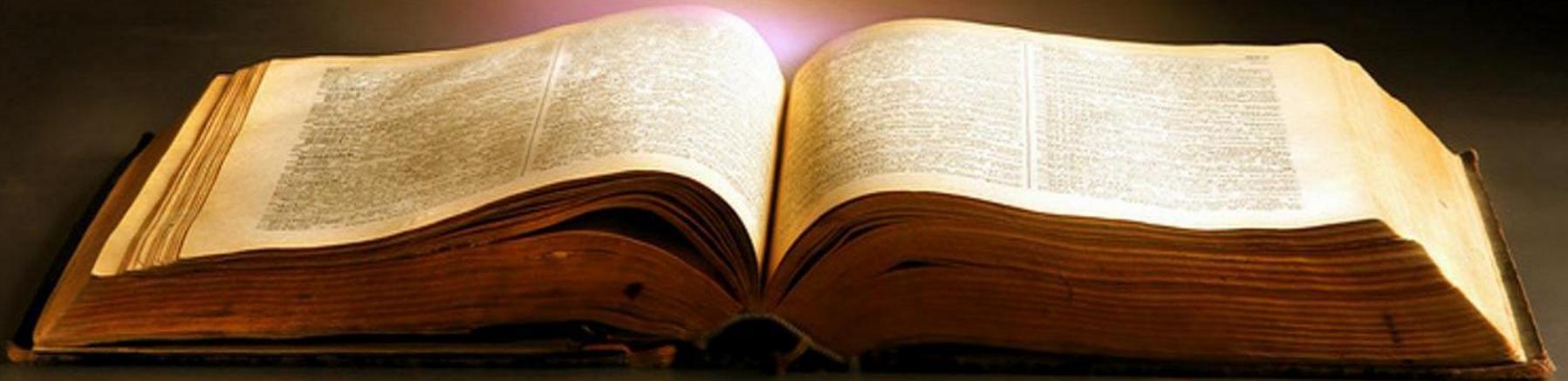


Stow Park Bible Fellowship

Bible Doctrines

Based on the teachings of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

3. The Existence and Being of God



The Existence and Being of God

- ‘Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.’ (Rom. 11:33) That is how Paul ends the 11th chapter of Romans, and we can do nothing better, as we begin to study the Biblical Doctrines, than to hold those eloquent words in our minds.
- Having completed the general introductions to this whole subject we can now proceed to the particular doctrines and the first doctrine to which we must pay attention – a doctrine that is placed first in the Bible itself - is the doctrine of God.
- We shall discover it in 8 steps using Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones’ writings on the subject bearing in mind what we have learned during the last two weeks on how he came to his discoveries of the doctrines he outlines.
- He doesn’t list these 8 steps as such, but I have felt it to be a good way of studying them by dividing his writings as such.
- Now these 8 steps are as follows:

The Existence and Being of God

- 1. We must be clear in our thinking about the Existence of God.
- 2. We must decide if we can KNOW God.
- 3. God cannot be comprehended but He can be known.
- 4. What do we know about God? – He is Holy and Infinite, etc.
- 5. God is Spirit.
- 6. God is Omnipresent.
- 7. God is a Person with personality.
- 8. God is One Being.
- I propose taking each of these steps in this order adding some of The Doctor's comments to lead us to a conclusion about the Existence and Being of God.
- So, to step 1:
- **1. We must be clear in our thinking about the existence of God**

The Existence and Being of God

- We must first of all realise that the Bible starts with God, not man, in its great opening statement which really tells us everything: “In the beginning **God** . . .” and it is very important that we should emphasise this and grasp it clearly.
- The knowledge of God is ultimately the sum of all the others. There is no point in considering the doctrine of salvation, nor of sin, unless we have started with the doctrine of God.
- This is a theme which has occupied God’s people throughout the endless ages of eternity, but even so, it is vital that we should try to classify our knowledge as far as we can go.
- We must try to have our thoughts concerning God arranged in an orderly fashion which will help us in every part of our Christian life and especially our worship.
- We must underline the great outstanding principles and, knowing these we can then proceed to worship God.

