

# Behold Your God, Part 1: The God Who Exists



# C.S Lewis: From Atheist to Christian Apologist

- November 29, 1898—November 22, 1963
- Trained under William Kirkpatrick, atheist mentor
- Became an atheist
- Lecturer at Magdalen College, Oxford





# C.S Lewis: From Atheist to Christian Apologist

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- “You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen [College, Oxford], night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.”

--C.S. Lewis



# Behold Your God!

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- **Isaiah 40:9:** “Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”



# INTRODUCTION

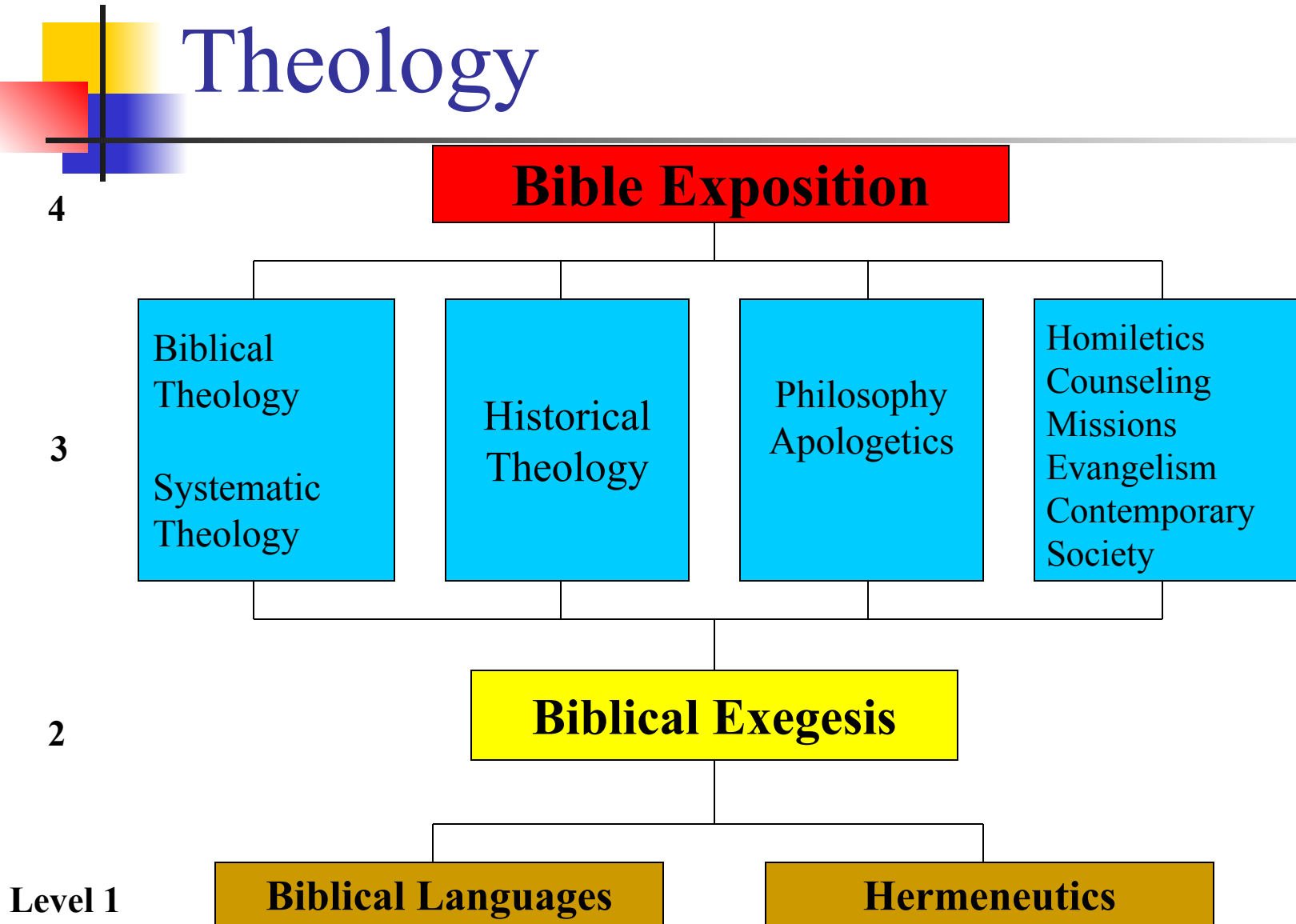
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- **Definition of Systematic Theology:**

