

Introduction to
Apologetics



Introduction to **Apologetics**

Contents

Session Title	Page
Defining God	3
Conversations that Count	18
What is Truth?	31
Understanding Worldviews	50
Evolution, Naturalism and Creation	66
Intelligent Design	89
Who Do Men Say that I Am?	105
Can I Trust the Bible?	122
Understanding Evil and Suffering	147
The Christian Legacy	167
Christianity and Public Policy	203

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 1

Defining God

Session Goals

To better understand the role of apologetics and establish a common definition of what the Bible means when it refers to God, from both a theological and philosophical standpoint. Discuss competing definitions of god from opposing worldviews. Introduce classical arguments for the existence of God.

Areas of Study

- What is Apologetics?
- Common Questions from Skeptics
- Defining God
- The Attributes of God
- Faith and Reason
- Classic Arguments for the Existence of God
- Turning an Atheist into an Agnostic
- Common Questions from Skeptics (Revisited)

And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God may grant them repentance, leading them to a knowledge of truth. *2 Timothy 2:24-25*

What is Apologetics?

Apologetics in the Bible

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a *defense* to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ... *1 Peter 3:15*

Greek word translated ‘defense’ is ἀπολογία (apologia). This term is derived from the Greek words ἀπό (apo) out of and λόγος (logos) logic/reason. Thus meaning ‘out of logic/reason’. It refers to a reasoned defense that would be given in a court of law.

Other language in the scriptures

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 “demolish arguments”
- Philippians 1:17 “defense of the Gospel”
- Jude 3 “contend for the faith”
- Titus 1:9 “refute those who oppose the Gospel”

What is apologetics?

Apologetics is putting forth any reasonable defense or argument in favor of the Christian worldview. Historically it has been done using logic, reason, philosophy, science, archaeology, testimonies, etc.

A branch of theology that attempts to give a rational justification for Christianity’s truth claims. *William Lain Craig*

Apologetics: giving any rational explanation or defense for Christianity’s truth claims.

Presenting the Gospel under different circumstances

- Acts 17:1-4 With the Jews – Paul uses Scripture and prophesy.
- Acts 17:16-34 With the Stoics and Epicureans – Paul uses reason and existing culture.

So Paul departed from among them. However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them. *Acts 17:34*

Apologetics and salvation

Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself.” So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: “I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall *answer* for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews,

especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. *Acts 26: 1-3*

But he said, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of **truth** and **reason**. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.” Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.” *Acts 26: 25-28*

Paul begins with prophesy
 Paul speaks of his conversion
 Paul speaks of his ministry
 Paul preaches the death and resurrection of Christ

Positive and negative apologetics

- Positive apologetics – clarify the truth claims of the Bible
- Negative apologetics – refute false objections to the Christian faith

Why apologetics?

- To remove obstacles to the Gospel.
- To refute false objections to the Gospel.
- To clarify faith to non-Christians.
- To strengthen the faith of Christians.
- To become a more effective evangelists.
- To obey God’s command of spreading the Gospel.

James W. Miller

There are those who wholly question the enterprise of Christian apologetics. They assert that God will call those whom he chooses and apologetics is just a distraction to the work of the Holy Spirit and the revelation of God. The idea is *prima facie* nonsense. When a missionary travels to another country to proclaim the gospel, she learns the language of the people so as to communicate in terms that they understand. Apologetics is simply the language the secular world uses to talk about God. To say we shouldn’t practice a rational defense of the Christian faith is like saying the missionary need not study language, because the Holy Spirit can do whatever [He] wants. *James W. Miller, Hardwired: Finding the God You Already Know*

We are all apologists, the question is whether we are effective apologists. *C.S. Lewis*

Can we love and worship God with our mind?

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37

The truth about God is the truth of Cross, the blood of Jesus, the creation of the heavens. It is logical, coherent, rational and consistent.

How do we love God with our mind?

- Seek the knowledge of God
- Think his thoughts
- Obey His commands
- Do His will

***Loving God with our mind:** Seek His knowledge, think His thoughts, obey His commands and do His will.*

Common Questions from Skeptics

- If God made the universe, who made God?
- Isn't faith illogical?
- Isn't atheism based on reason?
- We can't possibly know anything about God.
- Can't the Christian be wrong about the existence of God?
- Isn't it unfair that a murderer can just say a simple prayer and go to heaven?
- If there is a God, why is the universe so wasteful?
- If there is a God, why isn't there more evidence?
- Doesn't reincarnation make sense?

Defining God

When we say “God” what do we mean? When we use the word “God” in these sessions, we are describing the theistic God of the Bible and of classical Christianity. There are at least seven views of god in the world. Let's look at those seven first.

Seven major views of god:

1. Atheism – There is no God, therefore all that exists is the product of physical laws. Proponents: Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens
2. Pantheism – God is everything and everything is god, thus reality is spiritual not physical. Proponents: Buddhism, Hinduism, New Age, Oprah Winfrey, Deepak Chopra, Shirley Maclaine, the Dalai Lama
3. Panentheism – God who is everywhere is viewed as the eternal *animating force* behind the universe, the creator who is apart from the universe. Proponents: Zen Buddhism, Baha'i faith, Gnostics, Sikhism, Native Americans
4. Deism – God created the universe, but does not act in the universe. The universe is guided by the laws of nature while knowledge of god can only happen via logic and observation. Proponents: Liberal branches of Christianity, many in the scientific and philosophical disciplines.
5. Finite Godism – God is not “all-powerful/omnipotent” but is limited in some way. Proponent: Rabbi Kushner
6. Polytheism – The worship or belief in multiple gods usually assembled into a pantheon of gods and goddesses. Proponents: Mormons, Wiccans, Hindus, Native Americans
7. Theism – One God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, eternal, unchangeable and Personal. He exists outside the universe and brought the universe into being, and sustains the universe. Proponents: Muslims, Jews, Christians

Cultural Definitions:

- God (*Theologically*) – The sole Supreme Being, who is spiritual, transcendent, and the creator and ruler of all and is infinite in all attributes; the object of worship in monotheistic religions.
- God (*Practically*) – Any person or thing to which excessive attention is given. Examples: Money, fame, a person, an image, or symbolic representation of such a deity.

God according to the Church:

A common Christian creed:

We believe there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory; that this triune God created all, upholds all, and governs all.

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love; that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer; and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings; His substitutionary atoning death; bodily resurrection; ascension into heaven; perpetual intercession for His people; and personal, visible return to earth. We believe that He is one and the same as God. He was fully human and fully God.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower in ministry all who believe in Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is an abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide. We believe that Jesus Christ baptizes the seeking believer with the Holy Spirit and power for service, either at the time of or subsequent to regeneration, which is a separate work from the indwelling Spirit for salvation. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and in the exercise of all biblical gifts of the Spirit as reflected through the fruit of that same Spirit.

The Attributes of God

What are attributes, as they relate to the Christian God?

- An attribute is not a characteristic that God has, rather they are a part of His very nature or essence. He does not have love, He is love.
- Everything God does reflects all His attributes equally. They are not divided into parts. God's love and justice work hand in hand.
- No attribute is superior over any other. Grace did not win out over His wrath on the Cross.
- Proper theology does not emphasize one attribute over another. Emphasizing God's grace over his righteousness establishes a theology of lawless pleasure seekers.

Attribute, is not something God has, it's something God is. Part of His nature and His being. I have love, God is love.

God according to the Bible:

- God is eternal. *Isaiah 57:15*
 - He has no beginning and no end.
 - He does not live in time and space.
- God is infinite. *Jeremiah 23:24*
 - He has no limits.
- God is purposeful. *Jeremiah 29:11*
 - Everything He does has a purpose and a reason.
- God is immaterial. *John 4:24*
 - God is Spirit.
- God is omniscient. *Psalms 139, 147:5*
 - God knows everything with no exception.
 - God knows what was, what is, and what will be.
 - God knows what could have been, what could be, and what can be.
- God is a moral being. *Daniel 9:14*
 - He hates sin and loves righteousness.
- He is a God of justice *Psalms 33:5*
 - He punishes sin
 - Rewards righteousness
- God is love. *1 John 4:8*
 - He does not have love...He is love.
- God is self-existence.
 - He was not created.
 - He does not grow, improve, or evolve.
 - He is Being; everything else has being.
- God is non-contingent. *Acts 17:25*
 - The cosmos is contingent on a beginning or cause.
 - God needs no food, water, love, etc.
 - He depends on nothing.
 - He is the Uncaused Cause.
- God is transcendent.
 - He is outside the cause-and-effect universe.
- God is immutable. *Malachi 3:6*
 - He does not change.
 - God cannot become better or more complete.

- God is omnipresent. *Psalms 139:7*
 - He is not confined by space, time.
 - He exists in all possible worlds at all times.
- God is Holy. *Leviticus 19:2*
 - He does not sin.
 - He has no evil in Himself.
 - He stands apart from all created things.

Faith and Reason are Complementary

“Faith and reason are parallel. One does not cause the other because faith involves will, and reason does not coerce the will. Faith is consent without inquiry, in that faith’s assent is not caused by investigation. This does not prevent someone who believes from having some thought about those things he believes. Such reasoning from premise to conclusions is not the cause of faith but it should accompany it.” *On Truth*, St. Thomas Aquinas

Examples:

- God exists (faith)...The universe is ordered and complex (reason).
- Christ rose from the dead (faith)...Christians around the world report life-transforming miracles (reason).
- God is love (faith)...Everything necessary for life exists here on earth (reason).

Classical Arguments for the Existence of God

The Cosmological Argument

1. Everything that begins to exist has causes.
 2. The universe began to exist;
 3. therefore, the universe had a cause.
- Nothing in the universe can create itself as that would be a contradiction. If it created itself it must have existed before it was created (to do the creating).
 - Second Law of Thermodynamics, General Relativity both confirm that the universe had a beginning, while the work of Georges Lemaître and Edwin Hubble confirm that it is expanding.
 - If premise 1 and 2 is correct, then the conclusion must be correct as well.

The Cosmological Argument: Things that begin have a cause; the universe began. What caused the universe?

The Teleological Argument

The word *teleology* comes from telos which means "purpose" or "goal." The idea is that it takes a "purposer" to create something with purpose, and so where we see things obviously intended for a purpose, something had to have caused it for a reason. In other words, design implies a designer. William Paley (1743-1805) provided the most popular version of the teleological argument. The basic argument is that:

1. A watch shows that it was put together for an intelligent purpose (to keep time) and it has complexity (springs, glass, wheels, numbers).
 2. The world shows even greater evidence for design than the watch.
 3. Therefore, if the existence of a watch implies a watchmaker, the existence of the world implies an even greater intelligent designer (God).
- The human eye has purpose (to see) and it has complexity (retina, lens, sensors, etc.).
 - The earth has purpose (to sustain life) and it has complexity (precise distance from the sun, precise rotation, magnetic fields, food source, etc.).

The Anthropic Principle

Anthropic means "relating to human beings or their existence." *Principle* means "law." The Anthropic Principle is the Law of Human Existence. Our existence in this universe depends on many cosmological constants and parameters. Because it is so improbable that these constants would have aligned by mere chance, it is believed by many scientists and philosophers that there is purpose behind the universe, primarily for the existence of human life. This is the Anthropic Principle: that the universe appears to have been fine-tuned for our existence.

- The composition of the atmosphere
- The expansion rate of the universe
- The location of our moon and Jupiter
- The axis of the earth
- The precision of the laws of physics

The Moral Argument *Romans 2:15*

The moral argument begins with the fact that all people recognize some moral code (that some things are right, and some things are wrong). Every time we argue over right and wrong, we appeal to a higher law that we assume everyone is aware of, holds to, and is not free to arbitrarily change. Right and wrong imply a higher standard or law, and law requires a lawgiver. Because the Moral Law transcends humanity, this universal law requires a universal Lawgiver.

The Moral Argument;

Right and wrong
implies a law, laws
require a lawgiver.

- Murder is wrong
- Wrong implies right and wrong

- Right and wrong assumes a moral law
- A law requires a lawgiver

Pascal's Wager

Pascal's Wager seeks to justify Christian faith by weighing the various possible outcomes of belief and disbelief in the God of Christianity.

1. It is possible that the Christian God exists and it is possible that the Christian God does not exist.
2. If one *does believe* in the Christian God and he exists then one receives an infinitely great reward and if he does not exist then one loses little or nothing.
3. If one *does not believe* in the Christian God and he exists then one receives an infinitely great punishment and if he does not exist then one gains little or nothing.
4. It is better to either receive an infinitely great reward or lose little or nothing than it is to either receive an infinitely great punishment or gain little or nothing.
5. It is better to believe in the Christian God than it is not to believe in the Christian God.

Inference to the Best Explanation

Inference to the Best Explanation or abductive reasoning is a form of logical inference that goes from data description of something to a hypothesis that accounts for the reliable data and seeks to explain relevant evidence.

- Scientific process used by all historical branches of science including Darwinist, anthropologist, paleontologist, geologist, astronomers, etc.
- What best explains an ordered, complex world; chance or purpose?
- Evidence can be given for almost any explanation, but there is one explanation that best explains the complex universe: God.

God of the Gaps

The "God of the gaps" argument refers to the concept of "God" invoked to explain what science is yet, incapable of explaining. In other words, only the "gaps" in scientific knowledge are explained by the work of God, hence the name "God of the gaps." It is a flawed argument used by many Christians.

- Christians should argue from evidence: complexity therefore God; purpose therefore God; moral law therefore God.
- Atheists commit this flaw as well: "We don't know how life began but some day science will answer the question."

The goal of apologetics is to evoke or strengthen faith, not merely to bring intellectual persuasion. Directed toward unbelievers, it is an aspect of evangelism; toward believers, it is

training in godliness. It is possible to be intellectually persuaded of a theistic world view, as were the Pharisees, without a real heart commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior. *Five Views on Apologetics*, Stanley Gundry

Turning an Atheist into an Agnostic

What is atheism?

- Atheism - From the Greek “A” –implies the negative. Theism – means God. Thus: “There is no God”
- There is no God, is affirming the non-existence of God.
- This is a logical contradiction. An introductory course in philosophy or logic teaches that; you cannot universally affirm a negative in the absolute.

Example: If I said, “There is a green ball in the universe,” all I have to do is find one green ball and my statement is true (affirming a positive). Now if I said, “There are no green balls anywhere in the universe,” I would have to look everywhere first for my statement to be true. We know the atheist has not looked everywhere for God.

Bertrand Russell, Nobel Laureate and founder of Analytic Philosophy, acknowledged this, so he moved into agnosticism.

Does the atheist know everything?

Ask the atheist if he knows everything? What percentage of everything does he know? If he says “60%” ask: is it possible that the knowledge of God exists in the 40% of things he doesn’t know? If he says no God cannot exist thereremind him he just admitted he has no knowledge of this 40%.

What is agnosticism?

- Agnosticism
 - From the Greek “alpha” – a negative and “gnosco” – knowledge ...or... “One who does not know”
- Two kinds of Agnostics
 - Those who admit they do not know about God – These are open to the knowledge of God.
 - Those who claim we cannot know about God – This is a self-defeating statement as the claim itself is that there is some knowledge about God (that we cannot know

Him). What they are saying is that we cannot know anything about God except this one thing.

A cause must be sufficient to account for the effect

Suppose you walked into my house one day and you saw a beautiful painting of a sunset hanging on the wall. You noticed it was signed and so you asked me who the artist is. I tell you that one day I had left some canvass and some paint outside and the next morning I found this painting complete and next to it was a frog with the brush in his hand finishing the job. So I concluded that the frog painted the sunset. You would think I was crazy because frogs are not sufficient to account for beautiful paintings.

When an atheist speaks of the universe appearing from nothing, the solar system coming together by chance or an eye, butterfly or kidney coming together by natural selection, we have

Cause and effect; The cause must adequately explain the effect.

to conclude that the cause is not nearly sufficient to account for the effect, as there is an unthinkable amount of precision, information and purpose behind all of them. It is more likely that a rabbit wrote the Encyclopedia Britannica.

A painting implies a painter
A computer program implies a programmer
A book implies an author
The universe implies a creator

If there is a God why is the universe so wasteful?

Put another way; why all the dinosaurs, the stars burning out, black holes, uninhabited planets?

The concept of waste only applies to finite objects with limited resources. If a struggling artist won \$10,000 in the lottery and the next day spent it on a weekend cruise one would say that was wasteful. If billionaire Bill Gates spends \$10,000 on a weekend cruise most would agree that is far less wasteful. God is infinite and has infinite resources therefore nothing God does reduces in any way his unlimited resources. He could have made the universe a billion times bigger and still retained every bit of his power.

If there is a God why isn't there more evidence?

This question is designed to put the Christian on the defensive. While this is a legitimate question it is important to remember that the atheist or agnostic has the same burden of proof for their claims. Therefore, we can answer it this way: A universe from nothing, the complexity of life, a fine tuned solar system, the laws of physics, the complexity of an eye, the existence of a fruit tree, and so forth should be conclusive evidence for the existence of God.

Now turn the question: what is the evidence for the absence of God and if there is no God, how do you explain the existence of so much precision in the universe? Is this what we would expect to find in a chaotic event?

Isn't it unfair that a murderer can just say a simple prayer and go to heaven?

This is a common problem for atheists and the answer of course is yes that would be unfair. If a prayer can take away sin then God is not just. The problem of course is that this is not the proposition of the Christian faith. It's a baited question. The Bible claims that the son of God occupied a human body and lived a perfect righteous life. On a given day he chose to die as a consequence for sin on behalf of you and me. That is: he paid the price for murder, adultery, lying, etc. despite the fact that he did not owe this debt. The prayer of faith simply appropriates the payment for sin into our life.

Atheist: How do you (Christian) know you are not wrong about the existence of God?

- I would respond to this question by stating that I can be certain of God's existence. You can make this point by asking the atheist if he is certain that his mother exists. How can you be certain that she exists: because you know your mother and have a relationship with your mother. The fact that I never met your mother is irrelevant. In the same way a Christian who knows God can be certain of His existence.
- What about conflicting experiences from other religions? No other religion suggests that you can know God and experience his presence. Therefore, those experiences only support the idea of a supernatural experience.

How useful are these Arguments?

They do not prove God's existence.

- These arguments are best used to sweep away obstacles.
- They are usually not enough by themselves to convince someone.
- Statistics show the number of people who come to Christ by way of "proofs" is very low. Relationships are the best tools.

Why does knowing God make a difference?

- If God does not exist, life ultimately has no meaning or purpose beyond the grave. We are all just a product of colliding atoms and molecules.
- If God does not exist, then we must ultimately live without eternal hope.
- If God does not exist, morality is just a subjective opinion.
- If God DOES exist, we have hope of ultimate justice, peace and eternal life.

“To give evidence to him who loves not the truth is only to give him more plentiful material for misinterpretation.” Richard Weaver

Common Questions from Skeptics (revisited)

- If God made the universe, who made God?
- Isn't faith illogical?
- Isn't atheism based on reason?
- We can't possibly know anything about God.
- Can't the Christian be wrong about the existence of God?
- Isn't it unfair that a murderer can just say a simple prayer and go to heaven?
- If there is a God why is the universe so wasteful?
- If there is a God why isn't there more evidence?
- Doesn't reincarnation make sense?

Recommended Resources

- *Why I Am Not an Atheist*, Ravi Zacharias
- *The Case for a Creator*, Lee Strobel
- *Does the Idea of God Make Sense? Examining the Coherence of the Divine Attributes*, Charles Taliaferro
- *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, William Lane Craig
- *On Guard*, William Lane Craig
- *Five Views on Apologetics*, Stanley Gundry
- *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*, Lewis, Gordon R.

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 2

Conversations that Count

Session Goals

A discussion of several methods for sharing the Gospel. To obtain a better understanding of Conversational Apologetics, the Socratic Method and flawed arguments. Ultimately, to become a better witness for Christ.

Areas of Study

- Conversational Apologetics
- Examining 1 Peter 3:15
- The Value of a Godly Life
- Asking the Right Questions
- Practical Examples
- Flawed Arguments
- What is the Gospel?

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. *Proverbs 18:19*

Conversational Apologetics

A new generation of thinkers

Times change. People change. Cultures change. Therefore our approach must change. The truth never gets old, but people need to hear it in a fresh, new way.

- There have been changes in the values and presuppositions in Western Culture over the past 50 years.
 - People no longer assume that there is a God or that the Bible is true.
 - Secularists have moved Christianity into the subjective, emotional faith realm, while atheism and science are in the evidence and logical realm.
 - Eastern religions and post-modernism have crept into Western thought.
 - Alternative media has grown exponentially.
 - The New Atheists have taken a very aggressive position against Christianity.
- What is an evangelist?
 - By definition, an evangelist is "a preacher of the Gospel."
 - In the Bible, Jesus gives a command that carries down to our generation. "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." *Mark 16:15*
 - We must understand evangelism as a process. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." *1 Corinthians 3:6-8*
- Proper apologetics should ...
 - Articulate the Gospel message to a secular audience.
 - Answer tough Biblical questions and overcome objections.
 - Articulate questions that will move people closer to the message of salvation.
 - Build relationships that will facilitate the Gospel message.
- Whether you are nine years old or ninety, your sphere of influence is unique.

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. *Matthew 5:14-16*

- Is your light under a basket?
- Are you sharing your faith openly?
- What are you doing right now?
 - List three non-believers you are praying for and witnessing to.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

- List any new believers you are currently discipling. *Luke 6:12-13*
- _____
- _____
- _____

Two approaches for sharing the Gospel.

Effective Evangelism;
will require multiple
approaches to sharing
the Gospel,
dependent on the
audience.

Evidential – Provides evidence for the Christian worldview.
Example: We can trust the Bible because of the substantial volume of manuscripts.

but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” *John 10:38*

Existential – Focus on issues of existence and emotion.
Example: Jesus took away the guilt of my sin, and He can do the same for you.

Which is better? Depends on the audience.

Levels of belief

- Reasons – Logical conclusions people make about the world. This is at the intellectual level. This may be a real rational process or an argument to mask what’s deep inside. They can often prevent the Gospel from making its way into the person’s heart.
 - Evolution is a fact; therefore it proves there is no God.
 - There are too many religions in the world to know which one is true.
- Causes – Deep seated beliefs based on emotional experiences. These are heart issues. This is where the heart is converted.
 - My father left us when we were kids, therefore there can’t be a God.
 - We have been poor our entire life, God couldn’t possibly love me. *John H. Coe, Biola University*

We often underestimate the role we play in clearing the obstacles in someone’s spiritual journey. A seed here, a light shone there may be all that is needed to move that person one step further alone the way. Often the conversation will move from the smoke screens of supposed questions of the mind to the real questions of the heart. The best apologetic is able to travel the journey with the questioner, connecting the head with the heart. *Norman Geisler, Conversational Apologetic*

What is the Question? Michael Ramsden Answering the Tough Questions

- Giving the right answer to the wrong question is always wrong.
 - Should women have the right to choose?
 - Is God all loving or all powerful?
- Giving the wrong answer to the right question is always wrong.
 - Why are you a Christian, is often answered with how I became a Christian.
- Giving the right answer with the wrong attitude is always wrong.
- Many questions are moral complaints about God?
 - Do you believe homosexuality is wrong?
 - Did my grandmother go to hell?
- If there is a God why did he let my father die? Write question, very difficult answer which should focus on compassion for the individual, not apologetics.

Examining 1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct...

- But sanctify (or honor) the Lord God in your hearts.
 - Apologetics is not only an academic exercise; it is a spiritual discipline.
 - The word "sanctify" means "set apart". We are to set Christ apart as Lord in our hearts. In other words, we are to give Him a special place there.
 - He is to be set apart as Lord. This is more than just Savior. Many want Him as Savior, but he must also be Lord, not only on the lips, but in the heart. Some want Christ merely to escape Hell. But He should be Lord of our life.
- Always being prepared
 - Prepared in Greek implies getting fit.
 - Preparation anticipates continual hard work.
 - Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. *1 Corinthians 9:24*
 - How do we prepare to give a defense?
- to make a defense
 - This refers to a legal defense.
 - Paul makes an apologetic before King Agrippa (Acts 26). When Paul is done, Agrippa is crystal clear on at least one thing...that Paul wants him to say "yes" to Christ.

Proper Apologetics;
requires spiritual
and academic
preparation.

- It is important for all believers to have a prepared, logical presentation of their faith in Christ, whether for a court or for a neighbor.
- to anyone who asks you
 - People have never stopped asking and seeking. The problem today is that Christians have not always provided the proper answer, leading many to seek answers elsewhere.
 - People seek in different ways: drugs, promiscuous sex, New Age, money, career. All these are ways of attaining the human value and satisfaction that only God can provide through the knowledge of adoption.
 - Our lifestyle should be provoking questions.
 - Love someone – this will earn you the person’s ear and the right to be heard.
- for a reason
 - Greek for reason is “logos”; it’s where we get the word “logic.”
 - This implies that the Gospel is capable of being explained.
 - Our “how” (testimony) is not our “why” (Jesus is Lord).
 - Jesus should be the reason why we all are Christians.
- for the hope that is in you
 - Would your friends and family describe you as a person full of hope?
 - The believer must be ready to give a logical account of: how this hope arose in him (testimony), what it contains (Gospel message), and on what it rests (salvation, judgment, Christ’s coming).
- Do this with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience
 - We answer with gentleness so our attitude doesn’t crowd out the Gospel.
 - Gentleness will often disarm the skeptic.
 - We don’t pretend to know things we don’t know.

Caution: Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. *1 Corinthians 8:1*

The Value of a Godly Life

Our lifestyle should be provoking questions

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." *1 Peter 1:13-16*

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. *Galatians 5:22-23*

- List three of your best spiritual fruits
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- List the three spiritual fruits that need the most improvement
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- What would people say about my faith?
 - My family _____
 - My friends _____
 - My co-workers _____
 - My Neighbors _____

Love and Godliness;
attracts seekers
like a magnet.

Everyone has been given unique gifts

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. *1 Peter 4:10*

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. *Romans 12:6-8*

- List the three of your gifts that can be used for ministry.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Examples: teaching, compassion, artist, music, hospitality, etc.

- Why would they “ask you” about your faith? List two reasons.
 - _____
 - _____

Examples: great marriage, joyful life, always positive, miracle gifts, always kind.

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. *John 13:35*

“Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.” *St. Francis of Assisi* Your life is one big sermon, do it well and people will listen.

Asking the Right Questions

A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. *Proverbs 15:1-2*

When dealing with skeptics, it’s just as important to know how to interact as it is to have all the right answers at your fingertips. Alex McFarland, *10 Answers for Skeptics*

Socratic Method:

The art of leading and directing conversation by asking the rights questions.

Socratic Method

Named after the classical Greek philosopher Socrates, it is a form of inquiry between individuals with opposing viewpoints based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and exposing assumptions. The Bible records that Jesus asked over 200 questions.

We must learn the skill of talking to non-Christians in a way that makes them feel uncertain about their beliefs and what they are basing their life on, and yet minimizes their discomfort with us so that they want to continue the conversation. It is what Paul challenged us to do when he said, “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” *Norman Geisler and David Geisler, Conversational Evangelism*

Why should we ask questions?

A person can close his ears to facts he does not want to hear, but if a pointed question causes him to form the answer in his own mind, he cannot escape the conclusion. —*David Baker, Jehovah’s Witness Answer Book*

- Forces people to open up and consider their general assumptions.
 - Luke 18:18 Jesus’ question undermined the faulty assumption of the rich young ruler that we get to heaven by being good.
- Forces people to open up and consider cultural assumptions.
 - Matthew 22:15 By asking a question back, Jesus forced religious leaders to open up within their cultural assumption that paying taxes makes one unholy.

- Exposes faulty logic.
 - Matthew 9:1-8 Jesus uses a rhetorical question to expose shaky theology about the Son of God.
- Exposes motives.
 - Matthew 21:23-27 By asking His question about John the Baptist's authority, Jesus showed the religious leaders that they were not truly interested in receiving an answer.
- Exposes contradictions.
 - Matthew 22:41-46 By exposing an interpretation of the scriptures, "the Lord said to my Lord," Jesus exposes the contradiction in their thinking.
- Ensures a conversation.
 - John 4:1-26 Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a drink of water and then asks her to get her husband.
 - Again, people don't like to be "talked at." They want to be "talked to."
- Makes people think.
 - The difference between an argument and a discussion is that a discussion allows people to think.

First, be a good listener.

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.
James 1:19

He who answers before listening, that is his folly and his shame. *Proverbs 18:13*

*The Best Evangelists;
also happen to be the
best listeners.*

Principles of asking the right questions:

- Be genuinely interested; this comes from genuine love.
- Compliment or thank individuals for their questions or response.
- Start with the general, move to the specific.
 - Do you believe in God?
 - Where do you go to church?
 - What happens when we die?
- Ask open-ended questions.
 - How did you come to this conclusion?
 - What lead you down this path?
 - What was the most convincing argument for your belief?
- Focus on getting them to open their heart.

Open Ended Question;
one that cannot be
answered with simply a
"yes" or a "no".

- What do you fear the most?
- Has your worst fear ever come true?
- If you could change anything about the past, what would it be?
- What makes you angry?
- What is the meaning of life?
- Did something happen that made you come to this conclusion?
- How does your family feel about this?

Follow the three Cs

- Confirm – Make sure you understand what the skeptic is saying.
- Clarify – Ask questions about his or her position.
- Connect– Find common ground and concede the minor points.

It is a person, not a project.

- Compliment or thank individuals for their questions. This is a great way to show respect.
- Pray to discern the intent of a questioner as you listen, that you might understand the heart.
James 3:13-18
- Are they seeking truth or are they looking for a fight? Even the biggest bully can be disarmed if you show respect and interest for what they are saying.
- Remember not every question or accusation requires a defensive response.
- People don't like to be "talked at." They want to be "talked to."

We meet people where they are because God does.

- Woman at the well. *John 4:1-40*
- To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. *1 Corinthians 9:22-23*

How do we best present the evidence for God's existence?

- It's personal:
 - Because we don't simply talk to "generic" people, the specific nature of the individual or audience is going to guide the way we present the Gospel.
 - Each person, each audience we speak to is different.
 - Acts 17:1-4 Paul reasons with the Jews from the scripture.
 - Acts 17:22-29 Paul first dispels false beliefs.
 - Acts 14 Paul begins with nature and then reasons back to a Creator.

Practical Examples

Asking the right questions and avoiding the wrong

- I believe in science, not the Bible.
 - Bad question: What do you mean by science?
 - Good question: Where do you see a conflict between science and the Bible?
- I don't believe God exists.
 - Bad question: Is that what your parents told you?
 - Good question: Then how did the universe begin?
- I think the Bible is full of contradictions.
 - Bad question: Who told you that, because they are wrong?
 - Good question: Can you give me some examples?
- I believe Christians are hypocrites.
 - Bad question: Isn't everybody a hypocrite?
 - Good question: Fine, but what do you think about Jesus?
- I believe all religions lead to God?
 - Bad question: Why do you believe this?
 - Good question: What about Buddhism which doesn't claim to lead to GodDoes that lead to God?
- I can't believe in anything I can't see.
 - Bad question: Why not?
 - Good question: Do you believe in gravity? Why?
- Only science can tell us what is true.
 - Bad question: What is science?
 - Good question: Can you prove that scientifically?
- Doesn't the Bible ask women to submit to their husbands?
 - Bad question: Yes why is that a problem
 - Good question: Yes, but do you know the next verse?

Some methods of evangelism

- Conversational apologetics
- Building relationships
- Story-telling
- Personal testimony
- Servant evangelism

- Home studies
- Handing out tracts
- Open-air preaching
- Making a ministry
- Debate?only for the benefit of an audience.

Flawed Arguments

Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. *Mathew 10:16*

- Red Herring – This occurs when a speaker attempts to distract an audience by deviating from the topic at hand by introducing a separate argument which the speaker believes will be easier to speak to. Example: Shouldn't women have the right to do what they want with their bodies?
- Cherry Picking – The act of pointing at individual cases or data that seem to confirm a particular position, while ignoring a significant portion of related cases or data that may contradict that position. Example: I heard of a pastor who committed adultery, therefore all Christians are bad people.
- Straw Man Argument – This is based on misrepresentation of an opponent's position so that it can be easily discredited. Example: I'm not like those who think that everything the government does is bad.
- Internal Inconsistency – A statement that cannot meet its own standard of truth. Example: I don't like judgmental people.
- Moving the Goal Post – An argument in which evidence presented in response to a specific claim is dismissed, and some other evidence is demanded. Example: Marijuana is not as bad as alcohol; therefore it should be legal too. I'd rather have kids adopted by gay parents than have them living with abusive families.
- Nirvana Fallacy – This is when solutions to problems are dismissed because they are not perfect. Example: Capitalism leaves too many people in poverty.
- Negative Proof Fallacy – That is because a premise cannot be proven false, the premise must be true; or that, because a premise cannot be proven true, the premise must be false. Example: There is no proof that hell exists.
- Proof by Example – This is where examples are offered as inductive proof for a universal proposition. Example: Finches on the Galapagos Islands had beaks that changed, therefore evolution is true.

- Correlation does not Imply Causation – This is a phrase used in the scientists and statisticians to emphasize that correlation between two variables does not imply that one causes the other. Example: Reagan lowered taxes, and the deficit went up. The seat belt light always goes on before we experience turbulence, therefore the seat belt light causes turbulence.
- One or the other – This happens when only one of two choices is offered where there may be more than one. Example: Do you believe in science or the Bible?

What is the Gospel?

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. *1 Corinthians 15:3-4*

- Man separated from God – Sin of Adam and all.
- Life of Christ – fulfills God's standard of holiness (old covenant).
- New Covenant – unites the believer to Christ.
- Death of Christ – takes on the penalty for our sin upon himself.
- Resurrection of Christ – provides a new life for the believer.

Appropriating the Gospel into our life

- Repentance – turn away from our current sinful life
- Faith – trust fully in Christ
- Confession – outward expression of faith

The Roman Road

- for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. *Romans 3:23*
- when we were in our sin Christ Jesus came to die for us. *Romans 5:8*
- that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. *Romans 10:9*
- even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. *Romans 3:22*. He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God through Him. *2 Corinthians 5:21*

Paul never makes the case that you receive Christ to become happy or prosperous; rather it is for the forgiveness of sin.

Recommended Resources

- *Beyond Faith: Living the Faith We Defend*, Ravi Zacharias
- *Is Your Church Ready?: Motivating Leaders to Live an Apologetic Life*, Ravi Zacharias and Norman L. Geisler
- *Conversational Evangelism*, Norman Geisler and David Geisler
- *10 Answers for Skeptics*, Alex McFarland

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 3

What is Truth?

Session Goals

To define and understand the concept of truth, and therefore counter the claims of Post-modernism, Pluralism and Relativism as it relates to absolutes.

Areas of Study

- Common Questions from Skeptics
- The Bible and Truth
- What is Truth?
- What is Absolute Truth?
- What is Relativism?
- Three Formal Philosophical Views
- Relativism's Fatal Flaws
- Consequences
- Judge not Lest Ye Be Judged
- Common Questions from Skeptics (Revisited)

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." *John 8:31-32*

Common Questions from Skeptics

- It's true for me, but not for you.
- Who are you to judge others?
- Reality is an illusion.
- Christians are intolerant to others.
- You have no right to convert others to your views.
- Your values are right for you, but not for me.
- Who are you to say another culture's values are wrong or impose your values?
- Christianity excludes too many other views.
- All religions lead to the same God.
- Truth is relative.

The Bible and Truth

- The truth guides us (Genesis 24:48).
- We can access the truth. The blameless one speaks truth from the heart. *Psalms 15:2*
- Truth is not just head knowledge. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part. *Psalms 51:6*
- Truth can be cut off by God. He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. *Psalms 54:5*
- Truth is a shield. *Psalms 91:4*
- Truth is given by God. God shall send forth His mercy and His truth. *Psalms 57:3*
- The Bible is True. The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. *Psalms 119:160*

- Jesus, is full of grace and truth (John 1:14), and is the source of grace and truth (John 1:17).
- The ministry of John the Baptist is to bear witness to the Truth (John 5:33).
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17).
- You can suppress the truth (Rom 1:18) and exchanged (Romans 1:25) for a lie.
- God desires all men to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4).
- Paul further encourages Timothy to guard the truth, which the Holy Spirit has entrusted to him (2 Tim 1:14).
- The Scriptures are themselves the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15).
- Individuals who oppose God and naively listen to others never arrive at the truth and in fact, actually oppose it (2 Tim 3:7-8).
- To claim sinlessness for the believer is to practice self-deceit and thus be void of truth (1 John 1:8).
- Satan does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. This is strong support for the idea that Truth is a God-given gift, and Satan does not possess any of it.
- The wicked do not speak truth (Psalm 5:9).

Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Walter A. Elwell

What is Truth?

The Problem

Many believe truth is subjective, the individual world of preference and beliefs. Others believe truth is collective, the product of cultural consensus, others flatly deny the concept of truth altogether. Some religions teach that all we see is an illusion with reality only attainable through enlightenment, while others only believe in scientific or mathematical truths.

What is truth?

- Correspondence Theory – Does it match up (correspond) and agree with reality?
- Coherence Theory– For abstract concepts. Is it consistent, harmonious and understandable; within a framework of beliefs. Adultery is wrong within a Christian moral framework.

- Fidelity to the original – Faithfulness and accuracy. Is it an exact representation of the fact or with a given quality, condition, or event?

The Methodology

- Epistemology - The formal study of knowledge. How do we know what we know?
Sources of knowledge include:

Sense perception
Scientific
Philosophical
Experience
Revelation

Truth: A statement that corresponds to reality.

Knowledge is the belief in true proposition, while deception is the belief in false proposition.

- Logic – Most secularists will accept logical truth, therefore it should be considered.
 - Law of internal consistency – A statement must be coherent and lacking in self-contradictions.

Example: Morality is just an opinion and therefore it's wrong to impose our opinion on other people. Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded.

- Law of non-contradiction – No two statements can be in contradiction and both be equally true. A cannot be non-A. Contradiction occurs when one statement on a subject excludes the possibility of another.

Example: In Surah 19:67, it states that man was created out of nothing. In 15:26, man is created from clay. Since clay is something, we have a contradiction since "nothing" excludes the possibility of "clay." Both cannot be true.

Truth, by nature, is:

Law of Non-contradiction; No two statements can be in contradiction and both be equally true.

- Non-contradictory – it does not violate the basic laws of logic.
- Absolute – it does not depend upon any time, place or conditions.
- Discovered – it exists independently of our minds; we do not create it.
- Descriptive – it is the agreement of the mind with reality (coherence).
- Unchanging – never improves or changes.

John 18:36-38

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, “You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.”

Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.”

What is Absolute Truth?

For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations. *Psalms 100:5*

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. *Titus 1:1-2*

St. Augustine of Hippo

1. Truth exists - It is self-defeating to deny the existence of truth. If someone claims that “Truth does not exist,” then we can counter by asking if the claim is True or False. If the claim is False, then truth exists, and if the claim is True, then truth exists because the claim is false.
2. Truth is unchangeable - It is impossible for truth to change. What is true today always has been and always will be true. All true propositions are immutable truths. Example: On September 11, 2001 the World Trade Center was attacked. This will still be true 1,000 years from now. Stealing is wrong. This will be true 1,000 years from now.
3. Truth is eternal - By extension of its unchangeable nature, truth must be eternal. Even if every created thing ceases to exist, Truth will continue to exist. But suppose someone asks, “What if truth itself should someday perish?” Then the truth that “Truth has perished” would still exist eternally. Any denial of the eternity of truth turns out to be an affirmation of its eternity.

4. Truth is spiritual - The existence of truth presupposes the existence of minds. Without a mind, truth could not exist. The object of knowledge is a meaningful thought which resides in one or more minds. The statement “sunrises are beautiful” is a truth that must come from a mind to exist. $E=MC^2$ is an absolute truth that requires a mind to exist. Murder is wrong - is an absolute truth that requires a mind to exist.
5. Truth is not the function of matter – the concept of truth is incompatible with the materialist (atheists) view which states that all thinking is the result of moving particles. One set of moving particles cannot be truer than another. If there is no mind there is not truth and if no truth materialism is not true.

Conclusion - God Exists, God is Unchangeable, God is Eternal, God is Spiritual, God is not a function of Space, Time or Matter. These attributes apply equally to Truth and God, and only to Truth and God. Truth and God share the same attributes.

