



Course: Awakening Wonder: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty With Dr. Stephen Turley

Lesson 3: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in the Greek East

Outline:

“Beauty bids all things to itself...”

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite

*“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part;
then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”*

1 Corinthians 13:12

Ancient Greek Cosmology (The Central Concept of the “Logos”):

- The logos, as understood by the ancient Greek philosophers, was a rational (metaphysical) organizing principle of the coherence and harmony in the world. The understanding of the world as an intelligible order (cosmos) was a direct implication of the concept of logos.

Early Christian Cosmology:

- The logos, as understood by the early Christians, (and as evidenced in the Gospel of John), was not a mere rational principle that upheld the cosmic order, but rather the Divine Creator in and through whom all things were made and have their existence. Furthermore, the logos was now understood to be a Divine Person who is “God with us,” in the person of Jesus of Nazareth - uniting Himself fully with our humanity, revealing the Father to us, and renewing all of creation.
- The early Christian community placed great importance on the doctrine that creation was both beautiful and good, as well as fallen due to the sin of humanity, but now, in the Logos, (Jesus Christ), and in the future coming of the Kingdom of God, creation is restored. In Jesus Christ, the creation is resurrected, (overcoming sin and death), and made new.

Gregory of Nyssa (335 - 394 AD)

- Introduces the concept of infinity (apeiron) in Christian theology; God is understood as infinite goodness and being
- Introduces an “aesthetic theology”

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (5th-6th century AD)

- Apophatic theology (theology of negation - ex. “God is incomprehensible”)
- The first of God’s names is the “Good”
- All things participate in the Good in a hierarchical structure



- God, as the Good, is the source of all things and all things find the consummation of their life, desire, and movement in God.
- Something is beautiful, true, or good because it participates in Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, which are themselves of God.