



ENGAGING THEOLOGY

SMALL GROUP RESOURCE PACK

[fusion]

 LOGOS
Institute for Analytic and
Exegetical Theology

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Theology is something many of us find intimidating; it is the job of the professional academic, or advanced minister, we might think. In reality, theology (literally: the study of God) is something everyone engages with at some level, and something anyone who seeks to live a life of faith must engage with.

University is a great time to explore the Christian faith. Engaging Theology provides an opportunity for students to grapple with some of the big questions theologians have been discussing for centuries relating to theology and faith. In engaging with theology, we are able to discover more of God, grow in confidence in our faith, and learn to better articulate this faith to those around us. For those who are new to thinking about faith, or who are exploring the Christian faith for the first time, engaging with theology is a great way of expanding and deepening this exploration.

This resource is intended to:

- Provide Christian students with an opportunity to reflect on and deepen their own faith, to grow in confidence discussing theological ideas and to provide them with tools to engage in future theological exploration.
- Encourage Christian students to make connections between mission and theology.
- Welcome those interested in the Christian faith to engage with theological concepts

Over the course of 7 videos, we discuss important theological concepts and questions with Theologians, Biblical Scholars and Philosophers. Each video is accompanied by a set of notes that

provide a guide for how to run the accompanying sessions. Each video is between 15-20 minutes long, and the sessions should last around 1 hour 30 mins - 2 hours (depending on how talkative your group is!). We've included some suggested timings to help you plan.

This resource has been created by Fusion together with the Logos Institute for Analytic and Exegetical Theology at the University of St. Andrews, with generous funding from the Templeton Religion Trust.

BEFORE YOU START, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Think about who to invite. The sessions are designed to be used with people from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs and we expect no prior knowledge of Christian theology to engage in the conversation.
- Because of the above point, it's important to be sensitive in leading the sessions and to be aware that people are coming from different perspectives. This means group leaders should encourage people to share openly, and to encourage an environment where ideas are engaged with respectfully rather than too quickly dismissed by others in the group.
- Group leaders should read over the session notes in advance, watch the videos, and make sure you have all the extra resources you might need. This will give you the chance to think through the session and adapt it for your own group.

To make the resource last 8 sessions, you might want to split session 1 in two to create a more chilled out intro session with more social time. For this intro session, watch Josh Cockayne's introductory video and give the group an opportunity to share their experience of theology so far, using the questions underneath. Your second session can then start with watching the video by Andrew Torrance.

If you're finding yourself short on time you may want to add an 8th (or 9th) session focussing on the Theology Questions, discussing what you've learned about engaging with theology and considering how you might continue to do so from this point on.

THINGS YOU'LL NEED TO RUN THE SESSIONS:

- Something to play the videos on. Think especially about sound - are your laptop speakers sufficient for everyone in the room to hear clearly?
- A copy of the notes (these also sometimes suggest further resources).
- Glossary of key words for anyone who is unsure about a technical term used in the videos (you'll find this at the bottom of the resource pack).
- Notebook and pens (it will help the discussion if you encourage people to take notes during the video).

LEADING THE SESSIONS

Each of the session notes contains the following sections (the order of these changes in each session):

- **Welcome:** A short activity or question intended to break the ice with everyone present and introduce the topic in a relaxed, informal way.
- **Word:** A look at a Bible passage or passages related to the session's theme.
- **Witness:** A chance to consider: How might engaging with theology change the way we relate to our world and/or community?
- **Worship:** A time to pause and look to God during the session; we've suggested activities which will help us to connect our worship to the particular theological topic being discussed.
- **Watch:** This is the point to turn on the video!
- **Discuss:** These questions are given as a guideline to help discussion - feel free to use all or few of these, or indeed create your own questions, as best suits your group. These questions are divided into Key Questions (questions you should try and get through in the session) and Further Questions (questions to discuss if you have time).
- **Theology Question:** Each session

has a question specifically asking how we engage with theology based on the discussion in the video. The point of this question is to help us think about what theological tools we're developing as we discuss specific theological ideas.

