

# Christian Apologetics as a Missions Strategy



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# Apologetics as a Missions Strategy

- Why?
  - The cultural environment
  - The church's need
- What?
  - The questions
  - The answers
- Where?
  - Overseas
  - North America
- When?
  - Now



# Stumbling Blocks in Coming to Faith in Christ

1. Lack of intellectual knowledge of God
2. Other Christians – their perceived hypocrisy
3. Sin: accepting Christ would require turning away from sin
4. If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why is there so much pain, suffering, and evil?
5. Perceived conflict between Science and the Bible, e.g. Creation v. Evolution
6. No answers from the church to the hard questions



# The Statistics!

- According to pollster George Barna:
  - Only 9% of “born again” teenagers believe that absolute truth even exists
  - At least 60% of the children from evangelical homes are estimated to leave the church once they leave home
- Reasons:
  - No answers from the church for the hard questions asked by our youth
  - Indoctrination of our youth in secularism and evolutionism

# Does Your Truth Match Reality?

- What is the issue?
- Why Apologetics?
- Arguments for God's existence
- What is truth?
- Contrasting views of truth
- How do we know truth?
- How do we know the Bible is true?
- Does the Truth in the Bible match reality?
- What is the evidence for Truth in the Bible?





# The Truth Issue

- Your “truth” is what you believe to be true
- How do you know it is true?
  - Based on presupposition?
  - Verified by credible evidence?
- Is the Christian Truth true?
  - Looking at the evidence
  - Does the evidence support Christian Truth?
- What about Atheism? Evolution? Creation?
- What about Mormonism? Hinduism? Buddhism?



# Apologetics

- *Apologia* (Greek) – speaking in defense
- Apologetics is a defense of beliefs by arguments, evidences, and reasons for why we believe what we believe
- Why Apologetics?
  - Explain basic Christian beliefs
  - Defend beliefs from those who attack them
  - Defend beliefs from heretical beliefs



# Why Apologetics?

## ■ Why?

- Know what you believe
- Know why you believe
- Defend what you believe – **1 Pet. 3:15**

## ■ How?

- Rightly divide the word of truth – **II Tim. 2:15**
- Be a Berean, search the Scriptures daily – **Acts 17:11**
- Look for evidence of the Truth
- Answer the questions of believers & skeptics alike
  - **Acts 17:17**, “Therefore he [Paul] reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshippers, ...



# Why Christian Apologetics?

- **1 Pet. 3:15**, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;”
- **Matt. 22:37**, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
- **1 Th. 5:21-22**, “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”
- **2 Cor. 10:5**, “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,”



# Apologetics in the NT

- The word “apologia” is used in the NT eight times:
  - **Acts 19:33**, Alexander’s defense to the people
  - **Acts 22:1**, Paul’s defense before the people
  - **Acts 25:16**, Paul answers the charges against him
  - **Acts 26:2**, Paul’s defense before King Agrippa
  - **I Cor. 9:3**, Paul’s defense to those who examine him
  - **Phil. 1:7**, in defense and confirmation of the gospel
  - **II Tim. 4:16**, Paul’s defense in a court of law
  - **I Pet. 3:15**, give a defense ... a reason for the hope



# Arguments For God's Existence

- Cosmological argument
  - Beginning of the universe
- Teleological argument(s)
  - Design and order in the universe, e.g anthropic principle
  - Design of life
- Moral argument
  - Moral law implies a moral law giver



# Cosmological Argument

- Premise – everything that had a beginning had a cause
  - Based on Law of Causality
  - Everything has a cause
- The universe had a beginning
  - Einstein’s General Relativity
  - Second Law of Thermodynamics (Entropy)
- Therefore the universe had a cause
  - “Supernatural forces are at work ...”

