



A Three-Fold Cord

Creation, Redemption & Dominion

2nd Edition, Revised & Expanded

Everything that exists is proof of the existence of the biblical God. The more completely and deeply one understands this truth, the easier it is to manage the challengers. The effectiveness of your apologetic is measured by your ability to see Christ in everything. This is the heart of this apologetic.

However, proof, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27

“You shall love Yahweh your God ... with all your mind...”

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

1 Corinthians 2:16

...but we have the mind of Christ.

Isaiah 6:3

And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”

Habakkuk 2:14

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea.

Notice what is missing: the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh. We are here to give that knowledge, to demonstrate what already fills the earth: the glory of God!

Chapter 2. Outline

1. A Better Way of Thinking
2. The Supernatural – The Heart of the Matter
3. Some History
4. Prisoners in Nature’s Box
5. Defeaters
6. Eyewitnesses
7. Thinking Like Jesus
 - a. General Faith
 - b. Great Faith
 - c. The Dignity of Faith
 - d. Trick Questions and Answers
8. Some Definitions
 - a. Definitions
 - b. Enmity
9. Myth of Neutrality
10. Circular Reasoning

- a. Internal Biblical Proofs
- b. Philosophical Big Picture
- 11. A Standard for Standards – The AICP Test
 - a. Don't Answer/Answer Strategy
- 12. Some Different Worldviews
- 13. Apologetic Methods
 - a. Evidential – Empirical
 - i. What is Science?
 - b. Classical – Rational
 - i. Four Basic Rules of Reason
 - c. Presuppositional – Revelational
 - i. The Transcendental Argument
Transcendental Objects
 - ii. Question for Materialists
 - d. Other Arguments
 - i. Bertrand Russel's First Cause Objection
 - ii. Three traditional arguments for God's existence
 - iii. A Part of the Intelligent Design Argument
- 14. Some Other Trajectories
- 15. Conclusion
- Appendix A – Apologetics Resources
- Appendix B – Apologetics Keywords

1. A Better Way of Thinking

Instead of trying to prove the truth of Christianity to the unregenerate, [we] assume its truth at the outset, and then challenge the natural man by demonstrating that [based] on his [own] presuppositions nothing is true, nothing can be accounted for, and his own thinking is invalid.
Cornelius Van Til

Suppose we think of a man made of water, in an infinitely extended and bottomless ocean of water. Desiring to get out of water he makes a ladder of water. He sets this ladder upon the water and against the water and attempts to climb out of the water. So hopeless and senseless a picture must be drawn of the natural man's methodology, based, as it is, upon the assumption that time and chance are ultimate.
Christian theism, which was first rejected because of supposed authoritarian character, is seen as the only position which gives human reason a field for successful operation and true progress in knowledge.
Cornelius Van Til

“You can't see nothin' when you close your eyes.” Larry Norman

Isaiah 55:8-9

8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says Yahweh. 9
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

1 Corinthians 1:20

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

The apologetics I am offering is not about a way of thinking about various facts but learning to think differently. We must put on the mind of Christ. Our Lord Jesus never flinched in the face of opposition. When people want to contradict God, they run headlong into foolishness. Our job is to show how and why this is true.

The basic argument is that the biblical triune God is the necessary precondition for the intelligibility of all human experience and knowledge, and without Him, you cannot prove anything! Ignoring God as the starting point of knowledge makes confusion and suffering inevitable. Theology, philosophy, and science affect culture in profound ways. Good apologetics provides a proper framework for understanding reality as it is. Everything that exists displays the glory of God!

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiastes 10:12-13

12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up; 13 The words of his mouth begin with foolishness, and the end of his talk is raving madness.

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense [apologia] to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and respect.

Jude 1:3

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
This is probably the most repeated verse in this book.

Psalms 36:9

For with You is the fountain of life; **In Your light we see light.**

Psalms 24:1

The earth is Yahweh's and the fullness thereof, the world, and all they that dwell therein.

Genesis 1:26-27, 31

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them.

31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.

Matthew 28:18-20

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 the 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.”

Revelation 1:5-6

5 ... Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and loosed [washed] us from our sins by His blood 6 and He has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Colossians 2:4, 8

4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

2. The Supernatural – The Heart of the Matter

There are only two real possibilities. There either is or is not a supernatural aspect to the universe. That is, the universe is nothing more than blind physics and chemistry (i.e., atheistic, materialistic, monism), or the product of the brilliant, biblical Creator God. My own story is one in pursuit of the supernatural and learning to do the stuff. You can see a little of that in the preface. I think most have a fearful misunderstanding about the mechanics of the supernatural in general. It is not my purpose to delve into that in this book. Many have taught on the subject. Below is a very small sample of the information available. The worldview of the Bible is supernatural. Any attempt to naturalize the Bible will destroy it. By definition, the supernatural, in any form, is beyond the reach of “Methodological Naturalism” [discussed later] and therefore, doesn’t exist.

I would also recommend the book “Miracles” by C.S. Lewis.

Pew Research Center, *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals*

Countries: United States, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, India, Philippines and South Korea

Results: ~200 million claim to have witnessed miraculous healings.

(<https://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/spirit-and-power/>)

Consider, for a moment, the magnitude of the number 200 million people (America has 330 million) in just ten countries. This is only a sample of what Christ the Healer is doing across the world, through His people.

“All Christian churches in China practice some form of healing ... In fact, according to some surveys, 90% of new believers cite healing as a reason for their conversion. This is especially true in the countryside where medical facilities are often inadequate or non-existent.”

Edmond Tang, *Yellers and Healers – Pentecostalism and the Study of Grassroots Christianity in China*

It is no longer plausible to tout “uniform human experience” (explained below) as a basis for denying miracles, as in the traditional modern argument. Hundreds of millions of claims would have to be satisfactorily explained in nonsupernatural terms for this appeal to succeed; while many may be so explained, one cannot adopt the conclusion of uniformity as a premise without investigating all of them.”

Craig Keener, *Miracles*, 764

“Uniform human experience” derives from the atheistic philosophical view that only things common to all human beings are real. So, by definition, since every human being can’t do miracles (raise the dead, walk on water), they are not real for any human being, and anyone claiming miracle is lying or somehow deceived. If everybody can’t do it, nobody can do it. Also called generalization. It is a radical – I call “extremist” – all-or-nothing position. See also chapter 4, “Origins,” *Why I Believe in God* by Cornelius Van Til.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

4 And my speech and my preaching were not with **persuasive words of human wisdom**, but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power**, 5 that **your faith** should not be in the wisdom of men but in the **power of God** (See also Rom 15:19, 1Th 1:5).

Question: Which came first, faith or power?

John 14:12

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also.

3. Some History

In the early days of the Church, it became necessary to explain the Gospel as well as answer the rumors that circulated among the citizens of the Roman Empire. For example, it was observed that the Christians went to the city dumps every morning and gathered the live babies that had been deposited there overnight by the local people. Then the celebration of Communion service caused a stir. Rumors began to spread of cannibalism: eating flesh and drinking blood. “You know what they are doing with those babies, don’t you?” they whispered. Slander and gossip come to mind.

Matthew 5:11

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely because of Me.

Early Christian leaders were sometimes allowed to speak at their trial and express the true meaning of the accusations made against the followers of Jesus the Christ and to explain Christianity. This was the beginning of “apologetics.” “Apologia” (*apo low gee a*) is a courtroom word meaning “to give a reasoned defense.” It is what a lawyer does in presenting his case. In our modern world, we think of saying you are sorry, but this is nowhere close to apologia. One of the earliest surviving apologetics is the “Apology of Aristides the Philosopher.” It was delivered to the royal court of Caesar Hadrian when he came to Athens around AD 125. See <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/aristides-kay.html>.

Through the centuries, the apologia became more sophisticated and complex as more and more situations and heresies sprang up. Somebody said, “Heresies help to expose the weaknesses in theology.” Heretics, cults, and critics exploit weaknesses and problems in existing weak theology more than poking holes in good theology. See chapter 6, “Eschatology” for examples. Christian theology, philosophy, and apologetics all grew together in a parallel development out of necessity. There is naturally an interconnectedness of the disciplines. In principle, when rightly understood, they form a single, coherent, unified description of God’s reality.

Later, modern science (the product of Christian civilization) would be woven in and make the cord even stronger. Each one depends on a correct understanding of the others to maintain its integrity. Any discrepancies are with our understanding and not with God’s explanation of reality. Compromise and error unravel the cord.

Over time and upon closer examination of the details of every facet of Christian life and thinking, differentiations emerged, and different branches, or specialties, formed. The two main trunks have to do with explaining Christianity itself and why only the Christian worldview is valid. Some of the methods of apologetics will be examined below. This is similar also to the branches of theology, philosophy, and

science. It is unfortunate that many in the Church are anti-education, anti-mind. They are too busy being “spiritual.” But in Romans 12, it says transformation comes from a renewed mind.

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

There is much to do to set right in the entire educational system inside and outside the Church, and those people aren't even in the game. It is easier to sit on the sidelines and criticize than do the necessary hard work to make a difference. This is why there is so little transformation. Minds, and thus behaviors, are not being renewed. Memorizing Bible verses is a necessary but insufficient condition for discipleship. In many places, there is little difference between the thinking of those inside and outside the Churches.

The Kingdom of God encompasses all that exists, and we have that stewardship and will give an account to God for our part. The glory of God does indeed cover the earth (Is 6:3), but the knowledge of that fact is lacking (Hab 2:14), for now. The glory of God permeates all of reality. It is our job to explain it and specifically demonstrate it. We have a commission from the King and have been given marvelous tools to accomplish the task.

There are essentially two trajectories, two edges to this sword: (1) explaining Christianity, usually involving theology, and (2) showing all other systems to be irrational and inconsistent, lack the preconditions for meaningful human experience, and are simply untrue. While there have been pockets of rationality and pockets of things that are true, like careful observations about the world and the science behind technology, these false systems, as a whole, are incoherent, unstable, and will ultimately collapse. It was necessary that the Soviet Union collapsed, as will Islam, Hinduism and all other false systems. Suffering is the inevitable sign of a corrupt system. The question is “Who or what will fill the void when it does collapse?”

Acts 17:30

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands everyone everywhere to repent [think again, change of mind, turn to the truth].

Many have compartmentalized their life to such a degree that they can literally believe two, or more, opposing beliefs with no discomfort. Remember George Orwell's *1984* and doublethink? One such dichotomy is that there are sacred things and there are secular things, and some say, these should never be mixed. There is a theological name for this called Radical 2 Kingdoms, R2K. Another is that science and reason are in conflict with faith. Together, these lead to the idea that there are “religious truths” and “secular truths” which can be opposite and yet be both true at the same time. What nonsense, what raving madness! Jesus is Lord of all, and truth is one.

The progression, as men push God and His glory further out of sight, has brought us to the place where the egg is so scrambled that even unbelievers shake their heads. We are reaching the end of atheistic post-modern madness. We see the decay in almost every human endeavor. Confusion abounds.

1 Corinthians 1:20-24

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Psalms 53:1

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

Colossians 2:8-10

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality [rule] and power [authority].

Notice Paul didn't say beware of philosophy. He said beware of philosophy not based on Christ. Every man-made system has been made foolish; they will all fail. Every field of man's exploration is into realms originated by God. Theology, philosophy, sociology, psychology, geology, and all the other “ologies,” all have a divine foundation but get perverted through humanistic distortions, especially when they try to eliminate God. Proper conclusions are impossible without a proper starting point. Sometimes they accidentally get something right through careful observation. For something to be impossible, it means there is a 0% chance that it will happen or a 100% chance that it won't.

Jesus said, “I will build My [Ecclesia]...” Matt 16:18. Ecclesia more correctly translated means “assembly” and historically carried a different connotation than “Church.” Assembly meant the gathering or congregation of saints, while Church implied the building and/or the leadership, but not necessarily the congregation. In Roman times the ecclesia was a local assembly of people chosen for the responsibility of carrying out Roman requirements in their locality. Thus, the true purpose of the “Ecclesia” or local church, is to carry Heaven's requirements to the people in their local area. More in chapter 8 “Dominion.” Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt 28: 18). “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven” (Matt 6:10).

Acts 17:30-31

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent [change their mind], 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

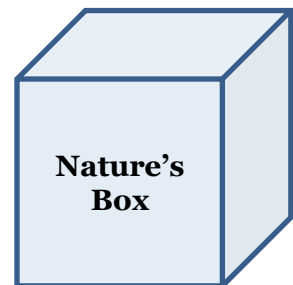
I find it fascinating is that atheists dogmatically insist that the message of Christianity is “Just put your blind faith in our religion.” When Christianity, more than any other worldview I am aware of, has always said “Here's how you can know this is true.” So, if Christians proclaim, “Here's the proof,” why do atheists hear “Just believe without any evidence whatsoever?” It's as if hearing they do not hear and seeing they do not see (See Is 6:6, Mt 13:13, Lk 8:10).

Dr. David Wood, “Debate on the Resurrection of Jesus,” Introduction.

4. Prisoners in Nature's Box

Nature's Box is my metaphor for the material, natural world. From the outer reaches of the cosmos to our physical bodies to the subatomic particles. It is the physical universe and the laws of physics and chemistry that describe it all.

To the atheist, materialist, physicalist, nothing else exists. Nothing else can exist. Man, separated from God, is a prisoner in Nature's Box. He is a slave to the ignorance, decay and death that permeates his reality. There is nothing outside the box. No help and no hope of rescue from his inescapable condition. Try as he may to find meaning, there is none. I have heard of some atheists being upset with God because He doesn't exist. C. S. Lewis was one of these, for a time. Atheism is a fatherless religion. That is called a presuppositional conflict. Recall the man of water under “A Better Way of Thinking” above.



History, morality, and standards all become man centered and therefore, subjective. Nature, rather than God, becomes the center of gravity but spiritual drives continue. Worship shifts from the Creator to the created world (Rom 1:25). Over time thinking becomes naturalized, empirical, and earth based, but still subject to all the natural and supernatural forces. How do you defend yourself against what you claim doesn't exist?

2 Timothy 2:26

and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been **taken captive by him at his will.**

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded**, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Get over your childish, self-pacifying beliefs and deal with the fact that the world is senseless.

(B.B. from Buffalo, New York, email to Answers in Genesis, Nuclear Strength Apologetics I, 31:30)

If God does not exist, everything is permitted.

(Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* 1880)

Naturalism is the belief that nothing exists beyond nature – a more specific form of materialism that says nothing exists beyond matter and the laws that govern the material world. Hmmm, laws are abstract, aren't they? Laws don't exist in the material world, only in a mind, do they? The source of the knowledge of God, including abstract, immaterial, invariant, universal objects (AIUUs), do not originate from within Nature's Box. The naturalist denies that anything exists outside the box and will only accept sources from the inside. This presupposition is the foundation to all anti-supernatural beliefs and the elevation of science to religion status. Only physical things can happen. Using measurements obtained exclusively inside Nature's Box, they are going to make the claim, and conclude, there is nothing outside the box. But in truth, it starts with a belief about reality, long before any calculations are made.

The purpose of the enlightenment was to find a way to explain everything without God and promised a better world without God. But rather than the liberation it claimed, it clearly and proudly announces its confinement to Nature's Box. Three hundred million dead testifies to the malevolent nature of the enlightenment and organized atheism.

