

2015



I'd like to  
apologize  
for my faith

PRACTICAL APOLOGETICS



# AGENDA

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6:00PM - 6:15PM	Welcome and Introduction
6:15PM - 7:15PM	<b>Session 1</b>
7:15PM - 7:30PM	Break
7:30PM - 8:30PM	<b>Session 2</b>
8:30PM - 8:45PM	Break
8:45PM - 9:00PM	Worship
9:00PM - 9:15PM	Q/A 1
9:15PM - 10:15PM	<b>Session 3</b>
10:15PM - 10:30PM	Break
10:30PM - 11:30PM	<b>Session 4</b>
11:30PM - 11:45PM	Q/A 2
11:45PM - 12:00AM	Closing Remarks



## LEGEND / KEY

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Indicates a Foundational Truth



A Question from a skeptic



Used to indicate a key phrase , thought, or passage



A Bible reference



A statement to ponder or give additional thought toward



Used to call attention to a statement



A Reference for further study



A Dialogue or Quote



An argument or position that can be made or defended

## NOTABLE QUOTES

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*The only way teens become truly “prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks” (1 Pet. 3:15) is by wrestling personally with the questions. Ironically, those who have never grappled with diverse worldviews are actually the most likely to be swept away by them. As G. K. Chesterton wrote, ideas can be dangerous — but they are far more dangerous to the person who has never studied them...we should always couch discussions of Christianity in the language of reasons and evidence. We should be giving apologetics from the pulpit and in the Sunday school classroom. Every course in a Christian school should be an opportunity to show that a biblical perspective does a better job than any secular theory of accounting for the facts in that field, whether psychology, biology, government, or business. Apologetics should be naturally woven in to all our discourse.*

—Nancy Pearcey

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*I think increasingly we are going to need to be not only the bearers of the gospel to others but a people who have answers available to questions such as, “What about the problem of evil? and “How do I know God exists?” We will need to give basic answers to these objections. Typically, the same questions come up over and over again. You won’t need to learn lots of new material with each person you talk to. If we have a mastery of some of the basics, we can really go a long way. And, as we’re evangelizing, as we’re talking about our faith, we will have greater confidence in presenting the gospel and won’t be daunted by the potential questions that might come up, but rather will say, “I believe the Christian faith does a better job of answering these sorts of questions.”*

—Paul Copan

*I believe that one of the ways that youth workers can equip teenagers in a meaningful way is to help them understand that faith in Jesus is not a blind faith that goes against all reason but rather a logical response to evidence that supports the existence of the God of the Bible and the fact that Jesus really is who the Bible claims him to be...Teenagers can be very smart, and if you can't address some of the apologetics topics that often come up in youth ministry, they may think that there are no good responses to common objections to faith in Jesus. You may have barely finished college, and philosophy and apologetics may not be your forté; that's OK. But it doesn't give you an excuse to neglect some of the most important questions teenagers in your church and community might be asking.*

**—Benjer McVeigh**

**(from, 5 Apologetics Topics Youth Workers Should Be Able to Address)**

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*The task of apologetics is to show that the evidence that the New Testament calls people to commit their lives to is compelling evidence and worthy of our full commitment. That often involves a lot of work for the apologist. Sometimes we would rather duck the responsibility of doing our homework, of wrestling with the problems and answering the objections, and simply say to people, "Oh, you just have to take it all in faith." That's the ultimate cop-out. That doesn't honor Christ. We honor Christ by setting forth for people the cogency of the truth claims of Scripture, even as God himself does. We must take the trouble to do our work before the Spirit does his work, because the Spirit does not ask people to put their trust and faith and affection in nonsense or absurdity.*

**—R.C. Sproul**

**(from, Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics)**

*Instead of addressing teens' questions, most church youth groups focus on fun and food. The goal seems to be to create emotional attachment using loud music, silly skits, slapstick games -- and pizza. But the force of sheer emotional experience will not equip teens to address the ideas they will encounter when they leave home and face the world on their own. A study in Britain found that non-religious parents have a near 100 percent chance of passing on their views to their children, whereas religious parents have only about a 50/50 chance of passing on their views. Clearly, teaching young people to engage critically with secular worldviews is no longer an option.*

*It is a necessary survival skill.*

**—Nancy Pearcey**

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*If someone doesn't think they need apologetics, one has to wonder if they have tried evangelizing lately.*

**—Bobby Conway**

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*The Bible says we should "always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Can you help someone work through the "Why does God allow suffering?" question? Can you help a university student see that science has not, will not and cannot disprove God? Do you know why it is logically impossible that all religions could lead to God? We need to be ready to answer these because the Bible commands us to do so. As Christians we have a tremendous heritage we have inherited from those who have taken 1 Peter 3:15 seriously.*

**—Jon Morrison (from, 5 Reasons To Rethink Apologetics)**

*Here is the sum of the matter: We must earnestly endeavor to know the truth of the biblical worldview and to make it known with integrity to as many people as possible with the best arguments available. To know God in Christ means that we desire to make Christian truth available to others in the most compelling form possible. To be created in God's rational, moral and relational image means that our entire being should be aimed at the glorification of God in Christian witness. A significant part of that witness is Christian apologetics.*

—**Douglas Groothuis**

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*In high school and college Christian teenagers are intellectually assaulted with every manner of non-Christian worldview coupled with an overwhelming relativism. If parents are not intellectually engaged with their faith and do not have sound arguments for Christian theism and good answers to their children's questions, then we are in real danger of losing our youth. It's no longer enough to teach our children simply Bible stories; they need doctrine and apologetics. It's hard to understand how people today can risk parenthood without having studied apologetics. Unfortunately, our churches have also largely dropped the ball in this area. It's insufficient for youth groups and Sunday school classes to focus on entertainment and simpering devotional thoughts. We've got to train our kids for war. We dare not send them out to public high school and university armed with rubber swords and plastic armor. The time for playing games is past.*

— **William Lane Craig**

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*One lesson we must learn from [Bart Ehrman's] Misquoting Jesus is that those in ministry need to close the gap between the church and the academy. We have to educate believers. Instead of trying to isolate laypeople from critical scholarship, we need to insulate them. They need to be ready for the barrage, because it is coming. The intentional dumbing down of the church for the sake of filling more pews will ultimately lead to defection from Christ.*

*Ehrman is to be thanked for giving us a wake-up call.*

- **Dr. Daniel B. Wallace**





# PRACTICAL THEOLOGY APOLOGETICS

## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

- The word "apologetics" comes from the Greek word *apologia*, (pronounced "ap-ol-og-ee'-ah.")
- "In ancient Athens it referred to a defense made in the courtroom as part of the normal judicial procedure. After the accusation, the defendant was allowed to refute the charges with a defense or reply (*apologia*). The accused would attempt to 'speak away' (*apo*—away, *logia*—speech) the accusation." (Martin Batts)
- The word refers to, "a verbal defense"
- The Apostle Paul uses the word several times in his writings:
  - To the Corinthians, Paul found it necessary to "defend" himself against criticisms of his claim to be an apostle.
    - 1 Corinthians 9:3  
*This is my **defense** to those who would examine me*
    - 2 Corinthians 12:19  
*Have you been thinking all along that we have been **defending** ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding beloved.*
  - To Timothy, Paul referred to the first time he stood trial.
    - 2 Timothy 4:16  
*At my first **defense** no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them"*
  - To the Philippians, Paul had expressed appreciation for supporting him.

- Philippians 1:7

*It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the **defense** and confirmation of the gospel*

*...And even referred to himself as a defender of the gospel:*

- 1 Philippians 1:16

*I am appointed for the defense of the gospel”*

- In the second century this general word for “defense” began taking on a narrower sense to refer to a group of writers who defended the beliefs and practices of Christianity against various attacks. These men were known as the *apologists* because of the titles of some of their treatises, and included most notably Justin Martyr (*First Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Second Apology*) and Tertullian (*Apologeticum*).

- **Key Verse:** 1 Peter 3:15



*but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a **defense** to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect*

- The context here is similar to Paul’s later epistles and to Luke’s writings: non-Christians are slandering the behavior of Christians and threatening them with persecution. When challenged or even threatened, Christians are to behave lawfully, maintain a good conscience, and give a reasoned defense of what they believe to anyone who asks.
- 3 Significant Parts to this passage:
  1. “Always Being Prepared”: In order to be ready, it requires study.

- 2 Timothy 2:15

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth*

- 2 Timothy 3:16

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

- John 5:39-40

*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*

- 1 Peter 2:2

*Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation*

2. "To Make a Defense": Give an answer to anyone who asks. In order to give answer we must know WHAT we believe and WHY we believe it.
3. "A Reason for the hope that is in you": It is all about the Gospel.

- Colossians 1:3-5

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel*

- An apologist is someone who presents an apology or makes a practice of defending the faith.

- **Apologetics is the Art and Science of Christian Persuasion**
  - **Art:**
    - What are the skills that are needed to communicate effectively with a non-believer?
  - **Science:**
    - The *Science* of Apologetics is the systematic study of the academic disciplines which are involved in apologetics.
    - To study and practice apologetics, we need to be good students and understand a large body of knowledge. Apologetics is one branch of theological study which is interdisciplinary by its very nature.
    - Without understanding what we believe and why we believe it, our faith becomes brittle and fragile: *“Honest questions deserve honest answers.”*
    - Virtually any aspect of human life can be turned into an argument for why Christianity is true and reasonable
  - **Christian:** *We are called to be ethical*  
*...do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.*  
 (1 Peter 3:15b-16)
  - **Persuasion:** *We are called to persuade others like Paul did.*  
<sup>2</sup> *And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*  
<sup>3</sup> *explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying,*  
*“This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”<sup>4</sup> And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. (Acts 17:2-4)*



- Stated another way:  
Christian apologetics is that branch of Christianity that deals with answering any and all critics who oppose or question the revelation of God in Christ and the Bible.



“Defending the faith requires defining the faith in its biblical context. The most successful apologetic will present a Christianity that balances orthodox theology, spiritual disciplines, healthy relationships, social action and evangelism.”  
(Stephen J Bedard)

- Apologetics is NOT about polemical attacks on other faith groups.
- Apologetics is NOT about winning a debate or argument.
- Apologetics includes at its core a deeper understanding of the gospel.
  - The only way to demonstrate Christianity is true is to know what it is about.
  - This requires both proper theology and the ability to see what the true gospel looks like in real life as it transforms individuals and communities. (Stephen J Bedard)
  - Apologetics IS about proclaiming the GOOD NEWS of JESUS CHRIST
- Apologetics can include studying such subjects as:
  - Biblical manuscript transmission
  - Reliability and authenticity of the Bible
  - Philosophy
  - Biology
  - Science and Evolution
  - Reason and logic
  - But it can also consist of simply giving an answer to a question about Jesus or a Bible passage.

## WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF APOLOGETICS?

- As a Proof : “presenting a rational basis for faith”
- Defensively : “answering the objections of unbelief”

- Philippians 1:7

*For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.*

- Offensively : “attacking the foolishness of unbelieving thought”

- *Psalm 14:1*

*The fool says in his heart, “There is no God...”*

- *1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16*

<sup>18</sup> For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written, <sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach<sup>[b]</sup> to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

- *2 Corinthians 10:5-6*

<sup>5</sup> *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, <sup>6</sup> being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.*

- Personally : “it builds up one’s faith”

Apologetics is similar to preaching because its goal is ultimately the defense and presentation of the validity and necessity of the gospel. It is an attempt to persuade the listener to change his beliefs and life to conform to biblical truth and to come to a saving relationship in Christ.

## WHAT KINDS OF APOLOGETICS ARE THERE?

There are several types of apologetics studies. Each has a targeted area of focus and purpose and often there is overlap with other types. For example, studying the reliability of the Bible is a focus of Biblical Apologetics, but is also addressed in the study of Cultural Apologetics.

### 4 Approaches to Apologetics:

- **Classical Apologetics:** that style of Christian defense that stresses rational arguments for the existence of God and uses evidence to substantiate biblical claims and miracles. It is quite similar to evidential apologetics and appeals to human reason and evidence.
- **Presuppositional Apologetics:** This form of Christian apologetics deals with presuppositions. A Christian presupposes God's existence and argues from that perspective to show the validity of Christian theism. This position also presupposes the truth of the Christian Scriptures and relies on the validity and power of the gospel to change lives.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16)*

- **Evidential Apologetics:** Evidential Apologetics is that style of Christian defense that stresses the miracles found in the Bible particularly Christ's resurrection as an evidence for the existence of God and the validity of Christ and His words. It also uses historical evidences to support the veracity of the biblical account. In this, it is very similar to Classical Apologetics, which stresses reason in its approach to evidences. Basically, evidential apologetics stresses evidence such as miracles, fulfilled prophecies, etc., and uses reason to support them.

- **Practical Apologetics:** the style of apologetics that focuses on the answering current social and ethical issues confronting the Christian faith, defending the reliability and authenticity of the Bible, and defending the exclusivity of the Gospel.

### Topics within Apologetic Study:

- **Biblical Apologetics:** A study of the veracity of the Bible. Archaeological, historical, geographical, linguistic, and cultural issues are examined with the goal of answering specific claims of critics and skeptics of the Bible.
- **Theological Apologetics:** A study of the challenges to the tradition conservative theology from within and outside of Christianity. Areas such as the nature of the triune God, the dual nature of Christ, and the relation of God to the world are some of the topics explored in this type of defense.
- **Cultural Apologetics:** A study that addresses current cultural challenges to the traditional views of Scripture. This type of study focuses on defending the Bible as the source of Absolute Truth, the comparison of various worldviews and their relation to a Biblical worldview, and presenting the Biblical view of doctrine and morality against current cultural and societal issues.

### WHY IS APOLOGETICS IMPORTANT?

1. We are commanded to defend the faith (1 Peter 3:15)
2. Apologetics helps Christians understand their faith better.  
Issues like:
  - The Trinity
  - The Nature of God
  - The Hypostatic Union : the two natures of Christ
  - Defending Jesus' physical resurrection and its significance for our salvation
  - The Gospel of Grace
3. Apologetics is away of sharing the Gospel to those who have doubts.
4. Apologetics counters the bad image that Christianity has received in the media and in culture.



