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Theology Proper

Don Fanning

Liberty University, dfanning@liberty.edu

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Systems of Perception

● Rationalism: Pilate

- When this is the sole guide in discovering about God, then the supernatural must be explained by human understanding. All that cannot be explained is rejected as untrue.

● Empiricism: Thomas

- Pursuing knowledge through observation and experiment. Must see, smell, touch, hear or taste it or not true!

● Faith: believers

- “By faith we understand” (Heb 11:3)= faith-perception
- A person reads the Bible, sees a fact of spiritual truth or phenomenon and accepts it by faith without further proof

Is faith rational?

1. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you **change** and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3
 - Children accept things as true because of a trust in a person.
 - By faith all biblical facts are accepted because of a trust in His person and Word
2. Is not irrational, nor unreasonable, nor without evidence. Nature shows that God is (Ps 19:1-6; Ro 1:19-20)
3. John came to the tomb in unbelief, saw the evidence, remembered Jesus' words and believed (Jn 20:30-31). Sufficient evidence for John is sufficient evidence for me too: reasonable

False views about God

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

⦿ Atheism: open denial of God (Psa 14:1)

- Absolute Atheist: “I have examined all the facts as to the existence of God and I deny that they are sufficient to believe God exists”
- Providential Atheist: “I doubt the existence of God, but deny His providential dealings and care of world”. Also a “Deist”. He wants freedom from accountability (Jn 3:19-20)
- Practical Atheist: “I don’t publicly deny God, but He is irrelevant to me”. Deny Him by lifestyle, neglect, indifference, denial of biblical absolutes and His rights over me.
 - Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.

More False Views of God

- Agnosticism: “Not sufficient proof to believe”, unwilling to accept evidence (innate, tradition, nature, revelation)
- Materialism: Tries to explain everything by physical observable causes (like empiricism)
- Polytheism: “Belief in many gods”. Evidence shows man originally monotheistic. Polytheism came later.

More False Views of God

- ① **Pantheism**: God is in everything and everything is God. Confuses God with nature and matter with Spirit. Note: God is everywhere, but not in every thing.
- ① **Deism**: Acknowledges existence of God, but denies His sustaining power, and anything supernatural.
- ① **Tritheism**: Godhead is three independent gods.

Revelation of Existence of God

- ⦿ Man can know truth & is responsible to know it (Rom 1:18; 2:8; 2 Th 2:10-12)
- ⦿ Some say cannot know truth unless verified by scientific testing
- ⦿ Pilate illustrates problem
 - Jesus said, “Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice” Jn 18:37-38
 - Pilate thought he could excuse himself from moral responsibility by claiming it can’t be known
 - Christ’s statement shows knowing truth is moral issue (Rom 1:18)
- ⦿ It is not that man “cannot” believe—but he “will not” believe (Jn 5:40) See Jn 7:17

Why bother giving evidence for believing?

- ⦿ Commanded to be “ready to make a defense to anyone who asks” 1 P 3:15
- ⦿ Proving scientifically God exists is impossible—cannot be observed, repeated or absolutely confirmed—neither can you prove Napoleon!
 - Weakness of scientific method—limited in evaluating history
 - Asking to prove God by scientific method is like insisting that a telephone measure radioactivity: not designed for it.

What is the evidence for God?

- ◎ **General or natural evidence** —Nature
 - General in scope—universal (Mt 5:45)
 - General geographically—globe (Ps 19:1-4)
 - General in methodology—varied elements of creation like sun and human conscience (Rom 2:14-15)
- ◎ **Special or revealed evidence** —Bible
 - When walking through woods, the tracks of a deer indicate that a deer had been there, even though the deer is not visible
 - In a court, the law only requires proof “beyond reasonable doubt”—never absolute proof

Arguments for existence of God

◎ Moral Argument

- Man's intellectual and moral nature demands a superior origin (no explanation through Naturalism)
- Man's conscience, a sense of right/wrong, demands a Law-Giver
- Man's free will implies a Great Will whom we are like
- Though defiled by sin (1 Tim 4:2), universally man wants to choose right and leave wrong.
- Some consciousness of a higher and holy Being quickens the individual conscience and recognizes a necessary accountability to such a Being.