# Teleological Argument

- Every design had a designer
  - A watch requires a watchmaker (Paley)
- The universe has highly complex design
  - Verified by the Anthropic Principle
  - Universe fine-tuned (designed) to make life possible on earth
- Therefore the universe had a Designer
  - Earth was designed for us





# Anthropic Principle

- 122 very narrowly defined constants identified
  - Oxygen level in earth's atmosphere ~21%
  - Gravity force is a precise constant
  - Expansion rate of universe
  - Jupiter orbit protects Earth
  - Thickness of Earth's crust controls release of oxygen
  - Rotation rate of Earth controls temperature differences
  - Tilt of earth at 23 degrees is just right
- Probability of 1 chance in  $10^{**}138$  (ZERO/NIL)



# Teleological Argument – Life

- Living organisms
  - Are complex
  - Appear designed
  - Contain information
- Life from non-life is impossible
  - Spontaneously generated life never observed
  - Probability is effectively ZERO
- Therefore life requires a Designer



# Complexity of Life

- Life requires DNA (information)
- DNA contains instructions for building and replicating living things
- Irreducible complexity
  - All parts required to function
- Specified complexity
  - Order of amino acids is specified in proteins
  - Information in a “simple” amoeba requires 1000 complete sets of an encyclopedia



# Moral Argument

- Every law has a law giver
  - Legislation requires a legislature
  - Prescription requires a prescriber
- There is a Moral Law
  - Fundamental sense of right and wrong
  - Conscience (manifestation of Moral Law)
  - Absolute (and universal) moral obligations
- Therefore, there is a Moral Law Giver
  - Source higher than ourselves
  - Source of our human rights



# Existence of The Moral Law

- The Moral Law is undeniable
- We know it by our reactions
- It is the basis of human rights
- It is the unchanging standard of justice
- Defines a real difference between moral positions
- We know what is absolutely wrong – there must be an absolute standard of righteousness
- It is the grounds for political & social dissent
- If there were no Moral Law, then we wouldn't make excuses for violating it



# Defending God's Word

- **Col. 4:5-6** – know how to answer
  - “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”
- **Tit. 1:9** – be able to exhort and convince
  - “holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”
- **James 1:22** – be doers of the Word
  - “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”



# What is Truth?

- Epistemology
  - Nature and scope of knowledge
  - How we know what we know
- Relation between belief, truth, knowledge
- **Ps. 100:3**, “Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. ... ”
- If God made us, He would not deceive us about the nature of our existence



# Truth Issues

- Absolute or relative?
- Correspondent or coherent?
- Determining truth
  - Using our five senses
  - Using logic
  - Revealed in Scripture
- Is truth knowable?
  - Agnosticism, skepticism, etc.



# How Do We Decide Truth?

- Is truth decided by our five senses?  
[*hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching*]
  - e.g. our feelings? [*touching the elephant*]
- Is our truth based on facts?
  - Does it match reality?
- Thomas asked the Lord about truth
- **John 14:6**, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”
  - Very exclusive statement
  - But, truth IS exclusive!

# Pontius Pilate's Question



- Pilate asked Jesus “What is Truth?”
- **John 18:37-38**, “Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are you a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all.’”
- Pilate did not think his question had an answer
- **John 17:17**, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”



# Jesus' Answer

- Jesus was clear that “everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”
- The Apostle John made it clear that Jesus was the Truth and there is no sin in Him
- Do you know how to answer Pilate’s question – “What is Truth?”
- How do we determine what is true?
  - Feelings don’t tell us what is true, facts do!



# Use of Logic in Apologetics

- The universe exists
- Universe cannot be infinitely old – would have entered into state of disorder long ago
- Universe is not in a state of disorder – therefore not infinitely old
- Universe had a beginning
- Universe could not have brought itself into existence
- Something before the universe brought it into existence
- That something is God



# Three Views of Truth

- What does it mean for a statement to be true?
- Three different views on what truth is:
  1. Correspondence/Traditional view
  2. Relativism/Postmodern view
  3. Practical/Useful view
- The Test
  - Does your “Truth” match reality? i.e. Does “what you believe to be true” match reality?