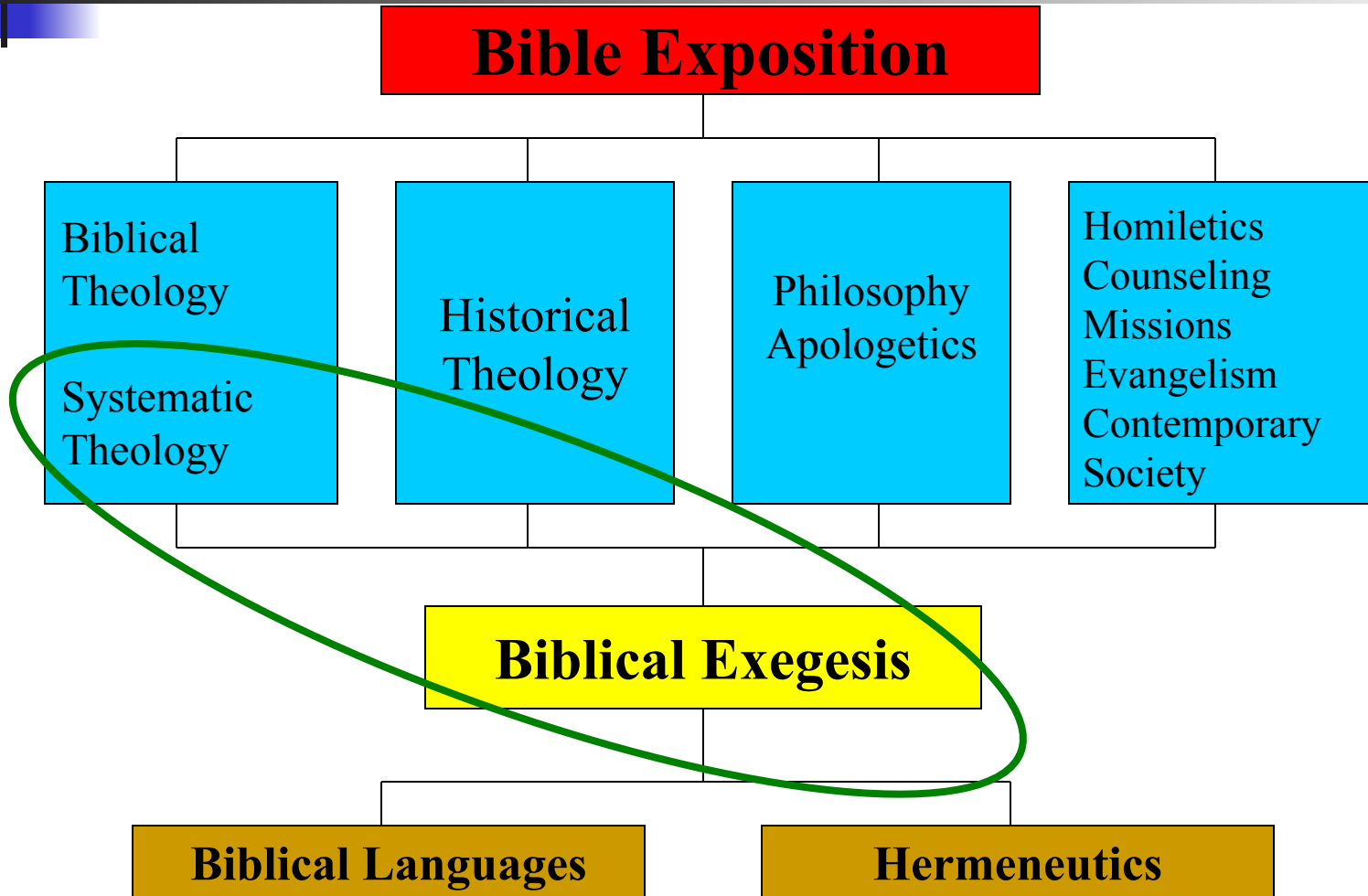
“Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today?’ about any given topic.”