- Televangelists and their scandals--both sexually and monetarily--are a disgrace to Christianity.
  - The media is biased against Christianity
5. Apologetics confronts a threat of apostasy in the visible Christian church.
- Such is the case with the Metropolitan Community Church denomination, which openly advocates the support of homosexuality in violation of scripture (Rom. 1:18-32).
  - As of 2002, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is in risk of apostasy by entertaining the idea of accepting homosexual relationships into church.
  - "The United Church of Christ set up a \$500,000 scholarship fund for gay and lesbian seminarians Friday and urged wider acceptance of homosexuals by other denominations." (United Church Makes Gay Scholarship, CLEVELAND, June 16, 2000, AP Online via COMTEX).
  - "The supreme court of the United Methodist Church was asked Thursday to reconsider the denomination's ban on gay clergy." (*Church court of United Methodists asked to decide on gay clergy ban*, NASHVILLE, Tennessee, Oct. 25, 2001, AP WorldStream via COMTEX).
6. Apologetics confronts many false teachings outside of the church.
- Mormonism teaches that God used to be a man on another world, that he brought one of his goddess wives with him to this world, that they produce spirit offspring that are born into human babies, and that you have the potential of becoming a god of your own world.
  - The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that there is no Trinity, that Jesus is Michael the Archangel, that there is no hell, and that only 144,000 people will go to heaven.
  - Atheism denies God's existence, openly attacks Christianity, and is gaining ground in public life and schools.
  - Islam teaches that Jesus was not God in flesh, that Jesus did not rise from the dead, and that He did not atone

for our sins. It teaches that salvation is partly based on one's works and partly based on Allah's grace. It teaches that the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel (Surah 2:97; 16:102); that Jinn are unseen beings created (51:56) from fire (15:27; 55:15); and that Muhammad was greater than Jesus.

7. Apologetics confronts the rise of immorality in America that is a threat not only to society but also to Christianity.

- The Barna Research group statistics show that 64% of adults and 83% of teenagers said moral truth depends on the situation that you are in.
- Nineteen percent (19%) of the adult population believes that "the whole idea of sin is outdated."
- Fifty-one percent (51%) believe that "if a person is generally good, or does enough good, he will earn a place in Heaven."
- When a society's morals fail, the society fails. Just look at history and think of:
  - Ancient Rome
  - Ancient Greece
  - Present-day Enron, Watergate, and White House interns.
  - Immorality seeps down into all areas of our culture.
  - Consider this: In the *New York Times*, online, of May 12, 2002, in the article "With Games of Havoc, Men Will Be Boys," the author, Warren St. John, interviews some players of what he says is a very popular video game. One young man says, "What I like to do is get in the car and drive around and do drive-by shootings. You can haul someone out of their car and beat on them and steal their money and their car. It's kind of amusing that you have that ability."

. . . A publicist from Long Island says the game's allure comes down to "just going on killing sprees." Not all video games are violent, but the fact that it is so

popular and that the youth are being trained up by them is very disturbing. These kinds of social trends are disturbing; and they reflect a moral decline in America.



*“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20)*

- God tells us in Philippians 4:8,  
*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things”*
8. Apologetics challenges the shift in our schools that are not friendly to Christianity.
- Don Feder in the *Conservative Chronicle*, in his article of Sept. 22, 1993, titled "Fighting Censorship, PAW Does it Its Way," said that in some junior high libraries, book titles included *The Joy of Gay Sex* and *How to Make Love to a Single Woman*.
  - There is an impressions series for grades one to six which promote the New Age and the occult
  - A controversial drug education program called Quest, which tells students that they alone can decide whether or not it's OK to use drugs
  - Textbooks direct students to fantasize about suicide, attack religion, and undermine family authority.

As much of a good impact the Church and godly families have upon a person's understanding of God, the world has just as much or more being thrown at us that contradicts everything we have been taught.

The Church proclaims....

- God is good
- God loves me
- Jesus died for me
- The Bible is important
- I should behave in a way that pleases God

...The World Contradicts

- **God is good**
- **There is too much evil in the world to allow for a good God**
- **God loves me**
- **Science says there is no God**
- **Jesus died for me**
- **Jesus may never have existed**
- **The Bible is important**
- **The Bible is a bunch of ancient documents that are no longer relevant**
- **I should behave in a way that pleases God**
- **It's best to be a "free thinker"**

- Apologetics is all about being able to tell others about the Gospel. This requires Christians to be ready to speak to people who are:
  - Critical: Against what we believe
  - Confrontational: Challenge our faith
  - Cooperative: Who believe many different faiths are correct
  - Curious: Wonder about what we believe
  - Christian: Those who have doubts about their faith



# TRUTH

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## SOURCE OF BELIEFS

- Our view of right and wrong is based on our beliefs.
  - **BELIEFS** : Things you hold to be true
  - **VALUES** : Beliefs that you hold as important or significant
  - **Ethics/Morals**: A set of values that people ought to practice and are practicing
- Simply put, “We act according to how we think.”
- A cultural proverb states:

*“Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character.”*
- The Bible puts it this way:
  - *Proverbs 27:19*  
*As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.*
  - *Matthew 15:18*  
*But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.*
- The Source of our beliefs are:
  - **History/Tradition**: Things we learn from our family, our heritage
  - **Experience**: Things we learn from our environment by experiencing them personally
  - **Revelation**:
    - Natural Revelation: God’s general revelation
      - Conscience
        - Innate or Natural Inclination :
        - Knowledge of Morality
        - Even most non-Christians accept the idea of a Moral Law

- Kant referred to this as : “Willing for all people what we desire to be done to ourselves”
- Great moral creeds of mankind support the view of innate morality
- Romans 2:14-15

*<sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them .*

- Creation

- God’s existence and power can be clearly seen through observing the universe.
- Psalm 19:1-4a

*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handwork. <sup>2</sup> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

- Romans 1:20

*For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

- Special Revelation:

- Physical appearances of God
- Dreams and Visions
- The written Word of God—The Bible
- Jesus Christ

- Hebrews 1:1-2

*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world*

- Hebrews 4:12

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

*<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

- For a Christian our beliefs are founded upon the Word of God.



A life that is rooted in and built upon the word of God as the foundation and authority of how we as followers of Jesus Christ live stands in contrast to the culture of our day where authority is questioned and standards are ever-changing and in some cases eroding completely.

- Colossians 2:6-7

*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

## **WHAT IS A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW?**

- A worldview is a collection of beliefs, convictions, and values that are applied to every area of life. It is our way of thinking as it relates to the world around us.

- Ronald Nash defines a worldview as:

“A worldview is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality.” (Reason and Faith, Nash, p24)

- Norman Geisler refers to a worldview as:



“an intellectual lens through which we see the world. If someone looks through a red-colored lens, the world looks red to him. If another individual looks through a blue-colored lens, the world will look blue to him.”

(Unshakable Foundations, Geisler and Bocchino, p19-20).

- Both Nash and Geisler’s definitions indicate that:

- Our worldview is based on our underlying beliefs
- Our worldview encompasses every area of life

- For a Christian there is should be no separation of secular life and church life.

- True faith involves every aspect of our lives.

*“Christianity cannot be limited to only one component of our lives, a mere practice of observance, or even a salvation experience. We are compelled to see Christianity as the all encompassing truth, the root of everything else. It is ultimate reality.”* (How Now Shall We Live, Charles Colson, p15)

- John MacArthur provides this excellent definition:

***“The Christian worldview sees and understands God the Creator and His creation (i.e., man and the world) primarily through the lens of God’s special revelation, the Holy Scriptures, and secondarily through God’s natural revelation in creation as interpreted by human reason and reconciled by and with Scripture, for the purpose of believing and behaving in accord with God’s will and, thereby, glorifying God with one’s mind and life, both now and in eternity.”***  
(Think Biblically, MacArthur, p14)



- A biblical view is very different from that of the world and our lives should reflect that difference.
- A majority of Christians today do not have a biblical worldview.
  - Recent studies have shown that while only 9% of adults in America have a Biblical worldview
  - The numbers aren't much better for Christians. The Barna Group's 2009 study found many troubling trends among Christians:
    - Only 19% of born-again believers possess a Biblical worldview (<https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years>).
    - Among high school aged only 9% are certain of the existence of absolute moral truth ("The Year's Most Intriguing Findings, From Barna Research Studies," *The Barna Update*, Ventura, Calif, 12 Dec. 2000).
    - 84% of Christian 18- to 29-year-olds admit that they have no idea how the Bible applies to their field or professional interests.
  - These trends not only reflect a shift in the way people view truth, it also shows how they view God's Word and therefore His message.
- Today we have lost much of our identity as a Christian nation, but more importantly we are losing a generation for the gospel of Christ.
- Five Questions that a Worldview must be able to answer:
  1. One's understanding of Origins
    - The concept of origins is central to interpreting many things in the world.
    - Some of the key questions of origins include:
      - Where did we come from?
      - Why is there something rather than nothing?
      - What is reality?
      - Where do good and evil find their foundations?

2. One's understanding of rationality
  - Reason is a key component of understanding our world, so providing an account of rationality and why or if we can rely on our reasoning skills is important.
  - How does reason work in the world?  
Is it a reliable way of knowing things? How can one know that?
3. One's understanding of Purpose
  - Is there any kind of purpose to our world?
  - How can one discover that purpose?
  - The understanding of *telos*—that there is a design or an ultimate end to the cosmos, humanity, or even to each individual will play a huge part in how one values others, and the environment.
4. One's understanding of Morality
  - Every worldview must have some kind of understanding of what morality is and where it comes from.
5. One's understanding of ultimate ends
  - Every worldview has some kind of account of what our ultimate ends are.
  - Is there a reality beyond this world?
  - Do we cease to be when we die?
  - How does one discover this end and how does this life relate to any our ultimate end?

- **“Indeed, the first and most vital task of apologetics is to clarify truth claims.”** Ravi Zacharias





## ISN'T WHAT I BELIEVE IS TRUE JUST AS RIGHT AS WHAT YOU BELIEVE?

### ISN'T RIGHT AND WRONG SUBJECTIVE?

- Statements like:
  - That's just true for you but not for me
  - That's just your reality
  - Who are you to say that someone else is wrong?
  - No one should force their beliefs on anyone else
- 2 primary and opposing views toward morality in our culture today:
  - **Absolute Truth** : The Scriptures tell us that God's Word is absolute truth. God's Word does not change with the times and the cultural shifts. His laws and His promises are eternal and lasting truth. Knowing the eternal nature of God's law and truth can help us in these troubling times.
  - **Relativism**
    - There is no one right view, one right way to think.
    - One person's view of truth is considered just as correct as another person's.
    - Even when in conflict with one another each interpretation satisfies the felt needs of that person or community.
    - Relativism...*“Challenges the view that the truth is...the same for all men everywhere at all times. The newer view regards any truth as socially constructed, contingent, inseparable from the peculiar needs and preferences of certain people in a certain time and place.”* (The Future of the Self: Inventing the Post-Modern Person”, Walter Truett Anderson, p27)
    - Man cannot know anything absolutely. We have only limited knowledge. What we call 'reality' or 'truth' is only an individual or community interpretation of what exists.

- Man constructs truth rather than discovers it, and there is no objective good or evil."
- A few Types of Relativism:
  - **Personal Relativism** : right and wrong are determined by each person.
    - Judges 21:25
 

*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*
  - **Cultural Relativism** : right and wrong is dependent upon the view of each society or culture.
  - **Progressive Relativism** : right and wrong changes over time. What was once considered right or wrong in the past may change in the present or future
  - **Situational Relativism** : determining whether something is right or wrong is dependent upon the circumstances.
  - **Utilitarianism** : the view that whatever helps the greatest number of people with the least amount of suffering is right. (all about the greater good)
- Postmodernism
  - A philosophy that affirms no objective or absolute truth, especially in matters of religion and spirituality.
  - Came after the age of Modernism
  - It is a reaction to modernism's failed promise of using human reason alone to better mankind
  - Dangers
    - Embraces moral relativism
    - Denial of objective truth
    - Pluralism

- Problems with Relativism
  - Relativism Is Self-Refuting
    - Relativists Believe Their View Is True for Everyone making them Absolutists
      - You should not say that someone else is wrong.
      - All views are equally acceptable.
      - You should not impose morality on others.
      - You ought to be “tolerant” and should not “judge.”
      - You ought to be open-minded.
    - Tolerance and Judging is only valid for the relativist
  - Relativism is a belief of convenience
    - It makes no intellectual or moral demands on us. Why struggle with intellectual or moral challenges?  
Relativism is really just *lazy thinking*
  - Relativism is selective
    - Relativists are not relativists about trivial facts that do not challenge their personal autonomy
    - Relativists Become Moral Absolutists When It Comes to Their Rights and Their Property
    - Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland has written about an illuminating encounter with a student at the University of Vermont.

Moreland was speaking in a dorm, and a relativistic student who lived there told him, “Whatever is true for you is true for you and whatever is true for me is true for me. If something works for you because you believe it, that’s great. But no one should force his or her views on other people since everything is relative.”

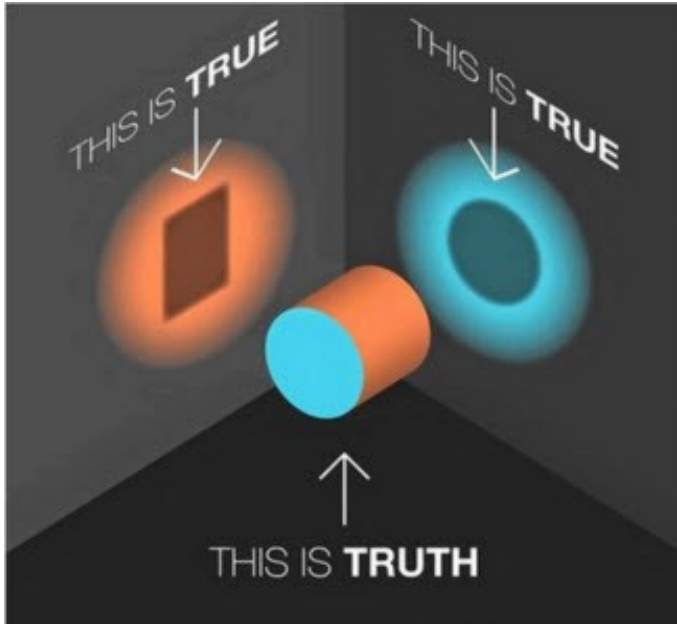
As Moreland left, he unplugged the student’s stereo and started out the door with it.