- **Want More?:** Here you'll find further reading recommended by each of the interviewees.

It's important to note that these sessions are starting points for discussing these topics, and not the final word.

Group leaders: Take time to think about the group dynamics and make sure the sessions don't just become discussion groups. Whilst it might be tempting to skip the worship, for example, to allow more time for discussion, all of the activities are important for helping those in your group to engage with the topic and in making the most of your small group time, and different approaches will engage each of us differently. If there are questions which need more time, then it might be a good idea to follow up discussions in another context.

You can read more about how to lead a small group well in Fusion's *Small Groups: Big Mission* handbook which is designed to help you run transformational small groups.

You can also find more theology resources on the Logos Institute website: <http://logos.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/> including a regular blog and podcast.

SESSION I: ENGAGING THEOLOGY

THEOLOGY QUESTION

As we saw in this week's video, theology is an ongoing task of engaging with God and one another. We are always looking to learn, and we're always expecting to be provoked with new questions. What did you learn from this week's video? What questions has it provoked?

LEADERS' NOTES

Group leaders, for this activity you will need: post-it-notes, pens, two walls/or large sheets of paper labelled 'You' and 'Your Community'

WANT MORE?:

Murray Rae, 2015. *Christian Theology: The Basics*, (Routledge).

Keith L. Johnson, 2016. *Theology as Discipleship*, (Inter Varsity Press).

WATCH:

Intro Video (Dr Joshua Cockayne)
[6 minutes]

WELCOME:

Opening discussion:
[15 minutes]

- What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word 'theology'? What experience (if any) have you had engaging with theology in the past? How did you find it?
- How did you relate to what Josh said about being forced to rethink the things you took for granted in moving away from home? What stories do you have of encountering people with different worldviews from your own?

WATCH:

'What is Theology?', with Dr. Andrew Torrance
[16 minutes]

DISCUSS:

[30-40 minutes]

Key Questions:

1. In a number of places Andrew talks about engaging with theology as a kind of wrestling (wrestling with questions as a student, wrestling in community, wrestling with people with different views). What do you think about 'wrestling' being an important part of engaging theology? Do you have any examples of this from your own experience? How do you feel about wrestling with theological views which are different from your own?
2. We are encouraged to look to prayer, Scripture, and the tradition of the Church to inform our theology. Up to this point, which of these has most impacted your own theology? Are there other places that you look to/have looked to to inform your theology?
3. Looking back at your discussions after Josh's intro video, what, if anything, has changed in your perception of theology?

Further Question:

Andrew says: 'Theology belongs to

the Church...'. What do you think about this? And what do you think the outworking of this might look like?

WITNESS:

[15 minutes]

Andrew speaks about curiosity being a natural response to engaging with theology. He also describes theology as the task of acting as a witness of God as he has revealed himself to us. As we engage theology we discover more about God and have more to share with the world.

Let's indulge our curiosity together for a moment...

INSTRUCTIONS:

Using the post-it-notes provided, take some time to think about the following questions:

4. What questions do you have about faith and theology?
5. What questions do you think your wider community (housemates, family, course mates) might have about faith and theology?

Stick the notes to the two points in the room, taking time to appreciate the questions in your group and in your wider community.

What do you notice about these questions? Are there any parallels? How might you explore your questions further and help your community to explore theirs?

WORSHIP & WORD:

[10 minutes]

As Andrew described, theology should be a response to the one who created us and the one to whom we belong.

Read the words of Psalm 139 together to end the session responding to God. You might want to use a suitable song to finish this reflection. (Suggested song: Kings Kaleidoscope- 139).

SESSION 2: INCARNATION

THEOLOGY QUESTION

In this video Oliver describes theology as: (i) asking fundamental questions of life, (ii) a meeting of the life of the mind and the life of faith, (iii) an exploration of the mystery of an infinite God from our finite perspective, and, (iv) an invitation to seek an understanding of faith. Which of these four do you find the most attractive as a description of theology and why?