Teleological Argument (*telos*, “end”)

- ◉ Universe is not a chaos but a cosmos (organized system)
- ◉ If you found a watch that kept good time must conclude a designer. Isa 45:18 *“he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited-- he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”*
- ◉ **Major Premise:** Design presupposes an intelligent architect
- ◉ **Minor Premise:** World shows design in every part
- ◉ **THEREFORE:** World has a Designer or intelligent Architect, who is God.

Cosmological Argument: cause and effect logic

- *Cosmos*: “an orderly arrangement”
- Every effect must have its adequate cause
- The universe is an adequate effect—the only sufficient cause is God
- Reason and probability side with creation—not chance or mere force (Rom 1:20)
- **Major Premise:** Every effect has an adequate cause
- **Minor Premise:** The world is an effect
- **THEREFORE:** World must have a cause outside itself which produced it, namely GOD

Ontological Argument: (Idea of a supreme being)

- ◉ Man has an idea of a God, who is perfect, independent and infinite.
- ◉ Since belief in “*God*” is universal, must come from within man, that is, it is innate.
- ◉ Could it have come from civilization or education, when uncivilized have same idea?
- ◉ **Major Premise:** An intuitive and universal belief among men must be true
- ◉ **Minor premise:** The belief that there is a God is universal and intuitive among men
- ◉ **THEREFORE:** That there is a God, must be true

Interesting facts

- More than 90% of world religions acknowledge one supreme being, most with redeeming concerns
- Monotheistic belief predated other forms of worship and heathenistic practice
- Other forms of heathenism and polytheism resulted from failure to pursue knowledge of God
 - In China Supreme God is *Shag Ti* and Korea is *Hananim*, The Great One
 - These beliefs predate Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (2,600 BC)
 - Both understood God should never be represented by idols
 - Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, Regal Books, p. 63ff

Anthropological Argument

- Man is more than a biological being, but has feelings, thoughts, ideals, and impulses (not instincts!)
- The Spiritual Dimension of man came from the image of God (Gen 1:26-28)
- **Major Premise:** Man is not just a physical being, but also moral, intellectual, emotional and volitional.
- **Minor Premise:** Since no other being in the universe possesses these qualities, they must have come from outside the universe
- **THEREFORE,** Since the only Being outside the universe is God, He must be the source of man

Biblical Evidence for God's Existence

- ⦿ Existence of God is assumed in Bible
 - It is a fact taken for granted—never argued
 - Those who come to God believe that He is (Heb 11:6)
- ⦿ **Biblical Theism**
 - What the Bible says about the reality, essence and works of God
 - Either God is all that the Bible says or it is the biggest and most deceptive hoax ever compiled
 - The strongest evidence comes from Christ, which, if in error, repudiates the nature of Christ
 - In spite of the evidence, without the illumination of the Spirit, man will not believe or understand.

Revelation of God

General Revelation	Special Revelation
Given to all Intended for all	Given to Few Intended for All
Sufficient for condemnation	Sufficient for salvation
Declares God's Greatness	Declares God's Grace and Love
Apologetics: Cosmological Argument Teleological Argument Anthropological Argument Ontological Argument	Nature: Personal – Phil 3:10 Anthropic—Human language Analogical—Rom 5:7-8

Attributes of God: Definition

- ⦿ “Those distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and which constitute the basis and ground for His various manifestations to His creatures.”
- ⦿ His attributes are different from His works
- ⦿ His attributes do not “add” anything to God; but rather reveal His nature.
- ⦿ Classified in two categories:
 - Absolute: incommunicable (Intransitive) ((Moral))
 - Relative: communicable (Transitive) ((Non-moral))
- ⦿ Important not to exalt one attribute above another

Absolute Attributes

◎ ***Spirituality*** involving:

- Life—God is life and ultimate source of all life
- Personality—He has self-cognizance, will, intellect, emotion and self determination— (the image given to man)

◎ ***Infinity***, involving:

- Self-existence—Free from the succession of time
- Immutability—Unchanging and unchangeable in being
- Unity—God is one

◎ ***Perfection***, involving:

- Truth—Agreement and consistency with all that is God
- Love—God seeks the highest good of humans at His cost
- Holiness—God is righteous, set apart or separate from sin

“Relative” Attributes (related to time and space)

