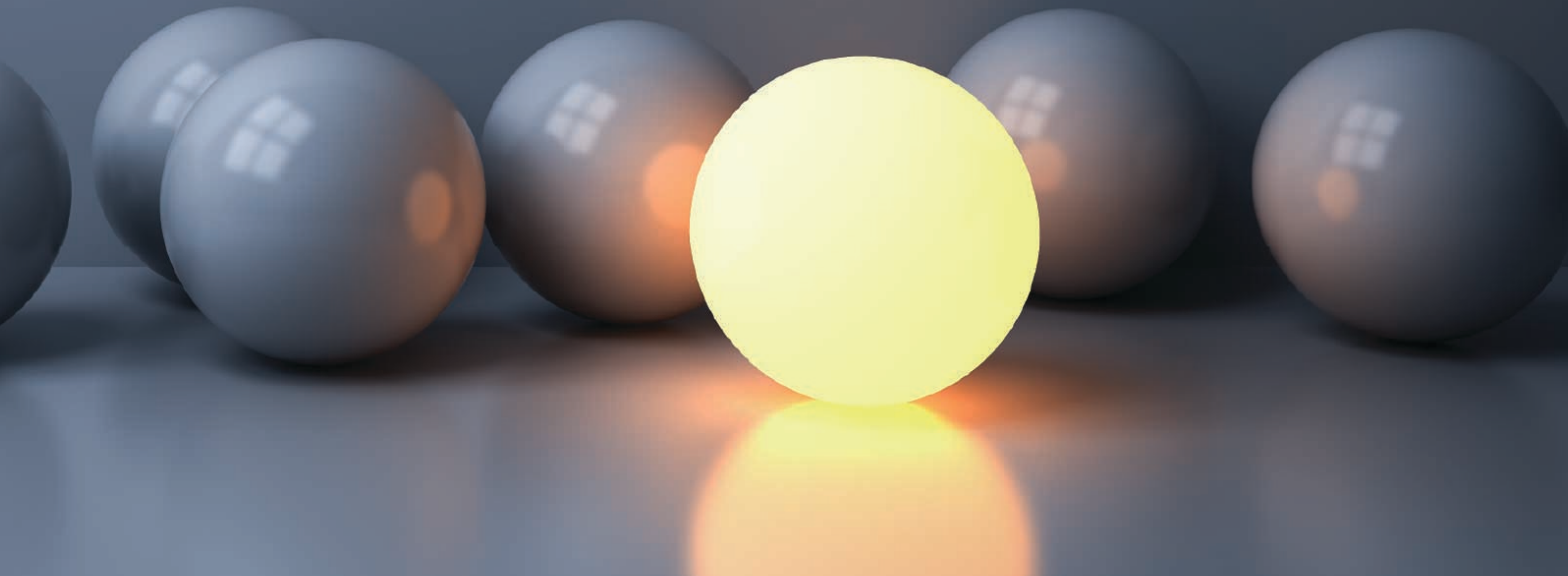


CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



CLASS INFO

When: Sundays, March 22—May 31, 2020

NO CLASS ON 4/12 (Easter)

Where: W247 (Zoom)

Time: 10:55am—12:05pm (enter room at 10:35am)

www.theologyclass.org/culture

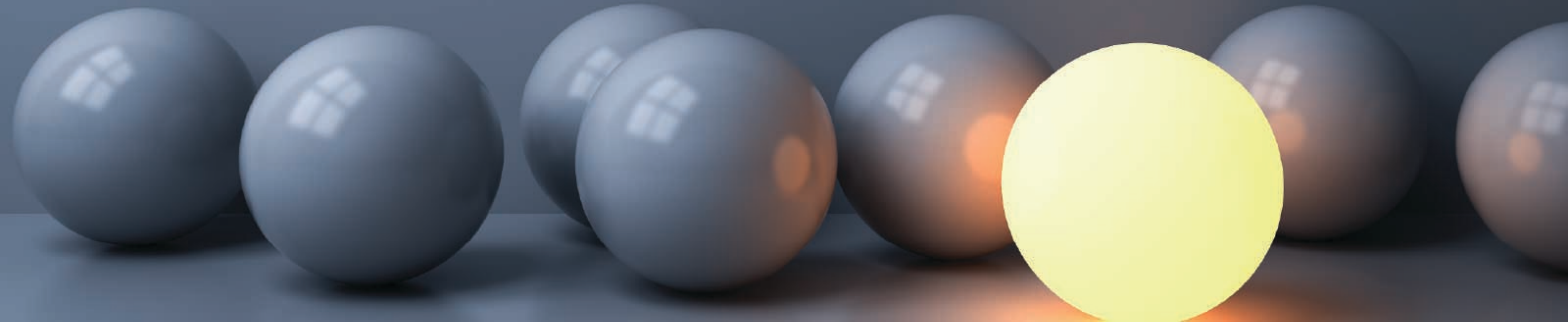
Treats sign ups: (hopefully April 19th?)

The GHP *Daily*

Daily (short) devotionals
while we cannot gather.



CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



WEEK 1: INTRO & OVERVIEW

Give Jesus a chance
He died for the
Opportunity

Elect Jesus

Your Life Leader '08

www.ElectJesus.net

JESUS
IS MY CO-PILOT

Try Jesus!

**If you don't like him, Satan
will always take you back!**

MY BOSS IS A



JEWISH CARPENTER





JESUS IS LORD

whether you believe it or not

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. WE LIVE IN A CULTURE THAT HAS MADE JESUS AN OPTION:

3. What is the Gospel?

- a. The *good news* that God has become King through Christ (His life, death, resurrection, ascension)
- b. Christ is ruling over His creation now
- c. All people are actively rebelling against God
- d. But if you believe (and follow) Christ, then God will pardon you from your sin, and raise you from the dead, just as He raised Jesus

I. INTRODUCTION

B. WHAT IS "APOLOGETICS"?

1. The biblical foundation of apologetics

a. 1 Pet 3:15 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to **make a defense** to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

b. *Apologia*: To make a defense

I. INTRODUCTION

B. WHAT IS "APOLOGETICS"?

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

I. INTRODUCTION

B. WHAT IS "APOLOGETICS"?

3. God-*dishonoring* apologetics

a. **Who:** Honoring yourself

b. **What:** Not prepared (and making attacks)

c. **How:** Being harsh & disrespectful (having a marred conscience)

I. INTRODUCTION

C. PURPOSE OF THE CLASS

1. Develop a consistent apologetic approach

2. Equip the saints to always be prepared to give a defense

Weeks 1—3 (Who) in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy

Weeks 4—7 (What) always being prepared to make a defense

Weeks 8—10 (How) do it with gentleness and respect

II. DISTINCTIVES OF GOOD APOLOGETICS METHODS

A. SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

1. **Matt 28:16-20** Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

II. DISTINCTIVES OF GOOD APOLOGETICS METHODS

A. SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

2. Christ is Lord over all things

a. Science, Philosophy, History, Art, Beauty, etc.

b. Christ lays claim to the entire world

i. This is how we do apologetics

ii. Start thinking in different ways, not merely memorizing arguments/defenses for the existence of God

iii. Challenge anyone not submitted to Christ's lordship as to the basis for their worldview

