**Explore - 1**

May the people raise you, O God. Then the earth will yield its harvests.

* 1. Does God Exist?

An atheist said, "INothing happened. "You see, there is not God." Another responded, "You've only proved that He is a gracious God."

* + - 1. Where to Begin

Sounds **disrespectful**

– he not it

Many believe God is an ‘it’

Break for Question:

How would you describe God?

What is He like to you?

Philosophers:

Great Intelligence, Self-Conscious One, Infinite Spiritual Essence

, Supreme Being, Creator

Modern day superheroes – Batman, Spiderman, Avengers, Iron Man, Aqua Man

While paying them in cinema – they laughing way to bank – never shed blood for us

**Who** or **what** is God?

Job 11:7

“Can you solve the mysteries of God? Can you discover everything about the Almighty? *NLT*

Can we **define** God – way we do you do in

– in science

Water – H20 – 2 hydrogen 1 oxygen atom

Yes and no

A **strict** definition of God is impossible – he is **infinite** – we finite

Without **limit** – **measureless**

Bottomless pit – can't reach bottom

Mathematics – can you

**Can you define** - 10 divided by 3

3.3333333333

**We cannot define God without His revelation.**

A **definition** of God in strict sense of the term is impossible. All attempts to define Him result, therefore, simply in descriptions of Him. These descriptions can never be **complete**, since God is **infinite**.

*Joseph Stump, The Christian Faith, A System of Christian Dogmatics*

We can know God only to the extent to which He has revealed Himself to us. The Scriptures declare that “He dwelleth in the light which no man approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see.”

God has revealed Himself to men in two ways:

natural revelation, on the one hand, through conscience and nature;

What we know is right and wrong even without being told for example, killing or lying or stealing

supernatural revelation on the other, through His dealings with men in history.

When He speaks as in Amos 3:7, it is to reveal.

Rom 1:19-20

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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.

This tells them that there is a Creator and Designer who has fashioned the world with wondrous power and wisdom. But He also speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures.

The Christian conception of God is theistic.

God is a person, who is at once transcendent and immanent. He is transcendent over the world, not included in it nor identical with it, and is its Creator and Ruler. On the other hand, He is also immanent in the world; His are the living power and will that uphold and energize it every moment of its existence. For “in Him we live and move and have our being.”

* + - 1. Other Opinions Of God

**Pantheism** denies personality of God, and identifies Him and the world. By identifying God and the world, it not only takes away personality from God but also from man, and with it takes away from man all moral responsibility and all possibility of true ethical development.

**Deism** conceives of God as a person, but as one who has made the world, and then has retired to look on while it runs its course.

**Agnosticism** conceives of the world as matter, motion and force. What the power back of these is, if any, it professes not to be able to know.

**Atheism** denies the existence of any God at all. Materialism is that form of atheism which claims that matter is all that there is; that there is no such thing as spirit; and that what we conceive of as evidences of spirit are only the results of the functioning of matter.

* + - 1. Proofs of God’s Existence
         1. Looking at His work – *Cosmological* Evidence

Theologians – way of

Making simple thing difficult

Cosmos **: World, orderliness, design.**

Psa 19:1

​The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Psa 19:1

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. NIV

From his creation we know – **glory** – weightiness of God

by the things he made – amazing designs

**Sun** just average star in our solar system but the universe is still expanding

Break for Question:

What other examples can you give of the complexities of creation?

Birds – counted 18,000

Who could have created a pump the size of a fist, that circulates blood 600 times a day throughout the body. In a span of 50 years, blood circulates the body 2,000,000,000 times and this without a single second of interruption.

Who could have created the DNA which can store so much information like a modern microchip computer the size of a huge shopping mall?

Yet some believe the universe came into being with a **Big Bang** boom sudden complexities of life.

The Cosmological Proof concludes that the world which exists must have a First Cause back of all the secondary causes seen to be operative in nature. Arguing from the consciousness that we as self-determining beings are real causes, the inference is that the first or real cause behind the world is a Person. Since the world presumably is a finite entity, however, the cosmological argument cannot prove that God is infinite, but only that He is inconceivably great and powerful.

Joseph Stump

Break for Question:

Which takes more faith: to be an Atheist or a believer?

* + - * 1. Looking at our heart – *Ontological* Evidence

Ontology  A study of our “**being”** – heart.

Rom 2:14-15

Even Gentiles, who do not have God’s written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. 15 They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.

Deep inside – we have a conscience – we feel **accountable** to higher being. We do something wrong - **heavy** in our conscience - no peace

Every where you go - some **form** of religious beliefs

The Ontological Proof suggests that a finite being conceives of an infinite being, and cannot think without positing God along with self and the world, certainly constitutes a strong probability that God exists.