The Old Testament refers to the Almighty as the “God of truth” (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 31:5; Is. 65:16)

I am the way the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me. *John 14:6*
When Jesus said I am the Truth, he was affirming that He is in fact God.

Subjective opinions vs. objective absolute truth

- Subjective opinion is a person’s preference. “Pizza is good” This is not a truth statement but an opinion. They will not tend to ever contradict other similar opinions. If I say, “Pizza is good” and my wife says, “pizza is bad” there is no conflict because we are different people with different preferences.
- A factual statement will be truthful in nature. “There is milk in the refrigerator” is a truth statement of fact. If I say, “There is milk in the refrigerator” and my wife says, “There is no milk in the refrigerator” there is a conflict. Both cannot be true.
- Absolute truth is objective. It never changes. God is love or $2 + 2 = 4$ are realities in the external world that cannot be changed. They are discovered, not created.

Opinion: subjective preference
Fact Statement: based on a reference point
Absolute Truth: never changes

Overview

- Opinion statement
 - “The main doors at Westminster Church are directly in front of you.”

- Statement of truth
 - “When you are standing behind the pulpit the main doors at Westminster Church are directly in front of you.”
- Statement of absolute truth
 - “On September 24, 2016 when you are standing behind the pulpit the main doors at Westminster Church are directly in front of you”
 - This statement is still true 100 or 1,000 years from now.

All truth is God’s truth

When we assert that Christian revelation is true, we aren’t saying that all non-Christian religions are wholly false. This is the impression that Christians often give, and pluralist arguments wrongly imply this as well. The Christian doesn’t claim exclusive possession of truth, because all truth is God’s truth. As the Scottish writer and pastor George MacDonald rightly remarked, “Truth is truth, whether from the lips of Jesus or Balaam.” The Christian is to affirm truth and virtue wherever they are found. But the Christian maintains that God’s revelation in Jesus is true and that other religious systems are wrong where they contradict Christian revelation. *Paul Copan, True For You, But Not For Me*

Here’s a simple definition drawn from what the Bible teaches: Truth is that which is consistent with the mind of God.

Objections to Absolute truth

All non-correspondence views of truth imply correspondence, even as they attempt to deny it. The claim: “Truth does not correspond with what is” implies that this view corresponds to reality. Then the non-correspondence view cannot express itself without using a correspondence frame of reference. If one’s factual statements need not correspond to the facts in order to be true, then any factually incorrect statement is acceptable. It becomes impossible to lie. Any statement is compatible with any given state of affairs. *Norman L. Geisler, Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal*

Another objection is that many things are comparative - like relative sizes such as shorter and taller. As such they cannot be absolute truths, since they change depending on the object to which they relate. For example, some people are good compared to Hitler but evil as compared to Mother Teresa. Contrary to the claim of relativists, in-between things do not prove absolutism. For the facts that “John is short in relation to an NBA player,” and “John is tall compared to a jockey” are absolutely true for all times and all people. John is in-between in size, and it depends on which one to whom he is compared whether he is shorter or taller. Nonetheless, it is absolutely true that John (being five feet ten inches) is short compared to most basketball players and tall compared to the majority of jockeys. The same thing is true of other in-between things, such as, warmer or colder, and better or worse - *Allan David Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*

There are many more things of which I am not absolutely certain. But even here the relativist is misguided in rejecting absolute truth simply because we lack absolute evidence that some things are true. The truth can be absolute no matter what our grounds for believing it. For example, if it is true that Sydney, Australia, is on the Pacific Ocean, then it is absolutely true no matter what my evidence or lack of evidence may be. An absolute truth is absolutely true in itself, no matter what evidence there is. Evidence, or the lack thereof, does not change a fact. And truth is what corresponds to the facts. - *Anselm, Truth, Freedom, and Evil; Three Philosophical Dialogues*

It is also objected that knowledge of truth is not absolute, since we grow in truth. What is true today may be false tomorrow. The progress of science is proof that truth is constantly changing. This objection fails to note that it is not the truth that is changing but our understanding of it. When science truly progresses, it does not move from an old truth to a new truth, but from error to truth. - *Augustine, Against the Academics*

Non-Christians often claim that Christians are narrow-minded, because they claim that Christianity is true and all non-Christian systems are false. However, the same is true of non-Christians who claim that what they view as truth is true, and all opposing beliefs are false, that is equally narrow. The fact of the matter is that if C (Christianity) is true, then it follows that all non-C is false. Likewise, if H (say, Humanism) is true, then all non-H is false. Both views are equally narrow. That's the way truth is. Each truth claim excludes contradictory truth claims. Christianity is no more narrow than is any other set of beliefs, whether atheism, agnosticism, skepticism, or pantheism - *Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, Philosophy of Religion*

According to correspondence, truth consists in the agreement of our thought with reality
Randall, J. & Buchler, J.; Philosophy: An Introduction

What is Relativism?

Objective relativism – No truth is universal. Truth is what you want it to be.

Why it matters – There would be no reason to seek truth and knowledge. No reason to have crime scene investigations, no need for science, history or mathematics, as none can lead us to the truth. If there is no truth then Jesus is as relevant as David Koresh.

How it fails – Everyone looks both ways before crossing the street. Everyone waits for green before proceeding through the intersection. No one can live this out. It fails its own test: If “truth is relative” then that statement is relative (and therefore not true).

Religious relativism – All religions are equally true as long as you believe it.

Why it matters – The Christian virtue of love would be equal to child sacrifice. Salvation can come through faith or suicide bombings.

How it fails – Cannot pass the law of non-contradiction. Example: Christians believe the universe was created, while Buddhists believe it always existed. Jesus said: “I am the way the truth and the life, no man goes to the Father but through me.” Mohamed said, Submission is the way and death by holy war is the only sure way. If all religions are true then god is a liar.

Moral relativism – No objective right or wrong.

Why it matters – No room for moral improvement: i.e., end slavery, child labor, etc. Becoming a teacher is as virtuous as becoming a drug dealer. If there is no right and wrong, there is no sin and no need for redemption. Rescuing a drowning child and murdering a child are morally neutral.

How it fails – Everyone lives by some standard of right and wrong. History has demonstrated a universal moral consistency.

Cultural relativism – All cultures are equal in every way.

Why it matters – Some cultures provide greater social improvement. Some cultures lack the civility of Western Civilization. With cultural relativism there is no incentive to help those civilizations. Cultural relativism puts Democracy on the same level as Communism.

How it fails – A trip to many foreign countries demonstrates a wide array of social practices with their corresponding economic and social outcomes. Example: The Hindu caste system keeps people in poverty, Islam rejects female equality.

Tolerance – Historically it meant a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward opinions and practices that differ from one's own. Today it means you must accept and agree with everything and everyone. Nothing is wrong.

Why it matters – No room to determine right and wrong. No room to judge what matters, i.e., moral behavior, artistic beauty, social norms, etc.

How it fails – Nobody agrees everything is acceptable. Most people will agree rape is wrong, child and animal abuse are wrong. Should we be tolerant of that? The question is not whether everything should be acceptable (tolerance); the question is where to draw the line.

Relativism's; most obvious flaw is that no one can live it out.

Source of the problem

- Reasons – There are too many disagreements in the world, too many different views for truth to be absolute.
- Causes – Relativism means I can sin without a bad conscience. I can do whatever I want. In short, I'm my own god.

Three Formal Philosophical Views

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is a western movement based on the position that reality is not mirrored in human understanding of it, but is rather constructed as the mind tries to understand its own personal reality. Postmodernism is therefore skeptical of explanations that claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person. In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Postmodern thinking has influenced the arts, music, architecture and literature.

- Postmodernists are skeptical of any truth claim or universal statement.
- They reject the dogma of science and empirical claims.
- Emotions, feelings, intuition, reflection, magic, myth, and mystical experience are the source of knowledge. Knowledge comes from within.
- Words have no external reference point. Therefore words are meaningless.

How it fails

- The skeptic must also be skeptical of his skepticism, therefore making it invalid.
- They don't reject the dogma of science when they are lying in a hospital bed.
- What if my intuition was telling me to drown my children or have an affair?
- Postmodernists use words to communicate their view, believing they have meaning, and therefore postmodernism fails its own test.
- The idea that we live in a postmodern culture is a myth. In fact, a postmodern culture is an impossibility; it would be utterly unlivable. People are not relativistic when it comes to matters of science, engineering, and technology; rather, they are relativistic and pluralistic

in matters of religion and ethics. But, of course, that's not postmodernism. *William Lane Craig, God is not Dead Yet; Christianity Today*

Relativism

Relativism is the philosophical position that all points of view are equally valid, and that all truth is relative to the individual. This means that all moral positions, all religious systems, all art forms, all political movements, all reality etc., is in the mind of the individual. Under the umbrella of relativism, whole groups of perspectives are categorized.

- Cognitive relativism (truth) - Cognitive relativism affirms that all truth is relative. This would mean that no system of truth is more valid than another one, and that there is no objective standard of truth. It would, naturally, deny that there is a God of absolute truth. Facts, values, principles and knowledge are matters for each individual to work out.
- Moral/ethical relativism - All morals are relative to the social group within which they are constructed. They are social norms not universal truths.
- Pragmatism – states that it is the outcome that determines whether a value is good or bad.

How it fails

- Internally inconsistent – if truth is relative then that statement is relative and not true.
- Everybody believes in some moral absolutes – rape is wrong even if a society voted to legalize it.
- If only the outcome matters then anything is justifiable including theft, war and murder.

Pluralism or Multi-Culturalism

Pluralism is the doctrine that claims that all cultural, societal and religious views are valid and equal. Many believe pluralism or multiculturalism is a fairer system that allows people to express who they are within a society that is more tolerant. They argue that culture is not one definable thing based on one race or religion, but rather the result of multiple factors that change as the world changes. It holds that no single explanatory system or view of reality can account for all the phenomena of life and therefore multiple views tend to heighten our knowledge base. Some religions such as Hindus are pluralistic the Bhagavad Gītā (4:11), "As people approach me, so I receive them. All paths lead to me"

- They reject the exclusivity of any religion.
- All religions are the same, thus “all roads lead to heaven.”
- All religions say the same basic thing.

How it fails

- Pluralists themselves are exclusive; thus pluralism fails its own test.
- Violates the law of non-contradiction.
- Religions do not say the same basic thing, most are fundamentally different.
- It puts Sharia Law and the oppression of women on the same level as freedom and equal rights
- Common Law is on the same level as Tribal Law or Sharia Law.

Naturalism and truth

Naturalism is the idea or belief that nothing exists beyond the natural world. Naturalists assert that natural laws are the rules that govern the structure and behavior of the universe and that the changing universe is a result of these laws.

- Most believe in absolute truth, in the form of laws of physics and scientific explanations.
- They do not believe in moral truth. They explain the origins of morality as an extension of culture.

How it fails

- Would a world of strictly material objects produce any nonmaterial, nonphysical absolutes like the laws of physics?
- If a culture decided that rape was good, would that make it good?

Is the Bible just a book of myths?

Hindu Mythology - The act of creation was thought of in more than one manner. One of the oldest cosmogonic myth in the Rigveda (RV 10.121) had Being come into existence as a cosmic golden egg. The Purusha Sukta (RV 10.90) narrates that all things were made out of the mangled limbs of Purusha, a magnified non-natural man, who was sacrificed by the gods. In the Puranas, Vishnu in the shape of a boar, plunged into the cosmic waters and brought forth the earth.

There were in all twelve ferocious battles fought between the gods over the control of the three worlds. Weapons included swords, daggers, spears, clubs, shields, bows, and lightning. The text also mentions various divine weapons by various heroes, each associated with a certain god or deity. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_mythology

Conclusion: Myths are symbolic tales of the distant past which include superhuman heroes or gods who take on human characteristics none of which can be verified.

Christian Bible - Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. *Luke 1:1-5*

- The Bible reads like a history book, not a book of myths.
- I Corinthians 15:14 ...and if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in vain and so is your faith.
- “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty” *2 Peter 1:16*

Conclusion: Christianity is rooted in historical events that are well documented by eyewitness accounts, myths are legends about the supernatural which are unverifiable.

Biblical morality

The historic Christian conception of morality rests on the cognitive claim about human nature. It says that humans were designed for a purpose—to be conformed to spiritual ideas of holiness and perfection, so that we may live in love with God and our fellow creatures. Moral rules are simply the instructions telling us how to fulfill those ideals, how to reach that goal, how to live according to that divine purpose. In the fall we went off track, in salvation God puts us back on course and empowers us to resume the journey to developing our full humanity, to become the people He originally intended us to be. *Nancy Pearcey, Total Truth*

- The moral laws of the Bible were not given to us to restrict our pleasure, rather they were given to protect us from harm.
- How do we know that there are universal moral standards? Sociologists agree that there is a consistency among cultures in these morals; killing, rape, stealing, etc. has always been wrong within every culture ever studied.
- If there is no absolute moral standard, then one cannot say in a final sense that anything is right or wrong. We are merely left with conflicting opinions. *Francis Shaeffer*

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds.... 2 Timothy 3:1-8

Relativism's Fatal Flaws

A teacher facing a class says: "The door to this room is on my right." But it is on the left for the students. Relativists argue that surely this truth is relative to the teacher since it is false for the class. But on the contrary it is equally true for everyone that the door is on the professor's right. This is an absolute truth. The truth is equally absolute that the door was on the student's left. <http://www.theopedia.com/Truth>

Some things appear only to be true at some times and not at others. For example, many people once believed the world to be flat. Now we know that truth statement was wrong. It would seem that this truth has changed with the times. Or has it? Did the truth change, or did beliefs about what is true change? Well, certainly the world did not change from a box to a sphere. What changed in this regard is our belief, not our earth. It changed from a false belief to a true one - *James F. Harris, Against Relativism*.

If relativism were true, then the world would be full of contradictory conditions. For if something is true for me but false for you, then opposite conditions exist. For if I say "There is milk in the refrigerator" and you say "there is not any milk in the refrigerator" - and we both are right, then there must both be and not be milk in the refrigerator at the same time and in the same sense. But that is impossible. So, if truth were relative, then an impossible would be actual. *Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, Philosophy of Religion*.

If truth is relative, then no one is ever wrong - even when they are. As long as something is true to me, then I'm right even when I'm wrong. The drawback is that I could never learn anything either, because learning is moving from a false belief to a true one - that is, from an absolutely false belief to an absolutely true one. The truth is that absolutes are inescapable. <http://www.theopedia.com/Truth>

Suppose I said "Pizza taste bad" and my wife said "Pizza taste good". While both are truth statements both are also contradictory. Not so, because we are different people with different tastes, both can be truth statements as neither are statements of absolutes, rather statements of preferences or opinions.

Seven fatal flaws

- Can't accuse others of wrong doing
- Can't complain about the problem of evil
- Can't place blame or praise
- Can't make charges of unfairness or injustice
- Can't improve on their morality
- Can't hold meaningful discussions about right and wrong
- Can't promote tolerance, as this is a moral position

Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl, Relativism

Consequences

When morality is reduced to personal taste, people exchange the moral question, what is good? For the pleasure question, what feels good? They assert their desires and then attempt to rationalize their choices with moral language. Instead of morality constraining pleasures, the pleasure defines the morality. This effort at ethical decision making is really nothing more than thinly veiled self-interest. When self-interest rules, it has a profound impact on behavior, especially how we treat other human beings. *Francis J. Beckwith Ph.D., Relativism*

- Breakdown of the family
- Deterioration of the arts
- Increase in sexual promiscuity, drug use and STDs
- Criticism is prohibited
- Silences free speech
- Tolerance is the cardinal virtue
- The death of right and wrong

Judge Not Lest Ye Be Judged

Should Christians judge other people?

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. *Matthew 7:1-5*

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. *Romans 14:13*

Do not judge

- We should not judge people on personal non-moral issues where the Bible has no clear teaching. Romans 14:1-23 speaks about eating preferences and special days.
- We should not judge people just by their outward appearance (John 7:24; James 2:1-4).
- We should not judge the value of another Christian's service (1 Corinthians 4:1-5).
- We should not judge others through evil speaking (James 4:11-12).

What we are commanded to judge

- We should judge the doctrinal teaching of preachers and teachers (Matthew 7:15-20; Acts 17:10-11; 1 Corinthians 14:29; Titus 1:10-16; 3:10; Hebrews 13:7; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 2:20-24).
- We should judge potential Elders/Pastors and Deacons to see if they measure up to the qualifications given in the Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).
- We should judge ourselves before we partake of the Lord's Supper to see if our spiritual condition is correct (1 Corinthians 11:31) and to see if our faith is real (2 Corinthians 13:5-7).

Purpose of judgment

The purpose of this judgment is not to condemn, but to restore the sinful believer into useful service (Galatians 6:1-5).

Common Questions from Skeptics (Revisited)

It's true for me but not for you.

- If my belief is only true for me, then your belief is only true for you, but you're saying you want me to believe what you believe.
- So if I said my wife was pregnant and she said she was not pregnant, both those statements

could be true?

- You say no claim is true for everyone but you want everyone to believe your claim. “Nothing is universally true,” but “my claim is universally true.”
- So if I don’t believe gravity is true, will that send me floating into outer space, or is gravity true for everyone?

Who are you to judge others?

- That’s a statement of judgment ...he’s judging others for judging others.
- So in your judgment, we shouldn’t judge others?
- Why is judging other’s behavior like a rapist wrong?
- In your judgment is abusing animals wrong?

Reality is an illusion

- Then isn’t that statement an illusion and therefore not true?
- So you’re saying I don’t need to look before crossing the street because the cars are just an illusion?
- Would you run from a charging grizzly bear? Why?

Christians are intolerant of others.

- Since we can only tolerate what we believe to be false...what does it mean to be intolerant?
- Are you saying I have to agree with you to be tolerant of your view?
- Aren’t you being intolerant towards my intolerance?
- Should we be tolerant towards people who kill elephants for their tusks?

You have no right to convert others to your views.

- Aren’t you converting me to your view, that I shouldn’t convert others?

Your values are right for you, but not for me.

- Moral relativism is unlivable because there would be no grounds to imprison people or create laws. It would not distinguish between Hitler and Mother Teresa.
- So if my values were to abuse animals for fun, would you be okay with that?
- If rape is a value I hold, are you ok with that?
- Do you want rapists put in jail even though their morals may be right for them?

Who are you to say another culture's values are wrong or impose your values?

- So we shouldn't impose our values on Muslims men for honor killings?
- Should we have respected the South's right to own slaves?
- So we shouldn't advise Brazil to stop destroying the Amazon jungle?
- Aren't you imposing your values "that you shouldn't impose your values" on me?

Christianity excludes too many other views.

- What's your view? Isn't that exclusive?
- You believe all religions lead to god, doesn't that exclude my view that only my religion leads to God or the atheists view that no religion leads to God?

All religions lead to the same God.

- Violates the Law of non-contradiction
- Jesus said love your enemies...Mohammed said kill your enemies. Both lead to God?
- Jesus said "I am the way"...Buddha said "meditation is the way." Both lead to God?
- Bibles say, "In the beginning God created"...Bhagavad Gita says the universe is eternal with no beginning. Both are correct?

Truth is relative

- If truth is relative, then that statement is relative and therefore not entirely true.

- If truth is relative, why do you stop at a red light, why not believe that they are all green?

Recommended Resources

- *True For You, But Not For Me*, Paul Copans
- *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid Air*, Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl
- *Mind Siege*, Tim LaHaye
- *Total Truth*, Nancy Pearcey
- *The Truth War*, John MacArthur
- *What Is Truth?*, Paul Copan and Dr. Mark Linville
- *Why Bother with Truth?*, James Beilby and David K. Clark
- *Is Everything Relative?*, Paul Copan
- *Is Everything Permitted?*, Dr. Mark Linville

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 4

Understanding Worldviews

Session Goals

To better understand the components and implications of a worldview, discuss competing worldviews and aid believers in the development and articulation of the Christian worldview.

Areas of Study

- What is a Worldview?
- Testing Your Worldview
- Competing Worldviews
- Uniqueness of the Christian Worldview
- Main Components of the Christian Worldview
- Worldview Questions

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. *Colossians 1:15-20*

What is a Worldview?

What is a worldview? (Modern-Secular)

"Through our worldview, we determine priorities, explain our relationship to God and fellow human beings, assess the meaning of events, and justify our actions." *Philosopher Michael Palmer*

What is a worldview?

A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world. *James W. Sire, Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*

What is a worldview?

A worldview is not only the way we perceive the world and interpret it, but it also provides the framework for how we live out what we believe. Worldviews are important because they shape actions.

Worldview: deeply held beliefs about the makeup of the world around us.

What a worldview must answer

- How did we get here?
- What is the nature of the world around us?
- What is a human being?
- What happens when I die?
- How do we know right from wrong?
- What is the meaning of life?

What a worldview must answer (more simply)

- Where did we come from and where are we going (creation/afterlife)?
- What's wrong with the world (fall)?
- What can we do to fix it (redemption)?

Worldview Components

- Comprehensive
- Related to reality
- Basic convictions and beliefs
- Not necessarily logically coherent
- Not always consciously conceived

Worldviews determine people's opinions on matters of morality, economics and politics. They strongly influence our opinion on:

- Raising children
- Poverty
- Political candidates
- Foreign aid
- War
- The environment
- Animal rights
- Abortion
- Sex

"I believe in Christianity, not because I see it, but because by it...I see everything else."

—C.S. Lewis

Testing Your Worldview

What must a worldview have in order to be persuasive?

- A strong foundation in correspondence.
 - Does it provide factual support and agreement with the real world?
 - Problem: Relativists believe that A and non-A can both be true at the same time.
 - Problem: Hindus believe that the material world is an illusion.
- A high degree of coherence.
 - Can you apply it consistently and does it contain internal contradictions?
 - Problem: Atheists believe cave drawings are the product of design but cannot apply the

same principles when discussing the solar system or the human eye.

- Problem: Book of Mormon (Alma 7:10) states Jesus was born in Jerusalem while the Bible (Matthews 2:1) states he was born in Bethlehem.
- Problem: There are so many contradictions in the Koran that Surah 2:106 states: “nothing of our revelation do we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but we bring in place one better.” Philosopher Abu Al walid Muhammad Ibn-rushd developed the Theory of Double Truth in the 12th century to solve the contraction problems in the Koran.
- Explanatory power.
 - Does it connect the dots of life?
 - Problem: New agers believe we are gods; atheists believe we are apes; the Bible claims we are made in the image of God, yet fallen. Which explains mankind best?
- More than one line of evidence.
 - Do we find support in experience, science, philosophy, etc.?
 - Problem: The answer to most questions put to the Muslim is, “because the Koran says so.”
 - Problem: Many atheists believe science is the only source of truth.
 - Problem: Book of Mormon lacks any archeological support.
- Do the prophets words come to pass?
 - And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. *Deuteronomy 18:21-22*
 - Joseph Smith founder of the Mormons: “it was the will of God that they should be ordained to the ministry and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, for the coming of the Lord, which was nigh - even fifty six years should wind up the scene.” (*History of the Church, Vol. 2, page 182*). Fifty six years passed in 1891.
 - Charles Russell founder of Jehovah’s Witness, “The seven times will end in A.D. 1914; when Jerusalem shall be delivered forever ... when Gentile Governments shall have been dashed to pieces; when God shall have poured out of his fury upon the nations and they acknowledge him King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” *Bible Examiner October, 1876 "Gentile Times: When Do They End?" pp 27–8:*

“Nobody is without a worldview: the question is whether it is a good one or a bad one. On the basis of the worldview we make the momentary judgments of life.” —*Ravi Zacharias*

Competing Worldviews

Fundamental assumptions of different philosophies

- Agnosticism – Belief that knowledge of God’s existence is not knowable.
- Atheism/Naturalism – Material world is all there is.
- Animism – Everything is spiritualized.
- Pantheism – Everyone and everything is god.
- Polytheism– Many gods are the source of life and truth.
- Monism – God is an unknowable, impersonal oneness.
- Relativism – Individual’s perceptions and beliefs are the source of truth.
- Skepticism – Everything must be questioned.
- Theism – Existence of a transcendent, personal God.
- Multiculturalism – All cultures are an equally valid source of truth.
- Pluralism – All religious paths lead to god.
- Pragmatism – Truth and worth is determined by practical outcomes. Put another way, “The Ends justify the means”.
- Utilitarianism - The belief that usefulness is the standard of what is good. The greatest good for the greatest number.
- Utopianism – Enlightenment notion that human nature is essentially good and consequently can reach perfection.
- Determinism – The belief that for every event, including human action, there exist conditions that could cause no other event.

Some worldview perspectives

Pluralism

Sikhism

- God – Pantheistic oneness
- Holy Books - Guru Granth Sahib;
- Founder -Guru Nanak, 1400s
- Creation – Eternal
- Problem of mankind - Five thieves; ego, anger, greed, attachment, and lust
- Redemption – Meditation, avoid evil
- Afterlife – Union with Akai

Bahá'í

Non personal, unknowable creator
 Many writing
 Bahá'u'lláh, 1800s
 From nothing
 Pride or self-centeredness
 Follow your religion, daily prayer
 Pass to another world

Hindu

- God – Brahma is Ultimate Reality. 330M other gods

- Creation – Brahma ascended from a flower that came from Vishnu's navel, from that flower he created the universe.
- Founder – No known founder.
- Holy Books - Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads
- Problem of mankind – Ignorance/ego
- Redemption –Releasing ourselves from the individual ego: three distinct paths. The Upanishads state that whoever becomes fully aware of the ātman as the innermost core of one's own self, realizes an identity with Brahman and thereby reaches moksha (liberation or freedom). Second path is Darhma which is righteous living.
- View of the world – All is an illusion.
- Adultery– Adultery is wrong, but polygamy was acceptable in India until 1954. Many incarnations of Vishnu were polygamists.
- Afterlife – Reincarnation or Moksha and thus freedom from birth and rebirth.

New Age

- God – He is a Cosmic Mind or Consciousness and is the universal oneness.
- Holy Book – All of life's answers are found within. Important books: A Course in Miracles by Helen Schucman, A New Earth by Eckhart Tolle.
- Creation – All is god and all is eternal.
- Problem of mankind – Ignorance of our divine nature.
- Redemption – Find your own path, which should include getting in touch with and raising of consciousness, awakening the god inside.
- View of the world – We are all gods, all part of oneness.
- Adultery – Inner voice, love
- Afterlife – Karma/Reincarnation or Nirvana

Buddhist

- God – Does not necessarily exist, rather life and the universe is a cycle.
- Holy Books - The Mahāsāṃghika, Mūlasarvāstivāda, Pali Canon, Chinese Buddhist canon, Kangyur.
- Founder - Siddhartha Gautama, between 6th & 4th century BC
- Creation – Universe always existed
- Problem of mankind – Desire
- Redemption – Release ourselves from desire through meditation and following the eightfold path, rituals, etc. Redemption is – freedom from suffering.
- View of the world – Our existence is suffering.
- Adultery – Wrong because it disrupts family and society

- Afterlife – Reincarnation or Nirvana

Judaism

- God – Is personal and relational
- Holy Book – The Tanakh consists of the Torah (teachings), Nevi'im (prophets) Ketuvim (writings), and The Talmud
- Founder – Abraham, Moses
- Creation – In the beginning, image of God
- Problem of mankind – Sin
- Redemption – keep the law, blood sacrifice
- View of the world – Good and evil, right and wrong
- Adultery – Sin, judgment
- Afterlife – Heaven and no after life

Islam

- God – One god, but not knowable or relational
- Holy Book- Quran
- Founder – Muhammad, 570-632
- Creation– Creation in seven days
- Problem of mankind – Disobedience
- Redemption – Accept Mohammed as a prophet of god and our good deeds must outweigh our bad deeds on the Day of Judgment or die in holy war. Follow the Five Pillars of Islam.
- View of the world– Muslim and non-Muslim, Sunni and Shia
- Adultery – It is sin but different consequences for male and female. Polygamy is permitted.
- Afterlife – Heaven and hell

Mormon

- God – Many gods with one central god over this planet
- Holy Book- Bible, The Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, Doctrine and Covenants
- Founder – Joseph Smith, 1820s
- Creation – Intelligent matter always existed. Father-God was one of the intelligences that progressed from spirit to a human body. He died, was resurrected, and now reigns from star called Kolob.
- Problem of mankind – Disobedience/ignorance

- Redemption – Accept Joseph Smith as a prophet of god, tithe, follow ordinances and laws, participate in Mormon rituals and subsequently become a god.
- Adultery – Sin, but polygamy was accepted until 1890. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were both polygamists.
- Afterlife – After death, those who have followed Mormon doctrine enjoy a state of being known as the Celestial Kingdom. They are exalted to godhood and have the opportunity to continue the cycle by creating their own spirit children.

Scientology

- God – Eighth Dynamic or Supreme Being is revealed personally through each individual. There exists a life energy or force (Theta) beyond and within all.
- Creation – Supernatural souls called "thetans" created the world. According to Scientology our innermost selves are in fact these same souls that have since lost those remarkable creating abilities of the past. Then 75 million years ago there existed an entire Galactic Confederation composed of 76 inhabited planets and led by an evil ruler named Xenu. Xenu decided to mass murder trillions of these Galactic Confederation people and then had them shipped here to the Earth. So the dead space aliens were put into volcanoes and blown up. Then the spirits of the space aliens started infesting these bodies.
- Problem of mankind – Experience, in this or in previous lives, is recorded in the brain as a series of "engrams" which prevent us from achieving one with god.
- Redemption – It is achieved with proper counseling. The goal is to erase these deposits (engrams) and therefore release the essential, spiritual self or soul.
- View of the world – Good may be defined as constructive behavior or enhancing survival. Evil may be defined as destructive.
- Adultery example – According to Hubbard, it is "undesirable activity, since it is non-survival not to have a well ordered system for the creation and upbringing of children, by families."
- After Life - Rebirths continue until one consciously confronts all pre-birth, current-life, and previous-life traumas and subsequently realizing one's true nature as a "thetan," an immortal spirit ...becoming one with god. Found in the seventh dynamic.

Secularism

- God – Does not exist
- Creation – The Humanist Manifesto 1933
- Problem of mankind – Society
- Redemption – Good government/science
- View of the world – Good or bad government

- Adultery example – Enhancing our survival
- Afterlife – Grave

Christian

- God – Is personal and relational
- Holy Book – The Bible
- Founder – Jesus Christ
- Creation – In the beginning, image of God
- Problem of mankind – Sin
- Redemption – By grace through faith
- View of the world – Good and evil, right and wrong
- Adultery – Sin, judgment
- Afterlife – Heaven and Hell

Uniqueness of the Christian Worldview

What sets Christianity apart?

- God is knowable, close and comprehensible, not abstract and distant.
- God is personal and relational.
- He is a God of justice and love.
- The problem of sin and a bad conscience is dealt with decisively.
- It is grounded on historical events rather than mythical events.
- Our sacred text is confirmed by fulfilled prophesy.
- The authenticity of our Founder is supported by signs and wonders.
- Salvation is based on grace, not human effort.
- The Christian worldview is supported by science, logic and philosophy.
- Christianity reflects reality.

Main components of the Christian Worldview

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. *Hebrews 1:1-4*

- God is the transcendent Creator.
 - Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- Mankind has unique value.
 - Genesis 1:27 In the image of God He created him male and female.
 - John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son.
- Biblical foundation
 - John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word ...and the Word was God.
- Deity of Christ
 - John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- Exclusivity
 - John 14:6 I am the way the truth and the life no one come to the Father except through Me.
- Relationship based on covenant
 - Genesis 9:9 I will establish My covenant with you ...
 - Mark 14:24 ...is My blood of the New Covenant
- Redemption based on grace
 - Romans 10:9 If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead you shall be saved.
 - Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is a gift from God.
- Duty
 - John 15:12 Love one another.

- I John 5:2 Love God and keep His commandments.
- James 1:27 Care for orphans and widows.
- Virtue
 - John 15:12 Love one another.
 - I Peter 1:15 ...you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written “be holy, for I am holy.”
- Afterlife
 - John 3:15 Believe in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

I am totally convinced the Christian faith is the most coherent worldview around. Everyone: pantheist, atheist, skeptic, polytheist has to answer these questions: Where did I come from? What is life's meaning? How do I define right from wrong and what happens to me when I die? Those are the fulcrum points of our existence. I deal with cultural issues whether they be in the Middle East, Far East, the Orient or the West. You broach questions in the context of their culture and then present the Christian answers. *Ravi Zacharias*

Worldview Questions

Rules for evangelism

- Rule #1 Do not assume because someone says “I’m a Hindu, Buddhist or Jewish” that they adhere to all the teachings of the Vedas, Buddha or the Hebrew Bible. Ask lots of questions.
- Rule #2 Be sensitive and respectful of what they believe.
- Rule #3 Find common ground as soon as possible.
- Rule #4 Stay focused on the big issues.

**The Most Important
Rule in Evangelism:
Ask lots of questions**

Jewish

- General Rule: Focus on the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the Messianic prophecies.
- Common Ground: Old Testament, Jesus followed Jewish tradition.
- Do you believe your Hebrew Bible as the word of God?

- Do you follow the Law of Moses every day?
- How do you deal with sin now that you no longer sacrifice at the temple?
- Did you know that the Hebrew prophets promised a Messiah would come?
- Have you read Isaiah 53?
- Did you know Jesus claimed to be the Jewish Messiah?

Mormon

- General Rule: Focus on Biblical and Mormon scripture.
- Common Ground: The Bible
- How can you be sure Joseph Smith was a true prophet?
- How would you compare Joseph Smith to Jesus?
- 2 Nephi 25:23 states “it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.” Ephesians 2:8 states: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Mormons believe marriage is eternal while Jesus stated we won’t be married in Heaven. How do you resolve the conflicts between the Bible and the Book of Mormon?
- How do you resolve the claims in the Book of Mormons of African elephants living in North America, American Indians being descendants of the Jewish people, large cities that have never been discovered and so forth?
- Are there any prophecies to support the Book of Mormon?
- Mormon doctrine states that the Bible was corrupted, yet we have manuscripts from the second century, when was it corrupted?
- 2 Nephi 26:12 states that Jesus is the eternal God; if he is eternal how is it that Mormons claim he was created?
- How do you explain changing doctrines such as polygamy and formal ban on black priests?
- I Nephi 18:25, II Nephi 12:7, and other verses refer to horses and cattle in the Americas during the first century which we know did not get here until the Europeans brought them in 1500s ...how do you explain this?

Jehovah’s Witness

- General Rule: Focus on Biblical scripture.

- Common Ground: The Bible
- How do you know the Watchtower is the prophetic arm of God?
- How is it that the Bible states that only God is holy and at the same time that Jesus is holy?
- Isaiah 45:6 states: “there is none besides Me, I am Jehovah (God), and there is none else. How is it that the Watchtower claims that Jesus is, “a god”?
- John 5:18 states that Jesus was killed because He made himself equal to God. Does the Watchtower know something the first century Jews did not?
- Mark 16:17 states that “these signs will follow *those who believe*: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues ... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover...” Does the Watchtower follow these verses?
- In John 14:9 Jesus states: he who hath seen Me hath seen the Father. It does not say you’ve seen someone “like” the Father as the Watchtower claims, how do you explain this?

Muslim

- General Rule: Focus on the forgiveness of God; don’t be critical of the Koran or Mohammed.
- Common Ground: Jesus as prophet, one God and a day of judgment.
- How can you be sure you will be going to heaven?
- How do you think you will do on the Day of Judgment?
- What is it about Mohammed’s life that would lead one to believe he was a prophet?
- The Koran says Jesus performed miracles and was born of a virgin; have you read about his life in the New Testament?
- The Koran states that the New Testament was corrupted, and yet we have manuscripts from the second century; when was it corrupted?
- Does the Koran contain prophecies like the Bible?

Buddhist

- General Rule: Because the Law of Karma and liberation is so hopelessly remote, keep the idea of forgiveness through Christ at the forefront of all your conversations with Buddhists. Also, focus on a personal, knowable God.
- Common Ground: Law of Karma, mankind is broken

- Is there forgiveness for bad Karma?
- How many people in existence do you know that have obtained Nirvana?
- How much Karma have you accumulated?
- How can you be sure Buddha's message is true?
- Is desire really a bad thing: aren't there good desires?
- Will eliminating desire really eliminate suffering?
- Hasn't science proved that the universe had a beginning?

New Age

- General Rule: The New Ager will not find comfort in their impersonal Cosmic Mind; therefore, focus on a personal God who is able to care for us and guide us. Also, question the authority of their source.
- Common Ground: Love as the cardinal virtue
- If we are in fact gods, shouldn't we at least have the ability to perform small miracles?
- Is your god a god of love? Why is he so far off?
- You say you don't believe in hell, but isn't coming back as a fly or in poverty much like Hell?
- By what authority are these gurus teaching? Can't they be wrong?
- Aren't there conflicts between many of the views of New Agers?
- I see so much evil in the world: if all is god, then isn't god evil too?
- How do you attain Enlightenment (salvation)? Isn't this based on human effort rather than on forgiveness?
- You say you don't like a judgmental God, but isn't your concept of reincarnation judgment rather than forgiveness?

Hindu

- General Rule: Because the Law of Karma and liberation is so hopelessly remote, keep the idea of forgiveness through Christ at the forefront of all your conversations with Hindus.
- Common Ground: Law of Karma, mankind is broken

- Does Brahman offer love and forgiveness?
- If this is all really just an illusion, why look both ways before crossing the street?
- How do you know the Vedas are sacred?
- How do you explain all the different versions of Hinduism? Which one is right?
- If Brahman is Ultimate Reality, why is he impersonal and far off?

Atheist

- General Rule: Focus on the cosmological and teleological (design) arguments.
- Common Ground: The universe, solar system and life are very complex.
- How did the universe begin?
- Does evolution explain the origin of life and the universe?
- How can science disprove God's existence?
- How do you get conscious life from a non-conscious material world?
- Can chance answer for all the complexity and design we see in the universe?
- If all life emerged by chance (random mutations), wouldn't the evolution of an eye be in the same category as a miracle?

Recommended Resources

- *Understanding Worldviews*, Keathley IV, H.
- *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*, James W. Sire
- *Understanding the Times: The Collision of Today's Competing Worldviews*, David Noebel
- *A Compact Guide to World Religions*, Dean Halverson
- *Foundations of Apologetics: Understanding Worldviews*, Ravi Zacharias (DVD, Vol. 4)
- *The Establishment of a Worldview*, Stuart McAllister (CD)
- *The Real Face of Atheism*, Ravi Zacharias (Appendix 2)

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 5

Evolution, Naturalism and Creation

Session Goals

To better understand the inconsistencies and implications of Naturalism and Darwinian Evolution and how they relate to the creation account.

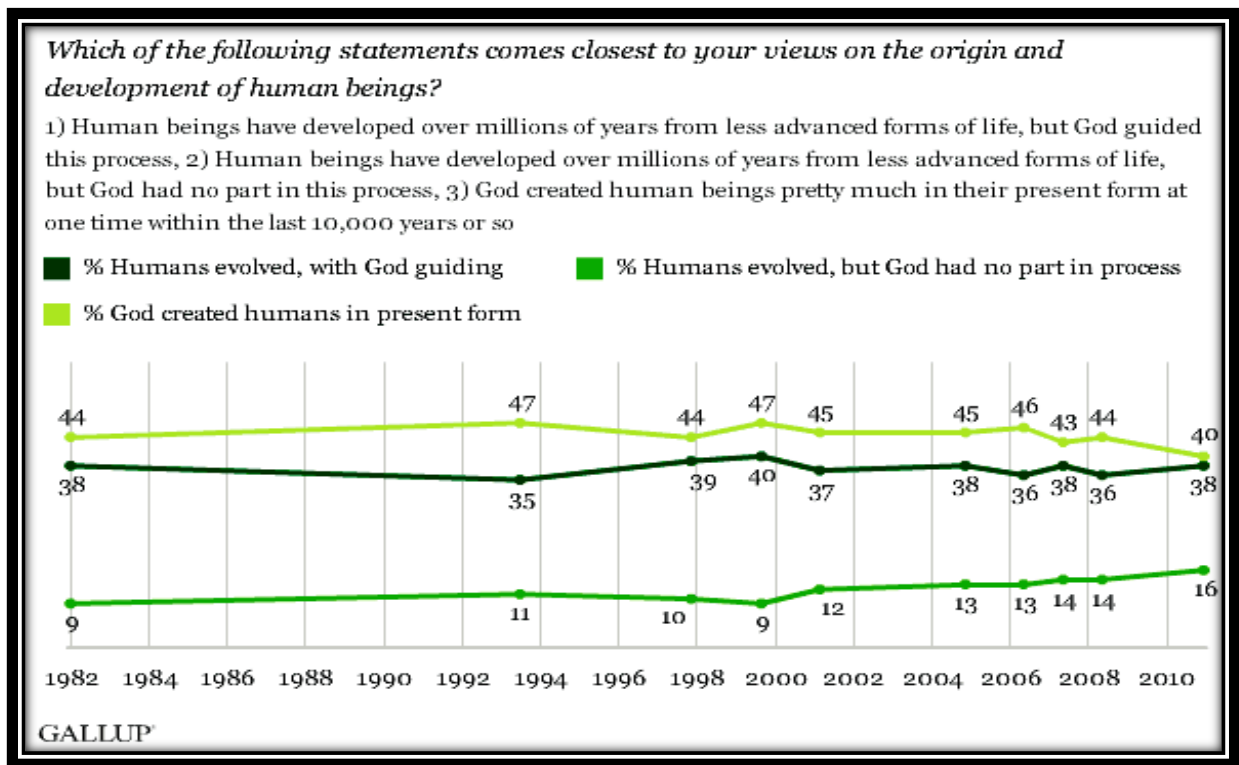
Areas of Study

- The Challenge
- Common Questions from Skeptics
- What is Evolution?
- What is Naturalism?
- Problems with Naturalism
- Two Types of Evolution
- Evolution and Biology
- Natural Selection
- Fossil Record
- Human Evolution
- Consequences of Evolution
- Questions for the Evolutionists
- Common Questions from Skeptics (revisited)

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. *2 Tim 4:3-4*

The Challenge

How serious is the problem?