- ◎ ***In relation to Time and Space:***
 - Eternity—Free from the succession of time
 - Immensity—His power and presence is bigger than universe
- ◎ ***Creation and Essence:***
 - Omnipresence—Present everywhere
 - Omniscience—Knows all actual and possible things
 - Omnipotence—All powerful
- ◎ ***Moral Being:***
 - Truth or Veracity, Faithfulness
 - Mercy, Goodness
 - Grace, Justice, Righteousness

Conclusion of Existence

1. Knowledge of existence of God means man is put here by design
2. Knowledge of God means responsibility
3. Knowledge of God's existence means that we have the responsibility to search and seek to know God personally, to be thankful and worship Him
 - Problem is sinful man does not search for God on his own (Jn 1:9; 6:44; 7:17; Ac 17:27-28; Ro 2:4)
 - Even when many believe in God, they live like practical atheist, as though He didn't exist or were indifferent to man.
 - ❖ God is incredible patient and slow to act against man (Ps 50:21; Ecc 8:11-12). God hopes man will repent and learn wisdom.
 - ❖ Man tends to believe God is Santa-Claus-type who only spoils kids

What's in a name? (Psa 138:2)

KJV I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

NIV I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

NLV I bow before your holy Temple as I worship. I will give thanks to your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness, because your promises are backed by all the honor of your name.

His names tell us what God is like, esp. His care and concern for us—they motivate us to trust His Word

Importance of His name

- ⦿ In our culture a name is merely a label— in other cultures it is a value to live up to
- ⦿ He revealed His names—man did not give God His names = special importance
- ⦿ His names are miniature portraits or promises
- ⦿ God changed His name at specific times to show His power and authority over a given situation—He could be trusted

Names of God

- ◎ **Yahweh(YHWH) Wrongly translated “Jehovah”**—The Independent *Self-existent One*: “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3:14-15)
 - Others see *Faithfulness of God*: “I am (or will be) who I have been”, the “always being or present God”
 - This name is the personal and proper name for God
- ◎ **Adonai**—*Lord, Master*; Most common name when Yahweh thought to be too sacred to pronounce (Ex 4:10-12)
- ◎ **Elohim**—*Mighty One*; a plural term for God (EI) usually speaking of His majesty or plenitude (Gen 1:1), not a reference to Trinity

Compound names of God

- ◎ ***El Shaddai:** *Almighty God* or *All Sufficient God* (Gen 17:1-20)—Who promises and keeps each one.
- ◎ ***El Elyon**—*Most High* [“Strongest Mighty One”] (Gen 14:18)—Who delivered Abram from Lot’s enemies
- ◎ ***El Olam**—*Everlasting God* or *God of Eternity* (Gen 21:33)—Abimelech made a covenant with Abraham, because “God is with you in all that you do.”
- ◎ ***Yahweh-Yireh**—*Yahweh will provide* (Gen 22:8-14)
- ◎ **Yahweh-Sabbath**—*Yahweh of hosts* [armies] (1 Sam 1:3; 17:45)—David and Goliath
- ◎ **Yahweh-Maccaddeshcem**—*Yahweh your sanctifier* (Ex 31:13)—As they sanctify Him, He sanctifies them!
- ◎ **Yahweh-Tsidkenu**—*Yahweh our righteousness* (Jer 23:6)—The name He is to be called when He saves Judah
- ◎ ***Yahweh-Shalom**—*Yahweh is peace* (Judg 6:24)

NT Names of God

- ◎ **Yeshua**—*Jesus*, “Yahweh is Savior or salvation (Mt 16:13-16; Jn 6:42)
- ◎ **Cristos**—*Messiah or Anointed One* (Jn 1:41; 20:31)
- ◎ **Kurios**—*Lord, Master* (Lu 1:46; Acts 2:36)
- ◎ **Soter**—*Savior; One who delivers from danger and death* (Lu 1:47)
- ◎ **Theos**—*God*; used of the Lord Jesus as true God (Jn 20:28; Tit 2:13; 2 Pet 1:11)

Trinity of God: Definition

- Cardinal doctrine of Christian Faith
- Not able to understand with human logic—the Infinite revealing Himself to the finite man.
- Term “Trinity” not found in Scripture—but does it reflect accurately the Bible teaching?
- English term “*trinity*” emphasizes 3 persons
- German, *Dreieinigkeit*, “Three-oneness”
- Concept is distinctness and equality of three-in-one.
- *“Composed of three united Persons without separate existence—so completely united as to form one God. The divine nature subsists in three distinctions: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”*