LEADERS' NOTES

Group leaders, for this activity you will need: pens and paper, and a copy of the calendar resource at the end of this pack

WELCOME:

[5 minutes]

In today's session, we'll be focusing on the Incarnation. This doctrine seeks to describe God's becoming human in Jesus Christ. What comes to mind when you hear the 'Incarnation'? (There's no right or wrong answer to this question!)

WORD:

[20 minutes]

To get us thinking about the topic, let's begin by looking at what the Bible says about this.

Divide into 4 groups, taking one of the following passages each. Each group should ask what the passage tells us about the nature and purpose of the Incarnation:

1. John 1: 1-18
2. Philippians 2:1-11
3. Hebrews 4:14-16
4. Ephesians 2: 11-22

WATCH:

[18 minutes]

'Why did God become human?', Prof. Oliver Crisp

DISCUSS (INCLUDING WORD):

[30-40 minutes]

Key Questions:

1. Oliver describes how the Incarnation allows us to be more intimately united with God. In what ways do you think God becoming man helps to achieve this? (You might want to refer to some of the passages discussed earlier).
2. What are your instinctive reactions or questions to the idea that Jesus is fully human and fully divine? Do you think this is an idea we can make sense of? What did you think of Oliver's

analogy of the spaceman and the spacesuit?

3. Oliver says that 'In Christ we see the face of God'. What does Jesus show us about what God is like? In what ways is our understanding of God changed by engaging with Jesus?

Further Questions

What did you think of Oliver's claim that the Incarnation makes Christianity unique compared to other world religions?

How might engaging with God through Jesus change the way we live every day?

WORSHIP:

[10 minutes]

Oliver says:

"We need to stop, we need to slow down, we need pause and we need to take the core claims of the Christian faith slowly. ...If we take those claims seriously, then we can't any more think of God as a God hidden behind the cloud...Now we're dealing with a God who has reached out a hand of friendship...and reached out to embrace us and reached out to have relationship with us and to transform us. ...If we take those things seriously, it's got to make change to how we get up on a Monday morning, in how we face the week and how we face the everyday tasks we have to deal with. And if it doesn't, then it's probably because...we haven't encountered the God we find in Jesus Christ."

We're going to spend some time putting Oliver's advice into practice - slow down and pause over those profound truths. Take time to stop. You might like to read one of passages that was read earlier and allow yourself to be amazed at the scandal of these words, or you might prefer to write some simple words to remind yourself of the scandal that God has reached out to us in Jesus.

WITNESS:

[15 minutes]

We finish by thinking about how we might practically apply this act of worship in our lives.

1. Take time to look over your week. You might want to sketch out the plans that you have, the people that you will meet, and the things that you are concerned about.
2. Reflect on the words that we've heard today: God is the God who reaches out a hand a friendship and reaches out to embrace us.
3. Look back over these plans for the week. How does this impact your perspective on the week ahead? Try to think how each situation might be transformed by an awareness of what we have been reflecting on in this session.

WANT MORE?:

Athanasius, *On The Incarnation*
(widely available)

Donald McLeod, 1998. *The Person of Christ* (Inter Varsity Press).

Gerald O'Collins, 2009. *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus* (Oxford University Press).

SESSION 3: FORGIVENESS

LEADERS' NOTES

It's worth warning your group that this topic might bring up some personal issues, so it's important to encourage people to be particularly sensitive in this session

THEOLOGY QUESTION

Jonathan spoke about how encountering different ideas had impacted some of the perspectives he grew up taking for granted. Have any of your theological perspectives changed or been strengthened since coming to University?

WELCOME:

[10 minutes]

In this session, we'll be thinking about the nature of forgiveness. In many respects, this is not a topic unique to theology, and forgiveness narratives seem to grip popular culture. Begin by sharing the best example of forgiveness you've seen in a film, TV series or book.

