

Christians & Culture: *Christian Worldview & Apologetics*

10-week class (3/22—5/31)

No Class on 4/12 (Easter)

10:55am—12:05pm

www.theologyclass.org/culture

I. Part 1: (Who) in your *hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy*

Week 1: Introduction/Overview [3/22]

Week 2: Apologetic Methods [3/29]

Week 3: How People Think in God's World? (Worldview) [4/5]

II. Part 2: (What) always being *prepared to make a defense*

Week 4: God [4/19]

Week 5: Historical Claims [4/26]

Week 6: Science [5/3]

Week 7: Ethics [5/10]

III. Part 3: (How) *do it with gentleness and respect*

Week 8: Methods of engagement [5/17]

Week 9: World Religions [5/24]

Week 10: World Religions [5/31]

Christians & Culture Week 1: Introduction to Apologetics

I. Introduction

A. We live in a culture that has made Jesus an option:

1. Bumper Sticker Culture
2. Jesus isn't an "option"
 - a. He's not campaigning
 - b. He's not something to try out
 - c. Jesus is King, so believe the gospel as you live in His world!
3. What is the Gospel?
 - a. The good news that God has become King through Christ
 - b. Christ is ruling over His creation now
 - c. All people are actively rebelling against God
 - d. Believe Christ; God will pardon you from your sin/raise you from the dead

B. What is "Apologetics"?

1. The biblical foundation of apologetics
 - a. 1 Pet 3:15
 - b. *Apologia*: To make a defense
2. God-honoring apologetics
 - a. **Who**: Honor Christ as the Lord of your heart
 - b. **What** We Do: Be prepared to make a defense
 - c. **How** We Do It: With gentleness and respect, having a good conscience
3. God-*dishonoring* apologetics
 - a. **Who**: Honoring yourself
 - b. **What**: Not prepared (and making attacks)
 - c. **How**: Being harsh and disrespectful (having a marred conscience)

C. Purpose of the class

1. Develop a consistent apologetic approach
2. Equip the saints to always be prepared to give a defense

II. Distinctives of Good Apologetics Methods

A. Supremacy of Christ

1. Matt 28:16-20
2. Christ is Lord over all things
 - a. Science, Philosophy, History, Art, Beauty, etc.
 - b. Christ lays claim to the entire world

B. Assume the Trinitarian God

1. We don't argue for mere theism
 - a. Begin with the Bible, which reveals a Triune God

C. Seek to understand our "Worldview"?

1. A particular philosophy of life or conception of the world
 - a. How we understand and live in the world around us
 - b. Everyone has a worldview
2. We know through revelation:
 - a. General
 - b. Special

III. Supremacy of the Bible

A. How God reveals Himself

1. General revelation
 - a. God revealed Himself through nature (Ps 19)
 - b. God revealed Himself through conscience (Rom 1:19)
 - c. Not saving knowledge
2. Special revelation
 - a. What God has revealed through the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - b. Special knowledge for how to please God

B. We don't prove God's Word to be true; it is!

1. The Bible is self-authenticating
 - a. We don't determine its reliability
 - b. We don't determine its authority
 - c. Cf. *Sola Scriptura* article (TheologyClass.org/culture)

C. God is true and doesn't change

1. All Scripture is true because it's God breathed (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - a. God won't contradict Himself
 - b. Inconsistencies are an interpretation issue
 - c. Findings challenge our interpretations (not the truth of Scripture)

IV. How We Know Stuff?

A. Epistemology

1. The theory of knowledge
 - a. The justification for belief, and how it relates to reality
 - b. How we know anything
 - c. Epistemological foundation for Christians
 - i. God/Bible are the source of knowledge

B. Epistemology through the centuries

1. Pre-modern era
 - a. We know what's true because the god(s)/supernatural tells us
 - i. Traditional/religious institutions were viewed as authorities/revered
 - b. Creation—1700s
2. Modern era
 - a. We know what's true because as autonomous beings we can use our own reason to discover truth
 - i. Thinkers began to question the traditional authorities
 - ii. We (as individuals) can believe what was self-evident
 - iii. The scientific method becomes the defining means of obtaining truth
 - iv. Individual reason is crowned the new source of ultimate authority
 - b. Enlightenment: 1700s—1900s (1940?)
3. Post-modern era (Late-modernism)
 - a. We know what's true for us (autonomy)
 - i. Personal freedom always wins against the claims of tradition, religion, family, community
 - ii. There is no universal *Truth* that we can know, we can only know what the *truth* is for ourselves
 - iii. It's morally wrong to assert *Truth* claims, because it's cruel towards those who hold different beliefs
 - b. 1940s—today
4. A biblical worldview is neither Post-modern, nor Modern
 - a. Both eras provide value, we're not autonomous
 - b. We live in God's world, and must abide by His truth

C. Why discuss epistemology with apologetics?

1. Apologetics deals with truth claims, and God is the source of all truth
2. Humans are depraved, rebels, fighting against God
3. Therefore, all people need to be challenged in their faulty, depraved, rebellious thinking

Homework for next week: Read Acts 17. How does Paul engage with the Bereans vs. the Athenians?

Christians & Culture Week 2: *Apologetic Methods*

I. Theology Determines our Apologetic/Evangelism (we cannot reverse this)

A. Anthropology (the study of humankind)

1. *Creation* (Gen 1–2), *Fall* (Gen 3)
 - a. Created good (in God's image)
 - b. Distorted image/sinned by falling to temptation (Gen 3)
2. Result: Dead in sin
 - a. Have no desire to please God (Rom 1:18-20)
 - b. We remain in our sin because that's what we desire
 - c. Dead humans (in their trespasses) have no desire to want to be saved

B. Soteriology (the study of salvation)

1. *Redemption* Eph 1:7-10
 - a. Jesus saves, gives life to His sheep
 - b. Has been enthroned as king of all creation

II. Different Apologetic Methods

A. *Classical* Apologetics

1. Two-step approach based on evidence and reason
 - a. First argues for theism
 - b. Then argues for Christianity as the most reasonable form of theism
2. Places a high degree of confidence in human reason (apart from special revelation)
 - a. Tries to demonstrate the high probability of realities
3. Example of Classical Apologetics:
 - a. The Cosmological argument
 - i. Everything that begins to exist has a cause
 - ii. The universe began to exist
 - iii. Therefore, the universe had a cause
 - b. That primary cause is the God of the Bible

B. *Evidential Apologetics*

1. Single-step approach based on evidence
 - a. Doesn't believe the first-step in the two-step method is necessary
 - b. The evidentialist will begin with a historical case for things like:
 - i. General reliability of the Bible
 - ii. The resurrection
2. Appeals to historical evidence, because the evidence alone is strong enough to convince those who deny theism
 - a. High degree of confidence in human reason
 - i. Views people primarily as thinking beings who can be persuaded
3. Example of Evidential Apologetics:
 - a. The minimal facts for the resurrection
 - i. Jesus' death by crucifixion
 - ii. Jesus' disciples had experiences where they thought He returned from the dead
 - iii. Saul (a persecutor of Christianity) converted once he had an experience with the risen Jesus
 - iv. The only thing that accounts for all three facts is the resurrection