The Existence and Being of God

- Clearly we must start with this: **The Existence of God.**
- We say we want to worship God and to know Him, so the first thought that comes to our minds is the existence of God, because, as we know full well, there are many people who tell us that they do not believe in it.
- It is not so much that we are concerned with them and their arguments, as that, from our own standpoint, it is essential that we should be clear in our own thinking about this subject.
- The Bible does not argue about the existence of God, it declares it. The Bible does not give us any proofs of the existence of God, it assumes it.
- Genesis does not start by saying, 'Well, by the following proofs we establish the existence of God, and because He has existed, we establish that at the beginning He created'
- No, it just states His existence and His being the Creator..

The Existence and Being of God

- Of course in Acts 14 and 17, and Romans 1, the Bible teaches us that, because of the goodness of God, disbelief in God is entirely without excuse.
- It only puts it like that negatively. It does not say, positively, that by reference to nature, and so on, the existence of God can be proved. It says that if someone does not believe in God, there is evidence that can be brought against him because God has left His marks in nature.
- Paul writes in Romans 1:20: 'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.'
- There are a number of *Cosmological* – that in nature every effect has a cause. *Teleological* – everything leads up to something. - *Moral* – an awareness of good and evil. *A feeling* that there is a God.

The Existence and Being of God

- But none of these can create FAITH, and according to the Scriptures, no one can believe in God without faith, without the inward work of the Holy Spirit that leads to faith.
- Hebrews 11:6 states 'And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.'
- So we must be clear in our believe in God through our faith. (End)
- **2. Believing in the existence of God, can we actually KNOW Him?**
- Now that is a vital question. Can we, humans, know God the Creator of the world?
- There are many people who say they believe in the existence of God but who say He cannot be known. That is known as *Deism*.
- They believe God made the world like a watchmaker makes a clock. He wound it up, then put it down and had nothing more to do with it.

The Existence and Being of God

- The goal of all our seeking and our worship and all our endeavour should not be to have a particular experience, it should not be to petition certain blessings; it should only be to know God himself – the Giver, not the gift, the source and the fount of every blessing, not the blessing itself.
- Listen to our Lord, Jesus, Himself, as he states: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God’. That is surely our end and object and goal.
- Again Jesus tells us His definition of eternal life: ‘And this is eternal life, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent’.
- Could it be that most of our particular problems arise from the fact that we do not start with this desire to know God and put this before everything else? These words of Jesus surely confirm that God wants us to know Him. (End)

The Existence and Being of God

- **3. God can be known but not comprehended (*Understood*).**
- Yes, we can know God but He is incomprehensible. We can never know God in the ultimate, final and complete sense. Remember: “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable His judgements and his paths beyond tracing out!” (Romans 11:33).
- “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, My ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8,9).
- God is nevertheless knowable; He cannot be comprehended or we would be equal with Him, but thank God He can be known.
- Our knowledge is but partial knowledge but nevertheless it is real although incomplete.
- Which leads us to the next question:

The Existence and Being of God

- **4. what do we know about God?**
- What can we know about God? What does the Bible teach us about God?
- The Doctor suggests that we must do what Moses did when he saw the burning bush. At first he said, 'I will go over and see this strange sight, why the bush does not burn up' (Exod 3:3) but the word came to him, 'Do not come any closer, take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.'
- The ancient Jews certainly were filled with such a sense of awe and reverence and such a conception of the majesty of God that in a sense they dared not even utter His name.
- We must approach God 'with reverence and godly fear for our God is a consuming fire'. (Heb. 12:28-9)
- Lesson: God is a Holy God and an Infinite God.
- Holy we can understand, but 'Infinite'?