This 2010 study indicates that 54% of Americans believe mankind evolved from primates.

21st Century Inquisition

- Recently courts in Cobb County Georgia ruled it unlawful to print disclaimers in science textbooks that state *Evolution is just a theory*. Even though evolution really is just a theory.
- Ruling in the Dover Pennsylvania case, a federal district judge wrote, “The fact that a scientific theory cannot yet render an explanation on every point should not be used as a pretext to thrust an untestable alternative hypothesis grounded in religion.” In other words, one untestable hypothesis should not substitute our favorite untestable hypothesis, evolution.

Teaching only one side of an argument and suppressing the other side:

- Science
- Bias
- Indoctrination

If you insist on teaching your children falsehoods – that the earth is flat, that man is not a product of evolution by natural selection – then you must expect at the very least that those of us who have freedom of speech will feel free to describe your teachings as the spreading of falsehoods, and will attempt to demonstrate this to your children at our earliest opportunity. Our future well-being – the well-being of all of us on the planet – depends on the education of our descendants. *Daniel Dennett, Darwin's Dangerous Idea*

Disclaimer

The statements in this section do not represent the views of the author or the teacher of this material. What they represent is the leading views on evolution held among evolutionists and educators. Rather than introduce new evidence and then debate the evolutionists on whose evidence is better, this section seeks to discredit the evolutionary paradigm using the very evidence they claim.

Common Questions from Skeptics

- Isn't Evolution a fact?
- Hasn't Evolution disproved God?
- Aren't most scientist atheist?
- Can you be a Christian and an evolutionist?
- Don't apes and humans have 96% identical DNA?
- Doesn't the Bible state that the earth is flat?
- Doesn't the Bible state that the earth is 6,000 years old?
- Why do so many scientists believe evolution?

What is Evolution?

Why is Evolution necessary?

- Why is Darwinian Evolution necessary to the atheist?
 - It gives intellectual credibility to the atheists' assumptions.
 - The alternative is little green Martians.
- What does atheism have in common with the New Age and the Garden of Eden?
 - If there is no God, then you can be your own god.
- Why is atheism so appealing?
 - Because if there is no God, then I am not accountable for my actions.
 - I can make up my own morality which will be grounded in physical pleasure.
 - It is presented as a logical, sequential hypothesis.
- Does evolution prove there is no God?
 - To date evolutionists have not performed any experiments to support or reject the God hypothesis.
 - Evolution does not test for God or the metaphysical; rather it is a theory about the evolution of species.

What is the scientific method?

Reproducing or observing an event, in a controlled environment to support or reject a hypothesis.

Can science disprove God?

Scientists only test natural causes, not supernatural events.

What is a theory?

An explanation of some aspect of the natural world; an organized system of knowledge that applies in a variety of circumstances to explain a specific set of phenomena; theories can incorporate facts and laws and tested hypotheses, true in fact and theory.

Bad theory, superstition, myth

A claim or belief about a process which is untestable and purely speculative. Example: Einstein's Static Universe, Cold Fusion, Galileo theory on tides, Multiverse.

Good theory

- Can be replicated
- Can be verified by observations
- Make predictions

Is evolution good theory?

- Can it be replicated? No, because it supposedly only happens over millions of years.
- Can it be verified? No, because it cannot be replicated.
- Can it make predictions? No, because supposedly there is not enough time to witness the results of any experiments. Darwin did make prediction about what we could expect to find in the fossil record.

Some theories that were ridiculed

The scientific community likes to claim the high moral ground and give the impression that the scientific process brings us perfect information. Nevertheless, the history of science is filled with a plethora of blunders. Example of theories that were initially ridiculed and ostracized: Germ Theory, Solar Wind Theory, Continental Drift Theory, Black Holes, DNA, etc.

What is the Theory of Evolution?

- Change over time? No
- Change within a species? No
- All species emerged from a common ancestor through the process of random mutations and natural selection.
- Evolution is gradualism.
- What is a species: the largest group of organisms capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring.
- Evolution involves the emergence of NEW species.
- Can evolution “develop” anything for species to adapt?
No, it works randomly and with lots of luck produces features necessary for adaptation at just the right time.

Evolution: beneficial random mutations appear and subsequently nature selects them, while

Evolution and time

- Initially, the theory needed hundreds of billions of years to support its claims, and they had it as the prevailing theory at the beginning of the 20th century as the Steady State Theory. Then things began to change:
 - Steady State Theory – Universe is eternal – evolution has all the time in the world.
 - General Relativity – Universe had a beginning about 13.4 billion years ago.
 - Earth is dated – Earth had a beginning 3.6 billion years ago.
 - Cambrian explosion is dated – First complex life 550,000 million years ago.
 - Mass extinctions – Four extinctions separated by only millions of years.

Dissenters of Darwinism

Over the past century many predicted that science would be free from any trace of religious belief as a consequence of the evolutionary paradigm. A 2009 study by the Pew Research Center of scientists who are members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, found that just over half of scientists (51%) believe in some form of deity or higher power. More specifically, 33% of scientists say they believe in God, while 18% believe in a universal spirit or higher power. The same study was performed with the same questions back in 1914 and again in 1996. Surprisingly American scientists answered almost the same way as their 1914 counterparts. Therefore, it is clear that new knowledge is not influencing scientists in any direction, which starts at an early age in America and Europe. *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press survey, conducted in May and June 2009, David Masci, Senior Researcher, Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life.*

More than half of
all scientists
believe in some
kind of God

Discovery Institute publishes a list of prominent scientists who reject Darwinian evolution. The scientists on this list dispute the first claims of evolution. Since Discovery Institute launched this list in 2001, hundreds of scientists have courageously stepped forward to sign their names. The list, which exceeds 1,200 signatures, is growing and includes scientists from the US National Academy of Sciences, Russian, Hungarian and Czech National Academies, as well as from universities such as Yale, Princeton, Stanford, MIT, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and others. It can be found at www.dissentfromdarwin.org.

What is Naturalism?

What is naturalism?

Naturalism commonly refers to the viewpoint that laws of nature (as opposed to supernatural ones) operate in the universe, and that nothing exists beyond the natural universe. Adherents of naturalism (naturalists) assert that natural laws are the rules that govern the structure and behavior of the natural universe, that the universe is a product of these laws. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

- Naturalism is a philosophy encompassing the entire structure of the universe where Evolution is a biological theory about the development of the animals and humans.
- “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.” *Carl Sagan, Cosmos*

Not all evolutionists are naturalists as many are even Bible believers. Almost all naturalists are evolutionists in that evolution is the prominent explanation for a godless world. But even here there are those who remain atheists and still admit that evolution fails to explain the natural world with all its complexity. The most recent high profile defectors are University of Chicago molecular biologist James Shapiro who wrote, *Evolution: A View from the 21st Century* and New York University Philosopher Thomas Nagel who wrote *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False*.

Problems with Naturalism

Can a monkey be trusted to arrive at truth?

“But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?” *Charles Darwin Down, Letter to Beckenham, Kent. July 3rd. 1881*

Natural selection selects for survivability not truth ability. Therefore, can our minds be reliable for arriving at truth as nothing in natural selection “selects” for reasoning or acquiring truth? “Our cognitive faculties are selected for their survival value, not their truth value.” Alvin Plantinga, *Analytical Philosopher, University of Notre Dame*

Can chance and smashing molecules arrive at truth?

Imagine riding in a train on your way to Alabama. While looking out the window you spot a beautiful arrangement of rocks that read: Alabama Ten Miles Ahead. You ask the attendant

about your location who goes on to say that that sign was the result of a mudslide which caused the rocks to fall in that arrangement. Do you still trust that Alabama is ten miles ahead?

Can a chaotic event produce something as structured and orderly as logic and subsequently arrive at truth?

Therefore, how could a naturalist even depend on reason and logic? Of course, they will make their case by using logic and reason, which is circular reasoning.

Does naturalism require faith and a belief in miracles?

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” – This is a statement of faith. Because we cannot go back in time we cannot know with certainty; therefore it requires the element of faith.

“The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.” – In the same way this is a statement of faith. Because we cannot go back in time we cannot know with certainty; therefore once again the element of faith.

A miracle can be defined as an event that is so improbable it cannot be explained as an ordinary natural event. For example, suppose a six is required from the roll of the dice to win at the black jack table. If you were to roll a six, this would be a natural event. On the other hand, if you kept rolling the dice and you got 10 sixes in a row, people would begin to think someone tampered with the dice. If you rolled 1,000 straight sixes, this would no longer be chance, but a miracle as it is so vastly improbable.

The degree of improbability involved in the development of an eye, kidney, solar system, atmosphere, bacteria, etc. is such that it could only be classified as a miracle. Coincidence, chance or natural events cannot explain this.

The universality of religion

The fact that 90% of Americans have had a religious experience puts a heavy burden on naturalists. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147887/Americans-Continue-Believe-God.aspx>

The naturalists' response is that religious people are hallucinating or it's a neurological response to what we believe, or we are just plain lying about it.

Suppose you went to a village, and 90% of the people said they knew a person named Bill. Then the other 5% said these people were hallucinating, and the other 5% said they were making it up. Who do we believe?

Near Death Experiences

Scientific research into near-death-experience (NDE) has been going on since the 70s with the work of Dr. Raymond Moody Jr. Investigations have now documented thousands of cases of out-of-body experiences. One of the leading researchers, Dr. Atwater records the events of over 3,000 adults and 277 children who have had NDE.

Dr. Pim van Lommel conducted the most impressive clinical study, which covered 12 hospitals and 300 people. The conclusions are startling. “Every single skeptical theory or argument put forward to explain NDEs has been disproved and discredited by clinical research.” Lommel’s findings were published in the highly respected international journal, *The Lancet*, where he concludes, “Our results show that medical factors alone cannot account for the occurrences of NDE.” Countless cases reveal information about events the subjects could not have otherwise known while they were lying in the hospital bed. Legally blind subjects report accounts which could not have otherwise been reported had they not been able to see during the event.

A cause must be sufficient to account for the effect

Suppose you walked into my house one day and you saw a beautiful painting of a sunset hanging on the wall. You noticed it was signed and so you asked me who the artist is. I tell you that one day I had left some canvass and some paint outside and the next morning I found this painting complete and next to it was a frog with the brush in his hand finishing the job. So I concluded that the frog painted the sunset. You would think I was crazy because frogs are not sufficient to account for beautiful paintings.

When an atheist speaks of the universe appearing from nothing, the solar system coming together by chance or an eye, butterfly or kidney coming together by natural selection we have to conclude that the cause is not nearly sufficient to account for the effect, as there is an unthinkable amount of precision, information and purpose behind all of them. It is more likely that a rabbit wrote the Encyclopedia Britannica.

- A painting implies a painter
- A computer program implies a programmer
- A book implies an author
- The universe implies a creator

Consciousness

Consciousness is the quality or state of being aware of an external object or something within oneself. It has been defined as: subjectivity, awareness, sentience, the ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood, and the executive control system of the mind.
Wikipedia

In 2004, eight neuroscientists felt it was too soon for a definition. "We have no idea how consciousness emerges from the physical activity of the brain and we do not know whether consciousness can emerge from non-biological systems, such as computers..." *Human Brain Function*

"The evolution of the capacity to simulate seems to have culminated in subjective consciousness. Why this should have happened is, to me, the most profound mystery facing modern biology." —*Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene*

The Cosmological Argument

1. All things that begin to exist have causes.
 2. The universe had a beginning;
 3. therefore, the universe had a cause.
- That cause, must be outside the whole universe in order to create it.
 - There cannot be an infinite number of causes therefore there must be a first cause.
 - Nothing in the universe can create itself as that would be a contradiction. If it created itself, it must have existed before it was created (to do the creating).

The Moral Argument *Romans 2:15*

The moral argument begins with the fact that all people recognize some moral code (that some things are right, and some things are wrong). Every time we argue over right and wrong, we appeal to a higher law that we assume everyone is aware of, holds to, and is not free to arbitrarily change. Right and wrong imply a higher standard or law, and law requires a lawgiver. Because the Moral Law transcends humanity, this universal law requires a universal Lawgiver.

- Murder is always wrong.
- Rape is always wrong.
- Stealing is always wrong

Does naturalism/atheism cause bad moral behavior?

While naturalism/atheism does not promote bad behavior, what it does do is remove the moral impediments to such behavior. And while many atheists still choose good behavior, particularly here in the West where we have strong criminal and civil laws, many will choose bad behavior without any restrictions or guilt.

Two Types of Evolution

Micro-evolution: changes within a species

In 1973 Peter and Rosemary Grant arrived on the Galapagos Islands to witness evolution firsthand. They spent several years meticulously documenting the finches and their morphological makeup. Due to a drought in 1977, the Grants witnessed nature select finches with bigger beaks as the population of finches with small beaks declined to about 15 percent of the original number, while the finches with larger beaks increased by 5 percent, which is significant. Natural selection at work, right? Well, that's what was published in scientific journals and textbooks all over the world.

Then, in 1983 the islands experienced heavy rains, and the food source of the finches once again became abundant. So in 1987 Peter Grant returned to the islands to check evolution's progress. What he found was that the finches' beaks had returned to their original size, which he interpreted as "a reversal in the direction of selection."

- With no net effect of evolutionary change you would think the entire experiment would no longer serve as evidence, yet to this day the research can still be found in textbooks all over America.
- We've bred big dogs and little dogs – but we've never turned a dog into a horse. Change WITHIN a species is possible, but all species have their limits. Change within a species is not Evolution.

Micro-Evolution: small
changes within the species

Macro-Evolution: new
anatomically different
species emerge

Macro-evolution: The idea that new species emerge due to random mutations and natural selection.

Evolution and Biology

Evolution and the origin of life

"If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down." Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*

"The complexity of the simplest known type of cell is so great that it is impossible to accept that such an object could have been thrown together suddenly by some kind of freakish, vastly

improbable, event. Such an occurrence would be indistinguishable from a miracle.” *Michael Denton, Atheist and Microbiologist*

Singled cell life and the modern city

Singled celled life is as complex as a modern city, except that it fits in the head of a needle making it vastly more precise. Both contain:

- Energy plant
- Highways
- Defense department
- Hospital
- Data processing center
- Manufacturing plant
- Sewage plant
- Library

After decades of research, the mystery to the origins of life on earth remains unsolved

No theory available today for the origin of life. Why?

The Human Genome

- Our entire DNA sequence is called a genome.
- There’s an estimated 3 billion DNA bases in our genome.
- It would take a person typing 60 words per minute, eight hours a day, around 50 years to type the human genome.
- Our entire DNA sequence would fill 200 1,000-page New York City telephone directories.

Evolution and time

Evolutionists claim that we have not witnessed evolution because there is not enough time as it takes millions of years and thousands of generations. Yet, the most extensive and longest running investigation has been undertaken by Richard Lenski of Michigan State University, who has been continuously growing cultures of *E. coli* in his laboratory since the late 1980s and monitoring the facets of their evolution. Because they have a short life span, the number of generations he has produced has approached 50,000. Lenski’s investigation is large enough and long enough to give solid, reliable answers to many questions about evolution. Nonetheless, all of the mutations identified to date can readily be classified as either modification-of-function or loss-of-function. *Behe, M.J. 2010. Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations, and ‘The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution.’ Quarterly Review of Biology 85,*

Random mutations

In the most open-ended laboratory evolution experiment (Lenski 2004), in which no specific selection pressure was intentionally brought to bear, all of the adaptive mutations that have been so far identified have either been loss-of-function or modification-of-function mutations, and there is strong reason to believe that most of the modification-of-function mutations diminished protein activity. *Behe, M.J. 2010. Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations, and 'The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution.'* *Quarterly Review of Biology* 85, 419-445

With almost all mutations recorded being detrimental to the species rather than beneficial it is more likely that species would have gone extinct rather than evolving into more complex creatures.

The example of mutations used by evolutionary biologists is the four winged fruit fly which can still be found in textbooks today. The problem with four winged fruit flies is that they can't fly and therefore reduce the survivability of the fly rather than enhance it.

Imagine a manual for assembling a child's wagon. Would randomly changing letters in the manual improve the manual? Would duplicating sections of the manual improve it? Clearly these types of changes would destroy information rather than create new information. Biological evolution assumes that such random changes not only could change the wagon, but these random "mutations" would evolve the wagon into a car and eventually a plane, and then even a space shuttle. *Cornell University geneticist Dr. John Sanford, Genetic Entropy and the Mystery of the Genome*

Human DNA and monkeys

What about the evolutionist's claim that our DNA is 95 to 98 percent similar to monkeys? Can changes in the DNA sequence bring about new species? No, because the differences at the chemical base level are still in the millions. The DNA in a zebra fish is 92 percent similar to monkeys yet you never see them swimming together.

The amount of information in the 3 billion base pairs in the DNA in every human cell has been estimated to be equivalent to that in 1,000 books of encyclopedia size. If humans were 'only' 4% different this still amounts to 120 million base pairs, equivalent to approximately 12 million words, or 40 large books of information. This is surely an impossible barrier for mutations (random changes) to cross. *W.J. ReMine, The Biotic Message (St. Paul Science, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1993), pp. 215-217*

"Every living species has its own unique, matching number of chromosomes. An animal with 13 cannot mate with a species with 12 or 14 chromosomes. Whenever that rare mismatch does happen, such as a horse mating with a donkey to produce a mule, the offspring are usually sterile or monster-like....If we are descendants of amphibians, which have 13 pairs of chromosomes, not only did the original 13 chromosomes change, but 10 chromosomes, with

approximately 130 million chemical bases on each, were added. That would be like replacing half the books in the Library of Congress and then adding ten new wings full of books, one text at a time, in correct numerical order...all without a plan. All perhaps done with a blind librarian.” Dr. Geoffrey Simmons, *What Darwin Didn't Know*

DNA points to a common ancestor or common Creator?

- DNA = similar blue prints?
- Same argument can be made for a common Creator.

Evolving microbes?

In November 2004 *National Geographic* published an article by David Quammen titled “Was Darwin Wrong?” Early on he assures us that in fact Darwin was not wrong because the evidence is overwhelming. He cites the best research, including the Peter Gant study which we’ve already discussed along with the discredited pepper moth studies. And here’s his best evidence: “The capacity for quick change among disease-causing microbes is what makes them so dangerous to large numbers of people...By natural selection they acquire resistance to drugs that should kill them. They evolve. There’s no better or more immediate evidence supporting Darwinian theory than this process of forced transformation among our inimical germs...These antibiotic-resistant strains represent an evolutionary series, not much different from the fossil series tracing horse evolution from Hyracotherium to Equus.”

- Problem: They’re still microbes.

Information theory

The Second Law of Thermal Dynamics states that the heat in the universe always moves from order to disorder. Information Theory, its close cousin, demonstrates that over time information will always diminish rather than advance. For example, the further we go back in time, the harder it is to piece together archeological findings because information is diminishing. If you close your garage door and come back ten years later, the information you had when you left would be affected. Colors fade, weather erodes, bugs damage, etc. It has been empirically proven that information moves from order to disorder.

Yet for evolutionary biology to hold true, the opposite would have to happen. Massive advances in molecular information would have to surge forward, but that’s never been empirically tested and affirmed. It seems logical to conclude that a strictly materialistic world could never produce a well-written book, much less a huge library of books.

Dr. James M. Tour

Dr. James M. Tour is one of the ten most cited chemists in the world. He is currently a Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science at Rice University. He has authored or co-authored 489 scientific publications and his name is on 36 patents.

...I simply do not understand, chemically, how macroevolution could have happened. Hence, am I not free to join the ranks of the skeptical and to sign such a statement without reprisals from those that disagree with me? ... Does anyone understand the chemical details behind macroevolution? If so, I would like to sit with that person and be taught, so I invite them to meet with me. <http://www.jmtour.com>

Natural Selection

“Evolution is not chance because natural selection is not chance.” *Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion*

Problems with Natural Selection

Natural Selection;
requires mutations
and transitions
which have to be
beneficial every step
along the path; from
fins to feet, or from
gills to lungs.

Is it plausible for a faster, more muscular gazelle to survive over its slower peers? Of course. Is it possible that he can pass on that advantage to the next generation? Of course. And is it also possible that all the slower gazelles will become dinner for the nearby lion pride? Of course. Anything under the sun is possible. A question remains: “Is it probable?”

Under the Darwinian paradigm, the mutation does not only make the species better, it makes it different. The advantage has to account for a transition from, say, an arm to a wing. The problem of course is that such a transition would produce so many wing-arms that the new feature would be a huge disadvantage through the transitional stages. The likelihood is that the mutated species would die. A wing-arm doesn't fly, and it can no longer grip branches.

Survival of the Fittest

The idea of “survival of the fittest” as a theory is weak at best, because the phrase uses circular reasoning to make its point. It lacks the ability even to make predictions. In other words, we

know it's the fittest because it survived. Today the earth is inhabited by super species which made the evolutionary cut. But is a cow, an armadillo or a frog really the fittest?

Evolutionist will take hours explaining how the markings on the leopard gave it an advantage and thus it was able to survive. The problem of course is how do they explain a zebra which can be spotted from miles away?

Other advantages

Why do we see so many advantages in the different species that don't necessarily advance survival? For example, although I find my fingernails and toenails advantageous, I hardly think their absence would lead to my extinction. My eyebrows protect my eyes from glare, but once again, I hardly think I need them for survival. The evolutionists would argue that it is simply a random mutation, but I'm thinking a random event would put a fingernail on my forehead, not perfectly on every finger. We can fill volumes of books with such example, leaving us with more questions than answers.

Disadvantages

And then what about those features which are disadvantages; why are they still around? Why do people still have bad eyesight? Shouldn't they have died of starvation or war? Why do some humans have light skin? Shouldn't they have died of cancer? And why did hominids stand upright, slowing them down in the process? The point is this: a legitimate model would account for such obvious shortcomings.

Common objection

If creation, why do we have an appendix and cancer? Design does not imply perfection. If a car alternator breaks, it does not mean the car was not designed.

The chicken or the egg?

- What came first, heart, blood or blood vessels?
- If the heart, why did it evolve when there was no blood to pump?
- If blood, why did it evolve if no pump existed and no vessels for circulation?
- If blood vessels, why did they evolve when no blood or pump existed?
- RNA or DNA

The Fossil Record

Charles Darwin

“The number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed on earth, must be truly enormous. Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory.” *Charles Darwin, Origins of Species*

The greatest support for evolution would be a record demonstrating this gradual progression with intermediate sub-species between groups of species, while the greatest support for creation would be a record which demonstrates a rapid emergence of the different groups.

Intermediaries and transitional forms

A transitional form or intermediary represents critical support for the evolutionary model as it stands between two species as the progressive changes are taking place. With so many species on the record, Michael Denton M.D., Ph.D., a molecular biologist, points out that there should be literally millions of transitional forms.

An intermediary or transitional form is a species that lived between two other species which link the two and served as a transition between the two. Two factors must be present to qualify as an intermediary:

- One, it must have lived during the appropriate time, that is, between the two differing categories of species.
- Two, we must see some degree of body parts (i.e., wings, fins, hands, brain) in a state of development rather than fully functioning limbs and body parts, which in most cases would indicate a separate unique species.

So the question is, has the discovery of countless species over the past 150 years worked to support Darwin’s theory or refute it? Well, over that time we’ve discovered thousands and thousands of new species in the geological strata and yet at best only a handful of what some would qualify as transitional forms. Yet as a percentage of the differing species, we have far less of what would qualify as an intermediary than we did in Darwin’s day, even using the most open-minded approach.

What do you have to do to change a cow into a whale and still retain a similar breathing apparatus. Essentially everything about the cow has to change. We have a sense of the numbers. Anytime the sciences avoid numbers it is immersing itself in an unavoidable

3.5 million species
would require at
least 3.5 million
transitional forms.
Today Evolutionists
can only point to a
few dozen.

miasma. Skin has to change, breathing apparatus changes, a diving apparatus has to be put in place, the eyes have to be protected, hearing has to be altered, salivary organs have to change, feeding mechanisms have to change. The calculations are not hard, I stopped at 50,000 changes. All these changes are coordinated. What does this suggest we should see in the fossil record? An enormous plethora of animals; intermediaries. That won't solve all problems but at least it will put it in the ballpark of a quantitative estimate. *David Berlinski, Mathematician, philosopher, biochemist.*

“The infinitude of connecting links has still not been discovered and the fossil record is about as discontinuous as it was when Darwin was writing the Origin.” *Molecular biologist Michael Denton, M.D., Ph.D.*

Archaeopteryx – missing link?

In our public textbooks, Archaeopteryx is still publicized as the missing link between birds and reptiles and is often called the first bird, having lived between 125 million and 165 million years ago. About the size of a modern bird, it was covered in feathers and had small wings and a long tail, along with other birdlike features such as a wishbone and a reverse big toe. First impressions would indicate that such a creature would add credibility to the idea of a missing link, as the feathers alone had only been found on one dinosaur around that period.

Problem: nothing leading up to Archaeopteryx remotely resembles such an organism with feathers and wings, and we don't see birdlike species for tens of millions of years after Archaeopteryx was extinct. Because it stands alone with huge gaps in the fossil record like most species, it supports the findings of a new species rather than an evolutionary progression predicted by naturalists. Despite this overwhelming acknowledgment among paleontologists, textbooks across America still hale Archaeopteryx as sound evidence for Darwinism.

The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches; the rest is inference, however reasonable, not the evidence of fossils.” More specifically he notes, “The history of most fossil species includes two features particularly inconsistent with gradualism: 1) Status. Most species exhibit no directional change during their tenure on earth. They appear in the fossil record looking much the same as when they disappear; Morphological change is usually limited and directionless. 2) Sudden Appearance. In any local area, a species does not arise gradually by steady transformation of its ancestors; it appears all at once and fully formed. *Steven J. Gould, Harvard paleontologist and the leading evolutionist*

Cambrian explosion

The Cambrian Era happened approximately 520-530 million years ago. During this period within a small window of time we see a very dramatic event known to paleontologists as the Cambrian Explosion. During this “big bang of biology” we see the sudden emergence of

virtually every body type or *phyla* known to have existed, without a trace of evolutionary forerunners. Prior to this event, the earth was inhabited by single-celled life for billions of years and therefore this stands as the clearest evidence of the abrupt appearance we would expect from a creation model. For the evolutionists it's their greatest enigma because of the absence of previous complex organisms to cloud the evidence. If there was anything before it—a cat, a mule or a bee—you could bet it was evolution. But there was nothing and therefore Darwin's tree of life no longer has roots.

The Cambrian Explosion;
challenges the idea
that life on earth
developed
gradually.

Mass extinctions

From there we move on to four other eras in earth's history, primarily the Permian, the Triassic, the Jurassic, and the Cretaceous, where the strata reveal mass extinctions followed by an emergence of predominantly new, vastly diverse groups of life. In the case of the Permian extinction, the devastation was so enormous it is believed that 95 percent of earth's inhabitants were destroyed, leaving only small marine life.

Yet in a small window of evolutionary time, we see the earth quickly inhabited by a new group of more complex and diverse organisms. As geologists and paleontologists probe the extinction/recovery events that have happened, what they are finding is that species exist relatively unchanged yet have a predisposition toward extinction, not speciation. New species seem to emerge during a small window of time and appear with fully functioning body parts which are designed for their particular environment.

Punctuated equilibrium

In order to overcome this grave problem, evolutionists produced a new theory called Punctuated Equilibrium, evolution making sudden leaps forward. "We are glorious accidents of an unpredictable process with no drive to complexity..." But even Gould acknowledged: "The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches; the rest is inference, however reasonable, not the evidence of fossils" —Steven J. Gould, Harvard paleontologist and evolutionary biologist.

Today, Punctuated Equilibrium is widely accepted by evolutionists. Problem: it's evolution without the evolution.

Nature magazine

"The intervals of time that separate fossils are so huge that we cannot say anything about the possible connection through ancestry and descent." *Henry Gee, Chief scientific writer for Nature*

Human Evolution

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. *Genesis 1:27, 2:7*

Is Homo-Erectus the missing link?

- Piltdown Man – Hoax
- Neanderthal – DNA proved it's not linked to man
- Homo-Erectus
 - Missing link – 400,000 year gap between man and Homo-Erectus.
 - Morphological differences – Homo-Erectus is a small monkey.
 - Intellectual differences – Homo-Erectus did not even make tools.
 - Spiritual differences – No worship or decoration

The problem: If Neanderthal, who looks a lot like a human, is not linked to mankind based on DNA tests, why should we believe Homo-Erectus, which is a small monkey, is linked to man?

The image of God

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? What does it mean to have a spirit? Put another way, what distinguishes mankind from other creatures?

- Immortal – Thinks beyond the grave.
- Spiritual – Prays, repents and communicates with God.
- Consciousness – Reflective and aware of her surroundings, past, present and future.
- Logical – Thinks rationally.
- Moral – We know right from wrong; we long for justice.
- Beauty – Man can perceive and appreciate beauty.
- Creative – Mankind is original, imaginative, artistic, and resourceful.
- Love, bravery and altruism – Mankind has the ability to be selfless, which is in sharp contrast to a theory based on survival.

Darwinian Evolution does not have a credible explanation for any of these features only found in mankind.

The Wallace Problem – if you take a child head hunter from the Amazon Jungle, move him to Oxford and give him a formal education, he would be able to do mathematics, philosophy and write poetry. He would be able to appreciate art, music and literature. Because of this self-evident fact Wallace concluded that mankind holds “un-opened gifts”. These gifts while

apparent do not in any way enhance our survival in the wild. Why or how they exist cannot be explained by natural selection. *Alfred Wallace – co-founder of evolution with Charles Darwin.*

Has anyone provided a proof of God's inexistence? Not even close. Has quantum cosmology explained the emergence of the universe or why it is here? Not even close. Have the sciences explained why our universe seems to be fine-tuned to allow for the existence of life? Not even close. Are physicists and biologists willing to believe in anything so long as it is not religious thought? Close enough. Has rationalism in moral thought provided us with an understanding of what is good, what is right, and what is moral? Not close enough. Has secularism in the terrible twentieth century been a force for good? Not even close to being close. Is there a narrow and oppressive orthodoxy of thought and opinion within the sciences? Close enough. Does anything in the sciences or in their philosophy justify the claim that religious belief is irrational? Not even in the ballpark. Is scientific atheism a frivolous exercise in intellectual contempt? Dead on. *The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and its Scientific Pretensions David Berlinski*

Consequences of Evolution

Impact / Consequences of Evolutionary Teaching:

- Engine for disbelief – theory “proves” Bible is false.
- Eliminates any need for God or any supernatural Creator or divine being.
- Reinforces that God was a concept made up by primitive, uneducated people to explain existence.
- Eliminates concept that there is any purpose to life.
- Eliminates morality and concepts of right and wrong – no objective basis.
- Eliminates concept of sin and consequences of sin.
- Eliminates hope for eternity.
- Evolution is not just a scientific theory, but a worldview – a way of understanding life that entirely excludes God.
- Leads to atheism. Examples of people who admit to becoming atheists based on evolutionary teaching: Lee Strobel, Michael Behe, Tom DeRosa.
- Supports eugenics advocates – Planned Parenthood (Margaret Sanger).
- Other famous evolutionists – Hitler, Stalin, Lenin, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot, John Dewey.
- Karl Marx: Wrote a letter to Frederick Engels (1860) declaring that *On the Origin of Species* was “the book which contains the basis in natural history for our views.” Marx wanted to dedicate *Das Kapital* to Darwin.
- Vladimir Lenin: “Darwin put an end to the belief that the animal and vegetable species bear no relation to one another, except by chance, and that they were created by God, and hence immutable.”

- Hitler: Historian Werner Maser writes that Darwinism was the general source for Hitler's "notions of biology, worship, force, and struggle, and of his rejection of moral causality in history."
- Josef Stalin: (1879-1953) - Tiflis Theological Seminary; Stalin read *Origin of Species* and became an atheist; ultimately murdered more than 20 million Russians.

O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely *called knowledge*— by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. *1 Timothy 6:20-21*

Questions for Evolutionists/Naturalists

- How did life begin?
- How do you explain the Cambrian Explosion?
- How do you explain the lack of transitional forms?
- DNA is a sophisticated language. Who wrote it?
- Did the first fish to walk out of the ocean have gills or lungs?
- Can you give me any scientific objections to evolution?
- Can you give me an example of an experiment where a new species evolved?
- Can you give me an example of information increasing without intelligent intervention?
- How do you know we evolved?
- With all the miracles evolutionists have to claim just for an eye to evolve, is it possible God had his hand in it

Common Questions from Skeptics (revisited)

- Isn't Evolution a fact?
- Hasn't Evolution disproved God?

- Aren't most scientist atheist?
- Can you be a Christian and an evolutionist?
- Don't apes and humans have 96% identical DNA?
- Doesn't the Bible state that the earth is flat?
- Doesn't the Bible state that the earth is 6,000 years old?
- Why do so many scientists believe evolution?

Recommended Resources

- David Berlinski Interview on Evolution <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S89IskZI740>
- *Darwin's Black Box*, Michael Behe
- *Darwin Strikes Back : Defending the Science of Intelligent Design*, Thomas Woodward
- *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Michael Denton
- *Evolution: The Grand Experiment*, Dr. Carl Werner
- *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?*, John C. Lennox
- *What Darwin Didn't Know: A Doctor Dissects the Theory of Evolution*, Geoffrey Simmons
- *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth? Why Much of What We Teach About Evolution Is Wrong*, Jonathan Wells
- *The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and its Scientific Pretensions*, David Berlinski

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 6

Intelligent Design

Session Goals

To understand the vast complexity of our universe, solar system and life systems in order to make a powerful defense for a Biblical Creator.

Areas of Study

- Competing Theories
- Limits of Science
- What is Intelligent Design?
- Intelligent Design vs. Chance
- Designer Universe
- Designer Biosphere
- Origins of Life
- The Genetic Code
- Questions for the Skeptic

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God ... *Romans 1:18-21*

The Glory of God

Why did God who needs nothing make the universe, stars, dinosaurs, humans, etc.?

For His glory. Put another way; to display, for all the Heaven to see, His perfect and magnificent attributes.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. *Psalms 19:1*

God created the
universe for His glory
not our pleasure

Historical perspective

- Special Revelation – The Bible
- General Revelation – Nature

How does a God of justice allow people who have never heard the Gospel to go to hell?

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*Romans 1:18-21*

for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness*Romans 2:14-15*

- God reveals Himself in Nature
- God reveals Himself in our heart and conscience

How does the universe help us better understand the Biblical Creator?

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| • Galaxies | God's power |
| • Water cycle | God's care |
| • Magnetic fields | God's protection |
| • Vegetation | God's provision |
| • DNA | God's wisdom |
| • Molecules | God's precision |
| • Photosynthesis | God's preparation |
| • Gravity | God's order |
| • The Cross | God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <i>Romans 5:8</i> |

Competing Theories

Creation – The idea that the universe, all life, matter, energy and time is the product of a purposeful creative act by a Creator who exists outside the creation, as explained by the Bible.

Intelligent Design – The idea that features in the universe, the solar system and living organisms are best explained by an intelligent agent or an intelligent cause.

Naturalism – A philosophical commitment to a universe governed exclusively by natural causes. A universe of matter and energy with no underlying purpose, direction or design. “Our materialism is absolute, we cannot allow a Divine foot in the door.” *Richard Lewontin*

Darwinian Evolution – The theory that claims all species emerged from a common ancestor through the process of random mutations and natural selection.

Limits of Science

The scientific process – Replicating and observing an event, in a controlled environment, to verify/reject a hypothesis. It is based on observable cause and effect relationships.

Matilda’s cake

Nutritionist can tell us how many calories.

Biochemist can tell us about the structure of proteins and fats.

Chemist can tell us about the bonding of those elements.

But only Matilda can give us the reason and meaning of the cake.

Science can only answer the HOW.

Only Matilda can answer the WHY.

Limits of science

- Purpose
- Consciousness
- Beauty
- Love
- Bravery
- Compassion
- Morality
- Meaning

- Supernatural

And yet the WHY questions still remain very important; Why do the electrons bind? Why do proteins function in specific ways? Yes we know how gravity works but why does it function the way it does, and more important why is there gravity at all?

- Over the past 500 years man has discovered many of the laws of physics and biology. It has led many to think this eliminates the need for a creator or designer. Why or why not?
- Ford Mustang – Discovering the laws of physics does not eliminate the need for a designer any more than discovering the laws of motion and combustion eliminate the need for a car designer.
- Objections – If man and animals are designed, then why do they get sick...and why create an appendix...why are there earthquakes? Design does not imply perfection. My car breaks...yet it still has design features.

Science and the Bible

Historically, the Bible has often been at odds with science. Not because the Bible is flawed rather because of human error.

- Bad Science \neq Good interpretation – Steady State Theory/In the beginning
- Good Science \neq Bad Interpretation – Heliocentric /Geocentric Solar System
- Good Science = Good Interpretations – Big Bang cosmology/In the beginning

What is Intelligent Design?

Where does Intelligent Design fit into the Biblical Worldview?

Theologians = Creation

Scientific Community = Evolution

Intelligent Design
Bridging the Gap

Taking on Charles Darwin

Charles Darwin “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”

Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (1996) Intelligent Design Theory—posits the idea that a system of information, specified complexity and purpose must be the product of an intelligent agent. That intelligent causes can do things unintelligent causes cannot.

Information + Specified Complexity + Purpose = Intelligent Agent

William Dembski, *The Design Inference* (1998). In this book he distinguishes between three competing explanations for biological systems: regularity, chance, and design. Dembski demonstrates that if the thing being examined cannot be explained by regularity, and if it is too statistically unlikely to be explained by chance, and contains an independently given pattern, then it may be attributed to design. Dembski claims that his concept is used in detecting design in different fields: forensic science, archeology, insurance fraud investigation, cryptograph, and SETI investigations.

Specificity + Complexity = Design

Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose. *Richard Dawkins, The Blind Watchmaker*

Intelligent Design vs. Chance

What is Irreducible Complexity?

Irreducible Complexity – a single system which is composed of several interacting parts, and where the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to cease functioning.

Natural Selection – An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly by numerous, successive, slight modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional. Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on. That is the part has to be fully functioning to give the species an advantage and thus have natural selection select it.

Michael Behe, Ph.D. in Biochemistry, uses the analogy of a mousetrap to illustrate this concept. A mousetrap consists of several interacting pieces—the base, the catch, the spring and the hammer—all of which must be in place for the mousetrap to work. Removal of any one piece destroys the function of the mousetrap.

Intelligent Design advocates assert that natural selection could not create irreducibly complex systems, because the selectable function is present only when all parts are assembled. Behe argued that irreducibly complex biological mechanisms include the bacterial flagellum of *E. coli*, the blood clotting cascade, cilia, and the adaptive immune system.

What is Specified Complexity?

