

Study Questions #1  
Traditional Western Theism

1. What does “traditional theism” refer to?
2. What is the relationship between the idea of God as a being worthy of worship and God’s being the greatest possible being?
3. In traditional theism the various attributes of God tend to constellate around what two fundamental ways of thinking about God?
4. St. Anselm is a foundational thinker for which of these two fundamental ways of thinking about God (above in #3). Explain the methodology of deriving the divine attributes based on this approach to God. Compare and contrast it with the other of the two approaches (above in #3).
5. God is said to be self-existent and necessary. Explain these attributes.
6. What is God’s relation to the universe according to traditional theism, and how does this viewpoint differ from pantheism and process theism?
7. According to traditional theism, God is a personal being. What does this mean? What are the grounds for this aspect of traditional theism?
8. Traditional theism understands God to be eternal. What are the two different ways western theists have understood God’s eternity?
9. God is said to be omnipotent. Have traditional theists understood this to mean that God can do anything without qualification? If not, what kind of qualification has been built into divine omnipotence?
10. God is said to be omniscient. How does traditional theism understand this? How might this idea create a conceptual problem for traditional theism?
11. How have traditional theists understood God’s goodness? How might traditional theists disagree or differ on their understanding of this aspect of traditional theism?