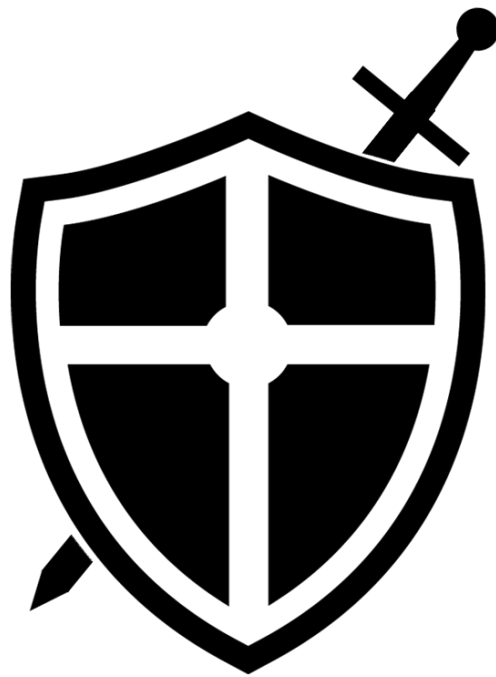


Useful Apologetics

CONVINCING THE LOST



Instructor's Guide

James Grandinetti

Sharon Baptist Church

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Note to the Readers

This course is intended to help you as a Soul-Winner convince the lost. This course contains both biblical and extra-biblical sources. Every effort has been made to use citations for references used. Please note the disclaimer below. All Scripture references in this material are to the King James Bible.

Our desire is that you would use this material as a reference to help answer some of these questions that people have with biblical answers.

DISCLAIMER: Sharon Baptist Church does not endorse Bible versions other than the King James Version. While we may not support all the details of the extra-biblical books mentioned, we feel that the content of these books is generally helpful for the spiritual reader. Also, please keep in mind we do not endorse all the doctrinal positions of other authors in these extra-biblical books.

Convincing the Lost



Discuss Note To Readers and also Table of Contents

01

Introduction: **What we will cover**

02

The Biblical Foundation

The Two Main Ideas

Common Questions with Biblical Answers

How can you prove God exists?

Does Suffering prove God does not exist?

How do you know the Bible is true?

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Why should I believe in Heaven and Hell?

If God created everything did he create evil?

Can all roads lead to Heaven?

The Biblical Foundation

4

The Examples in the Bible

There are two words that show us the biblical foundation for apologetics.

‘reasoned’ - διαλέγομαι, dialegomai - To mingle thought with thought.¹ You can see the derived English word “dialogue” in dialegomai. That same word is translated elsewhere as:

03

‘my defence,’ ‘mine answer,’ ‘the defence of the gospel,’ ‘my answer,’ ‘to give an answer’ (**Acts 17: 2,3; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:19; Acts 24:25**)

¹ Thayer, Joseph. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995

Then we have apologia, which is where we get the word apologetics. ἀπολογία, apologia - A reasoned statement or argument.² (**Acts 22:1; I Corinthians 9:3; Philippians 1:7, 1:16,17; II Timothy 4:16, I Peter 3:15**)

04

The Reasons

1. Because we are commanded to.
2. Because the Bible is full of examples where Christians contended for the faith.
3. Because real people have real questions that do have answers.
4. Because God does not expect people to have blind faith.
5. Because we desire to convince the lost.

05

5

Apologetics can be broken down into two categories: **academic** and **useful**. We want to focus on what will be **useful**. There is nothing wrong with going beyond the basics, however we are responsible for **what we know** and **how we spend our time**. (**Luke 12:48, Ephesians 5: 15-17**)

06

“As biblical illiteracy increases in our churches and as authority of any kind-including biblical authority- is more frequently called into question, we will continue to see relativism, skepticism, and smorgasbord religion appear in various “Christian” settings.”³

07

The Goal

Our goal is to present **arguments** without being **argumentative**. Present a **defense** without becoming **defensive**.⁴ This will require us to speak the truth in love. (**Ephesians 4:15**)

08

Question of Worldviews

(Understand Where People Stand)

09

The two “main” ideas

God exists or **God does not exist**. Within these two main ideas there are many worldviews. A **worldview** simply put “is how someone views or interprets reality. It is the framework by which one makes sense of the data of life.”⁵ “A worldview answers fundamental questions such as Why are we here? What is the meaning and purpose of life? Is there a difference between right and wrong? Is there a God?”⁶

10

² Ibid.

³ Copan, Paul. That's Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001.

⁴ Pg. 14 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

⁵ “Worldview” pg. 785 Geisler, Norman. Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

⁶ Myers, Jeff, and David Noebel. Understanding the Times: A survey of competing worldviews. Manitou Springs: David C. Cook, 2016.

Example: If I go to the store and run into someone who needs to hear the Gospel. I present the Gospel to them and they get saved, my worldview dictates that God directed my path (**Monotheism, Christianity**). A naturalist (**Atheist, Humanist**) would say 1. It was just by chance that you ran into someone and 2. That you presented a philosophy of life to someone who is scared of life and therefore needs a crutch to cope with life.

11

6

Within those two “main ideas” there are different belief structures. Please keep in mind I want you to really simplify everything to these two main ideas. The other information I am giving you is just more details.

God Exists (Belief Structures):

12

Monotheism – One God.

Polytheism – Many Gods.

Pantheism – Everything is God or We all make up God.

God Does Not Exist (Belief Structures):

13

Atheism – ‘A’ – without or no, ‘theism’ – God.

Agnosticism – Is a weak form of Atheism. It is the “I don’t know what to believe” position. It is trying to straddle the road between ‘God exists’ and ‘God does not exist.’

The two in six

As one writer describes there are six major worldviews. “Each of these six worldviews claims to present the truth.”⁷

14-20

Name the category – **God exists or God does not exist.**

1. **Christianity** – Monotheistic belief in God as revealed in the Bible, in creation, and in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ being, God incarnate and the Savior of the world. “The Christian worldview offers a narrative of all history. Thus, starts with the special creation of human beings by God, delves into the consequences of their fall, and promises redemption through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross and his subsequent resurrection.”⁸ (For the purpose of these worldviews, Judaism is listed under Christianity though our views are radically different concerning the Bible and the interpretation of the Bible.)
2. **Islam** – Is monotheistic as well, and began September 24, 622 AD, when seventy muhajirun pledged loyalty to an Arabian trader from Mecca who had fled to Medina and began receiving special revelations from Allah. The traders name: Muhammad. His submission to God gave his religion its name; *Islam* means “submission.”⁹
3. **Secularism** – “Secularism comes from the Latin word *saecularis*, roughly meaning “of men,” “of this world,” or “of this time.” Secularists believe humans are the center of reality [Humanism]. They disdain influence of those who believe in ideas of gods, an after-life, or anything beyond

7

⁷ Myers, Jeff, and David Noebel. *Understanding the Times: A survey of competing worldviews*. Manitou Springs: David C. Cook, 2016.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

what we can sense.”¹⁰ Even though they disavow religion they do have specific beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe. They hold an atheistic and materialistic view.

