

VIII. Ontology

What is ontology?

A. Definition: What it means for something to exist

B. We view the world through a material ontology.

1. Sun, Moon & Stars → we think: planets, orbits — what they are made of, how far away they are

2. universe is a smoothly running machine

3. obeying natural laws that we generally understand

C. We inherited this way of thinking from the Greeks

Alexander the Great led the Greeks into Persia

What happened in 334 B.C.?

Definition of Ontology — and what it means to have a material ontology

What did the Sun, Moon & Stars mean to ANE?

What ontology did ANE people have?

D. What about the Ancient Israelites?

When they looked at the Sun, Moon & Stars what did they think?

- before the Greeks
- didn't think of them as something that could be touched - or smashed

- TIME

SUN = days

MOON = months

STARS = seasons & years

Gen 1:14

- they weren't concerned with what the Sun, Moon & Stars were made of, but with what they do, and WHO makes them do it.

E. They had a Functional ontology

- Who is in charge?
- How does it work?
- order, organization & functions
- ANE things treated as non-existent:
 - deserts
 - oceans

- Pre-creation condition:

- NOT no materials
- BUT no functions

ANE Functional Ontology

F. Modern example: A business

Is a business the building? or
is it the people and what they
do to serve customers?

G. The main concerns an ANE
audience wanted to understand
were:

1. Time
2. Weather
3. Food
4. My Place In It

Functional Ontology, continued

What did God create on the first 3 days?

What is the Hebrew word for "create"?

IX. Gen 1

A. Question for Gen 1:5: Why didn't God call the light "light"?

- it's a period of light

B. On Day One, God created Time

C. Day Two: Weather

D. Day Three: Food

E. Another example in Gen 8:22

F. What about the other days?

4: Commissioning the things
5: that operate in the realms
6: created on days 1-3

G. Bara \equiv Hebrew word for "create"

1. God is always the Subject
2. objects?

clean heart, nation of Israel,
wonders, north & south, praise,
wind, etc.

Evidence for a functional ontology
in Genesis 1.

What is Gen 1 about?

H. Asa \equiv to make \Rightarrow material
to do \Rightarrow functional

I. Gen 1 is an account of functional origins, not material origins

Does the Bible deal with material origins?

J. The Bible does talk about material origins...

1. John 1
2. Col 1

- both are written in Greek
- so it's after the Greek influence
↳ material ontology

K. Another O.T. creation account

Psalm 104: _____

New Testament accounts of material origins, and another O.T. example of a functional creation perspective.