The student protested: “Hey, what are you doing? ... You can’t do that.”

Moreland replied, “You’re not going to *force* on me the belief that it is wrong to steal your stereo, are you?” He then went on to point out to the student that, when it’s convenient, people say they don’t care about sexual morality or cheating on exams. But they become moral absolutists in a hurry when someone steals *their* things or violates their rights. That is, they are *selective* moral relativists.

- Relativism is not Liveable
  - We judge people's customs all the time.
  - We speak of human rights and tell nations that they must respect them.
    - What about respecting human rights when collective rights trump individual rights?
    - Who are we to tell them that they are wrong?
    - What of women's rights?
    - The rights of the child?
    - Without a belief that there is such a thing as absolute truth - without a standard - we are all simply left shouting our opinions.
- Claims Relativists cannot make:
  - Relativists are logically incapable of accusing others of doing wrong
  - Relativists cannot place blame or accept praise
  - Relativists can’t make charges of unfairness or injustice.
  - Relativists are incapable of complaining about the problem of evil
  - Relativists are incapable of improving their morality
  - Relativists can’t hold meaningful moral discussions
- Each of these claims REQUIRES an OBJECTIVE MORAL STANDARD

- Confusions:
  - Absolute value vs Changing Behavior
  - Absolute values vs. Perception of the Facts
  - Absolute values vs Relative Cultural Practice
- Picture of Relativism



Each appears to be true when viewed in a limited perspective

## ABSOLUTE TRUTH

- In a world where there are so many “colored lenses” we must ask ourselves “What color lens (worldview) is the right color to wear in order to have a correct view of the world?”
- Geisler claims the more fundamental question is:
 

*“Is there only one intellectually justifiable lens through which the world can accurately be viewed?” In other words, “Is there only one true worldview?” (Unshakable Foundations, Geisler and Bocchino, p19)*

- The effect of relativism upon today's teens:
  - They have always lived in a world that promotes:
    - Violence and Sex in movies, television shows, and music lyrics
    - Homosexuality / Same-sex Marriage
    - Abortion
    - Living together before marriage...and much more
  - Because these things have always been a part of their world, the morality of the Bible seems to be the foreign set of values.
  - The way things are now is all young people have ever known and so it is difficult for them to realize that the world they live in now has changed so much.

- Francis Schaeffer refers to the change in values back in 1968 in his book, *"The God Who Is There"*, and calls the point when morality began to change as the 'line of despair'. He wrote:



*"The tragedy of our situation today is that men and women are being fundamentally affected by the new way of looking at truth and yet they have never even analyzed the drift which has taken place...this change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem, as I understand it, facing Christianity today." (p13)*

- A reversal must begin with the church. We are called to be united in Christ and reflect His truth to the world, so that the world might be affected by us.

*"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is **truth**. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:17,17,21)*



- The more we doubt the legitimacy and authoritativeness of the Bible as the Word of God, the less relevant it becomes in our lives.
- Studies show that there is often very little difference between the behavior of Christians and non-Christians.

*“In virtually every study we conduct, representing thousands of interviews every year, born-again Christians fail to display much attitudinal or behavioral evidence of transformed lives.*

*For instance, based on a study released in 2007, we found that most of the lifestyle activities of born-again Christians were statistically equivalent to those of non-Christians.”*

(UnChristian, David Kinnaman, p47)

- Christians are often indistinguishable from non-believers.



- In order to influence to the world around us we must begin with a proper view of what is right and wrong.
- Romans 12:2 Tells us not to think or act like the world, but allow the Holy Spirit to change our mind so that we think and act like Jesus.

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)*

- Winston Churchill:

*“Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened.”*

## WHAT IS TRUTH?

- When Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate on the night before his crucifixion, he told Pilate that he had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Pilate responded to Jesus with the question: What is Truth?

- John 18:33-38

*<sup>33</sup> So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"*

*<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" <sup>35</sup> Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." <sup>37</sup> Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate said to him, "**What is truth?**"*

- "Truth is that which conforms to reality, fact, or actuality."

- Point 1: Jesus is THE TRUTH

John 14:6 tells us that Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life... The passage does not say that Jesus is truth or truthful, but **THE TRUTH**.



- Point 2: Truth is a Standard
  - Truth is anything that conforms to fact or reality.
  - Another way of defining truth is to say that truth is the measurement or ruler for determining what is right.



- It is the standard for what is morally right and according to Scripture, God is the standard.
- *“Webster defines truth as “fidelity to an original or to a standard.”*
- *Just like you need a consistent stick when measuring meters, you also need a standard to tell right from wrong. To decide what’s good and true, you need to ask how something stacks up against the original, the standard...*
- *It’s God and God alone who determines absolute truth -what is right for all people, for all places, for all times. That perfect truth is objective because God isn’t just a figment of our feelings. It’s universal because God is above all. And it’s constant because God is eternal. Absolute truth is absolute because it originates from the original-God, the Standard.”*  
*(Josh McDowell, <http://www.josh.org/how-do-you-measure-truth-2/>)*

- Point 3: Truth does Not Change

- What was right yesterday is right today. What was wrong three hundred years ago is wrong today.
- One of God’s divine attributes is His unchanging nature. He never changes and that includes His view of sin. What He declares as unholy, improper, and sinful is always wrong because His view of morality never changes.

“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.” (Psalm 119:89)

- Illustrations of Absolute Truth:

- **A Ruler:** used to measure items. (an foot is always 12 inches and an inch is always the same length) A ruler will help us to determine the correct measurement and absolute truth helps us to know what is right and what is wrong—it measures our morality.

- **A Lighthouse:** both directs and protects. A lighthouse directs ships to shore and it also protects ships from danger. In the same way truth guides and protects us from doing something that is contrary to God's moral truth.

In 1 Timothy 1:18-19, Paul warns Timothy to keep hold to the faith with a clear conscious to prevent being shipwrecked in your faith.

*<sup>18</sup> This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, <sup>19</sup> holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith,*

- **An Anchor:** prevents drifting away. An anchor keeps a boat stationary and prevents it from floating away . The writer of the Book of Hebrews warns his readers to listen to the message of the prophets and of Jesus

- Hebrews 2:1

*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*

- Examples of standards in nature

- In science there are laws that govern the universe. These laws never change.
- In math, there are rules that never change, they are always true. (2 + 2 = 4 Always!)
- These are standards or rules.

EXAMPLE: If I asked a group of people to bring me a piece of string that is 18" long, and I examined each piece that was brought back, it would be easy to determine if any of those pieces were not exactly 18". Why? Because we would use a ruler to measure it. A ruler is a standard. An inch is always the same length, it never changes.

## Focus on the Family wrote concerning Absolute Truth:



- If you consider that the human race has been around for thousands of years, the last two or three hundred don't seem that long.
- It is in that short time that our beliefs have shifted from a certainty in truth to a denial that it even exists.
- **The best source of revelation is God's Word**
  - Psalm 40:11  
*Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord; may your love and your truth always protect me.*
  - Psalm 86:11  
*Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.*
  - Psalm 119:45  
*I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts [truths].*
  - Zechariah 8:16  
*These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts.*
  - John 8:31-32  
*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*
  - John 14:6  
*Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'*
  - John 6:13  
*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*
  - John 17:17  
*[God's] word is truth.*

- Romans 1:18  
*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*
- 1 Corinthians 13:6  
*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*
- Ephesians 6:14  
*Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.*

(Focus on the Family, [http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/teen\\_booklets/absolute-truth.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/teen_booklets/absolute-truth.aspx))

## WHY DOES ABSOLUTE TRUTH MATTER?

**“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8 ESV)**

“When Paul was writing to the newly established church of Colosse, he was determined to help them maintain a consistent witness in their community.

The Colossian church had started well, and Paul commends them for their good order and steadfastness (*Colossians 2:4*). One might think that if Paul was going to really help this church to continue on the right path, he might have talked to them about a church growth strategy, or given them tips on ways they could interact with their community. But this is not what Paul did; he wanted the Colossian believers to be strong and rooted in the truth and light of God’s Word.

If you allow human philosophy to infiltrate biblical truth, then compromise—and ultimately corruption—will take place. The Bible claims that there is only one absolute truth (*Ephesians 1:13; John 17:17*). If any other truth claim is accepted outside of the Bible, then the truth is compromised. When the absolute truth of God’s Word is compromised, the church loses its power and is no longer “the pillar and ground of the truth” (*1 Timothy 3:15*). If the church loses the truth, the church loses the potency of its message. Darkness cannot illuminate darkness.

Paul even goes further in the way that he warns the church. He tells the Colossians to be actively watching so that they do not allow empty philosophy according to the traditions of men to corrupt the truth of Christ. There have been so many examples of this happening in our time.

In today's world, the human philosophies of millions of years and evolution have corrupted many people's understanding of the truth of God's Word. These ideas that allow for death and suffering before sin have caused many thousands to doubt the validity and reliability of the Bible and have compromised the message of the gospel—what Christ has come to save us from. The moment we accept man's word over God's Word, we are no longer following God's Word.

From Answers in Genesis' "How Important is the Bible's Claim of Absolute Truth?"  
(<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2010/06/22/bible-absolute-truth>)

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**We judge everything according to our view of truth.**

**If we hold to the truth of the Bible and seek to have the same attitude toward morality as God, our lives will be dramatically different.**



- **Right Thinking** can bring about right living
  - **Right Thinking** comes from having the right doctrines and the right teachings
  - **Right Doctrines** and teachings come from Scripture
- John MacArthur writes:
- "Both right doctrine and right living are absolutely essential and totally inseparable for the true child of God. That is the most consistent teaching of Christ himself."*  
(*The Truth War*, p17)



# GOD

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## The God of the Bible

- Definition of God: Westminster Confession of Faith

There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them. In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.



- The Nature of God: The basic aspect of essence and substance
  - He is Spirit
    - John 4:24  
*God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth*
  - He is invisible
    - John 1:18  
*No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known*
  - He is a Person
    - “an individual being with a mind, emotions, and a will.”
    - God has an intellect  
Psalm 139:17  
*How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!*
    - God has emotions  
Psalm 78:41  
*They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel*
    - God has a will (volition)  
1 Corinthians 1:1  
*Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,*
  - He is Sovereign
    - Daniel 10:35  
*all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”*
    - God controls time and seasons (Daniel 2:21)
    - God powerfully delivered His people from Egypt (Exodus 12:29-32; 13:13-31)
    - God has dominion over the affairs of people (Job 12:13-25)

- God controls nature for His purposes (Job 37:2-13)
- God chose His people to become like Christ (Romans 8:28-30)
- God chose His people before He made the world (Ephesians 1:4)
- God's eternal purpose is to make His wisdom known (Ephesians 3:10-11)
- He raises and removes rulers (Daniel 2:21)
- He has a plan for His people and will carry it out (Ephesians 1:5, 11)
- He chose His people to save and purify them (2 Thessalonians 2:13)
- He is the only Sovereign (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15)
- The Creator looks after His creation (Psalm 104:3-32)
- The powerful Creator reduces human rulers to nothing (Isaiah 40:21-26)
- Relationship with God requires worship (John 4:24)
- God has dominion over the affairs of people (Job 12.13-25)
- He is Eternal
  - Psalm 90:2  
*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*
  - Psalm 102:27  
*...you are the same, and your years have no end*
- The Attributes of God
  - Omnipresence
    - Psalm 139:7-12  
*Where shall I go from your Spirit?  
Or where shall I flee from your presence?  
<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!  
<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me,*

*and your right hand shall hold me.*

<sup>11</sup> *If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light about me be night,"*

<sup>12</sup> *even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light with you.*

- Omnipotence

- Jeremiah 32:17

*Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens  
and the earth by your great power and by your out-  
stretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.*

- God has the power to create anything from nothing (Psalm 33:6-9)
- God has power to deliver (Exodus 13:3)
- God's creative power is beyond our comprehension (Job 38:1-11)
- God speaks and things happen (Psalm 29:3-9)
- His resurrection power is immeasurably great (Ephesians 1:19-20)
- His creation reflects His power (Psalm 19:1-4)
- His powerful word sustains everything (Hebrews 1:3)
- He has power over death (Revelation 1:18)
- No one can challenge what God does (Daniel 4:35)
- Reveals Himself as the almighty God (Genesis 17:1)

- Omniscience

- Psalm 139:1-6

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me!*

<sup>2</sup> *You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.*

<sup>3</sup> *You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.*

<sup>4</sup> *Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.*

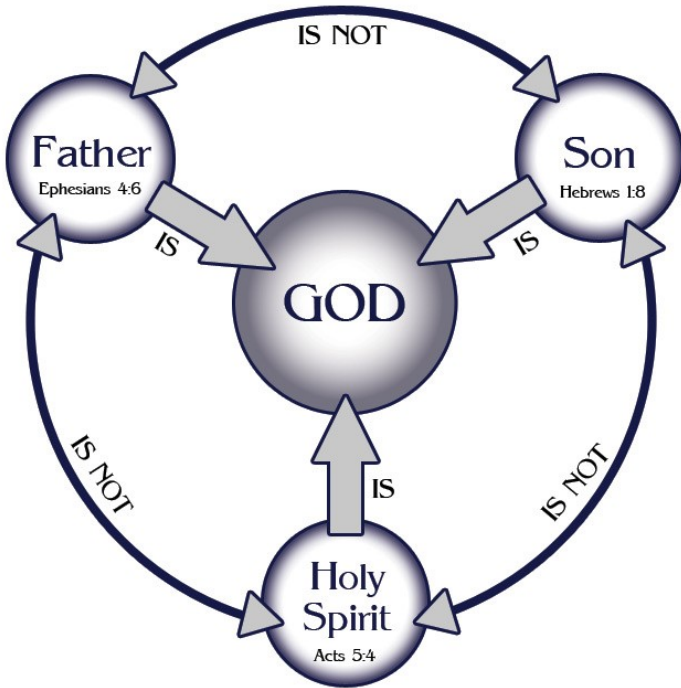
<sup>5</sup> *You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.*