WORSHIP:

[10 minutes]

Before getting into talking about the theology of forgiveness, it is good to acknowledge that there are times when we are all in need of forgiveness. So, let us begin by bringing to mind the things that we need to ask God for forgiveness for, with the assurance that he loves to forgive us. You might want to use the words below to confess together:

**All: Most merciful God,
we confess to you,
before the whole company of heaven
and one another,
that we have sinned in thought, word
and deed
and in what we have failed to do.
Forgive us our sins,
heal us by your Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ.
Amen.**

Leader: O God, make speed to save us.

All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

(from Daily Prayer, Night Prayer:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-daily-prayer>)

Watch:

'What is Forgiveness?' Dr. Jonathan Rutledge [15 minutes]

DISCUSS (INCLUDING WORD):

[30-40 minutes]

1. What do you think of the definition of forgiveness as, 'not counting someone's wrongdoing against them'?

2. Read the passages Jonathan referred to: 1 Corinthians 5: 1-5 and 2 Corinthians 2: 5-11. What do you think of this story? Are there other examples in which the most loving thing to do is not to forgive someone?

3. If God doesn't forgive everyone can he still be loving? Jonathan argues that God might choose not to forgive everyone and that this might sometimes be the most loving response. What do you think about this?

4. Jonathan spoke about how desperately God wants to forgive everyone. What are the ways that God seeks to make us aware of his forgiveness and love?

WITNESS:

[10 minutes]

Spend some time reflecting: Bring to mind someone who you find it difficult to love or might need to forgive. How has today's discussion impacted how you might relate to them this week? Is there a specific action you feel you should take in light of his? Make a note of this. You might like to finish by praying for one another, especially if this has brought up difficult issues.

WANT MORE?:

- Anthony Bash, 2015. *Forgiveness: A Theology*, (Cascade Books).
- Simon Wiesenthal, 1998. *Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (Reprint: Schocken Books)
- Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton. 1990. *Forgiveness and Mercy*, (Cambridge University Press).

SESSION 4: CREATION

THEOLOGY QUESTION

Joanna talked about how engaging with theology has increased her confidence in embracing uncertainty in answering theological questions. How have you found engaging with theological questions in these sessions so far?

LEADERS' NOTES

Group leaders, for this activity you will need: pens and paper

WELCOME:

[10 minutes]

In today's session, we're going to be discussing the importance of thinking about God as creator. To get us thinking, discuss the following question...

What is the best thing you've ever created from scratch?

WORSHIP:

[15 minutes]

This story comes from an international student worker from York:

"I met up for coffee with an international student who had never read the Bible before. When we started reading the opening of Genesis together, the student started to cry. She shared that she had never been told that she was a created person—this was a truly breath-taking revelation to her."

What difference do you think it makes to think of the universe and ourselves as created by God? Listen to a song together and take a few moments to remind yourself of this amazing truth. [suggested music Creation Song—Josh Garrels]

WATCH:

'The Theology of Creation' Dr. Joanna Leidenhag [16 minutes]

DISCUSS (INCLUDING WORD):

[30-40 minutes]

Key Questions:

1. If there are any science students in the room, encourage them to share what it means to them to be a Christian who cares about science. What can science and theology offer one another? And why do they so often seem to be in tension?
2. How does relating to God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit impact how we think about creation? What did you

make of Joanna's discussion of how reflecting on the persons of the Trinity changes our understanding of creation?

3. Read Psalm 8 together. How does this passage talk about how we should relate to creation and relate to God as creator? Joanna discussed two ways of thinking about our relationship to creation: as dominions/stewards of creation, and as worship leaders and friends of creation. What do you think about the difference of these two approaches and how are they reflected in this passage?

Further Question:

4. Joanna talks about how a concern for creation is something which the Church shares with wider society. Where do you see people who have a concern for creation in our society, and how could the Church be part of this conversation? How can you in your life connect with those who have this common concern for creation?

WITNESS:

[20 minutes]

Joanna talked about how our theology of creation shapes the way we relate to our world. Let's take some time to think about our own relationship to the world.