# Correspondence/Traditional View

- Any statement is true if and only if it corresponds to or agrees with factual reality
- Declarative statements are subject to verification and falsification
- A statement can be proven false if it can be shown to disagree with objective reality
- Truth is not a matter of subjective opinion, or majority vote, or cultural fashion
- Truth is objective and knowable, e.g. photo from outer space showing the earth as a blue sphere



# Law of Non-Contradiction

- We live by the law of non-contradiction (P, not P)
  - Can't both be true in the same way, at the same time
  - Both contradictory statements cannot be true
  - Can't be true that there both is and is not X in my room
- If I say XXX and my wife says not-XXX
  - One of us is wrong
  - We both can't be telling the truth
- Christians historically (traditionally) have affirmed the correspondence view of truth
  - Supports the concept of absolute truth
  - Logically self-consistent and supportable



# An Example From the Bible

- There are good historical reasons to believe that Jesus rose from the dead in space-time history, showing His divine authority:
  - **Rom. 1:4**, “and declared to be the Son of God ... by the resurrection from the dead.”
  - **1 Cor. 15:1-11**, “... the gospel which I preached to you ...”
    - Factual evidence of Christ’s Resurrection (provided by Paul)
  - **1 Cor. 15:14**, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.”
- Illustrates the concept of “absolute truth”



# Relativism/Postmodern View

- Statements about scientific facts, religious realities, or moral principles cannot be known to refer to objective states of affairs
- Language is contingently constructed through communities
- Language cannot transcend its own context and refer to realities outside itself
- All language fails to describe objective conditions because of its embeddedness in various cultures
- The truth of a statement depends on the views of persons or cultures, not on whether statements correspond to objective reality



# More on Relativism

- For a statement to be true just means that a person or culture believes it to be true
  - “Well, if that’s true for you ...”
  - “We can’t judge other cultures ...”
- Accordingly, one can say “Jesus is Lord” and another “Allah is Lord”, and both statements will be true – NOT



# Putting the Statements to the Test

- This is illogical and fails the law of non-contradiction
- The statements are mutually exclusive
  - **John 1:14**, Christians believe that Jesus is “God made flesh”
  - Muslims deny that Allah can or did incarnate
- The two statements cannot both be objectively true



# Summary of Relativism View

- Relativism offers no means of verifying or falsifying any belief
- Relativism does not support the concept of “absolute truth”
- This view is self-refuting and logically unsupportable
- This view often referred to as postmodernism



# Conclusion on Relativism View

- Relativism is false
  - It does not correspond to reality
- When truth is deemed to depend on a person or culture holding the belief, anything can become “true”
  - Which is absurd
- This attitude/view cannot be applied to medicine or science
  - Would be deemed ridiculous



# Practical/Useful View

- This view holds that a belief is true only if it works for a particular person
  - Christianity may be “true for me” if it helps me, but false for another person if it does not help him
- This view confuses usefulness with truth
  - e.g. “mismanaging money” <-> “misplacing money” (belief) <-> “stolen money” (reality)  
→ results in diligent management of his money



# Truth v. Use Value

- The “truth value” of a belief is different than its “use value”
- Does not support the concept of “absolute truth”
- This view is self-refuting and logically unsupportable



# Is Truth Knowable?

- Agnosticism – self-defeating, how do they know we can't know?
- Skepticism – self-defeating, do they even doubt skepticism?
- Rationalism – inconsistent – can't rationally prove that something is rationally inescapable
- Fideism – self-defeating, either unjustified belief or not fideism (belief in vs. belief that)
- Realism – we can know something



# What is Truth?

- Truth is that which corresponds to reality
  - Thought applies to reality
  - Knowledge is possible
  - Logic is a necessary presupposition of all thought
  - It is undeniable that logic applies to reality
  - Self-evident principles cannot be denied
- Truth is absolute, correspondent, knowable, logical
- The Bible claims to be the Word of God & true
- Does the Bible correspond to reality?
  - Is the Bible true?