C. *Presuppositional Apologetics*

1. An approach based on the authority of God's revelation
 - a. Makes the revelation from God (Bible) the starting point for how anyone can know anything; places a high view on Jesus as King over all things
 - i. Views people as being spiritually dead, loving their sin, enemies of God
 - ii. Since the human mind is corrupted by sin, the natural man would never be able to be neutral in accepting reason
 - iii. Unbelievers should submit to God as judge
2. Everyone's thinking is colored by their presuppositions
 - a. Presupposition: To suppose/assume beforehand; take for granted in advance
 - i. Implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse
 - b. The natural person presupposes a distorted view of reality (1 Cor 1:18)
 - c. The authority of the Bible is the assumed starting point in apologetic conversations
 - d. The Christian seeks to undermine a non-Christian's worldview by demonstrating that without the Christian God, they cannot consistently claim meaning, truth, or logic
 - i. When the non-Christian does such things, they are only "borrowing capital" from Christianity
 - ii. Two-story house
3. Example of Presuppositional Apologetics:
 - a. Question the unbeliever's presuppositions and require them to justify their rationality
 - b. This happens by assuming the other person's argument (temporarily, to investigate)
 - i. "Let's say this is true...then what follows?"
 - ii. *Reductio ad absurdum*: where an idea is disproven by taking someone's idea logically to an absurd conclusion
 - c. E.g., Moral Relativism

D. Which method should we use?

1. The basis should be Presuppositional (presupposing the Bible and its Trinitarian God)
2. After that, borrowing from other methods is wise
3. Choosing a method is a philosophical decision, great saints hold to all three

III. Consistent Biblical Model of Apologetics (ACTS 17: PAUL & THE JEWS VS. PAUL & THE GREEKS)

A. 17:1-15 Paul and the Thessalonians and Bereans

1. Paul visits Jewish synagogues (Thessalonica & Berea) to preach the gospel (17:2; 10)

B. 17:16-34 Paul in Athens

1. Paul goes to Athens
2. Went to the Areopagus
3. Paul's use of pagan culture
 - a. Paul quotes Greek philosophers
 - i. He understands their worldview
 - ii. But he does this to justify the Christian worldview
 - iii. Paul knew about a culture that wasn't his own
 - b. Paul's method:
 - i. Assumes a Christian worldview as the foundation of all true religious thought
 - ii. Speaks to them in their own language/culture, depending on audience
 - iii. Affirms them as people, finds common ground, shows how their beliefs depend on a Christian worldview
 - c. Paul goes into someone else's house and shows that the foundation of that house is actually God's

Homework for next week: What are signs of a good/persuasive argument? What are signs of a bad one?

Christians & Culture Week 3: How People Think in God's World? (Worldview)

I. Logic

A. Logic

1. The field that studies the principles of correct reasoning
2. Reason: The ability or process of drawing logical inferences/conclusions
3. Logic requires the act of reasoning by people in order to form thoughts, opinions, classifications, and judgment

B. Argument

1. The act/process of reasoning or discussing a coherent series of reasons, statements, or facts intended to support a point of view
 - a. Deductive Arguments: known facts to build on other facts until we come to a desired conclusion
 - i. Premise: The statement doing the supporting
 - ii. Conclusion: The statement being supported

C. Validity & Soundness of an Argument

1. Valid: An argument is valid if the truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusion
 - a. If the premises of the argument are true, then the conclusion must be true
 - b. It's impossible for a valid argument to have all true premises unless the conclusion is also true
 - c. Valid argument (Syllogism)
 - i. P1: All men are mortal
 - ii. P2: Vinnie is a man
 - iii. C: Therefore, Vinnie is mortal
 - d. Valid argument?
 - e. Invalid argument
 - f. Validity has nothing to do with the trueness/factuality of the argument
2. *Sound*: an argument is sound when all the premises are valid and if its premises are actually true
 - a. Sound argument
 - b. Un-Sound argument

D. Basic Laws of logic that are presupposed:

1. The *Law of Identity*: P is P
 - a. When we say something that is true, then it is true
 - b. Everything is itself, and not something else
2. The *Law of non-contradiction*: P is not $\text{non-}P$
 - a. Something cannot be both true and not true at the same time and in the same way
3. The *Law of Excluded Middle*: either P or $\text{non-}P$
 - a. The idea that all propositions must be either true or false

E. Bad Arguments

1. Self-defeating (refuting) arguments
 - a. Occurs when the conclusion denies the premise
2. Circular Reasoning (Begging the question)
 - a. When the conclusion of an argument is assumed in the premise
 - b. “Not all circularity is created equal” — John Frame
 - i. Narrow: The Bible is the word of God because it is the word of God
 - ii. Broad:
 - P1: Whatever the Bible says is true
 - P2: The Bible says that it is the word of God
 - C: Therefore, the Bible is the Word of God

F. Fallacies

1. See Appendix

II. Inconsistent Worldviews

A. Relativism

1. The idea that the truth of something is true only relative to an individual or group
 - a. There are no universal moral rules/ethics
2. Personal Moral Relativism
 - a. I can only know what is right/wrong/moral/ethical for me
3. Society-says Relativism
 - a. Society/culture creates morals
 - b. What’s right for one culture might not be for another
 - c. This view has significant issues with Christian missionaries
4. Problems with personal/cultural relativism?
 - a. Personal relativism doesn’t allow for ANY objective truth claim or moral objection
 - b. Cultural relativism doesn’t allow for ANY critique of one’s own culture

B. Religious Pluralism

1. An attitude regarding the diversity of religious belief systems co-existing in society
 - a. *Public policy*: General religious tolerance/freedom of religion
 - b. *Religious truth claim*: All religions ultimately have the same message with all believers eventually reaching the same spiritual end point.
2. The Blind Men and the Elephant
 - a. The idea that all religions have a piece of the truth, but none is complete
3. Problems with Religious Pluralism?
 - a. All religions make competing/mutually-exclusive truth claims
 - b. Jesus

Homework for next April 19th (no class on Easter): What are arguments for how God doesn’t exist (that you’ve thought/heard)? How would you respond to those claims?