- 4. **Marxism** - A worldview that believes “history could be defined as a struggle between the haves (the owners) and have-nots (the workers). If only the workers would rise up to overthrow the owners, they could form a worker’s paradise in which all wrongs are righted, all possessions are shared, and all injustices ended. The utopian state at the end of this long and bloody struggle is called communism.”¹¹ According to Lenin, who was a Marxist “Atheism is a natural and inseparable part of Marxism, of the theory and practice of scientific socialism.”¹²
- 5. **New Spirituality** – “Is a free-flowing combination of Eastern religions, paganism, and pseudo-science that pops up in odd places. Deepak Chopra, Rhonda Byrne, and Marilyn Ferguson, and Shakti Gawain – describe a world spiritual in nature but not governed by a personal all-powerful God.” (Pantheism) 8
- 6. **Postmodernism** – Suspicious of anything that includes modernism, and for that matter all other worldviews (Metanarratives). Postmodernism teaches that ultimate reality is inaccessible. Knowledge is socially constructed and truth-claims are political power plays. (Relativism)

Knowing these worldviews only provide us with background information to understand where we need to begin and where we need to go.

For those who believe – **no God exists**. We start with proving the existence of God.

21

For those who believe – **God exists**. We start by assessing what they believe about God. From there we move on to proving the God of the Bible is the one true God.

22

In all cases, idolatry is the problem. Whether the god created is a false “religious” god or they are the god themselves.

23

Secondly, there are only two systems whereby someone can be reconciled with ‘God.’ By a system of works (all monotheistic, polytheistic, and pantheistic religions excluding biblical Christianity) or as the Bible teaches through faith by God’s grace.

24

Example – **Acts 17:22-33** Paul first **observes** what the Athenians believe. Then Paul **reiterates** their belief in God using their own literature and altar. Then Paul argues by **taking them to the Bible**.

25

Common Questions with Biblical Answers

9

26

How can you prove God exists?

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lenin, V.I. Religion. Dutt Press, 2007.

This question perhaps is the most basic and fundamental of all questions concerning those that say “no God exists.”

There are many arguments or proofs that can be asserted for this.

Argument I (Cosmological)

27

Cosmos – Universe

Cosmological - Relating to a discourse or treatise of the world, or to **the science of the universe**.

28

Premise I - Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its nature or in some external cause.¹³

29

Biblical Basis – **Romans 1:20, Psalm 19**

30

What can we think of that exists due to the necessity of its nature?

How about number sets in mathematics exist? They **are rather discovered** than created and **therefore exist because of their nature**. [Consequently, God says, I AM and just exists.] Whereas people, planets, and personal belongings have a cause.

Example: If you were hiking and came across a translucent ball lying in the midst of a forest, everyone would agree that it got there somehow. If that ball were the size of a car, would you say it just exists? Would if it were the size of a planet?¹⁴

31

Premise II – If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God.¹⁵

32-33

Premise II is built out of premise one. Premise one cannot be correct if premise II is not. Because the Universe exists it demands an explanation.

10

Example: Evolution is an example of an impossibility because it tries to surmise an explanation of existence that has to have a beginning. If we count back from Man we have to come to a stopping point? If we count back from the Universe we have to come to a stopping point?

34

The following argument was originally developed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz – the father of differential and integral calculus, contemporary with Sir Isaac Newton. (1646-1716).

Original Argument

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.
(What is the best explanation for this?)

¹³ Pg. 64 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

¹⁴ Pg 56. Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Scientific Reasons to believe the Universe began

1. **Expansion of the Universe** – Increasing outward in all directions. The reverse would necessitate a start point.
2. **The Thermodynamics of the Universe** – Energy is tending toward disorder. This presupposes that we are moving away from an orderly state of usable energy. IF there was an infinite past, we would already be in a state of equilibrium.

35

36

37

The creation account in the Bible fits best. *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”*
Genesis 1:1

Argument II (Teleological Argument/ Design Argument)

11

38

Instead of looking at the **origin** this looks at the **reason behind its function.**

39

Teleology - Teleology or finality is **a reason or explanation for something in function of its end, purpose, or goal.** It is derived from two Greek words: telos (end, goal, purpose) and logos (reason, explanation).

40

Premise I – Fine tuning found in the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance, or design.¹⁶

41-42

Three options, either what we observe is by necessity, it is by chance, or it is by design.

43

Bible Basis for Design – **John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2,3, Hebrews 3:4, Isaiah 44:24, Isaiah 48:13**

44

Some current scientific facts about the fine tuning of the universe:

What about by Chance?

Robert Penrose (English mathematical physicist, Oxford University) stated – the current state of the universe existing by chance is on the order of 1 chance out of $10^{10(123)}$. (Not feasible)

45

His Awards -

Adams Prize 1966

Heineman Prize (1971)

Fellow of the Royal Society (1972)

Eddington Medal (1975)

Royal Medal (1985)

¹⁶ Pg. 111 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

Wolf Prize (1988) 12
 Dirac Medal (1989)
 Albert Einstein Medal (1990)
 Naylor Prize and Lectureship (1991)
 James Scott Prize Lectureship (1997-2000)
 Karl Schwarzschild Medal (2000)
 De Morgan Medal (2004)
 Copley Medal (2008)
 Fonseca Prize (2011)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WXTX0IUaOg> – “There is something outside of our computations.”

“The fine-tuning here is beyond comprehension. Having an accuracy of even 1 part out of 10^{60} is like firing a bullet toward the other side of the observable universe, twenty billion light-years away, and nailing a one-inch target!”¹⁷

46

The force of gravity, the electromagnetic force, subatomic “weak” nuclear force and strong nuclear forces are the four fine tuned forces of nature.

Two possible objections:

What if the universe use to have different constants and values?
 What if a different universe is governed by different laws etc...?