II. DISTINCTIVES OF GOOD APOLOGETICS METHODS

B. ASSUME THE TRINITARIAN GOD

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

II. DISTINCTIVES OF GOOD APOLOGETICS METHODS

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

i. Ps 19 *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

b. God revealed Himself through conscience

i. Rom 1:19 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.*

c. Not saving knowledge

III. SUPREMACY OF THE BIBLE

A. HOW GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

2. Special revelation

a. What God has revealed through the Scriptures

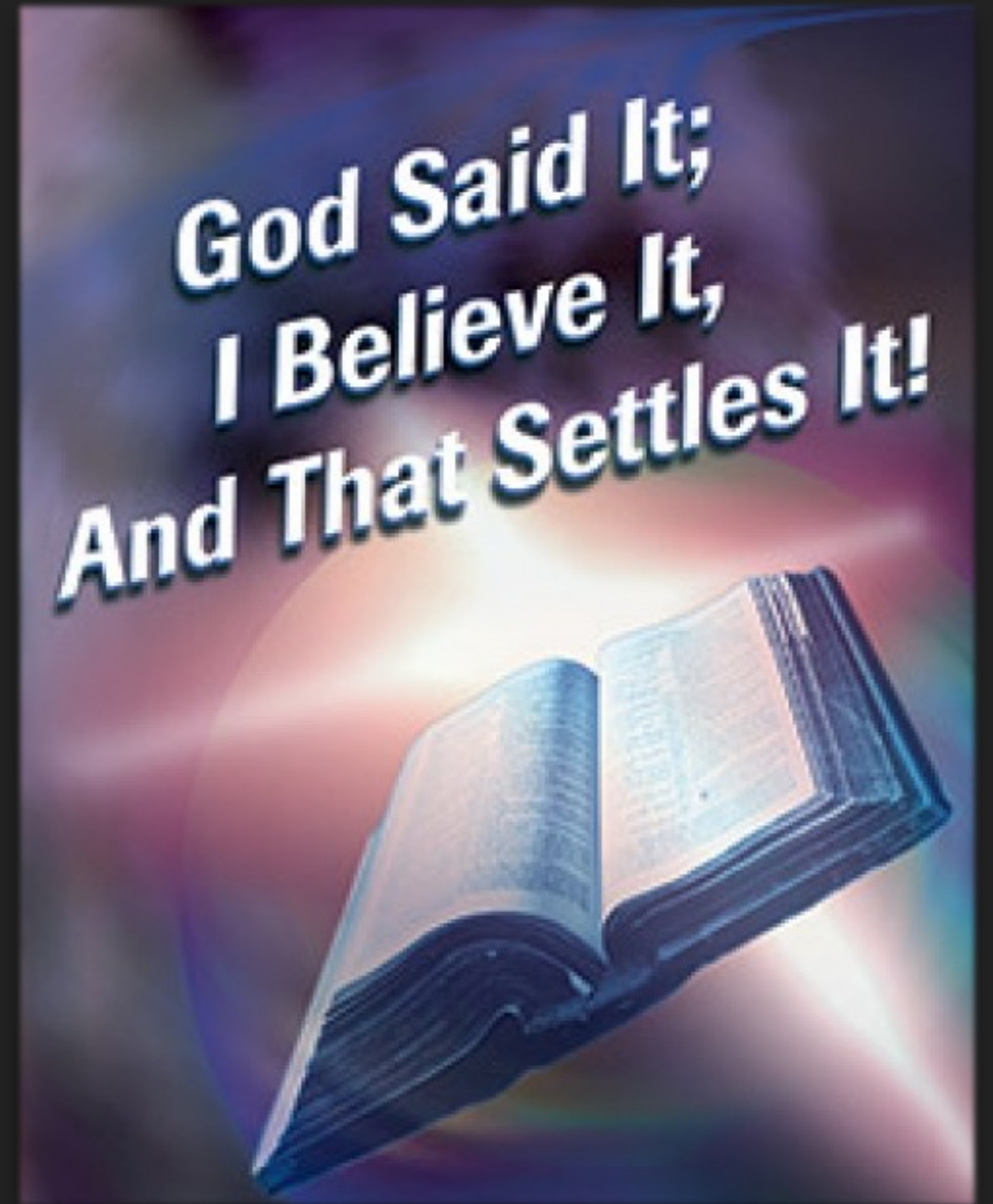
i. 2 Tim 3:16-17 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

b. Special knowledge for how to please God

III. SUPREMACY OF THE BIBLE

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 (2018)



III. SUPREMACY OF THE BIBLE

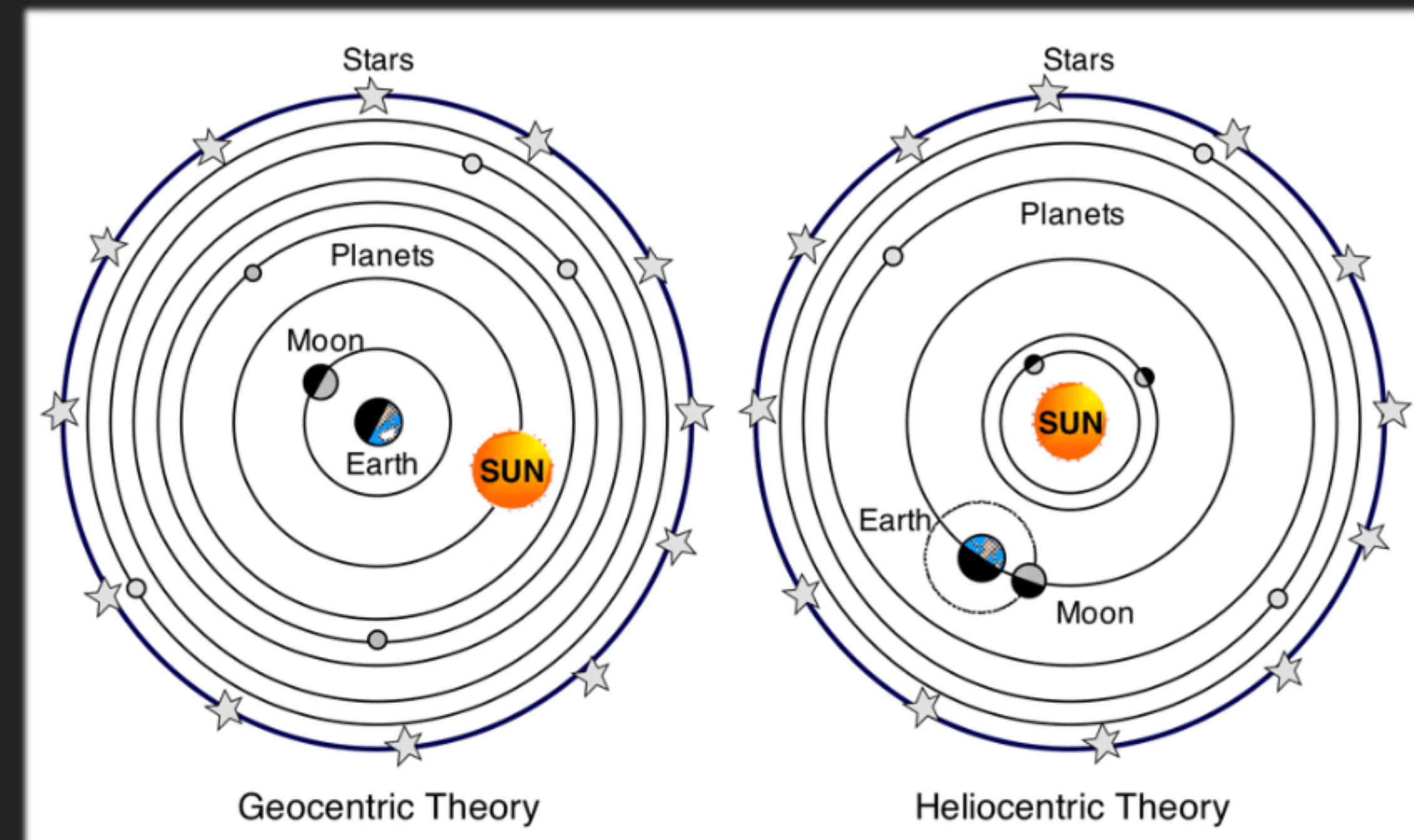
C. GOD IS TRUE AND DOESN'T CHANGE

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 (scientific/historical) 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 (the basis) anything
 - c. Epistemological foundation for Christians
 - i. God/Bible are the source of knowledge

IV. HOW WE KNOW STUFF?

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

ii. They provided the ultimate frameworks for people/societies

b. Creation—1700s

IV. HOW WE KNOW STUFF?

B. EPISTEMOLOGY THROUGH THE CENTURIES

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. The ancient sources of wisdom were dethroned; individual reason is crowned the new source of ultimate authority
- b. Enlightenment: 1700s—1900s (1940?)

IV. HOW WE KNOW STUFF?

B. EPISTEMOLOGY THROUGH THE CENTURIES

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

IV. HOW WE KNOW STUFF?

B. EPISTEMOLOGY THROUGH THE CENTURIES

4. A biblical worldview is neither Post-modern, nor Modern
 - a. While both of those eras provide some valuable things, I don't have the autonomy to decide what is true
 - b. We live in God's world, and must abide by His truth

IV. HOW WE KNOW STUFF?

C. WHY DISCUSS EPISTEMOLOGY WITH APOLOGETICS?

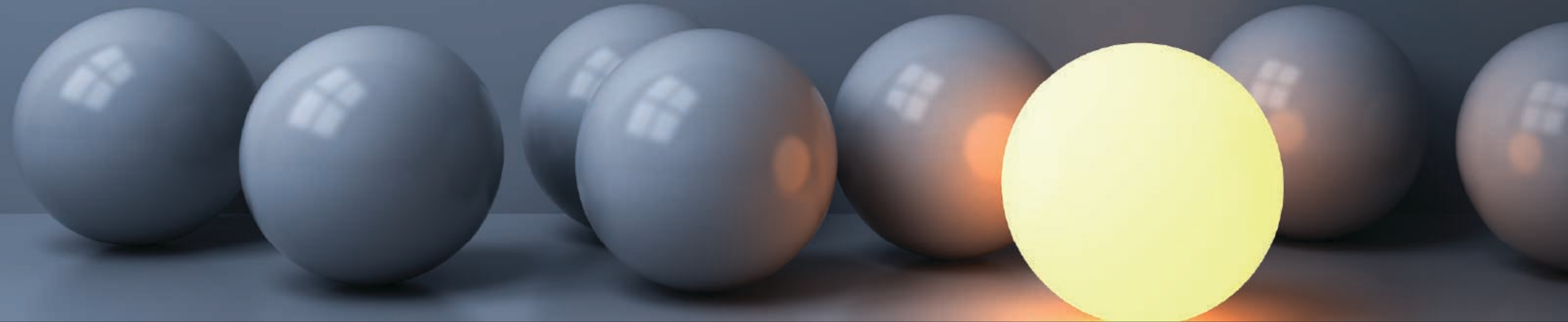
1. Apologetics deals with truth claims (making a defense about the truth of God's world), and God is the source of all truth
2. But humans are depraved, rebels, fighting against God (without the help of the Spirit)
3. Therefore, all people need to be challenged in their faulty, depraved, rebellious thinking

HOMEWORK

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

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)

I. THEOLOGY DETERMINES OUR APOLOGETIC/EVANGELISM

A. ANTHROPOLOGY (THE STUDY OF HUMANKIND)

2. Result: Dead in sin

a. Have no desire to please God

i. Rom 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his 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.