<sup>6</sup> *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is high; I cannot attain it.*

- Immutable (Never changes)
  - Malachi 3:16  
*For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.*
  - Numbers 23:19  
*God is not man, that he should lie,  
or a son of man, that he should change his mind.  
Has he said, and will he not do it?  
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?*
- Holy
  - Isaiah 6:3  
*And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*
- Righteous and Just
  - Psalm 79:19  
*Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens.  
You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?*
  - He rules out of righteousness (Psalm 97:2)
  - He is righteous in everything He does (Psalm 145:17)
  - He delights in demonstrating righteousness (Jeremiah 9:24)
  - In the end, the righteous Judge will judge righteously (2 Timothy 4:8)
  - People must declare humbly God alone is righteous (Exodus 9:27; 2 Chronicles 12:6)
- Loving
  - 1 John 4:8  
*Anyone who does not love does not know God,  
because God is love.*
  - Believers should imitate God's universal love (Matthew 5:44-45)
  - Eternal plans are motivated by His love (Ephesians 1:4-5)
  - God loves and preserves His godly people (Psalm 37:28)
  - God loves His people, even when they are faithless (Hosea 3:1)

- God deserves thanks because of His perpetual love (Psalm 100:5)
- God loved the world enough to send His Son to die (John 3:16)
- God loves those who love His Son (and obey Him) (John 14:21)
- His love is poured into believers' hearts (Romans 5:5)
- God is love, and those who know God love others (I John 4:7-8, 20-21)
- Merciful
  - Micah 7:18  
*Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.*
- The Unity of God
  - There is only One God
  - Deuteronomy 6:4  
*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one"*
  - 1 Timothy 2:5  
*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*
- The Tri-Unity of God (Trinity)
  - There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory
  - Each of the three persons is completely divine in nature though each is not the totality of the Godhead.
    - The Father is God (John 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Peter 1:2).
    - The Son is God (John 1:1, 14; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20).
    - The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16).

- Each of the three persons is not the other two persons.
- Each of the three persons is related to the other two but are distinct from them.



- Tozer referred to the immensity of God stating:

*“God dwells in a mode of being totally beyond us and wholly above us and infinitely removed from us yet when we think about God we are trying to think about someone unlike anything we know. God says, who am I like? or to whom will you compare me? The answer being, nobody; nobody's like God, nothing's like God. God is like Himself.*”



## Does God exist?

### Can you prove that God exists?

- Who rejects a belief in God?
  - Atheists
    - Do not believe God exists
    - Deny all supernatural (miracles, Divine intervention)
    - Purely naturalistic (evolution, natural selection)
    - New Atheism: view that "religion should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized, and exposed by rational argument wherever its influence arises"
      - Four Horsemen of the Non-Apocalypse
        - Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett, and Sam Harris
      - Assertive and aggressive atheism. Politically engaged in a variety of way
  - Agnostics
    - The view that the existence of God is impossible to be known or proven.
    - The word "agnostic" essentially means "without knowledge."
    - Agnosticism is correct in that God's existence cannot be empirically proven or disproven
- Why people reject the existence of God?
  - Rejection of the Bible
    - It contains errors, contradictions, social and ethical issues
    - It is a 2,000 year old relic that is irrelevant in today's world
    - It is written by man, compiled by a church to create their religion
  - A failure to trust religion.
    - The inconsistency of world religions
    - Christians are viewed as hypocritical

- The weakness of religious arguments, explanations, and apologetics.
- People only believe in God because they grew up in a family or environment that promotes a belief
- A secular worldview that is reinforced through culture
- The consistent replacement of supernatural explanations of the world with natural ones
  - Why the Sun rises and sets.
  - Where thunder and lightning come from.
  - Why people get sick.
  - Why people look like their parents.
  - How the complexity of life came into being.
  - Compare that to the number of times that a natural explanation of a phenomenon has been replaced by a supernatural one?
    - The number of times humankind has said, "We used to think (X) was caused by physical cause and effect, but now we understand that it's caused by God, or spirits, or demons, or the soul"? .....Zero
- The lack of scientific evidence for God's existence
- Why is there evil and suffering in the world if a loving and all-powerful God exists who could prevent it.





- Answering Objections to the existence of God
  - The existence of God cannot be proved or disproved—scientifically.
  - Atheists claim to reject anything not proven by science
    - Science is the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment.
  - The Bible says that we must accept by faith the fact that God exists
    - Hebrews 11:6  
*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him*
    - Faith is not a bad thing
    - But atheists believe in things by faith
      - Evolution
      - The Big Bang
      - The Multiverse
  - Atheists cannot prove:
    - There is no God
    - The Origin of Life: that non-life can produce life
    - The Origin of Purpose: why everything exists
    - That Evolution Is occurring now, that it occurred in the past and will occur In the future
- How we “know” God exists:
  - Belief in God is Intuitive
    - It is significant that studies of the world's cultures show an almost universal belief in a god or gods
  - Belief in God is assumed in the Scriptures (Genesis 1:1)
  - Belief in God is Corroborated by Logical Arguments
    - Ontological Argument
      1. God is “a being than which no greater can be conceived.”
      2. To exist is greater than to not exist,

3. Therefore the greatest conceivable being must exist.
  4. If God did not exist, then God would not be the greatest conceivable being, and that would contradict the very definition of God.
- Cosmological Argument
    1. Things exist.
    2. It is possible for those things to not exist.
    3. Whatever has the possibility of non-existence, yet exists, has been caused to exist.
      - Something cannot bring itself into existence since it must exist to bring itself into existence, which is illogical.
    4. There cannot be an infinite number of causes to bring something into existence.
      - An infinite regression of causes ultimately has no initial cause, which means there is no cause of existence.
      - Since the universe exists, it must have a cause.
    5. Therefore, there must be an uncaused cause of all things.
    6. The uncaused cause is God.
      - Objection: If everything needs a cause for its existence, then God needs one also.
  - Teleological Argument
    1. Human artifacts are products of intelligent design.
    2. The universe resembles human artifacts.
    3. Therefore the universe is a product of intelligent design.
    4. But the universe is complex and gigantic in comparison to human artifacts.
    5. Therefore, there probably is a powerful and vastly intelligent designer who created the universe.

- Question: Hasn't the theory of evolution shown us how it is possible for all the order in the universe to have arisen by chance? - No
- The Anthropic Principle :
  - All the seemingly arbitrary and unrelated constants in the physical universe have one thing in common—they are precisely the values you need if you want a universe that is capable of producing life.
- The Fine-tuning of the universe
  - Scientists have increasingly become aware that the universe is 'just right' for life. If any one of a number of features of the universe had been even slightly different, life as we know it would be impossible.
  - Atheist Richard Dawkins admitted that the most troubling argument for nonbelievers to counter is the fine-tuning of the universe.
  - Francis Collins: "To get our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for any kind of life form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability,"
  - Various features of the universe are 'just right' for the existence of stars, galaxies and life itself
    - Had they been slightly different the human race could not exist.
    - Had the ratio of the electromagnetic and gravitational forces differed by about 1 part in ten thousand billion billion billion then stars such as the Sun, which are capable of supporting life, could not exist.
    - If the earth were 5% closer to the sun, it would be a greenhouse with temperatures running up to 900 degrees Fahrenheit.
    - If the earth were 20% farther out it would produce carbon dioxide clouds that would freeze the planet.



- In fact, astrobiologists have determined that as many as twenty factors are needed for a life-sustaining planet, or at least one that sustains complex life.
  - within Galactic Habitable Zone
  - orbiting main sequence G2 dwarf star
  - protected by gas giant planets
  - within Circumstellar Habitable Zone
  - correct mass
  - orbited by large moon
  - magnetic field
  - plate tectonics
  - oxygen rich atmosphere
  - ratio of liquid water to continents
  - terrestrial planet
  - moderate rate of rotation
  
- Moral Argument
  1. Objective Moral Values Exist
  2. God and Objective Morality Are Closely Connected
  3. Non-theistic Ethical Theories Will Be Incomplete and Inadequate
    - The moral argument essentially claims that naturalism does not account for morality.
    - If human beings are simply the product of naturalistic evolution, then we have no foundation for moral obligation and human dignity



**If God exists, what kind of God is He?**

**How do you know that the God of the Bible is the one that exists?**

## **Views Concerning the Existence of God**

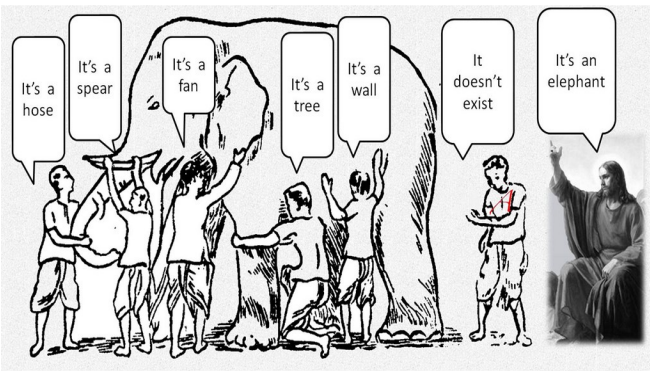
- **Atheism:**
  - God does not exist.
  - All that exists is the physical universe.
- **Agnosticism** :
  - Simply means lacking/having no knowledge.
  - States that an individual does not currently have the knowledge to know whether or not a God exists or they have some knowledge but not enough to actually make a decision one way or another.
- **Pantheism** :
  - God and nature are the same thing
  - Pantheists would say that all is God
  - There is no good or evil, no right or wrong and no true or false.
  - When we die, we are all taken back into the impersonal whole.
    - Everyone shares the same fate, Adolph Hitler and Mother Teresa.
  - We are all part of God, and God is unchanging.
  - Problems:
    - Cannot account for the origin of the universe
    - Cannot account for morality
  - Biblical Christianity teaches that God is separate from His creation, and He created it (Genesis 1:1-30)
- **Polytheism** :
  - The view that there are more than one god.
  - gods either came from nature or where at one time men and women who became gods.

- Gods are finite and contingent.
- The universe has always existed.
- All things come from the universe, even Gods.
- Problems:
  - Does not account for the origin of the universe
  - Does not account for existence of God (since he is viewed as finite)
- **Deism** :
  - Asserts that God cannot be known through religion because the only way to know God is through nature and reason.
  - Denies the supernatural intervention by God: There are no miracles.
  - The only way God has revealed Himself is through what He has created.
- **Monotheism** :
  - Sees God as the creator and sustainer of all things.
  - He interacts with creation numerous ways and reveals Himself to us through reason, nature, morality, etc.
  - Three Religions are monotheistic:
    - Islam
    - Judaism
    - Christianity
  - All three of these religions believe in the same God.
    - Islam says the Old Testament is now corrupted.
    - Judaism says that both of these stances are false.
    - Christianity sees the promises of the Old Testament fulfilled in Jesus.
  - All 3 also believe Jesus existed.
    - Islam believes Him to be a great prophet, and the gospels are corrupted accounts.
    - Judaism sees Him as a pretender, claiming to be the Messiah.
    - Christians believe Christ to be the Messiah.



## Don't all religions have some degree of truth? Aren't all religions essentially the same?

- 3 Positions on whether Jesus is the only way to heaven
  - Pluralism : There are many ways (religions) to God
  - Inclusivism: He is the only way to heaven but people do not need to know or believe in him to be saved
  - Exclusivism : Jesus is the only way to heaven
- Illustration of religious pluralism



- Six blind men feel a different part of an elephant and come to different conclusions regarding what the elephant is actually like. One blind man grabs the tusk and says, "An elephant is like a spear!" Another feels the trunk and concludes, "An elephant is like a snake!" The blind man hugging the leg thinks, "An elephant is like a tree!" The one holding the tail claims, "An elephant is like a rope!" Another feeling the ear believes, "An elephant is like a fan!" The last blind man leaning on the elephant's side exclaims, "An elephant is like a wall!"
- Kenneth Samples:  
*"Ironically, while the elephant analogy attempts to validate the truth of all religions, if taken to its logical conclusion the story really shows that all religions fail to identify God adequately. So rather than affirming religious truth, the analogy implies that all religions, at least in large measure, are based on false or misleading claims."*

- Atheist Charles Templeton:

*“It is insufferable presumption for the Bible to claim that besides Jesus there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved...Christians are a small minority in the world. Approximately four out of every five people on the face of the earth believe in gods other than the Christian God...Are we to believe that only Christians are right?”*

- Ravi Zacharias:

*“Anyone who claims that all religions are the same betrays not only an ignorance of all religions but also a caricatured view of even the best known ones”*

- Problems with Religious Pluralism

- The World’s Religions Are Different

- Many faiths do share some common beliefs and moral values.
- Fundamental and irreconcilable differences divide them on many crucial issues, including:
  - The nature of God
  - The source and focus of revelation
  - The human predicament
    - Hinduism claims that people are under the false illusion that they are distinct and separate from God.
    - Islam asserts that sin results from human weakness and willful disobedience, not an inborn tendency.
    - Christianity teaches that sin is inherent in human nature and cannot be overcome or compensated for by good works.
  - The nature of salvation
  - The destiny of humankind.