Methodological Naturalism is the restriction placed on science that says *only* naturalistic causes will be considered in scientific investigations. Notice that supernatural causes are excluded, by definition. But this is perfectly consistent with the atheistic or materialistic worldview which denies the existence of any supernatural causes in the first place, a priori. So, science is no longer the search for the truth of the natural world; it is the search for a purely natural explanation. Some have said, "Science is atheistic." This is a denial of even the possibility that some effects may have a supernatural source because there is no such thing as the supernatural to begin with. There is no God, and we are here; therefore... This assertion is also consistent with being a prisoner in Nature's Box.

So why the redundancy in the name? It is an in-your-face statement to supernaturalists that their views are not welcome. It is true that for most scientific investigations, like those that lead to technological advancements and discoveries about the present natural world, there is no problem. But there are serious problems in trying to discover natural solutions to unique supernatural events, like origins and miracles. The cause of supernatural events is beyond the reach of purely naturalistic science.

However, the effects play out and may be documented in the natural world, like someone who was blind but now sees.

Imagine a rubber ball dropped into a river from off a bridge. Now imagine that ball floats many miles downstream and is picked up by a scientist with an enquiring mind. That scientist could perform every known test and still not discover how the ball came to be in the river. Once the ball is dropped into the river, natural physical and chemical processes began to work on the ball. All that could be discovered are the natural processes acting on the ball from the time it was dropped into the river.

Miracles are similar to the ball in that after the miraculous event, natural processes resume their normal activity. The wine from water got digested. Lazarus eventually died again. Unless an eyewitness came forward, the scientist is left with an unanswerable mystery, “How did that ball get into the river?” But we have a Witness to the beginning of everything, the Creator Himself!

Historical sciences – like history, archeology and the paleo-ologies – are particularly constrained by worldview. That means the outcome of any scientific investigation is predetermined by the presuppositions of the scientist and the establishment “consensus view.” Most understand what happens if you go against the established view, so a measure of compliance is ensured. If you believe in millions of years, you will get different results than if you believe the biblical view of history. Historical sciences are faith-based.

Once a person is “born from above,” a contradiction and conflict is immediately engaged. The view from outside Nature’s Box is radically, fundamentally different than the view from inside Nature’s Box. Decisions must be made. Below are a few verses that specifically address this difference. In every way Kingdom life is superior to natural life. It is necessary that the basic Kingdom principles displace basic earthly principles in our thinking and in our lives.

Reshaping the Naturalist’s Mind

Ephesians 2:4-6

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Ephesians 6:12

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Romans 8:20-21

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be **delivered from the bondage to decay** into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Galatians 4:3, 8-9

3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were **enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.**

8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. 9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the **weak and beggarly elements**, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

Colossians 2:8, 20-22

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the **basic principles of the world**, and not according to Christ. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ **from the basic principles of the world**, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations – 21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22 which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

Hebrews 5:12-14

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again **the first principles** of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

All the above highlighted words come from the same Greek word: *στοιχεια* (*stoicheia*) and means something orderly in arrangement, that is, (by implication), a serial (basal, fundamental, initial) constituent (literally), a proposition (figuratively). G4747 from Strong's Dictionary. We get the word “stoichiometry” from this.

Notice there are first principles of the earth, first principles of the Mosaic law, and first principles of God. All the systems of the world, from the atheistic to the world religions to the occult, shamanistic and spiritistic religions are all governed by the first principles of the world. Every living thing on the earth is dying. Death is their master. The Gospel (good news) is that they can be set free.

John 10:10

... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

John 11:25-26

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

1 Corinthians 15:25-26

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

As the people of God, we are to make a distinction as to which set of principles are primary in our lives. The trap was in going back to the Mosaic principles. We do, in fact, live by both earthly and Kingdom principles, but which is the center of gravity of our lives? The supernatural or the natural? The glorious liberty we have as sons of God (Rom 8:21) or the enslaving, decaying elementary principles of this world?

John 8:31-36

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” 33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’” 34 Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

John 17:14-18

14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because **they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.** 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 **They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.** 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

5. Defeaters

Ministers regularly deal with the thoughts in people’s heads that stand against what they are saying. Some of those thoughts are conscious. Some are not. Bad theology and false beliefs drive bad interpretations and even inhibits correct understanding. These are called ‘Defeaters.’

If you believe ‘A’ then belief ‘B’ is impossible.

For instance:

1. If a Christian believes in millions of years, it is impossible to see that the Bible plainly teaches thousands of years. By the way, as noted below, many other Scriptures must be massaged into agreement with that exterior belief or are simply ignored.
2. If a person denies the existence of the supernatural, a miracle could happen right in front of their eyes and will say there is some naturalistic cause, that we just don’t understand yet. “Did you contact Ripley’s Believe It or Not? Since the Bible talks about supernatural events, (floating axe head, walking on water, resurrection of the dead) the Bible can’t be trusted.”
3. John 14:12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

If a person doesn’t believe we can do what Jesus did, then the greater works aren’t even a consideration. I ask about this verse when someone claims to believe the Bible. Too many don’t.

Of course, these work the other way also and become a protection from error. We are here to stand for the truth of things and show how and why they are true. We are not here to offer options. Jesus came to speak the truth with authority.

Mark 1:21-22

21 Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. 22 And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

6. Eyewitnesses

1 John 1:1-4

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with

the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

John 1:14-15

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.”

John 3:11

Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

John 15:26-27

26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because **you have been with Me from the beginning.**”

Acts 4:19-20

19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For **we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.**”

Acts 22:15

For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

1 Corinthians 9:1

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? **Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?** Are you not my work in the Lord?

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He **was seen by Cephas**, then by **the twelve**. 6 After that He was **seen by over five hundred** brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was **seen by James**, then by **all the apostles**. 8 Then last of all He was **seen by me also**, as by one born out of due time.

1 Peter 5:1

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and **a witness of the sufferings of Christ**, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

2 Peter 1:16-18

16 For **we did not follow cunningly devised fables** when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 18 And **we heard this voice** which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

7. Thinking Like Jesus

General Faith

Romans 12:3

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as **God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Hebrews 11:1, 6

1 Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 12:1-2

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 **looking unto Jesus**, the author (ruler) and **finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Galatians 2:20

20 I have been **crucified with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 3:11

But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”

Romans 1:17

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Great Faith

Matthew 8:5-13

5 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.” 7 And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 **For I also am a man under authority**, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such **great faith, not even in Israel!** 11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.

The centurion understood authority and knew the soldiers under his command would obey his every word. Likewise, he recognized Jesus’s own words were like his soldiers. This very much impressed Jesus, and He equated this understanding with great faith. Jesus also noted that

a foreigner had greater faith than the people of God, the ones to whom faith was entrusted. God often finds impressive faith in unlikely places. See also Isaiah 55:10-11

James 2:5

Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

Matthew 15:21-28

21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed **to the region of Tyre and Sidon**. 22 And behold, a **woman of Canaan** came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “**Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David!** My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” 23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.” 24 But He answered and said, “**I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**” 25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

26 But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the **children’s bread** and throw it to the **little dogs.**” 27 And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet **even the little dogs eat the crumbs** which fall from their masters’ table.” 28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, **great is your faith!** Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

The children’s bread is deliverance. The Canaanite woman, in responding to Jesus, recognized that the crumb from the Master was all her daughter needed, not something large or flashy. Again, this very much impressed Jesus, and He equated this understanding with great faith. This also illustrates that genuine faith is rooted in something deeper than mere belief; it is rooted in understanding (Prov 4:7). By the way, real faith doesn’t take “No” for an answer, it persists until it receives (Heb 6:12). She was, in effect, told “No” three times.

Some people think that saying the correct words is what causes the result. Some Eastern religions say that it is the sound vibrations coming out of one’s mouth that affect the environment. Manipulating the environment, and people, is the essence of witchcraft. But where did this idea come from? That is what God did, “Let there be...” Words are important, but more important is the truth and intentions behind them. We have all said something in a way we didn’t mean. Honest people want to communicate as clearly as possible.

Matthew 12:34, 37

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

John 2:1-5

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. 3 And when they ran out of wine, **the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”** 4 Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? **My hour has not yet come.**” 5 His mother said to the servants, “**Whatever He says to you, do it.**”

Question: How does the mother of Jesus demonstrate her great faith? Jesus told her “No.” Why does this look like presumption on her part? What is the difference between presumption and faith? Clue: results!

The Dignity of Faith

Matthew 11:2-6

2 And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples 3 and said to Him, “**Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?**” 4 Jesus answered

and said to them, **“Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”**

Jesus could have simply answered yes to their question. But He didn't. Jesus wanted John to trust in what he knew. He had heard from God that the Holy Spirit would visibly rest on the Messiah. He saw it happen. He heard God say, “This is My beloved Son,” John had both heard and seen the fulfillment of the Word of God. Then there were all the signs the Messiah would perform. Jesus offered evidence in verse 5. The messengers also saw and heard. Our faith belongs in the real. How many secretly want someone to believe in them? Faith offers a hidden strength.

A simple yes was grossly insufficient to strengthen the prophet about to lose his head. Now John would face his executioner with the dignity and certainty of faith that he had not missed God and fulfilled his mission in life. “I have run the course and finished the race,” Paul echoed thirty years later. Then Jesus added something else:

Matthew 11:11

Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has **not risen one greater than John** the Baptist; but he **who is least in the kingdom** of heaven **is greater than he.**

A son is better than a servant (Jn 8:35, Heb 3:5-6).

Trick Questions and Answers

Matthew 21:23-27

23 Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?” 24 But Jesus answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus and said, “We do not know.” And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

There are times when it is necessary to question the questioner. Often, it is to uncover the motives of the questioner. In questioning the chief priests and elders, Jesus wanted to demonstrate that they couldn't or wouldn't understand His answer. There is no obligation to answer those who can't or won't understand our answers, but we may go ahead and answer the questions for the benefit of those in the crowd. The debate is for the crowd, not the opponent.

Matthew 22:15-21

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. 16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. 17 Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? 19 Show Me the tax money.” So they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” 21 They said to Him, “Caesar's.” And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

First notice that Jesus viewed their question as wickedness and hypocrisy, not just a simple question. Frequently, we are asked trick questions of a two-option form called the “horns of a dilemma” in which both answers are untenable. But Jesus always goes for option number three. He answers the question and

displays the wisdom of God or the mind of Christ (1Cor 2:16), unavailable to the tricksters. May we learn to operate such wisdom and bring real answers to the many vexing problems of today.

Luke 20:27-40

27 Then some of the Sadducees, **who deny that there is a resurrection**, came to Him and asked Him, 28 saying: “Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife and died without children. 30 And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. 31 Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children and died. 32 Last of all the woman died also. 33 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.” 34 Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of **this age** marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are counted worthy to attain **that age**, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 **nor can they die anymore**, for they are as angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection (Rom 1:4). 37 But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ 38 For **He is not the God of the dead but of the living**, for all live to Him.” 39 Then some of the scribes answered and said, “Teacher, You have spoken well.” 40 But after that **they dared not ask Him anymore questions** (See also Matt 22:23-33).

Again, Jesus answers this trick question in a way that brings to light a deeper understanding of the future of the marriage relationship and the relationship of God and His people. Jesus answered so well they dared not ask any more trick questions. They were the smart people, and Jesus made them look foolish. That is part of our job – teach the truth of things and show contradictions in such a way so as to silence the critics.

“It is never about winning, Greg. It is about exposing their inconsistency. God does everything else. Never forget the antithesis.”
—Cornelius Van Til to Greg L. Bahnsen (1985)

Here are a few verses to ponder about faith, fear, and (misapplied) reason. See if you can identify what is going on in each case.

Matthew 16:8

But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, “O you of **little faith**, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?”

Mark 4:40

But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have **no faith**?”

Matthew 14:28-31

28 And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” 29 So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**”

Mark 16:14

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Luke 24:38-39

38 And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

John 20:27

Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving but believing.”

How do all these different scenarios play out in our everyday thinking and life? How do teachers, lawyers, administrators, mechanics, first responders, bank officials, the homeless, soldiers, and politicians use these in everyday life? Everybody uses faith every day.

Before we jump into the various apologetic methods, let’s look at some other factors. It is always good to define terms to minimize confusion and to keep everyone honest.

8. Some Definitions

- A. Presuppositions. These are our most basic or fundamental beliefs, held religiously, believed by faith, unverifiable by natural science. Presuppositions cannot be “proven” as such but can be evidenced.
- B. Worldview. A network of presuppositions in the light of which all experience is inter-related and interpreted. Worldviews give structure and meaning to the life we experience and are inherently religious. In some way, everything that you think should relate to everything else that you think. Every system of thought has its own starting point that it accesses by faith. Personal identity starts here. A worldview is a comprehensive approach to reality, knowledge, thinking, and life itself.
- C. Metaphysics. Is a view or study of ultimate reality – the origin, structure, and nature of reality.
 - a. What is the existence and/or nature of God? Which God?
 - b. What is the origin and nature of the universe?
 - c. What is the origin and nature of man? Is he free, basically good, an animal? What is man’s place?
 - d. What is history? What is the nature of change, development and meaning in history? How and why do things change? What about the future?
 - e. What is the nature of laws, concepts and universals? What is the nature of uniformity? How or why do unchanging things exist in a world of constantly changing things?

There are three basic roots of reality.

- i. Divine – behind all of reality is God: “In the beginning God...”
- ii. Material – reality is nothing more than physics and chemistry: “In the beginning nothing...”
- iii. Illusion – all that is perceived is illusory, can’t know anything for sure: Brahma’s dream.
By the way, are you sure you can’t know anything for sure?

All worldviews have the same pattern of overarching reality.

Biblical: creation fall redemption restoration

Others: origins the human condition How is it fixed? How does history end?

Question: How does Marxism fit this pattern?

- D. Epistemology. How we know what we know
 - a. On what basis can we trust the reliability of the human mind?
Without a satisfactory answer to this question, none of the others can be answered.
In most cases basic reliability is assumed. But why? On what basis?
 - b. What is the nature of belief?
 - c. What is the nature of truth?

- d. What are the standards or procedures for justifying one's beliefs?
- e. What is the nature of science and discovery?

Three basic roots of knowledge.

- i. Rational – stop and think. Knowledge comes through the mind through logic and reason. Reason is the **power to direct** our thoughts toward a conclusion. Those who say truth only comes from right reason are called rationalists.
 - ii. Empirical – stop and look. Knowledge comes through the senses, experience, observation, science. Those who say truth only comes from the senses are called empiricists. “What science cannot tell us; mankind cannot know” (Bertrand Russell).
 - iii. Revelational – stop and listen. Knowledge is revealed or disclosed, normally by God Himself. How is man's mind enlightened by God? Those who say truth only comes from God are called revelationists. “All truth is God's truth.” Truth is revealed in or through:
 - i. Creation
 - ii. Jesus
 - iv. Bible – Destroyed as a source of knowledge by millions of years and evolution.
- Personal (God speaks to people today) – Denied by many people.
 Rational and empirical knowledge have their foundations here. Man can only observe or discover what God has made knowable. But what is most amazing is that man's mind has been made with a correspondence to the natural world such that it is able to appreciate God's creation from the infinitesimally tiny size of subatomic particles to the magnitude of intergalactic space (Deut 29:29, Rom 1:19, Eph 3:3-5).