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

I. THEOLOGY DETERMINES OUR APOLOGETIC/EVANGELISM

B. SOTERIOLOGY (THE STUDY OF SALVATION)

1. Redemption Eph 1:7-10 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

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 & reason

a. First argues for theism

i. The skeptic takes the first step and accepts the likelihood of a deity existing before they can accept that a specific God (Yahweh) exists.

b. Then argues for Christianity as the most reasonable form of theism

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

A. CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS

2. Places a high degree of confidence in human reason (apart from special revelation)

a. Tries to demonstrate the high probability of realities (i.e., God's existence, the crucifixion, resurrection, etc.).

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

A. CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS

3. Example of Classical Apologetics:

a. The Cosmological argument (William Lane Craig)

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

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

B. EVIDENTIAL APOLOGETICS

1. Single-step approach based on evidence
 - a. Doesn't believe in the first-step in the two-step method (arguing for general theism) is necessary
 - b. The evidentialist will begin with a historical case for things like:
 - i. General reliability of the Bible
 - ii. The resurrection

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

B. EVIDENTIAL APOLOGETICS

2. Appeals to historical evidence (rather than the traditional proofs of theism). They believe that the evidence alone is strong enough to convince those who deny theism

a. Has a high degree of confidence in human reason (apart from special revelation)

i. Views people primarily as thinking beings who can be persuaded

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

B. EVIDENTIAL APOLOGETICS

3. Example of Evidential Apologetics:

- a. The minimal facts for the resurrection [that nearly all historians affirm] (Mike Licona)
 - i. Jesus' death by crucifixion
 - ii. Jesus' disciples had experiences where they thought He returned from the dead (individual and group appearances)
 - 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

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

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

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

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

C. PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS

2. Everyone's thinking is colored by their presuppositions (preunderstandings)

a. Presupposition: To suppose/assume beforehand; take for granted in advance

i. an implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse

b. The natural person (void of the spirit) presupposes a distorted view of reality

i. 1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

C. PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS

2. Everyone's thinking is colored by their presuppositions (preunderstandings)

c. The authority of the Bible is the assumed starting point in all 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

2nd floor: that which is right,
noble, ethical, good, etc. ↓

1st floor:
humans
living/
reasoning/
thinking in
their
rebellion



←
Stairs: God's
revelation (the
justification for
right beliefs)

II. DIFFERENT APOLOGETIC METHODS

C. PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS

3. Example of Presuppositional Apologetics:

a. Question the unbeliever's presuppositions and require them to justify their rationality

i. The apologist then reduces their position to absurdity

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

Mike the Atheist



Mike the Christian



Mike the Atheist



"There is no absolute moral right/wrong... what's right for you might not be right for me"

Mike the Christian

"If morality is based on personal preference, then it's the same thing as saying 'I like/don't like...'"



Mike the Christian

"...so morality is similar to our taste in food: I like pizza, but not broccoli..."



Mike the Christian

"...this means that I might like a meat-lovers pizza, and you might like broccoli, but it's no big deal, because we're both right."



Mike the Christian

"So, Atheist Mike, in your worldview, you can't object (morally) if I go punch an old lady..."



Mike the Christian

"you can't say it's
'wrong', you can only say
that you 'don't like it.'"



Mike the Atheist



"HEY! That's ridiculous. I object!"

Mike the Christian

"Of course you do,
because you know it's
objectively-morally
wrong to punch old
ladies..."



Mike the Christian

"...but by what standard is it objectively wrong?"



Mike the Atheist



what's next?
where's our
Common Ground?



Mike the Christian



III. CONSISTENT BIBLICAL MODEL OF APOLOGETICS

(ACTS 17: PAUL & THE JEWS VS. PAUL & THE GREEKS)

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

B. 17:16-34 Paul in Athens

[Thessalonica] Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” 4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. 5 But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob... they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”

[Berea] 10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. 13 But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. 14 Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea...

[Athens] 16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for “*In him we live and move and have our being*”; as even some of your own poets have said, “*For we are indeed his offspring*.”...

The Squatter

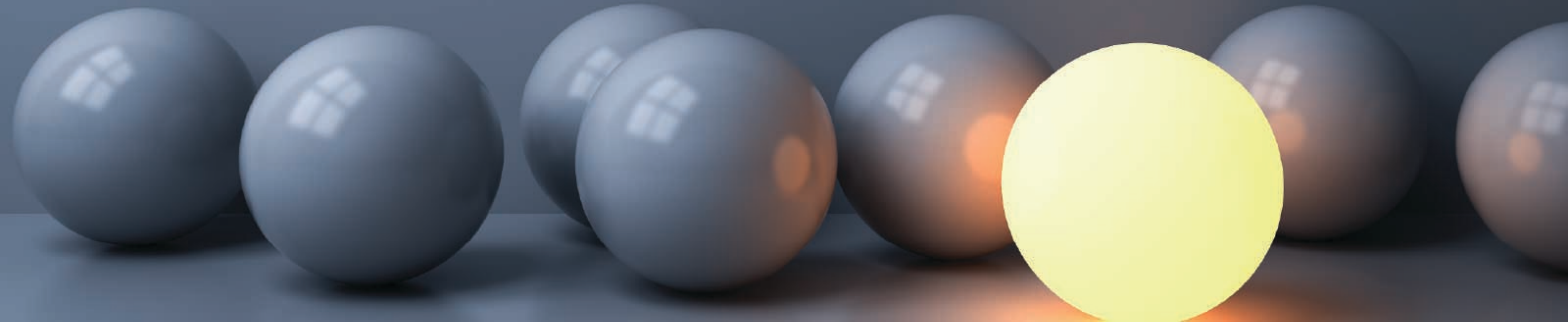


HOMEWORK

What are signs of a good/persuasive argument?

What are signs of a bad one?

CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



WEEK 3: WORLDVIEW

HOMEWORK

What are signs of a good/persuasive argument?

What are signs of a bad one?

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

I. LOGIC

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: Using facts we know 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

I. LOGIC

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

I. LOGIC

C. VALIDITY & SOUNDNESS OF AN ARGUMENT

1. Valid: An argument is valid if the truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusion

c. Valid argument (Syllogism)

i. P1: All men are mortal (if true)

ii. P2: Vinnie is a man (if true)

iii. C: Therefore, Vinnie is mortal (necessarily)

d. Valid argument?

i. P1: All humans are immortal (if true)

ii. P2: Vinnie is a person (if true)

iii. C: Therefore, Vinnie is immortal (necessarily true)

I. LOGIC

C. VALIDITY & SOUNDNESS OF AN ARGUMENT

1. Valid: An argument is valid if the truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusion

e. Invalid argument

i. P1: Married men are happy

ii. P2: I am happy

iii. C: Therefore, I am married

f. Validity has nothing to do with the trueness/factuality of the argument

I. LOGIC

C. VALIDITY & SOUNDNESS OF AN ARGUMENT

2. Sound: an argument is sound when all the premises are valid and if its premises are actually true

a. Sound argument

i. P1: Everything that begins to exist has a cause

ii. P1: The universe began to exist

iii. C: Therefore, the universe had a cause

b. Un-Sound argument

i. P1: All dead parrots are dead

ii. P2: Parrots are not frogs

iii. C: Therefore, frogs exist

I. LOGIC

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 non- P

a. Something cannot be both true and not true at the same time and in the same way

i. E.g., I am a married bachelor

I. LOGIC

D. BASIC LAWS OF LOGIC THAT ARE PRESUPPOSED

3. The Law of Excluded Middle: either P or non-P

a. The idea that all propositions must be either true or false

i. Built on truth values that the quality of a statement is either true or false

(a). Makes truth claims binary

(b). Need to ask the right question

I. LOGIC

E. BAD ARGUMENTS

1. Self-defeating (refuting) arguments
 - a. Occurs when the conclusion denies the premise
 - i. There is no truth/truth cannot be known
 - ii. You cannot believe a word I say

I. LOGIC

E. BAD ARGUMENTS

2. Circular Reasoning (Begging the question)

- a. When the conclusion of an argument is assumed in the premise
(you have to do what I say, because I say so)

I. LOGIC

E. BAD ARGUMENTS

2. Circular Reasoning

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

I. LOGIC

E. LOGICAL FALLACIES

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

I. LOGIC

E. LOGICAL FALLACIES

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: 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: Peanut butter is a cure for diabetes

I. LOGIC

E. LOGICAL FALLACIES

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

I. LOGIC

E. LOGICAL FALLACIES

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

I. LOGIC

E. LOGICAL FALLACIES

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: 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.”