Nature of revelation in Bible

- **Explicit** revelation: “fully and clearly expressed; leaving nothing implied; fully and clearly defined or formulated”
- **Implicit** revelation: “implied or understood, though not directly expressed”

Misinterpretations of the Trinity

⦿ **Tri-theism**

- Three gods in loose association, sometimes related

⦿ **Sabellianism or Modalism** (200 AD)(Libertal Schleiermacher and United Pentecostals—Jesus Only)

- God is qualitatively seen as one nature and one person
- This essence may be designated interchangeably as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Different names for identical simplex God
- Three names are three **modes** by which God reveals himself

⦿ **Arianism** (heresy of Council of Nicea, AD 325)

- Only God the Father is eternal and thus uncreated One
- Son had a beginning as first and highest created being, “begotten”
- Son not one in essence with the Father
- Christ is subordinate to the Father
- There was a time when Christ did not exist!
- Called “God” as an honorific title

Historical controversy

- ⦿ Apostolic Times
 - Gnostic heresy
 - Denied Deity of Christ: inferior in nature to Father
 - Jesus was super-angel of impersonal emanation of God
- ⦿ Early Church (300-500 AD)
 - Arian Heresy
- ⦿ Modern Day heresies continue:
 - Gnostics– Christian Science
 - Arian– Jehovah’s Witness
 - Socinian– Unitarianism
 - Each give Christ every title except God and Savior

Trinity is distinctly Christian

- ⦿ Man could not arrive at this doctrine except by revelation
- ⦿ Pagan religions have triads
 - Egyptian triads of Osiris, Isis and Horus (like human family: father, mother, child)
 - Hindu triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Schiva
 - In cycle of pantheistic evolution personifies forces of nature
 - Creative powers—Preservative powers—Destructive powers
- ⦿ Physical triads of Plato
 - Goodness – Intellect -- Will
 - Not personalities nor real persons who can be addressed or worshipped
 - Only personifications of faculties or attributes of God
- ⦿ Only similarities is “three-ness”

Definition of Trinity (triunity) of God

- **Trinity:** “Union of three divine persons (or hypostases) Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one divinity, so that all three are one God as to substance or three Persons (or hypostases as to individuality)”
Webster
- Trinity comes from “tri-” (three) and –nity (unity) thus means **triunity**
- **Hypostases** is plural of hypostasis, “substance, underlying reality, or essence”

More definitions

- ◎ **Person**—not the ordinary meaning
 - Not “an identity completely distinct from other persons”
 - Not the ideal term for explaining the trinity
 - In the Trinity, *persons* are inseparable, interdependent and eternally united in One Divine Being
 - Some have preferred the term “substance”

