

**The Consequences of Ideas**  
**Lesson 8 The Early Philosophers**

T/F

Belief in the theory of evolution is compatible with a Christian world view

Today, belief in Pantheism is mostly limited to remote heathen tribes with no formal education

The philosophical principles underlying the arguments of the proponents of Global Warning are Pantheistic.

**I. The Limitations of Philosophy**

- a. Philosophy begins and ends with **questions**. It never gives definitive or final answers to the questions that are of the greatest importance.
- b. Philosophy makes certain assumptions and examines their implications, allowing one to see the **logical** implications of competing assumptions, as well as the interrelationships between those choices.
- c. Since the most interesting assumptions cannot be verified with certainty, neither by reason nor by observation, philosophy thus has inherent **fatal limitations**.
- d. It can allow one to examine the coherence of a set of beliefs, but it cannot prove or disprove the **truth value** of the foundational assumptions upon which belief systems rest.
- e. This in turn means that the final conclusions cannot be evaluated as true or false with certainty. Therefore, when one adopts a certain philosophical position, without proof of truth, such belief becomes a matter of **faith**.
- f. In spite of the fact that metaphysical and epistemological claims can never be settled with certainty, philosophy does have **utility** and persists as a rational human enterprise.
- g. One reason for its value is that philosophy provides the principles of logical argument. For example, the principle of **non-contradiction**.
- h. This principle says that it makes no sense to embrace **simultaneously** both a particular claim and the denial or negation of that claim.
- i. The bottom line is that philosophy cannot offer definitive and final answers to the questions that we most desire to answer. Human reason and the principle of non-contradiction can take one only so far, but **no further**.
- j. Another limitation is that Philosophy is constantly **changing**. This is seen in the very nature of the discipline where one philosopher proposes an idea (thesis) and the next philosopher critiques it with his own idea (antithesis).
- k. This in turn is most often followed by someone else who finds a logical way to bridge the gap between the thesis and the antithesis and this becomes the synthesis. **Truth** does not change but philosophy does.

**II. The Early Philosophers**

Philosophical Idea	Biblical Refutation
<p>A. <b>Thales</b> thought that water was the essence behind all life.</p> <p>B. He taught that all living things are full of gods, meaning <i>theos</i> as an eternal <b>force</b> that transcends the body.</p>	<p>A. The Bible declares that God has <b>created</b> all life forms Acts 17:28 <i>In God we live and move and have our being.</i> Colossians 1:17 <i>By him all things consist.</i> They not only subsist in their beings, but consist in their order and dependences. He not only created them, but it is <i>by the word of his power</i> that they are still upheld. Heb 1:3. The whole creation is kept together by the power of the Son of God, and made to consist in its proper frame. By Christ it is preserved from disbanding and running into chaos.</p> <p>B. Further, God is more than a Creator, more than an eternal force; He possesses <b>moral attributes</b> and is personally involved in the lives of His created beings.</p>
<p>B. <b>Anaximander</b> taught that life evolved. Naturalistic evolution has clear consequences that Charles Darwin understood perfectly. If evolution is true then the following is also true.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) No gods worth having <b>exist</b>;</li> <li>2) no life <b>after</b> death exists;</li> <li>3) no ultimate foundation for <b>ethics</b> exists;</li> <li>4) no ultimate <b>purpose</b> in life exists; and</li> <li>5) human <b>free will</b> is nonexistent</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Ps 14:1</b> <i>The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. KJV</i></li> <li>2. <b>John 3:16</b> <i>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. KJV</i></li> <li>3. Christian ethics assumes, that the ideal of humanity has been revealed in Jesus Christ and that in Him also there is supplied a power by which man may become his true self. <b>Christ</b> is the ethical standard.</li> <li>4. Life's purpose is <i>growing up in all things unto Him who is the Head</i>. This is the <b>goal</b> and ideal purpose of all human faith and endeavor - <i>"till we all attain .... unto a fullgrown man, unto .... the fulness of Christ"</i> Eph 4:13.</li> <li>5. <b>Sin</b> is a product of the mind and the exercise of will. It is not determined by genetics and environment. It is the deliberate choice of self over preference to God.</li> </ol>