--John Frame

# The Place of Systematic Theology



# The Place of Systematic Theology



# DISCIPLINES OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

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- Major Topics/Disciplines of Systematic Theology:



Theology Proper—the study of God

- Christology—the study of Christ
- pneumatology—the study of the Holy Spirit
- Bibliology—the study of the Bible
- anthropology—the study of man
- hamartiology—the study of sin
- soteriology—the study of salvation
- ecclesiology—the study of the church
- eschatology—the study of future things





# The Existence of God

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- **Psalm 14:1:** “The fool says in his heart there is no god.”



# The Existence of God

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graph TD; A[The Existence of God] --> B[Theistic Proofs]; A --> C[General Revelation]; A --> D[Special Revelation];
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## The Existence of God

Theistic Proofs

General Revelation

Special Revelation



# The Existence of God

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## The Existence of God

Theistic Proofs

General Revelation

Special Revelation

1. Ontology
2. Cosmology
3. Teleology
4. Morality

# The Existence of God: Theistic Proofs



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- **Ontological Argument (Anselm)**
  - We have an idea of the Most Perfect Being
  - Existence is necessary for perfection
  - Therefore, the Most Perfect Being exists

# The Existence of God: Theistic Proofs



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- **Ontological Argument**
  - Premise 1: God has all perfections
  - Premise 2: Existence is a perfection
  - Conclusion: Therefore, God exists
  
- Guzman writes: “Where did you get your idea of a perfect being if you’re so sure no such thing exists?”

# The Existence of God: Theistic Proofs



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- **Cosmological Argument** (Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas)
  - Every effect must have a cause
  - Every motion must have a mover
  - The first mover and the original cause is God

# The Existence of God: Theistic Proofs



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- **The Teleological Argument** (Plato, Newton)
  - Telos means “end, purpose, goal”
  - Design implies a designer
  - This bases its argument on Intelligent Design in the Natural World

# The Existence of God: Theistic Proofs



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- **Moral Argument** (C.S. Lewis)
  - Humanity obeys a universal moral law
  - The universal law-giver is God
  - Romans 2:14-15



# The Existence of God: Theistic Proofs



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- Moral Argument:

- “It seems, then, we are forced to believe in a real Right and Wrong. Human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it...Consequently, this Rule of Right and Wrong, or Law of Human nature, or whatever you call it, must somehow or other be a real thing—a thing that is really there, not made up by ourselves—a real law, which none of us made, but which we find pressing upon us.”

--C.S. Lewis

# The Existence of God: Theistic Proofs



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- Positive for Theistic Proofs
  - We walk by a reasonable, logical faith
- Negative for Theistic Proofs
  - We must remember unbelief is a primarily spiritual issue



# The Existence of God

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## The Existence of God

Theistic Proofs

General Revelation

Special Revelation

1. Ontology
2. Cosmology
3. Teleology
4. Morality



# The Concept of Revelation

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- In 1961, Yuri Gagarin: “my atheism has been confirmed, I went up in space and looked around and I don't see any God up there.”



# The Concept of Revelation

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- **C.S. Lewis:** “Our relationship to God...is more like Shakespeare’s relationship to Hamlet. How much will Hamlet know about Shakespeare? Only what Shakespeare writes about himself into the play. Hamlet will never be able to find out anything about his author any other way. In the same way...we can’t find God just by going to higher altitudes. We’ll only know about God if God has written something about himself into our life, into our world. And he has.”



# The Existence of God

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## The Existence of God

Theistic Proofs

General Revelation

Special Revelation

1. Ontology
2. Cosmology
3. Teleology
4. Morality



# The Existence of God: General Revelation

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“General revelation is exactly that—general. It is general in its scope, that is, it reaches to all people. It is general in geography, that is, it encompasses the entire globe. It is general in its methodology, that is, it employs universal means like the heat of the sun and the human conscience.”

--C.C. Ryrie



# The Existence of God: General Revelation

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- **Innate Knowledge: Humanity's Inner Sense of God**
  - **Jonathan Edwards:** “A kind of intuitive knowledge of divinity...not that there is no argument or deduction at all, but it is without any long chain of arguments. The argument is but one, and the evidence direct.”





# The Existence of God: General Revelation

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- **Innate Knowledge: Humanity's Inner Sense of God**
  - **Romans 1:18-19:** “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them...For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks”



# The Existence of God: General Revelation

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- **History**

- **Job 12:23:** “He makes nations great, then destroys them; He enlarges nations, then leads them away.”