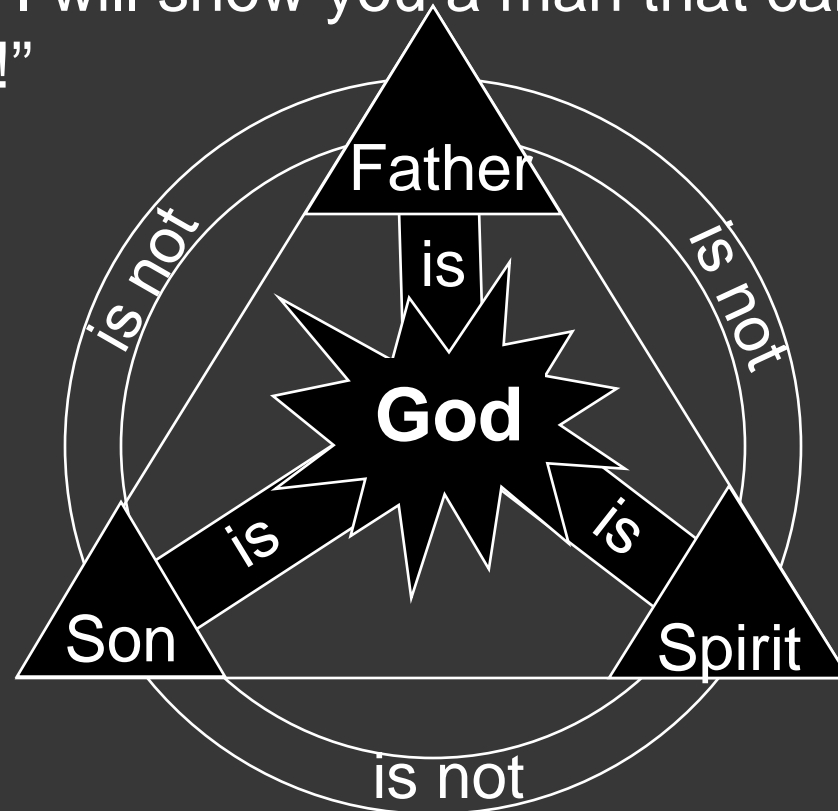
More definitions

◎ Essence—

- “Intrinsic or indispensable, permanent and inseparable qualities that characterize or identify the being of God”
- Triunity speaks of One God who is One in essence or substance, but characterized by three persons: Father, Son and Spirit
- Not three independent Gods existing as One, but three persons who are co-equal, inseparable, interdependent and eternally united in One Absolute Divine Essence and Being

Ancient Diagram of Trinity

John Wesley, “Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show you a man that can comprehend the triune God!”



For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. Isa 55:8-9

Explanation of the Trinity

- ⦿ God is one in regard to essence
- ⦿ God is three with respect to Persons
- ⦿ The three Persons have distinct relationships
- ⦿ The three Persons are equal in authority and knowledge
- ⦿ One Divine Being who acts and thinks as one within a three-fold personality
- ⦿ There is no analogy in nature and thus incomprehensible to finite minds, but it is the teaching of Scripture

Old Testament Teaching

- "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the **LORD alone.**"
Deuteronomy 6:4 NLT
 - Secondary emphasis—Lord's indivisibility
 - "God" (*Elohim*) is plural
 - "One" (*echad*) refers to one in a *collective sense* – As Adam and Eve (Gen 2:24) called "one flesh"
- OT **allows** for the Trinity and **implies** it
 - Gen 1 God the Father and Spirit are seen
 - God here is *Elohim*, plural form of *El*, God
 - The plural pronouns in Gen 1:26.
- Psalm 110:1 David distinguishes between "Lord" and "my Lord" (ref to Messiah)
- Isa 7:14 The one to be born of a virgin was also "*Immanuel*", that is, *God-with-us*
- Isa 48:16 (61:1) all three persons are mentioned as distinct from each other

New Testament teaching

- ◎ *“So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is **no God but one**. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us **there is but one God**, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and **there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom all things came and through whom we live.” 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 NIV*
- ◎ *“There is one body and **one Spirit**-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- 5 **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism; 6 **one God and Father of all**, who is over all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4:4 NIV*
- ◎ *“You believe that there is **one God**. Good! Even the demons believe that-- and shudder.” James 2:19 NIV*

NT Scriptures

1. **Father** is called God (Jn 6:27; 20:17; 1 Cor 8:6; Gal 1:1; Phil 2:11, “and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of **God the Father.**”
2. **Jesus Christ**, the Son is declared to be God,
 - By the divine names given to Him
 - By His works that only God could do (upholding all things, Col 1:17; creation, Col 1:16)
 - By His divine attributes (eternality, Jn 17:5; omnipresence, Mt 28:20; omnipotence, Heb 1:3; omniscience, Mt 9:4)
 - By explicit statements (Jn 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13, “...the glorious appearing of **our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ**”

More NT Scriptures

3. The **Holy Spirit** is recognized as God.

- Lying to the Spirit (Ac 5:3) was lying to God (v. 4)
- By attributes that only God has: omniscience (1 Cor 2:10), omnipresence (1 Cor 6:19)
- By work of regeneration of people to new life (Jn 3:5-6; Tit 3:5), which only God has power of life.
- By divine names, 1 Cor 6:11, “the Spirit of our God”, should be “the Spirit, who is our God”
 - Mat 28:19 unites the three names in *one singular name*

NT Triunity

- 1 Cor 12:4-6, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same **Lord**. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same **God** works all of them in all men.”
- 1 Peter 1:2, “who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**, through the sanctifying work of the **Spirit**, for obedience to **Jesus Christ**”
- 2 Cor 13:14, “May the grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit** be with you all.”

