



Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 4 – THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

LESSON 86 – DEFINING WORLDVIEWS: EASTERN PANTHEISTIC MONISM

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE – JOHN MACARTHUR, PGS. 399-451

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY – WAYNE GRUDEM, PGS. 439-528

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Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- ▶ Deism – Naturalism – Nihilism – Existentialism
- ▶ So the search continued, as men thought long and hard about the meaning of life! And since fallen man simply cannot see life from God's perspective, they turn inward for the answers. And in the 1960s this led the Existentialist to look East. There they found:
- ▶ Eastern Pantheistic Monism
- ▶ Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. – Romans 1:22-23

Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- ▶ First, they said that Western technology made possible modern warfare. And the Vietnam war they saw as the result of this Western reason and philosophy that had produced this kind of technology for warfare. And so they said, “Let’s abandon reason. Reason is responsible for all this. Western rationalism is the root cause of all the things that are wrong in this Western militaristic culture, as seen in the Vietnam conflict. And therefore, let’s abandon reason.”
- ▶ Secondly, they said, “Western economics have led to gross inequity and economic oppression of masses of people in the Third World. And since Western economics are based on Western philosophy and reason, let’s reject Western philosophy and reason, because it is that from which this system of gross, unfair, Western economics has developed.”

Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- ▶ Thirdly, they said, “Western religion has largely supported those who are in control of the culture, and control of the technology, and control of the economic system. So let’s get rid of Western religion, and let’s find something else.” And so they swing to Eastern thought.
- ▶ If reason demands an answer to the meaning of life then we must abandon reason. There was a move from the rational to the irrational. Rationality offers too many problems, you see. And the form of Eastern thought that best explains this ideological shift is called Eastern Pantheistic Monism.
- ▶ Pantheism is the belief that God is everywhere and in everything. Monism is the belief that this God who is everywhere and in everything is impersonal – He is not a He, but an it. Thus the soul of each and every human being is part of the soul of the cosmos.

Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- ▶ We have to give this some thought because to the Eastern mind the idea of God is completely impersonal – and that is hard for us to wrap our Western minds around. To the Eastern mindset then, God is the single complete component of reality. All that is is God and God is all that is!
- ▶ In this system of belief you are God. Your soul is part of the essence of this one reality and so you are part of the collective whole that is “God”. When you realize that you are in essence divine, this is to reach enlightenment. Ultimately all roads lead to this one divine reality.
- ▶ Since all roads lead to this one reality eventually everyone will end up in the same place, that is, being aware of this one reality and their part in it. There are no questions, no answers, no rational reality, no right or wrong, no meaning – there is just the “one” and our quest to become aware of our place in the universe.

Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- ▶ The point of meditation and other techniques used within this system are truly meant to lead us into nothingness.
- ▶ Meditation in the Bible is always focused on the content of the Bible and the Person of Christ. Eastern meditation is focused on being content-less.
- ▶ To truly be enlightened you must realize that there is no right or wrong, good or evil, you must be free from these restraints and free your mind.
- ▶ What about death? Well there is an answer for that too in this system. You see, since you are part of the impersonal singular reality that is all that is, then your personality, your individuality is actually just an illusion. It is not real or personal either. The goal is to see past the illusion to the deeper hidden reality.

Eastern Pantheistic Monism

- ▶ When you are completely empty of thought, knowledge, morals, self, identity, personality, and when you are free from the illusions of this world, then you transcend all – there is no time, no history, no reality apart from being one with everything.
- ▶ In fact, you know what the Eastern Pantheistic Molinist said when he ordered a sandwich for lunch? “Make me one with everything.”
- ▶ (sorry, couldn't resist).

A Biblical Response to EPM

- ▶ The Bible teaches us about a personal God who created all that is (Gen 1:1; Col 1:16), stands outside of time and space and even stretches the universe between His hands (Isaiah 57:15; Isaiah 40:22). He became involved with His creation to the point that He sent His Son to become a man, live a perfect and sinless life, die a criminal's death on the cross, bearing our sin and its penalty upon Himself, giving us His righteousness, all so that He could have a relationship with us, a relationship that had been destroyed by sin (Philippians 2:5-11).
- ▶ Knowing God is not a matter of becoming one with Him through thoughtless mind-numbing exercises in meditation. Knowing Him (faith) is based on embracing the truth of His Word.

A Biblical Response to EPM

- ▶ We must keep in mind as well that there are only two roads, one narrow, the other broad (Matt 7:13-14). Jesus tells us that the narrow way leads to life and the broad to destruction.
- ▶ We also know from Scripture that Jesus is the Only Way (John 14:6), the only name in all creation whereby we can be saved (Acts 4:12). There is no other way, and to take any other path is to be deceived into walking the broad road to hell.
- ▶ Self denial is not losing our self awareness (Luke 9:23). And Jesus forbids vain repetitions when we pray or meditate on the Word (Matt 6:7). All of these things are just completely contrary to the Word of God.

A Biblical Response to EPM

- ▶ Yoga
- ▶ Tai Chi
- ▶ Meditation (with repetition centered on one word or phrase)
- ▶ Astral Projection (out of body experiences)
- ▶ Channeling (speaking with the dead, “saints”, angels, or demons)
- ▶ Visualization
- ▶ Chanting a Mantra
- ▶ Meditative Trance States/Meditative Prayer
- ▶ Hypnotism

A Biblical Response to EPM

- ▶ God's ways are not ours (Isaiah 55:8-9).
- ▶ The wisdom of the world is foolishness to God (1 Cor 3:19).
- ▶ To befriend the world is to make ourselves an enemy of God (James 4:4).
- ▶ To be conformed to the world is sinful (Romans 12:2).
- ▶ Jesus said that He was satisfied and nourished by doing the work and will of God (John 4:34). We are to hunger and thirst after being right with God, then we will be satisfied (Matthew 5:6).

A Biblical Response to EPM

- ▶ The Word of God is useful for reproof and correction (2 Tim 3:16-17). We need to know if there any element of this philosophical worldview present in our life. This worldview has the foundation for the denial of the Word, the gospel, and the truth. Have we unknowingly dabbled in the occult, false religion, eastern thought, or New Age techniques? These things are rooted in a denial of Biblical truth.
- ▶ The glory of heaven will not be that we are all melded into one with an impersonal god. It will be that we will be free of sin, sorrow, and death and will live in a vibrant vital relationship with God forever. It is about the personal relationship we have with God through His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20).