The answer:

The first question does not consider the exactness of this fine tuning. Life permitting conditions could only take place with the values the way they are. By life is meant organisms that take in food, extract energy, grow, and adapt to their environment, and reproduce. Any variation from what is present results in non-life permitting. **The second question** evades the premise by theorizing about a different universe. The discussion concerns our universe and our existence.

Our universe starting by chance is out of the question because it is improbable. **But what about by physical necessity?** In other words, is a life-prohibiting universe impossible because by necessity the universe has to support life?

13

47

Evidence abounds where there is no observable life. Therefore, it is far more probable a universe will be life-prohibiting than it would be life-permitting.

Scientists and skeptics talk about “what is yet-to-be-discovered.” (Called the TOE *Theory of Everything*). This sounds good, but has no basis for a real probability. Even the M-Theory (Superstring Theory) which is based on the TOE, supposes 10^{500} different universes, “almost all of these possible universes are life- prohibiting.” Therefore, if there was physical necessity, life-prohibiting universes would not be abounding.

¹⁷ Pg. 109 Ibid.

Therefore, premise II stands:

Premise II Fine Tuning Is Not By Chance Nor By Necessity

48-49

Premise III Fine Tuning Is Due To Design

50-51

Question: But how can you know there is a God? He is not tangible?

Secondary Question

52

Answer:

Are there things that exist that we cannot observe hearing, seeing, feeling, and touching? Yes. What about Air? Gravity? Mathematics? Love? What about distant planets yet to be discovered? What about history you were taught but were not present for?

53-54

What about your testimony? Paul in **Acts 26:12-16** recounts his testimony which shows us the power of our testimony.

55

Argument III (The Moral Argument)

The question is raised, can we be good without God? Someone who does not believe in the existence of God would espouse relativism.

56-57

14

Relativism - the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and **morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.**

58

Premise I – If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist. (This premise seems agreeable to relativists).

59-60

Definitions

61

Values – Something is good or bad.

Duties – Something is right or wrong. (Moral Obligation)

Example – It would be good for you to become a doctor but you are not morally obligated to be one.

62

Also note the difference between subjective and objective.

Subjective means **dependent upon people's opinion.**

Objective means **independent of people's opinion.**

I can say **objectively** that if you drink strychnine regardless of your opinion of it you will die.

63

So, our premise is that if God does not exist then moral values and duties are not objective.

64

“A Barna poll taken in 1997” says “40 percent of those who call themselves evangelicals assert there are no moral absolutes. There is an increasing disparity between what Christians **say they believe and how they actually live.**”¹⁸

The objective in this premise is to show that **objective moral values require God.**

65

15

Naturalism (Atheism) purports that moral values are a byproduct of evolution and social conditioning. Therefore, taken to the ‘nth degree there is no such thing as right and wrong and there is no such thing as good and bad.

What the first premise does not state:

66

It does not try to prove that you cannot recognize objective moral values and duties without believing in God.

67

It does not try to prove that we cannot form a system of ethics without referring to God.

68

But rather it does state, objective morality requires God. “Belief in God is not necessary for objective morality; but God is”¹⁹ necessary for objective morality.

69

Premise 2 Objective moral values and duties exist.

70-71

Biblical Basis – Genesis 1: 26,27, Leviticus 19:2, Exodus 20 (The Ten Commandments)

72

“I’ve found that although people give lip service to relativism, 95 percent can be very quickly convinced that objective moral values do exist.”

Examples to use:

73

Is it right for me to steal from you?

Is it right for me to murder? (Making it personal often shows the fallacy or relativism.)

Can I murder all homosexuals? (Why not if morals are relative?)

16

What is the basis for any accountability?

The truth of a belief (whether it is true or not) is not tied to **how you came to hold that belief.** (The Genetic Fallacy)²⁰

If someone states “We are just products of our environments and genes.”

74

¹⁸ Copan, Paul. That's Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith. Grand Rapids: Baker Books , 2001.

¹⁹ Pg. 135 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

²⁰ Pg. 143. Ibid.

Answer: The fallacy is that they believe there is good reason and rationale to hold such a view thereby making themselves the acceptance to their own rule.

76

Here is another statement along the same lines, “What we call morality is nothing more than an attempt to survive and reproduce. In fact, all that we do is nothing more than our struggle to survive and reproduce.”

75

Answer: Does this mean your own belief is nothing more than an attempt to survive and reproduce? If this is true than both of us can never know what is right and wrong because we both have the same underlying instinct.

The biblical view is that there is Creator-creature distinction. Human beings are not divine but are made in God’s image. We reflect certain characteristics of the Creator. God is relational, self-aware, rational, personal, volitional, and moral. We have been made with these characteristics though in limited measure.

Further Jesus Christ stated there is absolute truth and He is the truth. **John 14:6**
Sometimes people will object to the morale argument with this question:

77

Question: What about the problem of suffering.

If God exists why would he allow suffering?

Secondary Question

17

The problem of suffering is significant and cannot be denied. There is suffering in the world around us that comes from many different sources. Natural disasters, disease, and man’s own inhuman acts towards others show suffering exists.

Remember Jesus’ question to the disciples:

Luke 13: 1-5 *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, **Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.***

78

First, we must note two areas of discussion. Are we talking about the **intellectual problem** with suffering or the **emotional problem** with suffering?

79

The intellectual problem with suffering deals with whether God and suffering can coexist. The emotional side of the problem really says “I want nothing to do with a God that would allow suffering to exist.” The truth is for most suffering **is more of an emotional problem than an intellectual problem.**

Dealing with the intellectual problem.

18

80

Does suffering prove God does not exist?

“Too often believers allow unbelievers to shift the burden of proof to the believers’ shoulders. “Give me some good explanation for why God permits suffering,” the unbeliever will demand, and then he sits back and plays skeptic about all the believers’ explanations.”²¹

Step 1 dealing with the **intellectual problem of suffering** is to clarify the argument.

81

Ask the question, “Are you saying it is **impossible for God and suffering to coexist**, or are you saying it is **improbable that God and suffering both exist?**”

82

If the first is chosen the argument is as follows²²:

1. An all-loving, all-powerful God exists.
2. Suffering exists.
3. Therefore, an all-loving and all-powerful God does not exist otherwise suffering would not exist.

83

Two areas defeat this argument.

First, **does man have free will? What is meant by free-will?**

84

We have the ability to choose. Go back to **Genesis 2: 15-17**. In order for man to have free will, he must have choices. Those choices necessitate right and wrong.