How can it be that mathematics, being after all, the product of human thought, independent of experience, is so admirably appropriate to the objects of reality? The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.
 (Albert Einstein)

- E. Ethics or Values – What is right behavior, valuable, important, good, beautiful?
 - a. Nature of good and evil
 - b. The standards of ethics and ethical evaluation
 - c. How one attains moral character and conduct
 - d. Nature of guilt, atonement, and personal peace
 - e. Nature of social order and the state

- F. Faith – Trust in an authority, belief that is put into action. You can't believe what you don't know. Reason and knowledge are the servants of faith. Faith starts in knowledge and is perfected in experience. Everybody believes things unverifiable by natural science. Faith allows us to touch the future through such avenues as trust, induction, the uniformity of nature (see below), and experimentation. Greg Bahnsen once asked, “What justifies your proceeding on the expectation that the future will be like the past?” **Faith!** And everyone exercises faith. Faith is often defined narrowly such that only “religious” people have faith. Every belief system requires faith and is often called a “faith.” So, the next time someone challenges you on your belief system simply say, “Yes, your faith is different from my faith.”
 Someone may ask you to trust them. At that moment, faith is exercised, or not. Faith and trust go hand-in-hand. Sometimes faith is grudgingly given. You may come, over time, to trust a new friend, author, or teacher. Faithfulness implies a loyal faith. Faith is blind when there is no knowledge or reason to back the trust, reducing it to mere opinion or credulity. Shallow, superficial “belief” is a poor substitute for the certainty of faith. To me belief is the same as opinion. All faith rests on belief that is put into action. Not all faith is true. When truth and Divine faith (Eph 2:8) walk together mountains move.

Uniformity of Nature is the assumption that nature behaves in a uniform manner across space and time. This is assumed since we have no experience beyond our own space and time. This is necessary for science and intimately related to induction.

Induction is the principle that allows us to start from general things, even past experience and make specific conclusions. It allows us to make predictions (a future outcome) based on past experience or incomplete knowledge. Induction, by faith, helps us bridge the knowledge gap. Induction works hand-in-hand with the Uniformity of Nature to make science possible. David Hume, in his “The Problem of Induction,” demonstrates that atheism offers no foundation for induction, and worse, it is not possible to know the future. There are a wide variety of applications, and all involve faith.

- a. I have studied swans in Wyoming for two years and have concluded that all the swans in Wyoming are white. My conclusion may be shown to be false by the discovery of a single black swan.
 - b. Large copper deposits are discovered on the moon. Since we have no experience with lunar copper, what makes us think that lunar copper will conduct electricity like terrestrial copper?
 - c. What makes us think that we can mix hydrogen and oxygen and get water, not salt?
 - d. What makes us think that we can squeeze a tube of toothpaste, and toothpaste (as opposed to hair cream) will come out?
- G. Religion. The day-by-day exercise or living expression of faith. People often think of religion as belief in some deity or as rituals performed at some location. This can be true but is deeper because everyone has religion, even those pretending to be religion-free. Someone might say, “So and so got religion.” Not true. So and so changed religions. People change their religion by changing their underlying faith commitments. Inevitably, people of similar beliefs or thinking flock together to form associations, groups, or faith communities. Every religion has sub-groupings or “denominations.” Changing one’s religion often changes one’s associations. This can be traumatic as friends become enemies and vice versa. The Saul/Paul conversion is an example. Those that once looked up to Saul later sought to kill him. Some religions are more organized than others. Some are more rational than others. Some are more toxic than others, and some are more destructive than others. Every religion claims exclusive truth. You may have to listen carefully to the vocabulary, but the underlying ideas are the same. A solipsist is a religion of one. (Tim Keller, *The Meaning of God*, chapter 2).
- H. Theology. The justification, outline, and/or theory of one’s religion. As everyone has a religion, so too everyone has a theology or theological statement. Atheism is a theological position. Again, some are more detailed and specific than others.
- I. Philosophy. Who are we, how do we fit in, and why? It tries to answer the big questions and serves religion. All religions have an attendant philosophy. Everybody does philosophy. It used to be said, “Theology is the queen of the sciences, and philosophy is her handmaid.”
- J. Politics. The application of theology onto the social order and governance. The largest position of organized atheism is Communism or one of its denominations. The state is the ultimate organized religion. All law is someone’s moral philosophy, derived from their worldview, being imposed on everyone else. Government is inherently forceful. Politics is always downstream of theology. Plainly, politics is an expression of religion, so it matters what religion is dominant.

Note that all the above definitions are interrelated and form a powerful interconnecting web or network that governs all human knowledge and experience. Later, we will look at what are called the “Preconditions for Intelligibility.” Does one’s most basic beliefs supply a proper foundation for meaningful human knowledge and experience?

As such, there is an inherent feed-back loop that adjusts the various parts of the network as needed. Of course, there is a spectrum of commitment strength, consistency, and coherence, ranging from true believers to the unwittingly ignorant and to pretenders.

On the negative side, this network locks in a destructive way of thinking that is difficult to break. That is why a divine transformation of the mind is necessary (Rom 12:1-2). On the other hand, this network can be a powerful stabilizing force where needed adjustments aren't so drastic. No one is perfect but the One. We are works in progress. The miracle of God's grace is that He has made a way for us to think like Him and change (Rom 12:1-2, 1Cor 2:16, Gal 4:19, Php 2:5)!

In principle, worldviews will agree on nothing. In principle, they would do nothing in a common fashion or in the same way in this world. But they often do things similarly. Why? People are inconsistent and don't mind plagiarizing God. They will use what works even if it contradicts their most basic beliefs. But they don't know why it works.

Romans 10:14-15

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

Every form of evangelism, theistic or atheistic, follows this principle. You cannot believe what you don't know. Education follows this same procedure.

Enmity

There is one more piece to this puzzle to interject, and it runs even deeper than presuppositions. It is summed up in the word "enmity." Enmity means "hostility," and you see the word enemy, but it is not just any hostility. It is the hostility between the Creator and the crown of His creation, life and death, light and darkness, order and chaos. It is the epic conflict of the ages. Enmity is first found in Genesis 3. By the way, this is the origin for the "Yin-Yang" symbol. But they falsely believe that the opposing forces are in balance. Not even close!

Genesis 3:14-15

14 So Yahweh God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And **I will put enmity** between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall crush your head and you shall bruise His heel."

Notice the source of the enmity, it is God Himself, "I will put enmity...." God set the opposition between His own and everything else, between what is true and what is not. This enmity, this antithesis, is first manifested in Cain and Abel. Cain killed his brother Abel because Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God and Cain's was rejected. Acceptance and rejection are powerful motivating forces in many lives. The dysfunction in the first family became host to the first murder. Genesis is the book of firsts.

Matthew 13:37-43, from Matthew 13:24-30

37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

All of history is full of good-versus-evil stories. Heroes and villains are the stuff from which legends are made. Interestingly, it depends on which side of the fence one stands as to who are the heroes and who are the villains. Are they "freedom fighters" or "gorilla terrorists?" Depends on who is telling the stories. Enmity is embedded into the human psyche and written into the fabric of human history. Bible history

traces the enmity from start to finish. The enmity is also described in John 3 and Romans 1 below, which says everyone knows about God but suppresses that knowledge, even hating God, and then begins to worship some aspect of the creation rather than the Creator. This is the root answer to the question, “Why are there so many religions?”

John 3:17-19

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness** rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Romans 1:18-20

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **suppress the truth** in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for **God has shown it to them**. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are **clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse**.

In the love of darkness and suppression of truth, the enmity is on display for all to see. They don't want the God of all creation. They want something else, anything else. Today people want to impress one another by saying they are “spiritual.” And they are because they are made in the image of God. But usually, they mean “anything but Jesus.”

In civilized countries, among “educated” people, the enmity is a willful hostility that takes the form of a façade of scientific and intellectual superiority. As noted by Rupert Sheldrake, there are ten core beliefs that atheistic scientists take for granted that make up the default worldview of most atheistically educated people:

1. Nature of the universe is mechanical or machine like. People and animals are just complex machines.
2. Matter is unconscious. Therefore, human consciousness is an illusion.
3. The laws of nature are fixed (contrasted to a world of constant change).
4. Total amount of matter and energy is always the same. The total quantity is always the same.
5. Nature is purposeless, directionless.
6. Biological heredity is material via DNA.
7. Memories are stored inside your brain as material traces.
8. Your mind is inside your head. Mind equals brain.
9. [Supernatural] phenomena are impossible.
10. Mechanistic or materialistic medicine is the only kind that really works.

Note the inherent anti supernatural nature of this materialistic worldview. Since science is currently imperfect, many scientists think the abundant discrepancies will eventually be figured out, given sufficient time, and so they issue scientific IOUs by faith. “Magic is science we haven't discovered yet,” says Isaac Asimov. Like someone rising from the dead. They reason, “Since there is no god, and matter is all that exists, everything has a material, or natural explanation. Give us time and enough government grants and we will figure it out.” The religious faith-based content of such a statement eludes them. C. S. Lewis's book “Miracles” is brilliant at showing why reality itself is miraculous!

Terence McKenna says, “Modern science is based on the principle: Give us one free miracle and we will explain the rest. The one free miracle is the appearance of all the mass and energy in the universe and all the laws that govern it, from nothing, in a single instant.”

Notice “modern science” has to come to the Creator God to get the free miracle that is then used to deny His existence. As far as I can tell, neither Rupert Sheldrake nor Terence McKenna are Christians, but they are good observers.

9. The Myth of Neutrality

1 Peter 3:15 Sanctify the Lord in your heart and be ready to give an answer

Matthew 12:30 He that is not with Me, is against Me

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do heartily as unto the Lord

“If there is only one universe, you might have to have a fine-tuner. If you don’t want God, you’d better have a multiverse.”

(Barnard Carl, cosmologist at Queen Mary University at London

“Science’s Alternative to an Intelligent Creator, the Multiverse Theory,” *Discover*, December 2004)

Neutrality says that no structure, order, system or truth will be assumed in advance. We will start as a “blank slate” and “see where the evidence leads us.” Contrary to popular belief neutrality is not a neutral position. As will be shown, with increasing detail, the idea of neutrality, when it comes to root belief issues, is a myth. A commonly projected idea is that atheism is the truly neutral position and, with respect to unbiased government, secularism. These are self-serving definitions to mask the true religious nature of their systems. A “pretended neutrality.”

Imagine trying to prove anything that you believe, starting with no beliefs whatsoever. Can you prove reason? Can you prove science? Can you prove the number 4? Can you prove your own existence? Can you prove anything? The answer is **no** because it is impossible to start nowhere.

There is no such thing as real neutrality when it comes to foundational issues. It is impossible to start nowhere. Everybody starts somewhere, and those that profess they are starting nowhere are simply unaware of their own presuppositions and assumptions (i.e., their own bias). Those that most loudly demand that we must meet on “neutral ground,” i.e., secular, atheistic ground, have predetermined where the interaction will lead. They are begging the question. Imagine getting into an airplane called Neutrality. No matter how engaging or fruitful the discussion, you are still going to the airplane’s destination. Don’t get on that plane! They are not neutral, and you shouldn’t be.

Romans 11:36

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

It is more honest to admit your bias than pretend you don’t have one, a pretended neutrality, called the “Pretended Neutrality Fallacy.” (Dr. Greg Bahnsen, the Bahnsen-Stein debate)

Related to neutrality is “open-mindedness.” If a person says that they are open-minded on some particular topic, they are saying they have no prior commitment or position on that topic. Is it possible to be open-minded on $2+2=4$? I should hope not! To say that a person is open-minded on $2 + 2 = 4$ is to say I have no commitment to $2 + 2$ being 4, and it might be something other than 4. “I am open to other possibilities.” If $2 + 2$ is something other than 4, the answer isn’t known; it is uncertain, at best. Being open-minded or neutral is to be uncertain. To be certain is to be closed-minded or non-neutral.

It is interesting to note the number of evolutionists that I have heard demand that we be open-minded with respect to evolution while they talk over and refuse to even look at the evidence that contradicts evolution. Open-mindedness, like neutrality is a one-way street. See “Dinosaur Soft Tissue” and listen to Lawrence Krauss rant and rave. I count no less than ten pejoratives, exaggerations, distortions, and

prejudicial conjectures in ten minutes of noise. It's like a young musician that thinks more volume is a good substitute for skill.

I recently heard a lecture by Kraus given in California on cosmology. I found it fascinating on the things we are learning. But Lawrence is completely incapable of getting past his own religious faith that tells him the universe created itself from nothing. His presuppositional view of reality determines, in advance, what he must find. He keeps digging until he gets the answer he knows must be true. If your religion requires that you start with nothing, (space and quantum fields excluded) then the mathematics, as well as all facts and their interpretations, must be conjured to agree, and all of material, natural reality (materialism) must fall into that line. Of course, this is completely at odds with a supernaturally completed universe, in a matter of days. Krauss' speculations are endless, as well as his circular reasoning, to which he is completely blind.

Uncertainty leads to indecision. The same could be said for neutrality. They outwardly claim no commitment to anything, but after a brief conversation their commitment is as plain as a brick wall. G.K. Chesterton said, "The purpose of an open mind, is the same as the purpose of an open mouth, it is meant to close on something." Ever watch someone chew with their mouth open? Not a pleasant experience. The same is true for the so-called open-minded.

Some people are so open-minded their brain fell out, they've lost their mind. Is it possible for a Christian to be neutral or open-minded with respect to the lordship of Jesus Christ, His resurrection or even the very existence of God? It might be possible, but to do so would be to deny Christ's absolute lordship at the outset of the discussion. The Christian must give up the belief that Jesus IS Lord in order to become neutral. Further, the Christian must consider the possibility that he can exist even if God does not. So, fellow Christian, if you are even tempted to believe that you can exist even if God does not, this chapter is dedicated to you.

Neutrality is a passive denial of a positive affirmation that Jesus *is* Lord, or anything else. Agnosticism is in the same boat. It is a passive denial of God.

How then could arguments be made to come back around to say that Jesus is, in fact, Lord when we deny Him at the very beginning of the position we are trying to prove? This must never be allowed to happen. I suspect that the many Christians that argue for the existence of God from a "neutral position" or even a probabilistic position have not given this much thought. After all it sounds so reasonable, so fair, so right. I hope to change this. Our starting place is the Throne Room not the Twilight Zone.

From probability, even a 99.99% probability that Jesus rose from the dead means there is a 0.01% possibility that He did not. That is not Christian, not biblical. If there is even the slightest doubt it wouldn't matter which apologetic method is used. They will all be diluted to the degree you are still trying to convince yourself. The doubt has to be overcome first, then solid apologetics can begin.

One aspect of faith is certainty. Also, that 0.01% is the excuse unbelievers need to justify their unbelief. Evolutionists use a $1/10^{40K}$ (10^{40K} is a 1 followed by 40,000 zeros) chance for evolution without blinking. There are about 10^{80} number of atoms in the known universe. But they say, "Since there is no God, and after all, we are here, aren't we?" No need for neutrality is necessary, except for the Christian.