Christians & Culture Week 4: God

I. Inconsistent Worldviews

A. Relativism

1. The idea that the truth of something is true only relative to an individual or group
 - a. There are no universal moral rules/ethics
2. Personal Moral Relativism
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3. Problems with Religious Pluralism?
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II. Arguments for the existence of God

A. Teleological Argument

1. *Telos*: goal/purpose
 - a. A "purposer" to have "purpose"
 - b. We see things obviously intended for a purpose, those things were made for a reason
2. Mt. Rushmore and the Grand Canyon
 - a. The GC formed by non-rational, natural process
 - b. MT created by an intelligent being
3. The Teleological Argument applies this to the whole universe
 - a. Design implies a designer, the universe shows marks of design, then the universe was designed

B. *Cosmological* Argument

1. Tries to demonstrate the existence of a first cause of the existence of the cosmos
2. The Kalam Cosmological Argument shows that the universe is not eternal but had a beginning
 - a. P1: Whatever begins to exist has a cause
 - b. P2: The universe began to exist
 - c. C: Therefore, the universe had a cause
3. Big Bang cosmology
 - a. Describes a universe that is not eternal
 - b. The second law of thermodynamics
 - c. Science prior to the Big Bang

C. The Moral Argument

1. Because objective moral laws exist, there must be an objective moral law Giver
2. The Moral Argument
 - a. P1: If God does not exist, then objective moral values/obligations do not exist
 - b. P2: Objective moral values/obligations do exist
 - c. C: Therefore, God exists
3. Without an objective moral law Giver there can be no objective good
 - a. Without an objective good, there is no objective evil
 - b. Without God, good and evil cannot objectively exist

III. The Problem of Evil

A. The standard argument

- P1: If God were all-powerful, he would be able to prevent evil.
P2: If God were all-good, he would desire to prevent evil.
C: So if God were both all-powerful and all-good, there would be no evil.
P3: But there is evil.
C: Therefore, there is no all-powerful, all-good God.

B. Defining evil

1. Natural evil
 - a. Anything that brings suffering, unpleasantness, or difficulty into the lives of creatures
 - b. The curse brought on the world because of moral evil
2. Moral evil
 - a. The sin of rational creatures
 - b. This is the evil that is often the “problem”
3. Theodicy
 - a. The goal of justifying God’s ways to men

C. God's involvement in the world

1. God is ultimately sovereign over all things, including evil
 - a. Cf. Gen 50:20; Isa 10:5-10; Lk 22:22; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Rom 9:1-29
2. Scripture frequently speaks of God determining our choices
 - a. Cf. Gen 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27; 2 Sam 24:1; Prov 16:9; Lk 24:45; Jn 6:44, 65; Acts 2:47; 11:18; 13:48; 16:14; Rom 8:28; 9; 11:36; Eph 1:11; 2:8-9; Phil 1:29;
3. God's Character
 - a. God himself is perfect and there is no evil in him
 - b. The original creation contained no evil (Gen 1:31)
 - c. The consummated new heavens/earth will be without evil (Rev 21:1-8)

D. The Problem of Evil for the believer

1. How to view the Problem
 - a. Theocentric: God centered
 - b. Anthropocentric: human centered
2. God's ultimate purpose is to glorify himself, with man's chief end to "glorify God and enjoy him forever"
3. Ways that God uses evil to bring about a greater good
 - a. Displaying his grace and justice (Rom 3:26; 5:8, 20-21; 9:17)
 - b. Judgment of evil, now and in the future (Matt 23:35; John 5:14)
 - c. Redemption: Christ's sufferings (1 Pet 3:18).
 - d. Shock value to unbelievers, intended to gain their attention and promote a change of heart (Zech 13:7-9; Luke 13:1-5; John 9)
 - e. Fatherly discipline of believers (Heb 12)
 - f. Vindication of God (Rom 3:26)

E. The Problem of Evil for the skeptic

1. No problem
 - a. There is no objective standard of good/evil in the world
 - b. From an evolutionary standpoint, what's evil about two bags of gas doing things to each other?
2. The problem is not solved for the skeptic
 - a. They're still left with the "evil" but cannot for account for it
 - b. They cannot actually claim that anything is "evil," only that they don't like it

Homework for next week: Have you ever been challenged on the reliability of the Bible or the historicity of Jesus? If so, how would you engage the conversation?

Christians & Culture Week 5: *Historical Claims*

I. The Historicity of Jesus

A. Lewis' *Trilemma* (Lord, Liar, Lunatic)

1. CS Lewis (Mere Christianity)
2. Jesus was either:
 - a. A lunatic/madman
 - b. A liar/something worse
 - c. The Lord

II. Objections and Responses to the Resurrection

A. The "swoon" theory

1. Jesus couldn't have survived the crucifixion
 - a. Roman soldiers were professionals
 - b. Roman law: death penalty for letting capital prisoner escape
2. The Roman soldier didn't break Jesus' legs like the other two criminals (Jn 19:31-33)
 - a. Breaking the legs hastened the death (Jn 19:31)
3. John saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side (Jn 19:34-35)
 - a. Jesus' lung had collapsed, died of asphyxiation
4. The body was totally encased in winding sheets and entombed (Jn 19:38-42)
5. The post-resurrection appearances convinced disciples that Jesus was alive (Jn 20:19-20)
6. How were the Roman guards at the tomb overpowered by a swooning corpse?
7. How could a swooning half-dead man have moved the great stone at the door of the tomb?
8. If Jesus awoke from a swoon, where did he go?
9. Conclusion: A swoon theory is at best a conspiracy theory that isn't rooted in any fact

B. The "conspiracy theory"

1. For the Apostles to have been this dishonest, they would have had to meet after Jesus' death and conspire to say he rose from the dead
 - a. Human beings are susceptible to change
 - b. Only one to deny his story under the threat of imprisonment, torture, or death
2. This made up story would have to be the most creative, clever, intelligent fantasy in history
 - a. "Fishermen's fish stories" aren't this elaborate, convincing, life changing, or enduring
3. The disciples' character argues against a conspiracy
 - a. They are simple, honest, common peasants
 - b. They are not cunning, conniving liars (they weren't even lawyers)
 - c. Their sincerity is proved by their words/deeds
 - d. They preached a resurrected Christ and lived a resurrected Christ life
 - e. They willingly died for their "conspiracy"
4. There could be no possible motive for such a lie
 - a. Lies are always told for selfish gain/advantage
5. If the resurrection were a lie, the Jews would have produced the corpse
 - a. The Jews/Romans would just go to the tomb and get it
6. The disciples couldn't have gotten away with proclaiming the resurrection if a lie
 - a. A conspiracy would have been exposed by adversaries

C. The “Hallucination” theory

1. There were too many witnesses
 - a. Hallucinations are private, individual, and subjective
 - b. 500 witnesses is public
 - c. (1 Cor 15:3-8) Most of the 500 are still alive, invites readers to investigate
2. The witnesses saw Christ together, at the same time and place
3. Hallucinations usually only last a few seconds/minutes.
 - a. Witnesses interacted with Jesus for 40 days (Acts 1:3)
4. Hallucinations usually happen only once
 - a. Appearances occurred many times to ordinary people (Jn 20:19—21:14; Acts 1:3)
5. Not only did the disciples not expect a resurrection, they didn’t even believe it at first
 - a. Neither Peter, the women, Thomas, or the 11.
 - b. They thought it was a ghost—He ate for proof (Lk 24:36-43)
6. Hallucinations don’t eat
 - a. The resurrection Jesus ate on at least two occasions (Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:1-14)
7. The disciples touched Him (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:27)
8. The disciples spoke to Him, and He spoke back
 - a. Figments of your imagination don’t hold profound, extended conversations
 - b. Jesus conversed with at least eleven people at once, for 40 days (Acts 1:3)
9. The apostles couldn’t have believed in a “hallucination” if Jesus’ corpse had still been in the tomb
 - a. If it were a hallucination, where was the corpse?
 - b. They could/would have just checked the tomb
 - c. If a resurrection story had developed the Jews could have just produced the corpse
10. Conclusion: A hallucination would only explain the post-resurrection appearances
 - a. Doesn’t explain the empty tomb, rolled-away stone, or inability to produce a corpse
 - b. No theory can explain all these data but a real resurrection