85-86

How does free will allow for suffering? If we choose wrongly suffering takes place.

87

19

Example: If a child is kept in a room that has nothing in it, that child cannot burn their hands. They have no option between touching a stove or not touching a stove. However, if a child is put in a room with a hot stove and explicitly told, do not touch the stove, they have a choice between suffering and non-suffering. Does this mean that the parent does not love the child, if the parent has told the child not to touch the stove?

88-90

Genesis 2 clearly shows that man had a choice between right and wrong. This does not disallow for God being all-power and all-loving. But rather shows God has given us free will.

²¹ Pg. 153 Ibid.

²² Pg. 155 Ibid.

Second, is there a possibility that suffering can bring a greater good?

Romans 5: 3-5 explains to us that tribulations have a place in the life of the Christian and in the end show us the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.

91

Ephesians 2: 4-7 explains that even though through our choices we have brought great suffering, God loves us, freely offers Salvation, and in the ages to come will show his exceeding riches of His grace by that which we triumph in through Him.

92

Given these verses what is a worldly example of good coming from suffering?

93

What about taking a child to the dentist? Does allowing that child to suffer (because no child likes the dentist) provide a greater good? What about require your child to go to school? (they would rather play all day and not learn) Should the child be allowed to stay home and not go to school because it would cause suffering in the child?

Those arguments deal with the possibility of God and suffering existing. But what about it being **improbable** that God would exist with suffering in the world?

94

First Response:

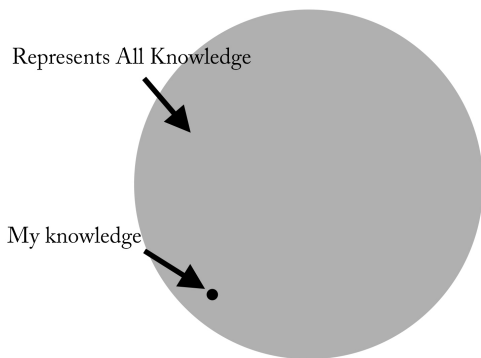
We are not in a position to say that it is improbable that God does not have good reasons for allowing suffering in the world.

95

20

How do we defend this?

As finite persons, we are limited in space, time, and in intelligence.



96

“In chaos theory, the butterfly effect is the sensitive dependence on initial conditions in which a small change in one state of a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state.”

97

“The idea that small causes may have large effects in general and in weather specifically was earlier recognized by French mathematician and engineer Henri Poincaré and American mathematician and philosopher Norbert Wiener. Edward Lorenz's work placed the concept of instability of the earth's atmosphere onto a quantitative base and linked the concept of instability to the properties of large classes of dynamic systems which are undergoing nonlinear dynamics and deterministic chaos.”²³

²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly_effect

Example: You leave to go to work 10 seconds later than you normally would. Because of this you have avoided an accident.

21

Our limited knowledge of cause and effect shows our finite ability to accurately explain all the reasons behind suffering and its meaning.

Second Response

Considering **the full scope of evidence** (not just suffering) God's existence is probable.

98

Example:

Statistics show that **90% of all college students** drink alcohol.

Joe is a college student.

It is probable that Joe drinks alcohol.

99-100

But would if we consider **the full scope of evidence.**

Statistics show that **90% of all college students** drink alcohol.

Statistics also show that **90% of all college students that go to Wheaton college do not drink alcohol.**

Joe is a college student at Wheaton College.

It is probable that Joe does not drink alcohol.

Remember the moral argument:

1. If God do not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
2. Evil exists.
3. Therefore, objective moral values exist. (Otherwise nothing could truly be evil)
4. Therefore, God exists.

The scale of evidence:



22

101

Third Response

Within the framework of Biblical Christianity, non-suffering is not the goal, **but rather knowledge of God.**

102

“One reason that the problem of suffering seems so puzzling is that people naturally assume that if God exists, then His purpose for human life is happiness in this life.”²⁴

103

Biblically speaking we know that because of the fall of man and the presence of sin, God’s plan is redemptive. Knowledge of Him and reconciliation will result in eventual everlasting fulfillment.

104

Consider the following verses:

“Then Moses said unto Aaron, *This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and **before all the people I will be glorified.*** And Aaron held his peace.” (This was after the death of Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu) **Leviticus 10:1-3**

105

“And said unto me, *Thou art my servant, O Israel, **in whom I will be glorified***” **Isaiah 49:3**

23

“Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, **Let the LORD be glorified:** but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.” **Isaiah 66:5**

“Now when the centurion saw what was done, **he glorified God,** saying, *Certainly this was a righteous man.*” **Luke 23:47**

“When Jesus heard that, he said, *This sickness is not unto death, **but for the glory of God,** that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*” **John 11:4**

“**I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.**” **John 17:4**

Secondly, within the Christian worldview **man is in a state of rebellion against God.**

106

John 3: 19-21, Romans 1: 18-25, James 4:4, Romans 8:7

107

The Christian worldview **expects** to see moral depravity, wickedness, and suffering as a result.

Thirdly, according to the Christian worldview **man does not cease to exist upon physical death. Therefore, there is more to this life than right now.**

108

Romans 8:18, II Corinthians 5: 1-4, Romans 8: 19-23

109

²⁴ Ibid.

Lastly, **knowledge of God and reconciliation to Him far outweighs the sufferings of this present world.**

110

24

II Corinthians 4: 16-18

What about the emotional problem of suffering?

111

Intellectual answers do not necessarily deal with the emotional problem of suffering.

112

Several items may be noted outside of this apologetics course:

1. Most need a loving friend and a ready listener, not an intellectual answer.
2. Unlike other “worldviews” we have real resources to help us in and through suffering, our Savior Jesus Christ!
3. As noted earlier, our knowledge of God is an immeasurable good. It provides purpose and hope that cannot be found elsewhere.
4. Story of Mabel, bedridden, blind, deaf constantly drooling for 25 years always thinks of others. And when asked what do you think of most as you lie here all day? Her response, “I think about my Jesus.”²⁵

113

The Story of Mabel:

114

“When God asks us to undergo suffering that seems unmerited, pointless and unnecessary, meditation upon the cross of Christ can help to give us the strength and courage needed to bear the cross that we are asked to carry. I mentioned earlier that knowing God is an incommensurable good to which our suffering cannot even be compared. Few of us really understand this truth. But a former colleague of mine got to know a woman who did. Tom used to make it his habit to visit shut-ins in nursing homes in an attempt to bring a bit of cheer and love into their lives. One day he met a woman whom he could never forget:

As I neared the end of [the] hallway, I saw an old woman strapped to wheelchair. Her face was an absolute horror. The empty stare and white pupils of her eyes told me that she was blind. The large hearing aid over one ear told me she was almost deaf. One side of her face was being eaten by cancer. There was a discolored and running sore covering part of one cheek, and it had pushed her nose to one side, dropped one eye, and distorted her jaw so that what should have been another corner of her mouth was the bottom of her mouth. As a consequence, she drooled constantly... I also learned later that this woman was eighty-nine years old and that she had been bedridden, blind, nearly deaf, and alone for twenty-five years. This was Mabel.