The Teleological Proof argues from the evidences of design and purpose in nature. Everywhere in the world there is evidence not only of the adaptation of means to ends, but of the coordination of means to remote ends. A purpose is seen in the arrangement and functioning of the world, and this purpose cannot be ascribed to a blind process of nature, but must be ascribed to a Person.

Joseph Stump

* + - * 1. Looking at His Hand - *Historical* Evidence

God’s hand is clearly in history: History is *His* Story.

See his hand God protected **Abraham** – despite his imperfection

See how God provide – feed world – delivered them - **Joseph**

God **build** his church in a time of uncertainty and great heavy persecution

Matt 16:18

20 years - after the Resurrection - 150,000 believers

First 300 years - to be Christian – meant

– **head** may cut – put in **boiling** oil – torn **apart** by beasts in the Coliseum - **crucified**

Today – **2.5 billion**

– more than **population** of - more **language**

**China**, **EU, US** combined

– the church speaks more **languages** than UN – in more **countries** than the UN

The Historical Proof draws the conclusion from the history of the world and particularly of man, that there is a Governor and Ruler who, without interfering with men’s freedom as persons, is guiding the affairs of the world to an end which He has foreseen and foredetermined.

Joseph Stump

* + - * 1. Looking at His Word – *Bibliological* evidence

Bibliological: A scientific study of biblical literature.

The 66 books of the Bible were written by over 40 people from different backgrounds over a period of 1500 years, but there is a common subject in all the books. They all speak of Jesus Christ. Such a unity shows there is a divine hand guiding the various authors.

Break for Question:

Search how many New Testament manuscripts exists today. What is the time difference between the original and the copies?

Compare it to the works of Caesar, Aristotle and other ancient writers.

Finally, the Bible is not a **textbook** or a book of abstract **philosophy**. And there is a thread of unity in the Bible.

* + - * 1. Looking at His Person – *Christological* evidence

John 1:18 …

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, the only begotten Son, who is at the Father's side, has **made** **him** **known**. *NIV*

Only begotten  mono-genes: one and only, one of its kind, unique – genes, nature, character, lineage, stock, order (English ‘genes’).

John 1:18

18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. NKJV

**The unique** person in history who carries the very **unique** genes of God!

**Live** among us – not watch

**Accounts** of Jesus – written by his disciples – **Gospels**

Old English – **good news**

Jesus Christ is **unique**.

He was **born** through supernatural circumstances.

He is unique in the supernatural **miracles** that He performed, including raising even the dead.

He is unique in His life-changing **messages**.

He is the only One in the world who actually **predicted** His own death together with the reason why and how He would be resurrected.

His **birth** was predicted (*prophesied*) hundreds of years *before* He was born by at least **300** prophecies in the Old Testament over a period of **1500** years by different people from different places, stating **how**, **where**, **when** He would be **born**, **die**, **buried** and **raised** again.

All the armies that ever marched, all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not **impacted** the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as that one man

– JESUS, in **just** three years of public ministry.

20 centuries – come and gone – he still **center** of human history

H**istory** divided BC or AD

**Anno Domini** – in the year of the Lord

Today – CE – Common era

Or **BCE**

No matter what you label it still point back to Christ

He came to reveal God’s glory

**First** miracle:

John 2:10

…and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." 11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. **He thus revealed his glory.** NIV

Break for Question:

Why do you think the Bible writes here, “He thus revealed His glory” after Jesus turned water into wine?

* + - 1. How is Christianity different?

The doctrine of the Trinity distinguishes the Christian religion from all others. The natural religions do not have it.

God is Three in one

The Bible plainly teaches that God is one; but at the same time it ascribes deity to three, namely, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. This doctrine is a mystery which the Scriptures reveal, but which they do not attempt to explain. But while the doctrine contains a mystery, it does not contain a contradiction; for truth cannot contradict itself. God is one and three; but He is not three in the same sense in which He is one. If He were said to be both one and three in the same sense, there would be a contradiction.

It is to be noted that the word “person” when employed by the Church to designate the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost is not used in the modern psychological sense in which it means as individual being possessed of self-consciousness and self-determination. In this sense God is only one person, and is the Absolute and Perfect Personality.

Joseph Stump

God is one God, not three Gods. There is but one divine essence, and this is common to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Each possesses exactly the same essence and the entire essence of the deity.

Christianity affirms in the deity of Jesus Christ that He is fully God and fully man.

This must be made clear: If He is not, He cannot die for the sins of all.

Practical Application:

God the Father sent His Son into the world to save us; God the Son became incarnate and redeemed us; and God the Holy Ghost applies the redemption of Christ to our souls.