D. The “myth” theory

1. The style of the Gospels is very different from the style of all other myths
 - a. The Gospels have no overblown, spectacular, childish exaggerated events
 - b. Nothing is arbitrary, everything fits in and is meaningful
2. There was not enough time for myth to develop
 - a. Several generations have to pass before added mythological elements can be mistakenly believed to be facts
3. The Gospels “embarrass” themselves
 - a. The first witnesses of the resurrection were women
 - b. 1st century women had a low social status and no legal right to serve as witnesses
4. The NT isn’t myth because it is specific to repudiate the mythic interpretation (2 Pet 1:16)
 - a. This means the resurrection account is either true or a lie

Homework for next week: Do you struggle with the integration of faith and science? How do you engage in conversations about those two things?

Christians & Culture Week 6: Faith & Science

1. Biography
 - a. Not raised Christian
 - b. Excelled in science, SDSU Zoology major
 - c. Entomology class; bumblebee epiphany

2. Three areas of science that point to the existence of God in Nature:
 - a. The origin of creation and the Big Bang
 - b. How God has fine-tuned the Earth to support life
 - c. The evidence of God's handiwork in every living cell

3. Romans 1:20 reads
 - a. For his [God's] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, ***in the things that have been made.*** So they are without excuse.

4. The founders of modern science were by and large all Christians
 - a. Sir Isaac Newton
 - b. Astronomer Johannes Kepler

5. Mid-1800s, Darwin divorces God from science
 - a. This atheistic worldview, became known as Scientific Materialism
 - b. Philip Johnson's (UC Berkeley) perspective
 - i. From the beginning there were particles,
 - ii. The particles became complex living stuff
 - iii. The living stuff became aware
 - iv. The living stuff conceived of god

6. BIG BANG and the ORIGIN of the UNIVERSE
 - a. Materialist view began in the 1920s
 - i. American astronomer, Edwin Hubble
 1. Galaxies outside of the Milky Way
 2. The universe was expanding
 3. This was in contrast to Einstein who thought the Universe was neither expanding nor contracting
 4. 1931 Einstein visited Hubble at the Mt. Wilson Observatory to discuss their different theories
 5. Einstein was persuaded his theory was wrong and the Universe was not static, and that the universe had a beginning
 6. He later admitted this was the biggest scientific mistake he ever made
 7. If the universe had a beginning, how were matter and energy created?
 - b. Materialists still don't have a definitive answer to this question
 - i. There are many competing theories trying to answer that question
 - ii. "Multi-verses" (crazy theory)
 1. Each parallel co-existing universe with its one unique laws of physics

7. FINE-TUNED EARTH PERFECTLY MADE BY GOD FOR LIFE

- a. Early 1960s popular cosmologist Carl Sagan thought there were only
 - i. 2 criteria needed for a planet to support life
 - 1. The right type star (sun)
 - 2. A planet JUST the right distance from the sun
 - 3. He thought there should be “billions and billions” of possible planets, like earth, where life could exist
 - a. Septillion # of planets 10 plus 20 zeros
- b. Astronomers had begun searching for alien radio signals in the late 1950s
 - i. SETI Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence
 - ii. But after 50–60 years no signals coming from space
- c. We have now discovered there are many more than these two factors necessary to support life on a planet
 - i. The more factors needed to support life on a planet
 - 1. There are fewer planets that have these necessary factors
 - a. There are more than 200 factors needed to support life
- d. Some of the 200 plus criteria making life possible on Earth are:
 - i. A large planet (like Jupiter) absorbs asteroids and meteors flying through outer space capable of destroying Earth
 - ii. Our Earth has a molten nickel-iron core giving Earth magnetic North and South poles
 - 1. This giant Earth-magnet creates a magnetic shield around us protecting us from dangerous solar radiation
 - 2. Unlike Mars which lost its molten core and its magnetic shield
 - a. Leaving Mars a barren lifeless planet
 - iii. God has made Earth’s gravitational strength neither
 - 1. Too strong - atmosphere ammonia and methane
 - 2. Too weak – not enough liquid water on earth
 - iv. We have a Moon that’s the perfect size and distance away
 - 1. Stabilizes earth’s rotation
 - 2. And stabilizes earth’s tilt on its axis
 - a. Which in turn stabilizes our climate making life possible
 - v. Thickness of the earth’s crust, is again neither
 - 1. Too thick – not enough oxygen
 - 2. Too thin – excessive volcanic activity
- e. This very well may mean we are truly alone in the universe

8. EVIDENCE of GOD IN LIVING CELLS

- a. Inside every living cell, there are genes made up of DNA
- b. Like the operating system of a cell phone
 - i. Inside humans it instructs a cell to become a heart cell, toenail, or a white blood cell to battle a Covid19 virus
 - 1. Also instructs the body how to build each one of our 60 trillion cells
- c. Each human cell contains the equivalent of about 1.6 GB of information
 - i. In 60 trillion cells that's an unbelievable amount of information
 - ii. For Darwinian evolution to be true, random mutations must make some improvement to the cell or the creature.
 - 1. Change even one single "letter" on one human gene and this simple mutation doesn't make an improvement; instead gives a baby sickle cell anemia.
 - 2. How often does one single bit of incorrect computer code make a cell phone do some miraculous new function?
- d. DNA is essentially information in source code
 - i. Who wrote the original lines of code to turn non-living chemicals in the primordial soup, into the first living cell,
 - ii. Since there is design and information in a cell, that must require an intelligent outside source of information
 - iii. Psalm 139:13-14 "knit me together"

Homework for next week: How much of our thoughts (including our "defense") of ethics have been shaped by secular thought, and how much by Christian thought? If a conservative-atheist could make the same arguments for being pro-life (or against homosexual marriage, etc.), is it actually a Christian argument?

Christians & Culture Week 7: Ethics

I. Ethics

A. Defining Ethics

1. The discipline dealing with what is good, bad, moral duty, and obligation
 - a. A set of moral principles/rules
 - b. The system
2. Defining Values
 - a. Beliefs for which a person has an enduring preference. The ideals that helps one make a judgment of what is important
 - b. The stimuli for thinking

B. Christian Ethics

1. The branch of theology that defines virtuous/wrong behavior
 - a. Known as Moral Theology
2. Some areas of ethics
 - a. War
 - b. Wealth & poverty
 - c. Social (racial issues, etc.)
 - d. The treatment of women
 - e. Marriage/divorce
 - f. Sexuality
 - g. Abortion & reproduction

C. Focus of Christian ethics

1. Creating a consistent Christian ethic
 - a. Rooted in good exegesis, biblical & systematic theology
 - b. A moral principle that is valid for all Christians in all cultures and times
 - c. Ethics aren't tied to politics, constitution(s), etc.