Anything less than 100% certainty leads to hesitation and your thinking is directly reflected in your confidence level. This can range from the subliminal to obvious discomfort in the conversation. Boldness is often a measure of confidence and competence of a particular subject. I think we have all experienced a measure of timidity early in our apologetics learning. Hopefully we get better with time. Don't allow such limitations stop you from pressing on. It will get better, I promise. We want every true advantage.

The multiverse theory, with its infinite number of universes, guarantees that even the most improbable events, like evolution, will happen somewhere. In their worldview, the fact that we are here is proof enough, even if we never explain how it happened. This is the power of presuppositions. The lengths the unbelievers go to remove the God of all creation and give His creative power to matter and energy is astounding. Raving madness!

“No evidence would be sufficient to create a change in the mind; that it is not a commitment to evidence, but a commitment to naturalism. ...Because there are no alternatives, we would have to accept natural selection as the explanation of life on this planet even if there were no evidence for it.”

(Steven Pinker, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *How the Mind Works*, 162)

Steven is admitting his commitment to naturalism. This is curious because there is no mind in an atheistic universe, only a brain. So, how can you explain something that doesn't exist? This is a philosophical inconsistency or presuppositional conflict.

Col 2:3 "...all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden [in Christ]." Further, for someone to claim true neutrality, they would have to give up knowledge. When they say they have knowledge, "no God exists," they are automatically biased and giving up neutrality. To claim neutrality and knowledge is to be inconsistent and prove the myth. It also means they have knowledge independent of Christ. Ultimately apologetics must ask whether facts are random events in a changing, chaotic, material universe, or something made by God. God alone has comprehensive knowledge. All "facts" and all their relationships are what they are by virtue of God's comprehensive plan. Every fact has His seal on it in the context of that comprehensive plan.

As a Christian, I have knowledge that God is real and true, that Jesus is both alive and Lord. So, by definition, I cannot be neutral. To do so would deny what I know to be true, making myself not only inconsistent but a false witness. Again, because I have knowledge, I cannot be neutral.

Conversely, the professing atheist, or believer of any other religion, is in the same situation. To say that a person has knowledge that there is no biblical God means they cannot be neutral. The "pretended neutrality fallacy" says that people pretend to be neutral, but their argumentation betrays their presuppositions, and their true starting point is shown to be anything but neutral. They are not open-minded, only pretending to be so. A skill to develop is listening to the opponent to gain insight as to their presuppositions and thus demonstrate "where they are coming from." Sometimes they themselves don't even know their own presuppositions. We can help them with that by asking them questions to draw it out.

For example, if someone asks you one of those "gotcha questions" like "If I don't believe in Jesus, I am going to hell, right?" the temptation is to jump in and try to answer the question. A better way is to ask the questioner, "On what basis will you judge my answer?" This will expose the questioner's bias, usually against whatever you might say. Questioning the questioner is a useful way to clarify their question and your answer. It also buys you some time to think and pray.

It should be noted that there are lesser issues in which it might be necessary to be impartial (like jury duty) or agnostic (what's for lunch) but, again, when it comes to root belief issues it is not possible to be neutral. Everybody starts somewhere.

An extension of this idea within Christianity is that people even approach the Scripture with preconceived ideas. I call these "continent views" or sub views within worldviews. This is partly why there are so many Christian groups, denominations, and cults. Each one I have met, that claims the Bible for its standard, set themselves distinctly against all the others. They are really being inconsistent or incomplete in their thinking. Truth is, by definition, singular. At best, only one can be right, and just maybe they are all wrong. To be fair, most groups that claim to be Christian have a fairly wide platform of agreement. But the differences can be significant. It is easy to point to those differences and throw the baby out with the bath water. What it means to be a Christian will be covered in chapter 7, "Redemption." In short, a Christian is one in whom Christ dwells (2Cor 13:5, Rm 8:9), hence the name "Christian."

Someone says miracles are impossible or violations of natural law or the book Daniel was written in the second century BC. How about "the cosmos is all there is or all there was or ever will be."? These are dripping with anti-theistic bias and are fundamentally religious positions. How do I know? Keep reading.

What normally happens is that people try to work out a theory of knowledge (science means knowledge), then apply that theory, that method of knowing, to the experiences of life, and then decide what reality is all about. This is backward.

One cannot arrive at a theory of knowledge without, in some measure, presupposing something about the nature of reality first. But this is often where early philosophy classes begin.

If you develop an epistemology claiming no metaphysical precommitments or prejudices and then apply that epistemology, can you proceed to some kind of metaphysical conclusion: be it monism, dualism, atomism, theism, atheism, etc.? Explained below. Restated, first of all, we decide how we know what we know, and then apply what we know to the nature of reality. This cannot work.

An illustration. Consider a peach-sorting machine. Imagine that you are a city person, and out of the blue, you inherit a peach orchard from a long-lost uncle. For all you know, peaches come from the grocery store. When you arrive at the orchard, a worker says it would be great to have a machine to sort good peaches from bad peaches. Being creative, you set out to invent such a peach sorting machine. As you begin, almost immediately, a problem presents itself: you have no idea how to tell a good peach from a bad peach. Without some preexisting standard (What is a good peach or a bad peach or even different grades of peaches?), a sorting machine cannot be built.

This was borrowed from Greg Bahnsen, thank you.

This is the difference between metaphysics and epistemology. Without some pre-existing standard (metaphysics) a theory of knowledge (epistemology) cannot be built. Then from the theory of knowledge, a theory of behavior or ethical standard is constructed. Everyone's ideas of "good and bad," "right and wrong," even "possible and impossible" have deep roots.

In reality, people choose a worldview with a metaphysical and epistemological outlook that is, to some degree, compatible with each other. Then ethics and values follow from there. For example:

Plato: Truth and ideals are beyond space and time. Therefore, knowledge is rational, intuitional.

Epicurus: Matter is all there is. Therefore, knowledge is empirical, of the senses, experiential.

Michael: God is in back of everything. Knowledge is revelational (In your light we see light). Knowledge follows the basic idea of reality. Ethics and values follow from what we know.

There are ultimately only two starting points: God and nothing. If nothing, then the most we can get is nothing, but if God, we get everything!

The difference is that the Christian apologist readily admits both the starting point and destination. We start and end in the triune Creator God.

All proofs for the existence of God or nonexistence of God presuppose their respective claims, but they are mutually exclusive, irreconcilably different claims. Both are faith positions, but both cannot be true. Recognizing this contradiction sets the stage for the debate. Is there an independent way to look at both and come to a proper conclusion? Actually, there isn't. This is the myth of neutrality. Any analysis will be, of necessity, filtered through our presuppositions. Examining truth claims at the presuppositional level is the most potent way to get at the truth of the claims.

Question: What metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics allow for abortion to be legal?

10. Circular Reasoning

DW: "I saw the sign on the door—neutral zone. I have always wanted to know what one of those might be. So, I guess I am interested in hearing your arguments for the existence of a neutral zone."

RD: "Well, this is a bit unusual, but the neutral zone is the place where we agree to reason together about ultimate questions... like the existence of God."

DW: "Reason. What's that?"

RD: "Reason is the process of identifying rational inferences from true and established premises."

DW: “Is this reason authoritative? Do we have a moral obligation to obey it?”

RD: “Well, yes.”

DW: “Why?”

RD: “Because to do otherwise would be... unreasonable.”

(Douglas Wilson, *The Deluded Atheist: A Response to Richard Dawkins’s The God Delusion*, 26-27)

Circularity has two basic forms: virtuous and vicious. Also, a tautology.

All forms of human reasoning reduce to some final, ultimate, supreme, or absolute authority. This is where faith comes in. When it comes to an ultimate standard, some circularity is built in. If you follow a chain of reasoning back to the ultimate source, that final authority becomes “self-referential” or “self-attesting” or “self-interpreting.” This is a virtuous circle. Note that this circle appears only at the very beginning, that of the supreme authority, and must be very tight. The toddler-test can be applied here, “Why? Why? Why?” There is a secondary wider circle, a feedback loop of evidences that reinforces the final authority. See the graphic below. It is said “God’s world agrees with God’s Word.” As it should, but the starting point is God’s Word, not God’s world.

“Begging the question” is an example of a vicious circle where the conclusion is assumed as part of the argument. It is easy to think that a self-attesting authority is begging the question. Sometimes the difference is subtle.

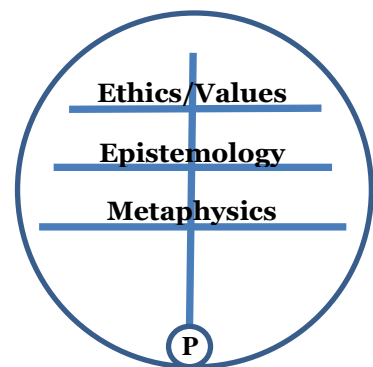
Consider the statement, “The use of logic or reason is the only valid way to examine the truth or falsity of the statement which claims to be factual” (Dr. Gordon recovered do).

“How does Dr. Stein prove this statement? If he says by logic and reason, he is begging the question. If he uses some other standard, he invalidates the statement itself by appealing to an even higher standard” (from the Bahnsen-Stein debate).

But there is a third possibility: that “logic and reason” are presuppositional. Logic and reason truly are his ultimate standard, and therefore the statement becomes “self-attesting.” However, this is a faith position and is not provable. When asked about why logic and reason is right, what will he do? Give logical reasons why logic and reason are right.

Once a person declares their ultimate standard, their system becomes fair game to be analyzed according to their ultimate standard. Only the Christian worldview can withstand such scrutiny. When someone says, “The Bible is full of inconsistencies,” ask them to show you some. But you have to be able to answer the perceived inconsistencies. Most perceived inconsistencies are due to bad theology and not the Bible itself. The second area of perceived inconsistencies has to do with the conflict between the Biblical worldview and the worldview of the critic. For instance, if the person is an atheist, or a Muslim, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a serious problem. They will try to make their problem, your problem. Do not allow them to impose their presuppositions on the Bible.

The graphic shows how knowledge flows from the deepest recesses of our understanding to actual behavior. At the lowest level, P, for presuppositions, are those unproven, unprovable, root beliefs that start the knowledge ball rolling. The small circle around the P is the self-referential, self-attesting nature of our presuppositions. In the final analysis, P is God, without whom reality itself is unintelligible or meaningless. The larger circle represents external, reinforcing evidences that support the presuppositions. The presuppositions, along with evidences, should form a coherent system of integrated thought that then, naturally supports Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Values, as well as provides feedback to the presuppositions. While no system is perfect, gaping holes point to either incomplete analysis or error. Evidences are always secondary but, if missing, can suggest P is not a valid starting point. If we “believe” something and there are no external evidences, we might need to rethink those beliefs. All this takes place before we even start to consider ultimate reality or metaphysics. For most people, all this happens unconsciously, being mostly inherited from their environment and experience.



When reason is the ultimate arbiter of truth, it is known as “rationalism.” For some it is science or natural senses, also called “empiricism.” But what is the foundation for logic or science? Where do the senses come from and how are they made intelligible, meaningful to the human mind? The materialist has no answer. For them it is their presupposition. They start with, and are stuck in, an “impersonal” universe in which physics and chemistry is all there is, so the ultimate sources of knowledge is DNA (knowledge is passed on chemically) and/or experience. While they cannot account for immaterial objects such as logic, reason, morality or induction it doesn’t stop them from employing them. The Christian, on the other hand, can demonstrate that logic and science, for that matter, math, ethics, meaning and laws in general, have a deeper foundation, and that foundation is Personal rather than impersonal. More far reaching is the idea that the Personal precedes the impersonal; the Eternal precedes the temporal; Spirit precedes matter just as Mind precedes brain. This is part of the Christian worldview and is not provable by natural science.

Question: Can science be proved scientifically?

An example of a tautology is “survival of the fittest.” How do you know a particular creature is the most fit? Because it survived. Why did it survive? Because it was the most fit. Round and round it goes. There is no independent verification possible.

Index fossils used for dating rock layers are another example. Can you see how, why?

For the Christian, the Bible is such a presupposition, both a self-attesting, absolute authority and evidenced in the world. It is held as the final authority, under God, the Author. Yes, God Himself is both presupposed and evidenced.

The unbeliever cannot allow God to be the ultimate authority but must require Him to be contingent, subordinate to some higher authority, generally believed to be nature itself. How can such a thing possibly be?

The Bible is our ultimate standard, even when defending the Bible. It would be foolish to believe the Bible but deny its Source. By the way, God Himself is self-attesting in Heb 6 and Gen 22.

Genesis 22:15-16

15 Then the Angel of Yahweh called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says Yahweh, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son...”

Hebrews 6:13-14

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

“Biblical understanding must stand on its own two feet without regard to any other system of thought. We can’t assume a worldview that comes from unbelievers. The Bible has its own worldview. The Bible has its own way of understanding the relationships of things in the world, to the human mind, to God. The Bible has its own way of gaining knowledge.”

John Frame, *Apologetics* 315, 7:00. “Apologetics to The Glory of God”

If we assume anything less than these truths, how can we make any progress in apologetics? If we don’t, then another system becomes a higher authority, by default. “Nature abhors a vacuum.” So, we will “presuppose” the biblical understanding of the world, knowledge, history and morality.

“Why do you believe this is true?” The Bible claims to be true, has eye-witness accounts and its claims are supported by archeology, and a variety of other sciences. There is a self-consistency and coherence within the Bible even though there are 66 books by 40 authors writing at different times, places, stations in life over 1400 years. Yet the agreement is remarkable and presents a common message. Supporting facts are brought in as well as the relationships between the facts. There is no other book of antiquity that is as well attested as the Bible. Those that say we can’t know what the Bible originally said are willingly ignorant of all the discoveries of the last 200 years and should study some more before making nonsense claims. The same goes for claims that Jesus never existed.

- A. Scripture is an all-sufficient authority and apologetics is conducted in terms of the biblical understanding, starting at the Throne, Mt 28:18, Gen 1:1, Jn 1:1.
- B. Scripture is its own best interpreter.
- C. Scripture is the final arbiter of all disputes.
- D. Scripture, particularly the New Testament, is at the heart of Christian understanding. The New Testament alone reveals the triune nature of God and redemption.

Question: What if someone starts with a different presupposition?

Internal Biblical Proofs

Acts 1:1-3

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by **many infallible proofs**, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Luke 24:25-27

25 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in **all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself**.

