

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Bible study/Prayer Meeting

Wednesday 16th November

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Ps/Hymn 55 tune of 195 come thou fount.

Read Genesis 1:1-5 Text Genesis 1:1

Series – The Doctrine of God series (1) Title The Existence Of God (1)

The Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy, a minister of the gospel, instructed him in **2 Tim 1:13** “***Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.***”

The word for **sound** means ***that which is healthy***. Timothy as a faithful minister of the gospel must give teaching that is healthy or for the health of his hearers.

In others words spiritual medicine, needed to live and think right in spiritual matters.

The only way to give sound words, is to ***Hold fast the form of sound words.***

The word **form** refers ***to an outline or pattern that of original object***. The idea is of an artist, designer, looking at a house, or scenery and making the exact pattern of what they see.

This means they do not add or take away from the original, but to copy as it is before them.

Paul is telling Timothy, the gospel that I have taught you centres upon the person and work of Jesus, therefore, as you hand down gospel teaching to others, don't add or take away from the message, but keep the pattern as originally given.

This is what Paul means when he says “***Hold fast the form of sound words...***” .

The words **hold fast**, in the original Greek is one word, which means ***to maintain, to keep***. The only way to hold fast,

maintains healthy teaching as to follow Paul's counsel in in **2 Tim 4:2** "**preach the word.**"

In **Titus 2:10** Paul uses the term **the doctrine of God**. The word **doctrine** means **teaching**, and so the expression the doctrine of God' means **teaching about God**.

The Church's historic theological confessions and catechisms are structured in a manner that is in keeping with this fact of the doctrine of God being the foundation of all other truth.

Another term used of the doctrine of God is theology proper. Theology proper commences with the doctrine of God and moves on from there through the various branches of truth.

The word Theology, comes from the Latin *theologia*; which in turn came from the Greek words *theos* (God) and *logos* (word) literally **the word about God**.

Putting the two words together **theology is the study of God in who He and His works.**

We must start where the Bible starts which is with God.

The opening words of Scripture, in **Genesis 1:1** "**In the beginning God,**" not in the beginning man.

We start with God in our teaching and not with man.

If our view of God is wrong, then our view of everything else will be wrong.

If we have wrongs view of God, then we will have wrong thoughts about God's dealings in our lives, His purposes, and how He leads us.

Perhaps one of the great failings in the modern church today is that we have lost sight of the greatness and majesty of our God, in essence we have lost sight of God.

Sound teaching about God, or healthy doctrine about God will lead to healthy and holy living for God.

When our doctrine is scriptural then our practices will be scriptural.

When our doctrine is healthy our view of God will be High and Holy.

Therefore, as we study Theology, the doctrine of God, may our lives be impacted because if our heads have been filled with truthful knowledge, but our hearts neglected, and remain cold, there will be a dullness and dryness in our lives, and we will have missed the point of this study.

May there be a band of people whose hearts the Lord will touch.

God has been pleased to reveal Himself through His word, **Genesis 1:1** *“in the beginning God...”*

I want to use these words and speak about **the existence of God.**

I FIRST, THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IS REAL

I begin that simple thought, God is real.

It is interesting to note that God never seeks to prove He exists.

He does not set out a list of arguments to prove His existence.

Rather, God declares His existence.

The point of God's existence is plainly declared in the very first line of Scripture *“in the beginning God.”* God does not set out to explain, argue or convince His creation of His reality, but to declare His existence. God never defends Himself, He states *“in the beginning God.”*

God did not begin to exist in the opening chapter of Genesis, a chapter which deals with all that God created.

God is not a created being, God's existence predates creation.

Men today set out to prove God does not exist, and they say prove to me that God exists.

To be honest at times, as Christians, fear arises, as Solomon wrote in **Prov 29:25** "**the fear of man bringeth a snare.**"

You have this person continually giving reason after reason why he does not believe God exists and at the same time challenging you to prove that God exists.

Now the greatest and best way answer any question about God is to take the apostles Paul's words in **Gal 4:30** "**Nevertheless what saith the scripture?**

When you follow the pattern, laid down by the Holy Spirit in Scripture, and respond, I don't need to prove God exists, because God does not set out to prove He exists,

therefore, I declare unto you what God says about Himself.

God exists, God is real because God has declared, and states He exists.

Hebrews 11:6 – "**for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**"

((The word **cometh** may also be read **approacheth**, Paul is teaching that the person who approaches God in worship must do so in faith, otherwise it is impossible to please God as the opening words of the text state "**But without faith it is impossible to please Him.**"

((The child of God will approach the Lord in worship out of a heart of faith, truly believing that the God to whom he comes actually exists.))

In this text, therefore, there is one of the two great foundations of the Christian religion, namely God is and God has spoken.

God is meaning— God does exist.

But also, God has spoken, that is He has revealed Himself. Faith is not a blind leap in the dark, rather Faith rests upon all the Lord has spoken of Himself.

We are not left to theories, speculations, to man's fallible mind concerning the issue of the existence of God and approaching God in true faith.

(As born again believers, we approach Him with assurance because He who is, has spoken; and because He has spoken we know that He is.)

True faith that pleases God is founded on His Word.

Therefore, we believe that God is, because God has spoken; we approach Him in faith to worship Him because He has revealed Himself to us in His inspired, Inerrant and Infallible Word.

This means that the faith or belief in God's existence of which **Hebrews 11:6** speaks, is born of and rests upon God's revelation of Himself.

Then that leads to the second thought:

II SECOND, THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IS RATIONALISED

Having the laid the foundation that God is real, and that He states so in His word,

there are certain statements or arguments regarding the existence of God, that come with a rational approach, that is using common sense, to declare or agree with what God says in His word.