²⁵ Pg. 171, 172 Ibid.

I don't know why I spoke to her-she looked less likely to respond than most of the people I saw in that hallway. But I put a follower in her hand and said, "Here is a flower for you. Happy Mother's Day." She held the flower up to her face and tried to smell it, and then she spoke. And much to my surprise, her words, although somewhat garbled because of her deformity, were obviously produced by a clear mind. She said, "Thank you. It's lovely. But can I give it to someone else? I can't see it, you know, I'm blind."

I said, "Of course," and I pushed her in her chair back down the hallway to a place where I thought I could find some alert patients. I found one, and I stopped the chair. Mabel held out the flower and said, "Here, this is from Jesus."

Tom and Mabel became friends over the next few years, and Tom began to realize that he was no longer helping Mabel, but she was helping him. He began to take notes on what she said. After a stressful week, Tom went to Mabel and asked her, "Mabel what do you think about as you lie here all day?" She replied, "I think about Jesus."

I sat there and thought for a moment about the difficulty, for me to think about Jesus for even five minutes, and I asked, "What do you think about Jesus?" She replied slowly and deliberately as I wrote. And this is what she said:

I think how good He's been to me. He's been awfully good to me in my life, you know... I'm one of those kind who's mostly satisfied...Lots of folks would think I'm kind of old-fashioned. But I don't care. I'd rather have Jesus. He's all the world to me.

And then Mabel began to sing an old hymn:

Jesus is all the world to me, My life my joy my all. He is my strength from day to day. Without him I would fall. When I am sad to him I go. No other one can cheer me so. When I am sad, He makes me glad. He's my friend.

This is not fiction. Incredible as it may seem, a human being really lived like this. I know. I knew her. How could she do it? Seconds ticked and minutes crawled, and so did days and weeks and months and years of pain without human company and without an explanation of why it was all happening-and she lay there and sang hymns. How could she do it?

The answer I think, is that Mabel had something you and I don't have much of. She had power. Lying there in that bed, unable to move, unable to see, unable to hear, unable to talk to anyone, she had incredible power."²⁶²⁷

²⁶ Pg. 171, 172 Ibid.

²⁷ Schmidt, Thomas. *Trying to be Good: A Book on Doing for Thinking People*. Grand Rapids. Zondervan. 1990

How do you know the Bible is true?
(Not just written by man)

25

115

How can we know the Bible is true? There are several evidences that we can look at. We can classify these evidences in two ways:

Internal Evidence: What is found in the Bible itself or in comparison to itself.

116

External Evidence: What is found outside the Bible from other sources.

117

What does the internal evidence say?

118

Facts concerning the Bible

Internal evidences

1. **The Bible is comprised of 66 different books, written by at least 40 different penman and written over a 1500-year period. With such diversity, how can there be a semblance of unity?** (In other words, the individual penman was far removed in language, time, culture, and location from one another. How then, could the message of the Bible be unified throughout all 66 books?) (~1400 BC - ~95 AD)
2. **Concerning just the New Testament alone which is comprised of 27 individual books, there was insufficient time to erase core facts.** I.E. the so-called "legend hypothesis."

119

120

The "legend hypothesis" states that Gospel accounts are really embellished legendary writings about a "good" man named Jesus.

26

The impossibility in this is **the time frame from the time of Jesus' death to the writing of the Gospel accounts.**

According to Professor Sherwin-White, whose is not a theologian, but rather a historian of Greco-Roman times the Bible could not be "legendary." He states two generations is too short a time span to allow legendary tendencies to wipe out the hard-core historical facts.²⁸

"This point becomes more devastating for skepticism when we realize that the gospels themselves use sources that go back even closer to the events of Jesus' life."²⁹

The time of writing is approximate and widely discussed but notice the approximate dates:

Matthew ~44-50 AD

²⁸ Pg. 190 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

²⁹ Pg. 190 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

Mark ~68 AD

Luke ~60 AD

John ~85 AD

Jesus lived 33 ½ years which puts these accounts within 10 to 15 years. (Jesus' Death ~AD 30-36)

3. **The subject matter of the Bible includes embarrassing accounts, which is an evidence of authenticity.** This is one criterion of six used to prove authenticity of ancient documents. (The other criteria are Historical Fit, Independent Early Sources, Embarrassment, Dissimilarity, Semitisms, and Coherence.) The Bible fits all these criteria³⁰

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121

Name some notable embarrassing passages in the Bible.

122

Some notable embarrassing accounts^{31,32}:

Jesus speaking to the Women at the well

Jesus allowing His feet to be washed by a prostitute

A woman at the empty tomb and the resurrection first

Peter denying Jesus 3 times

The disciples fleeing at the garden of Gethsemane

Jonah running away from God

Moses' angry outburst

God's comment on man in Genesis

This is just a short list. Many more could be listed.

4. **Jesus' own explicit claims.** He claimed to be the Son of God. He claimed to be the Messiah. He claimed deity³³.

123

You have to do something with Jesus. Ask the question what do you think of the Bible? What do you think of Jesus?

Matthew 11: 2-6 and **Luke 7:19-23** record Jesus' response to John the Baptist's inquiry regarding who He is. "Jesus' response is a blend of prophecies from **Isaiah 35:5,6; 26:19; 61:1**³⁴, the last of which explicitly mentions being God's Anointed One..." or Messiah ("Christ") "Perhaps most remarkably of all, these very signs are listed as signs of the Messiah's coming in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls from the

Jewish sect that lived at Qumran at the time of Jesus (4Q521)."³⁵

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28

5. **Fulfillment of Prophecy.** Beside the uncanny unity of the Bible, the fulfillment of prophecy is impossible from mere guesswork. (**Deuteronomy 18: 18-22**)

125

³⁰ Pg. 194-195 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

³¹ This is just a sampling; the Bible contains scores of examples.