Acts 17:30-31

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He **has given assurance** of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Philosophical Big Picture

- A. Metaphysics – Theory of ultimate reality
- B. Epistemology – Theory of knowledge from metaphysics
 - a. Rational – Based on reason, mental
 - b. Empirical – Based on the senses, experiential, experimental
 - c. Revelational – Based on knowledge revealed to us by God Himself
 - v. Creation
 - vi. Scripture
 - vii. Jesus
 - viii. Personal
- C. Ethics-Values – Theory of right behavior, value, important, good and beautiful
 - a. Moral Absolutes

- i. Personal Good
 - ii. Social Good
 - iii. Desirable Ends
- b. Uniformity Of Nature – Predictability in human experience
 - i. Assumed expectation that the future will be like the past, necessary for science.
- c. Universals & Laws – Concepts & Logic
 - i. General Concepts – Forms (duckness, goodness, names) contrary to physical particulars
 - ii. Concepts are abstract and immaterial vs particular and physical
 - iii. Laws of logic regulate human reasoning, crucial to rational thinking
 - iv. How can there be fixed laws in a constantly changing universe?
- d. Personal Freedom & Dignity
 - i. Why don't all living things have equal dignity?
 - ii. Why are there funerals?
 - iii. Why are there courts of law?
 - iv. If naturalism is true, then there is no reason for the naturalist to believe his naturalism
 - v. Cannot account for argumentation itself – just differing chemical reactions

The idea of forms is fairly simple. In the Bible there are families called “kinds.” The horse kind, the bird kind, the fish kind. In Greek philosophy there was an abstract realm that housed all the general “forms” of all the generalized objects on earth. Plato, who originated this idea, had no idea how the forms got from this abstract realm into our heads. It was a complete mystery. His worldview could not even account for the existence of such a place. He was observing something that was apparently true and gave it the name “form” but had no idea how or why it was true. Kind of like so-called science today.

Forms can even be more general than kinds. If I said, “Think of a tree, or a chair.” Probably no two people would be thinking of the exactly the same tree or chair. But we all have a tree “form” in our heads such that we would recognize a particular object as a “tree.” Every tree in the world is different but they all share a similar form, “treeness,” same for chairness” or “duckness.”

This is the “same but different” problem in philosophy. How does this happen? If you dip your foot in a river, take it out and dip it again, is it the same river? If you find an old photograph of yourself, how do you know it is really you? Maintaining identity through time, how does that work? How can something change yet remain the same? Same but different.

11. A Standard For Standards – The AICP Test

A. Arbitrary:

- a. Mere Opinion
- b. Relativism – True for you but not for me, no absolutes.
- c. Prejudicial Conjecture – We can't know what was originally written.
- d. Unargued Philosophical Bias – Miracles are impossible.

How do you know miracles are impossible?

What kind of mental resources are necessary to make such claims?

What is the foundation of such claims? See Prisoners in Nature's Box

B. Inconsistent:

- a. Logical Fallacies
- b. Behavioral Inconsistency
- c. Presuppositional Tension

A man thinks child abusers should be punished and helps his girlfriend get an abortion.

C. Consequences:

- a. If I believe this, and therefore act it out, where will I end up?
- b. A tree is known by its fruit.
- c. Reductio ad Absurdum - reduced to absurdity, logical conclusion.

D. Preconditions for Intelligibility: How can we account for these?

- a. Laws of Logic, Language, Rational Debate
- b. Uniformity of Nature, Causality, Induction
- c. Absolute Morality
- d. Basic Reliability of Senses and Memory
- e. Personal Dignity and Freedom
- f. Transcendentals

Application: Four big questions: Origin, Destiny, Meaning, Morality (Ravi Zacharias)

Are these answered individually well and are they collectively coherent? (Consistency)

Does the origin story justify the answer? (Preconditions for Intelligibility)

Prejudicial Conjecture: “How do we know some monk in the Middle Ages didn’t write the Bible?”

First off, the person throwing this out has obviously done NO homework on the subject. By the time the Middle Ages rolled around there were already many manuscripts buried in the desert sands. Like many other speculations about the Bible these people demonstrate their ignorance and prejudice as though it was brilliant insight. Matthew 6:23

Second, if there was no Bible, why would there be monks? Which came first, the Bible or the monk?

Question: Which worldview makes human experience intelligible or meaningful?

Don’t Answer/Answer Strategy – Apologetic Conversation

The biblical “fool” is someone that is foolish in the use of reason and action.

Proverbs 26:4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.

If we try to use the fool’s methodology, we become like him. We must voice our disagreement.

The response is something like this: “I disagree with your statement, but...”

Proverbs 26:5 Answer a fool according as his folly deserves, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

We can’t just walk away “agreeing to disagree” or nothing has really changed.

The response is something like this: “I disagree with your statement, but for argument sake, let’s suppose what you are saying is true...” What is the outcome? Where does it lead?

Using “logical conclusion” and “reducing to the absurd” and “impossibility of the contrary” we show that the fool’s ideas lead to absurdity, inconsistency, incoherence or worse.

The supposed divine dilemma: Epicurus (341-270 BC), Epicurean Paradox

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then He is not omnipotent.

Is God able but not willing? Then He is malevolent.

Is God neither willing nor able? Then why call Him God?

Is God both willing and able? Then whence comes evil?

The assumptions are numerous. See how many you can find. Also note that Epicurus knows about God. He lists several of His divine attributes but remains unbelieving. Can you answer His final question? This is the most common objection against God in all of history!

However, as [W. L.] Craig rightly challenges, how could the atheist, skeptic, or anyone else, know that God would not, if he existed, permit the evil and suffering in the world? After all, it is not impossible that God would have reasons for it. Craig argues that God’s purpose for human history might be to bring the maximum number of people freely into his kingdom to find salvation and eternal life which requires the existence of evil and suffering.

<https://jamesbishopblog.com/2016/06/27/answering-the-epicurus-dilemma/>

Common Problems from George Smith, Gordon Stein debates with Greg Bahnsen

1. Definitions matter – Smith, Stein define atheism as finding evidence lacking, contrary to regular use.
2. Faith and reason stand against each other. Faith goes beyond reason rather than faith being the foundation of reason. “I believe that I may understand.” Augustine.
3. Self-deception – in varying degrees of sophistication.

4. No reason to be rational – “People should be rational, for the sake of human good.” Why?
5. Abstract Concepts – Where does these come from?
6. Uniformity of nature – Why is it so?
7. Origin of life – scientific or philosophical? Who knows? But evolution is true. Really? Why?

“Nobody can know anything for sure (that’s just your opinion), but we know you Christians are wrong.”

How do YOU know that nobody can know anything for sure?

How do YOU know Christians are wrong?

How do YOU know what is right and wrong?

Where does the standard that YOU are using come from?

Isn’t that just YOUR opinion? At least, we Christians have a solid foundation for our ‘opinion.’ The Almighty Creator God of the Bible!

12. Some different worldviews.

1. Monism – all of reality is one thing
 - A. Spiritual – Hinduism and its derivatives, no distinctions, immaterial
 - B. Material – Atheistic (physics & chemistry), Atomistic (infinite number of particles moving in space). Reality is nothing more than atoms and forces interacting with each other.
 - a. Deterministic – no free will
 - i. Hedonistic – Live for pleasure
 - ii. Behavioristic – All behavior is product of stimulus and response.
 - iii. Marxist, dialectical materialism, all of history
 - b. Free Will
 - i. Egoism – live for individual pleasure – quantity vs quality
 - ii. Utilitarianism – what makes most people happy, socialistic
 - iii. Existentialism – define for oneself what he is or will be
 - c. Nobody can know for sure
 - i. Pragmatism – live for solving problems, what works
 - ii. Skepticism
 - a) Sophists – master arguments to win debates, truth is irrelevant
 - b) Cynics – it’s all a pretense, anti-establishment, anti-everything
2. Dualism – all of reality is two things, matter and spirit, time & space and something outside.
 - A. Idealism – Plato, intuitional
 - B. Moralistic – Confucius, duty, submission is everything

The above overview reflects the natural man’s attempts to understand the world around him apart from God because he has rejected the correct starting point. Because he is lacking the correct starting point a variety of competing ideas vie for his attention. Some are insightful; others observant with logical conclusions while, still others are just plain goofy. This fragmentation of ideas only gets worse as time rolls on. Consensus is increasingly impossible except where united against Christ.

Christianity is generally dualistic in that we understand reality is made up of the material and the spiritual and that there is an integrated interaction between them. The two are not separate islands but in a profound relationship, and Jesus is Lord of all.

13. Apologetic Methods

Each of these arenas of apologetics has a different set of tools and methods as will be outlined below. Each has its own starting point.

A. Evidential Apologetics – corresponds to an Empirical epistemology.

Used by the majority of apologists: Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel, William Lane Craig and many more. Evidence is abundant and powerful. Thank you, Jesus!

In a sense anything could be considered evidence, so I must first define what is meant by ‘evidence’ in the ‘Evidential’ context. What is meant by evidence in this context is primarily scientific and historical evidence. In the next sections I will talk about philosophical evidence and then transcendent evidence.

I got my start using evidence for Christianity, in particular, the Creation vs Evolution debate. I thought that if evolutionists could just “see the real facts of science” they would be convinced. To my knowledge not one evolutionist ever changed his mind because of one of my talks. In fact, most left more certain than ever we were lunatics. The Christians, however, left encouraged and with their faith strengthened because science and history agree with the Bible, as they should. What was going on?

We are told to “Follow the evidence wherever it leads.” But evidence is actually a poor leader. One problem is that evidence becomes the final authority, subtly, even above Scripture. Some “new discovery” may temporarily conflict with Scripture and cause trouble with some people. Think Big Bang. It must be made clear that evidence, especially historical evidence, is the result of interpretation. Interpretation is based on beliefs. Beliefs are derived from presuppositions, which determine the root faith of the interpreter. So, between the interpreter and the evidence are at least three philosophical steps. The meaning of the evidence is predetermined by the presuppositions of the interpreter. In the natural world we all have the same evidence, but the presuppositions predetermine how the evidence will be understood. Everyone follows science (meaning evidence) of some sort. But what science are we following? Methodological Naturalism is atheistic science and by definition disallows any possible supernatural causation. Authentic science does not have any such restrictions. I should probably comment on “science” here before continuing onward.

What Is Science?

The word “science” simply means “knowledge.” Conscience (con-science) means “with-knowledge.” By definition a mystery or uncertainty is not knowledge, neither is speculation or an educated guess.

There are at least two kinds of science that are often conflated or treated as the same thing. The first is the “how things work” kind of science called “Operational Science.” It is empirical. It is verifiable. Operational Science is observable, testable and repeatable. This is critical. It doesn’t matter where your lab is or what you believe. This is the kind of science that has brought about the ability to study nature, take it apart and rearrange the parts into whatever technology we desire, in the present, like computers, medical advances and cleaning products.

The other kind of science is “Historical Science.” It is forensic in that events in history are not observable, testable or repeatable, it is beyond the reach of operational science. The “scientific method” is limited here. The past is gone forever. Only evidence, like relics and fossils, exist, and only in the present. This kind of science is thoroughly subject to imagination, interpretation and the presuppositions of the interpreter. Just think of the variety of interpretations concerning America’s founding fathers. The agenda sets the interpretation. The further back in time we go the worse it gets.

Evolutionists have “Physics Envy.” They tell the public that the science behind evolution is the same science that sent people to the moon and cures diseases. It’s not. The science behind evolution is not empirical, but forensic. Because evolution took place in history, its scientific investigations are after the fact – no testing, no observations, no repeatability, no falsification, nothing at all like physics.

I think this is what the public discerns – that evolution is just a bunch of just-so stories disguised as legitimate science.

John Chaikowsky, “Geology vs. Physics,” *Geotimes*, vol. 50, April 2005, p6

As seen in the above quote it is to the advantage of some to blur the differences in these two kinds of science. I have often heard the statement “Science has proven evolution.” Or “All real scientists believe in evolution.” Examine those claims in the light of the paragraphs above. What do you see? The truth is that

nothing about evolutionary “science” is observable, testable, or repeatable. And no, variation within kinds doesn’t prove we came from a rock. It is a statement of faith. Some will claim that the tiny changes in creatures we see every day, like dog breeds or finch beaks, are proof of the unseen monumental changes, like a cow/pig/dog-like creature evolving into a whale, dinosaurs into birds or apes into man, as required by evolutionists, are all the same evolutionary process. No one has ever seen this happen. In fact, it is a giant leap of faith to believe that small variations can add up to a new body parts or new kind of creature. This is the worst kind of science called blind faith or credulity! This, again, is a conflating of two very different ideas. Both of these are “bait and switch” schemes to mislead impressionable minds. It takes years of education to believe you are nothing more than an animal, then become a professor to evangelize others to a religion of meaninglessness. Imagine believing your purpose in life is to convince everyone that there is no purpose to life. That we are all here as a result of undirected chance random processes. Note Some like to say, “It’s all politics.” Not so, it’s all religion, and politics is an expression of religion! The question is whose religion sets people free? Most produce slaves.

An audience, seeing and hearing a presentation for or against evolution, is evaluating the evidence through the filters of their own experience, worldview, foundational beliefs and/or even hostility toward God. Many are not really listening to find a reason to change their mind but to find loopholes to exploit. We all do the very same thing. When someone talks about the certainty of millions of years or that Jesus never existed, we roll our eyes and think “you poor deluded soul.” Unless there is some advanced work of the Holy Spirit, they cannot change their minds. It is necessary for the Christian to present reasoned, factual, consistent, coherent knowledge for the unbelievers to dismiss. 1 Pet 3:15.

For Christians, the best place for evidence is as a confirmation of the Christian worldview (the larger loop from Circular Reasoning) because it is the worldview that interprets the evidence, as well as the science behind the evidence. Not the other way around. Evidence in court is for the purpose of establishing reasonable doubt or belief but not absolute certainty. It is good when evidence rises to the level of “convincing.” But each person is convinced at a different level. Christians need to know that “God’s world agrees with God’s word” in a remarkable way. The Word is first. The Word tells us how to interpret the science and history of the world and to have an increasingly well-developed biblical Worldview.

However, we need to be able to show evidences in response to honest questions. Evidence cannot prove anything but can be used to demonstrate or confirm that there are other powerful, positive interpretations of science about the natural, historical world that agree with God’s word. This is what I was impressed with when the team came from the Institute for Creation Research of Dallas, TX to University of Wyoming. The atheists, evolutionists were beside themselves with absurd objections. Part of our job is to silence the critics, to show how they would rather be absurd and irrational than accept the truth of the history!

Denying the existence of Jesus doesn’t make Him go away, it merely proves that no amount of evidence will convince you.

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*.

Jesus did exist, whether we like it or not.

Bart Ehrman, Agnostic NT Scholar and historian

One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Pontius Pilate.

Bart Ehrman, Agnostic NT Scholar and historian, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to Early Christian Writings*, 261-262.

[There is not the] slightest doubt about the fact of Jesus’s crucifixion under Pontius Pilate.

John Dominic Crossan of the Jesus Seminar, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, 375

Jesus's death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable.

Gerd Lüdemann, Atheist NT scholar, *The Resurrection of Christ: A Historical Inquiry*, 50

Consider the quotes above. They sound great to the Christian but will probably not even phase the person that is “willingly ignorant,” 2Pt 3:8 and hostile to God. This is really the weakness in the evidential method, that it doesn’t touch the root faith level of the truly committed sceptic, the “true believer.” No amount of evidence will shake their faith. They can, and will, come up with “rescuing devices” which are in reality supports for their tenets of faith. To be sure, the committed Christian does the very same thing.

If an ossuary or bone box were discovered with the inscription “Jesus of Nazareth” and all the research labs concluded it was authentic, it would be rejected by all such Christians. We know that Jesus is still using His bones and took them with Him when He left.

Luke 24:38-43

38 And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have **flesh and bones as you see I have.**” 40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence.