Difficulty with the doctrine

Meaning of “begotten”

- “Begotten” only in His humanity (Mt 1:20), because He was from eternity (Mic 5:2, “...one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Meaning of “first-born”

- “Firstborn” is the Greek *prototokos* (from *protos*, first, and *tikto*, to beget), but this word may mean (a) first in time, or (b) first in priority. It is the context which determines the meaning
- In Psalm 89:27 where the clause that follows explains the meaning of “firstborn” or *prototokos*. Psalm 89:27 reads, “I also shall make him *My* first-born, The highest of the kings of the earth.”
- Colossians 1:18, “and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead,” it means first in time

Difficult phrases

◎ Meaning of “Only-begotten”

- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father...”
- To our mind the words “only begotten” suggest birth or beginning
- “Only begotten” is the Greek *monogenes*, a compound of *monos*, used as an adjective or adverb meaning “alone, only.”
- In compounds with *genes*, adverbs describe the nature rather than the *source of derivation*
- It means ‘**unique**’ or ‘**incomparable**’
- In **Hebrews 11:17** where it is used of Isaac as the *monogenes* of Abraham -- emphasis is not on derivation but on his uniqueness and special place in the heart of Abraham
- **1 John 4:9** the statement “God hath sent His Only Begotten Son into the world” does not mean that God sent out into the world one who at His birth in Bethlehem had become His Son.

Choices regarding the Trinity

1. Men either ignored it or rejected it as illogical and incompatible with human reason
2. Finding it incompatible with reason, have tried to solve the problem by reducing it to their own reason: two extremes— but not both
 - God is one—Unitarianism (Jesus is mere man, Spirit a force)
 - God is three—tritheism (3 separate gods, like polytheism), which is the basis of Mormonism, holding many gods
3. Historically the church accepted it completely by holding both truths (God is three and one) in balance

Decrees of God: Polarization of Evangelicals

- ⦿ What does God make happen?
- ⦿ Is God the author of sin?
- ⦿ Does God answer prayer or does it just seem that way?
- ⦿ If God doesn't control everything, how can the future be certain?

Diverse View Points

1. Augustinian Deterministic Calvinism
 - All inclusive decree of God
 - Include all that comes to pass—even Satan and sin!
2. Open Theism or Extreme Armenianism
 - Denies absolute foreknowledge of God
 - Attempt to explain how God changes His mind
 - Gives man a libertarian free will
3. A Mediate (indirect) theological view
 - Affirms the absolute foreknowledge of God as part of His omniscience, His absolute omnipresence, His absolute omnipotence (though God has chosen to limit the exercise of this power)
 - Greek philosophical concept of **Simpleness** of God is not Biblical since God is Tri-unity, creation is extremely complex
 - Single decree of God is derived from simpleness of God
 - Impassibility of God (no passion) is incompatible with Biblical narrative rather He is emotionally moved by man's condition
 - Immutability in His attributes, but His relationships with man is dynamic and changing.

Sovereignty of God: Definition

- ⦿ God has absolute control over everything that happens in time and space
- ⦿ Most definitions based on an assumed concept, instead of inductive study
- ⦿ Word “sovereign” not found in the Bible
- ⦿ OT says very little about God’s decrees and there is no reference to decrees in the NT
- ⦿ Most concepts of “sovereignty” are derived from philosophy, not inductive Bible study

Characteristics of God's decrees

- Hodge spent 15 pages describing Augustine's description of decrees without a single Scripture reference!
- Only 8 references to God's decrees in three distinct ideas:
 1. Five references to creation (Job 28:26;38:10; Ps 148:6; Prov 8:7-9; Jer 5:22)
 2. Day of resurrection Decree of Ps 2:7; Acts 13:33)
 3. Decree of Judgment Day of Yahweh (Zeph2:2) and Nebuchadnezzar's temporary insanity (Dan 4:24)
- Isa 46:10 Establishment of His counsel is linked with the accomplishment of His pleasure
 - No hint that this refers to exhaustive efficacious decree that control all
 - Our omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God sovereignly intervenes in human affairs according to His wise plan as He implements His general rule over the nations and His plan of redemption