Out of ten statements for God's existence there is only one I will mention, the **Cosmological approach.**

As good as these 10 statements are they do not produce faith in the heart of any sinner. **Ephesians 2:8-9** teaches that **Faith is**

the gift of God, and Paul also taught in **Romans 10:17** **that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.**

We can have all the arguments but unless God works by His Spirit in the hearts of sinners, applying the saving work of Jesus Christ, then sinners will remain lost, blinded by sin, and not see the creator and redeemer of men.

We can sum them up in two phrases which mean teach the same truth. **Every design must have a designer, and every designer has a design.**

In other words, **every builder has a building, or every building is made by a builder.**

The Cosmological Argument.

In NT Greek, the word for '**world**' is *kosmos*, this gives the term '**cosmo-logical**'. As the word suggests this argument is taken from the existence of the world and even the universe.

The argument is taken from **effect to cause**. **What does that mean?** well that's why we changed the words, **design and designer, or building and builder.**

The **effect** refers to the **design**, **what is created**, whereas the **cause** refers to the designer **who created it, a creator**

So what we have is **the effect, deign, building** and **then the cause, designer or builder.**

This argument is found in **Hebrews 3:4**, "**For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.**"

In this verse the Apostle employs this particular argument, he refers to a house built by someone.

Paul is showing the house didn't come into existence by itself. Rather as Paul states someone built that house, then the house has a builder.

What is the effect the design, what is built or created – a house.

What is the cause- a designer, a creator, a builder, some man.

You can follow this through with any effect, like a ship, airplane, a watch, they all have a cause a builder, a maker, designer.

Here is the point by employing this line of reasoning. Paul then states his conclusion “but he that built all things is God.”

God is the builder of all things. The Cosmos, the world, this universe is the effect, the design, what is built what is created.

Then it's cause – who created the world It was God. Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

The world did not come into existence by itself, or by a big bang or a progress through millions of years.

It saddens me to hear of the light show at the Tower of London, hosted by about us- they are giving a history of humanity, this world “all the way from the Big Bang to present day”, covering 14 billion years.

Answering questions such as Where did we come from.

Human beings did not evolve from animals or anything else over a period of time. but he that built all things is God.” You have a designer who is God.

(He that created all things is God. Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Neh9:6 “Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.”)

Therefore, we believe that God exists, but God does not need anything or anyone for Him to exist. He is self-existence and self-sufficient. He is the source of all life. He depends upon none of His creation, rather, His creation depends upon Him.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:16-17** “**For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and by-(in) Him all things consist.**”

The word **consist**, means **to hang together in organised dependence**. That is a striking statement, that which He created, hangs together **by or in Him**. That means this world is not out of control or disorganised. But His creation depends upon Him.

(God teaches in **Hebrews 1:3** He sustains His creation, **upholding all things by the word of His power** “. The word **upholding** signifies **to carry along**. The same word is used, in **Acts 27:15** describe a ship being carried along, or **driven along** by the wind.

Also, in **2 Peter 1:21** in the writing of the scriptures, “**holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost**. The word **moved** is **uphold, or carried along**.)

In His own universe, God is in control, when you have that high thought of God, then you will not be carried away with false groups, new organisations, who drive people into panic mode that this world depends upon man.

Rather **in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth**.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IS REAL AND RATIONALISED

III THIRD, THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IS REFUSED.

Genesis 1:1 “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*”

In the first part of **Psalm 14:1** we read “*the fool hath said in his heart there is no God.*” The word **fool** in this verse does not refer to person with an intellectual disability.

Rather the word **fool** means **one who is depraved.**

The same word is employed in **Isa 32:6** as the word **vile** “*for the vile (foolish) person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD...*”

Therefore, the fool who “*said in his heart there is no God*” *is not someone who cannot grasp the existence of God, he is one who refuses the existence of God.* He refuses God as His Creator. He refuses the reality of God around him.

Furthermore, from these words in **Ps 14** it is clear to see, the fool or foolish person, does not want God.

If you read again **verse 1**, you will see the words **there is, are in Italics**, this means these words are not in the original Hebrew, and that is why the translators make the distinction, putting them in Italics.

The translators have put them in to help with the flow of the reading, or you can leave them out to have the truest sense of their meaning.

Notice, the reading without the words in italics, ***the fool hath said in his heart no God.***” In other words, he had said **no God for me.** I do not want God.

Please notice again, the fool is saying no God, in his heart, not with his head.

Man's refusal of God is a heart problem. His heart as **Jeremiah 17:9** states is "**deceitful above all things are desperately wicked...**".

Such wickedness is displayed by how the fool speaks about God. a few years ago, the BBC news reported a statement of some TV awards, where a female actress, said "**I like to thank God whoever she is...**" then the actress paused, to let it sink it and get a reaction.

Paul said 2 cor 4:4 "**...the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**

The reason why fallen men and woman refuse the existence of God, because they want to be in control of their own destiny, be accountable only to self.

As **Judges 22:25** states "**every man did that which was right in his own eyes.**"

(Whether a person acknowledges God or refuses God, it does not take away the scriptural truth, that as God's creation we are accountable to God. **Hebrews 9:27** "**And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.**"

Rom 2:12, 16, "**...as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law...in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.**")

The only approach to answer men is the **Christological approach**.

God has revealed Himself to fallen man in Christ. We preach Christ crucified. Christ teaches that man is a lost sinner, morally

accountable to God. His guilt is real and deserving of punishment.

At death, the justice of God will visit the ungodly with an everlasting sentence of torments, in eternal hell, but God in grace and mercy has provided an eternal plan for the redemption of sinners.

All who put their faith alone in the Righteous person and Redeeming work of Jesus Christ will be saved from wrath to come.