- The World’s Religions Are Irreducible

- Religions are so diverse in belief and worldview orientation that they defy attempts to synthesize them to a single common theme or essence



- The World's Religions Are Contradictory
  - Christianity, affirms that Jesus Christ is God incarnate (God in human flesh).
  - Islam, asserts that Jesus was merely a human being.
  - Traditional Judaism also denies Christ's deity.
  - Based on the law of non-contradiction,
    - Jesus Christ cannot be both God incarnate (Christianity) and *not* God incarnate (Judaism, Islam) at the same time and in the same respect.
    - Contradictory religious claims have opposite truth-value, meaning that they negate or deny each other.
    - Therefore, exactly one can be true and the other false.
    - Accordingly, Jesus Christ must either be God incarnate or not be God incarnate
- William Lane Craig



*“Now this view, which one often hears expounded by laypeople and college sophomores, is rooted in ignorance of what the world's great religions teach.*

*Anyone who has studied comparative religions knows that the worldviews propounded by these religions are often diametrically opposite one another. Just take Islam and Buddhism, for example. Their worldviews have almost nothing in common. Islam believes that there is a personal God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and holy, and who created the world. It believes that people are sinful and in need of God's forgiveness, that everlasting heaven or hell awaits us after death, and that we must earn our salvation by faith and righteous deeds. Buddhism denies all of these things. For the classical Buddhist ultimate reality is impersonal, the world is uncreated, there is no enduring self, life's ultimate goal is not personal immortality but annihilation, and the ideas of sin and salvation play no role at all. Examples like this could be multiplied”*

- The claims of Exclusivity in the Bible
  - Jesus claimed to be the only way to heaven
    - John 14:6  
*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"*
  - Peter claimed Jesus is the only way to heaven
    - Acts 4:12  
*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*
  - Jesus actions show he is the only way to heaven  
Bruce Ware concludes:
    - Christ alone was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin
      - Isaiah 7:14  
*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*
      - Matthew 1:18, 23  
Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit...*"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"*
      - No one else in the history of the world is conceived by the Spirit and born of a virgin mother. Therefore, Jesus alone qualifies to be Savior.
  - Christ alone is God incarnate
    - John 1:1  
*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God*

- As such, he alone qualifies to be Savior.
- Anselm argued in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, our Savior must be fully man in order to take the place of men and die in their stead, and he must be fully God in order for the value of his sacrificial payment to satisfy the demands of our infinitely holy God. Man he must be, but a mere man simply could not make this infinite payment for sin. But no one else in the history of the world is both fully God and fully man.
- Christ alone lived a sinless life
  - 2 Corinthians 2:21
  - Hebrews 4:15  
*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*
  - But no one else in the history of the world has lived a totally sinless life.
- Christ alone rose from the dead
  - Romans 4:24b-25  
*...Jesus our Lord,<sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*
  - 1 Corinthians 15:3-4  
*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*
  - Christ's resurrection from the dead demonstrates that his atoning death for sin accomplished both the *full payment of sin's penalty* and *full victory over sin's greatest power*.
  - No one else in the history of the world has been raised from the dead triumphant over sin.

- Conclusion:
  - Christian exclusivism:
    - Does not teach that all other religions do not contain any truth
    - Does teach that it is the only religion that teaches the truth about certain issues such as salvation
  - Because pluralism is flawed, Either one religion is true or no religion is true
  - If Christianity is true then all other religions must be false
  - If Christianity is true, then all other religions do not have to be evaluated for truthfulness
  - The truth of Christianity rests upon:
    - The claims about Jesus
    - The reliability and authenticity of the Bible
- The actual existence of Jesus is a well-accepted historical fact. But was he *really* God? As we consider Christ's claims about himself, there are only four possibilities:
  1. He was a Liar .
    - That is, he knew he was not God, but deliberately deceived his hearers to give authority to his teaching.
    - There are, of course, people who say he was a great moral teacher, but deny his deity. But a deliberate liar and deceiver would hardly qualify as a great "moral" teacher!
  2. He was a lunatic.
    - He thought he was God but was only deceiving himself.
  3. He was a Legend .
    - As time passed, Christ's followers made up stories about him, thereby "making" him God
  4. He was Lord
    - Jesus was who he said he was.



## Don't the stories of Jesus mimic other pagan myths?

- Aren't the biblical narratives of Christ simply mythological rather than actual historical accounts?
- The claim is that the story of Jesus is remarkably similar to the stories of other ancient mythological stories (like Hours, Mithras, and Osiris) therefore Jesus is just a myth.
- The Logic:
  1. If story X is similar to a mythical story, then story X is mythical.
  2. Jesus is similar to the stories of [insert pre-christian deity here]
  3. The story of [pre-christian deity] is a myth.
  4. Therefore, the story of Jesus is a myth.
- Evaluating the claims
  - Mithras
    - 2 distinct (and non-continuous) traditions, one from India and Iran, centuries prior to the birth of Jesus, and another in Roman times concurrent with the Christian era.
    - There is no surviving Mithraic scripture; most of what is known about Mithras comes from statues and murals that have no captions
    - **Claim:** Mithras was born of a virgin on December 25th, in a cave  
**Truth:** Mithras was actually born out of solid rock, leaving a cave. He was not born of a virgin (unless you consider the rock mountain to have been a virgin). His birth was celebrated on December 25th, but both Mithras worshippers and the earliest Christians borrowed this celebration from earlier winter solstice celebrations.
    - **Claim:** Mithras was considered a great traveling teacher and master  
**Truth:** There is nothing in the Mithras tradition that indicates he was a teacher of any kind, but he could have been considered a master of sorts.

- **Claim:** Mithras had 12 companions or disciples  
**Truth:** There is no evidence for any of this in the traditions of Iran or Rome. It is possible that the idea that Mithras had 12 disciples came from a mural in which Mithras is surrounded by twelve signs and personages of the Zodiac (two of whom are the moon and the sun), but even this imagery is *post-Christian*.
- **Claim:** Mithras promised his followers immortality  
**Truth:** While there is little evidence for this, it is certainly reasonable to think that Mithras did offer immortality, although this is not uncommon for any god of mythology.
- **Claim:** Mithras performed miracles  
**Truth:** This claim is true, but what mythological god *didn't* perform miracles?
- **Claim:** Mithras sacrificed himself for world peace  
**Truth:** There is little or no evidence that any of this is true. The closest Mithraic narrative is a story in which Mithras killed a threatening bull in a heroic deed.
- **Claim:** Mithras was buried in a tomb and after three days rose again, and Mithras was celebrated each year at the time of His resurrection (later to become Easter)  
**Truth:** There is nothing in the Mithras tradition that indicates he ever even died, let alone was buried or resurrected. Tertullian, the ancient Christian Case Maker, did write about Mithraic believers re-enacting resurrection scenes, but he wrote about this occurring well *after* New Testament times. This again appears to be another example of Mithras followers borrowing from Christianity (in the Roman version of the Mithraic religion).
- **Claim:** Mithras was called “the Good Shepherd”, and was identified with both the Lamb and the Lion  
**Truth:** There is *no* evidence that Mithras was ever called “the Good Shepherd” or identified with a lamb, but since Mithras was a sun-god, there was an association with Leo (the House of the Sun in Babylonian astrology), so one might say that he was associated with a Lion. But once again, all of this evidence is *post* New Testament, and cannot, therefore, have been borrowed by Christianity.
- **Claim:** Mithras was considered to be the “Way, the Truth and the Light,” and the “Logos,” “Redeemer,” “Savior” and “Messiah.”

**Truth:** Based on the researched, historic record of the Mithraic tradition, none of these terms have ever been applied to Mithras deity with the exception of “mediator”. But this term was used in a way that was very different from the way that it is used in the Christian tradition. Mithras was not the mediator between God and man but the mediator between the good and evil gods of Zoroaster.

- **Claim:** Mithras celebrated Sunday as His sacred day (also known as the “Lord’s Day,”)

**Truth:** This tradition of celebrating Sunday is only true of the later Roman Mithras followers; it is a tradition that dates to *post*-Christian times. Once again, it is more likely to have been borrowed from Christianity than the other way around.

- Claims regarding other mythological deities like Horus and Osiris meet similar defeat

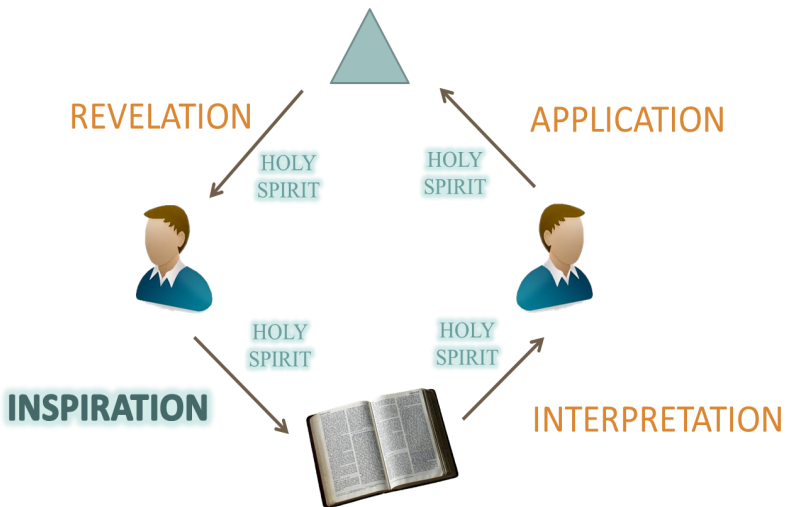




# THE BIBLE

## CLAIMS ABOUT THE BIBLE

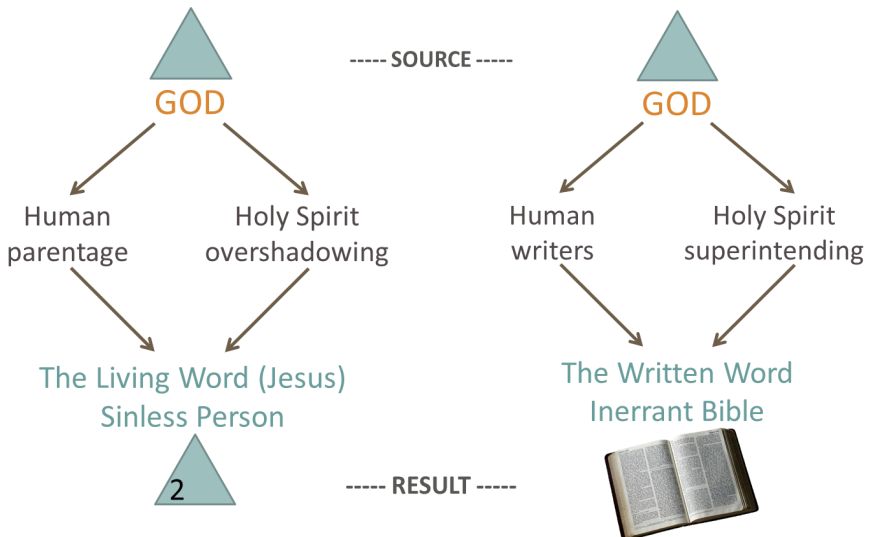
- The Bible is the Inspired Word of God
  - “God’s superintending of human authors so that using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in all the words of the original autographs”
  - Primary Passages:
    - 2 Timothy 3:16-17  
*<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
    - 2 Peter 1:20-21  
*<sup>20</sup>knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup>For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*





- Views of Inspiration:
  - Natural Inspiration: The Bible is written by great men who erred. Nothing supernatural
  - Partial Inspiration: The Bible contains God's words but must be sorted out from parts that are merely human and may be in error
  - Degrees of Inspiration: Some parts of the Bible are more inspired than others
  - Conceptual Inspiration: The thoughts or ideas of Scriptures are inspired but not the actual words
  - Dictational Inspiration: The writers passively recorded God's words without any participation of their own style or personality.
  - Verbal Plenary Inspiration: All of the actual words in the Bible are inspired and without error
    - Nature: Verbal - "the words" (Matthew 5:18)
    - Extent: Plenary - "all, every one of them"
    - Process: God-breathed - "from God"  
(2 Timothy 3:16)
    - Product: An Inerrant Bible (no errors)
    - Value:
      - Doctrine
      - Reproof (conviction)
      - Correction (restoration)
      - Instruction (training) in righteousness
    - Purpose: That the man of God might be mature
- Implication of Inspiration
  - It does not mean that all parts of the Bible are equally important, but equally inspired
  - It refers to the original Hebrews and Greek manuscripts not the copies
  - It allows for the recording of falsehood
  - It does NOT permit the recording of historical or scientific falsehood

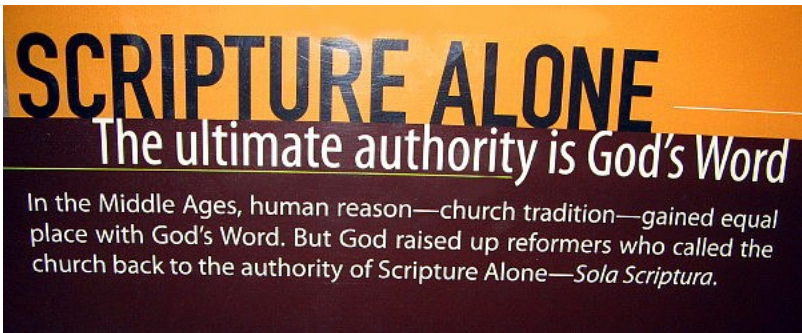
- It does NOT disallow the writer's use of research or extra-biblical resources
- It is limited to the writing of Scripture. Not everything the author said or wrote is inspired
- Summary:
  - What is Inspired:
    - The writing, not the writers
    - The Autographs, not the Copies
      - Only the autographs, not the translations
      - Only the autographs, good copies are accurate
  - How much is inspired:
    - Every word
    - Millard J Erickson  
*"Jesus and the New Testament writers regarded every word, syllable, and punctuation mark of the Old Testament as significant"*
- Illustrated:



- The Bible is Inerrant
  - Charles Ryrie:
 