I. LOGIC

E. LOGICAL FALLACIES

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.

I. LOGIC

E. LOGICAL FALLACIES

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!

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.

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

A. RELATIVISM

1. The idea that the truth of something (morality, God, art, science) is true only relative to an individual or group
 - a. There are no universal moral rules/ethics

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

A. RELATIVISM

2. Personal Moral Relativism

a. I can only know what is right/wrong/moral/ethical for me

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

A. RELATIVISM

3. Society-says Relativism

a. Society/culture creates morals

i. We should just do what our society says we should do

b. What's right for one culture might not be for another

i. It would "wrong" to cast judgment on other cultures

c. This view has significant issues with Christian missionaries

i. It's wrong to try to change cultural-religious beliefs

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

A. RELATIVISM

4. Problems with personal/cultural relativism?

a. Personal relativism doesn't allow for ANY objective truth claim or moral objection

i. If someone robs you, all you can say is "I didn't like that"

ii. There can be no claim of something/someone being wrong/right

b. Cultural relativism doesn't allow for ANY critique of one's own culture

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

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.

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

B. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

2. The Blind Men and the Elephant

a. The idea that all religions have a piece of the truth, but none is complete

i. Therefore, we should not be dogmatic about what we know, accepting all truth as partial

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

B. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

3. Problems with Religious Pluralism?

a. All religions make competing/mutually-exclusive truth claims

b. Jesus:

i. Judaism: Not the messiah, definitely NOT God

ii. Islam: Was messiah, but did not die/rise, definitely NOT God

iii. Christianity: Was messiah, died/rose, is the God-man

II. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

B. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

“To claim that all religions lead to God, one must be in the position of God, able to see that this is where all the paths converge. From the vantage point of being on the path on the ground, you are in no position to judge where any of the others are going.”

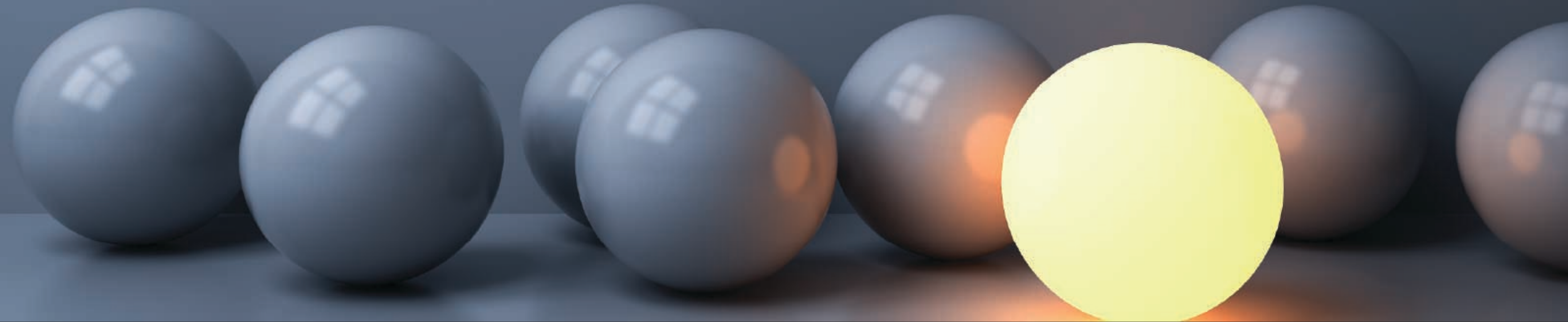
—Dictionary of Apologetics

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 (morality, God, art, science) is true only relative to an individual or group
 - a. There are no universal moral rules/ethics

I. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

A. RELATIVISM

2. Personal Moral Relativism

a. I can only know what is right/wrong/moral/ethical for me

I. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

A. RELATIVISM

3. Society-says Relativism

a. Society/culture creates morals

i. We should just do what our society says we should do

b. What's right for one culture might not be for another

i. It would "wrong" to cast judgment on other cultures

c. This view has significant issues with Christian missionaries

i. It's wrong to try to change cultural-religious beliefs

I. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

A. RELATIVISM

4. Problems with personal/cultural relativism?

a. Personal relativism doesn't allow for ANY objective truth claim or moral objection

i. If someone robs you, all you can say is "I didn't like that"

ii. There can be no claim of something/someone being wrong/right

b. Cultural relativism doesn't allow for ANY critique of one's own culture

I. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

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.

I. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

B. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

2. The Blind Men and the Elephant

a. The idea that all religions have a piece of the truth, but none is complete

i. Therefore, we should not be dogmatic about what we know, accepting all truth as partial

I. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

B. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

3. Problems with Religious Pluralism?

a. All religions make competing/mutually-exclusive truth claims

b. Jesus:

i. **Judaism:** Not the messiah, definitely NOT God

ii. **Islam:** Was messiah, but did not die/rise, definitely NOT God

iii. **Christianity:** Was messiah, died/rose, is the God-man

I. INCONSISTENT WORLDVIEWS

B. RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

“To claim that all religions lead to God, one must be in the position of God, able to see that this is where all the paths converge. From the vantage point of being on the path on the ground, you are in no position to judge where any of the others are going.”

—Dictionary of Apologetics

II. ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A. TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

1. *Telos*: goal/purpose

a. The idea that it takes a “purposer” to have “purpose”

b. Therefore, where we see things obviously intended for a purpose, we can assume that those things were made for a reason

2. We see a difference between Mt. Rushmore and the Grand Canyon

a. The GC was clearly formed by non-rational, natural process

b. MR was clearly created by an intelligent being (designer)

3. The Teleological Argument applies this to the whole universe

a. If design implies a designer, and the universe shows marks of design, then the universe was designed

II. ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

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

II. ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

B. COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

3. Big Bang cosmology

a. Describes a universe that is not eternal

i. Came into being a finite time ago

b. The second law of thermodynamics

i. All finite things eventually run out of the energy that sustains it

c. Science prior to the Big Bang

i. By definition, science can only test the natural/physical world

II. ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

C. THE MORAL ARGUMENT

1. Demonstrates that 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.

III. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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 (angels/humans)
- b. This is the evil that is often the “problem”

3. *Theodicy*

- a. The goal of justifying God’s ways to men (demonstrating the goodness of all his actions)

III. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

“If someone is seeking a theodicy that vindicates God’s providence in every instance of evil, I certainly cannot supply that, and I doubt that anyone else can, either. Nor, I think, can we supply a totally satisfying theoretical reconciliation between divine sovereignty, goodness, and evil. The mystery of God’s relation to evil is one that will, I am convinced, never be completely dissolved in this life, and I am not sure whether it will be in the next.” — John Frame, *Apologetics, a Justification of Christian Belief*. p.156

III. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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)

III. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

D. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL FOR THE BELIEVER

1. How to view the Problem

a. *Theocentric*: God centered

i. God's purpose in evil is to glorify himself

b. *Anthropocentric*: human centered

i. God's purpose in evil is to glorify humankind

ii. This doesn't minimize/ignore our happiness, but we have a God who does as he pleases (Ps 115:3; 135:6)

III. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

D. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL FOR THE BELIEVER

God's ultimate purpose is to glorify himself, with man's chief end to "glorify God and enjoy him forever"

"When God seeks a greater good for himself, he seeks at the same time a greater good for his whole creation, that good described so rapturously in Revelation 21 and 22." — John Frame (p. 185)

III. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

D. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL FOR THE BELIEVER

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)

III. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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

3 options Mr MyPillow

God either:

1. is allowing/causing the pandemic (evil)
2. Can't stop it (useless)
3. or doesn't exist