II. Abortion

A. What is it?

1. This is the question that **MUST** be asked/answered
 - a. If the unborn is **NOT** a human person, then no justification for abortion is necessary
 - b. If the unborn **IS** a human person, then no justification for abortion is adequate
2. We can never answer the question, 'Can I kill this?' unless we've answered a prior question: '*What is it?*'
 - a. Whether it's right or not to take the life of any living being depends entirely upon the answer to one question: What kind of being is it?

B. The SLED test: *Size, Level of Development, Environment, or Degree of Dependency*

1. **Size**

- a. Are preschoolers less valuable than teenagers, or women less valuable than man because they're smaller?
- b. Size doesn't equal value

2. **Level of development**

- a. Is a 4-year old girl less valuable than her mother because she can't reproduce?
- b. Value is not determined by abilities

3. **Environment**

- a. Does your value change when you cross the street, or even roll over in bed?
- b. When you are—in the womb or out—has no bearing on who you are.

4. Degree of dependency

- a. Should we disqualify those who rely on insulin or heart pacemakers just because they are dependent?
- b. Viability doesn't determine worth

C. Extraordinary circumstances

1. Emotional arguments

- a. Statistical minorities aren't the main point
- b. Don't ignore the statistical minority

2. Rape/incest

- a. Statistics
 - i. 1% from rape; 0.5% from incest
- b. The anti-abortion argument: unborn are human persons, therefore we don't kill them
 - i. We don't punish the victims of rape
 - ii. The unborn as a result of rape/inset are just as human as any other child

3. The life of the mother

- a. Statistics
- b. The anti-abortion argument: Always seek to preserve life

D. Remember the focus of the argument

- 1. The Christian pro-life position is theological, not political
 - a. If the foundational argument can be used by both Christians and secular pro-life people, then it's not a Christian argument
- 2. The Christian position should be rooted in the gospel
 - a. Avoid behavior modification
- 3. The woman seeking an abortion is not a monster
 - a. She bears the image of God
 - b. She's engaging in sin and needs to repent
 - c. The gospel is for women who have had abortions too!

III. Sexual Morality

A. Biblical sexuality

- 1. Gen 1—2
 - a. One man, one woman, one flesh

B. Polygamy

- 1. Argument: The Bible isn't clear at all on marriage, so many men practiced polygamy
- 2. Descriptive vs. Prescriptive
 - a. Descriptive: describing the historical situation
 - b. Prescriptive: prescribing an expected command/ethic for all time
- 3. Biblical polygamy
 - a. Common practice in the ANE
 - b. Gen 4:19-25
- 4. The Bible merely describes what IS, not what OUGHT to be

C. Gay Marriage

- 1. Objection: Jesus never addressed gay marriage
- 2. Jesus made a positive argument for marriage

- a. Mt 19:5-6
- 3. Other biblical passages
 - a. Rom 1:18-32 (26-27)
 - b. 1 Cor 6:9-10
 - c. 1 Tim 1:8-11
- D. Transgenderism
 - 1. Objection: The Bible never addresses transgenderism
 - 2. God made them male and female
 - a. Mark 10:6
 - 3. DeYoung article (TGC)
 - a. “What does the Bible say about transgenderism?”
- E. Remember the main point with all sexual ethics
 - 1. Being gay, transgender, a polygamous, etc. doesn’t send anyone to hell
 - 2. The goal of engaging in conversations is to offer a heart change through the gospel

IV. Slavery

- A. The Bible and slavery
 - 1. Objection: the Bible and the God of the Bible are evil because of it condones slavery
- B. Defining slavery (historically)
 - 1. Egyptian:
 - a. Authoritarian
 - b. Based on race
 - c. Slaves as property, no rights
 - 2. Hebrew:
 - a. Humane practice
 - b. A form of debt-payment
 - c. Not organized by race
 - d. Rights?
 - 3. Roman:
 - a. Diversity in practice
 - b. Prisoners of war
 - c. Not based on race
 - d. Employees
 - e. Rights?
 - 4. Trans-Atlantic:
 - a. Authoritarian
 - b. Based on race
 - c. Slaves as property, no rights
 - d. A defacto-cultural phenomenon

Homework for next week: Knowing what to say, and knowing how to say it are two different things. Examine yourself and think about your strengths/weaknesses when it comes to engaging with others. Are you passive? Overly aggressive? What’s your motivation for dialogue (i.e., are you more concerned with winning the argument than the person?)?

Christians & Culture Week 8: *Methods of Engagement*

I. How We Engage Others?

A. With gentleness and respect, having a good conscience

1. Don't abuse people
 - a. If you are abusive, do you even understand the gospel?
2. Have a good conscience
3. Keep the gospel at the front of your mind
 - a. "there but for the grace of God, go I."

B. Col 4:5-6

C. The Who-What-How-Why of Col 4

1. *Who*: Outsiders
2. *What*: Declare the word (the mystery of Christ) in a relevant/friendly way
3. *How*: In prayer, with thanksgiving, clearly, and with wisdom, making good use of our time, being gracious and appealing, in a way that outsiders will be validated for who they are, but challenged in their beliefs
4. *Why*: Because we remember the gospel: God was gracious towards us, we can be gracious to others

II. God's Image Bearers

A. Who are Humans?

1. Created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27)

B. What happened at the Fall?

1. The image bearer is now defaced/distorted by sin (Gen 3)
2. There still remains a connection with God
 - a. Gen 9:6 and Capital punishment

C. How God's redemption provides reconciliation

1. 2 Cor 5
2. Rom 8:29 Conformed to the image of Jesus through the gospel
 - a. Conformed: to have a similar form, nature, or style

D. All people have a connection to God

1. Because God values humans, we must value them too
2. Always win the man, not the argument
3. The person has an identity outside of their religious organization
 - a. Don't view others as being Islamic; view them as Muslims
 - b. The system/organization is the enemy, not the individual

III. Apologetics is not Evangelism

A. Apologetics

1. Making a defense for Christianity
 - a. Answering questions and removing barriers
2. Pre-evangelism

B. Evangelism

1. The public preaching of the gospel
 - a. Not a defense, but a positive proclamation of good news

IV. Tactics

A. Koukl's Socratic way of engaging in conversation

1. Discovering answers by asking questions
 - a. Self-discovery is always more effective than being lectured
2. Defuses situations
 - a. People like to hear their own voice
 - b. Avoids accusations
3. Keeps you in the driver's seat
 - a. You're not asserting anything
 - b. You're not on the hook for anything
4. Burden of proof
 - a. He who makes the claim bears the burden of proof

B. The "Colombo Tactic"

1. To gain information ask:

- a. *"What do you mean by that?"*
 - i. Clarifies the claims the person is making
 - ii. Tells what the person thinks
 - iii. Provides a good conversation starter