³² A longer list is provided in resources section.

³³ Look at the resource section; The Deity of Jesus Christ.

³⁴ Pg. 199 Ibid.

³⁵ Pg. 199 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

Peter Stoner (June 16, 1888 – March 21, 1980) was the Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College until 1953; Chairman of the science division, Westmont College, 1953–57; Professor Emeritus of Science, Westmont College; Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Astronomy, Pasadena City College.

Stoner is probably best known for his book *Science Speaks* that discusses, among other things, Bible prophecies and their probability estimates and calculations for fulfillment. Stoner calculated the probability of just 8 prophecies concerning Jesus being fulfilled by one person.³⁶

“Multiplying all these probabilities together produces a number (rounded off) of 1×10^{28} . Dividing this number by an estimate of the number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies (88 billion) produces a probability of all 8 prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person. **That probability is 1 in 1017 or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. That’s one in one hundred quadrillion!**”

126

6. **Fantastic claims that could be verified.**

Lazarus raised from the dead. (**John 12: 9,10**)

Jesus raised from the dead. (**Gospel Records**)

Paul’s claim about Jesus’ resurrection. (**I Corinthians 15: 4-7**)

The King Agrippa account. (**Acts 26:26,27**)

29

127

Example - “The twin towers are still standing today...”

Note – early dates on the writings of the New Testament are crucial and can be verified because of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 which is historically accepted even by skeptics. **Hebrews 5: 1-3** references the Temple in the present tense offerings being made. And yet Jesus prophesied about the destruction of the Temple in **Luke 21:6, Matthew 24:1, and Mark 13:1. Acts, though historically accurate and verifiable speaks nothing of the Temple being destroyed.**

7. **The Disciples and early believers’ commitment to the truth.** (This is noted both internally and verified with external sources. Most gave their lives for what they believed.)

128

External Evidences

129

1. **Concerning Historical Accuracy** – just the book of Acts alone contains at least 84 precise facts as found by historian and explorer Sir William Ramsey. (See the **Evidence to Support** the truth for these facts.)

130

³⁶ Stoner’s calculations are found in the resource section.

³⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Stoner

2. **Archeological Evidence** – There is a vast amount of evidence that supports many different details in the Bible.

131

Elba Cuneiform Tablets – verify the usage of Hebrew words and contain an ancient “dictionary” which has confirmed much of the Old Testament texts.

30

“The texts included historical information, religious texts, academic texts, agricultural details, laws, treatises and, of most interest to the study of Semitic languages, dictionaries (monolingual and bilingual) and encyclopedias, the oldest dictionaries and encyclopedias in history. Up until the discovery of the Eblaite tablets the only Semitic language known to exist in 3rd Millennium BC was Akkadian. Now with this discovery, another Semitic language was found to be in use in the 3rd Millennium BC and has a very close relationship with the Hebrew language of the Bible.”³⁸

Existence of Assyrian King Sargon - In the early 1800s skeptics use to point out that the Biblical record in **Isaiah 20** was incorrect concerning King Sargon’s existence, but now much evidence has been discovered.

Nabonidus and Belshazzar – Was always claimed as an incorrect biblical record in Daniel. However, Daniel 5:7,16,29 names Belshazzar as ruler and Daniel as being 3rd in the kingdom. How can Nabonidus be ruling at the same time as Belshazzar? With the numerous discoveries naming Belshazzar as the King Nabonidus’ son, it is understood that Belshazzar was Vice-Regent during this time which would make Daniel 3rd in the kingdom.

<https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/does-archaeology-support-the-bible/>

3. **Early Writings from Other Sources-**

31

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Tacitus (56-120AD)

Mara Bar-Serapion (70AD)

Pliny the Younger (61-113AD)

Suetonius (69-140AD)

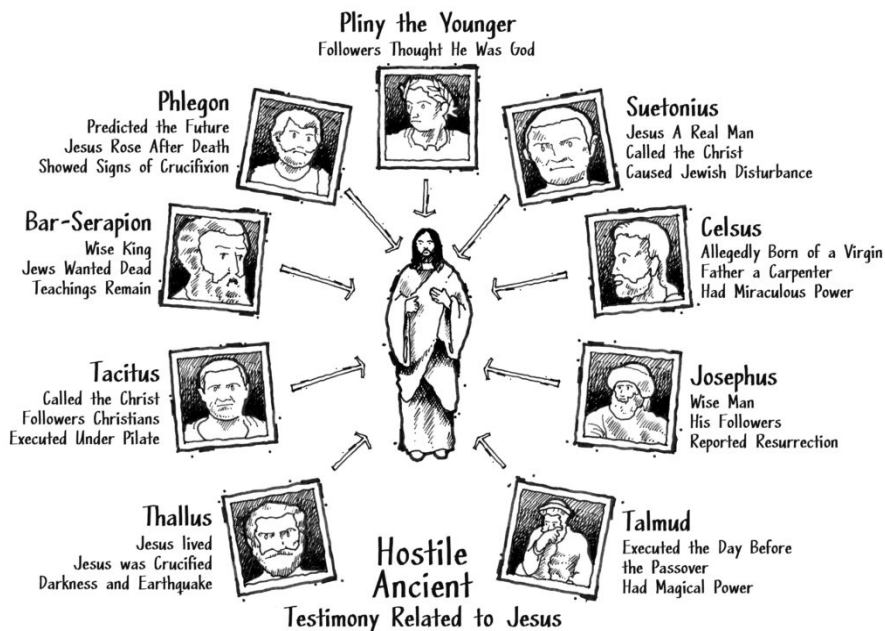
Lucian of Samosata (115-200 A.D.)

Josephus (37-101AD)

Jewish Talmud (400-700AD)

The Toledot Yeshu (1000AD)

³⁸ http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/bible_ebla.html



Each of these writers validate the New Testament writings.

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

What are some evidences we can point to or logical arguments?

The already established historical reliability of the story of Jesus' burial must support the empty tomb.

1. The disciples could not have believed in the resurrection of Jesus if the tomb was not empty.
2. Even if the disciples did believe despite the fact that Jesus was still in the tomb, nobody would have listened. Since the Gospel proliferated from Jerusalem, there would have been ample evidence for no one to believe.
3. The Jewish authorities would have unmasked the false story immediately.
4. Joseph of Arimathea a member of the Sanhedrin is unlikely to be a Christian invention. "Given his status as a Sanhedrist, Joseph is the last person you would expect to care properly for Jesus."³⁹
5. Because of the historicity of the Bible, we have specifically four separate sources that indicate Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the grave. And as we continue below the list of independent sources are not limited to just the Gospel records.