Luke 24:50-51

50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven

Jesus is very much alive and has interacted with people over the last 2000 years. It is not beliefs that holds Jesus’s Ecclesia together but Jesus Himself. That is why His Church can never be destroyed.

So, a method is needed to drill down and expose the irrationality of the faith foundation of the unbeliever. By the way, the most common reaction when the faith level is breached is anger because you are entering a sacred space and threatening issues of identity and worth that they don’t want disturbed, Rom 1:21. Don’t be surprised if the person with whom you are talking blows up. Convincing the person concerning the truth of things often requires time, but we need to be able to show the irrationality and worthlessness of the unbeliever’s position and the rock-solid nature of ours, with confidence and patience, humility and boldness.

The faith of God (Eph 2:8, Gal 2:20) can withstand the most rigorous scrutiny.

B. Classical Apologetics – corresponds to a Rational epistemology.

A very powerful case is built showing that reason and reality demand the existence of the God of Scripture. This track goes back to the early Church and Augustine is often credited as being the father of Classical Apologetics, hence the name. Classical Apologetics is more philosophical and essentially starts with the human mind. This should not be confused with the humanistic fallen mind, a common criticism. Built to take fallenness into account, attention is given to reason that is not, by definition, limited to the fallen world, as is humanistic thinking.

Some components of the classical method are discussed by R.C. Sproul in his 25-part Classical Apologetics class on YouTube.com. Also, a book by the same name. Covered in more detail in the chapter 4, “Origins,” but here briefly, the physical universe can **only be one** of these:

- An Illusion. “Cogito ergo sum.” means it’s not
- Self-Created. Impossible; a thing cannot create itself
- Self-Existent. Impossible, matter & energy (i.e., contingent objects cannot exist forever.)
- Caused by an eternal Self-Existent something. God cannot not exist; He is necessary being.

In the end, reality and rationality requires an eternal, all-powerful, intelligent “Being”: God.

Then there are some basic tools to get at what we want to know.

Four Basic Rules of Reason

These four basic rules, which allow for the growth of human knowledge, are regularly attacked. If any of these are compromised, any kind of irrationality is possible. It is often a violation of these rules that are used to justify the necessary “miracles” of existence required by the atheistic/secular/evolutionary crowd. See The Universe Created Itself in chapter 4, “Origins.”

From R. C. Sproul, “Classical Apologetics”

a) Law of Non-Contradiction

The law of non-contradiction is the most basic building block of logic and therefore rational thought. Everything else flows from this. It says that a thing cannot be its opposite in the same way at the same time. $A = \sim A$ ($A = \text{not } A$) is a rational impossibility. “My car is in the garage and my car is not in the garage” is a physical impossibility. This law is at the heart of all truthful, rational thinking.

Its attempted usage in life can be construed as lying, deceit or fraud in saying that something is so when it is not, or something is not so when it is.

Aristotle put it this way:

“To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.”

“Thou shalt not bare false witness...” Exodus 20:16

“All denials of the law of non-contradiction are forced and temporary. You can’t drive a car, [or do science,] and deny the law of non-contradiction.” R.C. Sproul.

b) Law of Causality

The law of causality is an extension of the law of non-contradiction and has been used as an argument for the existence of God going back millennia. God is the First Cause or Prime Mover. Bertrand Russell “believed in God” until he read John Stuart Mill who said, “Everything must have a cause.” So, God must have a cause. Russell died believing this common but false definition of the law of causality.

The true definition is that “every effect must have a sufficient, antecedent cause.” A related definition says that “everything that comes into existence must have a cause.” If a new disease manifests or a building collapses, a “cause” is sought to explain the event. Causal thinking is at the heart of all natural science and the scientific method, at least the “observable, testable, repeatable” kind of “how things work” science.

It is humorous that atheists will bring up primitive superstitions like some god being the cause of lightening or the sacrifice of a virgin to appease the volcano god and invoke the “god of the gaps” idea. “But now we can explain all natural phenomena without God.” They can’t, by the way. Therefore, science

has disproven God, as though God's only reason for being is to explain stuff. I say that without the Creator God, they can't explain **anything!**

David Hume (1711-1776) argued that an actual cause cannot be known, and the best that can be shown are "customary" or "contiguous" relationships. His main example comes from a pool table. One pool ball hits another pool ball and sets it in motion. It is "customary" to think one ball makes the other ball move based on the assumption that when one thing follows another, there is a "causal" relationship. But, according to Hume, this can't be known for sure, and he is correct. There might be some other unknown, invisible forces also at work, waiting to be discovered. But we continue to play pool anyway with the full expectation that we will sink the 8 ball in the corner pocket and win the game.

These ideas caused (pardon the pun) quite a reaction. Hume also implied that there could be an effect with no cause or an "uncaused effect" thus nullifying the law of causality. This has never been demonstrated. However, nothing is believed to have caused the Big Bang. The keyword is "believed." This irrational belief dominates cosmology. More later.

c) Basic Reliability of Sense Perception & Language

In the wake of Hume's skepticism, renewed efforts were asserted to establish the notion that human sense perception is basically reliable. It is true that "our senses do not have perfect perceptions of reality. That is why we have machines to heighten and extend our senses." Hume drew attention to those limits, showing there may be unknown, invisible forces at work. Yes, he was absolutely correct, because one of those possible, causal forces is the power of God. Hume's work, as an enlightened atheist, was the removal of God. But not even the great David Hume could close the door on God.

There persists, in this day, an idea that if something is not 100% it should be discarded. If you can be deceived by your senses (like an optical illusion), then your senses can't be trusted to any degree. It is a radical "all or nothing" position. You can imagine the chaos if people actually lived like that. But they can't, at least not for very long. Their purpose is to shred truth, not advance truth and understanding.

It is true that language changes with time. When you read the King James Bible, or Shakespeare, you are reading the English language of 400 years ago. It has changed, but it is still, with a little help, intelligible. Over the last 150 years, as organized philosophical atheism became more internally consistent, even language has come under scrutiny.

By the way, apart from God there is no basic reliability to anything, it is simply taken for granted. It is the God of order that provides the necessary foundation for reality to be orderly and reliable.

d) Analogical Use of Language

As each of the above laws was philosophically broken down, language became the next victim. They would say that like our senses, language, because it changes, is unreliable. As a means to express human thoughts it is useless. If this were actually true, the United Nations would have collapsed decades ago. I always find it amusing to hear someone, that believes this, using language to say that language is meaningless, and then expect you to know what they mean by what they say. University professors are especially good at pushing nonsense into young, impressionable minds.

This is a particularly diabolical attack. If language can be destroyed in the minds of people, then the Gospel breaks down because the words are meaningless. Within a couple of weeks of this writing, someone actually told me that.

As I mentioned above, this is materialism becoming consistent with itself. There is no communication of any kind in the material world of physics and chemistry. Chemicals don't communicate with one another. And no, deaf and blind fields do not constitute communication. The very foundation of materialism is chaotic change, so any notion of "language" is meaningless since there is no "mind" to perceive such things. The very language of science and mathematics, or philosophy, requires conscious mental states, or a mind.

Thomas Aquinas divided up language like this:

- a. Univocal – a single meaning: “The door is locked.”
- b. Equivocal – multiple meanings: “That is really cool!”
- c. Analogical – scaled or proportional meanings: good dog, good man, good God

Note that language is being used in this book and your eyes are perceiving the text on the page and you are basically, but maybe not perfectly, understanding what you read. Communication is basically reliable.

Our job is to show the absurdity, even insanity, of the unbeliever’s position as respectfully as possible, given the absurdity of some of their ideas.

Similar to the evidential method, the deepest root level (i.e., the faith level) is not yet exposed. We may show the utter irrationality of any non-Christian position and the person may still say, “I would rather be irrational, even insane, than bow to Jesus.” To such, we say, “Speak into the microphone!”

C. **Presuppositional Apologetics – corresponds to a Revelational epistemology**

“It is never about winning, Greg. It is about exposing their inconsistency. God does everything else. Never forget the antithesis.”

—Cornelius Van Til to Greg L. Bahnsen (1985)

“We do not want to trim the unbeliever’s tree; we want to dig it up by its roots.”

Presuppositions – our most basic or fundamental beliefs, believed by faith, held religiously, unverifiable by natural science. Presuppositions cannot be “proved” as such but can be evidenced. When it comes to these most basic faith commitments argumentation between presuppositions are qualitatively different.

In most attacks on Christianity, presuppositions are rarely brought into play. An opponent’s reasoning may be consistent with his starting point, but the goal is to show the irrationality of the starting point itself, and thus the house of cards collapses under its own weight. This is the power of this method. The opponent may keep talking but his foundation is in shambles.

As a culture becomes more consistent with its own presuppositions it either stabilizes, if it is founded on truth, or disintegrates, if it is founded on anything else. Which do we see in the world today?

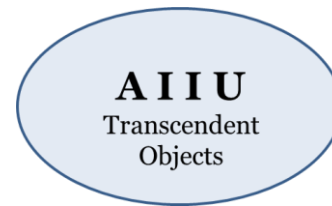
Here are some aspects of the Presuppositional Argument:

- i. **Internal Critique.** Show the irrationality, incoherence of the system by using its own standards and exposing the internal inconsistencies and/or incoherence, and failure to meet preconditions for human experience.
- ii. **Impossibility of the Contrary.** Impossible to be otherwise. Without God, you can’t prove anything, and nothing has meaning. God cannot not be the answer.
- iii. **Preconditions for Intelligibility.** Asks what things must be true in order for our reasoning and experience to be meaningful. God Himself is the ultimate precondition. He alone provides meaning. The ultimate proof is that without Him, you can’t prove anything, and without God nothing has meaning. Only the biblical worldview is rich enough to answer all the tough questions of life and function as the foundation for the resources for the meaningfulness of anything.
- iv. **Image of God - Imago Dei.** Human beings are made in the Image of God (Gen 1:26-27, 9:6) and thus express analogous characteristics of God Himself. AIIUs are some of those characteristics. This is the point of contact. You are the ultimate proof of God’s existence.
- v. **Existence of Transcendentals.** Abstract, Immaterial, Invariant, Universal objects, or AIIUs. Transcendentals exist outside of time, space, matter and energy. See below.

The Transcendental Argument

AIIUs or Transcendent objects are:

- **Abstract:** in or of the mind, not observable
- **Immaterial:** not material, nonphysical
- **Invariant:** does not change with time
- **Universal:** does not change with place



Here are some examples of transcendentals:

life, soul, mind, logic, reason, belief, faith, religion, laws, truth, love, beauty, values, morality, justice, virtues, forms, ideals, ideas, imagination, number, mathematics, dignity, liberty, creativity, information, talent, intelligence, consciousness, free will and more.

At the core of Christianity is a personal, immaterial, invariant, and universal entity – God! God is a transcendent person. The Christian worldview has a place for transcendental objects. The materialist worldview cannot even allow that they exist. But the fact that transcendentals do exist shows by the “Impossibility of the Contrary” that they must have a transcendent source. Something outside space and time, outside Nature’s Box.

Transcendental reasoning “is concerned to discover what general conditions must be fulfilled for any particular instance of knowledge to be possible; it has been central to the philosophies of thinkers such as Aristotle and Kant, and it has become a matter of inquiry in contemporary, analytically minded philosophy. Van Til asks what view of man, mind, truth, language, and the world is necessarily presupposed by our conception of knowledge and our methods of pursuing it. For him, the transcendental answer is supplied at the very first step of man’s reasoning—not by autonomous philosophical speculation, but by transcendent revelation from God.”

(Dr. Greg Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic*, 5–6, note 10)

Transcendentals are used by every human being every day. AIIUs are mostly taken for granted, in that they are necessary for everyday living, but most people give them little thought and cannot account for their existence. These things are the spice of life.

All transcendentals exist in the world but have no material substance. Materialistically AIIUs can only be accounted for in DNA or experience. Both are unsatisfactory by the very nature of the AIIU’s transcendence, showing the Impossibility of the Contrary. AIIUs cannot exist apart from God.

The Uniformity of Nature is also an example of a transcendental. There is nothing in constantly changing nature that requires it to behave in a uniform way. But if it didn’t, science would be impossible. Some common responses to the Uniformity of Nature are:

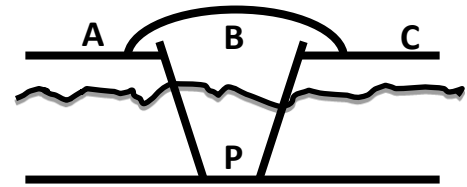
- “Everyone knows that.”
- “It always has behaved that way.”
- “That’s just how it is.”
- “The inherent properties of matter cause it to behave in a uniform way.”

The question to all of these statements is always the same, “Why?” Why, in a random universe, should nature behave in a uniform manner? Why do natural laws (a product of the human mind) describe so well and so consistently how nature will behave? Why is it possible that the human mind can even understand these things? But God!

So often, we are given only a conclusion for the development of some idea. School textbooks are famous for telling students what to believe (conclusions, indoctrination) rather than critical thought analysis and processing. The diagram illustrates, in a simple way, how to evaluate ideas. If we start at A, an Assertion, we should be able to go to B, the Bridge, or to P, Presuppositions to get to C, the Conclusion. If we start at P, can we get to C or A? Do any presuppositional tensions or inconsistencies

emerge? Presuppositions are sometimes murky, especially if they have been uncritically assumed or never examined. They also connect an “origin story” to the conclusion, or not.

We should get the same results if we proceed from A to C via B or P. If so, the idea is safely solid. Our conclusions are either working with our presuppositions or against them.



Questions are a great way to get at presuppositions and show underlying inconsistencies. Consider several common statements and some questions that expose presuppositional tension:

- “Nobody can know anything for sure.”
 - Are you sure nobody can know anything for sure?
 - How do you know nobody can know anything for sure?

- “There is no such thing as absolute truth.”
 - Is it absolutely true there is no such thing as absolute truth?
 - How do you know there is no absolute truth?
 - Is it true could $2 + 2$ be something other than 4?

- “Evolution is a fact, and survival of the fittest is true.”
 - Why are we trying to save endangered species?
 - Why are we trying to keep people from getting sick?
 - If they are not fit enough to survive, why try to keep them alive?
 - Why allow the unfit to breed?

This is a great inconsistency in the evolutionary worldview: the aggressive preservation of animal life while killing unborn human babies. Human life has no inherent value. As the followers of evolutionary theory become more self-consistent, we will increasingly see them answering the questions above. A hint of things to come as they gain more political power.

- “The cosmos is all there is or all there was or ever will be” (The late Carl Sagan, he now knows he was wrong).
 - How did Carl know the cosmos “is all there is”?
 - How did Carl know the past, “all there was”?
 - How did Carl know the future, “ever will be”?
 - How did Carl know the future will be like the past?
 - What scientific experiment was performed to show “the cosmos is all there is”?
 - What scientific journals published the results of such experiments?

- “No human being has ever seen a living dinosaur.”
 - What are the presuppositions?
 - What do you think? Why?

- A materialist criticizes Christianity for being illogical and wants you to give an explanation. Before you answer make sure to confirm that he believes the materialist universe is all there is. Confirm that he believes that there are no non-material forces. Then ask how he can believe in logic or call something illogical, when logic itself is a non-material, transcendent object. How can he demand from you what he claims doesn’t exist?