1. First, try to list all of the things you have consumed, disposed of, and used over the past week. Try to be as specific as possible.
2. How has what you believe about creation been reflected in your actions?
3. How might your theology inform your actions going forward? Try to pick a few concrete actions relating to the things you've listed.

WANT MORE?:

- David Ferguson, 2014. *Creation* (William B. Eerdmans).
- Simon Oliver, 2017. *Creation: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Bloomsbury).

SESSION 5: ATONEMENT

THEOLOGY QUESTION

What does it mean to allow Scripture to be the guiding voice in our theology? To what extent is the case for you?

LEADERS' NOTES

It is important to read through this reflection slowly, leaving periods of silence between each point to give people plenty of time to think and reflect.

WELCOME: [10 minutes]

We're more than half-way through the sessions so far. What has been the thing that has stood out to you most so far? And what is the burning question that keeps you up at night?

WITNESS: [10 minutes]

In this session, we are going to be focusing on the doctrine of the atonement, which focuses on Jesus' saving work. Let us begin by sharing some stories—our own, or of people we know - who have been saved by Jesus (whatever we understand this to mean)

WATCH: 'What is the Atonement?' Dr. David Moffitt [20 minutes]

DISCUSS (INCLUDING WORD): [30-40 minutes]

Key Questions:

1. What stood out to you from this video? What questions did it leave you with?
2. What did you think about David's argument that the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and ongoing intercession of Jesus are all important parts of his saving work?
3. Look at 1 John 1:7- 2:2. David suggested that this passage emphasises how God forgives us from sin through Jesus' death on the cross, but also how this is an ongoing work in which Jesus advocates for us today. What does it mean to be someone who is both forgiven and also continually in need of forgiveness? How does it make you feel to realise that Jesus continues to intercede for you?

Further Questions:

4. David described the work of Jesus as providing ransom, redemption,

forgiveness, purification, and reconciliation. Do you think any of these concepts are focused on more than others? How do you think this should be reflected in the worship of the Church?

5. David gave the example of how studying the accounts of sacrifice in Leviticus gave him a new appreciation for the richness of Jesus's sacrifice. Are there examples from your own life in which reading particular Scriptures has brought fresh amazement at who Jesus is?

WORSHIP: [10 minutes]

To conclude, we're going to use an examen reflection, an ancient discipline which helps us to focus on our past and look forward to our future, making ourselves aware of God's presence. This reflection will particularly focus on Jesus' atonement.

1. Begin by making yourself aware that God is present. God has been present and at work before we entered this room. Before we started this day, God was present.
2. Look back over your day. What happened? Where did you go? Who did you meet? What did you eat and drink? Take time to pay attention to each detail.
3. Try to recall how you felt at each moment. Were you frustrated? Happy? Sad? Emotional? What were the triggers for each of these emotions?
4. As we've been thinking about today, God's desire is to make us one in relationship with himself, but so often there are things that get in the way. Where in your day might you have got in the way of what God was doing in you? Where might you have missed an opportunity to look to God in prayer? What regrets do you have about today?
5. Look over each moment in your

day again once more, each event, each emotion, each time we stood in the way of God. But this time bring to mind that each moment, Jesus was at the moment praying and interceding for us. How does this change your perception of your day?

6. Finally, make yourself aware again that God is present here. God has been present and at work before we entered this room. Before we started this day, God was present. We come into God's presence with boldness and confidence because of what Jesus has done and continues to do for us. Receive the forgiveness that God offers to you in this place.

WANT MORE?:

Adam J. Johnson, 2015. *Atonement: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark).
Adam J. Johnson (ed.), 2017. *T&T Clark Companion to the Atonement* (T&T Clark).

SESSION 6: IMAGE OF GOD

THEOLOGY QUESTION

Christa talked about how theology doesn't make us experts in the divine, and that the more we learn, the more aware we are of how little we know. What do you think it looks like to be humble in engaging with theology?

LEADERS' NOTES

You may find it particularly helpful encouraging those in the group to make notes as you watch this week's video. There is a lot of great content which it will be helpful to keep track of for your discussions later.