*“Even if the errors are supposedly in ‘minor’ matters, any error opens the Bible to suspicion on other points which may not be so ‘minor.’ If inerrancy falls, other doctrines will fall too.”*
  - Some doctrinal matters which may be affected by denying inerrancy include the following:
    - Denial of the historical fall of Adam.
    - Denial of the facts of the experiences of people in the Bible.
    - An explaining away of some of the miracles of both the Old and New Testaments.
    - Denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
  - Some lifestyle errors that may follow a denial of Inerrancy include the following:
    - A loose view of the seriousness of adultery or homosexuality
    - A loose view of divorce and remarriage.
    - “Cultural” reinterpretation of some of the teachings of the Bible (e.g., teaching on women).
- The Bible is Authoritative
  - “The Authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God” (Wayne Grudem)
  - The Bible is Authoritative concerning divine commands and principles regarding the way we ought to live.
  - The Bible is an authoritative revelation of truths about God
- Basic truths about the Word of God:
  1. The Bible is the inerrant (without errors), infallible (incapable of error), inspired Word of God
  2. The Bible reveals God’s holy purpose, plan, and promise for mankind

3. There is one continuous theme about sin, redemption, and salvation throughout the Bible
  4. Jesus Christ is the focus of the Bible. This is God's story— not man's
  5. It is exclusively the Word of God
    - The Book of Mormon claims to be the Word of God
    - The Bhagavad Gita claims to be the Word of God
- Why it is crucial to believe in the Bible
    - You cannot accept just part of the Bible as truth.
    - If you do not believe in all of the Bible, you will start substituting your own ideas or the ideas of others.
    - If you cannot trust the bible, your faith will not be strong.
    - Your salvation depends on its gospel message
    - Your peace, joy, and assurance depends on its eternal truth
    - Your spiritual growth depends on living by its principles
    - Your power to evangelize and defend its message depends on the confidence you have in it





**How can we be sure that the Bible is the same now as when it was written?**

**Aren't there errors from all the copying and translation done through the years?**

- Related Questions
  - Is the Bible reliable and trustworthy?
  - Has it changed and been corrupted over the centuries as it was copied time and time again?
  - Haven't scribes and churches modified the writings over the centuries to conform to their theology and agenda?
- Implications:
  - If the Bible is not an accurate representation of what was originally written then it cannot be trusted
  - If every word is considered inspired and the original words are lost then it is no longer authoritative
- A Question about Reliability
  - Reliability means something is trustworthy. It can also mean that something is consistently good in its quality.
  - In reference to the Bible, reliability has to do with whether or not what it contains, from ideas to history to geography and more, is trustworthy or not.
  - If the Bible is full of historical and factual errors or blatantly contradicts itself, it would be hard to trust it or view it as reliable.
- The Challenge
  - The Bible we read today is an English translation of the Hebrew and Greek texts



- We do NOT possess ANY of the original writings (known as autographs)
- The copies we have today are actually copies of the copies of the copies

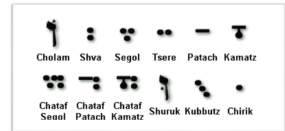


- Leaving the Question: Is the Bible that we have today the same as what was originally written?
- Daniel Wallace:
  - *“In all particulars? Probably not. But in all essentials? Absolutely”*
- Reliability is dependent upon the:
  - Quantity : How many manuscripts we have
  - Quality : How accurate the copies are
- Manuscript Evidence: Old Testament
  - Quantity (OT)
    - In the case of the Old Testament, there are only a small number of Hebrew manuscripts
    - Why so few manuscripts:
      - Because the Jewish scribes ceremonially buried imperfect and worn manuscripts.
      - Many ancient manuscripts were also lost or destroyed during Israel’s turbulent history.
      - Also, the Old Testament text was standardized by the Masoretic Jews by the sixth century A.D., and all manuscripts that deviated from the Masoretic Text were evidently eliminated
    - The Masoretes were rabbis who made it their special work to correct the faults that had crept into the text of the Old Testament during the Babylonian captivity, and to prevent, for the future, its being corrupted by any alteration.

- Most of their work was done between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Contributions:
  - Since texts traditionally omitted vowels in writing, the Masoretes introduced vowel signs to guarantee correct pronunciation
  - The Masoretes separated the Canonical and Apocryphal books



← Pointing system created by the Masoretes



- Divided each book into sections and verses
- Supplements: In addition to the existing Hebrew manuscripts there are:
  - The Dead Sea Scrolls
  - The Septuagint (a third-century B.C. Greek translation of the Old Testament)
  - The Samaritan Pentateuch
  - The Targums (ancient paraphrases of the Old Testament)
  - The Talmud (teachings and commentaries related to the Hebrew Scriptures).
- Quality (OT)
  - Because of the great reverence the Jewish scribes held toward the Scriptures, they exercised extreme care in making new copies of the Hebrew Bible.

- The entire scribal process was specified in meticulous detail to minimize the possibility of even the slightest error.
  - The number of letters, words, and lines were counted,
  - The middle letters of the Pentateuch and the Old Testament were determined.
  - Scribes were not allowed to copy a single letter by memory
  - If a single mistake was discovered, the entire manuscript would be destroyed.
  - As a result of this extreme care, the quality of the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible surpasses all other ancient manuscripts.
- Apart from some fragments, the earliest Masoretic manuscript of the Old Testament is dated at A.D. 895. This is due to the systematic destruction of worn manuscripts by the Masoretic scribes.
- The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls dating from 250 B.C. to A.D. 70 drastically reduced the time span from the writing of the Old Testament books to our earliest copies of them by about 1,000 years.
- In spite of this time span, the number of variant readings between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text is quite small, and most of these are variations in spelling and style.





- Manuscript Evidence: New Testament

- Quantity (NT)

- The quantity of New Testament manuscripts is unparalleled in ancient literature.

There are:

- Over 5,800 Greek manuscripts
- The manuscripts we have are not just small fragments.
- The average size of the Greek manuscripts we have are about 450 pages long.
- About 10,000 Latin manuscripts
- Another 5,000-10,000 manuscripts in other languages (Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, Arabic, etc.).
- In addition to this extraordinary number, there are over 1 Million citations of New Testament passages by the early church fathers.
- **“Just on the basis of the quotations of the church fathers alone we could reproduce virtually the entire New Testament multiple times over without the use of other manuscripts.”** Daniel B Wallace
- Compared to other classical works of the Greek and Latin authors:



- Tacitus (100 A.D.) 20 copies
- Caesar (100-44 B.C.) 10 copies
- Plato (427-347 B.C.) 7 copies
- Thucydides (4660-400 B.C.) 8 copies
- Herodotus (480-425 B.C.) 8 copies
- Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) 49 copies
- Homer (900 B.C.) 643 copies
- Euripedes (480-406 B.C.) 9 copies

- **“Whereas with other classical works have an derth of evidence, with the New Testament we have an embarrassment of riches”**  
(Daniel B Wallace)
- If we stack all the copies of the classical Greek writers they would be 4 feet high
- If we stack all the copies of the New Testament, excluding the church father quotations, it would stand over 1 mile high
  - What does that look like?

**Classic Greek**

**New Testament**



And these...



And these...



And these...

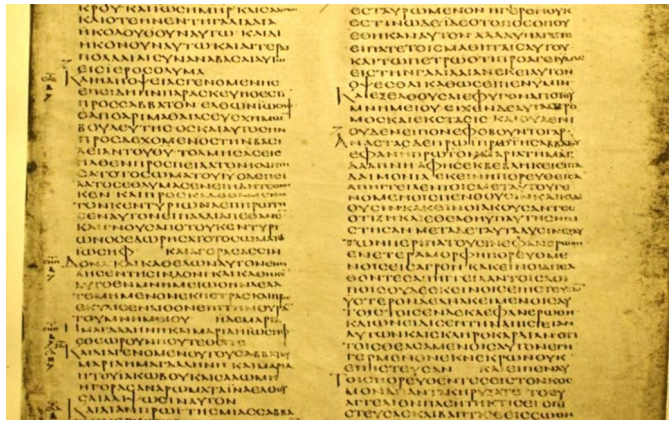


And these...



**That's a lot of manuscript evidence!!**

- Types of Manuscripts
  - Papyrus are the oldest manuscripts and are written on papyrus. They date from the second and third centuries A.D.
  - Uncial, or Majuscule are written in all capital letters and come from the second to tenth centuries
  - Minuscule, or small hand, often called Cursive are written in all lower case letters and are found in the tenth to fourteenth centuries
- Sample Uncial manuscript

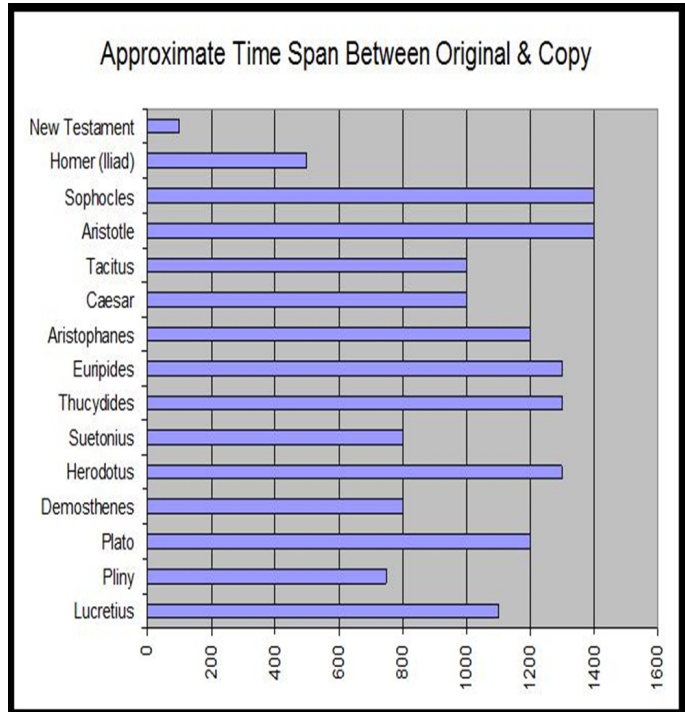


- Sample Uncial writing

IMAGINE A BOOK WRITTEN IN ENGLISH BUT WITHOUT ANY KIND OF SPACES OR PUNCTUATION MARKS OF ANY KIND. I THINK THAT WE COULD AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO READ, ESPECIALLY IF ENGLISH IS NOT EVEN YOUR NATIVE LANGUAGE.

- Early Copies:
  - The John Rylands Fragment (P52) of the Gospel of John is dated at A.D. 117-38, only a few decades after the Gospel was written.
  - The Bodmer Papyri are dated from A.D. 175- 225,
  - The Chester Beatty Papyri date from about A.D. 250.

- Codex Sinaiticus (a) – 4<sup>th</sup> century
  - Codex Alexandrius (A) – 5<sup>th</sup> century
  - Codex Vaticanus (B) – 4<sup>th</sup> century
  - Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus – 5<sup>th</sup> century
  - Codex Bezae (D) – 5<sup>th</sup> century
  - Codex Washingtoniensis (W) – 6<sup>th</sup> century
- Age Gap
    - The time span of the New Testament manuscripts is exceptional being less than 200 years (and some books are within 100 years) from the date of authorship to the date of our earliest manuscripts.
    - This can be sharply contrasted with the average gap of over 1,000 years between the composition and the earliest copy of the writings of other ancient authors





- Quality (NT)
  - The quality of the New Testament manuscripts is excellent; considerably better than the manuscript quality of other ancient documents.
  - And yet, because of the thousands of New Testament manuscripts, there are many variant readings, but these variants are actually used by scholars to reconstruct the original readings by determining which variant best explains the others in any given passage.
  - A Variant is:



**“Any place among the manuscripts in which there is variation in wording, including word order, omission or addition of words, even spelling differences.”** (Daniel Wallace)

- Why are there variants:
  - Some of these variant readings crept into the manuscripts because of visual errors in copying or because of auditory errors when a group of scribes copied manuscripts that were read aloud. Other errors resulted from faulty writing, memory, and judgment, and still others from well-meaning scribes who thought they were correcting the text.
- How many variants are there?
  - There are over 400,000 variants of the New Testament.
  - There are 138,162 words in the Greek New Testament
  - This number of variants might cause some be less people to be worried about the reliability of the New Testament text  
....but the more variants we have the better.
- Types of Variants
  - **Mistaken Letters:** Confusion of letters

- **Homophony:** Substitution of similar sounding words
- **Haplography:** Omission of a letter or word
- **Dittography** : Repetition of a letter or word
- **Metathesis:** Reversal in the order of two letters or words
- **Fusion:** Incorrect word division that results in two words joined as one
- **Fission:** Incorrect word division that results in one word written as two
- **Homoioteleuton:** An omission caused by two words or phrases that end similarly
- **Homoioarchton:** An omission caused by two words or phrases that begin similarly
- **Other Omissions**
- Examples of variants:
  - Confused letter: 1 Timothy 3:16

OC	OS	(os)	"he who"
OC̄	θεος	(theos)	"God"

- Similar looking words: 2 Peter 2:13

ΑΠΑΤΑΙΣ	απαταις
ΑΓΑΠΑΙΣ	αγαταις

- One of the most common examples of a textual variant has to do with the adding or missing moveable nu (n). This is similar to adding or leaving out the letter 'N' on the indefinite article in English.

**An apple = A apple**

- Most commonly disputed passages
  - There are several Scriptural passages that have manuscript support for NOT being included in the original text. These passages may have found their way into the Bible through scribal addition, harmonizing between other texts.
  - Even though these passages are in doubt:
    - Does not mean that the teaching is not found elsewhere in the Bible
    - Does not mean that they were not legitimate teachings from Christ, the Apostles, or the early Church.
  - Woman Caught in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11)
    - Earliest manuscripts do not have this story. Many believe it was a teaching of Jesus passed down in the church and added by scribes later
  - Ending of the book of Mark (Mark 16:9-20)
    - Not found in the earlier manuscripts. Some manuscripts have alternate endings.
  - John's Trinity declaration (1 John 5:7-8) KJV Includes it:
    - 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.'
    - Later Versions do not. They simply have:  
'There are three that bear witness:'
- Summary on Variants:
  - 75% are spelling errors or non-sense errors.
  - 24% are word order variations, transpositions, and synonyms.