# Our Mandate

- **1 Pet. 3:15**, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;”
- As believers we need to:
  - Be ready to give an answer to questions about our faith
  - Be able to explain what we believe and why we believe this
  - Answer those who ask for an explanation



# Is The Bible True?

- Some people say the Bible is full of errors or contradictions
- For most this is just an excuse for not believing
- Few who claim these errors have read the Bible and analyzed any of these alleged errors



# Alleged Errors in the Bible

- Law of non-contradiction
  - Fails truth test
- Mistranslations
  - Not true to original language
- So-called scientific errors
  - Authors used language of the day



# Law of Non-Contradiction

- Bible was written
  - By 40 authors from many walks of life
  - Over a period of 1500 years
- Bible has ONE author – God
  - God is perfect, holy, true
- There are no contradictions in His Word, no matter what it seems at first
- Many supposed contradictions



# Example of Non-Contradiction

- Many supposed contradictions result by placing two passages in false opposition to each other, e.g.
  - **Eccl. 7:29**, “God made man upright.” – Talking about Adam and Eve, who God originally created upright
  - **Ps. 51:5**, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity.” – Here King David is speaking of his personal situation, as a fallen descendant of Adam
- There is no contradiction here



# Mistranslation

- Translation of the books of the Bible is a real challenge
- We have many translations
  - KJV, NKJV, AS, NAS, NIV, etc.
- Most translation problems have simple explanations
- You should always look at the original Hebrew and Greek words used



# Example of Mistranslation

- **Lev. 11:13,19**, “And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, ... and the bat.” (NKJV)
  - Bats are not birds (a questionable word)
- The KJV uses the word “fowls” instead of the word “birds”
- The KJV used the word “fowls” in **Lev. 11:20** to describe “insects”



# Explanation of Mistranslation

- The Hebrew word used is “*owph*,” which can mean anything that “has a wing,” i.e. a winged creature
- The Hebrew word “*owph*” includes birds, flying insects, and bats
- Going back to the Hebrew word explains the supposed translation problem



# Alleged Scientific Errors

- Authors used the language of their day
  - The sun rising in the morning
  - The sun setting in the evening
  - The sun does not “rise” and “set”
  - The earth actually rotates
  - Our talk of the sun rising and setting is not “scientifically correct”
  - Spoken from perspective of the observer



# Does The Truth in The Bible Match Reality?

- Does the Bible's Truth Match Reality?
- Does what you believe (your truth) match reality?
- We apply certain tests to biblical Truth
- What happens when we apply the same tests to your truth?
- Does the evidence match up?



# Topics/Questions Covered

- Jesus' Credibility – Is He God?
- Prophecies Come True – Messianic + Others
- Christ Rose From the Grave – What is the Evidence?
- Is the Bible God's Word?
- Does Archaeology Verify the Bible?
- Creation Apologetics
- Is the Bible Reliable Scientifically?
- If God is All-Loving and All-Knowing, Why Do We have Evil and Suffering?



# Jesus' Credibility – Is He God?

- Evidence of Jesus' life on earth
  - Biblical, Roman, Jewish
- Jesus in His humanity
- Jesus claimed to be God
- Jesus' attributes
- Jesus' actions (miracles)
- The Apostles taught the deity of Christ
- Four possibilities – which one was He?
  - Liar, lunatic, legend, or the Truth
- What are Jesus' credentials?



# Prophecies Come True

- What is prophecy?
- Test of a true prophet
- The importance of prophecy
- Messianic prophecies
- The significance of messianic prophecies
- Messianic prophecy issues
- Probability of fulfillment of prophecies
- Other Old Testament (OT) prophecies
- End Time prophecies



# Christ Rose From The Grave – What is the Evidence?

- Jesus' Resurrection
  - Prophesied in the OT
  - Prophesied by Christ Himself in the NT
- Pertinent data to be considered
- Historical facts to be considered
- Accounting for the empty tomb
- More than a dozen appearances of the risen Lord
  - Includes more than 500 witnesses at once
- Paul teaches the importance of the Resurrection
  - Its significance to the Christian faith



# Is The Bible God's Word?

- The Bible is unique
- How we got the Bible
- Is Scripture inspired?
- Christ's teaching on the OT
- Christ's view of the NT
- Historical reliability of the OT
- Historical reliability of the NT
- Supernatural wisdom of the Bible