William Dembski who has a Ph.D. in Mathematics and Philosophy, asserts that specified complexity is present in a configuration when it can be described by a pattern that displays a large amount of independently specified information and is also complex, which he defines as having a low probability of occurrence. He provides the following examples to demonstrate the concept: "A single letter of the alphabet is specified without being complex. A long sentence of random letters is complex without being specified. A Shakespearean sonnet is both complex and specified."

A long sentence of random letters is complex without being specified. The Gettysburg address is both complex and specified. A mountainside is complex; Mount Rushmore is complex and specified. Blue prints to build a house – Instructions to build a kidney are also examples.

Living things can be similarly characterized, especially the "patterns" of molecular sequences in functional biological molecules such as DNA, primarily because DNA molecules only work to create an eye or a fingernail, using very specific instructions, which are laden with information.

"We have no experience at all of abstract principles producing information while we do know that concrete intelligences are capable of producing it." William Dembski

The human eye

The complexity of the eye surpasses human comprehension, for example, the retina is a very thin and complex tissue lining the back of the eye. It contains 7 million cone cells for color assessment, 125 million rod cells for adaptation to the dark, and 1.2 million nerve cells that collect billions of bits of information. For images to be registered in the brain, it takes an incredibly complex arrangement of photo-chemical receptors, nerve cells, electrical signals to and within the brain, muscles, tear ducts, skeletal structures, not to mention the absurdly complicated arrangement of molecules which make up the eye itself. *Geoffrey Simmons, What Darwin Didn't Know*

Human Eye;
Information +
Complexity +
Purpose =
Designer

If you hired the world's best electricians and had them string together 1.2 million lights onto a circuit board the size of a football field, you would never get within anything that approaches the precision found in the one square inch of the human eye.

Can chance create something?

The problem with all the possible naturalistic explanations is that they all rely heavily on chance. Chance does not create nor does it have any explanatory power. If I roll a die and it falls on six, it can be said that it happened by chance. But chance didn't make it fall on six. The force I applied, the angle at which it landed, etc. made it fall on six. Chance just states that we don't know how it fell on six, but it's within the expected probability distribution. If it falls on six 100 times in a row, we will no longer claim chance.

Chance can only explain an event when it falls within expected statistical distribution. If I win the lotto once or even twice in my life that would fall within the expected region. If I win it every week for ten years that would require a new explanation. *Stephen Myers, Signature in the Cell*

Who is the God of the Gaps?

The atheists, evolutionists and naturalists object to the intelligent design movement on the grounds that we are arguing from the gaps: "There's no scientific explanation; thus it must be God." But we are not and should not argue from this position. We are saying let the evidence go where it leads.

Naturalists make this fallacy when they claim that we cannot explain an event but that someday science will answer the question. It's science of the gaps.

Conclusion: A cause must be sufficient to account for the effect. A frog cannot account for a computer program any more than chance can account for a system of information and complexity.

Designer Universe

Einstein's relativity – The Biblical Big Bang

- By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. *Hebrew 11:3*
- Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain. *Psalms 104:2*

- These are the two most important findings of the Big Bang Theory – the universe had a beginning and it has been expanding ever since.

Three possible explanations for the universe

- Universe always existed Vastly disproved by General Relativity and Big Bang cosmology
- Universe created itself Logically contradictory – if it created itself, it had to exist before it did the creating in order to create
- Universe was created by outside agent God - The only rational explanation

Creation and Moses (two important rules)

- Understanding Genesis Chapter 1
 - God “*bara*” ...is translated; created. Strong’s: created from nothing.
 - 1:1 Heavens and earth – or universe (no word in the Hebrew for universe)
 - 1:21 Sea creatures and everything that moves
 - 1:27 Man in His image
 - God “*asah*” ...is translated; made. Strong’s: accomplish, bring forth, gather, finish, bring (come) to pass.
 - 1:3 Light becomes visible
 - 1:7 Clouds and water cycle is made
 - 1:16 Sun and moon become visible
- After Genesis 1:1, “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” This is important because from here on the perspective is from Earth. With this understanding, we see all twelve creation accounts appear in perfect sequence as understood by scientific findings today. The odds of Moses getting all twelve in the right order 3,500 years ago are astonishing.

Science and Genesis chapters 1 & 2

- 1:1 Matter and energy *created*
- 1:2 Earth without form
- 1:3 Sun is made
- 1:7 Water cycle, clouds
- 1:9 Continents rise
- 1:10 Super continent
- 1:12 Plants – oxygenate earth
- 1:14 Atmosphere becomes transparent
- 1:15 Sun and moon become visible
- 1:17 Stars become visible

Genesis Chapter 1;
twelve creation
events, all in
chronological order

- 1:20 Sea creatures are *created*
- 1:21 Reptiles and birds *created*
- 1:24 Mammals *created*
- 1:27 Man is *created*
- 2:7 Man receives a spirit

Is the universe fine-tuned?

Intelligent Design proponents' argument is based on the concept of the fine-tuning of universal constants that make matter and life possible and which are argued not to be solely attributable to chance. These include:

- The values of universal constants: speed of light, gravity, Planck constant
- All the electro-magnetic, atomic, nuclear and chemical constants
- The relative strength of these constants

If any of these values were even slightly different, the universe would be dramatically different, making it impossible for many chemical elements and features of the universe, such as galaxies, to form. Thus, Intelligent Design proponents argue that a designer of life was needed to ensure their specific values.

Protons are the positively charged subatomic particles which (along with neutrons) form the nucleus of an atom (around which negatively charged electrons orbit). Protons just happen to be 1,836 times larger than electrons. If they were a little bigger or a little smaller, we would not exist (because atoms could not form the molecules we require). So how did protons end up being 1,836 times larger than electrons? Why not 100 times larger or 100,000 times? Why not smaller? Of all the possible variables, how did protons end up being just the right size?

Protons carry a positive electrical charge equal to that of the negatively charged electrons. If protons did not balance electrons and vice versa, we would not exist. They are not comparable in size, yet they are perfectly balanced. Did nature just stumble upon such an exact relationship, or did God ordain it for our sakes?

Walter Bradley, Ph.D.

Outlines a few of these characteristics in *Signs of Intelligence*.

- A 2 percent increase on the strong force relative to the electromagnetic force leaves the universe with no hydrogen and no water.
- If the electromagnetic force relative to the gravitational force had been weaker, stars would contain a billion times less mass and would burn a million times faster.

Hugh Ross, Ph.D.

Notes the ratio of electron to proton mass, the velocity of light, the galaxy cluster density, the entropy level of the universe, and the decay rate of protons—all had to be specifically tuned within an unthinkable window of possibility.

Stephen Hawking, Ph.D.

The mathematician estimated that if the rate of the universe's expansion just one second after Big Bang had been smaller by one part in a hundred thousand million million, the universe would have re-collapsed into a hot fireball.

The odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the big bang are enormous... I think clearly there are religious implications whenever you start to discuss the origins of the universe. *Stephen Hawking's Universe, page 109.*

Roger Penrose Ph.D.

Oxford physicist Roger Penrose calculated just one of the parameters needed to set the universe on its course when he noted that the original phase space volume (mathematical representation of a system) required an accuracy of 1 in 10 billion multiplied by itself 123 times. The number is so large it can't even be written out because it has more zeros than the universe has atoms. *Roger Penrose, The Emperor's New Mind. pp 339-345*

Fred Hoyle Ph.D.

A commonsense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super intellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question. *Hoyle, F. 1982. The Universe: Past and Present Reflections. Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics: 20:16*

The atheist's response

The Multiverse Theory – that there are an infinite number of universes and we are the product of just one of many possible outcomes. So why ask if this one is fine-tuned? Of course this is not science and there is no evidence to support such a theory.

Designer Biosphere

Our solar system

The earth has vapor, liquid, and frozen water, which biochemists now believe are essential for life to exist. A five percent change in the distance from the sun would rid the planet of life.

Our planet must retain water vapor while allowing the slightly lighter dangerous gases such as methane and ammonia to escape. Therefore, a change in the surface gravity of just four percentages would make it impossible.

If Earth's rotation was just slightly faster, hurricanes and tornados would extinguish life; slightly slower, and the temperature differences would be too great for life.

The planets that orbit the sun with us are also essential. For example, University of Chicago physicist George Wetherill discovered that if Jupiter was not located precisely where it is, providing a gravitational shield for Earth, we would be bombarded with one thousand times more comets. *George W. Wetherill, "How Special Is Jupiter?" Nature, (1995)*

Unlike every other substance known to man, water's solid form (ice) is less dense than its liquid form. This causes ice to float. If ice did not float, our planet would experience runaway freezing. Other important properties of water include its solvency, cohesiveness, adhesiveness and other thermal properties.

If Earth's reflectivity or "albedo" (the total amount of light reflected off the planet versus the total amount of light absorbed) were greater than it is now, we would experience runaway freezing. If it were less than it is, we would experience a runaway greenhouse effect.

If Earth's magnetic field were weaker, our planet would be devastated by cosmic radiation. If it were much stronger, we would be devastated by severe electromagnetic storms.

If Earth's place in the solar system were further from the sun, our planet's water would freeze. If we were 5% closer, it would boil.

If our solar system were too close to the center of our galaxy, or to any of the spiral arms at its edge, or any cluster of stars, our planet would be devastated by cosmic radiation.

The color of our sun. If the sun were much redder, on the one hand, or bluer, on the other, photosynthesis would be impeded. Photosynthesis is a natural biochemical process crucial to life on Earth.

Back in 1963 we knew of only three parameters needed to sustain life on earth. In 1989, astrophysicist Hugh Ross published the first edition of *The Fingerprint of God* and listed 16 characteristics requiring fine-tuning for the universe and 19 for the solar system. By 1995, when he published *The Creator and the Cosmos*, the list reached 26 for the universe and 41 for the solar system. Today, listed on his website www.reasons.org, you will find no less than 35

vastly improbable characteristics necessary to make life possible in the universe and 122 for the solar system.

The Origin of Life

“The complexity of the simplest known type of cell is so great that it is impossible to accept that such an object could have been thrown together suddenly by some kind of freakish, vastly improbable event. Such an occurrence would be indistinguishable from a *miracle*.” *Michael Denton, Atheist and microbiologist*

God’s language

All life forms begin with cells that contain proteins, amino acids, molecules, and ultimately the DNA that holds the information which determines the many functions within that cell. In complex life it determines our hair color, our height, our fingernails, ligaments, and taste buds.

DNA: four letter alphabet which spells words (genes) that determine every function in living organisms.

Amino Acids: twenty letter alphabet that produce words which build very specific proteins for very specific functions.

All the intricacies of our eyes, from the color to the lens to the cornea to the retina to the smallest molecule, are driven by our DNA genetic code. And it applies to bees, alligators, birds, fish, and single-celled bacteria.

Proteins within the cell have several functions including storing and transferring molecules, providing a defense mechanism for the cell, catalyzing chemical reactions, and harvesting energy. Proteins are made up of polypeptides with specific functions which are driven by the sequence of the twenty different amino acids that make up the cell’s chemistry. Just like a sequence of letters determines the information in a word, so each polypeptide is laden with a sequence predetermined for a specific function within the cell. Like proteins, DNA consists of chain-like molecules known as polynucleotides which combine to form a DNA molecule. Scientists refer to the amino-acid-coding nucleotide sequence along the DNA strand as a gene. While the DNA strand’s nucleotides function as alphabet letters, the genes function as words.

Single celled life

Cambridge astronomer Fred Hoyle and mathematician N. Chandra Wickramasinghe calculated the odds of life forming by natural processes. They estimated that there is less than 1 chance in $10^{40,000}$ that life could have originated by random trials. 10 to the 40,000th is a 1 with 40,000 zeroes after it! How can one gain some conception of the size of such a huge number?

According to evolutionists, the universe is less than 30 billion years old, and there are fewer than 10 to the 18th (10^{18}) seconds in 30 billion years. So even if nature could somehow have produced trillions of genetic code combinations every second for 30 billion years, the probabilities against producing the simplest one-celled animal by trial and error would still be inconceivably immense! *Paul S. Taylor, Origins Answer Book*

“Just one living cell in the human body is more complex than New York City.” *Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize winning chemist, In Defense of the Faith*

The Genetic Code

Matters of information

Early one morning a military pilot is flying over the open ocean when he spots a small island on the horizon. As he moves in, he notices a group of logs laid out in a pattern. A closer look reveals the logs arranged to spell the word HELP. Knowing the unlikelihood of wind and rain producing a pattern with a message, he radios his carrier for assistance. Nobody on the carrier questions his judgment, so the ship changes course and heads towards the island.

Most people understand that patterns encoded with information do not come about by simple chance and therefore must be the source of some kind of intelligent agent. The word HELP, because of the information it contains and the complexity of the arrangement, must mean that someone is stranded on the island. The message in the composition has the intrinsic evidence of design, and therefore it can be inferred that an intelligent agent must have organized the logs for the purpose of conveying that message.

Over the past half century, molecular biologists have probed the inner workings of cellular biochemical machinery to find a complex language of encoded information. By studying the genetic code, they have stumbled across powerful evidence of a communication system so complex it challenges our imagination.

“DNA is like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software we’ve ever created.” *Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft*

“Yes, I now think it does point to a creative intelligence almost entirely because of the DNA investigations. What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of arrangements which are needed to produce life, that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinary diverse elements to work together...I now believe there is a God.” Former atheist Anthony Flew, *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*

Like a computer hard disc, DNA contains the database of information and the program to produce a specified product. Every one of the 10 to 100 trillion cells in the human body

contains a database larger than the Encyclopedia Britannica ... a molecular structure with an information processing capacity. *John Lennox, Ph.D., Oxford*

Charles B. Thaxton, Ph.D., notes, the DNA code is a genetic “language” that communicates information to the cell. The cell is very complicated, using millions of DNA instructions to control every function within the cell.

Panspermia – This is the most popular theory to explain how life emerged on earth; that it got here from another planet, transferred by a comet. Of course this is not scientific and does not solve the problem of how life emerged from naturalistic causes. This theory just pushes back the date.

Information Theory

Information; without
an intelligent agent it
always diminishes and
never increases.

Information Theory demonstrates that over time information will always diminish rather than advance. For example, the further we go back in time, the harder it is to piece together archeological findings because information is diminishing.

If you close your garage door and come back ten years later, the information you had when you left would be affected. Colors fade, weather erodes, bugs damage, etc. It has been empirically proven that information moves from order to disorder.

Yet, for evolutionary biology to hold true, the opposite would have to happen. Massive advances in molecular information would have to surge forward, and yet that’s never been empirically tested and affirmed. So it’s logical to conclude that a strictly materialist world could never produce a well-written book, much less a huge library of books.

Objections

- We are only one of many possibilities – true but it still requires an explanation
- Multiverse universe – pushes the problem back; no evidence
- If the universe needs an explanation, then the designer needs an explanation – flawed assumption
- The universe is not friendly to life, rather it wants to kill us – earth does not
- The laws of physics created the universe – laws don’t create, they operate on objects
- ID is arguing from the Gaps –not so

- ID is not scientific – Stephen Meyers uses extensive mathematical equations

Questions for the skeptic

- How did life begin?
- Why do we have gravity?
- Why do chemicals bind?
- Is it coincidence that we are the right distance from the sun, have the right mass, right atmosphere, the right chemical elements and the right location in our galaxy?
- The eye has many parts including 1.2 million sensors perfectly arranged; how do you account for an eye by chance alone?
- We know who wrote the Microsoft code, who wrote the DNA code which is infinitely more complex?
- How do you explain the precision we see in the laws of physics?
- How did the universe begin?
- Why is there something rather than nothing?
- Every cell in your body contains a library of information, how does chance account for a library?
- How does a brown cow eat green grass and produce white milk?

Recommended Resources

- *God's Undertaker, Has Science Buried God?*, John Lennox
- *Signs of Intelligence, Understanding Intelligent Design*, William Dembski
- *Icons of Evolution, Science or Myth*, Jonathan Wells

- *Darwin's Black Box*, Michael, J. Behe
- *The Language of God*, Francis S. Collins
- *The Creator and the Cosmos*, Hugh Ross
- *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, Norman, L. Geisler
- *Creation As Science: A Testable Model Approach to End the Creation/evolution Wars*, Hugh Ross
- *What Darwin Didn't Know*, Geoffrey Simmons

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 7

Who Do Men Say That I Am?

Session Goals

To better understand the evidence surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as it relates to His uniqueness and claims of deity. To study the historic life of Jesus as it compares to other self-proclaimed prophets and Messiahs.

Areas of Study

- Common Questions about Jesus
- Who was Jesus?
- Messianic Prophecies
- Evidence for the Life of Jesus
- Evidence for the Resurrection
- Other Religious Leaders
- Jesus in the Old Testament
- Who was Jesus of Nazareth?
- Who is Jesus?
- Common Questions about Jesus (Revisited)

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” *Matthew 16:13*

Common Questions about Jesus

- How do we know Jesus ever existed?
- Isn't the resurrection just a myth?
- Did Jesus ever claim to be God?
- Aren't we all sons of God?
- Isn't Jesus just a good moral teacher?
- How can we know he was the true messiah?
- How are the resurrection sightings different from Elvis sightings?
- Aren't you using the Bible to prove the Bible is true?

Who was Jesus?

Important Quotes

His identity is complex, he fits no previous formula or mold, and he always presents himself as a challenge to the status quo. He's carving out his own niche, doing his own thing and he's not simply replicating anything from the past. *Ben Witherington III, Asbury Seminary, A Case for Christ*

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life. *Napoleon Bonaparte*

Who do men say I am? – Two possible answers

- A Lunatic – If his claims of miracles, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life are false by today's standard, this would be a lunatic.
- The Son of God– If his claims are true, then He is the Son of the living God.

- A good moral teacher – Not possible because he claimed to do miracles, forgive sins and he claimed to be God. If that is not true, then he cannot be a good moral person.

Why did Christ have to be fully human and fully God?

- Because mankind has immeasurable worth and value, only one who is fully human can be the substitute for another human.
 - Jesus' humanity - Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. *Mark 9:21*
 - Jesus ate food. – *Mark 14:12*
- Only God is holy and sinless and therefore He owes no price of his own.
 - Jesus' Deity - "When Jesus saw their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.' The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, 'Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" *Luke 5:20-21*.

Jesus is a Son and we are sons - what is the difference?

- Jesus is the "only begotten." That is, he took on the very nature of God. *Ephesians 1:5*
- We are sons through grace, by adoption. We are made in His image, not His essence.

Messianic Prophecies

Biblical scholars have identified 456 messianic passages, and of those, about 109 are distinct messianic prophecies that the Messiah would fulfill.

And I will put enmity, between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. *Genesis 3:15*

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. *Micah 5:2*

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has

laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked, but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When you make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. *Isaiah 53:4-11*

Peter Stoner mathematical analysis

<u>Prophecy</u>		<u>Fulfillment</u>
Micah 5:2	Born in Bethlahem	Mt 2:1
Zech 9:9	King on Donkey	Lk 19:35-37
Zech 11:12	30 piece of silver	Mt 26:15
Zech 11:13	Silver to potter	Mt 27:5-7
Zech 13:6	Wounds in Hand	Jn 20:25
Is 53:7	No defense though innocent	Mt 27:12-14
Is 53:9	Grave w wicked death w rich	Mt 27:60
Ps 22:16	Crucified	Lk 23:33

Multiplying all these probabilities together produces a number (rounded off) of 1×10^{28} . Dividing this number by an estimate of the number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies (88 billion) produces a probability of all 8 prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person. That probability is 1 in 10^{17} or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. That's one in one hundred quadrillion! *Peter W. Stoner; Science Speaks.*

Evidence for the Life of Jesus

Extra Biblical accounts

Cornelius Tacitus lived from 56-120 A.D. and was a Roman historian. He writes: "Christians derived their name from a man called Christ, who during the reign of Emperor Tiberius had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. The deadly superstition, thus checked for the moment, broke out afresh not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but also in the City of Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world meet and become popular."

Pliny the Younger lived from 61-113 A.D. and was a Roman administrator in Turkey. In 110 A.D., he wrote to the emperor Trajan about the Christians: “The sum total of their guilt or error was no more than the following. They had met regularly before dawn on a determined day, and sung antiphonally a hymn to Christ and to a god. They also took an oath not for any crime, but to keep from theft, robbery and adultery, and not to break any promise.”

Flavius Josephus lived from 37-100 A.D. and was a Jewish historian. His writings about Jesus are believed to have been tampered with, but the best reconstruction we have reads: “At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of the people who received the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out.”

The Jewish Talmud is the ancient commentary of Jewish law. In an excerpt dated around 100-200 A.D. we read a fascinating report of the case against Jesus that led to his trial and execution: “On the eve of the Passover Jesus was hanged (on a cross). For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, “He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf. But since nothing was brought forward in his favor, he was hanged on the eve of the Passover.”

Multiple First
Century Sources,
confirm many
details about the life
of Jesus, supporting
the accounts of the
Gospels.

Conclusion

Three Gospels are eyewitness accounts (Mathew, Mark and John) the fourth Gospel is a well-documented account. There are considerable reports from non-Christian sources that supplement and confirm the Gospel accounts of Jesus. These come largely from Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Samaritan sources of the first century. In brief, they inform us that: (1) Jesus was from Nazareth; (2) he lived a wise and virtuous life; (3) he was crucified in Palestine under Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius Caesar at Passover time, being considered the Jewish king; (4) he was believed by his disciples to have been raised from the dead three days later; (5) his enemies acknowledged that he performed unusual feats they called “sorcery”; (6) his small band of disciples multiplied rapidly, spreading even as far as Rome; (7) his disciples denied polytheism, lived moral lives, and worshipped Christ as Divine. “This picture confirms the view of Christ presented in the New Testament Gospels.” *Norman Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*

Evidence for the Resurrection

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. *1 Corinthians 15:11-14*

Principles for historic validity

- Early testimony
- Eye witness testimony
- Embarrassing admission
- Hostile witness
- Multiple independent sources

The resurrection of Jesus, history or hype?

Most religions make a case for their claims by resorting to their holy book and pointing to its inspiration. Can the Christian make a case that Jesus rose from the dead without resorting to inspiration? That is, can we make a solid historical case for the resurrection? The remainder of this section will use *Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona, The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* as the primary source.

First Fact: The Hebrew Text foretold His brutal atonement and resurrection.

Surely He has borne our grief. And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. *Isaiah 53:4-5*

For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. *Psalms 16:10*

Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight. *Hosea 6:1-2*

Second Fact: Jesus foretold of his resurrection.

Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again. *Mark 10:33-35*

Third Fact: Jesus of Nazareth was crucified.

The historian Josephus writes, “When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had condemned him to be crucified ...” *Josephus, Antiquities*

The historian Tacitus reports “Christus suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate.” *Tacitus, Annals*

The Hebrew Talmud states, “On the eve of the Passover Yeshua was hanged.” *The Babylonian Talmud*

Fourth Fact: Jesus’ disciples believed that he rose from the dead.

The Apostles claimed Jesus rose from the dead in their writings; primarily the New Testament documents. Here, we are not appealing to inspiration but rather to the historical reliability of the documents.

The Apostles communicated the message of the resurrection. Clement, who was a student of the Apostle Peter, writes: “Therefore, having received orders and complete certainty caused by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christthey went with the Holy Spirit’s certainty.” *First Clement 42:3*.

Polycarp, who was instructed by John, mentions the resurrection five times in a letter to Philippi. *To the Philippians 9:2*

Fifth Fact: Skeptics lives transformed

Paul was a persecutor of Christians. He experienced a great transformation on the road to Damascus. Most people convert, having heard a message from a secondary source, but Paul already knew the message of the resurrection and was already dead set against it prior to his conversion. This transformation is well documented by Luke, Origen, Polycarp, Clement of Rome and Paul himself.

James was a skeptic as well, and shortly after the crucifixion became one of the strongest advocates of the resurrection. *Mark 3:21* and *John 7:5* both report that Jesus’ brothers did not believe in him. *1 Corinthians 15:3-7* states, “then He appeared to James.” James becomes the leader of the Jerusalem Church, *Acts 15:12-21*. The historians Josephus, Hegesippus and Clement of Alexandria all attest to his martyrdom.

Sixth Fact: The tomb was empty.

Shortly after the crucifixion, the enemies of the new faith were doing everything possible to crush the movement. All they had to do was exhume the body of Jesus, and it would have

stopped Christianity in its tracks. Yet, there is no recorded evidence that a body was produced or more specifically there was no debate on the issue of the empty tomb.

The counterclaim from hostile witnesses at the time was that the body was stolen, and therefore an empty tomb. This can be found in the Gospels and extra Biblical accounts from *Justin Martyr Typho 108* and *Tertullian, De Spectaculis 30*.

If the story was concocted, it is highly unlikely that the writers of the Gospels would have used women as the initial witnesses due to their lack of credibility in the culture at that time.

“All of the strictly historical evidence we have is in favor of the empty tomb, and those scholars who reject it ought to recognize that they do so on some ground other than that of scientific history.” —*William Wand, Oxford University Historian, Christianity: A Historical Religion?*

Seventh Fact: The apostles died for what they believed.

The Apostles believed it, as all suffered and all but one died for their faith. More importantly the disciples' lives were transformed shortly after the crucifixion. Ignatius notes that the disciples, having seen the risen Christ, were so encouraged that “they also disregarded death.” *To the Smyrnaeans 3:2*

While many people have died for a lie, they do it believing it to be true. Few would die knowing what they taught was a lie. All of the apostles suffered and died believing they saw the resurrected Jesus.

**Given the objective historical evidence, a
resurrection is the only possible explanation.**

Claims from secularists, counter claims from believers

Over the centuries many naturalistic explanations have been offered to discredit the resurrection. All fail to account adequately for the known facts. They are explained below.

- Embellishment – The resurrection was an exaggerated story.
 - The disciples claimed resurrection from the beginning.
 - These are early accounts; embellishment takes time.
 - No evidence for embellishment.

- No explanation for disciples' conversions.
- Resurrection in other religions – They claim the resurrection story of Jesus is plagiarized from other religions.
 - Other accounts are unclear.
 - Other accounts are not parallels.
 - First parallel story is dated 100 years after Jesus.
 - Accounts lack evidence.
 - No explanation for disciples' conversions.
- Fraud – The disciples or someone else stole the body and lied.
 - Disciples really believed the resurrection.
 - Paul's conversion is based on Jesus' appearance.
 - The skeptic James' conversion is based on appearance.
- Wrong tomb – Some have claimed that the disciples went to the wrong tomb.
 - Does not account for appearances to disciples.
 - Followers were not convinced by empty tomb.
 - James and Paul not convinced by empty tomb.
 - No sources suggest wrong tomb.
- Apparent death theory – Jesus never died and appeared to the disciples after his crucifixion.
 - Spear wound would have ended his life.
 - Hanging on a cross would have left him badly wounded.
 - Paul experienced a “glorious” appearance.
 - Crucifixion causes asphyxiation .
- Delusion – is a false belief held with conviction despite the evidence.
 - Does not explain the empty tomb.
 - Conversion of Paul.
 - Conversion of James the skeptic.
 - Based on expectation that was not there.
- Hallucination – false perception of something that is not there.
 - Not a group occurrence.
 - Does not explain the empty tomb.
 - Conversion of Paul.
 - Conversion of James the skeptic.
 - Based on expectation that was not there.
- Illusion – is a distorted perception of something that is there.
 - Not a group occurrence.
 - Does not explain the empty tomb.
 - Conversion of Paul.
 - Conversion of James the skeptic.

- Based on expectation that was not there.

Other Religious Leaders

When you look closely at the founders of other religions and compare their claims to the claims of Jesus, you will not find superficial differences and fundamental similarities; you will find fundamental differences and only superficial similarities. *Ravi Zacharias*

Founders of other major religions

Mohammed founder of Islam – When asked if he could perform miracles like Jesus he raised the Quran and said “this is my miracle”. Though he’s called a prophet he has no fulfilled prophecies to speak of. He had thirteen wives, Aisha was six or seven years old when she married Mohammed. He waged war for the purpose of revenge, such as the attack on the Lihya. During the Battle of Badr, Muhammad sent his men out to raid caravans. Later, Mohammed directed military campaigns for the mere purpose of spreading Islamic rule, ordering his followers to convert others by the sword. “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every move; but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them” (Sura 9:5). Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other ... So righteous women are devoutly obedient,But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - advise them; forsake them in bed; and strike them. Surat 4:34

Joseph Smith founder of Mormonism - Never made claims of miracles or holiness. He was indicted for perjury and polygamy and subsequently arrested for treason and inciting riots. It is believed that between 1841 and 1843 he married about thirty women, ten of them already married to other men. Smith was killed in a gunfight as he tried to escape from a prison window. He had many failed prophecies”if necessary, should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, for the coming of the Lord, which was nigh--even fifty-six years should wind up the scene." Smith was a racist “If Abraham, Joseph, and Moses had married Negro wives their descendants would have been denied the priesthood according to the word of the Lord to Abraham”.

L. Ron Hubbard founder of Scientology – Was a writer of fiction whose critics including his own son have characterized him as a liar, a charlatan, and mentally unstable. On August 10, 1946, Hubbard married his best friend’s 21 year old girlfriend Sara Northrup, while still married to his first wife. On August 31, 1948, he was arrested in San Luis Obispo, California, and subsequently pled guilty to a charge of petty theft. He had begun an affair with his 20-year-old public relations assistant in late 1950 leading Sara to file for divorce in 1951 accusing him of marrying her bigamously and subjecting her to sleep deprivation, beatings, strangulation, kidnapping and exhortations to commit suicide. Only six weeks after setting up the Hubbard College and marrying a staff member, 18-year-old Mary Sue Whipp, Hubbard

closed it down. The Food and Drug Administration took action against Scientology's medical claims, seizing thousands of documents and pills. An Australian report published in October 1965, condemned Scientology and Hubbard describing him as being of doubtful sanity, having a persecution complex and displaying strong indications of paranoid schizophrenia with delusions of grandeur. His writings were characterized as nonsensical, abounding in "self-glorification and grandiosity". Scientology was accused of brainwashing, blackmail, extortion and damaging the mental health of its members. He spent the last decade of his life in seclusion on a \$30 million yacht.

Sun Myung Moon founder of Unification Church - In 1955, Moon was jailed for draft evasion, adultery, and promiscuity. Moon teaches: "I am now making a prototype of the perfect family, accomplishing what Jesus could not do." The perfect marriage and sinless children are the apex of earthly life. Yet Moon's elder son, Hyo Jin Moon, and his wife Nansook, divorced leaving a lasting embarrassment. Moon's extensive business interests included News World Communications, an international news media corporation which founded The Washington Times and owns other media in several countries; Tongil Group, a South Korean business group (chaebol) active in manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, tourism, and publishing. In 1982, Moon was convicted in the United States of filing false federal income tax returns and conspiracy.

Charles Russell founder of Jehovah's Witness - On March 22, 1911, The Brooklyn Daily Eagle published articles accusing Russell of gaining profit from a strain of wheat named "Miracle Wheat" which Russell sold for \$60 per bushel, far above the average cost of wheat at the time. Throughout 1912 and 1913, the Eagle continued to report on Russell's alleged fraud. Russell sued the Eagle for libel, but lost. A government expert investigated the "Miracle Wheat" and federal authorities made him refund the money. Russell made many false predictions including the end of secular society, "In view of this strong Bible evidence concerning the Times of the Gentiles, we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, will be accomplished near the end of 1915".

Siddhartha Gautama founder of Buddhism - rejected the superstitions of Hinduism and developed what is essentially an atheistic faith in its character and content. The goal of religious practice was freedom from suffering and the illusion of the self. In classical Buddhism, Buddha is not even revered as divine but rather a noble, enlightened man. He left luxury, abandoned his wife and children and lived an ascetic life not eating, then he sought the middle ground.

Hinduism - Hindus have around 300 million gods and a varied group of religious traditions resting on the teaching of the Vedas and the Upanishads that are very difficult to pin down. There is not one founder or leader to speak of.

The Uniqueness of Christ

- Holy and sinless
- Sacrificial death
- Performed miracles
- Fulfilled prophecy
- Spoke prophecy
- Born of virgin
- Claimed to be god
- Promise of His presence
- Defeated death and lives forever

Jesus is unlike any other self-proclaimed prophet, with no second runner up to speak of.

Jesus in the Old Testament

Ways in which Jesus appears in the Old Testament

- Appearances – in the fire
- Types – King David vs. Goliath
- Analogies – sacrificial lamb
- Events – in creation
- Prophecies – his coming

Jesus appears in the Old Testament

Jesus in the Fire - He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the god." *Daniel 3:25*

Jesus wrestles with Jacob —So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." *Genesis 32:24-30*

Jesus, along with two of his angels, visited Abraham. In Genesis 18:3, Abraham greets one of the men as "My Lord" ("Adonai" in Hebrew) which is a phrase in scripture used only to refer to God (see Ps. 110:1). Starting in Gen. 18:13, this man is called "the LORD." Whenever the word *LORD* appears in scripture with all caps, this identifies God's name Jehovah *or* Yahweh.

Jesus also appeared to Joshua in Joshua. 5:13-15. Joshua was near Jericho when he saw a man with a sword drawn. Immediately Joshua wanted to know if he was friend or foe and he was told by the man that he was captain of the Lord's host. Upon hearing this, Joshua fell on his face and worshipped him. This man did not stop Joshua from worshipping him as any other servant of the Lord would do (see Acts 10:26; 14:15; Rev. 19:10; 22:9 where servants of God stopped other men from worshipping them). Joshua asked Jesus what his message was and Jesus responded by telling Joshua to take off his shoes because he was on holy ground, which is the same thing he told Moses in Exodus when he appeared to him in a burning bush.

Jesus in Creation

Genesis 1:1, 2, 26 where God's name is Elohim, which is plural.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."

Colossians 1:16 For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him

Types and shadow of Jesus

Leviticus 16:21-22 "... Aaron (the high priest) shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

Exodus 12:46 The lamb had to be without blemish, which was analogous to being without sin, and was to have no bones broken.

When the destroyer (angel of death) went through Egypt killing the firstborn of all the Egyptians, he looked upon the sides and tops of the doors of the Israelites. When he saw the blood of the sacrifice, he did not enter. Likewise, Christians are protected by the sacrificial blood of Jesus. Like the lamb, He was crucified on the Passover. *John 18:28*

Hebrews 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

Was He just a son of God or God himself?

- First century Jews knew his sayings made him equal with God. “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’” *John 10:31-33*
- “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” *John 5:18*
- Jesus assumed priestly functions, declaring people clean *Mark 1:41*; and forgiven *Mark 2:5*; *Luke 7:47* “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” *Mark 2:7*
- Jesus accepts worship. *Mathew 28:9*; *John 12:12-15*
- Jesus claims to be without sin. He challenges His accusers to find any fault in Him. *John 8:46*
- John saw Jesus as the Word made flesh, God incarnate. *John 1:1*; *14*
- Thomas gets it, “My Lord and my God!” *John 20:28*
- “God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” are used interchangeably. *Titus 2:13*
- “God was manifested in the flesh.” *1 Timothy 3:16*

Jesus’ Self-Understanding

- Jesus clearly accepted the major tenets of the Jewish faith and the authority of the Torah.
- Jesus is one with the Father – “I and the Father are one.” *John 10:30*
- Jesus fulfills the Mosaic covenant – “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” *Matthew 5:17-18*
- Jesus is the fulfillment of prophesy – He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to

suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. *Luke 24:25* “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” *Luke 4:14-21 / Isaiah 61:1-2*

- Jesus saw Himself as a prophet. *Mark 12:1-11*
- Jesus referred to Himself as the “Son of Man,” clearly alluding to Daniel, chapter 7. This was one of Jesus’ favored self-designations; He considered Himself as one who is coming to restore and establish the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus claimed to be the Messiah and the disciples refer to Him as such. The “Son of David” was a clear Messianic designation. *Mark 8:29-30*
- Jesus believed He was God. Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” *John 8:58* reference *Exodus 3:13-14*
- Jesus claimed to be the only way to God. “I am the way, truth, and life.” *John 14:6*
- Jesus performs miracles. *Mt 4:23-24; Mt 8:1-4; Mt 8:14-15; Mt 8:23-27; Mt 9:2-8*
- Jesus claims to be without sin. He challenges His accusers to find any fault in Him. *John 8:46*

How others in the first and second century saw Jesus

John the Baptist “And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” *John 1:34*

Ignatius, the leader of the church in Antioch, who died as a martyr in the Coliseum in 110 repeatedly refers to Jesus as God.

Polycarp lived from 69-155 A.D., and was bishop of Smyrna, a disciple of the apostle John. He writes, “Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the High Priest himself, the [Son of] God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith.”

Irenaeus, who lived from 125-200 A.D., wrote, “For with him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom He speaks saying, ‘Let us make man after our image and likeness.’”

Justin Martyr lived from 110-166 A.D. and was a great Christian early church apologist; he writes, “Our Christ conversed with Moses under the appearance of fire from a bush.” He refers to Christ as the “Angel and Apostle,” “Who is also God,” yea “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,” and “the I AM that I AM.”

Who is Jesus?

- And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. *John 10:28*
- So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. *Mark 16:19*
- Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. *Romans 8:34*
- For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. *Hebrew 4:15*
- Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. *Revelations 3:20*
- Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. *Revelations 19:11*

Apologetics and Christ

There is a “Christocentric Strategy” in Apologetics: The Priority of Jesus.

- Our apologetics should rest primarily on the person of Christ. Metaphysical abstractions have their place, but the person of Christ is the most compelling argument.

Common Questions about Jesus (revisited)

- How do we know Jesus ever existed?
- Isn't the resurrection just a myth?
- Did Jesus ever claim to be God?
- Aren't we all sons of God?
- Isn't Jesus just a good moral teacher?
- How can we know he was the true messiah?

- How are the resurrection sightings different from Elvis sightings?
- Aren't you using the Bible to prove the Bible is true?

Recommended Resources

- *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona
- *The Case for Christ*, Lee Strobel
- *Jesus Among Other Gods*, Ravi Zacharias
- *Science Speaks*, Peter W. Stoner
- *The Case for the Real Jesus*, Lee Strobel
- *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Norman Geisler
- *Christianity: A Historical Religion?* William Wand

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 8

Can I Trust the Bible?

Session Goals

To better understand the New and Old Testament documents, their origins, reliability and accuracy.

Areas of Study

- Is the Bible Inspired?
- Common Questions from the Skeptics
- What is Hermeneutics?
- How did we get our Bible?
- The New Testament Documents
- New Testament – Extra-Biblical Accounts
- The Old Testament Documents
- Old Testament – Extra-Biblical Accounts

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. *Hebrews 4:12*

Common Questions from the Skeptics

- How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God and not the word of man?
- Isn't the Bible the product of powerful church leaders?
- How come we have so many versions of the Bible?
- How did we get the Bible?
- How do we know the Bible wasn't changed as it was copied?
- Isn't the Bible just a book of myths?
- How can we trust the Bible is accurate?
- Aren't there contradictions in the Bible?
- Hasn't science disproved the Bible?
- How is the Bible different from other holy books?
- Why is the Bible so hard to understand?

Is the Bible Inspired?

How do we know the Bible is the inspired Word of God?

Prophetically accurate

Unique among all books ever written, the Bible accurately foretells specific events-in detail-many years, sometimes centuries, before they occur. Approximately 2500 prophecies appear in the pages of the Bible, about 2000 of which already have been fulfilled to the letter. *Hugh Ross, Reasons.org*. The following prophesy descriptions and many more can be found at *100prophecies.org* *George Konig, Ray Konig*.

- Isaiah 13:17-22 and Jeremiah 51:26, 43, mighty Babylon, was said to be indestructible, yet two Bible prophets declared its doom over 100 years earlier. These prophets further claimed that the ruins would be avoided by travelers, that the city would never again be inhabited, something that is still true 2,700 years later.
- Leviticus 26:44, the Bible said that God would never allow the people of Israel to be completely destroyed, which is still true 3,500 years later.

- Leviticus 26:32-33, as well as in other prophecies of the Bible, we learn that the people of Israel would be persecuted in the nations to which they would be driven during their exile, and that the land of Israel would be in ruins.
- Matthew 24:1-2, Jesus prophesied that the Temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed. His prophecy was fulfilled about 40 years later when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and tore down the Temple.
- In Luke 21:24, Jesus said that Jerusalem would be trampled upon by foreigners and that the people of Israel would be forced into exile. The people of Israel are the only culture in history to survive more than a few generations without a homeland, in this case for 2,000 years.
- Amos 1:9-10, the prophet said that God would cause Tyre's protective fortresses to fail, as punishment for the way that Tyre treated Israel. That prophecy was fulfilled in 586-573 BC when Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar attacked the mainland of Tyre, and in 333-332 BC when Alexander the Great conquered the island of Tyre.
- Ezekiel 26:21, the prophet said that Tyre would be brought to an end and would never again be found. When Alexander the Great destroyed the city in 332 BC, he brought an end to the Phoenician Empire. The Empire was never revived or "found" again.