LEADERS' NOTES WELCOME

Group leaders, for this activity you will need: pens and paper

LEADERS' NOTES WITNESS

Group leaders, for this activity you will need: a selection of newspapers and some highlighter pens

WELCOME: [10 minutes]

Write down the name of every person in the room on a piece of paper and randomly assign a name to each person in the room. Then get each person to secretly draw a picture of the person on the piece of paper, making sure not to write the name on the picture or include too many obvious give-aways. When you've all finished, place the pictures in the middle of the room and see if you can guess who's who.

WORD: [15 minutes]

It's often said that human beings are made in the image of God. This is a theme we find repeated throughout the Bible. Split into 3 groups, each taking the following sets of verses. Ask the questions: What do these verses tell us about being made in the image of God? Then feedback to the group:

1. Gen. 1:26-27; Gen 5-9
2. 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3
3. Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10

WATCH:

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? Dr. Christa McKirland [19 minutes]

DISCUSS: [30-40 minutes]

Key Questions:

1. What stood out to you from Christa's discussion of the Genesis passages? What questions do you have about this?
2. Christa picks up on the themes of temples, idols, and priests. Using the passages above, compare how these themes feature in the Old and New Testaments. What does this reveal about the image of God?
3. Christa talks about how the focus

shifts from human beings made in the image of God to Jesus who is the image of God. In what ways do you think this shift is significant?

Further Questions:

4. How does the theology of the image of God discussed in this video connect to the previous sessions we have considered (you might particularly want to think about connections with Incarnation, Creation and Atonement)?

WITNESS: [15 minutes]

Christa described how everyone has an untouchable value because they are each made in the image of God. Let us stop and think about how we see this in those around us.

Take a selection of newspapers and spend some time finding stories which you think reflect something of humanity as made in God's image.

WORSHIP: [15 minutes]

Christa encourages us that the presence of God through the Holy Spirit makes possible an intimate relationship with God today. She described this as providing a source of light and empowerment for our daily lives as we try to follow Jesus. Take some time praying for one another that we may be filled with the Spirit and empowered to follow Jesus in the week following. You may want to do this in smaller groups if your group is fairly large.

WANT MORE?:

- Marc Cortez, 2018. ReSourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in the Light of Christ (Zondervan)
- John F. Kilner, 2015. Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God (Wm. B Eerdmans)

SESSION 7: GOD AND MORALITY

THEOLOGY QUESTION

Stephen refers to Nietzsche in saying that every philosophy is a kind of involuntary biography. Stephen suggests that we bring to philosophy a lot of convictions and presuppositions, is the same true for theology? Can you think of any examples in which the way you've engaged with theology in this series (or elsewhere) has revealed something about what you care about?

WELCOME:

[10 minutes]

Today we're going to be thinking about the relationship between God and morality. For those who have studied philosophy, you will know that a much discussed problem in moral philosophy is the trolley problem. A good (but not for the faint-hearted) illustration can be found from the Netflix series the Good Place (the clip is available here/ or just search 'trolley problem good place': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDnO4nDA3kM>)

Here's the explanation for those who don't have the video: Your trolley is moving towards five people who will be killed if you keep moving, but if you press the lever to switch the track, the trolley would hit and kill 1 person.

What would you do?

WATCH:

'What difference does God make to morality?' Prof. C. Stephen Evans [18 minutes]

DISCUSS:

[30-40 minutes]

Key Questions:

1. Is Stephen right that all thinking people should care about ethics? How much thought have you given to what is good/bad and what we should/shouldn't do? And why?
2. The interview discussion started with Dostoyevsky's quotation: 'If God is dead, then everything is permitted.' What do you think about this claim? What do you think about Stephen's idea that moral obligations have to come from a higher being rather than from society or from ourselves?
3. What do you think about Stephen's idea that all people have a conscience which provides some awareness of God's voice?
4. Do you think our culture thinks of obligations in negative terms? What do you think about the idea that God's commands are a gift?