In the Q&A part of the Bahnsen/Stein debate, a questioner asked, “Why is it necessary for the abstract, universal laws to be derived from the transcendent nature of God? Why not assume the transcendental nature of logic?” Restating Greg Bahnsen’s answer: We do assume the transcendental nature of the laws of logic. However, the laws of logic do not justify themselves, just because they are transcendental, that is a precondition of intelligibility. The laws of logic do have a transcendental

necessity about them and cannot make sense except in a worldview in which transcendental objects can exist in the first place. The atheistic, materialist universe does not even allow for the existence of transcendental objects, so God is a necessary precondition for all transcendental objects.

One big question that effects the foundation of science is this: How are there unchanging laws in a constantly changing universe? Science depends on the Uniformity of Nature, which means that nature's laws remain uniform throughout time and space. For example, if we found copper on the moon, what makes us think it would conduct electricity? It is because God is immutable and unchanging that His creation is orderly and stable. There is no other reason. Only the Christian worldview has the answers to these tough questions. The atheist offers faith-based IOUs because he has no answers.

Malachi 3:6

For I am Yahweh, I do not change

Presuppositional Apologetics is a worldview analysis on its own terms. What the worldview says about itself. Does it or can it stand on its own, without court intervention? Use the AICP test.

Presuppositional Apologetics is also an apologetic method based on biblical authority which deals with presuppositions or most basic starting points, like Gen 1:1. Presuppositions form the basis of worldviews. It is not merely the recognition that we all have presuppositions that control our interpretation of evidence and experience. It is "worldview" analysis, not "fact" analysis, not probabilistic, not fideistic (faith in faith). It is the more biblical method following the example of Paul the Apostle found in Acts 17:22-31. Paul started and ended with God. I have left it as an exercise for the reader, at the end of the chapter, to apply the lessons learned as to Paul's apologetic to the Greeks. Presuppositional Apologetics also makes use of the Transcendentals, which deal with the source of absolute, immaterial, invariant, universal objects and is sometimes called the Transcendental Argument. At its core, the Presuppositional Argument says that God is the necessary precondition for intelligible human knowledge and experience.

Presuppositional Apologetics makes a potent tool for showing the truth of the divine nature in reality. Dr. Jason Lisle called it the "Nuclear Option" because it affects everything in its blast radius, that is, all of reality! Evidential Apologetics is like a repeater rifle and Classical is like a shotgun. Each has their place.

Presuppositional Apologetics a big picture way of showing the truth of Christianity. It will also work to uncover hidden problems in any non-Christian or non-biblical worldview. It is not overly philosophical but can be. It does not require an extensive knowledge base of evidences, but more can be helpful. It is good to be able to answer honest questions concerning God's creation. Remember good evidence is supportive of truth. It is not against the use of scientific or historical evidence, just the way evidence is inappropriately used.

The Evidential and Classical apologetic methods assume unbelievers have a correct understanding of what is possible and the valid use of logic and reason, all of which depend on presuppositions. We do not concede that ground to those outside Christ. We don't even allow that they have a valid starting point! So, it is up to us to show how and why only the biblical understanding has the correct foundation for any endeavor in human thinking and activity.

As a powerful weapon, it is not a shortcut or an excuse to be lazy. You need to do your due diligence. But like the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, it might be called an unfair advantage.

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Psalms 53:1

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

1 Corinthians 1:20-25

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God **made foolish the wisdom of this world**? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

God has turned the wisdom of this world into foolishness. At best foolish victories are temporary.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

“Biblical understanding must stand on its own two feet without regard to any other system of thought. We can’t assume a worldview that comes from unbelievers. The Bible has its own worldview. The Bible has its own way of understanding the relationships of things in the world, to the human mind, to God. The Bible has its own way of gaining knowledge.”

(John Frame, *Apologetics* 315, 7:00, and *Apologetics to The Glory of God*)

If we assume anything less than these truths, how can we make any progress in apologetics? So, we will “presuppose” the biblical understanding of God and His creation. It is our starting point.

Question for Materialists

- i. What is the origin of life? The science has been stalled for 50 years.
- ii. How do you get life from primordial soup, chemistry and physics?
- iii. Can chemicals live? How do you know?
- iv. How do you get consciousness from chemistry and physics?
- v. Where does inert matter come from?
- vi. How does inert matter become living, then self-aware, then rational, then moral?
- vii. Why be rational?
- viii. Can dirt have mental states?
- ix. How do you get from dirt to mental states?
 - x. How do you get logic from chemistry and physics?
 - xi. Can chemicals think? Why do you? How?
 - xii. Why be moral?
 - xiii. How do you get morality from chemistry and physics?
 - xiv. Can chemicals be moral? Why are you? How?
 - xv. Can chemicals add? Why can you? How?
 - xvi. Why think in terms of scientific inference?
 - xvii. Why think in terms of general principles?
 - xviii. Why do you think that you can use past experience to predict the future?
 - xix. Can science be proved empirically?
 - xx. Can you prove anything?
 - xxi. Is it true there are no absolute truths?

Bertrand Russel’s First Cause Objection

I for a long time accepted the argument of the First Cause, until one day, at the age of eighteen (~1890), I read John Stuart Mill's Autobiography, and I there found this sentence: “My father taught me that the question, ‘Who made me?’ cannot be answered, since it immediately suggests the further question, ‘Who made God?’” That very simple sentence

showed me, as I still think, the fallacy in the argument of the First Cause. If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If there can be anything without a cause, it may just as well be the world as God, so that there cannot be any validity in that argument. ... There is no reason why the world could not have come into being without a cause; nor, on the other hand, is there any reason why it should not have always existed. There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination. (Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), *Why I Am Not a Christian*, the first cause argument, 2)

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873): was "one of the most influential thinkers in the history of liberalism (atheism)." Wikipedia

As with most things liberal, error is at the very root of the system. This is Bertrand Russell's first argument against God, and it is fundamentally flawed in three key ways.

A. The pre-eminent error is right here in this phrase: "everything must have a cause." Russell used John Stewart Mill's faulty definition of the law of cause and effect to set in stone his own view. The nuts don't fall far from the tree. The First Cause Argument employs the Law of Cause and Effect, see more above. The law does not say, "Everything must have a cause." It says, "Every effect must have a cause," or a more complete version is that "Every effect must have a sufficient, antecedent cause." What is obvious is that Mill erred in his version of the law. We may never know why he got it wrong. Maybe to suit his purpose as an anti-theist? How many others have thrown away what little faith they had on such blunders?

B. The next error is this: "There is no reason why the world could not have come into being without a cause." This is dealt with further in chapter 4, "Origins." This error can be attributed to David Hume in his attack on the Law of Cause and Effect. In effect (pardon the pun), Hume "proved" that it is impossible to "know" that a certain effect had a certain cause. He said, at best, all you can have is a "contiguous relationship" or a "customary relationship." His famous example is from the pool table. It cannot be "proved" that one ball, the cause, hitting another ball, the effect, doesn't have some unseen, unobserved, intermediate cause that made the second ball move. This seems trivial, but he was in fact, correct. You could do this a million times and the best you can show is a "customary relationship."

It is one thing to say that you don't know what caused the effect and quite another to say there was no cause at all. The real leap of faith (they do that a lot) came from Hume's followers, which said that it is possible to have an effect with no cause at all!

"We can certainly conceive of an uncaused beginning-to-be of an object; if what we can thus conceive is nevertheless in some way impossible, this still requires to be shown."
(John Leslie Mackie (1917 – 1981) *The Miracle of Theism*, 1982, 94)

We can conceive that lions could appear out of thin air and attack people, but nobody believes it would ever happen. We don't live life with such irrational fears, at least most people don't. Why? Reality is ordered of the Lord. It is the law of cause and effect.

When asked about an effect with no cause, Hume wrote the following:

"But allow me to tell you that I never asserted so absurd a Proposition as that anything might arise without a Cause. I only maintained that our certainty of the falsehood of the proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor from demonstration but from another source [like imagination]." (David Hume, in a letter to John Stewart, 1754)

If someone tries to say there could be an effect without a cause, ask them to give you one single example, and the Big Bang doesn't count. Again, we may not know the cause of an effect, but what is certain is that a cause exists. By the way, the cause need not be exclusively materialistic, as in a miracle.

Related to this is the “Uniformity of Nature” which Hume also demolished by showing no one can know the future. Predicting the future is one of science’s most valuable features. It appeared to some that Hume had destroyed science! This is one of those great inconsistencies that “rational (atheistic) people” have to live with because if they actually lived what they believed, there would not be found a scientist among them. Science would be impossible, at least to them. The very philosophical foundation they stand on contradicts their activities. Nothing new here. So they do science anyway and use it to beat up on God.

It is the faithful God of law and order that established the foundation that makes Cause and Effect and the Uniformity of Nature what it is so that science can be what it is. But they say belief in God hinders human development and scientific progress. Really? How? Why? This prejudicial assertion only impresses people that want it so. It was the Protestant Reformation building on the previous work of the natural philosophers, not the enlightenment, that brought about the scientific age. Only Christianity provided the necessary resources and preconditions for intelligibility for making modern science possible. The enlightenment hijacked what originated in the Church and used it to promote the idea that they could build a better world without God.

C. The third error I will expose is that according to Russell, “there is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all.” This also is dealt with in chapter 4, “Origins.” Simply, because matter is mutable, changeable, it cannot be eternal. The world had to come from an eternal, unchanging, intelligent source, with sufficient power to accomplish the job.

The idea of an eternal universe was common to enlightenment thinkers. It relieved them of the difficulty of explaining a beginning. Ironically, it was Edwin Hubble via the Big Bang and Albert Einstein via Relativity that killed the eternal universe hypothesis. But the atheistic or anti-theistic religion is never slowed for long. “Since there is no God, there is a naturalistic explanation to be found, given enough time and government grants.” Such amazing faith! Such credulity! Some have said, “I don’t have enough faith to be an atheist.” Thus, we come full circle to the triune Creator God as the one and only uncaused First Cause.

D. Finally, Russell says, “The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination.” Poverty of imagination? Really? What happened to philosophy and science? In the end science is redefined to be what is necessary to uphold atheistic beliefs, and anyone who disagrees is accused of being anti-science.

B and (C and D) respectively, violate the two principles from chapter 4, “Origins”:

Self-Created – impossible; a thing cannot create itself.

Self-Existent – impossible; matter and energy, contingent objects cannot exist eternally.

In the famous Bahnsen-Stein Debate, Dr. Gordon Stein used Russell’s anti-theistic formula for his opening remarks. Stein then used the platform to spout Bertrand Russell and his own books and never really entered the debate. It becomes evident that he never knew what hit him.

Three traditional arguments for God’s existence

These have what might be called presuppositional retooling. Many attempts to prove the existence of God are inherently weak. This was discussed above in the Apologetics Methods section and is ultimately the purpose of this chapter.

A. Cosmological – The First Cause Argument – The Concept of Cause and Effect

Above I noted Bertrand Russell’s objection to the First Cause Argument followed by my objections to his objection. Right boss? Now we look more explicitly at the First Cause Argument.

The beginning of the First Cause Argument comes from the observation that things change. But what are the limits of change over time? Change must have a cause. Can things change forever, forward or backward? Rolling the tape backward, if a thing is changing, there must be some cause to the effect of observed change. Due to the nature of changing things, there cannot be an infinite regress into the past of causes and effects.

Suppose there is an effect with cause D, but that had a cause, call it C. But C had a cause, call it B. We end up at some initial or first cause, call it A, and that cause we call God. Aristotle recognized this first cause as the “Unmoved Mover.” Aristotle’s prime mover is nothing like the God of Scripture, but his reasoning is good. As is, this argument can only show a first cause is necessary, but not the God of the Bible.

The problem is that this argument looks at God as one more natural cause in the chain. It is also assumed that an unbeliever can make sense out of the causal relationships $D \rightarrow C \rightarrow B$ from the atheistic worldview, independent of God and without bringing God into the picture at all. So, how does the unbeliever even make the connection from $B \rightarrow A$?

The change is from making God one more cause in the causal chain, to examining the entire way of reasoning about the “concept of cause and effect.” There could be no concept of cause and effect if God did not exist. God is the necessary precondition for the intelligible use of causal reasoning, and every other form of reasoning. Apart from God, no causal connections can be made for any customary relationship anywhere. No connections could be made about squeezing toothpaste to rolling billiard balls to the uniformity of nature to science itself. The Christian worldview now provides a foundation for inductive reasoning. Hume’s “The Problem of Induction” points out that atheism offers none of the necessary resources to justify the validity of induction. But that never stopped them from using it. Induction is not a “problem” to Christian thinking. God as the Creator, First Causer and Unmoved Mover is that necessary precondition for the intelligible use of causal reasoning. Now we have a foundation for the concept of concepts.

- Concept of future events
- Concept of morality
- Concepts of logic and reasoning
- Concepts of abstract, immaterial, invariant, universal objects
- Concepts of nothing or something, non-existence or existence, possible and impossible

“I see a ladybug on the rose.” (Dr. Greg Bahnsen, *Pushing the Antithesis*, 159)

Question: What mental resources are necessary to comprehend this sentence? How many kinds of things would need to be known? These are the preconditions for intelligibility.

The Kalam Cosmological Argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist must have a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

The origin of the Kalam Argument is Islamic, circa AD 1100 It gets right to the heart of the matter. It doesn’t work backward to a first cause but starts with the first cause itself. Now this simple argument does not say who or what the cause was but just that one is necessary, but the First Cause must be outside of time and space and greater than the universe (i.e., must be transcendent). Note this argument existed centuries before Einstein, Hubble, and the Enlightenment Project.

“John Taylor complains that the *kalam* cosmological argument gives the appearance of being a swift and simple demonstration of the existence of a Creator of the universe, whereas in fact a convincing argument involving the premise that *the universe began to exist* is very difficult to achieve. John Taylor disagrees. The *kalam* cosmological argument cannot in his view be endorsed because its adherents have not shown its main premise, that *the universe began to exist*, [see chapter 4, “Origins” for the proof] to be more reasonable than its denial.” John Taylor, “Kalam: A Swift Argument from Origins to a First Cause?” *Religious Studies* 33 (1997): 167-179. Quoted by William Lane Craig, “A Swift and Simple Refutation of the *Kalam* Cosmological Argument?” <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/scholarly->

[writings/the-existence-of-god/a-swift-and-simple-refutation-of-the-kalam-cosmological-argument/](https://www.writings/the-existence-of-god/a-swift-and-simple-refutation-of-the-kalam-cosmological-argument/)

There are only two possibilities – the universe is eternally existent, or it began to exist. This is astonishing to me because virtually no one believes in an eternally existent universe anymore. But here it is. More in chapter 4, “Origins.”

B. Ontological – The argument from being – Necessary Being

The most prominent modern advocate of the ontological argument is Alvin Plantinga. Plantinga is best-known for his defense of the view that religious belief is foundational, that religious belief does not stand in need of external justification, but is also known for his work on modal logic, on the logic of possibility and necessity. Plantinga applies his approach of modal logic, possibility and necessity, to the ontological argument, presenting the argument in a revised form.

