with Scripture.

→ In addition, the solutions that the secular psychologist offers are developed from a mind that is not based on what the creator God said about human thoughts, behaviors, and actions.

Question #7. Explain the doctrine of the Trinity, and provide its biblical basis.

A. Definition of Trinity or Tri-Unity

The Trinity is the doctrine that God is one essence in three co-eternal, co-equal persons.

B. Formulation of the Trinity in the Bible

I would like you to think of this statement by going all the way back to your geometry class in high school. You had to show that if such and such

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were true then the following conclusions could be reached. That is in essence what you are doing in this question. You are seeking to prove that the very statement that you just made is an accurate representation of the data found in the Bible.

This proof has 3 very simple steps:

Step 1: Show the Oneness of God

In other words, I want to be clear that I do not believe in Tri-theism (3 Gods), but only 1 God. There are several places to prove that but the following are probably the best.

- *Exodus 20:2-3*
- *Deuteronomy 6:4*
- *1 Corinthians 8:4*

Step 2: Show the deity of each member of the Godhead

Deity of the Father

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

1 Corinthians 8:6 *Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.*

Deity of the Son

Again, there are several passages that fit the bill, but the most obvious ones are:

John 1:1-14 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*



Additional Notes:

John 8:58 *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."*

John 20:30 - 31 ³⁰ *Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

Philippians 2:6-8 *who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Deity of the Holy Spirit

Acts 5:3-5 *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? ⁴ "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." ⁵ And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.*

1 Corinthians 3:16 *Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

Step 3: Show the three in oneness of God

This final step is simply designed to show that tri-theism is not correct (just like in step 1). Here the point is point is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are actually united together in the one God. Once again there are a few passages that could be used, but probably the best are:

- Great Commission: Matthew 28:19-20
- Baptism of Jesus: Matthew 3

By bring these three steps together I have effectively shown that the definition of the Trinity accurately represents the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole.



Additional Notes:

Question #8: Explain each of the following attributes of God describing the practical implications of each attribute for life and counseling: wrath, mercy, holiness, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.

We have several steps to write this question.

- I think it is best to begin by defining an attribute,
- Defining the specific attributes given
- Explain how each of those attributes would impact life and counseling. This last step is best if you can tie it directly to a case you have or are counseling.

A. Define the Term Attribute

The attributes of God are those distinguishable characteristics or qualities of the nature of God that are inseparable from the essence or being of God [nature/essence refers to all that God is whether material or immaterial].

B. List the Attributes

1. **Omnipresence** – there is no place that you can go that God is not there (I prefer not to say that God is everywhere lest I came across as a pantheist – the world is God).

Psalm 139:6-12

- God's presence is a deterrent to sin
- God's presence is a comfort in suffering

2. **Holiness** – God is altogether separated from sin.

Isaiah 6:1-5

3. **Love** – God's emotion of care and concern for his creation that motivates him to act for the benefit of his creation.

Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

4. **Truth** – God represents things as they actually are. In other words, what God says and does is accurate.



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Titus 1:2 *in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,*

Romans 3:4 *May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar*

John 17:17 *Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.*

5. Omnipotence – God is able to do all things that are consistent with his character.

Matthew 19:26 *With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*

Psalms 115:3 *Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases.*