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<p>D. <b>Anaximenes</b> taught that air inside both human and animal bodies constitutes their souls. The Pythagoreans also thought this way.</p> <p>E. This is foundational to the philosophy of modern day animal rights groups. If animals have souls like men then it is conceivable that man is <b>no different</b> than the animals of creation and we share kinship.</p> <p>F. It is not much of a stretch from this thinking to the idea that animals are entitled to <b>legal</b> representation in civil cases for the prevention of cruelty in farming, meat industry practices and the elimination of hunting. Such an idea has been argued by current administration officials.</p>	<p>C. The position advocated by Anaximenes ideas are completely at odds with God's Word. First, man and animals do not share <b>kinship</b>—all the claims of evolutionists notwithstanding. Paul addressed this very point in 1 Corinthians 15:39 <i>"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes."</i></p> <p>D. Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:7,21-25 clearly states that man was a special creation with no phylogenetic relationship to any other creature—we are not physically <b>"interrelated"</b></p> <p>E. As Adam previewed the animals in the Garden for a mate and went about naming them (Genesis 2:18-20), it became clear that among all the animals that God had created, there was <b>none</b> that corresponded to him, hence he felt isolated and "alone" Gen 2:18</p> <p>F. Man as the highest order in creation is given <b>mastery</b>. Gen 1:26 <i>And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. KJV</i></p>
<p>G. The <b>Pythagorean</b> School is the source of the idea of Western pantheism. Pantheism is at the heart of the modern New Age philosophy.</p> <p>H. New Agers reason that since each of us is <b>god</b>, our innate human potential can solve world problems and holistic health can yield a higher degree of wellness than ever before.</p> <p>I. Because of the connection with the <b>divine</b>, New Agers promote human potential for stress reduction, increased productivity, and personal transformation at weekend seminars and in corporate executive suites.</p> <p>J. The various elements of a "New Medicine" that taps <b>inner</b> energy sources are taught in several leading nursing and medical schools. The claim is that these can achieve a level of healing unavailable through traditional medical care.</p> <p>K. Both soul (through the human potential movement) and body (through the holistic health movement) can achieve impressive new heights of wellness through the recognition of the <b>oneness</b> of all things.</p> <p>L. Clearly, the pantheistic world view lies behind many New Age claims. In addition, a deeper examination of the belief system behind the <b>global warming</b> issue reveals that it is merely an offshoot of pantheism, where environment is god.</p>	<p>G. It is evident that Paul disagrees at many points with pantheism in general and the Stoics in particular. In Acts 17:24 he affirms that <i>"God...made the world and all things in it."</i> Clearly Paul believes in an ontological <b>distinction</b> between God and the world, with the world being dependent on God for its existence.</p> <p>H. Paul proceeds in verses 24-25 to affirm that God is in need of <b>nothing</b> within the creation to sustain <i>His</i> existence.</p> <p>I. This affirmation simply could not have been made in Stoic philosophy; nor can it be consistently made in New Age philosophy today. If the world is of one essence with God, then by definition God is <b>not</b> independent or free of the world.</p> <p>J. Paul concludes by affirming in verses 30-31 that God now declares to all men that they should repent of idolatry because He has fixed a day in which He will <b>judge</b> the world in righteousness, through Jesus — whom He raised from the dead.</p> <p>K. Here we find that God is involved in a <b>sovereign</b> and <b>personal</b> manner with the world as its lawgiver and judge, and that He has intervened in human history <i>miraculously</i> to establish both salvation from, and judgment upon, human sin.</p> <p>L. <b>None</b> of these activities of God could be true within a pantheistic system, but all are perfectly consistent with the infinite, personal, holy God of Judeo-Christianity.</p>

**III. Application**

- a. Classical Philosophy is not principally about possessing wisdom, but about loving it and seeking it.
- b. On the other hand, Christian Philosophy leads not only to the pursuit of godly wisdom (seeing things from God's perspective) but ought also to the doing of the will of God.
- c. Just as many unregenerate persons seek wisdom as an intellectual pursuit, many Christians seek Biblical wisdom in the same way.
- d. To what extent are you involved in the study of the Bible as an intellectual pursuit rather than as a life changing activity?