- **Therefore, 99% do not conceal the meaning of the original New Testament manuscripts!!!**
- ***No variant readings are significant enough to call into question any of the doctrines of the New Testament.***
- Daniel Wallace on Variants:
  - *“For more than two centuries, most biblical scholars have declared that no essential affirmation has been affected by the variants.”*
  - *“In the last 135 years, not a single new reading of any MS has such a pedigree [as to be both new and viable]. This shows that the autographic wording is to be found among the MSS somewhere.”*



- The New Testament can be regarded as 99.5 percent pure, and the correct readings for the remaining 0.5 percent can often be ascertained with a fair degree of probability by the practice of textual criticism.
- John Warwick Montgomery observed:  
*“to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.”*



**How do you know that all 66 books in the Bible are supposed to be part of Scripture?**

**Didn't the church arbitrarily decide which books should be included in the Bible and which books should be rejected?**

- Related Questions
  - Why does the Protestant Bible differ from the Roman Catholic Bible?
  - Didn't the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. determine which books to include as their Bible?
- The issue is one of Canonicity
  - The word "canon" (canon) is a Greek word meaning:
    - A Ruler
    - A Staff
    - A Measuring Rod
  - Theologically it is applied to the Bible and refers to the collection of writings accepted as the Divinely inspired Word of God
  - How are books determined to be authoritative?
    - Some Inadequate views of Old Testament Canonicity
      - Age determines canonicity
      - Many ancient books are not in the Canon
        - Book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13)
        - Book of the Wars of the Lord (Numbers 21:14)
        - Many young books were placed in the Canon
    - Hebrew language determines canonicity
    - Agreement with the Torah determines canonicity
    - Religious values determines canonicity
    - Religious community determines canonicity

- How books are determined to be authoritative?
  - Canonicity is determined by God
    - A canonical book is valuable and true because God inspired it.
    - Canonicity is determined or fixed conclusively by authority, and authority was given to the individual books by God through inspiration.
    - The real question is not where a book received its divine authority, but how did men recognize that authority?
  - Canonicity is recognized by men of God
- Incorrect View of Canonicity
  - The Church is the Determiner of Canon
  - The Church is the Mother of Canon
  - The Church is Magistrate of Canon
  - The Church is Regulator of Canon
  - The Church is Judge of Canon
  - The Church is Master of Canon
- Correct View of Canonicity
  - The Church is the Discoverer of Canon
  - The Church is the Child of Canon
  - The Church is Minister of Canon
  - The Church is Recognizer of Canon
  - The Church is Witness of Canon
  - The Church is Servant of Canon
- Edward J. Young:
 

“When the Word of God was written it became Scripture and, inasmuch as it had been spoken by God, possessed absolute authority. Since it was the Word of God, it was canonical. That which determines the canonicity of a book, therefore, is the fact that the book is inspired by God.”



- Principles Involved in Recognizing Canonicity



- Apostolicity  
Was the book written by an apostle, or prophet of God? Was the writer confirmed/authenticated by acts of God
- Orthodoxy  
Did the message tell the truth about God with no falsehood?
- Antiquity  
Was it written during the apostolic period?
- Transformation  
Does it come with the power of God to transform lives?
- Use  
Was it accepted by the people of God?
- 3 Steps in the historical process of canonicity
  1. Inspiration by God
  2. Accepted by Man
  3. Collected and Preserved by the people of God
- F.F. Bruce:



“One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect.

The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa—at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397—but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of those communities.”

- What Books are part of the Canon?
  - The Protestant Bible has 66 Books
    - 39 in the Old Testament
    - 27 in the New Testament
  - The Hebrew Old Testament contains the same books but groups them differently resulting in 22 books (or 24 in some arrangements)
  - The Roman Catholic Bible contains additional books known as the Apocrypha (11 books not included by the Protestant Bible)

<b>HEBREW CANON</b> <small>24 BOOKS</small> <small>TANAKH תנ"ך</small>	<b>CHRISTIAN CANON</b> <small>39 BOOKS</small>
<b>LAW</b> <span style="float: right;">5</span> GENESIS EXODUS LEVITICUS NUMBERS DEUTERONOMY <div style="text-align: right;"><b>תורה</b> TORAH</div>	<b>HISTORICAL</b> <span style="float: right;">17</span> <small>PENTATEUCH</small> GENESIS EXODUS LEVITICUS NUMBERS DEUTERONOMY
<b>PROPHETS</b> <span style="float: right;">8</span> <small>FORMER PROPHETS</small> JOSHUA JUDGES SAMUEL KINGS <small>LATER PROPHETS</small> ISAIAH JEREMIAH EZEKIEL <small>BOOK OF THE TWELVE (considered 1 book)</small> HOSEA      JONAH      ZEPHANIAH JOEL      MICAH      HAGGAI AMOS      NAHUM      ZECHARIAH OBADIAH      HABBAKUK      MALACHI <div style="text-align: right;"><b>נביאים</b> NEBI'IM</div>	<small>HISTORICAL</small> JOSHUA      1 SAMUEL      EZRA JUDGES      2 SAMUEL      NEHEMIAH RUTH      1 KINGS      ESTHER 2 KINGS 1 CHRONICLES 2 CHRONICLES
<b>WRITINGS</b> <span style="float: right;">11</span> PSALMS      ECCLESIASTES PROVERBS      ESTHER JOB      DANIEL SONGS OF SONGS      EZRA-NEHEMIAH RUTH      CHRONICLES LAMENTATIONS <div style="text-align: right;"><b>כתובים</b> KETUBI'IM</div>	<b>POETICAL</b> <span style="float: right;">5</span> JOB PSALMS PROVERBS ECCLESIASTES SONG OF SOLOMON <b>PROPHETICAL</b> <span style="float: right;">17</span> <small>MAJOR PROPHETS</small> ISAIAH JEREMIAH LAMENTATIONS EZEKIEL DANIEL <small>MINOR PROPHETS</small> HOSEA      JONAH      ZEPHANIAH JOEL      MICAH      HAGGAI AMOS      NAHUM      ZECHARIAH OBADIAH      HABBAKUK      MALACHI



- The Difference between the Protestant and Roman Catholic Bible is the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the Catholic Canon
  - Eleven pieces of literature (7 books and 4 parts of books) were pronounced to be a part of the official canon in 1546 AD at the Council of Trent; this was 29 years after Luther posted his 95 theses.
  - The acceptance of the Apocrypha was a clear reaction of the Church against Luther and the Protestant Reformation.
  - Its intent is to support other Church positions (praying to the dead, indulgences, veneration of relics, etc.) that clearly were being used by the Church for its own power and profit.
  - The general term is usually applied to the books that were considered by the Church as useful, but not divinely inspired.
- Summary on the Apocrypha
  - Rejected by the Jewish Community :  
The Jews wrote the Apocrypha and reject it as God's Word.
  - Rejected by the NT authors: The authors never claimed that it was inspired.
  - Rejected by Jesus : Christ and the writers in the New Testament never quote the Apocrypha.
  - Jesus defined the boundaries of our Old Testament Scriptures – never once referencing or quoting the Apocryphal books
  - Jesus: ... Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44)
  - The Apocrypha has verses that contradict the Gospel message.

- **The History of Canonization**

- Old Testament Canon – Recognizing the correct Old Testament books
  - Christ refers to Old Testament books as “scripture” (Matthew 21:42, etc.).
  - The Council of Jamnia (A.D. 90) officially recognized our 39 Old Testament books.
  - Josephus, the Jewish historian (A.D. 95), indicated that the 39 books were recognized as authoritative.
- New Testament Canon – Recognizing the correct New Testament books
  - The apostles claimed authority for their writing
    - Colossians 3:16  
*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God*
    - 2 Thessalonians 3:14  
*If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.*
  - The apostle’s writings were equated with Old Testament scriptures
    - 2 Peter 3:1, 2, 15, 16  
*<sup>1</sup>This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, <sup>2</sup>that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, <sup>15</sup>And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup>as he*

*does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*

- The writings of the early church fathers attest to the acceptance of many NT books:
  - They quote them as Scripture.
  - They draw a clear distinction between their writings and that of Scripture.
  - Marcion (c. 140), a Gnostic heretic, devised his own canon which excluded the entire OT and included only Luke (except Chap. 1 and 2) and the Pauline epistles (excluding the pastoral epistles).
  - Muratorian Canon (170 A.D.) attests to all the books of the NT except Hebrews, James, and 1 & 2 Peter.
  - Origen (185–254 A.D.) writes commentaries on most of the books of the NT emphasizing their inspiration.
  - The Council of Athanasius (A.D. 367) and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) recognized the 27 books in our New Testament today as inspired.
  - Council of Hippo (393 A.D.) and Council of Carthage (397 A.D.) both affirmed our current NT canon. They forbade claiming any other writing as Scripture.
- Donald Guthrie:

**“From the early part of the second century of the Christian era, there is evidence that the letters of Paul were treasured not merely as isolated communications, but as a definite collection of writings, now commonly described as the Pauline corpus.”** (*New Testament Introduction*)

- Eusebius, a fourth-century Church historian, speaks plainly about the condition of the New Testament canon in his day:

- Homologoumena: Books accepted into the canon and recognized not only in the early generations but also by succeeding generations.

Universally-agreed-upon books were:

- The four Gospels
- Acts
- Letters of Paul (including Hebrews)
- 1 Peter
- 1 John
- Revelation
- Antilogoumena: Books that were accepted by the majority (including Eusebius), but disputed by some:
  - Hebrews: due to its anonymity
  - James: some believed it conflicted with Paul's doctrine of faith apart from works
  - 2 Peter: questioned its genuineness
  - 2 and 3 John: questioned its genuineness
  - Jude: questioned its authenticity (because it refers to a Pseudepigraphical Book of Enoch)
  - In the Old Testament the following books were disputed by some:
    - Song of Solomon: some deemed it too sensual
    - Ecclesiastes: seemed to skeptical
    - Esther: Does not mention the name of God

- Pseudepigrapha: Books rejected by all:
  - Old Testament:
    - Book of Jubilee
    - Book of Adam and Eve
    - 1 and 2 Enoch
    - 2 and 3 Baruch
    - 3 and 4 Maccabees ...and more
  - New Testament:
    - Acts of Paul
    - The Didache
    - Shepherd of Hermas ...and more

- J. I. Packer:

“The Church no more gave us the New Testament canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity, by His work of creation, and similarly He gave us the New Testament canon, by inspiring the individual books that make it up.”

- Summary:
  - The New Testament Books are the Earliest Christian Writings We Possess
  - Apocryphal Writings are All Written in the Second Century or Later
  - The New Testament Books Are Unique Because They Are Apostolic Books
  - Some NT Writers Quote Other NT Writers as Scripture
  - The Four Gospels are Well Established by the End of the Second Century
  - At the End of the Second Century, the Muratorian Fragment lists 22 of our 27 NT books
  - Early Christians Often Used Non-Canonical Writings

- The NT Canon Was Not Decided at Nicea—Nor Any Other Church Council
- Christians Did Disagree about the Canonicity of Some NT Books
- Early Christians Believed that Canonical Books were Self-Authenticating.
- Did the Church Councils decide on which books to include?
  - NO— Regional councils did not just “pick” books they happened to like,
  - They affirmed the books they believed *had* functioned *as foundational documents for the Christian faith*.
  - In other words, these councils were declaring the way things had been, not the way they wanted them to be.
  - these councils did not create, authorize, or determine the canon. They simply were part of the process of recognizing a canon that was already there.



## How do you know that other writings should be excluded?

- Related Questions:
  - Are other writings simply left out because they did not agree with the theology and message of the “accepted” books?
  - What about the ‘Lost Gospels’?
- What about the other writings that have been discovered?
  - We know that many of these apocryphal writings are forgeries, pretending to be written by someone who was clearly not the author. That fact alone raises serious questions about the reliability of their content.
  - These gospels were not lost to the early church. Early Christians knew about them and rejected them for good reasons (cf. Irenaeus in A.D. 180)
  - Many of these apocryphal writings contain obvious embellishments and legendary additions.
    - For example, in the *Gospel of Peter*, Jesus emerges from the tomb as a giant whose head reaches the clouds, and he is followed by the cross itself which then speaks (!).
  - Gnostic Gospels are forgeries that use the names of well-known apostles (like Thomas, Peter, James) for their writings to have any credibility
  - Many of these apocryphal writings contain a Gnostic-style theology that did not even emerge until the second century, and therefore could not represent authentic first-century Christianity (e.g., *Gospel of Philip*).
- **Gnostic Discoveries:**
  - In 1945 a chance discovery of ancient documents in Upper Egypt at a place called Nag Hammadi.
  - The Nag Hammadi Library, as it is known today, contained papyrus codices of forty treatises written in Coptic (an old Egyptian language) dating from the

third to fifth centuries CE. Most of the documents show Gnostic influences to one degree or another, and a number of the books found are Gnostic Gospels.

- “Gnosticism” is a word used today to describe several complex religious–philosophical movements that flourished from the second to the fourth century AD.
- At the heart of the Gnostic worldview is the belief that the material world is evil and corrupt; in contrast, the spiritual world is good and pristine.
- A partial list of the Gnostic Gospels (and date of composition):
  - The Gospel of Thomas (2nd century CE)
  - The Gospel of Truth (2nd century CE)
  - The Gospel of Judas (2nd century CE)
  - The Gospel of Peter (2nd century CE)
  - The Gospel of Mary (2nd century CE)
  - The Gospel of Philip (2nd-3rd centuries CE)
  - The Gospel of the Egyptians (2nd-3rd centuries CE)
- In addition, there are other Gnostic texts that narrate aspects of Jesus’ life, though they are not known as gospels:
  - Sophia of Jesus Christ (2nd century CE)
  - Pistis Sophia (2nd century CE)
  - Apocalypse of Peter (2nd-3rd centuries CE)
  - Apocryphon of John (2nd-3rd centuries CE)
  - Second Treatise of the Great Seth (3rd century CE)
  - Hypostasis of the Archons (2nd century CE)
  - Tripartite Tractate (2nd-4th centuries CE)
- Summary:
  - Books that have been rejected were known to the early church who also rejected them
  - There is no such thing as a “Lost Book of the Bible”





## Isn't the Bible full of contradictions?

- Related Questions:
  - How can the Bible be true with all the discrepancies and errors?
  - Don't the Gospels conflict with one another concerning the events of Jesus' life
  - Aren't there scientific and historical inaccuracies in the Bible?
- Atheists are quick to point out that there are seemingly hundreds of "contradictions" in the Bible.
- Contradictions and discrepancies refer to instances where two or more passages of Scripture seem to give conflicting information
- Errors refer to passages where a false statement is made.





