

# The One True God (Part 1)

Tom Pennington | April 2, 2017

## Donald Macleod in *Behold your God*

“God is not simply a great sight, the object of speculative curiosity. The revelation of His glory and the whole theological process which legitimately follows from it is holy ground. We cannot stand as superiors over God or His Word. We may not coldly and detachedly analyze and collate the great self-revealing deeds and utterances of Jehovah. We may not theologize without emotion and commitment. The doctrine must thrill and exhilarate. It must humble and cast down.... Theology has lost its way, and indeed its very soul, if it cannot say with John, ‘I fell at His feet as dead (Rev. 1:17).’”



# Our Objectives in Theology Proper

1. To gain a basic understanding of the biblical teaching about the Person and work of God.
2. To be challenged to further study.
3. To develop a desire for closer fellowship with God.



# I. The Existence of God



# *Biblical Doctrine*

"In the beginning, God'... (Gen. 1:1). The Bible does not begin with a rationalistic argument for the existence of God but rather assumes that he exists, that he existed before the beginning of all things outside himself, and that there is only one God. Theology proper, as with all other areas of systematic theology, is properly derived from God's own testimony in his inspired, inherent Word, the Bible. One's concept of God does not come from below, from human reasoning about the universe, because human reason is finite in its components and operations, corrupted by indwelling sin, and therefore never able of itself to derive an accurate understanding about God, who is infinite and holy. Proof for God's existence must come, first and foremost, from God's testimony about himself. He has provided irrefutable proofs for his existence in the Bible."



# I. The Existence of God

- A. Man's intuitive knowledge
  - Universal
  - Necessary
  - Scriptural



# Man's Intuitive Knowledge

- *Biblical Doctrine:* "Theology proper seeks to ground the knowledge of God's existence in Scripture and to relegate all other evidence of God's existence to secondary status, subordinate to Scripture's assessment. Still, God has revealed himself by means other than Scripture. He has revealed himself nonverbally to all people through nature, conscience, and history. This is referred to as general or natural revelation, and the Bible strongly affirms it. But knowledge of natural revelation of God must never be considered independent of Scripture, because the Bible shows that, left to his own thinking, man will corrupt the revelation of God in nature. Even the Christian needs the guidance of Scripture to properly assess God's revelation of himself in nature."



# I. The Existence of God

- A. Man's intuitive knowledge
  - Universal
  - Necessary
  - Scriptural
  - Rejected
- B. The Classic Rational Arguments



# Two Approaches

## Evidentialist

- A common pool of facts
- The careful use of reason
- Leads to...
  - Agreement of the truth
  - Possible acceptance of Christ

## Presuppositionalist

- God has revealed Himself.
- All men know that revelation.
- Man suppresses that knowledge—he is dead!
- The Spirit must regenerate through the Word.
- Proof of God: impossible & unnecessary



# 1. The Cosmological Argument

- Argument from cause & effect
- Contribution: There must be a First Cause
- Weaknesses:
  - It begs the question of the need for a first cause.
  - Logically, God must have a cause.
  - Doesn't demand a single, personal cause.



## 2. The Teleological Argument

- Argument from order & design
- Contribution: The First Cause is intelligent & outside the universe.
- Weaknesses:
  - Intelligent Designer may be finite like his creation.
  - Intelligent Designer doesn't equal a personal God.



# 3. The Ontological Argument

- Argument from the idea of God
- Contribution: The First Cause must be infinite & perfect.
- Weakness:
  - Impossible to deduce real existence from abstract thought or imagination.



# 4. The Moral (Anthropological) Argument

- Argument from conscience
- Contribution: The First Cause has a moral nature.
- Weaknesses:
  - Doesn't prove, but assumes moral law is objective.
  - Doesn't necessarily point to a being of absolute perfections.



# Different Christian Perspectives on the Classic Proofs

1. Classic: force rational unbelievers to admit God's existence.
2. Modified: offer grounds to the believer that his faith is rational.
3. Worthless: are of no value whatsoever to believers or unbelievers.
4. Presuppositional: use the proofs (but from the Scripture) to remove any legitimate objections.



# I. The Existence of God

A. Man's intuitive knowledge

B. The Classic Rational Arguments

C. The Biblical "Argument"



# C. The Biblical Argument

God has revealed Himself...

- 1. Generally** through creation & providence.
  - Rom. 1:18-21 – creation.
  - Acts 14:9-17 – providence.
- 2. Morally** through the law written on the heart.
  - Rom. 2:14-15
- 3. Personally** through His Son.
  - John 1:18 - No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.



# C. The Biblical Argument

God has revealed Himself...

## 4. **Propositionally** through His Word.

- *Biblical Doctrine:* "the only reliable proof of the existence of the true God consists of statements from and about him in his inspired Word. God must not be excluded from testifying about himself. Quite the contrary, his testimony, given by his own inspiration, must be accepted as unique and perfectly reliable.... Scripture asserts the existence of the only true God (John 17:3). The Bible begins with foundational presupposition that God existed "in the beginning" (Gen. 1:1). So every statement from the Bible about God's nature and actions is proof from him of his existence."



## C. The Biblical Argument

### 4. *Propositionally* through His Word.

- The God of Scripture claims he is the one true God who has eternally existed...
  - Deut. 33:27 - "The eternal God."
  - Ps. 90:2 - Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.
  - Is. 44:6 - "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.'



# C. The Biblical Argument

## 4. ***Propositionally*** through His Word.

- The God of Scripture claims he is the one true God who has eternally existed...
  - John 17:3 - "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
  - John 5:44 - "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?
  - 1 Cor. 8:6 - 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.
  - 1 Tim. 1:17 - Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.



# C. The Biblical Argument

God has revealed Himself...

**5. *Savingly* only through the work of His Spirit using the Word.**

- 2 Cor. 4:1-6

- *Biblical Doctrine:* "As those whose minds have been blinded to the glory of God revealed in Christ (2 Cor. 4:4), unbelievers do not need more evidence, whether logical or empirical; rather, they need new eyes to properly evaluate the sufficient evidence they already have. They need to experience the miracle of regeneration, in which God quickens the unbelieving heart by shining into it the light of the knowledge of his glory (2 Cor. 4:6). This happens only by the proclamation of the gospel that Jesus Christ is Lord (2 Cor. 4:5).



## *Biblical Doctrine*

"In summary, God exists. He exists as he is revealed by the Bible. The reason one must believe that he exists is because he said that he exists. His existence must not be accepted on the basis of human reason, because that is limited to time and space and has been corrupted by indwelling sin. God has sufficiently revealed himself in the Bible."