# The Existence of God: General Revelation



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## ■ Nature

- **Acts 14:17:** “and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons”
- **Romans 1:20:** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
- Nature: Enough to condemn, but not enough to save!



# The Existence of God

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## The Existence of God

### Theistic Proofs

1. Ontology
2. Cosmology
3. Teleology
4. Morality

### General Revelation

1. Humanity's Inner Sense
2. History
3. Nature

### Special Revelation



# The Existence of God: Special/Particular Revelation

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- **Millard Erickson:** “By special revelation we mean God’s manifestation of Himself to particular persons at definite times and places, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him.”



# The Existence of God: Special/Particular Revelation

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- **Hebrews 1:1-2:** “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son.”



# The Existence of God: Special/Particular Revelation

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- Methods of God's Special Revelation
  - Visions (Ezekiel 1)
  - Dreams (Genesis 31:11)
  - Written (10 commandments)
  - Theophanies (Exodus 3)
  - Christophanies (“the Angel of the Lord”)
  - Jesus Christ Incarnate (John 1:14)
  - The Bible (Genesis 1:1, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4)



# The Existence of God

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## The Existence of God

### Theistic Proofs

1. Ontology
2. Cosmology
3. Teleology
4. Morality

### General Revelation

1. Humanity's Inner Sense
2. History
3. Nature

### Special Revelation

1. Divine Revelation
2. Theophanies/  
Christophanies
3. Incarnation
4. The Bible





# Implications of the Existence of God

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- The Moral Implication
  - **Psalm 14:1:** “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.”
  - Mankind wants to deny any moral responsibility to God

# Implications of the Existence of God



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- **The Moral Implication**
- **Thomas Nagle, an agnostic:** “I am talking instead of something much deeper--namely the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself. I want atheism to be true. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and naturally hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that. My guess is that this cosmic authority problem is not a rare condition...I am curious whether there is anyone who can genuinely be indifferent to whether there is a God.”



# Implications of the Existence of God

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- The Existential Implication
  - If life is based on an accident, there is no purpose or meaning
  - If life is based on a Creator, life does have purpose and meaning



# Implications of the Existence of God

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- **The Existential Implication**
- **C.S. Lewis** in “Is Theology Poetry?” “If I swallow the scientific cosmology as a whole [that excludes a rational, personal God], then not only can I not fit in Christianity, but I cannot even fit in science. If minds are wholly dependent on brains, and brains on biochemistry, and biochemistry (in the long run) on the meaningless flux of the atoms, I cannot understand how the thought of those minds should have any more significance than the sound of the wind in the trees. And this is to me the final test.”

# Implications of the Existence of God

- **The Spiritual Implication:** If there is a God, there is Hope!
- **Karl Meninger:** a secular psychiatrist called for “A revival of the conscious sense of guilt and of repentance. “I am calling for a revival of the concept of sin. ‘And what would be the good of that?’ someone asks. Why not a “no-fault” theology ... no one to blame? Things just happen, alas?” “Here’s why. The assumption that there is sin in it somewhere implies both a possibility and an obligation for intervention. Hence sin is the only hopeful view. When evil appears around us and no one is responsible and no one is guilty ... then no moral questions are asked, and then there is, in short, nothing to do about it. So we sink to a despairing hopelessness. Therefore the consequences of my proposal for a revival of the consciousness of sin would not be more depression but less.”



# Implications of the Existence of God

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- If “things just happen, alas” then there is no chance for change
- But if there is sin, there is forgiveness, transformation, and hope
- **1 Corinthians 6:11:** “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”



# C.S Lewis: From Atheist to Christian Apologist

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- C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*: “When I began teaching for the English Faculty, I made two other friends, both Christians (these queer people seemed now to pop up on every side) who were later to give me much help in getting over the last stile. They were HVV Dyson and JRR Tolkien. Friendship with the latter marked the breakdown of...old prejudices.”



# C.S Lewis: From Atheist to Christian Apologist

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- September 19, 1931, the three friends went for a late night walk to talk about Jesus
- October 1, 1931, Lewis wrote: “I have just passed on from believing in God to definitely believing in Christ—in Christianity . . . [My] long night talk with Dyson and Tolkien had a good deal to do with it.”









