

Lesson 1

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The deepest thought that a man can ever have is, "Is there a god?" This question must be answered by every human being and the answer will affect one's whole concept of life.
- B. It is not possible to prove God in the scientific method. The scientific method deals with verifiable things or things that can be measured. Science cannot measure the specific gravity, atomic weight or dynamic energy of a spiritual being. Therefore science and reasoning alone can not find God. God is real even though He cannot be measured. There are many things that are real which cannot be measured. No one has ever seen three feet of love or two pounds of justice but one would be foolish indeed to deny their reality. God cannot be put into a test tube but He nevertheless is real.
- C. There is no branch of science, from astronomy to zoology, which contradicts the idea of God. Nor is there any established fact of science or generally accepted theory of science that disproves the idea of God. Science can often answer the questions of what and how, but why remains a mystery, for science has no clue to the origin of things.
- D. Is it possible to prove the existence of God by reason? If we mean can science prove God, the answer is no, but it is certain that there is enough evidence available to make faith in God reasonable. All the rational arguments put together form a strong cumulative argument for the existence of God. NOTE: By logic alone we cannot find God. Unless God reveals Himself, we are doomed to confusion and conjecture.
- E. We should also remember that all the arguments used by the modern naturalists against God are not new. Nothing essential has been added to the argument as it existed many centuries ago, in ancient Greek times. The arguments against God were all in existence before Christianity came on to the scene of history. It is not because a man is modern but because he is a naturalist that causes him to say God is a figment of the imagination.

II. THE UNIVERSAL BELIEF IN GOD ARGUMENT

- A. Wherever you go around the globe, you find that man is a worshipping creature, and that human history is essentially religious history. Men in every type of culture and every degree of civilization worship some kind of God or gods.
- B. Anthropologists have shown that among the most primitive people today there is a belief in God. And in the earliest histories and legends of people all around the world is the evidence for an original concept of one God. There seems to have been a concept of a Supreme Being even in societies which are polytheistic today. The heathen rather than not worship something will worship anything (Rom. 1:18-23).
- C. The point is clear that the vast majority of humanity, at all times and in all places, has believed in some kind of God or gods. Where did this concept come from? How come animals do not have it? It becomes obvious that all men are worshipping creatures because the image of God is stamped on their hearts.

III. THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

- A. This deals with the law of cause and effect. No effect can be produced without a cause, As we trace each effect to its cause, we eventually come to uncaused cause, who is God. The universe connotes an adequate cause, and the only sufficient cause is God (Psa. 19:1). The universe as we know it owes its existence to some ultimate Cause which must be greater than what the Cause produced.

- B. The law of cause and effect raises a philosophical problem. If every effect must have a cause, then who caused God? The answer is that God is eternal and uncreated. A God who is sovereign, omnipotent and all-wise would be the First Cause. Were God a created being, He would not and could not be God. Everything must have a final point of predication and that point is God Himself. This is where a theist parts company with an atheist. NOTE: An atheist must say that matter is eternal and life came from non-life and neither of these statements has any scientific proof.
- C. Does the argument from the origin of the universe prove conclusively the existence of God? The cosmological explanation of the origin of the universe does not prove the existence of God but rather shows that it is reasonable to conclude that an infinitely great Cause is responsible for the beginning of the universe.

IV. THE TELIOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.

- A. This is the argument from design to designer. The universe not only proves a Maker but also a Designer. There is observable purpose and design in the universe which argues for the existence of God as its designer. The human body is the most complex organism and it is illogical to think that it did not have a designer. NOTE: No one would think that a wrist watch could come into being without an intelligent designer. How much more incredible to think that the universe, in its infinite complexity, could have happened by chance. NOTE: It is unlikely that a monkey in a print shop could set Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in type. If we found a copy of it we would conclude that an intelligent mind was the only possible explanation for the printing. NOTE: Take a new deck of cards. Once you shuffle a deck of cards, you lose the order arranged by the manufacturer. The chance of getting that order back by shuffling is infinitesimal. So the order and design of the universe is not just by chance but is the work of a Creator.
- B. Does the teleological argument prove conclusively the existence of God? The theological explanation of order in nature does not prove the existence of God but rather shows that it is reasonable to conclude that a purposeful Intelligence is responsible for the order and design of nature.

V. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

- A. Every human being knows by intuition that God exists (Rom. 1:20). This is something inherent to man. He may think of this as a supreme power or force or a spirit but he is conscious of someone or something above him.
- B. Since man is a moral and intelligent being, he must have had a Maker who is also a moral and intelligent being. Man's moral nature, religious instincts, conscience and emotional nature argue for the existence of God. These characteristics come from God because man was made in the image of God (Acts 17:29).
- C. It is generally agreed that all men have some moral standards. These standards may vary among individuals and cultures. However, all men do not have the same moral codes. Where man is his own lawgiver and where a moral warp exists in his soul, we would not expect the law of God to emerge unsullied in his system of ethics. Yet all men have moral notions. NOTE: Some deny moral standards; but although some steal, none enjoy being robbed; though some lie, none enjoy being deceived; though some murder, none enjoy being murdered.
- D. Conscience and emotion to some degree exist in all men. Any man who violates his conscience is oppressed by feelings of guilt. Men have a concept of right and wrong. A stone or a tree does not have guilt. An animal has no real guilt. Yet God has endowed man with a conscience as a reminder that he is not mere animal but a moral creation made in the image of his Creator.
- E. Does the anthropological argument conclusively prove the existence of God? The theological explanation of morals in man does not prove the existence of God but rather shows the reasonableness to conclude that an infinitely great intellectual and moral being has endowed men with such a nature.

VI. THE EXPERIENTIAL ARGUMENT: All men and women who commit their lives to the true God through Christ experience a new life. Where Jesus Christ is believed and trusted, a profound change takes place in the individual.

VII. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- A. Is Atheism Logical? An atheist is one who denies the existence of God.
1. To deny the existence of God one would need to be assured that God had no place in our beyond the universe. Unless a man has all knowledge, it is possible that God could exist outside of a person's limited knowledge. To be an atheist you would need to know everything; you would need to be God yourself.
 2. Out of all the millions of the inhabitants of the earth, only a handful of human beings are foolish enough to swallow the nonsense of atheism.
 3. To believe in atheism is to believe in pure chance. One must believe that everything in this world, including himself, came into existence by accident. To believe in atheism requires more faith than to believe in God. Francis Bacon said, "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcorn, than that this universal frame is without a Mind."
 4. The consequences of belief in atheism are devastating—no purpose for living, no reason to live, no confidence in the past and no hope for the future. To put God out of the picture is to bring meaninglessness to man. Man in his true significance cannot survive permanently in isolation from his Maker. The current loss of identity and emergence of the faceless man in today's culture is a testimony to the effects of losing our God.
- B. Whose God Do We Believe? Assuming a Supreme Being or force does exist, whose God or gods do we take? Sin has caused men to see God through colored glasses. The Christian religion does not teach that men cannot have false and erroneous beliefs about God. Once the question of God's existence is settled, then we ask ourselves where has this God revealed Himself? The true God has revealed Himself in Christ and in the Bible.

VIII. WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT GOD

- A. So overwhelming is the evidence for a Supreme Intelligence, a sovereign Creator, that the Bible never stops to argue His existence (Gen. 1:1). It simply assumes His existence (Heb. 11:6) and dismisses the skeptic by calling him a fool (Psa. 14:1).
- B. The evidence for God is excellent and by faith we come to believe in this God and get to know Him personally (Heb. 11:1-3). NOTE: Theism may be defined as a belief in the existence of a God who controls the world. A Christian begins his whole religion with the concept of God. Although the scriptures indicate the futility of denying God's existence, men wickedly suppress the truth about God that is before their eyes and turn to idolatry (Rom. 1:18-23).
- C. As our Western culture becomes more secular and atheistic, we can expect people to deny the true God but go after all kinds of fake gods they have conjured up in their minds. Man must have a higher force to live for because God made men to believe.

IX. CONCLUSION

- A. If you deny the existence of God, you must give a satisfactory explanation for the world about you. If you face the question of origin honestly, I am confident you will finally have to agree that God is the one satisfactory explanation for all existence.
- B. There is a God, a God with whom it is folly to trifle, a God with whom you must some day reckon. The living God never fails to reveal Himself to a heart that truly seeks Him.