2. To make them defend their own views ask:

- a. *"How did you come to that conclusion?"*
 - i. Clarifies the reasons for the person's ideas
 - ii. Tells how the person thinks
 - iii. Makes him bear the "burden of proof" of defending his own claims

3. To exploit a flaw, begin your question with:

- a. *"Can you clear this up for me?"*
 - i. Used when reasons don't properly support claims
 - ii. Challenges a weakness or contradiction
 - iii. Exploits a flaw with a question rather than a statement

V. Evangelism

A. The goal of apologetics

1. Removing obstacles
 - a. Not to win the argument
 - b. Get people to a place to preach the gospel
2. “Win the man, not the battle”
3. Use apologetic encounters to introduce evangelism

B. The Three Circles

1. God’s Design [draw “God’s Design” circle]
 - a. We see God’s design all around us
 - b. simple testimony: “I haven’t always accepted God’s plan; I’ve actually been living as a rebel against God”
 - i. “I decided to depart from God’s design”
 - ii. [draw “sin” arrow leading away from God’s Design]
2. Brokenness [draw “brokenness” circle]
 - a. Departure from God’s design leads us to brokenness
 - b. The Bible says that everyone has sinned and has departed from God’s design
 - c. Our sin takes us all to a place of brokenness.
 - d. We try to change ourselves, but the change we need has to come from somewhere else
3. The Gospel [draw “Gospel” circle]
 - a. “Gospel” means good news
 - i. That God sent His Son Jesus to usher in His Kingdom
 - ii. That because His Son lived, died, was raised from the dead, and has ascended to Heaven, that He has all authority
 - iii. That all people are rebel-sinners against God, but if they repent of their sin and trust in God, He will raise them from the dead, just as He raised Jesus
 - b. Repent & Believe [draw “Repent & Believe” arrow away from God’s Design]
 - i. Once we do this, we are no longer broken in God’s eyes—we’re made right
 - ii. Repenting & believing doesn’t fix everything, but it does forgive everything
 - c. Recover & Pursue [draw “Recover & Pursue” arrow away from Gospel]
 - i. Through God’s grace we can *recover and pursue* His design for our lives
4. Next steps
 - a. Ask if the diagram makes sense
 - i. Offer any points of clarification
 - ii. Ask if he/she sees their life anywhere in the diagram
 - b. Ask if there is anything that would prevent them from repenting and believing the gospel today?

I. Atheism

A. Not monolithic

1. Ask questions
2. Identify the person's worldview, and discern their basic presuppositions
 - a. *reductio*

B. Common presuppositions

1. Materialism: a belief in the physical/material world only
 - a. The supernatural & miracles are impossible because the supernatural does not exist
 - b. Christians: The supernatural exists and is involved in the world

II. RCC

A. Overview

1. Origins
2. Reformation

B. Similarities

1. Monotheism/the Trinity/the deity of Christ
2. Virgin birth
3. Crucifixion/Resurrection
4. Second coming of Jesus
5. The Bible as God's word
6. Baptism/Communion
7. Jesus as savior
8. Saved by grace

C. Notable Differences

1. Saved by grace through faith
2. Authority
 - a. Sola Scriptura
3. Mary (RCC view)
 - a. A co-redeemer with Jesus
 - b. Her merit helps Catholics in purgatory
 - c. Petition to pray for us
4. The sacraments
 - a. Baptism: Going public with one's faith/conversion
 - b. Eucharist: The corporate remembrance of the New Covenant, a means of strengthening our covenant bond as a local church

D. How to Engage

1. Ask questions
 - a. Monolithic in principle, not in practice
 - b. Dialog, don't attack
 - c. Don't get hung up on minutia; get to the gospel
2. Know your own theology
 - a. You can't lead someone in a theological discussion if you don't know what you believe

III. Islam (Muslims)

A. Background & Origins

1. Muhammad (570-632) the last of the prophets
 - a. Islam: “surrender”
 - b. Holy books:
 - i. Qur'an (Arabic), revelation from archangel Gabriel in 610 CE, memorized and compiled into one book
 - ii. Hadith: Compiled sayings/teachings of Muhammad
2. Denominations
 - a. Sunni
 - i. Largest Islamic denomination (68-80%)
 - ii. “*Sunnah*” = “habit/custom/tradition,” practice the habits of Muhammad
 - b. Shi'ite
 - i. Second largest denomination (10-13%)
 - c. Denomination differences from successorship and authority
3. World impact
 - a. 23.2% of the world's population is Muslim (almost 1 in 4)

B. Basic Theology

1. Basics of Islam: Five Pillars
 - a. *Shahadah*
 - i. Central tenet of faith ('there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger')
 - b. Ritual prayer (*salat*)
 - i. Performed in Arabic, facing Mecca
 - ii. dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, night
 - c. Alms-giving (*Zakat*)
 - i. Ritual giving from 2.5% - 10%
 - ii. For social welfare or religious purposes
 - d. Fasting the month of Ramadan
 - i. Fasting from dawn—sundown
 - e. The Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca
 - i. Performed at least once in life of Muslim if resources allow
 - ii. Time of purification, circle Ka'ba, etc.
2. God (Allah)
 - a. Is the Arabic name for “God”
 - i. The only God, creator of the universe
 - ii. *Tawhid* (strict monotheism)
 - b. There are 99 names for God (the best, most beautiful, names)
 - i. The merciful, the compassionate, etc.
 - c. The Qur'an is God's eternal Word
 - i. Contrast with Christian thought: Jesus is the eternal Word

3. Jesus (Isa):

- a. A messenger of Allah to guide the Children of Israel with new scripture
- b. A great prophet (93 appearances in the Qur'an)
- c. Was born to Mary (virgin conception)
- d. Performed miracles to aid in his ministry to the Jews
 - i. Healed the blind, raised people from the dead
- e. Only appeared to die on cross
 - i. Judas on the cross?
 - ii. Was taken down early?
 - iii. "God raised him to Himself"
- f. Judgment: Will return for the Day of Judgment to restore justice and to defeat the anti-Christ

4. Holy Spirit (roles)

- a. Creates life (Allah blows into our mother's wombs our human-spirit)
- b. Some believe that this is a description of Angel Gabriel

5. *Shirk* (to share)

- a. The sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism (worshiping anything other than Allah)
- b. *Shirk* is unforgivable if remained unpardoned before death

6. Trinity (from the Qur'an)

- a. Often confused with Allah, Jesus, and Mary
- b. *"People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion, and do not say anything about God except the truth: the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was nothing more than a messenger of God, his word, directed to Mary, a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not speak of three - stop, that is better for you - God is only one God, He is far above having a son, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him and He is the best one to trust."* (Sura 4:171)

C. Muslim presuppositions

1. *Unitarianism* (the 1 Being of God can only be shared by 1 Person)

- a. The Trinitarian's presupposition: "the Bible's speaking of God is not limiting the Being to 1 Person"

2. Muslim: "Jesus was praying to the Father in the Garden; you see, he couldn't be God"

- a. Christian: "Why are you assuming that God can ONLY be the Father? You're presupposing that God is 1 Person"

C. Commonalities between Islam and Christianity

1. God alone is the creator of the world (39:62)
2. Jesus is a very special person who had great abilities while on earth. He is revered
3. We are to live separate from the evil in the world that opposes God

For further reading:

"What Every Christian Needs To Know About The Qur'an" (James R. White)

"What You Need To Know About Islam & Muslims" (George W. Braswell Jr.)