The Existence and Being of God

- ‘Infinite’ means no beginning and no end, absolute, complete. Everything derives from God and God’s infinity is emphasised everywhere in the Bible, from beginning to end and we should never pray without reminding ourselves of that. (End)
- **5. God is a Spirit**
- The next quality was stated once and for ever by our Lord Himself. ‘God is a Spirit’, and you will remember was made to the woman of Samaria.
- Acts 17:24 states, ‘The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands’.
- Does that help us to understand what it means that God is Spirit?
- It also means that God has none of the properties discerned by the bodily senses. (People who seem to think they have visions will always do well to bear this in mind.)

The Existence and Being of God

- ‘No man has seen God at any time’, writes John (John 1:18).
- ‘Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen’, says Paul (1 Tim 1:17)
- **6. God is Omnipresent**
- We shall be discussing this fully later. Suffice it to say at the moment that though God is Spiritual in His essential being, when He chooses, He may also give appearances of Himself, such as when He put Moses in the cleft of the rock and told him he should see His back parts.
- He can give appearances of Himself and yet it is not His true self.
- God in order to tell us something about Himself has spoken a language that you and I can understand. It is almost impossible for us to grasp the idea of infinity and spirituality, so God speaks as if He were man that we might understand, know and trust Him. That is the whole idea of *Anthropomorphism*.

The Existence and Being of God

- So all this means: God is invisible, without parts, without body, free from any and every limitation which brings us to the next characteristic of God:
- **7. Yet, God is a Person – has Personality.**
- What does ‘personality’ mean?
- Personality exists where there is mind, intelligence, will, reason, individuality, self-consciousness and self-determination.
- Where you have these things, you have personality and the Bible asserts that **God is a person**. How vitally important this is.
- So how does the Bible teach us that God is a person?
- It does so directly and indirectly. Indirectly, it tells us that God has left marks of Himself and of His mind and sensibility in creation. You see there the evidence of His mind and His will and His ordering. Where do all the wonderful inventions come from? They all originate from the God’s Laws of Nature.

The Existence and Being of God

- But there is a great deal of direct evidence for saying that God is a person. Have you not noticed how the presence of God is always described in a personal way. Take the name of God, 'I am', that is a personal statement. It is only a person who can say, 'I am'.
- Then have a look at Psalm 115 and see how God compares Himself with idols –they have eyes but they cannot see, hands but they cannot handle, etc.
- Paul says in Thessalonians 'that they turned from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thes: 1,9)
- The Bible also teaches that people converse with God and that He is able to have specific dealings with men and women. He chooses particular people and He blesses particular people – again all this is personal.
- The final proof is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, In the incarnation, in the person of His Son, God has declared that He is personal.

The Existence and Being of God

- Our Lord said, ‘anyone who has seen me has seen the Father’. (John 14:9) and again in John 10:30, ‘I and the Father are one’. Therefore God must be personal because it was a person who was speaking.
- Furthermore, our Lord’s teaching of God was always in terms of this personal quality. He spoke of Him as ‘the Father’ and you see this in its most glorious form when you take a look at the Lord Jesus praying.
- In John 17, for example, what is He doing? He is praying, not to ‘whatever gods may be’, but to His ‘Holy Father’, the person. And thus in every way, everywhere, the Bible asserts that God is a personal being. (End)
- **8. Finally the Bible teaches that God is One Unity.**
- ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord’. (Deut.6:4) and when we come to the doctrine of the Trinity we shall deal with that.

The Existence and Being of God

- It is referred to now, to make our consideration of this doctrine, as taught in the Bible, complete. 'There is *one God*, one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'. (1 Tim 2:5).
- This is not the same God worshipped by any other religion, Muslims, and the like. They may seem the same but none of them are the same true God.
- The glorious truth we have been trying to look at together is just this, this infinite, absolute, sublime, transcendent, glorious, majestic, everlasting being who is Spirit, who is truth, who lives in light no one can approach, this God has been graciously pleased that you and I should **know Him**, That we should talk to Him and that we should worship Him.
- And He is prepared to listen to us, to meet with us, and receive our unworthy and poor worship, and our praise and adoration.
- Blessed be the name of God!