³⁹ Pg. 225 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

Paul in **I Corinthians 15: 3-5** gives us three keys or proofs to Jesus Christ death, burial and resurrection, that is spoken of by corresponding witnesses. Remember every book in the Bible is considered an independent source document.

142

I Corinthians 15 “...Christ died...”

33

143

Acts 13: 28-31

“And though they found no cause of death in him, **yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.**”

Mark 15:37-16:7

“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and **gave up the ghost.**”

I Corinthians 15 “...he was buried...”

144

Acts 13: 28-31

“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and **laid him in a sepulchre.**”

Mark 15:37-16:7

“And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and **laid him in a sepulchre** which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.”

I Corinthians 15 “**he rose again** the third day according to the scriptures:”

145

Acts 13: 28-31

“But **God raised him from the dead:**”

Mark 15:37-16:7

“And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: **he is risen**; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.”

I Corinthians 15 “...he appeared...”

146

Acts 13: 28-31

“And **he was seen many days of them** which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.”

Mark 15:37-16:7

“But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: **there shall ye see him**, as he said unto you.

34

Some “theories” of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection that hold no water.

147

The Swoon Theory – He passed out and the cool air of the tomb woke him up. (He faints before he dies, somehow survives is stolen away or is able to walk out of the tomb.)

148-149

Problem – Asphyxiation would have taken place with 40 to 70 pounds of swaddling clothe.

Problem – Weakness from loss of blood etc... would have prevented opening of the tomb and also walking off.

The Hallucination Theory – He did not rise from the dead, only people though they saw him.

150-151

Problem – If we were dealing with one or two people this might be plausible. But with the multiplicity of witnesses this is not possible.

Problem – Where is the body?

Problem – Hallucinations would not be identical.

The Impersonation Theory – Someone dressed up to be like Jesus but was not Jesus.

152-153

Problem – Jesus appeared to His closest friends and relatives, they would have known if it was an imposter.

Problem – Jesus had scars from the crucifixion.

Problem – How did they fake the ascension to Heaven?

Problem – Why didn’t they just go to the tomb to prove it was not him?

The “Spiritual Resurrection” Theory – This is the theory that just Jesus’ spirit arose not his physical body?

35

154-155

Problem – Where is the body?

156-157

The Theft Theory – The disciples came and stole Jesus away.

Problem – Would the disciples be able to overcome the Roman guard? **Problem** – Why or how would the grave clothes be left

Problem – The disciples gave their lives for Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

The Unknown Tomb Theory – This simply states they went to wrong tomb and Jesus’ body was not there.

158-159

Problem – People would have quickly shown his body.

Why should I believe Heaven and Hell exist?

I don’t believe in an afterlife.

36

160

This question is obviously difficult to answer. In the past, you could read of folks weighing people right before they died and then right after they died to see if there was a change in their weight. The thought was that because the soul departed the body there would be a small difference. The fact is that the spirit and soul is immaterial versus the physical body so this does not answer the question.

HE 'WEIGHED HUMAN SOUL.'

161

Dr. Duncan MacDougall, Known for His Experiments, Dies at 54.

HAVERHILL, Mass., Oct. 15.—Dr. Duncan MacDougall, a surgeon known particularly for his experiments in "the weighing of the soul," died at his home here today at the age of 54. Through delicate weighing devices, he calculated the weight of the human soul at between 6 and 8 ounces. In this research which extended through years, he said he took into account the actual weight of the body immediately before and immediately after death.

He was a contributor of poetry to various magazines.

How do we defend this belief?

162-163

Premise I

There is a universality in **ever era and culture of people** who have this belief in an afterlife.

This does not mean that everyone holds universally a belief in the afterlife, but rather the idea is found throughout all secular history.

Does the Bible tell us that man universally holds this belief?

37

164

Ecclesiastes 3:11 suggests so.

*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set **the world in their heart**, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*

165

The word world in **Ecclesiastes 3:11** has the meaning of eternity. Notice this quote from Theologian Albert Barnes.

The word, translated "*world*" in the text, and "eternity" in this note, is used seven times in **Ecclesiastes**.

166

"The interpretation "eternity," is conceived in the sense of a long indefinite period of time, in accordance with the use of the word throughout this book, and the rest of the Old Testament. God has placed in the inborn constitution of man the capability of conceiving of eternity, the struggle to apprehend the everlasting, the longing after an eternal life."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Barnes, Albert. Commentary on the Old and New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1983.

From Strong's Lexicon – "From H5956; properly concealed, that is, **the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind** (past or future), that is, (practically) **eternity**;"⁴¹

Premise II

Just like the moral argument, all of mankind has an innate cry within themselves for justice.

38

167-168

Why would this be the case universally across all of humanity? **Really this gets back to the moral argument.**

"Sense of justice built into the brain
by Public Library of Science

169

A new study from the Karolinska Institute and Stockholm School of Economics shows that the brain has built-in mechanisms that trigger an automatic reaction to someone who refuses to share. In the study publishing next week in the online open access journal PLoS Biology, the subjects' sense of justice was challenged in a two-player monetary fairness game, and their brain activity was simultaneously measured using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). When bidders made unfair suggestions as to how to share the money, they were often punished by their partners even if it cost them. This reaction to unfairness could be reduced by targeting one specific brain region, the amygdala.

The study is based on the universal human behavior to react with instant aggression when another person behaves unfairly and in a manner that is not in the best interest of the group. The researchers had 35 subjects play a money-based fairness game, in which one player suggests to another how a fixed sum of money is to be shared between them; the other player can then either accept the suggestion and take the money, or reject it, in which case neither player receives anything."⁴²

39

170-171

Premise III

Jesus directly taught concerning Heaven and Hell.

Considering the fact of Jesus, being God incarnate, Creator of all things; He has the best perspective on eternity. **(John 1:1-5, 14; Colossians 1: 15-20, Hebrews 1: 8-12)**⁴³

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Some key passages concerning Heaven and Hell

Matthew 5: 29-30

Matthew 10:28

Matthew 13: 41-43

173

⁴¹ Strong, James. *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990.

⁴² <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-05-justice-built-brain.html>

⁴³ Remember these subjects build upon previous discussions. If someone accepts the Bible as authoritative they must accept what our Lord and Saviour said concerning the subject.