What about Nostradamus?

Predicts the attack on the World Trade Center

- Century 6 Quatrain 97 At forty-five degrees the sky will burn, Fire to approach the great new city: In an instant a great scattered flame will leap up, When one will want to demand proof of the Normans.

Very vague predictions

- Century 2 Quatrain 3 During the appearance of the bearded star, The three great princes will be made enemies: Struck from the sky, peace earth quaking, Po, Tiber overflowing, serpent placed upon the shore.
- Skeptics such as James Randi suggest that his reputation as a prophet is largely manufactured by modern-day supporters who fit his words to events that have either already occurred or are so imminent as to be inevitable. *James Randi, Mask of Nostradamus: The Prophecies of the World's Most Famous.*
- Thus, no Nostradamus quatrain is known to have been interpreted as predicting a specific event before it occurred, other than in vague, general terms that could equally apply to any number of other events. *Peter Lemesurier, Nostradamus, Bibliomancer: The Man, the Myth, the Truth.* This even applies to quatrains that contain specific dates, such as Quatrain 3.77, which predicts, "in 1727, in October, the king of Persia shall be captured by those of Egypt" a prophecy that was never fulfilled in any respect. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nostradamus>

Historically accurate

- Princeton historian R.D. Wilson who mastered 45 languages noted that "the names of 29 Kings from ten nations (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and more) are mentioned not only in the Bible but are also found on monuments of their own time. Every single name is transliterated in the Old Testament exactly as it appears on the archaeological artifact –

syllable for syllable, consonant for consonant. The chronological order of the kings is correct.” *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament, R.D. Wilson*

Scientifically accurate

- Peter Stoner who was chairman of the mathematics and astronomy departments at Pasadena College remarked that his copy of Young's General Astronomy, published in 1898, is full of scientific errors while, the Bible, written over 2,000 years ago lacks such errors. For example, the shape of the earth is mentioned in Isaiah 40:22, gravity in Job 26:7 and atmospheric circulation in Ecclesiastes 1:6. A reference to ocean currents can be found in Psalm 8:8, and the hydraulic cycle is described in Ecclesiastes 1:7 and Isaiah 55:10. The second law of thermodynamics is outlined in Psalm 102:25-27 and Romans 8:21. And these are only a few examples of scientific truths written in the Scriptures long before they were "discovered" by scientists.

Experientially livable

- While Buddhism encourages us to flee all human desire, New Age and Hinduism claims we are living in an illusion. The relativists claim that there is no truth, while the atheists claim the universe is all the product of chance and that survival is our strongest drive. The Bible on the other hand urges the believer to seek virtue and live a life of love. While no easy task, it is the one worldview that best reflects reality and brings the highest level of human fulfillment.

Accurate depiction of man

- Every worldview acknowledges that man is broken. The atheist claims the problem is bad government, while the Buddhist claims it is human desire. The New Age movement claims that it is ignorance of the divinity in us and the Muslim claims it is due to disobedience. The Bible depicts man as a triune being with virtuous desires at odds with sinful desires.

Reliability

- Early accounts, eyewitness accounts, extensive manuscripts, archeologically supported and extra Biblical accounts all point to the impeccable reliability of the New Testament.

Social progress

- The Biblical worldview brought us the scientific method, the modern concept of human rights and equality and the modern concept of universal education. In addition, it remains the most charitable worldview in human history, bringing us the idea of the poor as a social class and the hospital system. Finally, it is Christianity that brought us the greatest works of art in history along with the greatest architectural marvels. All in all, it is the worldview that provides the best framework for social progress with no competitor of any consequence.

The Bible:

Prophetically Accurate
Historically Accurate
Scientifically Accurate
Socially Accurate
Experientially livable

Conclusion: the Bible must be the inspired word of God.

What is Hermeneutics?

Hermeneutics – The science of interpretation of scripture

- Biblical hermeneutics is perhaps summarized best by this verse: Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. *2 Timothy 2:15*
- Biblical hermeneutics is the science of knowing how to properly interpret the various types of literature found in the Bible.

Why hermeneutics?

- God's revelation is progressive.
- We are separated by time, culture, language, covenant, etc.
- We cannot understand the text apart from the original audience.
- The Bible uses various genre.
- Five Steps:
 - Is it literal, allegorical, poetic or prophetic?
 - Grasp the text - contextually – read the entire chapter or book
 - Determine the audience.
 - Situation (rebellion, expansion, pre-law, etc.)
 - New or Old Covenant
 - Reason, purpose, point
 - What is the principle?
 - How do I apply it?
- Example 1: *Revelations 3:14-21*. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
- Example 2: *Philippians 4:13*. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
- Example 3: *1 Thessalonians 5:26*. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

Old Testament Laws – what do we do?

- Moral Laws – Still apply.
- Civil Law – We're not Israel, though some still apply.
- Ceremonial law – Gone – we are under the New Covenant.

How do we deal with apparent contradictions?

There are four Gospels which give a biographical sketch of the life and ministry of Jesus. Many events are parallel among them though they don't always agree in detail. Events such as how many angels were at the tomb on the day of resurrection, what the sign on the cross said, and how many women went to the tomb, are recorded differently. But imagine if each of four children had to write a biography about their mother's life. Of course the details of the events would vary to some degree. Despite the fact that the Bible gives different accounts of the same events, all can be reconciled. As an example, there are four accounts of the time that the women went to visit the tomb.

1. Matthew 28:1: 'At dawn...went to look at the tomb'.
2. Mark 16:2 'Very early...just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb'.
3. Luke 24:1: 'Very early in the morning...went to the tomb'.
4. John 20:1: 'Early...while it was still dark...went to the tomb'.

Mark's account is the one that seems to deviate from the others. But of course, it is perfectly reasonable to assume that the sun had risen between the time they left the house and their walk across Jerusalem. This kind of discrepancy in the details of the accounts should be expected from four people who are writing about the same event at different times, which is evidence they did not corroborate their stories.

Though I don't believe it is a good idea to get overly entangled on the issue of contradictions, I think it is important to be able to defend the Bible against such false claims. Below are three rules that will help solve many apparent contradictions you may face.

What is a contradiction?

"A is B" and "A is not B" are mutually exclusive and contradictory. The statements, 'There are two windows in this room' and 'there are no windows in this room' are contradictory and cannot be reconciled.

First we must clarify what a contradiction is. A contradiction occurs when two different statements on a topic cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense. As an example, the statements, 'There are two windows in this room' and 'there are no windows in this room' are contradictory and cannot be reconciled, because 'no windows' excludes 'two windows' in every sense. The statements, 'There are only two windows in this room' and 'there are three windows in this room' are contradictory because the world only excludes the possibility of three windows. Now by contrast, suppose I said 'there are two windows in this room' and someone else said 'there are three window in this room'. This is not a contradiction because there are two windows contained within the three window room.

As another example, suppose I said 'John's shirt is blue' and someone else said 'there is no blue on John's shirt'. This of course is a contradiction, because blue and no blue cannot be reconciled. Like all contradictions, at least one and perhaps both statements are false. Suppose

now I said 'John's shirt is blue' and someone else said 'John's shirt is white'. This is not a contradiction because John could have a blue and white striped shirt.

When we understand the nature of a contradiction, we will see that there are no contradictions in the Bible. All the apparent contradictions can be reconciled, usually with just a little thought.

What is a paradox?

- John 20:1 – Mary Magdalene
- Mathew 28:1 – Mary Magdalene and the other Mary
- The statements, 'There are two windows in this room' and 'there are three windows in this room' are not contradictory because they can be reconciled.
- The statements, 'There are only two windows in this room' and 'there are three windows in this room' are contradictory.

A paradox is a statement which appears at first to be a contradiction but can be reconciled. For example, if a friend asks me what I did for lunch and I say; "I went to Burger King" and later another asks me what I did for lunch and I say "I went to the pharmacy" this appears to be a contradiction. Further investigation will identify that within an hour, I have time to do both. A paradox initially appears to be contradictory or illogical but once investigated it can be reasonably understood.

A Biblical example, would be when John 20:1 reports that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and Mathew 28:1 reports that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. There is no contradiction here; John simply did not include "the other Mary" in his account. Verse 2 of John 20 brings clarity when it states that, Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." The "we" in this statement by Mary indicates that she was not alone.

Another Biblical example is when John 19:17 reports that Jesus went out carrying the cross to the Place of the Skull. Matthew 27:31,32 claims that Simon carried the cross. But a closer look indicates the Jesus was led out to be crucified and that it was only as they were going to Golgotha that Simon was forced to carry the cross. Mark 15:20,21 which gives us more information, starts the scene from the hall called Praetorium inside the palace. This implies that Jesus carried his cross for some distance, from the palace into the street.

Mark 15:23 reports that the two thieves crucified with Jesus mocked him while Luke 23:43 claims one defended him. This is pretty straight forward. The obvious solution is that both thieves mocked Jesus initially. During the time they were

Paradox:
two claims which
appear to be in
contradiction but can
be reconciled using
proper analysis.

hanging on the cross one of the thieves seems to have had a change of heart and repented on the cross, while the other continued in his mocking. Presumably the change of heart happened after Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing,"

All four Gospels give a slightly different account of the words that were written on the sign above Jesus' head while on the cross. This paradox is solved by reading John 19:20 which says; "Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek."

Most paradoxes can be solved by simply looking at the context and thinking it through a bit.

What is a mystery?

A mystery is something hard for the human mind to grasp as we are limited in our capacity to understand the depth of God and the nature of heaven. While a mystery cannot contain contradictions, it is something that appears unintelligible given our limited knowledge. Examples include the trinity, virgin birth, and an eternal God. The New Testament makes reference to mysteries 21 times, many of which are reveled in the New Testament.

Other possible "contradictions" solved

Scribal errors - While they are rare, there are a few errors of transmitting in the Bibles we currently read. In 2 Kings 8:26; Ahaziah is said to have been 22 when he became king, while in 2 Chronicles 22:2 claims Ahaziah was 42 when he became king. Clearly a scribe got this wrong when transmitting the scripture. Fortunately 2 Kings 8:17 clears this up and ensures us the the correct age is 22. Such scribal errors do not change Jewish or Christian beliefs in the least.

Time lapse between record- Another possible scribal error can be found in 1 Kings 4:26 which reports that Solomon had 40,000 stalls for his horses and 2 Chronicles 9:25 reports that he had or 4,000 stalls. There are several ways to solve this problem. The first is that a zero had been rubbed out or distorted from early manuscripts or that a scribe left out or added a zero. Possibly the stalls mentioned in 2 Chronicles were large ones that housed 10 horses each. Therefore 4,000 of these large stalls would be equivalent to 40,000 small ones. The most apparent explanation is that the number of stalls recorded in 2 Chronicles was the number at the beginning of Solomon's reign, the number recorded in 1 Kings was the number of stalls at the end. Having reigned 40 years certainly the number of horses and stalls could have increased by that many.

Genealogy - Matthew 1:6 reports that Jesus descend from Solomon, Luke 3:31 reports that he descended from Nathan, both of whom are sons of David. This is straight forward, Matthew gives Joseph's genealogy and Luke gives that of Mary. It is clear that Joseph was descended from David through Solomon and Mary through Nathan.

Summary verses detail account - Acts 1:18 claims Judas bought a field with his blood-money for betraying Jesus, Matthew 27:5 claims he threw it into the Temple. The account in Matthew indicates that the silver was thrown down on the Temple floor from where the priests used it to buy a field. A closer look indicates that the passage in Acts is just a summary of the other.

Proper Biblical understanding - Genesis 2:17 claims Adam would die the same day he eats of the tree, while Genesis 5:5 claims he continue to live to the age of 930 years. The Bible describes death in three ways; 1) Physical death on earth, 2) spiritual death which is separation from God, and 3) eternal death in hell. The death spoken of in Genesis 2:17 is clearly spiritual death, the death mentioned in Genesis 5:5 is physical death which ends our present life.

How did we get our Bible?

Who wrote the Bible?

Our Bible was authored by about 40 different people, over the course of about 1,600 years. The Old Testament was written by kings (David, Solomon), a political leader (Moses), boy turned Prime Minister (Daniel), shepherd (Amos), and prophets (Isaiah, Nehemiah). The New Testament was written by a tax collector (Matthew), fishermen (Peter, James, John), doctor (Luke), and a religious leader (Paul). Yet with such diversity all the books of the Bible miraculously tie together in theme and message. Each generation built on the other. Moses believed Abraham, David believed the writings of Moses, Jesus quoted from David, Paul quoted from Jesus, Peter quoted from Paul. Authors do not give very flattering accounts of themselves, which support their authenticity. Sin, weaknesses, and cowardliness are shown in as much light as their greatest accomplishments. Old Testament – kings (David, Solomon), political leader (Moses), boy turned Prime Minister (Daniel), shepherd (Amos), prophets (Isaiah, etc.)

Yet they miraculously tie together in theme, message, and even many detailed cross-references over a period of 1500 years and three continents. Authors do not give very flattering accounts of themselves, which support their authenticity. Sin, weaknesses, and cowardliness are shown in as much light as their greatest exploits.

Each generation built on the other. Moses believed Abraham, David believed the writing of Moses, Jesus quoted from David, Paul quoted from Jesus, Peter quoted from Paul.

We need to keep in mind that the Bible was inspired by God. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 *Timothy* 3:16 Inspiration = (Greek – theopneustos, theh-op'-nyoo-stos; divinely breathed in: given by inspiration of God.) This is how God gave us the Bible.

How did the New Testament become canon?

The term “canon” is used to describe the books of the Bible that are divinely inspired. Those chosen to comment on the final list did not take this responsibility lightly. The first qualification was to determine if the book or letter was universally accepted by the church as inspired. The second step was determining the authenticity of the author which had to be an apostle or someone closely related. There were other qualifications, but the point is that these church leaders took great precaution to ensure that the final list of books that make up the New Testament was the group of books that were God breathed, inspired by the Holy Ghost.

During the first century, letters were written by the apostles and circulated to the early churches. The letters were copied and then sent along to other churches. It is estimated that by the end of the first century, tens of thousands of New Testament documents were in circulation. This is important because the extensive number of copies protected the church from fakes and counterfeits, as they were able to check their list against others.

How long did it take? – Clement Archbishop of Rome quotes from most of the New Testament books by the end of the first century. By the middle of the second century, church fathers were quoting from all of the New Testament documents as we have them today.

Tertullian stated that by 150 A.D., the Church in Rome had compiled a list of the New Testament books, which closely matches our list today. By 240 A.D. Origen’s list matches ours and he referred to it as the New Testament. We have 32,000 quotes from before 325 AD, from Irenaeus (182-188 AD), Justin Martyr (before 150 AD), Polycarp (107 AD), Ignatius (100), Clement (96 AD) and many other first-, second- and third-century fathers. All but eleven verses of the New Testament can be reconstructed through their writings alone.

Church Council of Hippo 393 and Church Council of Carthage 397 – ratified the established canon.

Why do Roman Catholics have more Old Testament books than Protestants?

- On April 8, 1546 the Council of Trent approved the Apocrypha as canon among Roman Catholics. Since that time Catholics have read from an Old Testament that contains 46 books, instead of 39. Protestants reject those seven books on several grounds:
 - They were not included in the Hebrew canon.
 - Neither Jesus nor the apostles quote from the seven books.
 - None of the books claim to be inspired.
 - Early church fathers such as Origen, Athanasius, and Jerome rejected the books.

Are we reading what the authors wrote down?

One of the most common objections to the Bible when witnessing to an atheist is the question of reliability. Many will claim that the Bible was written centuries after the events, while others

claim that the entire story was concocted by the church. Some skeptics will argue that the accuracy was lost during the many translations, while others question the credibility of the authors. There are really three issues which are often expressed in different ways. The first is the **accuracy** of the Bibles that we are reading in the 21 century. Can they be counted on to transmit exactly what the apostles wrote down 2,000 years ago. Next you have the question of **reliability**. Does the New Testament properly record the events that happened in the first century? Of course they include miracles, so for some atheists this will discredit any evidence you may provide. The final question is one of **trustworthiness** or put another way, does the Bible reveal the truth about life, heaven and the universe. So let's tackle each question in a general sense and then we can go into more specifics.

Accuracy: Are we reading what was written?

Reliability: Is it describing the actual events?

- Is it accurate – are we reading what the apostles wrote?
 - Manuscripts – copies from the original signature
 - Do we have enough? – more than any other ancient source
 - Are there conflicts? – Yes, thousands, of which 99% are spelling errors and 1% do not change any important Christian doctrine.
- Reliability?
 - The single most important issue when speaking of reliability is the amount of time between the events and the writings. How dependent are we on oral transmission, which as we know can be very flawed. Was the story handed down for several generations, opening it up to embellishment and myth, or were witnesses around during the writings to serve as a check against forgery? Do we have archaeological and outside sources to support the claims of the writers or are they dependent on the writings of one man, such as the Koran and the Book of Mormon?
 - How much time between the events and the writings? – 20-50 years
 - Matthew was in circulation during the time of the eyewitnesses.
 - Many ancient historians and critical scholars today believe that the Gospel of Mark was written as early as 50-54 A.D.
 - Luke is considered to have been composed around 58-60 A.D.
 - Who are the sources? – eyewitnesses and historians
 - 2 Peter 3:15-16 “as also in all his epistles,” Peter is referencing Paul’s epistles before 67 AD.
- Trustworthy?
 - Biblical inerrancy is the idea that the scriptures are without error.
 - Biblical infallibility is the belief that what the Bible says regarding matters of faith and Christian practice are factual and true and free from possible error.
 - Are there contradictions in the Bible? – no
 - What books are ‘inspired’ and how do we know? (covered in first section)
- What is a translation?

- A translation is a new writing in a different language.
- Can they be trusted? – Yes, particularly those that use early Greek manuscripts as the source.
- Is it a real account?
 - Archaeology – supports the claims of the Bible
 - Extra-Biblical accounts – support historicity of the Bible

In the past, the Bible has demonstrated that its accounts are trustworthy as far as they have been verified. Moreover, the Bible has never been controverted by solid historical data. Therefore, the benefit of the doubt should go to the Bible in places where it cannot be verified, when there is no evidence to the contrary, and when it seems clear that the author intended for us to understand the event as historical. *Gary R. Habermas, A Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*

Is the Bible a legend or a book of myths?

One of the most famous classical historians who ever lived was A.N. Sherwin White of Oxford University. He studied the rate at which legend grew up in the ancient world. He determined that even the passage of two generations of time was not adequate for legend to grow up and wipe out a solid core of historical truth.

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. *Luke 1:1-4*

The Bible reads like a history book, not a book of legends and myths.

What about the “lost” Gospels; aren’t they important?

- The Gospel of Thomas – discovered in 1890. Dated beginning of the third century. Quotes from 14 New Testament books, and it quotes from Titian, which is dated 175 AD.
- Gospel of Peter – Dated the third century
- Gospel of Judas – Dated the beginning of third century
- Gospel of Mary – Dated 200 – 250 AD
- Gospel of Mark – Fraud
- Jesus Paper – Fraud
- Books that were considered but not accepted as canon: Acts of Paul, Teachings of the Apostles, Apocalypse of Peter, etc.
- Reason they were not included:
 - The authors were unknown to the early church.
 - They did not have universal acceptance by the early Church.
 - They are dated later than the original New Testament documents.

- Jesus and God is not recognizable.
- Peter was executed 67 AD so his books must be dated before that.
 - And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:15-16
 - “as also in all his epistles,” Peter is referencing Paul’s epistles before 67 AD.

Conclusion – The New Testament was written in the first century and largely affirmed as sacred by much of the Church by the middle of the second century all the others came later and largely rejected early on.

Jesus and other biographies

- Historian of ancient Christianity, John Dickson compared the life of Jesus to the other religious biographies:
 - Islam - The earliest biography of the founder of Islam, Mohammed, was composed around 760 A.D., 125 years after his death, but continued to be edited for another 50 years.
 - Buddhism - The first written records of the life and sermons of the Siddharth Gautama (Buddha) appeared 350 years after his death.
 - The most famous of ancient Israel’s rabbis was a great scholar named Hillel, who died early in the first century A.D. His teachings and stories appear in writing for the first time in the Mishna, composed about 200 A.D. Nevertheless, scholars still treat these writings as serious historical texts.
 - The Gospels were written within 40-60 years after Jesus’ death. These establish beyond doubt that Jesus’ teachings, death, and resurrection, together with his status as Messiah (Christ), were being taught by missionaries and committed to memory by Christians in the early 30s A.D.

The New Testament Documents

Manuscript evidence

The single most important issue when discussing accuracy is the amount of manuscripts, which are simply copies from the original document. Suppose I had two copies (manuscripts) of a letter originally written by my great grandfather. Both manuscripts were copied by family members from the original letter. One claims he smoked cigars, the other says he never smoked cigars. Clearly one of the two people making the copies made a mistake. It would be hard to tell what the original letter said about my great grandfather's smoking.

Now suppose I have twenty copies and nineteen say he never smoked cigars, while only one claims he smoked cigars. Clearly, we can determine that the original letter said he never smoked cigars. And this is why the number of manuscripts matter because you can check them against each other and have a good idea about what was in the original document. Manuscript counts are important because they help weed out errors and embellishments. By cross checking numerous writings one can make better estimations of the original writings.

<u>Writings</u>	<u>Date written</u>	<u>Earliest copy</u>	<u>Time span</u>	<u>Manuscripts</u>
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1400 yrs	49
Plato	427-347 B.C.	A.D. 900	1300 yrs	7
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1000 yrs	10
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643

Christian Apologetics, Norman Geisler

The Bible we have today is remarkably true to the original writings. The manuscript count is as follows:

- Ancient Greek manuscript; 5,300
 Latin Vulgate: 10,000 copies
 Other manuscript versions: 9,300+
 - Syriac
 - Coptic
 - Armenian
 - Gothic
 - Ethiopic
- Total: over 24,000 manuscripts

The New Testament documents are better-preserved and more numerous than any other ancient writings. If you can't believe in the authenticity of the Bible you can't believe in the authenticity of any ancient text.

What would we look for in a credible witness?

- Multiple witnesses
 - Three eyewitnesses – Mathew, Mark and John
 - One historian – Luke
- Confirmation through archaeological finds
 - Not one that disproves accuracy of the Bible
 - Substantial secular evidence
- Early transmission of the events
 - Most of the New Testament was written before 70 AD.
 - Three of the Gospels are eyewitness accounts.

- Honesty about themselves
 - Matthew 16:23 – ‘Get behind me, Satan!’
 - Mark 14:47 – Peter cuts off Malcheus’ ear
 - Throughout the Gospels the disciples appear to lack faith.
- Some divergence in accounts
 - Reveals that they were not in collusion with one another
- Some doubt
 - Questioned Jesus’ resurrection
 - Matthew 28:17
 - Mark 16:13
 - Luke 24:11
 - John 20:24-29
- Accurate prophecies
 - Many New Testament prophecies have been fulfilled such as:
 - The destruction of the Temple in 70AD
 - The rise of Israel as a nation in 1947
 - The diaspora in the first century
 - The return of the Jews to Israel in the twentieth century
 - Prosecution of the first century church

Overview of early manuscripts

John Rylands Manuscript

One of the earliest surviving pieces of New Testament scripture is a fragment of a papyrus codex containing John 18:31-33 and 37-38. This papyrus was found in Egypt, and has been dated about 125 A.D. It currently resides at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England.

The Muratonian Canon

Discovered in the Ambrosian Library in Milan by Father Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750), the fragment dating from 170 AD lists the same New Testament that we have, without Hebrews, James and 1 & 2 Peter.

Papyrus Bodmer II

This collection of approximately fifty Greek and Coptic manuscripts was purchased by M. Martin Bodmer of Switzerland in 1955-56, and has been dated at around 200 A.D. The documents were discovered in Egypt. The manuscripts include Old and New Testament texts and writings of the early churches.

Chester Beatty Papyrus

Dated 200-250 A.D. made public in 1931. It contains the Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles, and Revelation.

Latin Vulgate

This is the Latin Bible, or '*versio vulgate*,' which means 'common translation.' It was translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382 and 405 A.D. The Vulgate was the standard version of the Bible for Roman Catholics for over 1500 years. Until 1450, copies were also very rare and expensive. During the Protestant Reformation in the 14th and 15th centuries, the Bible was finally translated into modern languages, against great resistance from the Church.

Codex Sinaiticus – Sinai Book

The word 'Sinaiticus' derives from the fact that the Codex was preserved for many centuries at St. Catherine's Monastery near the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt. It was discovered in 1844-1859 by Constantine Tischendorf, the Codex is the remains of a huge hand-written book that contained all the Christian scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, together with two late first-century texts, the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas. Codex Sinaiticus is generally dated to the fourth century, and sometimes more precisely to the middle of that century.

Codex Vaticanus

It is the most famous manuscript in the possession of the Vatican library. It is generally believed to be from the fourth century, and is thought to be the oldest (nearly) complete copy of the Greek Bible in existence. Lacking from it are most of the book of Genesis, Hebrews 9:14 to the end, the Pastoral Epistles, and the book of Revelation; these parts were lost by damage to the front and back of the volume, which is common in ancient manuscripts.

Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus

It is an early 5th century Greek manuscript of the Bible. It receives its name, as a codex in which the treatises of Ephraem the Syrian, in Greek translations, were written over ("rescriptus") a former text that had been washed off its vellum pages, thus forming a palimpsest. The later text was produced in the 12th century. The effacement of the original text was incomplete, fortunately, for beneath the text of Ephraem are the remains of what was once a complete Bible, containing both the Old Testament and the New.

Codex Alexandrinus

It is a 5th century manuscript of the Greek Bible, containing the majority of the Septuagint and the New Testament. Along with the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus, it is one of the earliest and most complete manuscripts of the Bible. It derives its name from Alexandria, where it resided for a number of years before being given to the British in the 17th century. Due to damage and lost folios, various passages are missing or have defects.

Codex Claromontanus

Claromontanus is a 6th century manuscript on vellum of the Epistles of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews in Greek and Latin on facing pages. It was named by Theodore Beza because he procured it in the town of Clermont-en-Beauvaisis, to the north of Paris. Later, history of its use by editors of the Greek New Testament can be found in the links and references.

Codex Bezae

This is an important codex of the New Testament dating from the 5th or 6th century. It is written on vellum and contains, in both Greek and Latin, most of the four Gospels and Acts, with a small fragment of 3 John. The importance of the Codex Bezae is such that a colloquium held at Lunel, Herault, in 1995 was entirely devoted to it. Papers discussed the many questions it poses to our understanding of the use of the Gospels and Acts in early Christianity, and of the text of the New Testament.

Codex Laudianus

Contains the book of Acts written in both Latin and Greek (parallel style) dating from the 6th or 7th century.

New Testament – Extra Biblical Accounts

Gospel of Luke

Luke is a historian of the first order. In his account of the Gospel, he lists 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 islands. He names tax collectors, proconsul, magistrates, etc., without making a single mistake.

Pontius Pilate

An inscribed stone was found that refers to Pontius Pilate, named as “Prefect of Judaea.” Luke 3:1, “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea...”

Gallio Proconsul of Achaia

“A decree of Claudius found at Delphi (Greece) describes Gallio as proconsul of Achaia in A.D. 51, thus giving a correlation with the ministry of Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:12).” (The New Bible Dictionary) Acts 18:12, “But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat.”

Erastus the Roman city-treasurer

Excavations have revealed a text naming a benefactor Erastus which may be a reference relating to the city-treasurer of Rom. 16:23. (The New Bible Dictionary) *Rom. 16:23*, “Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.”

Temple of Artemis

At Ephesus parts of the temple of Artemis have been uncovered as is mentioned in Acts 19:28. And when they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians."

Extra – Biblical accounts of Christ

There are 39 ancient sources such as Pliny, Josephus, and the Talmud, which refer to the life of Christ, his teachings, crucifixion and resurrection in addition to the New Testament.

Josephus (Jewish Historian, A.D. 37-100)

“...the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ, whose name was James...” “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”

Cornelius Tacitus (Roman Historian, A.D. 55-120)

“Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius...”

Lucian (Greek Satirist, A.D. 125-180)

“...the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world...their first lawgiver persuaded them that they were all brothers one of another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws...”

Suetonius (Greek Historian, A.D. 120)

“As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus [another spelling for Christus or Christ], he expelled them from Rome.” “Punishment by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition.”

Pliny the Younger (A.D. 112)

“They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bound themselves to a solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds, and never to deny a truth when they should be called upon to deliver it up.”

The Arch of Titus

This is a relief that depicts the Roman General Titus carrying off the spoils of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. We see soldiers, part of a procession of several hundred, carrying off the Menorah and Table of the Showbread. Also seen being taken are the silver trumpets that called the Jews to the festivals. The signs they are carrying commemorate the victories that Titus had won. Luke 19:41-44 (read) Matthew 23:37-39 (read)

A taxation-census

It is known that Quirinius was made governor of Syria by Augustus in AD 6. Archaeologist Sir William Ramsay discovered several inscriptions that indicated that Quirinius was governor of Syria on two occasions, the first time several years prior to this date... archaeology has provided some unexpected and supportive answers. Additionally, while supplying the background behind these events, archaeology also assists us in establishing several facts: (1) A taxation-census was a fairly common procedure in the Roman Empire and it did occur in Judea,

in particular. (2) Persons were required to return to their home city in order to fulfill the requirements of the process. (3) These procedures were apparently employed during the reign of Augustus (37 BC–AD 14), placing it well within the general time frame of Jesus' birth.

The Gospel of Luke

The historical trustworthiness of Luke has been attested by a number of inscriptions. The 'politarchs' of Thessalonica (*Acts 17:6, 8*) were magistrates and are named in five inscriptions from the city in the 1st century AD. Similarly, Publius is correctly designated *proptos* ('first man') or Governor of Malta (*Acts 28:7*). Near Lystra inscriptions record the dedication to Zeus of a statue of Hermes by some Lycaonians, and nearby was a stone altar for 'the Hearer of Prayer' (Zeus) and Hermes. This explains the local identification of Barnabas and Paul with Zeus (Jupiter) and Hermes (Mercury) respectively (*Acts 14:11*).

Derbe, Paul's next stopping-place, was identified by Ballance in 1956 with Kaerti Hüyük near Karaman (*Luke 2:2*) and to Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene (*Luke 3:1*) have likewise received inscriptional support. (*The New Bible Dictionary*)

Luke's earlier references to Quirinius as governor of Syria before the death of Herod I (*Luke 2:2*) and to Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene (*Luke 3:1*) have likewise received inscriptional support. (*The New Bible Dictionary*)

The Old Testament Documents

Ancient manuscript terms

- Papyrus – Papyrus is a thick paper-like material produced from the pith of the papyrus plant.
- Parchment – Parchment is a thin material made from calfskin, sheepskin or goatskin. Its most common use is as the pages of a book, codex or manuscript. It is distinct from leather in that parchment is not tanned, but stretched, scraped, and dried under tension, creating a stiff white, yellowish or translucent animal skin. The finer qualities of parchment are called vellum. It is very reactive with changes in relative humidity and is not waterproof.
- Scroll – scroll is a roll of papyrus, parchment, or paper which has been written, drawn or painted upon for the purpose of transmitting information or using as a decoration. It is distinguished from a roll by virtue of being intended for repeated use rather than continuous, but once-only use of the roll. Scrolls in general have greater value.
- Codex – Similar to modern book formats today, with separate pages normally bound together and given a cover. It was a Roman invention that replaced the scroll. During the second century, Christian texts began to be written down in books rather than on rolls; the name 'codex' was transferred to them. The pages that formed the earliest Christian books were made from the reeds of the papyrus plant.

Hebrew Bible terms

Hebrew Bible or Old Testament also known as the Tanakh or the Masoretic text consists of:

- Torah - Five Books of Moses
- Nevi'im - Prophets
- Ketuvim - Writings

Septuagint

- The Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures which originated in Alexandria, Egypt.
- Translated between 300-200 BC.
- Widely used among Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) Jews because many Jews spread throughout the empire were beginning to lose their Hebrew language. The process of translating the Hebrew to Greek also gave many non-Jews a glimpse into Judaism.
- According to an ancient document called the Letter of Aristeas, it is believed that 70 to 72 Jewish scholars were commissioned during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus to carry out the task of translation.
- The term “Septuagint” means seventy in Latin, and the text is so named to the credit of these 70 scholars.
- In the book *New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell asserts that Jesus and his disciples quoted from this text.

Dead Sea Scrolls

- Recovered in the Qumran cave in 1948
- Date from the third century BC to 68 AD
- They comprise roughly 825-872 documents.
- The library contains some books or works in a large number of copies, yet others are represented only fragmentarily by mere scraps of parchment. The number of different compositions represented is almost one thousand.
- They are written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- Approximately 30% of the scrolls consist of fragments from the Hebrew Bible, including all the books except the Book of Esther and the Book of Nehemiah.

Nash Papyrus

- A collection of four papyrus fragments acquired in Egypt by W. L. Nash
- The fragments were the oldest Hebrew fragments known at that time that contained certain passages later included in the bible.
- Initially dated to 2nd century AD, but now dated to 100-150 BC.
- Masoretic text, specifically the Ten Commandments and the Shema Yisrael prayer
- The order the commandments listed in the Nash papyrus differs from that of the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint.

The Old Testament – Extra-Biblical Accounts

The Shiloah Inscription

This inscribed text was found in the Siloam tunnel wall which brings water from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam, located in Jerusalem. The inscription records the construction of the tunnel by Hezekiah, which has been dated to the 8th century BCE. Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? *2 Kings 20:20*

The Merneptah Stele

Standing six feet tall the Merneptah Stele is an inscription by the Ancient Egyptian king Merneptah dating back to 1208 BC. It was discovered in 1896 at Thebes, and now housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The text is largely an account of Merneptah's military victory over the Libyans and a separate campaign in Canaan. Biblical archeologists translate a set of hieroglyphs on Line 27 as "Israel", such that it represents the first documented instance of the name Israel in the historical record demonstrating the existence of a nation 200 year before King David expanded its borders.

Moabite Stone

This stele (inscribed stone) corroborates the story found in 2 Kings 3:4–8 of the Moabites paying tribute to Israel. It is the most extensive inscription ever recovered that refers to the kingdom of Israel; it bears the earliest extra-biblical reference to the house of David and Israel's God Yahweh. Time Magazine, December 18, 1995, Volume 146, No. 25 notes that "The skeptics' claim that King David never existed is now hard to defend." Found in 1868 at the ruins of Dibon, it was later broken and reconstructed, and is now in the Louvre in Paris. In the Bible it says that Mesha the king of Moab was paying tribute to Israel and that they suddenly stopped. This is King Mesha's account of the rebellion. See 2 Kings 3:5.

Stela of Ashurbanipal

This relief of Ashurbanipal (668-626 BC) from Nineveh shows the king carrying a basket on his head, symbolizing the king's personal involvement in the restoration of the temple of Esagila in Babylon. One generation later, the Babylonians came and destroyed Assyria, and the Assyrian Empire passed into history. The cuneiform inscription around and over the king's body records his restoration of the shrine of Ea, the god of fresh water and wisdom, within the Temple of Marduk, the supreme deity of Babylon. See Isaiah 10:5-13

The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III

This black limestone relief sculpture is one of the most important discoveries in Biblical Archaeology. This panel depicts the Hebrew king Jehu, or possibly one of his servants, bringing gifts to Shalmaneser III and kneeling at his feet. This was prophesied because of Jehu's failure to eradicate all false worship in Israel that Jeroboam instituted. The stone reads: "The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri: I received from him silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase with pointed bottom, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king and spears." See 2 Kings 10:31-36.

Nebuchadnezzar Cylinder

This clay cylinder measuring 20.8cm is one of three cylinders found in the ruins of ancient Babylon that describe several building projects by king Nebuchadnezzar including the rebuilding of the temple of Shamash, the Akkadian sun god, in Sippar. See Daniel 4:30.

Babylonian Chronicles

The Babylonian Chronicles records events in ancient Babylon dating from about 750 BC to 280 BC. The ABC 5 tablet is part of that chronicle and records events from 605-594 BC including Nebuchadnezzar II's military campaigns in the west. It also records the defeat of Nineveh in 612 BC and the fall of the Assyrian Empire. It records Nebuchadnezzar's rise to power, it records the removing of Jehoiachin, King of Judah and inserting Zedekiah as king in his place, as recorded in Scripture, and it records the capture of Jerusalem on the 16th of March, 598 BC. See 2 Kings 25:8-11.

Cyrus Cylinder

The Cyrus Cylinder speaks of Cyrus the Persian's conquest of Babylon. The Cylinder's text has traditionally been seen by biblical scholars as corroborating the Biblical account wherein Cyrus allows the Jewish captives to return to their homelands, following their Babylonian captivity. Though the text is not specific as it refers to the restoration of cult sanctuaries and repatriation of deported peoples, it can be inferred that this included the Jewish captives. The Bible records that "the decree of Cyrus" gave permission to the Hebrew captives to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild their Temple. See 2 Chronicles 36:22-23.

The Elephantine Papyri

The Elephantine Papyri is a collection of ancient Jewish manuscripts dating from the fifth century BC. They come from a Jewish community at Elephantine, the island in the Nile at the border of Nubia. The 'Passover letter' of 419 BC (discovered in 1907), which gives detailed instructions for properly keeping Passover, is in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin. The documents were first acquired in 1893 by New York journalist Charles Edwin Wilbour. After

lying in a warehouse for more than 50 years, the papyri were shipped to the Egyptian Department of the Brooklyn Museum. It was at this time that scholars finally realized that “Wilbour had acquired the first Elephantine papyri.” The papyri are reported to confirm the account found in the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah, specifically mentioning two people mentioned in the book of Nehemiah, Sanballat the Horonite and Johanan. *See Nehemiah 2:19; 12:23*

Common Questions from the Skeptics (revisited)

- How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God and not the word of man?
- Isn't the Bible the product of powerful church leaders?
- How come we have so many versions of the Bible?
- How did we get the Bible?
- How do we know the Bible wasn't changed as it was copied?
- Isn't the Bible just a book of myths?
- How can we trust the Bible is accurate?
- Aren't there contradictions in the Bible?
- Hasn't science disproved the Bible?
- How is the Bible different from other holy books?
- Why is the Bible so hard to understand?

Recommended Resources

- *Can I Trust the Bible?* (RZIM Critical Questions Discussion Guides), Darrell L. Block
- *Is the New Testament Reliable?*, Paul Barnett
- *Who Is Jesus?*, R. C. Sproul

- *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*, Lee Strobel
- *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, F. F. Bruce
- *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?*, Walter C. Kaiser
- *100 Prophecies: Ancient Biblical prophecies that foretold the future*, George Konig, Ray Konig

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 9

Understanding Evil and Suffering

Session Goals

To better understand the complex questions surrounding the concept of evil, pain and suffering and help believers formulate a cohesive response to these issues. In addition, we will discuss some complex scripture verses related to slavery and God's wrath.

Areas of Study

- Common Questions from Skeptics
- Understanding the Complexity of Evil
- What is the Ultimate Foundation for Morality?
- Is there Purpose behind Suffering?
- How do we explain the Sanctioned Killings in the Bible?
- Can we be Good without God?
- How Should the Christian Deal with Pain and Suffering?
- Common Questions from Skeptics (revisited)

O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" and You will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. *Habakkuk 1: 2-3*

Common Questions from Skeptics

- If God created everything, then didn't he create evil?
- If God is love why does he allow evil?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- How could a loving God kill so many people in the Bible?
- Aren't the Ten Commandments outdated?
- Can't we be good without God?
- How could a loving God send people to hell?
- If God loves me, why did my father leave?
- How is the killing in the Old Testament different from Islamic Jihad?
- Doesn't the Bible support slavery?

Understanding the Complexity of Evil

Understanding the complexity of evil.

The reason the problem of evil is so complex is because there are really several components to it. I've been to churches that try to spiritualize every evil act and I've been to those that try to control every evil act by controlling behavior. If only it was that simple. Jesus had a capacity to look at an individual and discern whether the problem was a demon, a physical ailment that needed healing, an issue of pride that demanded rebuke or just a problem of ignorance that was solved with good Biblical teaching. The Church has done a good job on the last note, not so great on the others.