Further Questions:

5. Josh asked the question: Is Christianity more about obligations and rules or about values and virtues? What do you think?
6. Do you think there are good examples of acts which are always wrong to do (i.e. which we're obliged not to do)? If so, do you think God helps to make sense of these?
7. Can you think of an example in which a group of people found it hard to agree on an objective moral obligation? This might be as trivial as disagreement over when who might do the washing up in shared accommodation, or as serious as political disagreement.

WORD/WORSHIP:

[10 minutes]

Stephen argued that God knows what is good and that his law can guide us towards goodness, and also that he desires us to be transformed and that his law is a gift which can lead us to such transformation.

Read Psalm 19:7-14 together, taking time to reflect on this.

WITNESS:

[10 minutes]

Our perspective on this topic can influence how we share our faith with others. Spend some time discussing how the questions raised in this video might impact how we communicate about our faith to others

WATCH:

'Conclusion video'. Dr. Joshua Cockayne [1 minute]

WANT MORE?:

- C. Stephen Evans, 2014. God and Moral Obligation (Oxford University Press)
- David Baggett and Jerry Walls, 2016. God and Cosmos: Moral Truth and Human Meaning (Oxford University Press)
- David Baggett and Jerry Walls, 2011. Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality (Oxford University Press)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

As with all areas of study, engaging with theology will bring you into contact with a whole range of vocabulary, much of which you may not be familiar with. This short glossary is compiled to help explain some of the words and phrases that come up in the Engaging Theology videos and notes that may be new or unfamiliar. It will be helpful to keep this to hand when watching and discussing the videos. It's good to encourage people to be honest if they don't understand a word or phrase as it's very likely that others in the group will be thinking just the same thing! Don't be afraid to google something if you're not sure!

Atonement: The work of Jesus in saving his people. The word comes from the English words, 'at-one-ment', i.e. to make one with.

Divine Command Theory: An ethical theory that claims what we ought to do/ought not to do depends on what God commands us to do/not to do.

Doctrine: A formulation or summary of a particular theological belief.

Ecology: The branch of biology which studies the relationship between organisms and their environment.

Ecumenical Creeds: The Creeds (summaries of Christian beliefs) agreed by the majority of mainstream Christian denominations. This usually includes the Nicene Creed and the Apostle's Creed.

Exegetical: The study of critical explanation or analysis, especially of a text.

Imago dei: The Latin term for 'the image of God'.

Incarnation: The doctrine which seeks to describe God's becoming human.

Metaphysical naturalism/materialism: The philosophical view that all which exists is natural elements of matter.

Monolithic/reductive ethical theory: An approach to moral philosophy which thinks we need only a single principle to understand morality. E.g. according to Utilitarianism (see below), we only need an understanding of why it is good to maximise everyone's well-being to understand how we should act. In session 7, Prof. Evans contrasts this approach with an approach to ethics which needs a theory of both goodness and obligation.

Repentance: Feeling remorse for or turning away from one's past wrongs.

Pentateuch: The first five books of the Old Testament.

Preposition: A preposition is a word such as after, in, to, on, and with. Prepositions are usually used in front of nouns or pronouns and they show the relationship between the noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence. In session 6 Dr. McKirland talks about the use of the preposition 'in' (the image of God) in reference to mankind in the Old Testament which was then missing in the New Testament's description of Jesus as being the image of God (no 'in').

Salvation: Literally: to be protected from harm. What this involves theologically is discussed in these videos, but usually involves the idea that human beings are protected from the harms of sin and death.

Schism: Division or disunion, especially into mutually opposed parties.

Trinity/triune: Christians believe in one God, who is three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

Universalism: The theological belief that all people will acquire salvation after death.

Utilitarianism: The ethical view that we ought to do what brings about the greatest well-being for the greatest number of persons.

Virtue Ethics: An ethical theory which focuses on the importance of a person's character rather than on the right/wrong of specific actions.

RESOURCES

MON

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