NT Word Studies

- ◎ “Counsel” *Boule* “purpose, resolution or decision”
 - Luke uses it 5 x to refer to divine counsel, “the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God’s *purpose* for themselves, not having been baptized by John (Lu 7:30)
 - This first occurrence shows man’s ability to frustrate God’s plan for them
 - Evidently God had a plan (*boule*) for Israel that they refused to conform to
- ◎ Acts 2:23
 - “this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death (Ac 2:23)
 - Use of the strongest language of sovereignty working God’s plan for redemption
 - “Predetermined”, *horizein* (“ordain, appoint”) to modify *boule* “counsel or plan”
 - Peter acknowledges God’s pretemporal plan by “foreknowledge”, places full responsibility for the crucifixion on the evil men who did it. No hint that God forced or controled the will of Jewish leaders, Judas, Pilate, Herod or soldiers. They did it willfully and intentionally
- ◎ Acts 4:27-28
 - “Purpose”, *boule*, is subject of verb, “foreordained”, *proorizein*.
 - Paul declared to the Ephesians “the whole *counsel* (*boule*) of God” (Ac 20:27)

Key Passages Eph 1:9-12 & 2 Pet 3:9

- **Context:** Paul has been focusing on glorious plan of salvation
 - 1:3-6 Father's eternal plan of salvation
 - 1:7-12 Son's work of redemption past and His intended inheritance for us at the end times (v.12)
 - 1:12-13 Spirit's work of applying salvation
- **Key phrase:** "He works all things..." (1:11) *ta panta* with the demonstrative article it should be translated "**all these things**", which restricts the meaning to a concept in the context
- This not a proof-text for exhaustive sovereignty
- The Demonstrative is mistranslated in (1:10; Col 1:20) which has led some to hope for universalism
- Rather Paul refers to those rescued from darkness (1:13), by redemption (1:14) and who are now part of Church (1:18)
- God unusual intervention in history at Christ's death was to secure a complete salvation for all mankind. The demonstrative limits that intervention
- 2 Pet 3:9, "The Lord is not slack... not *wishing* (boulomai)..."
 - God's plan is that everyone on earth hear the Gospel before Christ returns
 - This "purpose" is that all the world repents and believes and is a bona fide offer
 - If this is not true (as Calvin holds), then the verse is nonsense or God is double-minded!

“Purpose” *prothesis*

- ◎ Occurs 5x in reference to God’s plan
 - 3 refer to God’s plan of salvation (Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11; 2 Tim 1:9)
 - 2 refer to God’s plan for a transition from national Israel to the Church (Rom 9:11; Eph 3:11)
- ◎ None refer to a comprehensive plan for every event in human history
- ◎ How do we become included in His salvation “plan”?
 - Rom 8:28, “those who love God, who are the called according to His *purpose (prothesis)*”
 - Called to love God (theme of Romans is repentant faith)
 - 2 Tim 1:9, our salvation and calling is according to His plan

Will thelema

- Is used 18 x for the moral will of God
- Is used 5 x for the God's salvation plan
- Is used 2 x of guidance for the believer's walk, numerous times of Christ's desire to fulfill the will of the Father
- Nowhere is there a suggestion of an all comprehensive controlling Decree
- Beza said, "Nothing falls outside of the divine willing, even when certain events are clearly contrary to God's will." – a notion not supported by Scripture

Self-limiting of God's Sovereignty

- Creation of man in His image as moral being with freewill, limited His exercise of sovereignty—as it already had with Lucifer and angels as free moral agents
 - Did God cause Lucifer to rebel? Thus making God the author of sin!
- God delegated dominion or responsibility of earth to Adam and descendents (Gen 1:26)
 - In creation God established cycles and rules of nature; then He rested
- Constant real conflict in heavenly realms (Job 1; Dan 4)
- Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world he controlled (Mt 4:8-11); later called “prince of this world” (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11); Paul called him “god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4); “prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2)
- God delegated civil rule to human magistrates and governments: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Gen 9:6)
- Even though human governments have abused their authority, God has never withdrawn His delegation of authority (Rom 13:1-7)
- God has chosen not to exercise the fullness of His sovereign rule now, but it is coming soon.
- This is especially evident in communicating salvation. He has delegated the responsibility of world evangelism to believers to take the initiative