Plantinga favors a possible world analysis of statements about possibility and necessity. Possible worlds are ways that the world might have been. Any logically consistent description of a world is a possible world. On Plantinga’s view, to say that something is possible is to say that there is a possible world in which it is actual, and to say that something is necessary is to say that in every possible world it is actual. The argument: If $A = B$ and $B = C$ then $A = C$ is must be true in every possible world. It cannot not be true; it is necessary.

The modal ontological argument, like Anselm’s, begins with a statement about God. God, if He exists, is a necessary being. That is, if God exists at all, then He must exist in every possible world. The first premise is based on the idea that God is perfect, and that something is *better* if it has *necessary* existence rather than it merely has contingent or dependent existence.

<http://faculty.fiu.edu/~harrisk/Notes/Philosophy%20of%20Religion/Ontological%20Argument/Anselm.htm#:~:text=Perhaps%20the%20most%20prominent%20modern%20advocate%20of%20the,i.e.%20on%20the%20logic%20of%20possibility%20and%20necessity.>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/platingas-modal-ontological-argument-for-god.html>

But we ask, “How can we know anything of being?” How is it that the “concept of being” or even a “concept of God” exists in our minds in the first place? Rom 1:19-20: God Himself put it there!

How is it we could even “invent God?” I remember seeing “In the beginning, man created God in his own image” for the first time on the back of a Jethro Tull record album. It stuck with me to this day. But where does creativity come from? How is it possible to invent God, or anything else? Where did the concept of God come from? It is because we are made in the image of God. If you don’t know what “Jethro Tull” or “record album” is, ask someone older than you, or Google it!

C. Teleological – The argument from design – Created Order

Teleology means purpose or goal. Note that built into this argument is the presupposition of a creative personality with a mind that has intentionality and has the power of accomplishing those goals. Again, it is God Himself that provides the original design specifications and creative power. We observe design out in the world because it was, in fact, created for a purpose.

But those with a different starting point, or atheistic presuppositions, must come to a different conclusion. They can’t help themselves; their religion dictates how they see what they see.

Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved.

(Francis Crick, *Natural History*, volume 97, 1988, “What Mad Pursuit,” 138).

Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.

(Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 1986, 1)

In the movie, *Expelled – No Intelligence Allowed*, about 1:32:36, Ben Stein interviewed Richard Dawkins. Ben and Richard had the following exchange:

Ben: What if, after you died, you ran into God and He said, “What have you been doing Richard? I mean, what have you been doing? I have been trying to be nice to you. I gave you a multi-million-dollar paycheck, over and over again, with your book and look what you did.”

Richard: Bertran Russell had that point put to him and said something like, “Sir, why did you take such pains to hide yourself?”

But God is not hidden. Note that both of these prominent atheists observe “intelligent design” but then deny what their own eyes see. They witness against themselves and do it very publicly. In this blatant display of hostility to God, they necessarily hand over creative power to inanimate matter, and God is robbed of His self-described power, place, and authority. Everything that exists is proof of God.

If biological things “give the appearance of having been designed” what evidence would be required to say that it wasn’t? Or that it was? They are making a presuppositional assertion that it wasn’t designed based on their materialistic belief system. This is begging the question.

Romans 1:25

... who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

The temptation is to say, “The sunset is beautiful; therefore, God exists.” This is exactly backwards. The truth is that because God exists, the sunset is beautiful; He made it that way. Further, God gave us the mental resources with which we can appreciate beauty in general and sunsets in particular.

A Part of the Intelligent Design Argument

Contrasting Apparent Design with Intelligent Design is at the heart of the Intelligent Design argument.

If you are trying to look at events in the distant past, you should rely on the cause-and-effect relationships that exist today and look for a cause that is known to have the power of producing the effect under investigation. So, we ask the question, “What are the causes now in operation that are known to produce the effect being examined?”

Note the word “known.” No speculation allowed.

And who can we thank for this smart advice? James Hutton, Charles Lyell, and Charles Darwin. From this principle, the term “uniformitarianism” emerged. “The present is the key to the past.” But what they had in mind, being hostile to God, was to only allow purely natural causes. This was later expanded to include every possible cause and effect that atheistic science might investigate, not just for the observable things today but also for the origin of all things and is known today as “Methodological Naturalism.” Any non-natural cause, by definition, is filtered out. Again, being hostile to God, they predetermine what *kind* of evidence will be considered.

So, what are the causes, now in operation, for the production of digital information? DNA is digital information via the AT (adenine and thymine), CG (cytosine and guanine) pairs in very specific arrangements. It is considered, by far, the most complex digital code known. There is no close second. A phrase often used here is “specified complexity.”

In the construction of proteins, for which DNA provides the code, the four base parts A, C, G, and T are selected three at a time. Each one of these combinations code for one of 20 amino acids, with leftovers. The amino acids are arranged in a specific order, according to the code, to form the protein similar to the letters in this paragraph. The average chain of amino acids is 500 units long. Some are thousands. There are 100,000 proteins in the body. The DNA provides the code for the building materials.

By the way, the blueprint for the creature is not found in the DNA. The same DNA could produce two different creatures in the same way a pile of building materials could produce two different houses. The blueprint isn’t in the materials; it is in the hands of the builder.

There is one, and only one, known cause capable of producing information, and that is an intelligent mind. But what kind of intelligence also has the power of constructing the DNA code? This intelligence

has to know the complete design specifications for tens of thousands of the body parts of all creatures that this Mind's power creates.

I am talking about the Almighty, Triune, and Creator, God of the Bible. Yea God!

“The machine code of the genes is uncannily computer-like. It looks like something designed by a software programmer. Apart from differences in the jargon, the pages of a molecular biology journal might be interchanged with those of a computer engineering journal.”
(Richard Dawkins)

Francis Crick was a code breaker in World War II. His Sequence Hypothesis, 1961, showed the code nature of DNA.

The central proposition of the Darwinian synthesis (random mutation and natural selection) is that things look designed, but they are not really designed. It is a purely undirected process giving the appearance or illusion of design (Dawkins's *The Blind Watchmaker*) but is not guided or directed in any way. An example would be the belief that the front legs of some creature turned into wings. But evolution doesn't know it is making a wing; it is just blindly and randomly mutating parts. It is a pure accident that a wing happens to form. By the way, how does this process know when to stop? What unbelievable blind faith! We are asked to believe that accidents give us rational information. But wait, it gets worse. There are three other chemical groupings that must be present: amino acids, lipids, and carbohydrates. All four, including nucleic acids, are absolutely necessary for life. All of which are subject to the same random development and processes as DNA. These are rarely talked about, for good reason!

See James Tour on “The Mystery of the Origin Life
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zU7Lww-sBPg>).

If Darwinism is a real process, then it should be easy to create a computer simulation. All evolutionary computer simulations have targets or goals, including Dawkins's program (David Berlinski). A goal by definition makes the simulation non-Darwinian, because Darwinian evolution, by definition, is a directionless, blind process. Those programs are self-defeating. It may simulate some kind of evolution, but it is not Darwinian! In its simplest meaning, evolution is change through time. Children evolve into adults, businesses and car models evolve over time. In fact, everything in the material universe changes over time. It is always good to ask for a definition at the beginning of a conversation.

More and more of what we do know is conflicting with what the materialist's religion requires. Yet there is movement to restrict and oppose anti-Darwinian knowledge that puts the Spanish Inquisition to shame. Think of the 300-500 million dead in the last 100 years all in the name of organized atheism.

A parable by the late Antony Flew (1923-2010): A nicely manicured garden is found in the jungle. No gardener can be found. Therefore, the conclusion is that the garden created and maintains itself. Similar to Dawkins's *Blind Watchmaker*.

The garden is the proof of the gardener. The location of the gardener is irrelevant. The system is the proof of the Creator. By the way, this thinking, the necessity of a Creator, led Antony to become a Deist, but not a Christian. Deism is the idea that God made everything in the beginning, then went silent, and has no further interaction with His creation. This is a popular stopping point for those who see the necessity of a creator but don't want the actual Creator God of the Bible.

14. Some other trajectories for proving the existence of the Biblical God.

A. If anything exists God exists

A. Rational Necessity – Reason requires the existence of a transcendent, eternal, omnipotent Creator.

B. Ontological Necessity – If anything exists a transcendent, eternal, omnipotent Creator exists

B. Preconditions for Intelligibility

– For anything to be meaningful, a transcendent, eternal, intelligent, omnipotent Creator is required.

C. Impossibility of the Contrary

– Occam’s Razor says that “all things being equal, the simplest explanation is usually the right one.” The assumption behind Occam’s Razor, with respect to God, is that “the creator of a complex system must be even more complex than the system.” So, God must be even more complex than the universe, so God cannot be the correct explanation. But this is exactly opposite of the historically understood view of God. God being perfectly unified in all of His attributes is infinitely simple. What is simpler than God? Nothing. So, God is the best answer to Occam’s Razor. God cannot not be.

“According to the classical theism of Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas and their adherents, God is radically unlike creatures in that he is devoid of any complexity or composition, whether physical or metaphysical. One consequence is that [the Biblical] God simply has no parts.”
(*Online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/divine-simplicity/>)

D. AIUs

Transcendentals require the existence of a transcendent source which is an eternal, omnipotent Creator.

E. Creation Itself – Everybody knows, Rom 1:16-24, Gen 1:26-27

15. Conclusion

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

4 And my speech and my preaching were not with **persuasive words of human wisdom**, but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power**, 5 that **your faith** should not be in the wisdom of men but in the **power of God**.

Paul was reminding the Corinthians of his manner when he first preached the Gospel to them. He demonstrated his Gospel. How much more should this be true today? In most places only words are preached with no demonstration. The world is tired of empty words, and there really isn’t much wisdom either. Please understand I am not denigrating any evangelistic or missionary effort. I am pointing out that we are not doing what Paul did, or what Jesus said to do in the Great Commission. Courageous people are doing the best they can with what they know, and I thank God for every born-again person their efforts produce. This should also be a part of our apologetic, our Gospel, the demonstration of the Spirit and power. You are the first apologetic most people will ever know.

In the beginning, God created...and has revealed Himself personally, through His creation and in the conscience of every person (Rom 1:18-21, 2:14-15).

The starting point is everything. Science is faith-based, and neutrality is a myth. All ground is common ground, but no ground is neutral. Physics and chemistry only exist in the present. Everyone lives by faith which allows them to touch the unobservable past and future. Religion is the expression of faith. The atheistic religion says you can get a universe from nothing and then conscious mental states from dirt given enough time and accidents. The materialist worldview is utterly incompatible with logic and reason, as are all non-Christian worldviews. The existence of transcendentals testifies to a transcendent source.

“The transcendental argument for the proof of the Christian God is that without Him you can’t prove anything. Notice the argument does not say that atheists don’t prove things. The argument doesn’t say atheists don’t use logic, science, or laws of morality. In fact, they do. The argument is that their worldview cannot account for what they are doing.”
(Dr. Greg Bahnsen, *The Bahnsen-Stein Debate*, Bahnsen closing argument).

The Evidential and Classical methods assume that the unbelievers are competent to understand the arguments and can therefore properly evaluate the truth or falsity of the claims, for and against God, coming to a proper conclusion. The Presuppositional method assumes no such thing. In fact, it denies that the unbeliever can ever come to a proper conclusion concerning the origin and nature of God’s creation or

any Kingdom truth. The standards for reaching the truth of things are polar opposites, even though the tools are identical. We are not arguing to God; we start with God, that He might have the preeminence in all things (Col 1:18).

The transcendental argument is that the biblical, triune God is the necessary precondition for the intelligibility of human experience and knowledge, and without Him, you cannot prove anything! Only the Christian worldview can make sense of reality. Everything that exists is proof of the existence of God, and you, my friend, are the ultimate proof. It is just that simple.

Apologetic exercise: Read Acts 17:22-31. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you.

- How did Paul open his speech?
- What are Paul's presuppositions?
- Can you identify the Greek presuppositions?
- How does Paul contrast the two systems?
- What are the self-contradictions in the Greek system?
- How does Paul conclude his speech?

Bonus:

- How does Paul's speech differ from Peter's speech in Acts 2:14-36?
- Contrast the two audiences.
- It has been said Peter's speech was better than Paul's because 3000 people got saved. Is this a true and/or fair assessment? Why?

For too long, unbelievers have dominated the field of faith with half-truths and used great swelling words to intimidate the righteous. They are arrogant and timid mice with a big microphone. Their use of coercion and control is limited only to Nature's Box and the resources of the State. Only in Christ does humility fuse with boldness to create an unstoppable force driven by love and liberty. The darkness disappears in the light, so shine bright Saints! The gates of hell cannot withstand a militant Church!

Matthew 16:18-19

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Appendix A: Apologetics Resources

Apologetics, Frame, John
Classical Apologetics, Sproul, R.C., Gerstner, John, Lindsey, Arthur
Cold Case Christianity, Wallace, James Warner
Making Sense of God, Keller, Tim
Miracles, Lewis, C.S.
Presuppositional Apologetics, Bahnsen, Greg
The Age of Revelation, Boudinot, Elias, 1801
The Case for Christ, Strobel, Lee
The Defense of the Faith, Van Till, Cornelius
The Universe Next Door, Sire, James

Bahnsen, Greg versus Stein, Gordon, *The Great Debate: Does God Exist?*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDHkheBeTRE>
Sproul, R. C. *Apologetics Series*, 25 Parts (Part 1).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XaT97FknI0>
Tour, James, *The Mystery of the Origin Life*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zU7Lww-sBPg>

Appendix B: Apologetics Keywords

Here is a vocabulary list of words and ideas related to apologetics.

Theology, Philosophy, Science/Knowledge	Law of Non-Contradiction
Presuppositions, Worldviews	Law of Causality
Myth Of Neutrality, Circularity	Basic Reliability of Sense Perception
Proof vs Persuasion	Analogy of Language
Belief vs Truth	Univocal, Equivocal, Analogical
Antithesis & Enmity	Analogy of Being
Arbitrary, Inconsistent, Consequences	Description vs Prescription
Preconditions for Intelligibility& Experience	Passive/Active Causation
Metaphysics – ultimate reality	Causally Closed/Open
Epistemology - knowledge	Illusion, Self-Created, Self-Existent
Empirical, Rational, Revelational	Caused by Self-Existent/Necessary Being
Experiential	Transcendent, Immanent
Self-attesting, Self-defeating	Relative, Absolute
Vicious/Virtuous Circularity	Changing, Unchanging
Ethics/Aesthetics – moral, important	Eternal, Temporal
Contradiction, Paradox, Mystery	Personal, Impersonal
Limits of Possible/Impossible	Point of Contact, Wholly Other
Orthodoxy/Heresy	Generalization, Naturalization, Verification
Sacred/Blasphemy	Noumenal, Phenomenal – Plato, Kant
Origin, Destiny, Meaning, Morality	Objective/Subjective Truth - Kierkegaard
Creation, Miracle, Providence, Prophecy	Cosmological – cause & effect
Evidential, Classical	Teleological – design & purpose
Presuppositional	Ontological – being, existence
Transcendentals	Transcendental – beyond material world
Internal Critique	Abstract, Immaterial, Invariant, Universal
Impossibility of the Contrary	
Preconditions of Intelligibility	
Don't Answer/Answer Strategy Pr 26:4-5	