THEHILL.COM

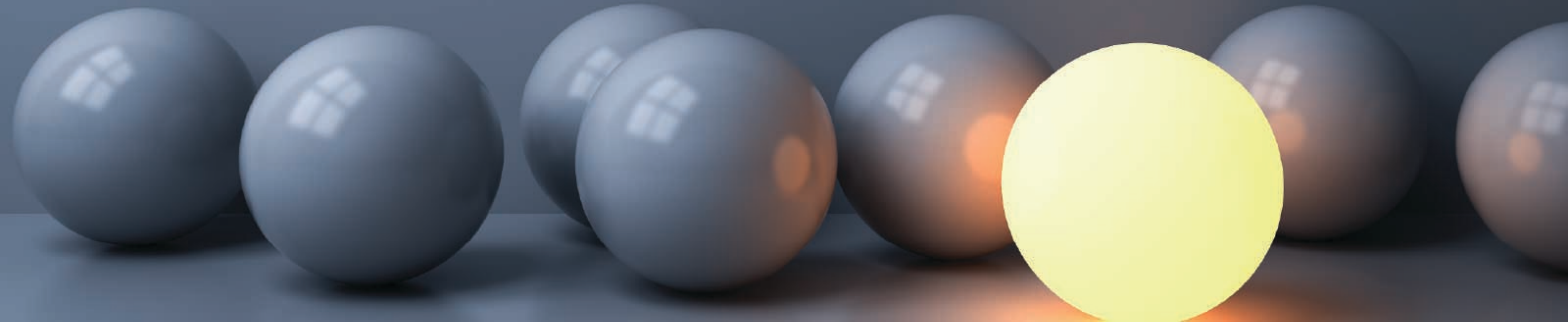
MyPillow founder uses coronavirus briefing to urge Americans to focus on religion

When an atheist uses the Problem of Evil against God's existence.



thecarpentersdesk.org

CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



WEEK 5: HISTORICAL CLAIMS

F.F. BRUCE

FOREWORD BY N.T. WRIGHT

The NEW
TESTAMENT
DOCUMENTS



Are They Reliable?

AS FEATURED IN *GOD'S NOT DEAD 2*

COLD-CASE
CHRISTIANITY

A HOMICIDE DETECTIVE INVESTIGATES
THE CLAIMS OF THE GOSPELS

J. WARNER
WALLACE

forewords by LEE STROBEL
and RICE BROOCKS



I. THE HISTORICITY OF JESUS

A. LEWIS' TRILEMA (LORD, LIAR, LUNATIC)

1. “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.” —CS Lewis (Mere Christianity)

I. THE HISTORICITY OF JESUS

A. LEWIS' TRILEMA (LORD, LIAR, LUNATIC)

2. Jesus was either:

- a. A lunatic/madman (like someone who says he is a poached egg)
- b. A liar/something worse (the devil of hell)
- c. The Lord (the Son of God)

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 laid the death penalty on any soldier who let a capital prisoner escape in any way (including surviving crucifixion)
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 so the corpse could be taken down before the Sabbath (Jn 19:31)
3. John (eyewitness) saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side (Jn 19:34-35)
 - a. This shows that Jesus' lung had collapsed, died of asphyxiation

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

A. THE "SWOON" THEORY

4. The body was totally encased in winding sheets and entombed (Jn 19:38-42)

5. The post-resurrection appearances convinced disciples (like 'doubting Thomas') that Jesus was alive (Jn 20:19-20)

a. Jesus appeared in glory, not as a half-dead, staggering sick man who has just had a narrow escape death

6. How were the Roman guards at the tomb overpowered by a swooning corpse?

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

A. THE "SWOON" THEORY

7. How could a swooning half-dead man have moved the great stone at the door of the tomb?

a. Who moved the stone if not the angel?

8. If Jesus awoke from a swoon, where did he go?

a. How could have he just disappeared?

b. A man that popular would have left tracts

9. Conclusion: A swoon theory is at best a conspiracy theory that isn't rooted in any fact

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

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 of them had 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. However, even "fishermen's fish stories" are never this elaborate, convincing, life changing, or enduring

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

B. THE "CONSPIRACY THEORY"

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" (nothing proves sincerity like martyrdom)
4. There could be no possible motive for such a lie
 - a. Lies are always told for selfish gain/advantage
 - b. What advantage did the disciples seek?

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

B. THE "CONSPIRACY THEORY"

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 in Jerusalem if it had been a lie

a. If there had been a conspiracy, it would have been unearthed by the disciples' adversaries

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

C. THE "HALLUCINATION" THEORY

1. There were too many witnesses
 - a. Hallucinations are private, individual, and subjective
 - b. Having only three witnesses would be rejected by psychologists, but over 500 is as public as an event can be
 - c. In 1 Cor 15:3-8, Paul notes that most of the 500 are still alive, which invites the readers to check out the truth of the story
2. The witnesses saw Christ together, at the same time and place

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

C. THE "HALLUCINATION" THEORY

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 (sans the insane)

a. But appearances of Jesus 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 had to eat something to prove He was not (Lk 24:36-43)

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

C. THE "HALLUCINATION" THEORY

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 with you.

b. But Jesus conversed with at least eleven people at once, for 40 days (Acts 1:3)

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

C. THE "HALLUCINATION" THEORY

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 (as a result of hallucinations) the Jews could have just produced the corpse

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

C. THE "HALLUCINATION" THEORY

10. Conclusion: A hallucination would only explain the post-resurrection appearances

- a. It wouldn't explain the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, or the inability to produce a corpse
- b. No theory can explain all these data but a real resurrection

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE 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, childishly 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

II. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE RESURRECTION

D. THE "MYTH" THEORY

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)

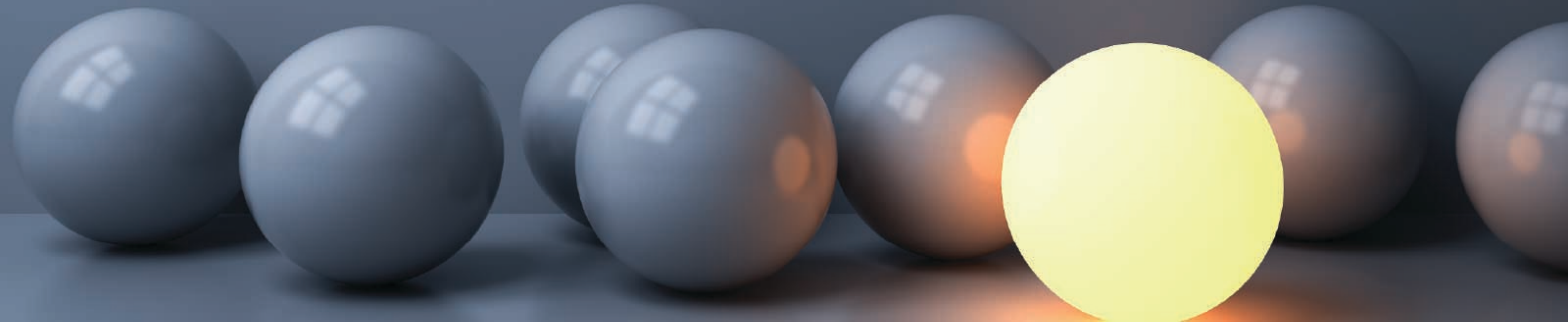
a. This means the resurrection account is either true or a lie

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

Romans 1:20 (NIV)

“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood *from what has been made . . .*”

“I was merely thinking God’s thoughts after him. Since we astronomers are priests of the highest God in regard to the book of nature, it benefits us to be thoughtful, not of the glory of our minds, but rather, above all else, of the glory of God.”





From eternity were the particles...

and the particles became
complex living stuff.

And the living stuff became aware,

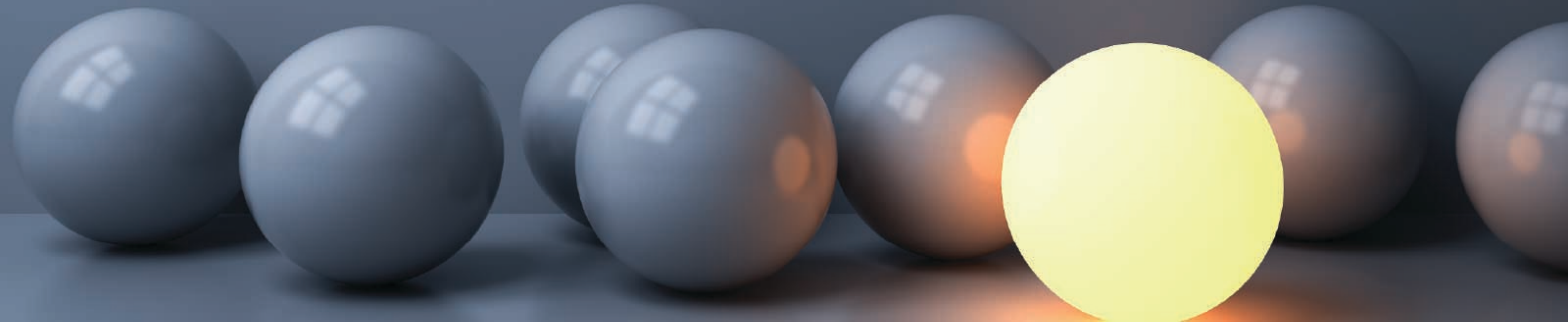
and the living stuff
conceived of god.

