

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
OUR PREMODERN HERITAGE – PART II
GOD, THE BIBLE, AUGUSTINE, AND AQUINAS

Terms and concepts to know:

The Middle Ages

Feudalism

The City of God

The Modern Era

The Prince

Pantheism / Monotheism

Revealed theology

Creation science

Sin and Salvation

The “Dark” Ages

Augustine

Augustinian “historicism”

Machiavelli

Old / New Testament

Natural theology

Experiential theology

“Problem of evil”

Study and discussion questions:

1. Discuss the concept of feudalism and how it controlled the political, social, and economic relations among the various classes. What sort of system eventually surpassed it? What are some of the reasons you feel it did not survive as a system?
2. Discuss the historicist elements of Augustine’s philosophy. Do you agree with not only the concept of historicism, but of Augustinian historicism?
3. How is it that Aquinas was able to better integrate Aristotle’s work into his own? How did he differ from Augustine? How is Aquinas’ s “hierarchically arranged world” different from today?
4. In an article in the *The Christian Science Monitor*, Sheasley and Jonsson discuss the growth of bible classes in public schools. What do you think about this phenomenon? Would you disagree with your school allowing for elective classes in the Bible? Why or why not?
5. Discuss the differences among natural, revealed, and experiential theologies. Which do you think would appeal most to a believer or be accepted by a nonbeliever?
6. Discuss Stevenson’s reference to the “problem of evil.” How would believers deal with this problem in a rhetorical sense?
7. Discuss the biblical theory of the universe, its theory of human nature, and its diagnosis and prescription for what ails us.
8. Discuss some of the contemporary *political* questions regarding religion in society such as prayer in schools, the Ten Commandments posted in the classroom, etc. What is your position on these issues?

Readings:

Heineman. *Political Science*, Chapter 3.

Stevenson. *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 6 and “Historical Interlude”.

Video: *Waiting for Armageddon*