

L LORD

OF HEAVEN & EARTH:

*LESSONS ON THE NATURE AND CHARACTER
OF THE GOD OF SCRIPTURE*

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LORD OF HEAVEN & EARTH: Lesson Notes

****Class participants can prepare for each session by reading through the lesson notes and being prepared to discuss the Thought Questions in class****

LESSONS

1. TOTHEPRAISEOFHISGLORY

A lesson on Christian theology as a basis for praise to God

2. ETERNAL POWER & DIVINE NATURE

A lesson on the results and limitations of recognizing God in nature

3. MAKER OF HEAVEN & EARTH

A lesson on the identity of God revealed in the act of creation

4. HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

A lesson on the transcendent nature of God

5. THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A lesson on the immanent character of God

6. HOW LONG, O LORD?

A lesson on God and the problem of evil

7. THE GOD OF ISRAEL

A lesson on the story of Yahweh, Israel, and the blessing of the world

8. GOD WITH US

A lesson on the incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth

9. FATHER, SON & SPIRIT

A lesson on the Trinity revealed in salvation

10. ALPHA & OMEGA

A lesson on the God who makes all things new

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LESSON 2: ETERNAL POWER & DIVINE NATURE – Results and limitations of knowing God in nature

- ❖ General Revelation v. Special Revelation
 - GENERAL REVELATION – God’s means of revealing himself through the traits and processes of creation.
 - SPECIAL REVELATION – God’s means of revealing himself directly through the actions and words of human beings (e.g. Jesus, Scripture).
- ❖ ‘Natural Theology’ seeks to know God through observation and study of the natural processes of the world (science, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, etc.).
- ❖ ‘Proofs’ for God’s existence
 - ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT > God as ‘Highest Form of Being’
 - This argument defines God ‘that than of which no greater thing can be thought.’ Reasoning from this that existence is always greater than non-existence, it is logically concluded that God must exist.
 - COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS > God as ‘First Uncaused Cause’
 - Based on the observable principles of causation and dependency, this argument deduces that God is the primary cause upon which all existence depends.
 - TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT > God as ‘Designer of the Universe’
 - Teleology suggests that all elements of the world show evidence of function and purpose – often to ‘fine-tuned’ levels – thus suggesting a God who designed it.
- ❖ Discerning God in Human Nature (individuals and cultures)
 - Sense of Higher Reality – Human beings observe and experience things that seem to go beyond our physical limitations – e.g. mental cognition and consciousness, truth, spirituality.
 - Sense of Morality – the common belief that there exists a standard for how people ought to behave toward one another and society suggests a moral establishment of some kind – e.g. justice, freedom, power.
 - Sense of Aesthetic – the experience of awe or delight in the orderliness of the world allows us to appreciate and discern the world’s designer – e.g. beauty, pleasure.
 - God known through the universe or human nature is always limited, though.
 - Philosophy and Science can only speak generically about God.
 - Evil in the world challenges what we can discern about God’s power and/or goodness.
- ❖ God in History?
 - God known through human history (Israel & Jesus!) provides a possible way forward for Natural Theology
 - History, as recorded in Scriptures, is a bridge between General Revelation and Special Revelation

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❖ In Praise of God

- Psalm 119: 1-4 / Acts 17:24-28

❖ Thought Questions

- Some might suggest that knowing God through observation of the world is an impossible task because it can only ever reveal things about ourselves rather than God. Do you think this is correct?
- Which of the three main 'proofs' of God's existence do you find most compelling? Why?
- What experiences in your own life might lead you to a belief in a divine power outside of what you know from Scripture?