- Metaphysical
 - What is the origin of evil?
 - What is the spiritual component?
- Physical
 - Explaining natural disasters.

- Is our flesh evil?
- Moral aspect
 - Is there a universal moral law?
 - How do we explain breaking of that law?
- Intellectual
 - Why is there evil and how does a loving God fit in?
 - Why does the Bible have apparent conflicts?
- Existential
 - What is the emotional, personal component?
 - How does suffering affect my worldview?

Different components

- Spiritual – Satan and demons
- Physical – Flesh and nature
- Psychological – Mind – human will and emotions gone wrong

What is the problem?

- God is all powerful and all loving.
- Evil and suffering exist in the world.
- Suffering appears to be random (Christians and non-Christians are affected)

Is a world with evil the best possible world? What are the alternatives?

- No world at all
- A world with only good – no free will
- A world with no morality – evil is rampant
- A world of good and evil – free will

Atheist's argument

- God is all-powerful, loving, and perfect.
- A perfect, loving God would create a universe that is perfect.
- The universe is not perfect but contains evil and suffering.
- Therefore, God does not exist.

Premise two is incorrect. The God of the Bible does not claim to create a perfect world, rather in Genesis Chapter 1 he states that it was good. He creates one with free choice and one that is temporary. The world is perfect in accomplishing His overriding will.

What is morality?

- What we do?
- Social standards?
- Is it what we believe is right and wrong?

Morality is

- Morality is objective and independent of opinion.
- Morality is not what we do, but what we “ought” to do.
- Morality is the transcendent universal standard of right and wrong.

How do we know there is evil and what does that say about God?

- | | | |
|---------------|---------|----------------|
| • Evil | assumes | Good |
| • Good & evil | assumes | Moral Law |
| • Moral Law | assumes | Moral Lawgiver |

You cannot disprove the existence of God with evil, any more than you can prove the existence of God with all the good in the world.

Can God have moral grounds for allowing evil? Yes...free will, ending suffering, ushering someone into heaven, etc.

Evil = Good and Evil

Good and Evil = law

Law = Lawgiver

Euthyphro's Dilemma

To better understand an attribute let's look at the Euthyphro's Dilemma which is used by atheists to stumble Christians who don't understand the concept of attributes. It's a bit complicated so try to follow along slowly. Here is the dilemma; Is an act right because God says it's so, or does God say it's so because it's right?

- If you chose "Right because God says so" then morality is arbitrary. That is, God could have said that rape is right and it would be right. That of course is a problem because under any circumstance rape must be wrong.

- If you chose "God says it's so because it's right" then morality is independent of God. That is to say that at some point God had to learn right from wrong because right and wrong is independent of God.

Of course, we do not have to choose from those two options. There is a third option which includes a moral standard (this avoids the first premise). Yet, the standard is not independent of God, but internal (avoiding the second premise). In the third option morality is grounded in the goodness of God. His commands are not arbitrary, rather they are part of His nature. God is a moral being and morality flows from his nature so he gets it right every time without having to reference an outside source. In general morality, is an attribute of God.

The universality of the problem

- It is the most frequently asked question by non-believers and skeptics.
- It may be the most significant (non- conscious) stumbling block, leading to doubt.
- Affects believers and non-believers.

How does the fall of man impact God's plan?

- "You will know good and evil."
- Impact on the relationship?

Origins of Evil

- The Bible opens by describing a world that is not as it should be.

Satan's fall from heaven is symbolically described in *Isaiah 14:12-14* and *Ezekiel 28:12-18*. While these two passages are referring specifically to the kings of Babylon and Tyre, they also reference the spiritual power behind those kings, namely, Satan. These passages describe why Satan fell, but they do not specifically say when the fall occurred.

What is the Ultimate Foundation of Morality?

What is the link between morality and evil?

Undoubtedly when we discuss the problem of evil and suffering we cannot discuss it apart from morality. The reason of course is that immorality almost always leads to pain. That is to say, the moral law was not given to restrict pleasure; rather it was given to mankind to protect us from evil. It is quite clear that if we follow God's law we can eliminate a vast majority of suffering.

As an example, suppose everyone followed the commandment to keep sex in marriage. This would eliminate the pain from:

- Adultery
- STDs
- Abortions
- Sex slave trafficking
- Fatherless homes
- Prostitution
- Child molestation

Are the moral laws of the Bible outdated?

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. *Josh 1: 8-9*

The question restated is: Would the world be a better place if everyone refrained from stealing, killing, adultery, covetousness, lying, etc.? I believe even today the answer is a resounding yes.

Would a loving God give us a rule book?

Many in the New Age movement resent the idea of God giving us a moral law, or put another way, a rule book. They prefer a God who leaves us alone and does not tell us what to do. But is this love? Does a loving parent warn a child about crossing the street or is it more loving to let the child learn on its own the dangers of crossing the street?

Imagine two societies both with kings. The first allows people to do what they want with no rules. Rape, lying, theft go unpunished and therefore rampant. The other king establishes strict rules of justice and order. Which is the more loving king?

What is the ultimate foundation for morality?

- Man is made in the image of God.
- Therefore man has intrinsic value.
- If man has no value, then morality cannot exist.
- There is no moral issue with murdering a computer or a pencil.
- There is no moral issue with a lion raping another lion.
- Man has intrinsic value, therefore, killing, raping and degenerate behavior is wrong.
- Man has intrinsic value, therefore, morality exists.

**Morality exists
because God loves
us and thus has
placed a high value
on our life.**

God loves us -_When King David was confronted by Nathan about his adultery and murder, he responded by saying “I have sinned against the Lord.” It is clear that he sinned against Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba but how did he sin against the Lord? Because God loves Uriah and Bathsheba and therefore it would be no different from someone hurting our own children.

What about sinful behavior where no one is hurt, like using drugs? This would go back to “God loves us” and is no less concerned about us being involved in destructive behavior than we would be if our children were doing it.

What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

- Mankind has intrinsic value independent of his utility or function.
- Mankind has meaning and purpose.
- We are in His likeness, unique in all creation: rational, moral, spiritual.
- Therefore, human life is sacred.

Did God create evil? Two possibilities

Evil is the absence of God - At first it might seem that if God created all things, then evil must have been created by God. However, evil is not a “thing” like a rock or electricity. You cannot have a jar of evil. Evil has no existence of its own; it is really the absence of good. For example, holes are real but they only exist in something else. We call the absence of dirt a hole, but it cannot be separated from the dirt. Perhaps a further illustration will help. If a person is asked, “Does cold exist?” the answer would likely be “yes.” However, this is incorrect. Cold does not exist. Cold is the absence of heat. Similarly, darkness does not exist; it is the absence of light. Evil is the absence of good, or better, evil is the absence of God. God did not have to create evil, but rather only allows for the absence of good. *Michael Houdmann, Got Questions?*

Evil is the product of free will - One of the good things God made was creatures who had the freedom to choose good. In order to have a real choice, God had to allow there to be something besides good to choose. So, God allowed these free angels and humans to choose good or reject good (evil). When a bad relationship exists between two good things we call that evil, but it does not become a “thing” that required God to create it. *Michael Houdmann, Got Questions?*

What is the connection between evil acts and suffering?

Now we want to think that the problem of suffering has an easy cause and effect relationship and often it does. I have a Christian associate who is constantly struggling with bad health. This person is seriously over weight and yet is constantly indulging himself with a stack of pancakes and biscuits a mile high. Nothing is killing more Christians in America today than obesity related health problems, yet the church is content talking about homosexuality rather than

gluttony, so as to not offend its members. Unfortunately, quite often the relationship is not so clear cut. Why do tornadoes hit the Midwest rather than San Francisco? Why do good Christian people give birth to children with birth defects? Why do mass shootings often happen in churches?

Jesus was confronted with this and his answer is quite unusual. Here is the entire exchange found in Luke 13:1-5, There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

Apparently the Galileans that were slain here were killed so that Pilate can perform human sacrifice. The question was clearly designed to lead Jesus into a trap, whether he should justify the act of Pilate by condemning the Galileans. The assumption was that these Galileans had performed an incredible act of wickedness and therefore got what they deserved. Jesus rejects their proposition that sin and suffering are tightly connected by lumping all sin and punishment into one big basket. He implies that we are all deserving of this kind of death and only grace keeps us alive and only repentance can save us. Jesus puts it another way in Mathew 5:45 " ...for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." So while we like to think there is this clear cut connection between sin and suffering, between righteousness and success, sometimes that is not the case.

So if the connection is not strong and in fact Christians can experience pain and suffering, why does God give us so many rules for living? The answer is simple; if you look at the life of those who do choose to follow Jesus, while they may experience pain, the trajectory of their life is moving in a better direction since the time they made that decision. As an example, I have a young close relative who was involved with drugs, alcohol and bullying in high school. She dropped out of high school and her future looked less than promising. In her early 20s she made a commitment to follow Jesus and has since stopped doing drugs and got married to a good Christian man. They have a beautiful baby girl and have decided that she will stay home, raise the kids and foster abandoned animals, while he works at what is a good paying job. Do they struggle? Of course they do. But the trajectory of her life has gone from potential drug addict and alcoholic with all its perils, to having a loving family.

So while the connection between sin and suffering is often not as tight as we'd like, almost always we can see a significant improvement in every Christian's life, and certainly this will be the case when we are all rejoicing in Heaven.

Is There Purpose Behind Suffering?

How does God use evil?

- To punish sin – evil is punitive.
- To edify the believer – evil is corrective
 - Exception for the believer – Communion. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. *1 Corinthians 11:29*
- Patience and Endurance – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. *James 1:2-4*
- Glory – His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.' *John 9:2-3*
- Redemption – But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. *Genesis 50:19*
- Redemption – We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. *Romans 8:28*

Why do bad things happen to good people?

The Biblical answer is that there are no “good” people. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that all of us are tainted by and infected with sin and could not be clearer about the non-existence of “good” people. *Romans 3:10* —“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Every human being on this planet deserves to be thrown into hell at this very moment. Every second we spend alive is only by the grace and mercy of God. Even the most terrible misery we could experience on this planet is merciful compared to what we deserve.

The question should be: Why do good things happen to bad people?

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the

tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”
Luke 13:1-5

For the Christian bad things can be a learning experience, corrective and edifying.

Final of reckoning

Christ will be the judge over all nations (John 5:22). All unbelievers will be judged by Christ at the “great white throne,” (Revelations 20:11-15) and they will be punished according to the works written in the books. Romans 2:5-6 states that unbelievers are storing up wrath against themselves and that God will “give to each person according to what he has done”. Christians will be judged, at the “judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10).

What does a fallen world look like?

In much the same way that God allows evil people to commit evil acts, God allows the earth to reflect the consequences sin has had on creation.

The fall of humanity into sin had effects on everything, including the world we inhabit. Everything in creation is subject to “frustration” and “decay.” Sin is the ultimate cause of natural disasters just as it is the cause of death, disease, and suffering.

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. *Romans 8:19*

Killing in the Bible?

How do we explain the sanctioned killings in the Bible?

As we read through the Old Testament we do see a tremendous amount of bloodshed. The Jews invade Canaan with incredible brutality, King David kills Philistines, Babylon destroys Jerusalem on God's command, and so forth. How could we justify such behavior and still claim God is a God of love and forgiveness.

Explanation – “After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, ‘The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.’ No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations,

the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” *Deuteronomy 9:4-5*

Would a loving God allow evil to go unpunished?

Destruction of Tyre and of Babylon happened under God’s consent. Jonah and Nineveh – shows the patience of God in dealing with sinful people. God always waited for the nations who ultimately experienced judgment to turn from their despicable ways and always warned them of the judgment that was coming. The book of Jonah describes God’s patience with the Ninevites, who finally did turn from their evil ways and avoided destruction. Other peoples and cultures could have repented of their sins, but they chose not to.

Amalek (described in 1 Samuel) routinely attempted to commit genocide against Israel, but were given 400 years by God to repent. But Amalek continued to commit their atrocities against Israel and so God judged them via Saul and the Israeli army.

From Sodom and Gomorrah, to Noah's flood to the destruction of the Canaanites every act that leads to death is due to judgment for sin. Of course the question remains, is that justifiable. I was once in a public debate with two atheists at first one of the atheists was complaining about a world with evil in it and how it was possible that a loving God would allow such suffering. Later in the debate the other was convicting God for all the killing in the Old Testament. But the truth is you can't have it both ways, complain about evil and then complain when God stomps it out. In every case, you had wicked people causing unthinkable acts of injustice and in every case they are given a chance to repent, the best examples being Nineveh and Israel. In the case of Nineveh they did repent and God spared them.

Islamic Jihad and the Bible?

While Islamic Jihad is an eternal mandate to convert by the sword and genocide is generally focused on destroying a particular culture, the killing in the Bible is specific and always the administration of justice to a sinful nation which at times included Israel.

Can a moral God kill babies?

Now the examples we noted excludes the possibility of God killing babies, because we can presume that the sins of a baby hardly merit their death. So how could God claim to be holy and still approve of the death of children. Well there are two premise that must be agreed upon before we can make the case on God's behalf. Let me start the first with an example. If I was walking the streets of Austria-Hungary in 1890 and I came across a one year old child and I murdered that child would it be a moral act? Of course it would not be for me. Now if I had infinite knowledge and it turns out I knew that the one year old baby was named Adolf Hitler and I knew of the atrocities that would be committed at his hands, would that be a moral act? If his death meant that millions would be spared of course it would be a moral act. So the first

point is that I cannot murder and be considered moral but God who has infinite knowledge can kill a child, if he knew he was sparing other lives.

The second point is that God sees history in light of eternity and therefore can make decisions based on an eternal perspective. So then, if God knew that at an older age of accountability this particular child would reject salvation or perhaps experience significant suffering, would it be moral for God to usher him into eternity prematurely? Of course this would be moral and just and loving. So therefore, light of who God is and his infinite knowledge, God and only God can allow for the death of a child and still remain a holy and moral being. But it must be understood that God has infinite knowledge and that God grants salvation.

- God has infinite knowledge – If you killed baby Hitler this would be very good morality.
- God views the world in light of eternity – If you gave someone eternal life then killing them would be good morality.

History and Hyperbole

Killing is not always approved. In Judges, chapters 19 and 20, the Bible records the brutal rape and murder of a young woman who was a Levite's concubine. Moreover, the actions of the Levite are less than honorable, and the crime results in a vicious civil war within the nation of Israel. But a careful reading of the text will show no approval of the actions that took place.

I Samuel 15:20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. I Samuel 30:1 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire,

Are the moral laws of the Bible outdated?

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. *Josh 1: 8-9*

The question restated is: Would the world be a better place if everyone refrained from stealing, killing, adultery, covetousness, lying, etc.? I believe even today the answer is a resounding yes.

Does the Bible support slavery?

Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. *Leviticus 25:45*

When discussing issues like slavery it is important to understand the historical content. Unlike the current century, back in ancient civilization there were no civil court systems, human resource departments, employment opportunities, minimum wages or customer service representatives which is the standard many secularists use when criticizing the Bible. When they left Egypt the Israelites were a band of the worst kind of barbarians.

During ancient times women were very dependent on men who could plow, build and hunt. Many men and women had to sell themselves into slavery just to stay alive because they did not have the means to produce enough food and shelter. Abolition at that time would have meant mass starvations.

Ground rules for discussing the issue of slavery

Before an honest discussion on this issue several ground rules must be agreed upon: Slavery was widespread and practiced by every ancient civilization.

- There was no legal or economic system to protect slaves.
- There were no prisons, police force or other methods of enforcing the law.
- The new laws were designed to bring civility to a lawless nation.
- Slavery was often necessary to individuals and families to avoid starvation.
- Bible revelation is progressive. Divorce is allowed in Deuteronomy 24:1 and divorce is subsequently prohibited in Matthew 19:8.

Important verse

Exodus 21:16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

Every verse in the Bible is subject to this restriction. Man Stealing or forced slavery, as with the African slave trade was punishable by death. There are only a few things in the Bible that was punishable by death and slavery as we've come to know it was one of them. Therefore, when the Bible makes reference to a slave, it's more like an indentured servant or a contract worker, not the state of subjection and bondage we've associated with slavery today.

Toughest verse

Exodus 21:20-21 "And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property."

Atheists have claimed that this verse allows an Israelite to beat his servant just short of death and get away with it. But that takes the entire verse out of context. If you read the verses before 20-21 it is clearly talking about things deserving the death penalty.

- Verse 12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.
- Verse 15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.
- Verse 16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him
- Verse 26-27 which is only a couple of verse after the one in question states, "If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth".

There will still be a penalty for beating this servant under other verses (laws) just not the death penalty.

Biblical safeguards

While the Old Testament does allow voluntary slavery, only under Jewish law is there a deliberate attempt to safeguard the slave against brutality.

- Deuteronomy 23:15 protects the slave who has escaped, while chapter 15:12 and Exodus 21:2 requires the release of slaves after seven years.
- Exodus 21:7-11 protects female slaves from unjust treatment and provides redemption.
- Deuteronomy 16:14, Leviticus 25:6 tells the Israelites to treat the slave as extended family.
- Colossians 4:1 elevates the slave to something of an employee as it requires the master to give the slave that which is just and fair.
- Exodus 21:20 requires capital punishment for anyone who kills a slave.
- Ephesians 6: 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Some will conclude that the Bible does not speak out against slavery, but that is just not true. Verses like love your neighbor and your enemy include slaves, women, concubines, and foreigners.

Code of Hammurabi

The only historical comparison we can make to Biblical laws can be found in the Code of Hammurabi or Babylonian law code which is dated 1772 BC. The difference in the way it treated women and slaves is substantial. More importantly, the way it administered justice was very unlike the Mosaic Laws which required an equitable penalty. It contained 282 laws, of which here are some excerpts. The death penalty is imposed on robbers in general (Law #22) and those caught stealing a slave (Law #15) and if an adopted son says to his father, "You are not my father" his tongue should be cut off (Law #192). Half the sum was imposed for hurting another man's slave as the amount of hurting a freeman (Law #199); if a son strikes his father,

his hand would be cut off (Law # 195); the broken bone of a freeman was worth three times (Law #198) that of the life of a maid servant (Law # 214) and a slave (Law #252). Penalties were imposed on innocent people. For example, if a man kills a woman, the man's daughter shall be put to death (Law #210), and if a builder builds someone a house and it falls and kills the son of the owner, then the son of the builder should be put to death (Law #230).

The Bible comparison

If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth. Exodus 21:26-27

You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you. Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin. Deuteronomy 24:14-16

Bible: prohibits
forced slavery
(Exodus 21:16) and
allows for slaves to
run away
(Deuteronomy
23:15).

If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight. Deuteronomy 25:1-3

Conclusion: Under Mosaic Laws slaves and women received new found protections, while the Code of Hammurabi placed little value on slaves and women and includes maiming individuals as a means of administering justice.

Understanding evil, pain and suffering: possible explanations.

- A drug addict – Flesh
- Adultery – Flesh
- False religions – Corrupt spirit
- Satan worship – Corrupt spirit
- Atheist – Corrupt soul – will
- Murderer – Corrupt soul – will
- Domestic violence – Corrupt soul – emotions
- Earthquake – Mass rebellion – fallen world

- Good Christian going broke – Corrective act of God
- Mass starvation in Africa – Fallen nation
- Baby with cancer

Can we be Good without God?

Can we be good without God?

- Can an atheist be good? Yes. But there are two parts to the question:
 - Can one be good without the belief in God?
 - Can one be good without the existence of God?
- We cannot be good without the existence of God because we would no longer have intrinsic value. That is to say, if atheism is true and we are all just glorified monkeys, a human life would not have any more value than a cow's life.

Sin and other worldviews

Muslim – each individual is put on a scale and if good deeds outweigh bad then they are accepted into heaven. Problem: no justice as one can be a rapist and as long as his good deeds exceed his bad.

New Age, Buddhism, Hinduism – law of Karma rules which mean we carry the burden of sin into each successive life. Problem: no grace, no forgiveness no justice.

Scientology – sin and guilt is dealt with as a psychological phenomenon. Problem: no grace, no forgiveness, no justice.

Post-modernism – sin is just a matter of one's personal opinion. Problem: it rejects a moral standard which is so evident in all of us.

Atheists – Morality is a social construct designed to help us survive.

What is the impact of Christ's death on evil, sin, pain and suffering?

- The cross eliminates the penalty of sin.
- The cross eliminates the power of sin.
- The cross will ultimately eliminate the presence of sin.

Justice - Christian theism is, in fact, the only worldview which can consistently make sense of the problem of evil and suffering. Only in Christ do we see:

- Penalty of sin fully satisfied – Justice
- Love of God fully satisfied - Redemption

Is morality universal or is it cultural?

Is evil a cultural norm? When someone is raped, are we outraged because the rapist broke the law or social norms, or because it is morally repugnant?

Are Christianity's morals universal? Yes, in every society we've studied, lying, stealing, murder, etc. is wrong.

How do we explain human sacrifice? How do we explain Hitler? In every case evil is explained away by misinformation. The Jews were inferior; if the Aztecs didn't sacrifice, the sun would not rise; we kill unborn babies in America because we don't believe it is a life.

What is the history of Christianity and morality?

The Crusades and Inquisitions? Christianity has a long history of being the most charitable ideology in human history? Some examples include:

- Jesus was the first to identify the poor as a distinct social class.
- Once in power the Christian's first political move was to abolish the gladiatorial games.
- Throughout the Middle Ages monasteries educated the poor and cared for the sick.
- It was Christians like John Locke and William Penn who brought us the concept of equality and human rights.
- The modern concept of hospitals emerged in the churches and monasteries of Europe.
- The greatest Charities in history were founded by Christians including the Salvation Army, Red Cross, Sisters of Mercy, Compassion, etc.
- No other ideology or religion has this track record.

Can atheism bring us good morality?

- No incentive to be good - as there is no universal moral law. Most notorious mass murders were atheists:
 - Stalin
 - Lenin
 - Pol Pot
 - Mao Zedong
 - French revolution
 - Napoleon
- Theistic incentive
 - A moral law

- God is watching and will judge.

How Should the Christian Deal with Pain and Suffering?

How do we deal with evil in the world?

- The believer should hate evil first.
- Then the believer should deal with the evil within.
- Next, view evil in light of our forgiveness and our own evil state.
- Deal with evil in a loving and compassionate way.

How does the Christian deal with evil that has happened in their own life?

- Is there sin in my life?
- Turn the other cheek.
- Count it all joy – How we respond to suffering is determined by the genuineness of our faith. Those with faith truly from God will not be crushed by suffering, but will come through the trial with their faith intact. “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ...” *James 1:2-4*
- Trust – As finite human beings, we can never fully understand an infinite God. Sometimes we think we understand why God is doing something, only to find out later that it was for a different purpose than we originally thought. God looks at things from a holy, eternal perspective; we look at things from a sinful, earthly, and temporal perspective. *Job 13:15*: “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.”

Benefits of suffering

- Serve God – who comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. *2 Corinthians 1:4*
- Glorify God – His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.' *John 9:2-3*

- Endurance, Patience – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. *James 1:2-4*

How could a loving God send people to hell?

- God “sends” no one to hell. Hell is a free choice.
- God has done everything possible to keep us from hell.

The end of evil

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 *Peter 3:13*

Benefits of being broken

Regardless of the intermediate causes of any given affliction, we must realize that the sovereign controller of all things in the universe is making the final choices. God allows heartaches, failures, troubles and afflictions to enter the lives of godly men and women. This exalted purpose has nothing to do with consequences for negative behavior or discipline for sin in our lives as Christ-followers. This exalted purpose involves God’s deliberate strategy for producing brokenness in the lives of Christ-followers.

Brokenness – humbling ourselves before God despite the circumstances in our lives so that He may be glorified by using us. Brokenness is the process by which God dislodges our self-life and teaches us to rely upon Him alone in every facet of our lives. Brokenness is the process whereby God crushes all our self-dependence and, in its place, substitutes an utter dependence on God and God alone in every area of our lives. The bottom line is this: spiritual usefulness without spiritual brokenness is a spiritual impossibility. *Pastor Lon Solo*

While Western atheists turn from belief in God because a tsunami in another part of the world caused great suffering, many brokenhearted survivors of that same tsunami found faith in God. This is one of the great paradoxes of suffering. Those who don't suffer much think suffering should keep people from God, while many who suffer a great deal turn to God, not from him. *Randy Alcorn, If God is Good, p. 102*

Questions from the Skeptics (revisited)

- If God created everything, then didn't he create evil?
- If God is love why does he allow evil?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- How could a loving God kill so many people in the Bible?
- Aren't the Ten Commandments outdated?
- Can't we be good without God?
- How could a loving God send people to hell?
- If God loves me, why did my father leave?
- How is the killing in the Old Testament different from Islamic Jihad?
- Doesn't the Bible support slavery?

Recommended Resources

- *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis
- *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis
- *Can Man Live Without God?*, Ravi Zacharias
- *Deliver Us From Evil*, Ravi Zacharias
- *Is the Bible Intolerant? Sexist? Oppressive? Homophobic? Outdated? Irrelevant?*, Amy Orr-Ewing
- *Is God a Moral Monster?*, Paul Copan
- *Got Questions?*, Michael Houdmann

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 10

The Christian Legacy

Session Goals

To counter the modern argument that “Christians are hypocrites” by better understanding the enduring contributions of Christianity to Western Civilization. In addition, we will dispel several myths that have been perpetrated by secular academics.

Areas of Study

- Is Religion Good for Society?
- Common Questions from Skeptics
- Religion and War
- The Evolution of Human Rights
- The Discovery of the Scientific Process
- The Rise of Public Education
- Caring for the Poor
- Christianity and Art
- Christianity and Architecture
- Common Questions from Skeptics (Revisited)

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. *James 1:17*

Is Religion Good for Society?

Is religion good for society?

Religions are so vastly different in the way they impact society that it is naïve to lump them all together. As an example: if we were looking for a very peaceful effect on society, Buddhism would be among the top three religions. We've seen how warring tribes have become peaceful monks over just one generation with the introduction of Buddhism. Most economists agree that the caste system of Hinduism has kept millions in poverty in India. Islam appears to be at odds with democracy. Therefore, in order to answer the question, you must look at each religion individually. This session will look exclusively at Christianity and its impact on Western Civilization to answer the question.

Is Christianity better for society than atheism?

We can answer this question in two ways; empirically and logically. Empirically, all we have to do is look at the last century and the atheistic societies of North Korea, China, Russia and Cuba. If we compare those to the Christianized West, we can make clear distinctions.

On the logical argument, it is clear that Christianity is better for society because with Christianity you have a clear incentive to be good, something you don't have with atheism. Several incentives work to mold better citizens, they include:

- A clear moral law
- Equality under God
- Marriage as a sacrament
- God is watching

In an atheistic society, no such incentive exists. That is, everyone makes up their own moral standards and while some of those standards may be good, there are no restrictions on those who chose to steal and rape.

Christianity is best for society because there is an incentive to be a good citizen:

- 1. Moral law**
- 2. Equality for all**
- 3. God is watching**

Is Western Civilization better than other civilizations of the world?

Today, it is relatively clear that the West has progressed well beyond all other regions, evidenced by the fact that we have a net increase in immigration, while very few Westerners migrate to foreign nations. It is also evident by the fact that the West provides aid to other societies, while very few bring their aid here during a disaster. Finally, we have the highest

standards of living, along with the lowest level of real poverty. We have the best healthcare, the most freedom, the best roads, national defense, legal system and continue to turn out the best inventions. The West gave birth to the university system, the hospital system, the greatest works of art and architecture, democracy, the automobile, polio, hepatitis and smallpox vaccines, personal computers, aviation and so forth.

Didn't Christianity evolve just to control the masses?

If so, one would expect that it was a top down ideology. Or put another way, that it came from high government officials, then passed down to the masses. But of course, we don't see this in Christianity.

- It's origins begin with Jesus' followers who opposed Roman and religious control.
- It spreads for almost 300 years among the poor counter-culture in secret, of which many paid with their lives.
- By the end of the second century we have churches established throughout the Mediterranean, Europe and Africa and we know that the New Testament documents were recognized by then; yet, Christianity is still illegal and prosecuted by an oppressive Roman government.

If it had been Constantine's intent to use Christianity to control the masses, this would have been a very poor choice, because the established Roman gods were warrior gods ideal for a warrior king, while Christianity teaches love and forgiveness.

Common Questions from Skeptics

- Weren't most wars religious wars?
- Christians don't care about human rights; don't they oppose gay marriage?
- Aren't Christians responsible for the Crusades and Inquisition?
- Didn't Christianity evolve just to control the masses?
- Don't Christians oppose science?
- Isn't good art just a matter of opinion?
- Didn't the church prosecute Galileo?
- Aren't church people hypocrites?

- Aren't human rights the product of the Enlightenment?
- What's so great about Western Civilization?
- Can't we be good citizens without religion?

Religion and War

The Crusades and the Inquisitions – Is this the Christian legacy?

Today it is not uncommon to hear the new atheists reducing Christianity's contribution to Western Civilization to the Crusades and Inquisitions. The truth is the reason these two events are so popular is because they are such a black eye on the Church, not because they are unique in any way. While they are indefensible acts, we can put them into historical context. In the case of the Crusades, the Church was trying to take back land that was held by the West for centuries, and subsequently taken by an Arab invasion in 636 AD. The Crusaders were further trying to liberate the Christians and Jews in Palestine living under Muslim oppression.

The Inquisitions though hard to defend pale in comparison to what the atheistic Communists and French Enlightenment did to silence opposition, something that is not heard much in our history classes.

The important point when someone is using the misdeeds of a few believers as a pattern for Christianity is to point out that these are examples of those who departed from the teachings of Christ, rather than those who followed, and therefore cannot be used to represent the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. As an example, suppose someone violates the laws against murder and kills another person. We don't use this to make a case that the laws against murder are bad, rather we acknowledge that this person departed from the law. In the same way, when a pastor commits adultery we cannot allow others to represent this as the legitimacy of Christianity.

Another flaw in this argument is that in every case they are arguing from the exception rather than the rule.

Religious Wars

According to Wikipedia (a source the atheists love) during the 3,000 years of recorded history, the number of deaths due to "religious wars" could not possibly exceed 18 million and is probably closer to 6 million.

Non-Religious Wars

With over 200 million deaths in the last century alone, most at the hands of secular governments and none of them “religious wars,” the number of deaths at the hands of atheists versus all those in history due to religion would put the figure at less than 8 percent. But sadly the 200 million deaths attributed to something other than religion in the last century is just the tip of the iceberg.

Mass murderers

- Mao Zedong – is the Chinese ruler who brought communism to China and ruled for three decades. The total deaths attributed to his rule stands at 40 -70 million. He eliminated Christianity, missionaries and churches.
- Joseph Stalin – Communist ruler of the Soviet Union, is attributed with killing over 20 million of his own people. He instigated reign of terror upon the Christian population. Stalin shut down over 54,000 churches, killed believers, and made the population of monks and the clergy vanish. Stalin was a confessed atheist, and his vision for the Soviet Union was secular, with no trace of religion.
- World War I took the lives of 15 million, while World War II took the lives of an unimaginable 55 million people.
- Genghis Khan –The Mongol Warlord, who can be categorized as a barbarian for his lack of religion, is the third leading killer in history with an estimated 40 million deaths credited to his reign. Expansion was his primary motive.
- Other non-religious wars — An Lushan Revolt (36 million), the fall of the Ming Dynasty (25 million), and the Taiping Rebellion in China (25 million). The Napoleonic wars alone, which were fought in the name of the secular Enlightenment, killed over 4 million people.

Most wars were fought for non-religious reasons. Furthermore, the worst murderers in history were atheists, not Christians.

The Viking invasion of Europe saw the most inhumane acts of cruelty ever recorded as women, children, and monks were slaughtered without regard while thousands of villages were burned to the ground. Rome’s expansion and fall, along with civil wars in Russia, China, and America, were bloody beyond belief.

Conclusion: There are many reasons that nations go to war: power, land, revenge, politics, resources, etc. Despite the modern argument, religious wars only account for about 3% to 5% of people killed in wars, while atheistic regimes are the most brutal in human history.

The Evolution of Human Rights

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. *Genesis 1:27*

Are human rights the product of the European Enlightenment (1650-1800)?

With the exception of democratic elections, almost all the rights that emerged from the Enlightenment can be found in ancient Israel under King David. Some include property rights, presumption of innocence, separation of church and state, equality under the law, fair trials, and all kinds of equal protection for citizens, women, foreigners and even slaves. And much like the modern universal concept of rights, all people were subject to these laws including rulers, judges and foreigners (Lev 18:5). The Ten Commandments provided the legal framework, while the 613 specific laws found in the Torah described their practical application.

The New Testament records Paul calling for equality among all races, nationalities and genders (Gal 3:28). In 313 under the Edict of Milan the Christian Emperor Constantine guaranteed religious freedom to all. By the fifth century Saint Augustine had written extensively on limited government, while Canon Law of the Medieval Church required democratic elections for clergy and protected Christians from self-incrimination in court.

By the 13th century the Magna Carta had been signed into law, which put forth the principles of limited government and basic human rights. The Protestant Reformation incorporated principles of democracy, free speech, freedom of religion, separation of church and state, separation of powers and more. Prior to the Enlightenment, Rhode Island had already been established as a democracy, with the full benefits of religious freedom. As for the Enlightenment, three of its greatest theorists John Locke, Isaac Newton and James Madison were devout Christians using the Bible to make their arguments. Therefore, to claim that human rights are the result of the Enlightenment is to discard centuries of history.

Conclusion: The fundamentals for universal human rights and equality under the law were well established under Biblical premises long before the European Enlightenment.

St. Augustine (354-430)

The City of God, is where he began to put forth the first ideas of freedom from repressive government and its theological implications. "God did not intend that His rational creature, made in His own image, should have lordship over any but irrational creatures: not man over man, but man over beasts. Hence, the first just men were established as shepherds over flocks, rather than kings of men. The first order of servitude therefore is sin, by which man was placed under man...for if nothing had been done in violation of the law, there would have been no need for the discipline of servitude as a punishment."

In *On Free Will* he wrote, “A law that is not just should not be called so, and it is not just if it does not agree with natural law. Because natural law has been ordained by God for his glory and for the well-being of human beings, whatever laws are contrary to God’s honor or contrary to the welfare of human beings are sinful and tyrannical and should not be called laws.” Augustine wrote extensively of these natural laws, and in so doing he took the words of Jesus and the apostles and began to show their social implications.

Magna Carta - June 15, 1215,

The Magna Carta was the first limitation of government intrusion and the first security of liberties ever to be affirmed at the highest level of government. Drafted by the leading clergy, it opens with the statement:

“We in the presence of God, and for the salvation of our soul, and the souls of all our ancestors...to the honor of God and the exaltation of the Holy Church and amendment of our Kingdom...”

It provided safeguards against government intrusion, guaranteed rights, standards for due process of law, habeas corpus, protected commerce, widow’s debt payments, trial by jury, and subjected the king to the same laws.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

He was the foremost classical proponent of natural theology, natural law and political theory. All that is contained in the law and the Gospel; that is, the lifestyle described there, particularly that people should treat their neighbors as they themselves want to be treated, belong to natural law... and all evil and sin is unnatural.

Natural Law – While holding to the preeminence of divine law (Bible), Aquinas held that certain laws and rights are so obvious and inherent that they are universally recognizable by virtue of human reason.

In *Summa Theologiae* he asserted that, “Accordingly, the best form of government is in a state or kingdom, where one is given the power to preside over all; while under him are others having governing powers: and yet a government of this kind is shared by all, both because all are eligible to govern, and because the rulers are chosen by all. For this is the best form of polity, being partly kingdom, since there is one at the head of all; partly aristocracy, in so far as a number of persons are set in authority; partly democracy, i.e. government by the people, in so far as the rulers can be chosen from the people, and the people have the right to choose their rulers.” According to Aquinas, all the people should be eligible to rule. His words on limited power and self-rule are hundreds of years before their time, and will be the inspiration for so many champions of freedom in later years.

Protestant Reformation, 1516, led by Martin Luther

In *On the Freedom of the Christian*, Luther outlines his theological and ideological thinking on the premise of “freiheit” or freedom. This concept of individual freedom or liberty quickly included political and economic freedom. The concept of individualism is born.

Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)

Rutherford’s book, *Lex Rex* continues to make the connection between natural law and biblical revelation while building on the theory of limited government. “Kings like everyone else,” he wrote, “are subject to divine law; as for absolute sovereignty, it belongs to God alone and any attempt to such is tyranny and should be resisted by Christians.”

John Lilburne (1514-1557)

He is the first person in history to put forth ideas of freedom and equality in complete opposition to governing authority. In his eighty-three pamphlets he fought for private property, religious freedom, freedom of speech, free trade, and limits on government authority via a written constitution.

John Locke (1632-1704)

The most influential writer on natural rights, which he believed derived from God, wrote, “In the former way, nobody that I know, before our Savior’s time ever did, or went about to give us morality. ‘Tis true there is a law of nature; but who is there that ever did give it to us all entire, as a law...before our Savior’s time?” His writings inspired libertarian movements all over Europe, Latin America, and Asia and inspired the American Revolution. Locke rejected the arbitrary power of government in favor of the biblical principle of universal moral law, which applied equally to all mankind.

Two Treatises on Civil Government with over 1,200 Bible references argued for God-given rights of life, liberty, and property and helped shape Western democratic ideas. America’s founding fathers used *Two Treatises* as their constitutional guide. Government exists by the consent of the people, wrote Locke, for the protection of those rights. Locke also wrote *An Essay on Religious Tolerance*, in which he argues for religious freedom.

John Locke made all his arguments for equality and freedom from a Biblical perspective.

William Blackstone (1723-1780)

Commentaries on the Laws of England, was the most influential book in America’s history after the Bible. The founders took their philosophy from John Locke and their passion from the Great Awakening, but they found the blueprint for a new nation in Blackstone.

As an English judge and Oxford law professor, Blackstone looked to the Bible as the foundation of his legal philosophy, which is evident throughout his work. It later became the manual for every law student and judge in the United States through the middle of the nineteenth century. Most historians attribute “The Laws of Nature and Nature’s God,” found in the Declaration of Independence, to Blackstone. He established the idea of universal God-given rights for all humanity and subsequently fortifying those rights through common law.

American Revolution of 1776

The American Revolution played a significant role in the way rights would flow. Prior to the Declaration of Independence, rights traveled from the particular god to the king to the people. In declaring that men are created equal and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights” the signers derailed centuries of tradition and put human rights on a new path—from God to the people and then to the government.

Emancipation

The first priest ordained in the Americas Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566) was the first person of his time and the only person of his century to denounce the traffic of black slaves, and although Indian slaves had advocates such as theologian and philosopher Francisco Marroquin (1499-1563) Bartholomew was the most outspoken, writing books, letters and treatises while presenting his case to kings, statesmen, clergy and powerful commanders. For almost fifty years he articulated the Biblical understanding of human rights, religious freedom and the relationship between salvation and social justice. William Wilberforce (1759-1833) introduced the Abolition Bill in Parliament almost every year between 1790 and 1807 when it was finally passed into law. The Abolition Bill ended slave trade on British ships, although slavery remained a reality in British colonies. He was convinced that full emancipation was the next step, but his poor health limited his influence.

Abolition in American was driven by the Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and especially the Quakers, who organized the first abolitionist societies including the *Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade* and the *Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage*. They succeeded by making Biblical arguments against slavery.

United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

While the atheists like to put the UDHR and the United Nations in general on the secular side of the ledger, the truth is the UDHR was the deliberate intention of the World Council of Churches and the leadership of the theologian Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, who lobbied many years for such an international article on rights. And despite the fact that the well-known theologian Jacques Maritain played such a prominent role in its development and the fact that the delegates selected to draft the document were disproportionately Christian, including the Saudi

Arabian and Lebanese delegates, it is a non-religious document. This was agreed to initially in order for the UDHR to remain inclusive.

Conclusion: Believers can say with confidence that humans rights, freedom and equality developed in the West because of Christianity, not in spite of Christianity.

The Emergence of Modern Science

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.
Romans 1:20

Roger Bacon (1214-1294)

Set out to divorce science from magic and superstition by promoting experimental science. He believed that science would reveal the Creator and draw people to Christ. He performed experiments using mirrors and glass three hundred years before its time.