# Does Archaeology Verify the Bible?

- What is archaeology?
- Some ancient archaeological finds
- The Dead Sea scrolls
- Evidence for the accuracy of the Bible
  - Internal, copy comparison, archaeology
- The Ebla tablets
- The divisions of Genesis
- Genesis and origins
- The walls of Jericho
- Other important archaeological finds
- Archaeology confirms accuracy of the Bible



# Creation Apologetics

- What Does the Bible Say About Creation?
- What Do Jesus And The Apostles Say About Creation?
- What Does Science Say About Creation?
  - The Creation and Evolution Models of Origins
  - Which Model Best Fits The Scientific Evidence?
- Challenges to Evolutionism
- Does It Matter What We Believe About Creation?



# Is The Bible Reliable Scientifically?

- Scientific statements in the Bible
  - Are they accurate?
- Reliability of the Bible established by:
  - Prophecy, history, geography, archaeology
- Laws of science consistent with the Bible
- Scientific statements/anticipation in the Bible
  - Astronomy, geophysics, geology, hydrology
  - Meteorology, biology, physics
- Alleged scientific errors in the Bible
- Scientific disciplines established by Bible-believing scientists



# Why Do We Have Evil & Suffering?

- Death and suffering are everywhere
- View of history (and God):
  - Atheists/evolutionists have a wrong view
  - The Bible gives the proper view
- The role of man's free will
- What about “senseless suffering”?
- Suffering of believers
- God's purposes
- Is God doing anything about death & suffering?
- Our source of hope



# Christianity – A Rational Faith

- Common misconceptions
- What is faith?
- Can Christianity be tested objectively?
- A rational body of truth
- Creation makes it plain
- Moral smoke screens
- More arguments for God's existence
- Addressing Bible difficulties
- Addressing postmodernism
- Addressing skepticism



# Apologetics as a Missions Strategy

- Defense of the Faith is essential for
  - All church leaders
  - All believers
- Christian Apologetics is crucial for
  - Reaching new believers
  - Discerning the Truth
- Creation Apologetics is important for
  - Establishing the Truth from the very 1<sup>st</sup> verse
  - Explaining why Jesus came to Earth and died for our sins
  - Providing answers to the hard questions



# Reference Books

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2. Norman Geisler & Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, 2004.
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7. Josh McDowell & Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions*, 1993.
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9. Phil Fernandes, *No Other Gods*, 2002.
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# More Reference Books

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3. Don Batten, *The Creation Answers Book*, 2008.
4. Ray Comfort, *Scientific Facts in the Bible*, 2001.
5. Peter Stoner & Robert Newman, *Science Speaks*, 1976.
6. *Creation Moments, 101 Scientific Facts & Foreknowledge.*
7. Ralph Muncaster, *Can Archaeology Prove The NT?* 2000.
8. Siegfried Horn, *Biblical Archaeology*, 1985.
9. Timothy Keller, *The Reason For God*, 2008.
10. Charles Colson & Harold Fickett, *The Faith Given Once, For All*, 2008.



# Some Useful Websites

1. [www.greatcom.org/resources/areadydefense/default.htm](http://www.greatcom.org/resources/areadydefense/default.htm)  
- A Ready Defense by Josh McDowell
2. [www.carm.org](http://www.carm.org) - Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry
3. [www.reasonablefaith.org](http://www.reasonablefaith.org) - William Lane Craig Apologetics Resources
4. [www.leestrobel.com](http://www.leestrobel.com) - Investigating Faith by Lee Strobel
5. [www.josh.org](http://www.josh.org) - Josh McDowell Ministry
6. [www.osta.com/apologetics](http://www.osta.com/apologetics) - Lectures on Christian Apologetics by Heinz Lycklama
7. [www.osta.com/creation](http://www.osta.com/creation) - Lectures on Creation by Heinz Lycklama



# Special Credits

- Dr. Phil Fernandes, The Institute of Biblical Defense.
  - Apologetics arguments in his books.
- David A. Prentice, M. Ed., Origins Resource, 2007.
  - Some useful graphics and images.
- Josh McDowell, The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict, 1999.
  - Many references to specific evidences.