I. Watchtower Bible & Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses)

A. Background & Origins

1. Founder: Charles Taze Russell
 - a. 1870 (Pennsylvania)
 - b. Name coined in 1931 by Judge Rutherford from Isa. 43:10
2. Disputed many mainstream Christian beliefs
 - a. Immortal soul/Hell/Predestination/Trinity/physical return of Christ
 - b. Restoration of first-century Christianity
3. Holy Book:
 - a. New World Translation (NWT)
 - b. Watchtower/Awake magazines
4. Denominations
 - a. No autonomous thought allowed
 - b. As of 2019: 8.68 million worldwide

B. Basic Theology

1. God
 - a. Jehovah, Almighty God
2. Jesus
 - a. Nature
 - i. Jehovah's special creation, master worker through God created (Prov 8:22, 30)
 - ii. Preexisted as Michael the Archangel
 - iii. Is a "mighty god" but is not Almighty God
 - b. As Messiah
 - i. Became messiah at his baptism
 - ii. Lived a perfect and sinless life
 - iii. Died on a torture steak; ransom sacrifice for our original sin in Adam, making it possible for those exercising faith to gain everlasting life
 - iv. Raised from the dead in spirit
 - v. Rules God's kingdom (since 1914), will come to earth and reign for 1,000 years in Jehovah's new political kingdom
3. Holy Spirit
 - a. Jehovah's active force
 - b. Not a person, no divine qualities
4. The Trinity
 - a. Theistic invention of pagan religions
 - b. Often portrayed as pagan tritheism

C. The Gospel

1. Limited understanding
 - a. Focuses on the "message about the kingdom of God and of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ"

II. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

A. Background & Origins

1. Founder: Joseph Smith
 - a. Upstate NY (1820), vision from God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost
 - i. All Christian creeds, denominations, their pastors and professors were “corrupt and an abomination in God's sight”
 - ii. Joseph restored of the gospel that Jesus taught after he ascended
2. Holy Books
 - a. KJV (Joseph Smith translation)
 - b. Book of Mormon
 - c. Doctrine & Covenants
 - d. Pearl of Great Price
 - e. Progressive revelation
3. Denominations
 - a. The Brigham Young branch (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
 - i. Officially dropped the name “Mormon” (2018)
 - b. FLDS, James Strang Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Joseph Smith III Community of Christ, etc.
 - c. As of 2019, 16.5 million LDS

B. Basic Theology

1. God
 - a. Many gods exist, but Heavenly Father/God (Elohim) is the true and only God of this universe
 - b. God was once as we are now, and sits enthroned in heaven (Kolob)
 - i. “as man is God once was, as God is man may become”
 - ii. “great law” of eternal progression
 - iii. The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's
“In the beginning, the **head of the Gods** called a **council of the Gods**; and they came together and concocted [prepared] a plan to create the world and people it.” — Joseph Smith, 1844, *History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 308
2. Jesus
 - a. Birth was as natural, the result of natural action
 - b. Is the literal spirit-brother of Lucifer
 - c. After crucifixion he came to the Americas, bringing another testimony/gospel
 - d. Jesus is “Jehovah” (in the OT)
3. Holy Spirit
 - a. Not the same as in Christianity, clear distinction between the Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit
 - i. The Holy Ghost is the third person of the godhead
 - ii. Possesses the power of deity, but is not like Father and Son (no flesh/bones)
 - iii. Is personal (a ‘he’)
 - b. The Holy Spirit is God's presence via an essence
 - i. The Spirit of the Lord/Christ
 - ii. Is impersonal (an ‘It’)
4. The Trinity
 - Three separate Gods

C. The Gospel

1. The central doctrine is the Atonement of Jesus
 - a. Faith in Jesus, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, laying on of hands for the gift of the holy ghost
2. In its fullness, the gospel includes all the doctrines, principles, laws, ordinances, and covenants necessary for us to be exalted in the celestial kingdom. The Savior has promised that if we endure to the end, faithfully living the gospel, He will hold us guiltless before the Father at the Final Judgment (see 3 Nephi 27:16).
3. The gospel has been restored through the prophet Joseph Smith

Appendix: Logical Fallacies

Fallacy: An argument that uses poor reasoning. A deceptive, misleading, or false notion or belief.

1. CIRCULAR REASONING: When the proposition (idea/conclusion) is supported by the premises (the support for the claim), which is supported by the proposition).

Example: *Peanut butter ice cream is the best ice cream, because no other ice cream tastes as good.*

Narrow:

The Bible is the word of God because it is the word of God.

Broad:

P1: *Whatever the Bible says is true*

P2: *The Bible says that it is the word of God*

C: *Therefore, the Bible is the word of God*

2. SUBJECTIVE CLAIMS: Saying something about the subject of the sentence. A personal view/belief/way of thinking about a particular thing (subjective reality). These claims aren't necessarily right/wrong.

Example: *I love Jesus*

Example: *Peanut butter ice cream is the best ice cream*

3. OBJECTIVE CLAIMS: Saying something about the object of the sentence. Something that can be proven true (objective reality)

Example: *All roads lead to the same God*

Example: *Peanut butter is a cure for diabetes*

4. CONTRADICTION (the law of non-contradiction): A statement that asserts both the truth and falsity of something (something cannot be true, and not true, in the same time and same way.

Example: *My brother is an only child.*

Example: *I am a married bachelor*

Example: *No sentence is longer than five words*

5. EITHER-OR: Where an issue is represented as having only two sides.

Example: *If you're not with us, you're against us!*

Example: *You either believe in a literal 7-day creation, or you believe in Darwinian evolution*

6. AD HOMINEM (against a man): The arguer attacks the character of the opponent instead of the issue. This distracts the audience from the issue and makes them disregard the issue without critically examining its worth.

Example: *President Obama is a Muslim, and all Muslims are terrorists who want to kill Americans.*

7. STRAW MAN: stating an opponent's argument in an extreme or exaggerated form, or attacking a weaker, irrelevant portion of an opponent's argument.

Example: *Christians don't believe in Science*

Example: *A Christian would only deny a literal 7 day creation if they don't take the Bible seriously*

8. NON SEQUITAR: (literally means “does not follow”) any argument which fails to establish a connection between the premises and the conclusion.

Example: *I wore a red shirt when I took the test, so that is probably why I did so well on the test.*

9. RED HERRING: attempting to hide a weakness in an argument by drawing attention away from the real issue: a diversionary tactic or an attempt to confuse or fog the issue being debated.