Psalm 139:13-14 (NIV)

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



WEEK 7: ETHICS

Grasping God's Word



Sundays | 9:20–10:55am

Starting June 7th

Meeting on [zoom](#)

Taught by Vinnie Angelo

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 (this is uniformed)

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 (this could differ depending on a situation)

I. ETHICS

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

I. ETHICS

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.
 - i. Do our secular values inform our Christian ethics, or do our Christian ethics inform our Christian values?

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?

II. ABORTION

B. THE SLED TEST: SIZE, LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, OR DEGREE OF DEPENDENCY

1. Size:

“The 6-week old fetus is only the size of a pea and isn’t a person”

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

II. ABORTION

B. THE SLED TEST: SIZE, LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, OR DEGREE OF DEPENDENCY

2. Level of Development:

“The fetus hasn’t developed into a person.

They often don’t have genitalia or cognitive function.”

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

II. ABORTION

B. THE SLED TEST: SIZE, LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, OR DEGREE OF DEPENDENCY

3. Environment:

“My body, my choice”

- 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.

II. ABORTION

B. THE SLED TEST: SIZE, LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, OR DEGREE OF DEPENDENCY

4. Degree of dependency:

*“The unborn has to depend on the woman for life,
therefore it’s not viable without her.”*

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

II. ABORTION

C. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Emotional arguments

- a. When engaging in a disagreement, don't allow for the main argument to be hijacked by a statistical minority
- b. However, we shouldn't ignore the statistical minority

II. ABORTION

C. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

2. Rape/incest

a. Statistics

- i. 1% of abortions from rape
- ii. 0.5% of abortions from incest

b. The anti-abortion argument: the 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

II. ABORTION

C. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

3. The life of the mother

a. Statistics

i. “physical health problems” 4%

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

i. Exhaust all medical options (for the mother and the unborn)

ii. Eventual choice that might cause devastation for the unborn

iii. Cancerous uterus (removing would indirectly end the life of the unborn)

II. ABORTION

D. REMEMBER THE FOCUS OF THE ARGUMENT

1. The Christian pro-life position is theological, not political
 - a. If the foundation of the anti-abortion argument can be used by both Christians and secular pro-life people, then it's not a Christian argument (it's probably just moralism)
2. The Christian position should be rooted in the gospel
 - a. It's good to not kill babies, but we don't just want to change behavior

II. ABORTION

D. REMEMBER THE FOCUS OF THE ARGUMENT

3. The woman seeking an abortion is not a monster
 - a. She bears the image of God (just like the unborn)
 - b. She's engaging in sin and needs to repent
 - i. Just like anyone who has hated another Christian is guilty of murder (1 Jn 3:15; Mt 5:21-26)
 - 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

III. SEXUAL MORALITY

B. POLYGAMY

1. Argument: *The Bible isn't clear at all on marriage, after all, so many men practiced polygamy (Abraham, David, Solomon, etc.).*

2. Descriptive vs. Prescriptive

a. Descriptive: describing the historical situation

b. Prescriptive: prescribing an expected command/ethic for all time

III. SEXUAL MORALITY

B. POLYGAMY

3. Biblical polygamy

- a. Common practice in the ANE
 - i. Infant mortality, maternal mortality
- b. Gen 4:19-25 (first biblical reference)
 - i. Lamech and his wives

4. The Bible merely describes what IS, not what OUGHT to be

III. SEXUAL MORALITY

C. GAY MARRIAGE

1. Objection: *Jesus never addressed gay marriage*
2. Jesus made a positive argument for marriage
 - a. Mt 19:5-6 ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
3. Other biblical passages
 - a. Rom 1:18-32 (26-27)
 - b. 1 Cor 6:9-10
 - c. 1 Tim 1:8-11

III. SEXUAL MORALITY

D. TRANSGENDERISM

1. Objection: *The Bible never addresses transgenderism*
2. God made them male and female
 - a. Mark 10:6 But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.
3. DeYoung article (TGC)
 - a. “What does the Bible say about transgenderism?”

III. SEXUAL MORALITY

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*

IV. SLAVERY

B. DEFINING SLAVERY (HISTORICALLY)

1. Egyptian:

a. Authoritarian

b. Based on race

c. Slaves as property (non-human), no rights

IV. SLAVERY

B. DEFINING SLAVERY (HISTORICALLY)

2. Hebrew:

- a. Humane practice
- b. A form of debt-payment
- c. Not organized by race (but by circumstance/economic situation)
 - i. Mainly for fellow Hebrews (Gentiles allowed)
- d. Rights?
 - i. Freed every 7th year (Ex. 21:2)

IV. SLAVERY

B. DEFINING SLAVERY (HISTORICALLY)

3. Roman:

- a. Diversity in practice
- b. Prisoners of war (either slaughtered or made slaves)
- c. Not based on race
- d. Employees (domestic servants)
- e. Rights?
 - i. Protected under Greek law
 - ii. Masters could beat them, but there were restraints
 - iii. Had opportunities for emancipation

IV. SLAVERY

B. DEFINING SLAVERY (HISTORICALLY)

4. Trans-Atlantic:

a. Authoritarian

b. Based on race

c. Slaves as property (non-human), no rights

d. A defacto-cultural phenomenon (for all cultures through time)

IV. SLAVERY

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?)?

Grasping God's Word



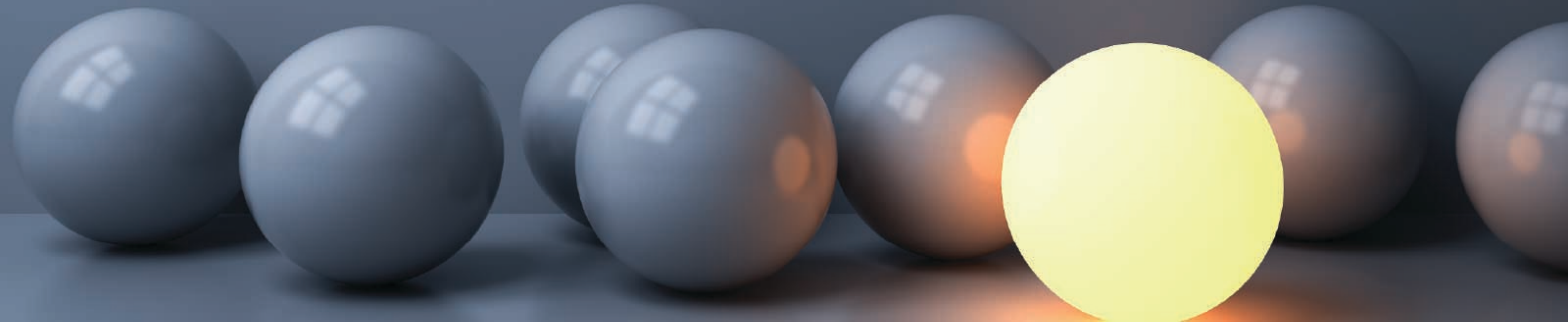
Sundays | 9:20–10:55am

Starting June 7th

Meeting on [zoom](#)

Taught by Vinnie Angelo

CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



WEEK 8: METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

I. HOW WE ENGAGE OTHERS?

A. DO IT WITH GENTLENESS AND RESPECT, HAVING A GOOD CONSCIENCE

1. Don't abuse people

a. If you are abusive to others then you might not even understand how you have been saved by grace

2. Have a good conscience

3. Keep the gospel at the front of your mind, and remember that:

a. "there but for the grace of God, go I."

b. You are not better than the other person

c. Win the man, not the battle

I. HOW WE ENGAGE OTHERS?

B. COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

I. HOW WE ENGAGE OTHERS?

C. THE WHO-WHAT-HOW-WHY OF COL 4

1. **Who:** Outsiders
2. **What:** We declare the word, which is the mystery of Christ, in a way that's relevant and friendly to anyone.
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 challenging their own distorted beliefs.
4. **Why:** Because we remember the gospel = since God was gracious (et al) 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)

II. GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS

B. WHAT HAPPENED AT THE FALL?

1. Gen 3 (the Fall, the image bearer is now defaced/distorted by sin)
2. There still remains a connection with God (post-Fall)
 - a. Gen 9:6 Capital punishment
 - b. PW: “Every human being, regardless of achievement or development, by virtue of being human, has inherent rights that are to be protected.”

II. GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS

C. HOW GOD'S REDEMPTION PROVIDES RECONCILIATION

1. 2 Cor 5

2. Rom 8:29 Through the gospel we are conformed to the image of Jesus

a. conformed: to have a similar form, nature, or style

II. GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS

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. Often involves answering questions and removing barriers to the Christian faith
2. Could be considered “pre-evangelism”

III. APOLOGETICS IS NOT 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

IV. TACTICS

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

IV. TACTICS

B. THE "COLOMBO TACTIC"

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

IV. TACTICS

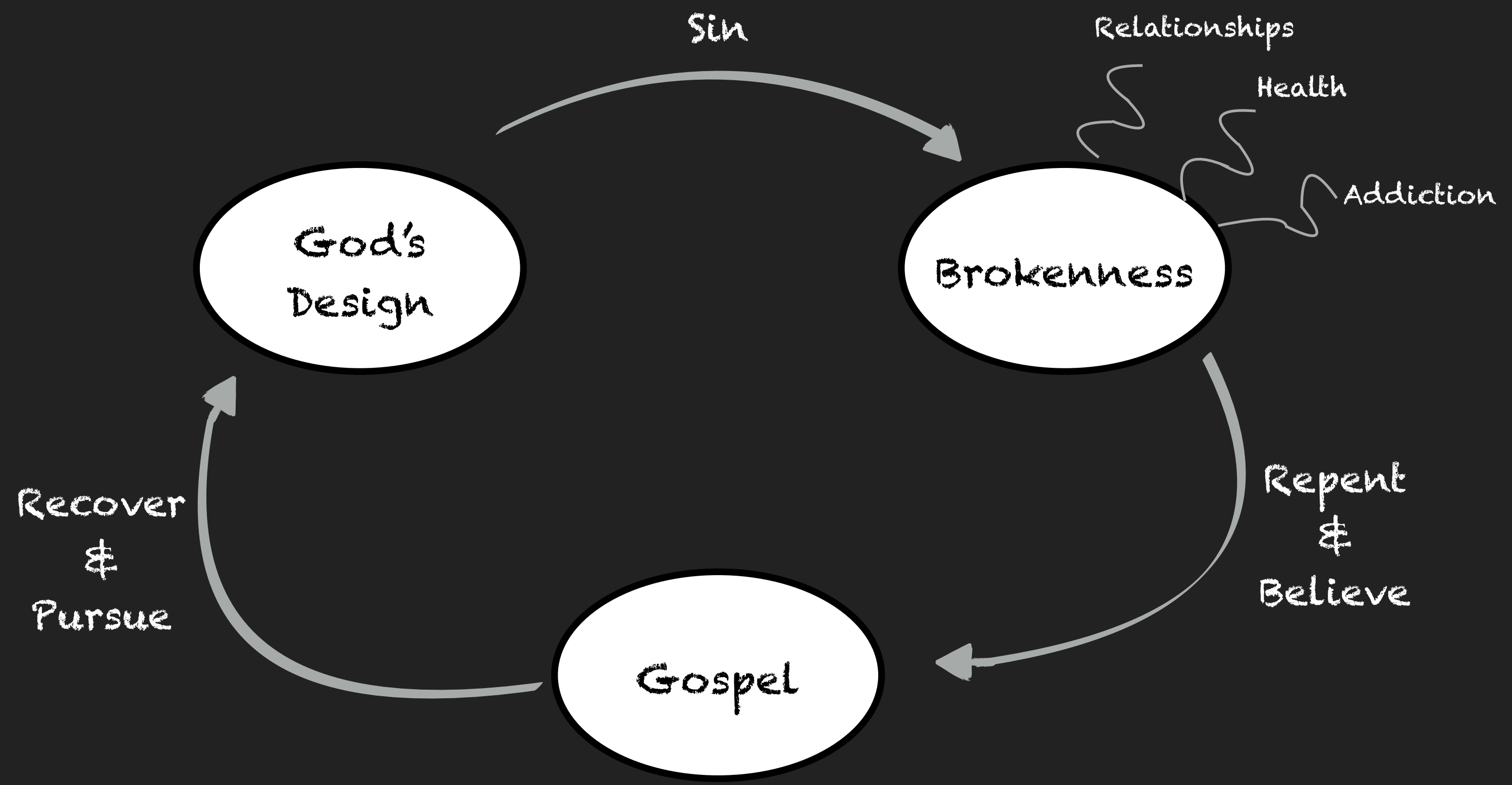
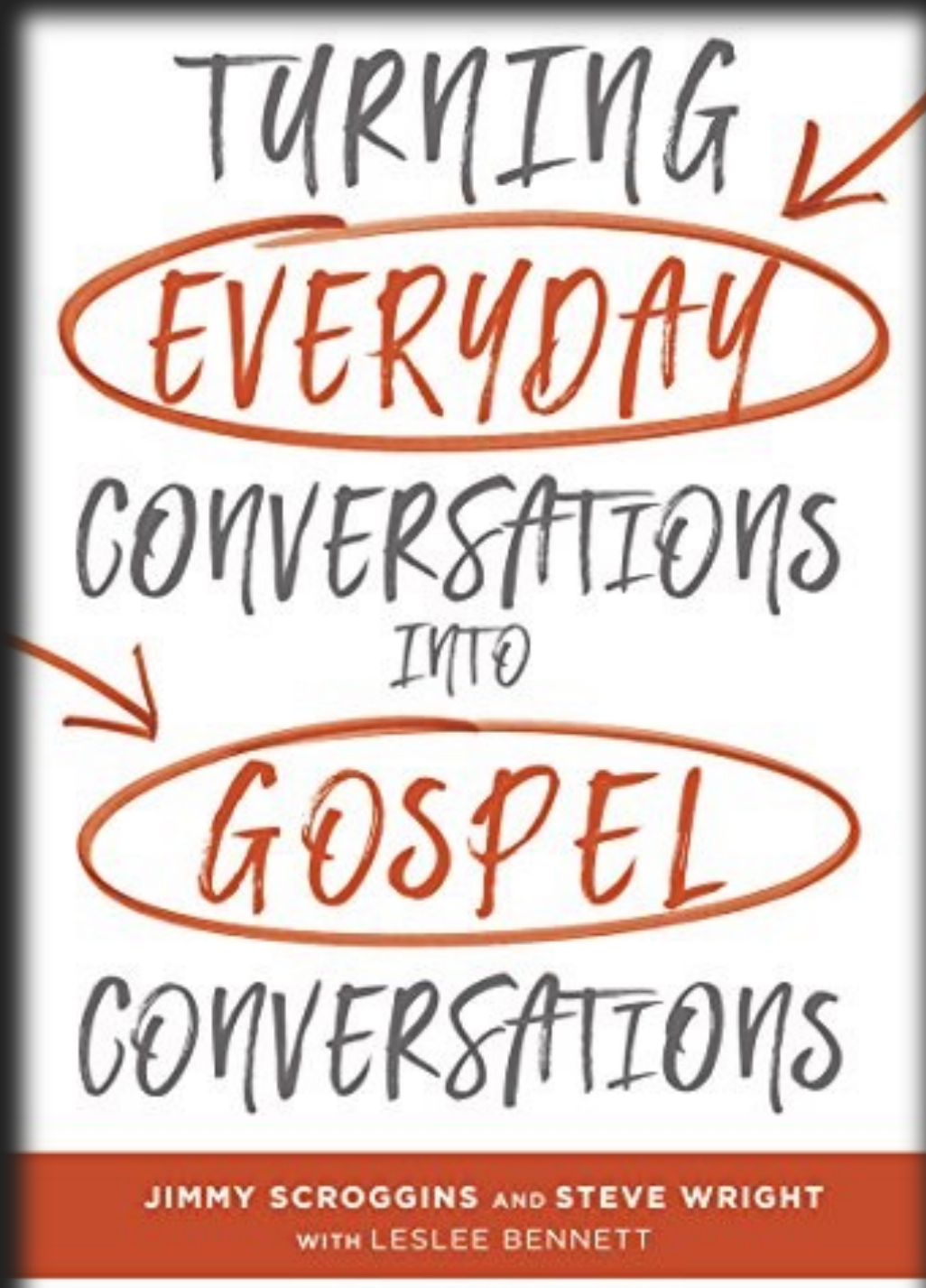
B. THE "COLOMBO TACTIC"

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



V. EVANGELISM

B. THE THREE CIRCLES

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?

Homework for next week: How much do you know about other religions to fruitfully engage in a conversation with someone? Is your knowledge of other religions primarily based on sound-bites (from the news) or caricatures in popular culture? Or do you have a sound understanding of another person's belief system?