Matthew 22: 29-32

Matthew 23:33

Matthew 25: 31-34, 41,46

Luke 6: 22,23

Luke 10:15

Luke 10:20

Luke 16: 19-31 *

John 3:13

John 6:38

John 14: 2,3

John 17: 3-5, 24

This list is not all inclusive, but obviously this is a central teaching that our Saviour had.

Would God judge man with the sentence of going to Hell?

Yes.

174

Some things to note:

1. **God is perfect and as such MUST be a just judge. Therefore, he must condemn sin and not overlook it.**

175

Genesis 18:25 *“That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**”*

40

I Samuel 2:10 *“The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: **the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth**; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.”*

Romans 2:1,2 *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. **But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.**”*

There is not a corner in Scripture where God is not a just judge.

2. **God does not owe anyone a second chance and yet he repeatedly extends his mercy and grace toward us and yet people still stubbornly refuse to repent.**

176

Romans 1: 18-32

One author wrote **“Hell is the logical consequence of a life lived separated from God.”**

Romans 6:23 sums up the situation.

3. **We all have sinned; thus, we have earned the “wages” of sin. We are offered a free gift of Salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Those who face judgement will do so because of rejection of Jesus Christ.**

177

Oftentimes it is brought up:

What about those who never have been given the Gospel?

41

178-183

Several items should be noted:

1. We are given the commission to take the Gospel to the ends of the world. (**Matthew 28: 18-20**)
2. God is not obligated to save anyone.
3. According to the Bible everyone is culpable because our internal witness (conscience) and our external witness (the heavens and earth.) (**Romans 1:19,20 Psalm 19:1-5**)
4. God declares everyone is responsible for the light they are given. (**Luke 12:48**) (**Matthew 10:15, 11:21-23, 12:41,42**) Therefore it is not our responsibility to sort this out, but rather God is the Judge.
5. **Ephesians 2:8,9, John 1:9 and Titus 2:11** make clear that Salvation is offered to all.

If God created everything did he create evil?

42

184

This is a very common question and logical, or so it seems on the service. Specifically, we find this verse in the Bible:

Isaiah 45:7 *“I form the **light**, and create **darkness**: I make **peace**, and create **evil**: I the LORD do all these things.”*

185

Ah-haa there it is God creates evil so what’s the use?

This verse often touted by people as an argument against God’s existence do not understand the context.

Look at the opposing words:

186

Light/Darkness

Peace/Evil (punishment, pestilence etc...) – God is the judge of all things, the moral lawgiver.

But in all fairness the problem of evil is real much like the problem of suffering.

The argument normally goes like this:

187

God created all things and therefore created evil as well.

188

The first point is to understand what we are talking about. **Evil is not a thing to be created**, but rather should be looked at as an absence of good or a rejection of good.

God in the Bible is described over and over again as good. He is the standard bearer of right. One of the attributes of God is goodness.

189

Consider the following verses:

43

190

*Holy – denotes absolute good and absolute pure in reference to God.

“There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.” I Samuel 2:2

“And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?” I Samuel 6:20

“Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.” Psalm 99:9

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

I Corinthians 3:17

“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” Revelation 4:8

“God’s allowance of evil is to allow a greater good. What is that greater good? Love. For love to truly exist, it must be free. It must be freely given, freely received, and reciprocal between both parties. God could have created us as robots or automatons. But, that would not provide true love. The ultimate love was given in Jesus, who experienced the horrors of torture and experienced the just punishment that we deserve.”⁴⁴

44

Because of the nature of free will, God has allowed conditions to exist where evil is a possibility. We know from the Bible, that one of the great purposes of God is for His glory. We also know that love necessitates the ability to choose. Therefore, God chose us (**John 3:16**) and displayed His love for us (**Romans 5:8**). We likewise have been given the ability to choose.

191

192

⁴⁴ <https://crossexamined.org/did-god-create-evil/>

Can all roads lead to Heaven?

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194

The argument is that if you believe Jesus is the only way to Heaven, then you are religiously narrowminded. Someone who believes the view that only one religion is a means of salvation is a **particularist**. Someone who views many religions are a means to Heaven is **pluralist**. In addition, the pluralist seem to focus in on biblical Christianity only, even though other “religions” claim the same exclusivity.

One of the main arguments used against someone who believes Jesus Christ is the only way of Salvation is that of **cultural relativity**. The cultural relativity argument supposes that because you were raised in a Christian culture, you naturally hold that Christianity is the only way of Salvation.

195

The problem with this argument is what is called the **genetic fallacy**. “This is trying to invalidate a position by criticizing the way a person came to hold that position.”⁴⁵

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Example: If you were born in Greece and believed therefore that the earth orbits the sun, is there any grounds to dismiss that belief because you were born in Greece?

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How you came to a belief does not have any relevance as to the truth of the belief.

How can Christianity claim to be exclusively true?

198-201

1. First, there are fundamental differences between biblical Christianity and all other religions.
2. Biblical Christianity only provides **consistent** and **coherent** answers to life’s biggest questions. (Origin, Meaning, Morality, and Destiny.)
3. The historicity of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection agree with the Bible.
4. Jesus claimed to be the only way of Salvation.

What are some differences between Christianity and other religions?

1. Jesus claimed to be God.

202-205

“Although many claim that Jesus does not differ much from other religious leaders such as Buddha, Jesus' claim to be God in the flesh singles Him out of the crowd. The Buddha claimed no such thing, nor did Muhammad or Confucius.”⁴⁶

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2. The Bible claims Jesus died for the sins of the world.

⁴⁵ Pg. 270 Craig, William Lane. On Guard. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

⁴⁶ <https://www.bethinking.org/is-christianity-the-only-way/why-believe-that-jesus-is-the-only-way>

3. The Bible claims Jesus rose from the grave.

“No founder or leader of any world religion claimed to die as a sacrifice for human sin in order to set us right with God. Nor is any other world religion based on the resurrection of its divine founder.”⁴⁷

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Biblical Basis:

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John 14:6 *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

Acts 4:12 *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

I Timothy 2: 5,6 *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”*

John 3:36 *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

47

John 10: 7-9 *“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”*

I Corinthians 3:11 *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

Hebrews 2: 3,4 *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”*

Tying this altogether:

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The Bible clearly tells us to be prepared to give an answer of the hope that is within us and to contend for the faith.

We have been commanded to be witnesses, ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

Real people have real questions that God has given us answers to in His Word.

Let us take what we have been taught and point people to our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

⁴⁷ ibid.

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