Example: *In the presidential debate, when asked about his inappropriate comments towards women, candidate Trump responded by bringing up the public sexual misconduct that Bill Clinton engaged in while in the Oval Office.*

Example: *When the Mormon missionary told the Baptist that the Trinity was invented at the Council of Nicaea, the Baptist told the missionary that he, “shouldn’t trust the LDS church, because one of Joseph Smith’s wives was 14.”*

10. SWEEPING GENERALIZATION: assumes that what is true of the whole will also be true of the part, or that what is true in most instances will be true in all instances.

Example: *Vinnie must be rich, because he owns an Apple Computer, and Apples are computers for rich people.*

11. HASTY GENERALIZATION: bases an inference on too small a sample, or on an unrepresentative sample. Often, a single example or instance is used as the basis for a broader generalization.

Example: *All baseball players are really rude. When I was 12 I asked Jose Canseco for his autograph after an A’s game, and he totally ignored me.*

Example: *All Muslims are terrorists, because on 9/11 Muslims flew planes into buildings.*

12. APPEAL TO AUTHORITY: attempts to justify an argument by citing a highly admired or well-known (but not necessarily qualified) figure who supports the conclusion being offered.

Example: *My pastor said that this Bible passage means X, and so that’s what it must mean!*

Example: *I am voting for X, because that’s who the actor from my favorite movie is endorsing.*

13. APPEAL TO TRADITION: (don't rock the boat) based on the principle of "letting sleeping dogs lie." We should continue to do things as they’ve been done in the past. We shouldn't challenge time-honored customs or traditions.

Example: *It would be wrong for a church service to start with the sermon and then spend the last part singing, that’s not the way it’s done.*

GLOSSARY

Anthropology: The study of humankind (people). Theologically this refers to the natural state of humankind (the nature to which they're born, namely their spiritual depravity).

Apologetics: To make a defense (legally) for something. The phrase most commonly associated with 1 Pet 3:15.

Argument: The act/process of reasoning or discussing a coherent series of reasons, statements, or facts intended to support a point of view.

Autonomy: Literally self-law.

Circular Reasoning (begging the question): When the conclusion of an argument is assumed in the premise (i.e., the Bible is the word of God because the Bible is the word of God).

Classical Apologetics: A two-step approach to apologetics that is heavily based in human reason. The first argument is made for the existence of a deity, with the second argument for the God of the Bible.

Epistemology: The theory of knowledge. It's the basis and grounds for how people know what they know.

Evidential Apologetics: A single-step approach to apologetics, where history, archeology, and evidence is used to create the most plausible argument for the Christian faith.

Logic: The field of study that focuses on the principles of correct reasoning. Logic requires the act of reasoning by people in order to form thoughts, opinions, classifications, and judgment.

Ontology (Ontological): The branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature and relations of beings (their essence; what makes them what they are).

The Gospel: The good news of what God has done in Jesus; that the Kingdom of God has arrived in the coming of Israel's Messiah. Because of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, all people (who are rebel sinners against God) who have faith in Jesus will also be raised from the dead and live in God's eternal Kingdom.

Premise: A proposition upon which an argument is based, or from which a conclusion is drawn.

Presuppositional Apologetics: The school of Christian apologetics that believes the Christian faith (through God's revelation) is the only basis for rational thought. It assumes: the Bible as the basis of truth, the Trinitarian God of the Bible to be the only God, and attempts to expose flaws in other worldviews.

Presupposition: A thing that is assumed beforehand (at the beginning of a line of argument). These are things that are either conscious or subconscious. Everyone has presuppositions about their worldview.

Reason: The ability or process of drawing logical inferences/conclusions.

Relativism: The belief that knowledge, truth, and morality only exist in relation to culture, society, historical context, or self, and are not absolute.

Revelation (Natural): How God has revealed Himself in nature (Ps 19; Rom 1). Through natural revelation, all people have been made known of God's existence and greatness.

Revelation (Special): How God has revealed Himself as the God who saves. This was most clearly revealed in the life of Jesus, and recorded (and preserved) in the Bible.

Scientific Method: A method of researching the physical world, in which a problem is identified, relevant data are gathered, a hypothesis is formulated from these data, and the hypothesis is empirically tested.

Skepticism: A philosophical school of thought that questions the possibility of certain (or absolute) knowledge, especially concerning areas of religious belief or dogma.

Syllogism: A kind of philosophical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion, based on two or more propositions (e.g., If A and B, then C: *All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; Therefore, Socrates is mortal*).

Transcendental Argument for the existence of God (TAG): The argument that attempts to prove the existence of God by arguing that logic, morals, and science ultimately presuppose a supreme deity/god, and that God must therefore be the source of logic and morals.

Truth: That which conforms to final reality. Ultimately true things are what is consistent with God's nature and intention for creation.

Recommended Bibliography

General Apologetic

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R.C. Sproul, *Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics* (Crossway, 2018)

James R. White, *The Forgotten Trinity* (Bethany House, 2019)

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Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Zondervan, 2016)

The Bible

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Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament* (B&H, 2016)

*FF Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?* (Eerdmans, 2003)

J. Warner Wallace, *Cold Case Christianity* (David Cook, 2013)

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Presuppositional Apologetics

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K. Scott Oliphint, *The Battle Belongs to the Lord* (P&R, 2003)

Richard Pratt, *Every Through Captive* (P&R, 1980)

Apologetics and Culture

Paul Gould, *Cultural Apologetics* (Zondervan, 2019)

Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (Penguin, 2009)

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Ethical Apologetics

Michael Brown, *Can you be Gay and Christian?* (Charisma House, 2014)

Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (Abingdon Press, 2002)

Scott Klusesendorf, *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture* (Crossway, 2009)

James R. White, *The Same Sex Controversy* (Bethany House, 2002)

Apologetics and Science

Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence* (Free Press, 2007)

Paul Copan, *Dictionary of Christianity and Science* (Zondervan, 2017)

Stephen Meyer, *Signature in the Cell* (Harper One, 2010)

Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator* (Zondervan, 2014)

The Resurrection

*Gary R. Habermas, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Kregel, 2004)

Mike Licona, *Paul Meets Muhammad: A Christian-Muslim Debate on the Resurrection* (Baker, 2006)

N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Fortress, 2003)

World Religion Apologetics

Michael Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections, Vol. 1* (Baker, 2000)

Michael Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: Theological Objections, Vol. 2* (Baker, 2000)

Michael Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: Messianic Prophecy Objections, Vol. 3* (Baker, 2003)

Michael Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: New Testament Objections, Vol. 4* (Baker, 2006)

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*Walter Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults* (Bethany House, 2003)

James R. White, *Letters to a Mormon Elder* (Solid Ground Christian Books, 2007)

James R. White, *What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an* (Bethany House, 2013)

James R. White, *The Roman Catholic Controversy* (Bethany House, 1996)

Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other Gods* (Faithworks, 2018)

Apologetic Communication

*Gregory Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* (Zondervan, 2019)

Jimmy Scroggins & Steve Wright, *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* (B&H, 2019)

note: Resources marked with a * are highly recommended for that topic