Grasping God's Word



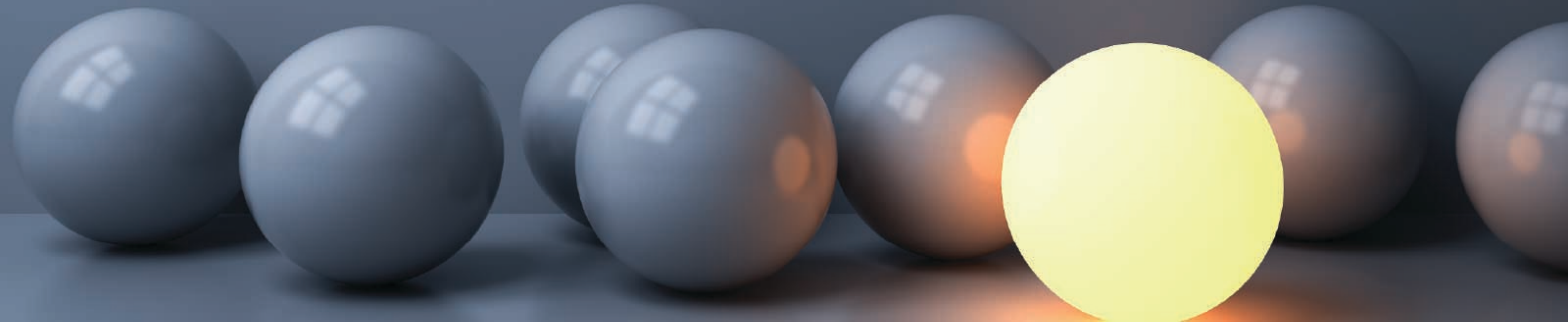
Sundays | 9:20–10:55am

Starting June 7th

Meeting on [zoom](#)

Taught by Vinnie Angelo

CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



WEEK 9: WORLD RELIGIONS (PART 1)

I. ATHEISM

A. NOT MONOLITHIC

1. Ask questions to find out what the person believes and how they think
2. Identify the person's worldview, and discern their basic presuppositions
 - a. Once discovered, expose their faulty thinking (*reductio*)

I. ATHEISM

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

II. RCC

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

II. RCC

C. NOTABLE DIFFERENCES

1. Saved by grace through faith (alone)
2. Authority
 - a. Sola Scriptura (no magisterium)
3. Mary (RCC view)
 - a. A co-redeemer with Jesus
 - b. Her merit helps Catholics in purgatory
 - c. Petition to prays 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

II. RCC

D. HOW TO ENGAGE

1. Ask questions

- a. While the RCC is “monolithic” in principle, it’s not monolithic 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 (Mecca, southwest Saudi Arabia)

a. Islam: “surrender” (to Allah)

b. Holy books:

i. Qur'an (Arabic), revelation from archangel Gabriel (Jibril) in 610 CE, was memorized and later compiled into one book, existed eternally with Allah

ii. Hadith: Compiled sayings/teachings of Muhammad (like a commentary). Multiple hadiths exist

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

A. BACKGROUND & ORIGINS

2. Denominations:

a. Sunni

i. Largest Islamic denomination (68-80%)

ii. Derived from the word “sunnah” meaning “habit/custom/tradition,” as Sunni's claim to practice the habits of Muhammad

b. Shi'ite

i. Second largest denomination (10-13%)

c. Denomination differences largely to do with successorship and authority of the religion following Muhammad's death

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

A. BACKGROUND & ORIGINS

3. World impact

- a. 23.2% of the world's population is Muslim (almost 1 in 4)
 - i. 31.5 of the world's population is Christian

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

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. To be used exclusively for social welfare or religious purposes

1. Basics of Islam: Five Pillars

d. Fasting the month of Ramadan

- i. Fasting from dawn—sundown (food, drink, sex)

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.

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

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

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

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" (brought to heaven without dying)
- f. Judgment: Will return for the Day of Judgment to restore justice and to defeat the anti-Christ

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

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

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

5. Shirk (to share)

- a. The sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism (worshiping anything other than the singular God, Allah)
- b. Shirk is unforgivable if remained unpardoned before death
 - i. Christians commit shirk by worshipping Jesus

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

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)

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

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”

III. ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

D. COMMONALITIES BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

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

Grasping God's Word



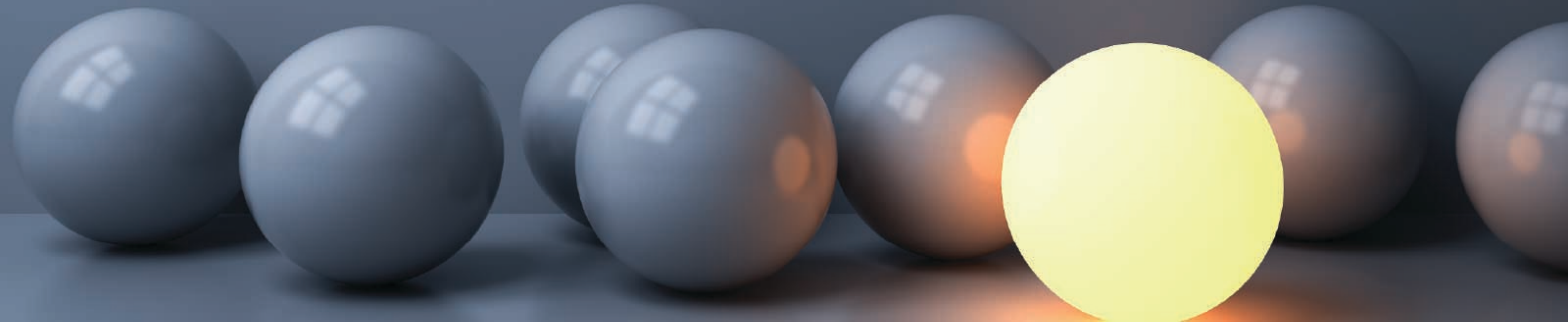
Sundays | 9:20–10:55am

Starting June 7th

Meeting on [zoom](#)

Taught by Vinnie Angelo

CHRISTIANS & CULTURE



WEEK 10: WORLD RELIGIONS (PART 2)

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

A. BACKGROUND & ORIGINS

1. Founder: Charles Taze Russell

a. Had “Bible study” in 1870 (Pennsylvania)

b. Name coined in 1931 by Judge Rutherford (2nd president) from Isaiah 43:10

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

A. BACKGROUND & ORIGINS

2. Disputed many mainstream Christian beliefs

a. Immortal soul/Hell/Predestination/Trinity/Fleshly return of Christ

b. Believe they are practicing a restoration of first-century Christianity

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

A. BACKGROUND & ORIGINS

3. Holy Book:

- a. NWT: done by the WTBTBS
- b. Watchtower/Awake magazines
 - i. JW.org

4. Denominations

- a. No autonomous thought allowed
 - i. Some “Bible Students” still remain
- b. As of 2019: 8.68 million worldwide

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

1. God:

a. Jehovah (the Father) is Almighty God

i. He (Jehovah) alone is to be worshipped

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

2. Jesus:

a. Nature

- i. Jehovah's special creation, the master worker through whom Jehovah created all other things (Prov 8:22, 30)
- ii. Preexisted as Michael the Archangel (appears in Revelation)
- iii. Jesus is a “mighty god” (has divine-like qualities) but is not Almighty God

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

2. Jesus:

b. As Messiah

- i. Became messiah at his baptism
- ii. Lived a perfect and sinless life (unlike Adam)
- iii. Died on a torture steak (not a cross); ransom sacrifice for our original sin in Adam, making it possible for those exercising faith in him to gain everlasting life
- iv. Raised from the dead (by Jehovah) in the form of a spirit, not physically
- v. Is ruling God's kingdom (since 1914), will eventually come to earth and reign for 1,000 years in Jehovah's new political kingdom

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

3. Holy Spirit:

- a. Jehovah's active force

- i. When Jehovah causes something to happen, he uses his active force

- b. Not a person (impersonal), no divine qualities

4. The Trinity

- a. Theistic invention of pagan religions

- i. Developed in the 4th century

- b. Often portrayed as pagan tritheism (three gods as one god)

I. WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JW'S)

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, had a vision from God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost in 1820

i. All Christian creeds, denominations, their pastors and professors were “corrupt and an abomination in God's sight”

ii. Joseph was to “restore” of the Gospel that Jesus had taught after he ascended

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

A. BACKGROUND & ORIGINS

2. Holy Books

- a. KJV (Joseph Smith translation)
- b. Book of Mormon
- c. Doctrine & Covenants
- d. Pearl of Great Price
- e. Progressive revelation

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

A. BACKGROUND & ORIGINS

3. Denominations

a. The Brigham Young branch (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) is largest denomination

i. In 2018 the church officially dropped the name “Mormon”

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

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

1. God

- a. Many gods exist (polytheism), but Heavenly Father/God (Elohim) is the true and only God of this universe

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

1. God

b. God was once as we are now (but now an exalted man), and sits enthroned in heaven (on a planet which circles a star called Kolab)

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

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

2. Jesus

- a. Birth was as natural as are the births of children, it was the result of natural action
- b. Is the literal spirit-brother of Lucifer (both created)
- c. After crucifixion he came to the Americas, bringing another testimony/gospel
- d. Jesus is 'Jehovah' (in the OT)

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one”

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

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 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')

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

B. BASIC THEOLOGY

4. The Trinity

Three separate Gods (working together in one godhead)

II. CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)

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