

W.E.C. 11 - A Basic Introduction to the Aseity of God

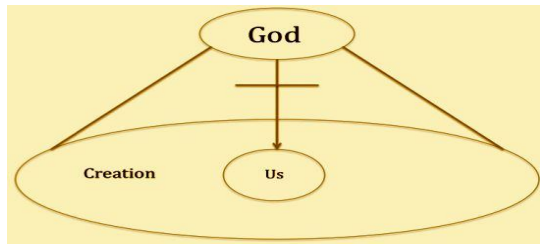
Before we start – we must **ALWAYS** keep this in mind:

- Who God is in His nature will never be fully understood by His creatures (us)
 - Even when we are in heaven
 - Because He is infinite and we are and always will be finite
 - We do not have the ability of comprehending God in His infinity
- We must be fearlessly anthropomorphic when we read the Bible
 - Meaning - we read, believe, approach, understand, pray, communicate, memorize, think, meditate, trust, and comprehend God just like He tells us in Scripture
 - God uses terms to describe Himself that we can understand
 - Calvin refers to this as “baby talk”
 - Otherwise, we, being finite, would never be able to understand an infinite God
- This subject causes frustration and may cause people to step away from Scripture
 - Because God is not who they thought He was from Scripture
- Again – we must be fearlessly anthropomorphic when reading the Bible
 - Because this is how God has revealed Himself to us

Aseity of God (“a se” / “auto theos”)

- **Exodus 3:1-2** - *Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.*
 - What in this account highlights the aseity of God, and why?
- The term **aseity** comes from the Latin phrase *a se*, meaning “from or by oneself.”
- God has no needs at all
 - **Acts 17:24-25** - ²⁴ *The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything*
- God’s attributes are not abstract qualities
 - God’s attributes and His character are not separate like they are with us
 - They are identical to God himself
- God’s infinity, eternality, and unchangeability are as much God as His wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness
 - These are not separate parts of God in which He switches back and forth
 - What God is and what He does are the same
- God is not like human beings:
 - Essence – what we are by nature
 - Existence – that we are/exist - what we do
- His attributes are not dependent upon His essence
- God simply is that act of existence by which He is

The Creature Creator Distinction



Us As Image Bearers of God

- Analogical – similar, not identical to (in a reflective sense) – not measured by human standards at all
- Univocal – the same (a chain) – if so, we would be identical to God, just lessor
- Most Absolute - God alone is the sufficient reason for his own existence, essence, and attributes. He does not possess his perfections by relation to anything or anyone other than himself.

Archetype vs Ectype

- Archetypal theology - is that which exists in the mind of God; it is necessarily hidden from and incommunicable to us creatures just as God's immensity or holiness, as it exists in God, is incommunicable to us
- Ectypal theology - is the accommodated theology, what we have in Scripture
- We as creatures have no comprehension of archetype theology.
 - We only know it exists

What does it mean that God is immutable?

- Pure actuality – what actually exists (infinite in all things – 100% God at all times)
- Potentiality – possibility / contingency (greater or lesser in all things)
- Can there ever be a time where God is in transit?
- **Malachi 3:6** - *For I the Lord do not change*

Lordship / Sovereignty

- The difference between being purely sovereign and mostly sovereign is?
- How does this affect how God governs the universe?
- How do things come into existence?
- Is God ever passive?
- How, exactly, does God see the future?
 - Does He foresee what people will do, then respond?
 - Does He not know what people will do until they do it?

Salvation

- How are people saved?
- By foresight – foreseen faith / libertarian free-will?
- This is the underlying reason why many scholars reject this doctrine
 - Arminian / Molinism / Open Theists

Human Action

- If God is sovereign over all – how can humanity make free choices?
- Divine vs human causality
- Compatibility
- Decree vs Desire

Why Pray?

- The Free Will objection to Calvinism and prayer:
 - If God has already determined the future with no risk involved
 - If a person cannot do anything other than what God has already decreed
 - Why pray?
- The Open Theist objection to Calvinism and prayer:
 - If God already foresees what we are all going to do
 - It has to go the way God foresees – its already locked into place
 - Why pray?
- The Reformed objection to Free Will and Open Theism:
 - If God cannot violate a person's free will
 - If God does not know the future for certain
 - Why pray?