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)

Copernicus formulated new idea of a heliocentric solar system. He dedicated his groundbreaking book, *On Revolutions of Heavenly Spheres*, to the pope. It is wrong to think that this book shook the intellectual community, as it would take about another 150 years before Aristotle was decisively toppled and a new framework for doing science emerged. But it is right to think that Copernicus made the first major contribution to unraveling the traditions and metaphysics associated with the cosmos for so long. His other interest included the church, where he served many years as a member of the clergy in the Cathedral of Poland.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

He is the first to establish and codify the scientific process for future generations. In his quest for the “discovery of God’s laws of nature” he developed his idea of the inductive method of inquiry. Published in *Novum Organum* in 1605, it laid out the blueprint for the modern scientific method. He believed that truth about nature was only possible through rigorous testing and observation, then arriving at a hypothesis which must later be tested for accuracy. He was a loyal member of the Church of England and published several *Essays* of his theological ideas while working from the belief in God as the Creator and sustainer of the universe.

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)

In 1623 he published *The Assayer*, on the subject of comets, including their weight and composition, and hints on the importance of science over the opinions of the popular majority. From 1625 through 1629, Galileo published his series *Dialogue Concerning The Two Chief World Systems* which put forth the Copernican assumption of a heliocentric solar system with mathematical calculations to back his argument. The two world systems in question were Ptolemy's and Copernicus' systems, not the Church's as some modern scholars would have you believe. His great contribution was his initial dismantling of Aristotelian physics and the Ptolemaic system, which were prevalent in Western culture for almost 2000 years, opening the Western mind to new possibilities. In this book he noted that if there is a contradiction with the supremacy of the Bible "it becomes the office of wise expounders to labor until they find how to make those passages of Holy Writ concordant with these conclusions." He died in 1642, the same year Isaac Newton was born. Galileo considered himself a committed Catholic for whom "the Holy Scriptures cannot err".

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)

Christianity
brought us the
scientific process
because without
the Christian
God, you cannot
have a universe
governed by
laws.

Kepler was the founder of physical astronomy and discoverer of planetary motion at a time when the wall between astronomy and astrology was blurred. In 1609 he published *The New Astronomy* in which he proved that the planets travel around the sun in an elliptical orbit. He further showed that a planet does not travel an equal distance in an equal amount of time. In *Harmony of the Worlds* he published his third law of planetary motion, which mathematically relates the time it takes a planet to orbit the sun with the distance from the sun. He praised God in this book by saying, "Great is the Lord, great is His power and there is no end to His wisdom." "We see how God, like a human architect, approached the foundation of the world according to order and rule and measured everything in such manner."

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

Pascal is credited with the invention of hydrodynamics as well as laying the foundation for differential calculus, the mathematical theory of probability, and the treatment of conic sections. As a Christian he believed "there is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ." In his famous work *Pensees* (thought) he argued the case for a divine Creator and the Christian beliefs.

Robert Boyle (1627-1691)

Boyle established the Royal Society of London and ushered in the new age of modern chemistry. Alchemists spent most of their time trying to turn metal into gold or attempting to discover the fountain of youth. In *The Skeptical Chemist*, published in 1661, he crushed Aristotle's concept of four elements (earth, air, water, and fire) and replaced it with the idea that an element cannot be separated into similar components by chemical methods. He was a Christian who believed the Scriptures should be studied in their original language. He claimed in *The Christian Virtuoso* (1691) that the study of nature is the duty given to man by God in Genesis 1:28.

Isaac Newton - (1642- 1727)

Newton developed the new math called calculus. He disproved the Greeks' ideas of light by using a prism to show that light was made up of all the colors in a rainbow. By using a curved mirror, he successfully improved the telescope with a principle still used today. In 1687, with the help of Edmond Halley, Newton published *Principia Mathematical*, in which he developed his theory of gravity and his three laws of motion. He proved mathematically that the same laws which apply to earth must apply consistently throughout the universe.

Because of Newton's work, Francis Bacon's inductive method won the day, earning him the title of father of the scientific method because he was the one to establish and codify the process for future generations concluding one of the greatest intellectual struggles in human history. Galileo's geocentric solar system was now widely accepted.

Throughout his life he dedicated as much time to his theological writings as to his scientific writings. His theological writings include *Observations on Daniel* and *The Apocalypse of St. John* among others. The preface to the second edition of *Principia* reads, "Without all doubt this world...could arise from nothing but the perfect free will of God...from this fountain...what we call the laws of nature flowed, in which appears many traces indeed of the most wise contrivance, but not the least shadow of necessity." Newton always recognized God's providence as he wrote: "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent being...as Lord of all."

John Woodward (1665-1728)

Woodward is the father of modern geology. In his writings he demonstrated how the stony surface of the earth was divided into strata and how the shell was originally formed at sea. His system for cataloging rocks, minerals, and fossils were well in advance of his time. He established the Paleontology Museum at Cambridge and the Woodwardian Professorship of Geology at Cambridge.

Michael Faraday (1791-1867)

Faraday made revolutionary discoveries in the fields of electricity, magnetism, and chemistry. He is credited with the discovery of electromagnetic induction and the invention of the

generator, transformer, and electric motor. His work contributed to the invention of stainless steel, optical glasses, alloys, locks, electroplating, and India rubber, to name a few. He built the first-ever electric motor. Using mercury and copper, he managed to transform electric energy into mechanical energy, later to become the motors of modern homes and industry. He discovered one of the most important hydrocarbons known to man, benzene, which is used today for the production of synthetic rubber, nylons, dyes, detergents, pesticides, plastics, and resins.

Faraday exemplified Christian humility as he refused to be knighted and even declined the Presidency of the Royal Society. He was content to let others pursue the economic benefits of his discoveries, which didn't seem to bother him one bit. His work contributed to the invention of optical glasses, alloys, locks, electroplating, and India rubber to name a few. In the 1840s Faraday was responsible for securing the admission of women members to the Royal Institute. Faraday attended London Sandemanian Church his entire life. As deacon, he would visit the poor and sick in his community regularly, even cancelling lectures to keep his commitment. Later in life he became an elder and preached at the Church on occasion.

John Dalton (1766-1844)

Dalton is the father of Atomic Theory. In 1808, he published his findings on atoms in *A New System of Chemical Philosophy*. It states that all elements are composed of tiny indestructible elements called atoms, which all have the same likeness and weight. Initially, Dalton was ridiculed, but later embraced by the scientific community. John Dalton was a Quaker who never married and lived a very modest life.

Samuel Morse (1791-1872)

Invented the telegraph, which is one of the great milestones of human history. He also built the first camera in America and took the world's first photographic portrait. He always had an interest in invention and by 1817 had obtained three patents for pumps. He invented the pump used for fire engines and a marble-cutting machine. On May 24, 1844, the telegraph line from the Supreme Court chamber in Washington, D.C., to Baltimore was officially opened as Morse sent the famous words "What hath God wrought"

Lord William Kelvin (1824-1904)

Kelvin became the first scientist to codify the concept of energy, establish the scale of absolute temperatures, and launch the study of thermodynamics, establishing its first and second law. He was a teenage prodigy, eventually earning twenty-one honorary doctorates. He stated that "science positively affirmed the creative power of God," and he adamantly opposed evolution.

Orville (1871-1948) and Wilbur Wright (1867-1912)

On December 17, 1903, the Wright Brothers achieved the impossible by flying the distance of 120 feet in 12 seconds and later that day flew 852 feet for 59 seconds. The years to come were filled with trials as the world was reluctant to accept the new flying machine. Then in 1908 before a large crowd in France, Wilbur and a passenger made a few challenging maneuvers, including a figure eight in midair, stunning the crowd. They immediately became two of the most famous people in the world. The brothers had promised their father that they would never fly together to avoid the possible tragedy of losing two sons. But in 1910 Orville took his 82-year-old father on his first and only flight, reaching heights of 350 feet where he could hear the Bishop yelling, “higher Orville, higher.”

Francis Sellers Collins (1950-)

Collins is the physician-geneticist noted for his discoveries of disease genes and heading up the largest biological collaboration, the Human Genome Project, which mapped human DNA. In 2006, Collins published *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* which has an account of his conversion from atheism to evangelical Christianity. While it started with a quest to vindicate his atheism, it ended with his conversion during a hike on a fall afternoon. He offers an inspiring view of the human genome, demonstrating the miraculous nature of God’s instruction book for life.

Conclusion: Christians can say with confidence that modern science is the product of devout believers who diligently pursued the knowledge of God. And they can further make the case that every branch of science was founded by Christian believers.

Public Education is Established

Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren... *Deuteronomy 4:9*

Monasteries

Monasteries appeared all over Asia Minor, Italy, and the Mediterranean by the fourth century. Monasteries with their churches, workshops, libraries, and schools would become the new cultural learning centers of Western civilization, embracing the great commission to “teach the nations.” They preserved the writings of antiquity and were the primary source of educating Western societies for almost 700 years. The scope of the scholarly works produced by the Christian monks was broad, including historical works, encyclopedias, biblical commentaries, and documentary works on the lives of the saints. Theoretical treatises addressing complex issues were common as well.

Children of every social class, as well as unwanted children and adults, received their education in monasteries. Most included math, reading, religion, and writing in the curriculum. Medicine was cultivated in the monastic hospitals, elevating it to scholarly discipline in the future.

Charles the Great (Charlemagne)

In 797 Charlemagne established public schools when he declared “that the priest establish schools in every town and village, and if any of the faithful wish to entrust their children to them to learn letters, that they refuse not to accept them but with all charity teach them...and let them exact no price from the children for their teaching nor receive any from them save what parents may offer voluntarily and from affection.”

Universities

The university movement started with cathedral schools, which became cultural centers in Europe under the auspices of the bishops who presided over them. In the twelfth century they began to grow in number and take on an international flavor as students from all over Europe flocked to the schools in Paris, London, Oxford, and Bologna.

In Paris three such cathedral schools, St. Victor’s, St. Genevieve-du-Mont, and Notre-Dame, would soon unite to form the University of Paris, which was the first of its kind. Economic support, along with civil protection for teachers and students, came primarily from the church, whose steadfast determination was evident in the many edicts handed down by the pope, making the University of Paris a reality. Although the primary purpose was unquestionably the teaching of theology, the liberal arts along with medicine were also part of the curriculum.

Oxford University: As early as 1119, students were gathering in the town church to learn theology, while in 1133 Robert Pullen, a prominent theologian, held formal lectures in the town of Oxford. By the beginning of the thirteenth century the pope and cardinals were giving legal and financial support to Oxford students.

Cambridge University’s growth, like so many others in Europe and Russia, would follow a pattern of financial and legislative support, initially coming exclusively from the church.

College

In 1255 Robert Sorbon acquired three houses on the same street in Paris, where he took it upon himself to teach theology to poorer, less qualified students. Within a century La Sorbonne consisted of seventy such houses with well over 300 faculty. The movement spread to Oxford, where Chancellor Walter de Merton founded Merton College in 1274 which, like La Sorbonne, provided everything for the student free of charge.

By the sixteenth century, Cambridge had thirteen such colleges, Oxford had eleven, and Paris six. These institutions were founded by bishops, canons, and theologians, primarily for the study of theology but soon growing to include the liberal arts and medicine.

Sunday School

During the Industrial Revolution, England's young and poor labored six days a week in the most hideous conditions. Robert Raikes (1736-1811), a frequent advocate for the hungry and imprisoned, began establishing schools on Sunday for the poor. These schools, which were primarily for literacy training with the Bible as central textbook, would start the Sunday School Movement, which is with us to this day.

Church Charity Schools

Without a doubt the pilgrims put a high priority on education. In the Northeast where populations were dense, town schools began to form along with Church Charity Schools which were free of charge. These schools were originally established to help poor children. Their rapid expansion required oversight boards and curriculums. Soon children from every background came to learn at these schools. Charity schools in later years evolved to form the first public schools in America. During this time the church shaped the curriculum, as most colonists distrusted government intervention in education.

Harvard University

Only eighteen years after the Puritans landed in America, they established the first of many of America's finest universities, Harvard. On September 8, 1636, by a vote of the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, New College—later named Harvard College—was established for the purpose of biblical instruction. To this day the entry to Harvard Yard reads:

After God had carried us safely to New England, and we had built our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government; one of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advanced learning, and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lay in the dust.

Yale University

Yale University was founded by the General Court of Connecticut in 1701 with the express purpose that:

Youth may be instructed in the Arts and Sciences who through the blessing of God may be fitted for Public employment both in Church and Civil State.

It was mandatory for students to:

Live religious, godly and blameless lives according to the rules of God's word, diligently reading the Holy Scriptures, the fountain of light and truth; and constantly attend to all the duties of religion both and secret. Every student shall consider the main end of his study to wit to know God in Jesus Christ and answerably to lead a godly, sober life.

Princeton University was founded in 1746 with the official motto *Under God's Power She Flourishes*.

Public education in America

The Old Deluder Act (1647) of Massachusetts was the first law in America establishing public education. Its Christian origins can hardly be denied:

It being one chief project of that old deluder Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the scriptures ... and to the end that learning may not be buried in the grave of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors.

The law went on to order every town that the “Lord increases to over fifty households” to appoint one among them to teach the children to read and write. Those towns of over one hundred were mandated to establish a grammar school for the same.

By the middle of the 19th century there were 246 universities in America of which seventeen were state institutions, with the remaining 229 rooted in the Christian church.

In 1782 Congress voted this resolution: “The Congress of the United States recommends and approves the Holy Bible for use in all schools.” It followed that every child in America up until 1963 received as their basic education biblical training, and yes, it was government sponsored. Central to all the early schools and colleges in America was Christian training first and foremost.

For over a hundred years the *New England Primer* was the primary textbook for educators—second only to the Bible—with over five million copies in existence. It included the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Westminster Catechism, and more.

True religion affords government its surest support. The future of this nation depends on Christian training of our youth. It is impossible to govern without the Bible. *George Washington*

Conclusion: Believers can say with confidence that public education is the product of the Christian worldview.

Christian Charity

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. *James 1:27*

Charity and the Hebrew Bible

Starting in the Hebrew Bible the poor were recognized as a distinct social class worthy of our care, protection and resources. During the time of Moses there were poor people in Israel and there were poor people in heathen lands as well, but the Biblical laws enacted by the Hebrews found throughout the Scriptures had safeguards and protection for the poor, something not found anywhere in ancient Mesopotamia.

After a harvest the Israelite was not to pick up what fell to the ground (glean) as it was all to be left for the poor (Leviticus 19:10). You were not to harvest the corners of your field (Leviticus 23:22) as this was to be left for the stranger and the poor. The justice system was not to favor the rich over the poor (Leviticus 19:15) nor was anyone permitted to charge interest when lending money to a poor person (Leviticus 22:25). The poor were to be taken in and cared for, including strangers and sojourners (Leviticus 25:35). No one was ever to oppress them (Deuteronomy 24:14) or close the hand to them (Deuteronomy 15:11), and they were to be given their daily wage by the end of the day (Deuteronomy 24:15). In order to safeguard these protections, the books of the prophets outline severe consequences descending upon those who oppress the poor, widows and orphans (Isaiah 10:2, Malachi 3:5).

Jesus and Charity

Jesus, upon whom the Church is built, gave His followers the example of charity through love by first taking pity on the sick, the blind, and the leper; by feeding the hungry and restoring the sinner. By teaching his disciples to feed the poor (John 13:29) and distribute bread (Mathew 14:19) he left behind a literate following in the works of charity. Having taught them that it is better to give than to receive, in washing their feet just before His crucifixion, He leaves with them an unmistakable last impression about the life they are to lead as His followers. It is one of humble servitude where no one person is to consider himself above another.

Apostolic Church

Through the faith of the apostolic Church we see this new kind of charity, one motivated by love and unbound by laws began to unfold in the acts of the new believers. Acts chapter 6 records that one of the first orders of business among the new congregation of believers was to appoint someone to care for the widows and ensure their daily distribution. Because many within the new Christian Church were still bound by religious traditions which valued piety over benevolence, the apostle James makes an unmistakable break from the past when he describes the essence of the new religion in Chapter 1:27: "Pure and undefiled religion before

God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” He appears to be putting this act of kindness on the very same level as personal holiness and self-restraint, perhaps before it, seeing benevolence chronologically comes first.

Early Church

By the fourth century it was the Apostles’ Constitution which governed many church practices. It states emphatically, “It is there made the duty of bishops to take care for the maintenance of all who are in distress, and to let none of them want. They are to supply to orphans the care of parents, to widows that of husbands, to help to marriage those who are ready for marriage, to procure work for those out of work, to show compassion for those who are incapable of work, to provide a shelter for strangers, food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, visits for the sick and help for the prisoner.”

The hospital system is born

The very first hospital is debatable, though many historians believe it was the work of Archbishop Basil in 370 when he founded the famous hospital in Caesarea with an isolation unit for those suffering from leprosy, and buildings to house the poor, the elderly, and the sick. Like a city, it contained housing for physicians and nurses along with workshops and schools. This was very different from the Greeks and later the Romans, who brought their sick to various temples where the healer-god Asclepius would give the sick wisdom and healing. While it was common in ancient civilizations to bring the sick to the temples, the early Christian hospitals differed in that they were specifically built to care for the sick, and many employed doctors and had training programs and libraries, along with what would become nurses. Furthermore, they were different because they were available to everyone who was in need, rather than only to specific classes or citizens. Therefore, what we know today as hospitals or in-patient medical care was unmistakably the invention of these Christian pioneers. Prominent Princeton University historian Peter Brown makes the case that such institutions were a novelty at the time with no classical precursors.

Mercy Ships

Since their beginning they have impacted over 5.5 million people; delivered more than \$21 million of medical equipment, hospital supplies, and medicines; completed close to 350 construction and agriculture projects including schools, clinics, orphanages, and water wells; and demonstrated the love of God to people in 95 ports in 53 developing nations.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity was born in 1968 when Mr. & Mrs. Fuller pursued their dream of working with churches, community groups, and others to provide decent and affordable

housing. In the early fall of 1976, the Fullers met with friends and supporters to present their dream, and Habitat for Humanity International was officially birthed at this meeting.

The Young Men's Christian Association

(YMCA) began as a response to deplorable social conditions of young men coming from rural areas to work in the big cities around the time of the Industrial Revolution. George Williams and a group of co-workers started the first YMCA for Bible study and prayer in order to improve life on the streets. Today the YMCA is the largest provider of child care in the United States, operating nearly 10,000 child care sites across the country, providing high-quality and affordable care to more than 500,000 children. YMCAs also serve nearly 10 million children under the age of 18 through activities such as camping, sports, and after-school programs. YMCAs are the country's largest employers of teenagers.

The International Red Cross

Due to his Christian upbringing Henry Dunant embraced social work at an early age. By age 18 he had joined the Geneva Society of Almsgiving, and by 24 he had founded the Geneva chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association. On a business venture in 1959, Dunant came across a horrifying battle scene in Italy, witnessing around 40,000 men lying either dead or dying on the battlefield, left behind by the country they served. Dunant immediately organized locals to provide assistance to those soldiers and upon his return to Switzerland began working toward the creation of a national relief organization that would be neutral in wars, thus able to assist all the wounded in battle and the Red Cross was born.

Christianity is the only worldview that places charity at the center of its belief system and the only worldview whose leader followed that example.

Today, the ICRC has a permanent mandate under international law to take impartial action for prisoners, the wounded and sick, and civilians affected by conflict. In 2004, ICRC delegates visited more than 570,000 people deprived of their freedom in some 80 countries; ICRC water, sanitation, and construction projects catered to the needs of around 20 million people; the ICRC supported hospitals and health care facilities serving some 2.8 million people; it also provided essential household goods to more than 2.2 million people, food aid to 1.3 million people, and assistance to another 1.1 million people in the form of sustainable food-production and micro-economic initiatives.

Salvation Army

In 1865 William Booth, a Methodist preacher, founded the Christian Mission in London's East End to help feed and house the poor. The mission was reorganized in 1878 along military lines, with the preachers known as officers and Booth as the general. The group would soon be known as the Salvation Army. General Booth was deeply influenced by his wife, Catherine

Booth, who was an inspiring speaker and helped to promote the idea of women preachers. The Salvation Army worked hard to rescue young women from prostitution; it was involved in attempting to bring an end to the slave trade and was influential in improving the working conditions of poor women and children who were sorely mistreated. Catherine and fellow members of the Salvation Army also attempted to shame employers into paying better wages. Dedicated to feeding and assisting the poor, the Salvation Army is now established in 80 countries and has 16,000 evangelical centers and operates more than 3,000 social welfare institutions, hospitals, schools, and agencies.

Goodwill Industries

Founded in 1902 in Boston by Rev. Edgar J. Helms, a Methodist minister and early social innovator, Helms collected used household goods and clothing in wealthier areas of the city, then hired and trained those who were poor to mend and repair the used goods. The goods were then resold or given to the people who repaired them. The system worked, and the Goodwill philosophy of “a hand up, not a hand out” was born. Dr. Helms’ vision set an early course for what today has become a \$2.4 billion nonprofit organization. Helms described Goodwill Industries as an “industrial program as well as a social service enterprise . . . a provider of employment, training and rehabilitation for people of limited employability, and a source of temporary assistance for individuals whose resources were depleted.”

Bread for the World

Thousands of local churches and community groups support Bread for the World’s efforts by writing letters to Congress and making financial gifts to the organization. Bread for the World groups across the country meet locally to pray, study, and take action; members meet with their representatives in Congress, organize telephone trees, win media coverage, and reach out to new churches.

Christian Children’s Fund

In 1941, Dr. Clarke unveiled his plan for individual, person-to-person child “sponsorship” in China. Donors began sending \$24 per year, per child. This new China’s Children’s Fund concept enabled people to send smaller amounts of money on a regular basis to help an individual child—pioneering the philosophy of child sponsorship. In 1951, the name was changed to Christian Children’s Fund, as their work was extended beyond just China. Today the CCF is working in 33 countries, assisting more than 10.5 million children and families regardless of race, creed, or gender. CCF supports vocational training, literacy training, food distribution, educational programs, early childhood development, health and immunizations programs, nutritional programs, water and sanitation development, and emergency relief, safeguarding children in both manmade and natural disasters.

World Vision

In 1947 Robert Pierce was a young evangelist working at Youth for Christ. During a crusade in China, he met a missionary named Tena Hoelkedoers, who introduced him to White Jade, a young girl who was abandoned by her family because she had received Christ at one of his rallies. Tena asked Pierce what was he going to do about it, and so he promptly gave her his last five dollars and promised to send more each month. That divine appointment blossomed into World Vision's first child sponsorship program in Korea in 1953. As children began to flourish through sponsorship in Korea, the program expanded into other Asian countries and eventually into Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Today, World Vision supports 4 million children in 100 countries by providing access to clean water, nutritious food, education, health care, and economic opportunities.

Compassion International

In 1952 Evangelist Everett Swanson traveled to South Korea to preach the gospel to the troops in the Republic of Korea Army. During his visit he encountered children orphaned by the war.

Inspired by Matthew 15:32, where Jesus says, "I have compassion for these people...I do not want to send them away hungry," in 1953 Rev. Swanson began incorporating his experience in Korea into his revival meetings. Christians were donating funds to purchase rice and fuel for the Korean children, and by 1954 they had developed a sponsorship program so that individuals, families or churches could help support orphans for a few dollars a month. Sponsorship money provided Biblical lessons, food, clothing, shelter and medical aid on a regular basis for the children of Korea. Because of Swanson's obedience, 1.2 million children are assisted each year in more than 24 countries.

Who Really Cares

Syracuse professor Dr. Arthur Brooks spent years researching the current condition of charity, to better understand who is doing the giving and why. Brooks' work is summarized in his book entitled, *Who Really Cares: America's Charity Divide: Who Gives, Who Doesn't, and Why It Matters*. The author started his research as a liberal progressive, almost certain it was the secularists who were charitable, primarily because they are the ones that advocate higher taxes and more government programs. His research would lead him to very different conclusions. Here are some excerpts from his book:

Religious people are more charitable in every measurable nonreligious way—including secular donations, informal giving, and even acts of kindness and honesty—than secularists...Secularism correlates directly with low rates of charity in Europe just as it does in the United States. All across Europe, religious citizens are more than twice as likely to volunteer for charities and causes as secularists. This correlation is specifically tied to religion, not some other characteristic associated with it.... Imagine comparing secular Frenchmen with religious Americans who are identical with respect to education, age, income, sex, and marital status. We can predict that 27 percent of the

secular French will volunteer, compared to 83 percent of the religious Americans...But the evidence leaves no room for doubt: Religious people are far more charitable than nonreligious people. In years of research, I have never found a measurable way in which secularists are more charitable than religious people.

Conclusion: Believers can say with confidence that Christianity is the most charitable worldview in human history.

Art and Christianity

And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the Lord has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded. *Exodus 36:1*

What is art?

Prior to secularization, art critics and the artists themselves followed clear lines of scrutiny. Art was measured by its aesthetic beauty and its ability to stand alone as a symbolic replication. It enriched our life while at the same time it had to display craftsmanship, order, unity and meaning. Like Bezalel, who decorated the first Tabernacle, the artist—to be such—had to have unusual talent and ability. He required knowledge of techniques and methods, often spending decades developing them. Through the Christian influence came the medieval style, realism, renaissance art, the baroque, mannerism and others. During this time the greatest advances in art history took place, which we will explore below.

Christian art overview

Christian art through history encompasses a wide array of media, including entertainment, literature, music, architecture, carvings and paintings. Some of these had a profound influence on Western Civilization which would seem almost empty without the musical compositions of Mozart, Bach and Handel or the literary works of Dante, Milton and Shakespeare. But Christian art also includes the decoration of functional items such as manuscripts, doors, coins, columns, buildings and rugs. Those that are solely created for aesthetic beauty, which include paintings and sculptures, are considered the fine arts and the subject of this class. It was a slow progressive journey with humble beginnings that spans two thousand years. It has high points like the inauguration of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and low points like the destruction of priceless works of art by Protestants during the reformation.

Byzantine Art

Byzantine art is the first purely Christian art form. One of the expressions of this style was icons, which were religious portraits, painted on panels in a variety of sizes ranging from life-size to miniature pocket size. They were made of paint, mosaics, silver and gold. Often they were adorned with jewels and elaborate frames. As works of art, icons forged new rules of representational art less concerned with realism in favor of expressing the spiritual power of the person illustrated. Intentionally they lacked perspective, but had very human faces, often facing the viewer directly. Intense colors in sharp contrast filled the panels to produce a majestic work of religious symbolism. The use of icons in religious services would spread throughout the Greek world and then to the Slavic people ultimately playing a major role in the Orthodox faith.

Mosaic was the next great stride in art history, which came with the Greeks and the Romans who turned the use of miniature cubes into a complex art form. In Constantinople, Ravenna, Sicily, Venice and Rome under the Christian influence it would become one of the most successful mediums in art history. Mosaics are created by embedding a colored piece of stone, marble, tile or glass into wet plaster. By inserting the cube at a slightly different angle the artist creates a vibrate effect much like when a diamond reflects light.

Basilica of Saint Marco in Venice displays one of the best examples of mosaic art. Started in the eleventh century, this overwhelming abundance of beauty which embellishes every wall of the church took two hundred years to complete. Studded with thousands of pearls, sapphires and emeralds and millions of glass cubes set in gold leaf, the splendor of Saint Marco's leaves the viewer in awe. Majestic scenes of the resurrection, baptism, nativity and the crucifixion cover the five domes. The massive arches depict the lives of saints, biblical stories and illustrations of Christ as teacher, law giver and judge.

Giovanni Cimabue

The first of the Franciscan artists painted *Crucifixion* for the Franciscan church of Santa Croce in Florence around 1287. With body twisted, head collapsed and blood flowing, the agony of Christ's sufferings with all its pain is vividly portrayed. The viewer is left awaiting His words, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Cimabue had breathed life into traditional Byzantine iconography.

Duccio di Buoninsegna

The most influential painter among the Sienna artists kept with the flat Byzantine tradition but added a naturalism and intensity not previously seen. His *Santa Trinita Madonna* shows an expressive and sweet virgin delicately holding Jesus with angels in humble appearance surrounding the throne.

Giotto di Bondone

Brought a more humanistic side of the sacred stories as well as a sense of space that give the painting the illusion of a third dimension. In *St. Francis Renouncing his Earthly Possessions*, Giotto like a picture captures the moment in which St. Francis removes his clothes and focuses his whole being on prayer. Anger, frustration and wariness grip the other people in the painting as they cope with the human dilemma unfolding before them. He is the first to approach his subjects as a sculptural mass inhabiting the space around them. Thus the birth of *perspective*; which represents three dimensions more authentically. The *fresco* (plaster) painted in Arena Chapel, Padua of *The Kiss of Judas* Giotto portrays the emotionally intense encounter like never before. With great detail the work shows Judas about to kiss Jesus in that moment of betrayal as Jesus gazes down at his traitor. This work is seen by historians as the beginning of the Renaissance style.

Masaccio

Our next great artist hailed in the Renaissance style with his ground-breaking work on *form* and *realism*. And though he died at 27 he produced enough work to change the course of art for centuries to come. He painted backgrounds so convincing that space seems to appear in *three dimensions*. In *The Holy Trinity with the Virgin and St. John*, the fresco which Masaccio painted in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, the perspective of the barrel vault behind Christ is so compelling that Vasari wrote, “There seems to be a hole in the wall.” His grand masterpiece *Life of St. Peter* is a history of the salvation of mankind through the life of Christ. The work, which took four years to complete, starts with the *Expulsion from Paradise*, which depicts the eviction from the garden in all its pain, agony and alienation. Throughout the painting Masaccio gives the backgrounds a new seamless linear perspective. Another breakthrough is his perfect *use of shadows* which add to the realism he so eloquently portrayed. By perfecting elements such as human form and individual expressions, he achieves new heights in drama, emotions and power.

Jan Van Eyck

Using a new revolutionary technique which he perfected, oil painting instead of egg tempera, he furthered the use of perspective and raised the bar with his *precision*. *The Adoration of the Lamb* is a marvelous altarpiece which contains twelve separate panels. With blood flowing, the lamb stands on the altar, alive with the inscription, “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” *The Virgin and Child with Canon George van der Paele and Saints* is an incredible fusion of artistic talent, beauty and style. Here we see the Virgin enthroned with the Christ Child on her lap.

Fra Angelico

His style was simple as he continued the innovations in perspective introduced by Giotto. In 1438 he began a series of 50 frescoes containing the life of Christ in the monastery of San Marco in Florence. These were created to aid in prayer and contemplation. In *The*

Annunciation, serenity and peace fill the composition as he displays the fundamental meaning of worship. As the angel appears before Mary, her prayerful pose indicates she is the model of holy modesty. At the same moment a light shines upon her and she is miraculously made pregnant with the Son of God.

Giovanni Bellini

He is one of the earliest masters of the oil technique, which gave way to the use of light and color as a means of expression. Form is now defined by color rather than line. In *Madonna and Small Trees*, his use of light and shades shows a flawless precision. In *Pieta* the dead Christ is propped up by two angels, head bowed and hands pierced. Because Bellini believed that identifying with Christ's pain can ease our own, the passion is a constant theme of his.

Leonardo da Vinci

Da Vinci was a pioneer of formidable talent who along with art made contributions in architecture, science, engineering and design. He developed new techniques in painting such as *sfumato*, which is a method of blending colors so subtly that there is no visible transition, giving the appearance of eliminating lines and borders. This new technique is evident in *The Virgin of the Rock* in which the baby Jesus and his cousin the baby John the Baptist are portrayed with Mary and an angel in a natural grotto. John pays homage to Jesus who blesses him. *Leonardo's Last Supper* portrays the reaction of his Apostles at his announcement that one would betray him.

Raphael

After seeing just one drawing, the pope knew Raphael was a great artist and thereafter kept him busy painting frescoes in the Vatican along with a group of elite artists gathered from all over Italy. He was soon made responsible for the entire room known as the Stanza della Segnatura in which he painted his masterpieces, *The School of Athens*, *Disputation of the Holy Sacrament*, *Parnasus* and *Virtues*. In the final years of his short life Raphael painted *The Transfiguration*, which is a dramatically-composed panel depicting the moment in which Jesus, Peter, John and James went up to a mountain to pray. St. Luke records that Jesus' countenance was altered and his raiment was white and glistening.

Michelangelo

Michelangelo created the biblical scenes that adorn the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel which is the absolute pinnacle of monumental works of art. It was Michelangelo who was charged with painting the 40-meter-long ceiling with scenes stemming from the creation to Moses, which he does with nine scenes and 300 figures. For four years he climbed the scaffold and he designed and unleashed his brushes, arriving at an icon of Western art. Twenty-five years after he completed the work, he was in the Sistine Chapel again painting the western wall which was to

depict the *Last Judgment*. The Bible records that Christ's first coming displays his love and kindness; in the second He will show his power, strength and justice; damnation awaits those to those who have rejected His merciful plan of salvation.

Baroque Art

The *Baroque style* was born, which took the representationalism of the Renaissance to new levels by emphasizing movement, light, detail and drama. The style which made its way into the Protestant countries is characterized by the selective illumination of figures out of deep shadows.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

He made a vast departure from the classical world of perfect humanity and took his paintings into the real world, changing the course of art for all time. By 1600 he made his technique of using the contrasting effects of dark shadows and intense light a phenomenon throughout Italy. Caravaggio used this revolutionary style to focus our attention on the principle actors in his paintings, ignoring backgrounds altogether. In his dramatic altarpiece, *Entombment*, the artist captures an intense realism that many at the time found shocking. In this masterpiece he who said "come to me and I will give you eternal life" is being laid to rest in a dark tomb. In *The Taking of Christ*, Caravaggio captures this monumental moment of Christ's ultimate betrayal by casting light over the faces of the figures. While John screams in terror, Judas reaches over to kiss Jesus who looks away in despair, conscious of the suffering he is about to bear. The soldiers close in on Jesus, who Judas identified earlier as "the one I shall kiss is the man; seize him."

Peter Paul Rubens

Was indeed a prolific artist as his work spans many topics and genres. Among his masterpieces is the three-panel altarpiece *The Descent from the Cross*, which he painted for the Antwerp Cathedral. In this composition you see the panorama of his style which incorporates the drama and emotion of the Baroque with his unique energetic rhythm, fluid movements and naturalistic light—a style never again to be matched. Here Christ is lowered from the cross, the instrument of his suffering. John, Mary and others wrap the naked Christ in linen, while blood still flows from his hands, feet and side. *Christ Crucified between two Wrongdoers* is one of the most dramatic depictions of the passion ever.

Rembrandt van Rijn

His vast Biblical paintings cover an array of subjects demonstrating his deep knowledge of the scriptures. *Belshazzar's Feast* records the horrific moment when a hand appears before the king of Babylon and records his terrifying fate. "You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting." Fascinated with texture, Rembrandt's style is loaded with heavy colors and

extremely thick paint. After the death of his wife and three children, his paintings began to focus on the emotional and spiritual aspect of the human condition. *Return of the Prodigal Son* who squandered his fortune in sinful living is cast in a state of profound remorse, yet in glorious redemption. As he approaches his father's house, unsure of what punishment awaits him, his father sees him and runs to embrace the apple of his eye. No lecture, no reprimand and no punishment, just open arms. A staunch reminder that God's grace and mercy will always exceed our own.

Non-Christian movements

The 18th century was raising new ideas about human existence and the potential of mankind. The Rococo style is a visual representation of the optimism people felt during those years leading up to the French Revolution. It was the art of the aristocracy; less formal, it emphasized their indulgent lifestyle with scenes from comedies, operas and court life. Gone was the reflection and emotional depth of the Baroque paintings which stressed heroism, piety and morality. Rococo is light in color, effect and emotion yet dynamic in composition and atmospheric effect.

By the late 1800's Protestantism, which was ambivalent towards the fine arts, had a large share of converts, while the Catholic Church, formerly a huge art patron, was struggling with the effects of the reformation and the ever-increasing secular movement. The arts were now squarely in the hands of that secular establishment.

Subjectivity

The Romantic movement of the early 19th century was a European development which influenced both the arts and philosophy. While their accomplishments were often genius, subjectivity began to creep its way into the artistic establishment.

Modernism

The term Modernism is applied retrospectively to a host of trends that emerged in the middle of the 19th century. *Impressionism* materialized in France, a style that took a great interest in the visual experience and the effect of light and movement on the appearance of the objects the artist painted. A new technique by Georges-Pierre Seurat skillfully put touches of pure color side by side and then let the brain automatically mix them. While impressionists often accomplished works of incredible mystical beauty and had its share of grand masters, the technical sophistication and precision that was the hallmark of Western art was slipping away.

Surrealism

Surrealism was making headway as an international style but it wasn't until 1924 when French poet Andre Breton published *Manifesto Surrealism* that it came into being as a serious

movement. In his book he suggests that rational thought was antithetical to the powers of creativity and imagination and thus unfavorable to artistic expression. It was the subconscious that could produce artistic truths. And thus one of the most bizarre epics in art history was born.

Cubism and Minimalism

Cubism and Minimalism are two other 20th-century movements which found beauty in reducing objects to their simplest form. In so doing, they also minimized the need for the artist altogether and with it the awe a well composed work of talent and skill used to inspire. *Abstract Expressionism* is another contemporary movement. It doesn't just throw out old rules for new ones; rather they let the paint make the rules. Jackson Pollock was an icon of the movement. Of his drip painting he claimed, "Painting has life of its own which I let come through." He and William de Kooning were pioneers of "action art," as they became a physical part of the painting, often using cigarettes and buttons to lay down layers of paint. In so doing they make it hard to distinguish their work from the cave paintings of the Stone Age.

Conclusion: Believers can say with confidence that the greatest innovations and works of art happened under the Biblical worldview. They can also make the claim that art has deteriorated at the hands of the secularists.

Christianity and Architecture

Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' *1 Kings 8:17-19*

The Temple in Jerusalem

The temple in Jerusalem functioned as the focal point of Hebrew life through 70 AD and the destruction of the third version by the Romans. The structure was surrounded by an outer court called the "court of the gentiles" and an inner court called the "court of priests." The doors of both courts were covered in bronze, while the walls separating the two were made of three layers of hewn stone held together by cedar beams. The inner court contained a huge bronze altar of sacrifice and the molten sea, which was a 10,000- gallon bronze pool for ceremonial washing.

Within the main sanctuary or Holy Place was the Altar of Incense and a table for the holy bread called the Bread of the Presence of God, both centrally located. The Holy of Holies is the place where the high priest would enter once a year to offer the sacrifice, a perfect lamb, for the sins

of the nation. It was the highest and most important ceremony of the Jewish people. Inside these doors a veil of blue, purple and crimson made of the finest material and decorated with cherubim was erected to separate man from the presence of God. Two forward-facing giant cherubim 15 feet tall stood covered in gold as symbolic protectors of the Ark of the Covenant, which was placed below them. The ark contained the original tablets of the Ten Commandments which Moses brought down from Mount Sinai centuries earlier.

The temple, like the tabernacle before it, was the place where God's presence would dwell. It was also the place where the people could come and make supplication, worship and sacrifices to God. Both were symbolic representations of that which was to come in Christ. For example the yearly sacrifice for the sins of the people was a foreshadow of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary in which case, like the lamb on the altar, Christ as our representative takes upon himself our sins and is subsequently put to death for those sins. The Ark of the Covenant represents Christ, a lawgiver and source of justice.

When Christ hung lifeless on the cross the High Priest was hard at work making the yearly sacrifice for the people. It is written that at the moment of his death as the priest cut the throat and spilled the blood of the perfect young lamb, the curtain that separated man from the presence of God in the Holy of Holies was rent in two, symbolizing the new reality—that man can approach God once again.

Constantine (272-337)

Having legalized Christianity, Constantine commenced what was arguably the most ambitious building project of its time, the impregnable city of Constantinople. He built monumental churches in Rome, Byzantine and Palestine. His church structures were erected primarily for the celebration of the Eucharist, but also to enshrine places and objects of Biblical importance. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is located at the end of the Via Dolorosa, where Jesus carried the cross to his death. At the location of Jesus' entombment is where Constantine built a memorial enclosing the tomb in a 100- foot rotunda capped by a dome. In Bethlehem, he built the Church of the Nativity, which was the location of Christ's birth.

St. Peter's and St. John's Laterna

These churches in Rome became the first of the Christian superstructures. The Laterna, built in 313 -320 was the earlier of the two and is a massive five-aisle basilica with a 300 foot nave which was built as the church and residence of the Bishop. St. Peter's, which later became the location of the Vatican, was a congregational church as well as the shrine for the Apostle Peter's remains. Very little is known of Constantine's architects, who it's safe to say were revolutionaries. They experimented with rotundas, domes, light, octagons, axial emphasis, crossed longitudinal and transept axes. They implemented structural solutions and pushed the technological limits of their buildings. By Constantine's death they had forged a new style that would have an immeasurable impact on Western Civilization.