God's Foreknowledge

- Peter struggled with some teachings of Paul (2 Pet 3:15-16)
- Foreknowledge and election were not among those “hard to understand” teachings
- Refers to election 4 x (1Pet 1:1-2; 2:6,9; 2 Pet 1:15)
- Refers to Foreknowledge 3x (1 Pet 1:2, 20; 2 Pet 3:17)
- The concept of “elect ACCORDING to the *foreknowledge* of God (1Pet 1:2) is not mysterious
- Rom 8:29, Berkley, “Because those whom he knew beforehand, He appointed beforehand to share the likeness of his Son, so that he might be the First-born among many brothers.”
- To deny that election and ordination are conditioned on God's foreknowledge is to ignore these passages
- The idea of unconditional election was rejected in the Synod of Orange in AD 529
- It was revived by the Reformers 1000 years later, but even Calvin called it “a horrible decree”

Examination of Terms for *Foreknowledge*

- ◎ Calvinistic claim:
 - Foreknowledge (*proginoskein*) has a “pregnant” meaning of “making one the object of loving care or elective love.”
 - Thus this makes foreknowledge and election synonymous
 - Their intent is to claim a basis for an unconditional individual election
 - This would explain away the truth that God’s plan is based on His foreknowledge

Foreknowledge, *proginoskein, prognosis*

- No “pregnant” meaning found in LXX, Classical Greek, Koine Greek or Church Fathers before Augustine (AD 400)
- Lexicons do not support a pregnant meaning, except Arndt and Gingrich who base their view on 4 German theological articles
 - You don’t base linguistic meanings on theology, rather the opposite
- Church Fathers as Jerome argues (*Ag. Pelagius BK. 3*) argue that “God’s foreknowledge must not be understood as involving fatal necessity or compulsion by God, but that the events foreknown by God are done by men of their own free choices.”
- Since God chooses to reveal Himself by human language, if we change the word meaning, then all objective communication is lost!
- Acts 26:5, “Since they have known about me for a long time previous...that I lived as a Pharisee..., etc.”
 - Meaning is to know something about a person beforehand
- Does this primary meaning make sense in the context? Acts 2:23; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 1:20; Rom 8:29-30; 11:2

Steps of Divine-Human Encounter

Foreknew, *prognosis*, Ro 8:29

Determined counsel, *horizo boule*, Acts 2:23

Elect (chose), *eklektos*, 1 Pet 1:2

Predestinate, *proorizo*, text

Call, *kaleo*, Rom 8:30

Illuminate, *photizo*, Heb 10:32

Draw, *helkuo*, Jn 6:44

Regenerate, *paliggenesia*, Tit 3:5 and Seal, *sphragizo*

Justify, *dikaioo*, Ro 3:24

Lead (Isa 48:17), empower (Ro 15:13), and gift (1 Co 12:4-7)

Someone sent, Ro 10:15

Someone preached, announced gospel, Ro 10:15

Heard, Ro 10:15; Eph 1:13

Understood, Mt 13:15; Ac 8:30

Persuaded, Ac 26:28

Commitment to Believe, and Trust
Eph 1:13

Obey (Phil 2:12) and serve (Mt 6:24; 1 Th 1:9)

Glorify (Ro 8:30)

Manifestation of the decree

- In the material realm: creation (Psa 33:6-11); nations (Ac 17:26); length of life (Job 14:5)
- In the social realm: family (Ge 2:18); marriage (Mt 19:1-9); government (Rom 13:1-7); church decreed in past, revealed in NT (Eph 2:15; 3:1-13)
- In the spiritual realm:
 - Order of the decrees: *Supralapsarian/Infralapsarian*
 - Sin and the decrees: God **permits, not authors**, limits
 - Salvation and decrees: Choose and predestinate believers before creation (Eph 1:4-5; 2 Tim 1:9)

Answers to objections of God's decrees

- ⦿ Objection: The decree does not allow for man's free will
 - Sovereignty is not contradictory
 - God does not make all aspects of His will come into being
- ⦿ Objection: the decree makes it unnecessary to preach the gospel
 - God designed the only way men come to Christ is through communication of the gospel by men
 - People are lost, not because of a decree, but because they have not believed

Conclusions

1. Should stand in awe of a God who is wise, powerful and loving
2. Should entrust our lives to such a God
3. Should rejoice in wonder of our salvation
4. Should rest in fact that God controls all
5. Should accept responsibility for sin, but cannot frustrate God's plan
6. Should be humble before such a God