Justinian (527-565)

Under his rule Christian architecture would reach new heights. Justinian erected dozens of church buildings throughout Constantinople, the Mediterranean and the western empire. In Ravenna alone he built S. Vitale, S. Apollinare Nuovo, and S. Apollinare in Classe. He built the first five-domed church of the Holy Apostles. Though now lost, it is modeled in San Marco in Venice.

Hagia Sophia

Justinian's greatest achievement was the grand Hagia Sophia, which still stands in present-day Istanbul. The church combines the elongated design of the basilica with an immense dome measuring 107 feet in diameter. After two centuries the synthesis between horizontal and vertical form which marked Byzantine architecture was finally achieved in this engineering milestone. The dome stands an impressive 184 feet high and is surrounded by forty windows at the base, giving the impression that it is floating and giving the interior a remarkable quality of natural light. The light which elegantly floods through these windows represents Christ, the Light of the World. The huge central nave measures 233 x 252 feet, while the exterior is a complex arrangement of piers, columns and cupolas, all supported by bearing walls and buttresses.

St. Mark's

In Venice, it is a marvel on many fronts; engineering, spiritual, mathematical, artistic and beauty. Words (including these) could not begin to do it justice. The vast shimmering mosaics created a spiritual interior of unsurpassed beauty. The floor plan is that of a Greek cross with four domes, one on each arm and a large central dome, each of which is supported by four huge barrel arches. The center of the cross contains the sanctuary with a high altar of marble which contains the relics of St. Mark.

Durham Cathedral

It was begun in 1093. The Cathedral is the definitive building of the Anglo-Norman Romanesque style and still stands as one of the great structures of this period in Europe. Its scale is enormous, over 496 feet in length and its forms overpowering. The building carries engineering innovations not easy to fathom. It's the earliest example of rib vaulting, which would soon transform the heavy walls of the Romanesque into the soaring lightness of the Gothic era. The building, which still houses the relics of the patron saint, is notable for the ribbed vault with pointed transverse arches supported on relatively slender composite piers alternated with massive drum columns, and flying buttresses. These features appear to be precursors of the Gothic architecture which appears in Northern France a few decades later. It was the skilled use of the pointed arch and ribbed vault which made it possible to cover far more area, uninterrupted. The buttressing made it possible both to build taller buildings and to open up the intervening wall spaces for larger windows. A renowned masterpiece of

Romanesque architecture, Durham Cathedral has been described as “one of the great architectural experiences of Europe.”

Monasteries

Monasticism, which started in the fourth century, was flourishing by the fifth century under the leadership of St. Benedict. Monasteries by the thousands were built all over Europe by the monks themselves. They were places of prayer, contemplation and worship. Peaceful sanctuaries, they were built as self-sufficient mini-towns with chapels, gardens, kitchens, dormitories, refectories and guest houses. They had a secondary function as hospitals, libraries, worship centers and schools, making a significant contribution to the economic, architectural and cultural preservation of Western Europe for well over a thousand years.

Gothic architecture

Spanning from about 1150 through 1400, these structures can be thought of in terms of a “skeleton” system. A synthesis of pillars, buttresses, and ribbed vaults combine to balance out the vertical and horizontal forces and thus a self-supported skeleton. The walls lose their bearing function and therefore only act as screens to keep out the elements. Soon the masonry walls, which were formerly canvases for artists, will be replaced with beautifully-crafted stained glass windows, the hallmark of Gothic architecture. Like the mosaics of the Byzantine era and the frescos of the Romanesque, the *stained glass* of the Gothic depict Biblical scenes with incredible precision and grace.

The goal of these new super structures was to transport the believer from the earthly realm of the physical to the transcendent world of Heaven. They symbolized the process of redemption and the afterlife. In their attempt to glorify God, this new generation of builders would push many of the limits of their new style beyond anything yet attempted, leaving behind towering legacies. The breadth of the vaults and their height would surpass all previous achievements and bring the worshiper one step closer to that transcendent experience.

Notre-Dame Cathedral

Construction started in 1163 and would not be fully completed for another 180 years, something hard to imagine by today’s standards. It measures a staggering 427 feet long by 157 feet wide. Two massive Gothic towers crown the western facade, which is divided into three levels. The main doors are adorned with early Gothic carvings and surmounted by a row of sculptures of Old Testament kings. The two towers are 223 feet high. At the cathedral's east end, the apse has large clerestory windows added between 1235 and 1270 and supported by massive *flying buttresses*, which are especially notable for their boldness and grace. The cathedral's three great rose windows to the west, north, and south retain their 13th-century glass. An important innovation at Paris was the combination of *triangular ribs* and *transverse arches*. The result of this technique was to further open the interior of the cathedral without the

visual interruption of supporting columns. This innovation is impressive to view even by contemporary standards.

Chartres Cathedral

It is said to contain one of the most complete collections of medieval stained glass in the world. Like the sculptures, the stained glass was intended to be educational. The five windows of the choir tell the story of the Virgin Mary. The rose window in the north transept portrays images of the Old Testament. The south transept, which is representative of the New Testament, has a rose window depicting the Apocalypse. Three beautiful rose windows over the three portals depict Christ's second coming, Mary enthroned with Christ and Mary as the instrument of God.

Canterbury Cathedral

Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury is credited with the Romanesque architecture and art that survives today at Canterbury. In 1130 he built the huge crypt beneath the east end and an extensive choir with ambulatory. A common Romanesque feature the *crypt* is a stone chamber or vault, usually beneath the floor of a church used as a chapel or burial vault. The ambulatory is the covered passage way around the east end of a cathedral extending behind the high altar. There are often chapels lined up along the ambulatory. The medieval stained glass windows at Canterbury are among the earliest and finest in the world. The oldest window dates 1180 AD, and many more continued to be added throughout the Middle Ages.

The *Gothic* era marks a high point in architectural innovations, producing what was then the first international style. It launched a building explosion throughout Europe driven by the idea of a Heavenly Jerusalem found in the book of Revelations. The murals of the Romanesque style were replaced with an upward thrust and a heavenly light. The artist was replaced by the master mason and sculptor.

Salisbury Cathedral

Salisbury Cathedral rises 404 feet making it the tallest medieval structure in the world. The chapter house is notable for its octagonal shape, slender central pillar and decorative mediaeval frieze (wide central walkway). The frieze circles the interior above the stalls and depicts scenes and stories from the books of Genesis and Exodus, including Adam and Eve, Noah, the Tower of Babel, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The chapter house also displays the best-preserved of the four surviving original copies of the *Magna Carta*.

Saint Chapelle

The stained glass windows at Sainte-Chapelle each rise over forty feet in height and cover over 1,100 Biblical stories in all. This was the Gothic era, a time where popes, architects, builders and masons stretched the limits of their talents to see a tiny piece of heaven manifest before the

eyes of those who came to worship. And while many religious sites have lost their ability to move the viewer, the Gothic cathedrals of the middle ages still retain the power and wonder they once held. More significantly, they still retain the promise of that Heavenly place mankind still longs for.

The Renaissance

By the end of the fourteenth century, the impressiveness of gothic architecture began to wear off in Europe as it was coming out of the middle ages, and into a new era. And so it was that the architects began to change with the times too, as they sought a new religious expression in their work. As they began to revive the ideas of Greek and Roman architecture, artists and architects worked hand-in-hand once again. It was the dawn of a movement that started around 1400 and would last 200 years. It was a return to classical ideas and it would usher in an “age of awakening” in Italy and northern Europe. This period is known as the Renaissance, which means *born anew* in Italian.

Cathedral of Santa Maria Del Fiore

It began in 1296. The Florentines built the crossing of the building to such inconceivably large proportions (141 feet) that 120 years later the building was still unfinished because no one could quite figure out how to build the huge dome. Brunelleschi solved the problem by inventing a new type of dome which is conical and high rather than hemispheric. It has eight sides and white ribs on the outside of the dome to call attention to their proportions.

The Duomo, as it is called, can be seen from all over the city, dominating the skyline with its heavenly presence. The innovative design with its eight sides draws attention to its mathematical proportions and symmetry; in fact, the cathedral is perhaps the best example of the Renaissance architectural principle of symmetry.

St. Peter's Basilica

After one hundred and twenty years of construction, overseen by twenty-two popes and fourteen architects, the church was dedicated by Pope Urban VIII in 1626. Ever since then, this church has been the center of the Roman Catholic faith: The Vatican.

The basilica is truly impressive, measuring almost 800 feet in length. It contains over 430 statues and 10 domes. The central dome, designed by Michelangelo, is the largest dome in the world, measuring 138 feet in diameter and reaching more than 390 feet in height. It is buttressed by the apses and supported internally by four massive piers 60 feet thick. Despite its immense size, the structure is a stunning achievement in unity, symmetry and unspeakable beauty.

St. Paul's Cathedral

St Paul's is built in the shape of a cross, with the dome crowning the intersection of the arms. The conical dome is one of the largest in the world, standing 365 feet high. The monochrome frescoes inside the dome feature stunning scenes from the life of St Paul. It is impressive in size, measuring 479 feet in length and containing nearly three hundred monuments. Between the arches of the inner dome are mosaics of prophets and saints. Brilliant decoration abounds, and in a symmetry that is nearly overwhelming. The ceiling above the choir and presbytery has coffered barrel vaults and some of the most elaborately decorated ribbed vaults in the world. The exterior facade is flanked by two huge towers and a double row over Corinthian columns capped with a bas-relief illustrating the conversion of St. Paul.

Conclusion: Believers can say with confidence that the greatest structures in human history were built under the Christian influence. They can also make the claim that architecture has deteriorated at the hands of secularists.

Common Questions from Skeptics (revisited)

- Weren't most wars religious wars?
- Christians don't care about human rights; don't they oppose gay marriage?
- Aren't Christians responsible for the Crusades and Inquisition?
- Didn't Christianity evolve just to control the masses?
- Don't Christians oppose science?
- Isn't good art just a matter of opinion?
- Didn't the church prosecute Galileo?
- Aren't church people hypocrites?
- Aren't human rights the product of the Enlightenment?
- What's so great about Western Civilization?
- Can't we be good citizens without religion?

Recommended Resources

- *State of the Arts: From Bezalel to Mapplethorpe*, Gene Edward Veith
- *Christianity and Human Rights: Christians and the Struggle for Global Justice*, Frederick M. Shepherd
- *Faith and Human Rights: Christianity and the Global Struggle for Human Dignity*, Richard Amesbury
- *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights*, Walter J. Harrelson
- *America's Providential History*, Mark A. Beliles and Stephen K. McDowell
- *Charity & Religion in Medieval Europe*, James William Brodman
- *How Christianity Changed the World*, Alvin J. Schmidt
- *For All Peoples and All Nations: The Ecumenical Church and Human Rights*, John S. Nurser
- *Who Really Cares: America's Charity Divide, Who Gives, Who Doesn't and Why It Matters*, Arthur C. Brook
- *Men of Science Men of God*, Henry M. Morris
- *Scientists of Faith: 48 Biographies of Historic Scientists and Their Christian Faith*, Dan Graves
- *The Faith of Scientists: In Their Own Words*, Nancy K. Frankenberry

Introduction to **Apologetics**

Session # 11

Christianity and Public Policy

Session Goals

To better understand current public policy issues in America and how they relate to the Christian worldview.

Areas of Study

- Questions from the Skeptics
- Christians and Politics
- Marriage
- Same Sex Marriage
- Abortion
- Hate Crime Legislation
- Taxation
- Modern Feminism
- Socialism/Capitalism
- Separation of Church and State
- The Sexual Revolution

for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: *Acts 17:2*

Questions from the Skeptics

- Shouldn't Christians be removed from the world?
- Shouldn't a woman have the right to do what she wants with her body?
- Why shouldn't gays have the same rights as heterosexuals?
- Does life really begin at conception?
- Isn't separation of church and state in the Constitution?
- Shouldn't we embrace all kinds of families?
- Isn't it better to divorce than live in hostility?
- Isn't a gay adoptive family better for kids than a destructive heterosexual one?
- Doesn't capitalism leave too many people behind?
- Doesn't the Bible discriminate against women?

Christians and Politics

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience's sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. *Romans 13:1-7*

Christians and public policy

- What is the role of Christians in public policy and politics?

- In the Old Testament God appoints kings and judges to make and enforce public policy. And while public policy cannot stop sin, it can constrain it. Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon occupied top governmental positions to protect God's people and extend His kingdom.

Unlike the Roman Empire in the first century, our country is a participatory republic. We have the obligation to make our voices heard and to get involved in dialogue. Our government asks us, as citizens, to participate.... Being salt and light in this age means contending responsibly for godly standards wherever they are under assault,...There is no escaping the mixture of religion and politics, because nearly every law is the result of somebody's judgment about what is good and what is bad. —Tom Minnery, *Why You Can't Stay Silent: A Biblical Mandate to Shape Our Culture*

Though the Bible gives us no clear mandate to be involved in politics, some verses do support the idea that Christians should be engaged. Jesus clearly indicates that the second most important commandment for the Christian should be to love our neighbor. When a lawyer confronts him on this mandate by asking; who is my neighbor, Jesus responds with a parable in Luke 10:25-37. He describes loving your neighbor with the story of an injured person who is rescued and helped by a certain Samaritan that was walking along the road. The implication is that loving your neighbor is expressed in acts of charity, rather than in a feeling of pity. That said, we can extend this idea of helping others by supporting government action on behalf of those in need of protection, knowing that nothing has brought about more poverty and human suffering throughout history than bad and corrupt governments.

Other scriptures about governing authorities

- I Samuel 8:4-20
- Mark 12:13-17
- Luke 20:20-26
- Romans 13:1-7
- Titus 3:1-2
- I Peter 2:13-17
- Revelation 13:1-8

Government: no institution has inflicted upon mankind more poverty, war and misery.

Christians and civil disobedience

The most dramatic example of civil disobedience in the New Testament can be found in Acts 4 and 5. When Peter and John were commanded not to preach the gospel, their response was, "We must obey God rather than men." *Acts 5:29*

The state is not a special sphere of authority to promote or enhance the kingdom of God. It is an agent of the kingdom of Satan that God ordains and uses primarily as His servant to bring terrestrial judgment on sinners. Accordingly, disobedience to the evil state is never sin in cases when public policy would compel us to violate a clear commandment of God or to disregard or abrogate a conviction we hold with a strong basis in Scripture. In all other cases, disobedience

to the state might be sinful but not because of disregard of a public policy per se. Civil disobedience would be sinful if it were public and flagrant, especially during dire times such as Christians faced under Nero and if it involved careless or cavalier disregard for God's glory and the apostolic concerns noted above. Otherwise, violating biblically innocuous public policy would not be sinful if done discreetly, privately, clandestinely, wisely, prudently, and carefully (or if done through ignorance of the policy). —John Cobin, Ph.D, *Bible and Government: Public Policy from a Christian Perspective*

Pray for our governing leaders (1Timothy 2:1-3) and to respect those in authority (Romans 13:1-7)

Christians and this world

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:2

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here. John 18:36

Neither are referring to government as has been interpreted by some Christians.

Marriage and the Bible

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. *Genesis 2:24*

Facts about marriage

- Reproduction depends on a man and a woman.
- Men and women are complementary in child rearing.
- Children need a mother and a father.
- Children perform best when raised by both biological parents.
- Marriage helps couples to stay together and care for children.
- Government support of marriage protects children by incentivizing men and women to commit to each other and take responsibility for their children.
- Marriage serves a general public purpose.
- Marital breakdown weakens civil society.

Marriage and Society

The social institution of marriage emerged in the Hebrew Torah over three thousand years ago and was subsequently endorsed by every succeeding Western culture. The long-established tradition of marriage worked to stabilize societies and has provided a secure environment for children since its inception.

Protection for women

It was further believed that marriage sought to protect and provide for women, domesticate men, and cultivate the next generation.

Parenting

Parenting was a selfless relationship which always placed the child's best interest over all others. The marriage covenant provides stability and nurturing for the children.

Covenant

The biblical view of holy matrimony elevated marriage to the status of a lifelong covenant between a man, woman, and God. And although mutual love was always a priority, the idea was that love would flow from the lasting commitment rather than the commitment flowing from the volatile emotions of love.

Single Parenting

Child poverty can be linked directly to the breakdown of the family, as never-married mothers are seven times more likely to live in poverty than those married to the biological father of their children. Research shows that 80 percent of child poverty is found among single mothers. Of the children born to unwed mothers, only 6.7 percent will reach their eighteenth birthday without experiencing poverty.

Crime and Divorce – The Center for Law and Social Policy reported, “Most researchers now agree that studies support the notion that, on average, children do best when raised by their two biological parents.” The Progressive Policy Institute reports that “the relationship between crime and one-parent family is so strong that controlling the family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. Further, 72 percent of America's youngest murderers, 70 percent of long-term prison inmates and 60 percent of rapists come from single-mother families.”

Divorce and Children

Adults and divorce – In *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially*, Professor Linda Waite uses solid research to show the

overwhelming benefit of marriage for children, men, and women alike and later published a national study which interviewed unhappily married adults and found that when “interviewed again five years later, those that had divorced were on average still unhappy or even less happy, while those who stayed in their marriages on average had moved past the hard times and were at a happier stage.”

Divorce and children – Judith Wallerstein published the results of the most comprehensive research on the effects of divorce on children in her groundbreaking book, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*. She is widely considered the world’s foremost authority on the subject. She found that a year after the divorce, 44 percent of children “were found to be in a significantly deteriorating psychological condition” while almost half exhibited “heightened aggression and anxiety.” Ten years later two-thirds of all the children showed symptoms of stress, and half said their lives had been destroyed by the divorce.

The National Survey of Children found that 80 percent of adolescents in mental hospitals and 60 percent of children in psychiatric clinics have been through a divorce. Wallerstein summarizes years of research by stating, “It would be hard to find any other group of children – except perhaps the victims of a natural disaster – who have suffered such a rate of sudden serious psychological problems.”

Divorce and the Bible – When is it acceptable for divorce to take place according to the scripture?

Marriage under attack

- No fault divorce
- Same sex marriage
- Entitlement programs
- Sexual liberation
- Cultural icons diminish marriage

Same Sex Marriage

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! *Isaiah 5:20*

“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing” *Edmund Burke*

False premise of same sex marriage

- You are born gay
- Kids don't need a mother and father
- Marriage is about love
- Gays are being denied their basic human right to marry
- Gay marriage will strengthen families
- Opposing gay marriage is intolerant and bigoted

Same sex marriage and traditional marriage

Family advocates argue that same-sex marriage will further erode the bonds of traditional marriage, while secularists reject such an argument, citing a 12 percent reduction in divorce among Scandinavian countries which legalized gay marriage in the mid-1990s.

What we know is that between 1990 and 2000, Norway's out-of-wedlock birth rate increased from 39 percent to 50 percent; in Sweden it rose from 47 percent to 55 percent; and in Denmark it rose from 46 percent to 60 percent. With fewer people getting married, it's only logical that the decline in divorce would follow. What's happening is what social conservatives have long suspected, that marriage itself is in deep decline.

Same-sex
marriage moves
the focus of the
relationship from
the children to
the adults.

The decline in marriage can be explained by the diminishing link between marriage and children. That is to say, from a social perspective marriage is primarily about raising children, not love. The reason governments got involved in marriage is because of the strong social benefits of providing a stable environment for the next generation. The government should not be in the love and lust business, but it can provide incentives for good social behavior. Gay marriage further erodes the link between marriage and children, making marriage more about the feelings the adults, than the needs of the children. When marriage is so drastically redefined as a relationship for the happiness of the adults, the children suffer and marriage as an institution declines.

Same sex marriage and civil rights

Prior to the 1960s, African Americans were denied entrance to our educational establishment along with access to our court system, job market, political process, and public facilities simply because of the color of their skin. They were the object of public scorn, ridicule, and violence, all with the consent of our legal system. Homosexuals face no such discrimination or economic inequality; in fact studies have found that under similar situations they earn more per household than their heterosexual counterparts, making such a comparison insulting at best.

Same sex marriage is not a civil rights issue at all for the simple fact that any gay person in America can get married; they just have to marry someone of the opposite sex. In this particular case the law applies to everyone equally. In fact, today there are many restrictions on marriage such as polygamy laws, age laws, and laws restricting marriage to relatives. The laws apply equally to everyone. The debate, properly understood, is the redefinition of a four-thousand-year-old institution, not a civil rights issue.

Same sex marriage and adoption

It must be understood that with same sex marriage, by extension gay adoption will follow. In his article “Child Molestation and the Homosexual Movement,” Steve Baldwin summarizes the academic research where he notes that homosexuals, who account for only 3 percent of the population, also account for 40 percent of child molestation cases. And seeing that most child molestations happen by stepfathers and family members, open gay adoption will inevitably put children in the most dangerous possible environment.

Dangers of same sex marriage

- Moves marriage from the needs of the children to the needs of the adults
- Moves marriage from covenant to love
- Loss of religious freedom

Abortion

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. *Psalms 139:13*

Fetal Development

Is a fetus a person? – The heart begins to beat within twenty days. In twenty-one days a baby pumps her own blood. The brain begins to function within forty days. The eyes, ears, feet, and hands begin to form within four weeks. And within eight weeks, when most abortions take place, thumb sucking is present along with all body systems. In 2007 baby Amillia survived outside the womb after just over twenty-one weeks, when many abortions are still taking place.

Does life begin at conception?

We know that when the twenty-three chromosomes of a nucleus sperm cell meet the ovum's nucleus with its twenty-three chromosomes, they form one cell with forty-six human chromosomes. At this point you have the DNA for a girl or a boy who has never and will never again exist in the history of the world. Cell splitting will occur through adulthood, but only with the exact DNA. The only thing he or she will need from that point on is the proper nutrition.

The father of modern genetics, Dr. Jerome Lejeune, testified before the Louisiana Legislature's House Committee on June 7, 1990. Here's what he had to say: "At no time is the human a blob of protoplasm. As far as nature is concerned, I see no difference between the early person that you were at conception and the late person you are now. You were and are a human being."

Testifying before a Senate Judiciary Committee in 1981, Harvard University Professor Micheline Mathews Roth noted, "It is correct to say that biological data cannot be decisive...It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human begins at conception." Professor Hymie Gordon of the Mayo Clinic testified as well: "By all the criteria of modern molecular biology, life is present from the moment of conception." The Senate Report concluded, "Physicians, biologists, and other scientists agree that conception marks the beginning of the life of a human being – a being that is alive and a member of the human species." There is overwhelming agreement on this point in countless medical, biological, and scientific writings.

Hate-crime Legislation

You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality ... *Deuteronomy 16:19*

Equal protection

Hate crime legislation would add additional penalties to certain crimes based on the ethnicity or sexual orientation of the victim.

In Biblical and Western tradition, laws always govern behavior and acts. Hate crimes seek to attach additional penalties for intent or thoughts (discrimination). This defies centuries of Western legal tradition along with our Constitution. The truth is laws already protect every citizen from harassment and violence, and they do it by applying those laws equally to all Americans.

Singling out one segment of society for additional protection is a clear violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, which mandates equal protection under the law. Such laws would constitute special rights rather than equal rights.

Taxation

How much is too much?

Should Christians pay taxes? Yes, it is mandated by Jesus in *Mark 12:13-17*

How much is too much taxes? Today the average family works through May to pay their tax bill. Higher income earners pay as much as 50% of their income toward taxes.

Is there a moral issue with taxation?

Are you a better person if you advocate for more and more government programs? Biblical tradition has always advocated helping the poor on an individual level. That is, it is virtuous to help others with your resources. It is hardly virtuous to advocate helping others with someone else's resources.

And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: ... He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. ... He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. *Samuel 8:11,15,17*

Freedom and taxation

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money. Take that and give it to them for Me and you." *Mathew 17:25-27*

The Founding Fathers of America always understood the concept of freedom as inversely related to how much you pay in taxes. The most important freedom is the freedom to keep what you work for.

Modern Feminism

So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. *Genesis 1:27*

Early Feminist Movement

Starting in the 19th century, feminism tended to arise in what we now refer to as waves, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom. Originally, feminism sought equality in property rights, changes in the marriage relationship, and eventually in women's suffrage, or women's right to vote. Despite President Woodrow Wilson's opposition, Congress passed what became, when it was ratified in 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment, which prohibited state and federal agencies from gender-based restrictions on voting.

Feminism in the 60s

The second wave came in the early 1960s, with the secular ideology of Margaret Sanger's Planned Parenthood. It became widely influential, and their new target became abortion and marriage, otherwise known as women's liberation. According to Sanger, marriage is a "degenerate institution" and sexual modesty is "obscene prudery." Feminist organizations subsequently began throwing out everything that resembled traditional morality and values, as their unbending allegiance to self-gratification took hold.

National Organization for Women supports:

- Same sex marriage
- Premarital sex in all forms
- Partial Birth Abortion
- Opposes parental notification laws
- No fault divorce
- Childhood sex education

Modern Feminism
values a successful
career over a
successful family
life.

In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing. *1 Timothy 2:9*

Feminism is a Biblical concept in which woman for the first time in human history were regarded equal to men.

The Bible provided the catalyst for their equality in the West long before women got equality anywhere else.

Proverbs 31 Women vs. Modern Feminist

Faithful	¹¹ Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.
Resourceful, planner	¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
Charitable	²⁰ She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.
Wise and knowledgeable	²⁶ She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
Skilled homemaker	²⁷ She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Wise mother	²⁸ Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:
God-fearing	³⁰ Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who

fears the LORD is to be praised.

Modern Feminist

Power (empowerment)

Career

Sexual identity (sexual gratification and exploration)

Independence (from men and family)

Physical appearance

Role and gender similitude (erasing the lines that make men and women unique)

Self-actualization (self-discovery)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. *Galatians 3:28*

Socialism vs. Capitalism

And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. *Acts 18:2-3*

Socialism Defined

Socialism is nothing more than government doing the work of planning, regulating, producing, and/or controlling the flow and exchange of property, while capitalism leaves those decisions to the entrepreneur and consumer without government intrusion.

Capitalism defined

Capitalism harnesses one's self-interest to sell the fruit of their labor at the highest possible price and harmoniously unite it with another's need to buy the highest quality product at the best possible price, arriving at a mutually beneficial exchange of property. It's the only system that can inspire someone to maximize the potential and production of their property (business, land, or raw material) and simultaneously inspire the very best use of another's property (in this

case money) and arrive at an exchange in which both a seller's and a buyer's standard of living are elevated in the transaction.

Capitalism vs. Socialism

Capitalism succeeds because free exchange is mutually advantageous. Think of it as economic democracy where people vote with their dollars for the most cost-efficient, high-quality product.

Under government programs guided by socialist ideology, the ownership incentive to maximize production is gone. The incentive to innovate and be efficient associated with competition is gone. The incentive to maximize personal wealth is gone too. Left is a web of unaccountable government bureaucracies that cannot provide the quality service and innovation that entrepreneurs need for survival. Government regulations (i.e. taxes, laws, subsidies, tariffs), although not as drastic, work in a similar fashion to choke production, innovation, and freedom.

Productivity and Standards of Living

Why are standards of living higher in the West than in other regions? One word: productivity.

Let's try to understand this concept of productivity with a very basic example because this is the foundation of our capitalist system. Imagine four tribes with 20 people in each. One tribe produces 100 skins and 100 tons of grain per year while another produces 100 huts and 100 tons of grain. The third produces 10 pots and 10 pounds of grain while the fourth produces 10 tools and 10 pounds of grain. As they begin to trade it's clear to see that the skins/huts tribes will be living better than the pots/tools tribes. Because of their productivity they will be able to trade their extra skins, huts, and grain for pots and tools, keeping for themselves as they see fit. This is fundamentally how economics works on a personal and national level. The more one produces the better they and everyone else live. In today's world it means a higher wage and a lower price for that production.

Now let's dig a little deeper to understand how it affects our standard of living today. When a candle factory worker who formerly produced one candle per day is equipped with a new piece of machinery that enables him to produce three candles per day, the supply of candles goes up. This works to reduce the price of candles on the overall market. Consequently the demand for cheaper candles increases, which will ultimately work to create more jobs in the candle industry, while wages will increase as well because each worker's productivity increases. A worker who makes three candles is more valuable than a worker who makes one. A candle sold at \$1 creates more demand than a candle sold at \$3.

More importantly, standards of living will increase because people will have more candles in their homes at lower prices than before the machinery was purchased. People who never had candles can now afford them, and therefore their living standards are likewise elevated. More precisely, increased productivity leads to more supply and higher wages, which leads to lower prices, which leads to higher demand.

This happens when businesses and individuals invest in capital, be it human capital through education and training or industrial capital such as machinery. As economist Daniel J. Mitchell explains, “The level of capital formation, for instance, largely explains why workers in the United States, Germany and Japan earn more than workers in Brazil, India and Nigeria.” The more capital we invest, the more productive we are, and hence the higher our standard of living.

...nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. *2 Thessalonians 3:8-10*

Income redistribution and Europe

What socialism and government handouts do on a fundamental level is take from the more productive tribe and give it to the less productive tribe, creating a disincentive to produce more skins altogether. Regulation reduces productivity by making it harder and more expensive to produce each product. In today's world, individuals become more productive through education, machinery, and acquiring skills. Nations become more productive by creating the incentives that increase productive forces

The best argument for capitalism is that it works. It is the best system we know of to raise standards of living.

Many love to point to Europe as the shining example of “market socialism’s” success. They point to strict labor assistance and free health care as their crowning achievements. What they fail to point out is that living standards in these countries average those of America’s poorest states, while incomes in America are 40 percent higher at \$37,600 per person. Americans also have much higher purchasing power. In other words, things are cheaper here and therefore we can buy more with our higher salaries.

What about the so-called “Swedish Model”? Well, on September 9, 2006, *The Economist* reported that true unemployment in Sweden hovers at about 17 percent and although their incomes are at \$33,890, their purchasing power is 30 percent lower than that of Americans. That would be equivalent to every American taking a \$4,000 pay cut and increasing prices on everything by 30 percent. High taxes and government regulation have strangled business so much that Swedes have the lowest level of self-employment in Europe. But the bad news doesn’t stop there. Of the 50 largest companies in Sweden, only one was founded after 1970. Basically, American companies are more innovative and out-performing the Swedes by a large margin.

The Great Depression and Government’s role

Thomas J. DiLorenzo discusses the myth taught in many schools that Roosevelt’s spending programs got us out of the Great Depression while proving it was Hoover’s wage protection, tariffs, tax increases, and spending programs that started the Depression. He notes:

Despite the doubling of government expenditures from 1933 (Roosevelt's first year in office) to 1940, the creation of dozens of new federal programs, and the direct employment of some ten million Americans in government 'relief' jobs, the economy was basically no better off in 1938 than it was in 1933. Indeed it was precisely because of these programs and expenditures that the Great Depression dragged on until after World War II. More than ten million Americans were unemployed in 1938, compared with eight million in 1931, the year before Roosevelt's election. It was not until 1947, when the wartime economic controls were ended and government spending and employment levels fell dramatically, that prosperity was restored. Federal government expenditures fell from \$98.4 billion in 1945 to \$33 billion by 1948, the first full year of genuine recovery. Keynesian economists expected a two-thirds reduction in government spending to lead to another depression, but they were dead wrong. FDR's vaunted 'jobs' programs unequivocally destroyed jobs. Government 'jobs' programs, such as the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, can only destroy private-sector jobs in order to 'create' government make-work jobs. And since government bureaucrats spend the taxpayers' money much more inefficiently than the taxpayers themselves do, government jobs that are created usually destroy several private-sector jobs. For example, the federal government's own General Accounting Office has estimated that some federal jobs programs have provided \$14,000 per year jobs at a total cost of more than \$100,000 per job once one accounts for all the administrative expenses. Thus, in this case, about seven \$14,000-per-year entry-level jobs must be destroyed in order to create one government job.

Government Spending

Countless academic studies have weighed in on government spending versus the free market alternative. Nobel laureate Ronald Coase sums it up:

There have been more serious studies made of government regulation of industry in the last fifteen years or so, particularly in the United States, than in all preceding history. The main lessons to be drawn from these studies is clear: they all tend to suggest that regulation is either ineffective or that when it has a noticeable impact, on balance, the effect is bad, so that consumers obtain a worse product or a higher priced product, or both, as a result of the regulation. Indeed, this result is found so uniformly as to create a puzzle: one would expect to find, in all these studies, at least some government programs that do more good than harm.

Communism and economics

Karl Marx, writing in *The Communist Manifesto*, put forth the idea that labor alone determines the value of a product. To him land and factory owners who sought the profit from their capital were exploiting the worker. When you peer into the window of a factory or a bank it may appear that in fact it is the worker who sets the value of a product and therefore merits all its earnings. But what we fail to see is the planning, the risk, and the capital expenditures that went into the venture to arrive at a finished product. Capitalists understand that value is determined by the consumer while profit is the result of producing a product that creates value in excess of

its production costs. More importantly, it is capital in the form of machinery, land, labor, knowledge, etc., that all merge to arrive at a product suitable for the consumer.

Separation of Church and State

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. *2 Timothy 3:12*

The First Amendment

In 1791 the First Amendment was ratified by Congress, stating: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof....”

Prior to 1947, the Court rightly interpreted the “establishment of religion” as requiring an act of “Congress,” which the wording clearly and unmistakably sets forth. All the historical evidence left by the framers—including public statements, the Federalist Papers, acts of Congress, and previous Supreme Court rulings and opinions—supports the idea that the intent of the amendment was to protect the states from federal encroachment on their religious freedom.

In 1789, while the First Amendment was being drafted, the Northwest Ordinance was ratified by the newly-formed Congress and signed by President Washington into law. It defined the terms future territories would have to meet in order to gain admission into the newly-formed union. It also acknowledged the existing practices of the states. It required under Article III that: “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” It *required* new states to teach religion and morality. It’s hard to think they would draft an amendment that under today’s interpretation contradicts the ordinance they had just signed into law.

Under the current interpretation, a nativity scene is not considered “the free exercise thereof;” rather it is associated with “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” This kind of rationale has created a Supreme Court which in the opinion of Justice Kennedy resembles a “national theology board,” all the while creating a trail of confusion and contradictions few could follow.

Everson v. Board of Education

On February 10, 1947, the Supreme Court of the United States made a landmark decision in a case concerning taxpayer-funded busing of parochial school students, known as *Everson v. Board of Education*. It was Chief Justice Hugo Black who authored the opinion that would later send shockwaves through all our state and federal institutions. In it he wrote, “The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and State. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve of the slightest breach.”

Since this ruling, the Supreme Court, along with lower courts and liberal organizations such as the ACLU and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, have relied on the “separation of church and state” clause to strike down almost two hundred years of religious expression, previously within our rights. Since then at least five of the nine unelected justices of the Court have placed a vast amount of restrictions on our religious expression, restrictions which were absent for most of our history. In recent years the phrase has become so common that many Americans believe it is in the Constitution right alongside abortion and gay rights.

In 1962 the Court struck down voluntary school prayer. That was the first time in 170 years prayer was ever restricted, and therefore the Court was incapable of citing previous cases. In fact it was the first time *ever* that the Supreme Court ruled without citing previous court cases. In contrast, when the 1892 Supreme Court ruled in favor of public expression of religion in *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, it provided 87 historical precedents and noted that it could cite more but felt that was sufficient.

How do we get from *Congress making laws* to the *establishment of religion*, when none of the cases recently decided by the Supreme Court actually consists of Congress making laws? How did the courts manage to apply this clear wording to, say, a nativity scene, school prayer, or the display of the Ten Commandments, which have always been considered religious expressions? In the *Engel* case the Court claimed that voluntary school prayer would establish an “official state religion” and therefore was prohibited by the First Amendment. That’s the same First Amendment that was written to protect religion from government intrusion. Since that decision courts have reinterpreted religious expression to mean religious establishment, subsequently censoring our religious freedoms, much like the Church of England had done centuries before.

Separation of Church and State – Jefferson

So where did the term “separation of church and state,” which has now become the foundation of religious legal precedence, come from? The statement is found in a letter President Thomas Jefferson wrote on January 1, 1802, to the Danbury Baptists in response to their concern over the prospect of losing the religious freedom they enjoyed to the power of the new federal government. He notes in the letter, “Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God; that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship; that the legislative powers of government reach actions only and not opinion, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between Church and State.” As we can see, Jefferson was assuring them that the federal government under the limits of the First Amendment is powerless to interfere in religious matters.

In 1789 Jefferson wrote, “No power over the freedom of religion...is delegated to the United States by the Constitution.” In 1805 he said, “In matters of religion I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the Constitution independent of the powers of the general government.”

So why should we care if a kindergarten student is prohibited from giving out Christmas cards or if a school library is prohibited from supplying Christian books? Well, for starters this kind of censorship reverses the religious freedom our forefathers fought so hard for. Second, it

disregards so much of our rich heritage, as Christianity was not only a huge source of inspiration for our founders but the pillar of so many of our institutions, including education, law, and freedom itself.

Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin [is] a reproach to [any] people. *Proverbs 14:34*

Sexual Revolution

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints. *Ephesians 5:3*

Liberation Movement

The 1960 saw the rise of the liberation movement and with it the growth of the sexual revolution. The premises you must hold to embrace the sexual revolution are as follow:

- You must believe that your “identity” can somehow be found in a host of sexual experiences.
- Next you must move to the basic assumption that *pleasure* is the primary human aspiration, as the self-restraining concepts of virtue, self-respect, dignity, family, and fidelity could never be reconciled with this ideology of self-gratification.
- You have to abandon the idea that sex has consequences, although 41,000 people in North America get a sexually transmitted disease EVERY DAY.

Consequences of Sexual Revolution

Ben Shapiro, in his book *Porn Generation*, chronicles the rush by every segment of society to sexualize our kids. “A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that sexual dysfunction affected 43 percent of women and 31 percent of men. Over 25 percent of women 18-29 said they didn’t find sex pleasurable and younger women (18-31) were more likely to have sexual problems than older women. More sexual visibility hasn’t made people happier—it’s made them more critical of themselves, more unfulfilled, more unhappy. When our culture transforms a beautiful act between a man and a woman into a public act catering to individuals, you undermine the fundamental value of sex.”

On the subject of unwanted teen pregnancies, the facts are just as grim, as 1 in every 10 teenage girls becomes pregnant every year. That’s 1 million teen pregnancies each year, resulting in 400,000 abortions. We know that the earlier a girl begins to have sex, the more likely she is to have an unwanted pregnancy or acquire an STD, yet from 1970 to 1988 the figure of 15-year-old girls who had had sex rose from 5 to 26 percent. The Centers for Disease Control reported that two Americans between the ages of 13 and 25 are infected with the HIV virus *every hour*.

The sexual revolution has been a cataclysmic failure for our families and our children. The irony of this cultural re-engineering is that studies now indicate the highest level of sexual satisfaction is reported among heterosexual married couples...as the Bible predicted.

Questions from the Skeptics (revisited)

- Shouldn't Christians be removed from the world?
- Shouldn't a woman have the right to do what she wants with her body?
- Why shouldn't gays have the same rights as heterosexuals?
- Does life really begin at conception?
- Isn't separation of church and state in the Constitution?
- Shouldn't we embrace all kinds of families?
- Isn't it better to divorce than live in hostility?
- Isn't a gay adoptive family better for kids than a destructive heterosexual one?
- Doesn't capitalism leave too many people behind?
- Doesn't the Bible discriminate against women?

Recommended Resources

- *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and better off Financially*, Linda Waite
- *How Capitalism Saved America*, Thomas DiLorenzom
- *Basic Economics*, Thomas Sowell
- *Faith of our Founding Fathers*, Tim LaHaye

- *The Myth of Separation*, David Barton
- *101 Frequently Asked Questions about Homosexuality*, Mike Hally
- *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce*, Elizabeth Marquardt
- *Woman Who Make the World Worse: and How Their Radical Feminist Assault is Running our Schools, Families, Military and Sports*, Kate O’Beirne
- *Porn Generation: How Social Liberalism is Corrupting our Future*, Ben Shapiro
- *Hating Women: America’s Hostile Campaign Against the Fairer Sex*, Smuley Boteach
- *Why You Can’t Stay Silent: A Biblical Mandate to Shape Our Culture*, Tom Minnery
- *Bible and Government: Public Policy from a Christian Perspective*, John Cobin, Ph.D