The above graphic shows 361 apparent contradictions from "The Reason Project" ([www.project-reason.org](http://www.project-reason.org))

- 3 Primary Types of Contradictions:
  - Doctrinal: Questions of Theology
  - Ethical: Pertaining to human values and morals
  - Historical: Related to detailed accounts
    - Names
    - Places
    - Dates and times
    - Numbers
    - Events
- Where do contradictions come from?
  - Transcribed Errors
  - Wrong letters copied
  - Transposition of letters
  - Duplicate Names for the same person or place
  - Derivation of Names
  - Translation of words (multiple meanings)
  - Fragmentary accounts
    - Accounts that include parts of a story taken together form the whole story
    - Perspective on the story may yield differences
- Examples of Contradictions and Errors that aren't
  - Historical Name Errors
    - Copyist Mistake
      - Hemdan (Genesis 36:26)
      - Amram (1 Chronicles 1:41)

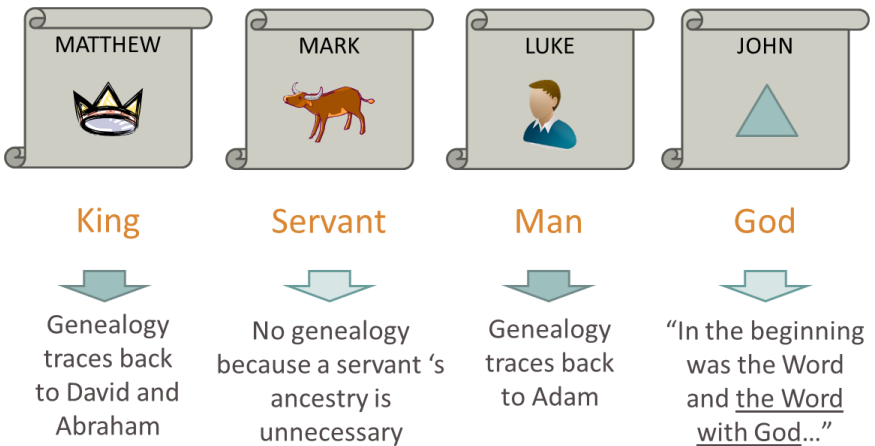
חַמְדָּן חַמְרָן

- Zabdi (Joshua 7:1)
- Zimri (1 Chronicles 2:6)

זַבְדִּי זַבְרִי

- Multiple Names
    - Ezekiel is also Ezekias
    - Elisha is also Eliseus
    - Rehoboam is also Reboam
    - Jehoshaphat is also Josaphat
  - Different Names used for the same people
    - Anab
      - The Hittite Genesis 26:34 = Race
      - The Horite Genesis 36:20 = Tribe
      - The Hivite Genesis 36:2 = Habitat
  - Dates/Numbers
    - Scribal Errors: a single letter changed and...
      - 20 becomes 2
      - 50 becomes 80
      - 200 becomes 4000
    - Ahaziah's age when he began to reign
      - 22 2 Kings 8:26
      - 42 2 Chronicles 22:2
-  koph = 20       mem = 40
- Event
    - Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus
      - Companions did hear Acts 9:7
      - Companions did not hear Acts 22:9; 26:14
      - The word "hear" (ΑΚΟΥΩ) means:
        - To hear
        - To perceive or understand
      - In chapter 9 they heard a sound but in chapter 22 and 26 they did not understand/hear words

- The Genealogy of Jesus
  - Joseph, son of Jacob
    - Matthew 1:16 = Line of Joseph
  - Joseph, son of Heli
    - Luke 3:23 = Line of Mary
- Portrayal of Jesus in the Gospels
  - Matthew: as King
    - Genealogy traces back to David and Abraham
  - Mark: as Servant
    - No genealogy because a servant's ancestry is unnecessary
  - Luke: as Man
    - Genealogy traces back to man
  - John: as God
    - "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"



- Differences in Accounts

- Did the women report the resurrection to the men?

- The women reported the resurrection to the men (Matthew 28:8).
- The women did not report the resurrection to the men (Mark 16:8).
- The apparent contradiction is resolved because Mark is not finished. Verse 8 is the very last one, according to the best manuscripts. So we can stamp this “insufficient information in Mark.” It is not difficult to imagine that *some time* after the women’s initial fear, they reported the resurrection to the men. Thus, Matthew 28:8 says that the women “ran” to tell the men of what they saw and heard. So the parallel accounts can be harmonized (not a bad word) easily, without stretching things.

- One Blind Man or Two?

- Jesus healed one blind man (Mark 10:46, Luke 18:35).
- Jesus healed two blind men (Matt. 20:30).
- Matthew’s account simply provides more detail

- 15 Mistakes people make that lead to difficulties in Bible passages:



1. Assuming that the unexplained is unexplainable
2. Presuming the Bible guilty before proven innocent
3. Confusing our fallible interpretations with God’s infallible revelation
4. Failing to understand the context of a passage
5. Neglecting to interpret difficult passages in the light of clear ones
6. Basing a teaching on an obscure passage
7. Forgetting that the Bible is a human book with human characteristics
8. Assuming that a partial report is a false report

9. Demanding that NT citations of the OT always be exact quotations
  10. Assuming that divergent accounts are false/contradictory ones
  11. Neglecting to note that Bible uses different literary devices
  12. Forgetting that only the original text, not every copy is without error
  13. Confusing general statements with universal ones
  14. Forgetting that later revelation supersedes previous revelation
  15. Forgetting that the Bible uses every day, non-technical language
- Summary: There are difficult passages but they are explainable
    - Not every situation will be answered to everyone's satisfaction
    - The writers of the New Testament used techniques and methods that literally all ancient historians employed in arranging their material – techniques that do not produce actual contradictions at all, but instead end up highlighting various points/individuals or summarizing accounts for their readership.
    - Wayne Grudem:



*“Our understanding of Scripture is never perfect, and this means that there may be cases where we will be unable to find a solution to a difficult passage at the present time. This may be because the linguistic, historical, or contextual evidence we need to understand the passage correctly is presently unknown to us “*



## Doesn't the Bible contain errors in the Gospels concerning Jesus?

### How can we respond to challenges made by Bart Ehrman about the contradictions in the Gospels about Jesus?

- Related Question:
  - How can the Gospels be viewed as divinely inspired when there are so many differences in details about Jesus?
- The Challenger:
  - Dr. Bart Ehrman is a distinguished professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
  - In his book, Misquoting Jesus, Ehrman claims that the New Testament Gospels offer different and conflicting details about the events of Jesus' life and statement made by Jesus
  - Ehrman's view on the Scriptures:

“The historical-critical method maintains that we are in danger of misreading a book if we fail to let its author speak for himself, if we force his message to be exactly the same as another author's message, if we insist on reading all the books of the New Testament as one book instead of as twenty-seven books. These books were written in different times and places, under different circumstances, to address different issues; they were written by different authors with different perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, traditions, and sources. And they sometimes present different points of view on major issues”
  - **Craig Blomberg's Reply**

“In the midst of Scripture's unity, we must not lose sight of its diversity. This takes several forms. The books of the Bible are written by different authors, to different times and places, to different audiences in distinct circumstances, using various literary genres. Each book

thus displays unique purposes and themes. In some instances, different portions of Scripture are so closely parallel that we can postulate a literary relationship between them and assume that their differences are intentional; sometimes theologically motivated; sometimes merely for stylistic variation.”

- An example from Ehrman of an apparent contradiction:
  - How many statements did Jesus make while on the cross?
    - Gospel of Mark records Jesus as making only one statement (Mark 15:34),
    - The other Gospels include six additional statements.
  - Jesus’ Statements:
    - Luke 23:34  
And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do “
    - Luke 23:43  
And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
    - John 19:26-27  
When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”<sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.
    - **Mark 15:34**  
**And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**
    - John 19:28  
After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”
    - John 19:30  
When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.



- Luke 23:46  
Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.
- Ehrman rejects the harmonization of the four accounts , claiming the result is simply another Gospel that differs from the other three.
- Ehrman attempts to use these sayings of Jesus during his crucifixion to boost his position that the Gospels do not accurately record the events and teachings of Jesus.
- Responding to Ehrman:
  - Historical accounts often record differences between various accounts
    - “Differences of standpoint or of object” (Haley).
    - When the same event is recorded by multiple authors, it is not uncommon to find differences between them.
    - If the differences are contrary to one another it would represent a true contradiction or discrepancy.
      - Example: If one Gospel claimed that Jesus died at the sixth hour of the day while another says that he died at the ninth hour.
    - Examining the four accounts, there are no contradictory details, only different ones.
  - A partial account is not necessarily an inaccurate one.
    - Ehrman claims that because Mark does not include sayings that the other Gospel authors include, that Mark is therefore wrong
    - While the Gospel of Mark records only one saying by Jesus, he never claims that Jesus made no other statements.
    - Mark simply chooses to record the single statement making his Gospel selective but not contradictory.

- Newscasts report the same story and choose to include different details. Each leaves out details that one or more report may include and yet these are not considered to be contradictory reports
- No Gospel writer claimed to record every detail of every event in the life of Jesus.
  - John closed his Gospel by proclaiming that Jesus said and did many other things
  - John 21:25  
*Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*
- It is quite possible that Jesus made other statements from the cross that none of the authors included.
- According to Ehrman Jesus is despondent in Mark, crying out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” while Luke portrays Jesus as more accepting; recognizing that he would soon be in Paradise.
  - Jesus is quoting from Psalm 22, and that while he is expressing anguish during his suffering, he is claiming the words of David in the Psalm with full expectation that deliverance would follow
- Ehrman’s claim that “smashing” the different sayings of Jesus from the four different Gospels together illustrates that no one Gospel is correct and simply results in new Gospel.
  - The Gospels are well attested by scholars to present the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus in a different perspective, a different portrayal of Jesus.
  - Darrell Bock:  
Each author expressed their own emphasis and should be “viewed as complementary rather than contradictory”



## Doesn't the Bible make a number of claims that are scientifically inaccurate?

- Implications/Claims:
  - The Bible is often described as a book that includes many ideas that are scientifically inaccurate.
  - Many misinterpreted the Bible in such a way as to make it seem to be at odds with the reality of our world.
    - The Roman Catholic Church promoted Geocentrism (the earth is the center of the universe) for many years.
      - The idea that man is the center of God's attention therefore the place where they live must be the center of God's universe.  
This is neither a logical nor biblical inference.
    - The Bible makes unscientific statements like “the sun rises and sets”
  - The biggest scientific conflict with the Bible surrounds the issue of Creation and Evolution (discussed later)
- Response:
  - The Bible was not written to describe the workings of the physical world
  - It was written to explain spiritual principles
    - The nature of mankind
    - The nature of God
    - The Plan of Redemption
  - Many of the worlds greatest scientists credit their faith and belief in the Scriptures for their scientific discoveries
    - Anselm
    - Abelard
    - Copernicus
    - Kepler
    - Galileo

- Scripture contains many statements that are scientific references.
  - These statements refer to biological, astronomical, geological, and other scientific phenomena that were not known at the time the Scripture was written. (and many not known until recently)
  - Bible only has accurate scientific observations (no fictional or mythical beliefs).
- God is the Creator of the universe and the author of the Bible, so the two are in harmony.
- Scientific Accuracy of the Bible
  - Earth is spherical
    - Isaiah 40:22  
“It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, ...”
    - Proverbs 8:27  
“...when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,”
  - Earth is not supported
    - Job 26:7  
“He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing.”
  - Universe continually expands
    - Genesis 1:8  
“And God called the expanse Heaven.”
    - Jeremiah 31:37  
“If the heavens above can be measured, ...then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel”
  - Stars are innumerable
    - Jeremiah 33:22  
“As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured,”
  - Stars emit sound
    - Job 38:7  
“when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (stars emit radio waves)

- Stars have different glory
  - 1 Corinthians 15:41  
 “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.” (different sizes, temperatures, spectral classes, magnitudes)
- Heavens are controlled by ordinances
  - Psalm 19:6  
 “Its [sun] rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat”
  - Jeremiah 31:35  
 “Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,”
- Earth’s structure
  - Psalm 104:5  
 “He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.”
  - Job 38:4  
 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? (geology - inner core, liquid core, mantle rock, crust, soil, sediment)
- Ocean Currents
  - Psalm 8:8  
 “the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.”
  - Matthew Fontaine Maury, the “Pathfinder of the Sea”, was very sick, he asked one of his daughters to get the Bible and read to him. She chose Psalm 8. It spoke of paths in the sea, ". He repeated "the paths of the sea, the paths of the sea, if God says the paths of the sea, they are there, and if I ever get out of this bed I will find them." - In 1855, Maury wrote the first textbook on modern oceanography, *The Physical Geography of the Sea and Its Meteorology*.

- Water Vapor Cycle
  - Job 36:27-28  
“For he draws up the drops of water; they distill his mist in rain, which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly”
  - Ecclesiastes 1:7  
“All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again”
- Three kingdoms of natural science
  - 3 Kingdoms: Minerals, plants, animals (Genesis 1)
- Animals produce after their own kind
  - Genesis 1:21  
“So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”
  - Genesis 6:19-20  
“<sup>19</sup> And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. <sup>20</sup> Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive.
- All flesh is not the same
  - 1 Corinthians 15:39  
“For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.”
  - Modern science also divides these different kinds of flesh into man, beast, fowl and fish



## Isn't the Bible just like other sacred texts like the Qur'an?

- Related Question:
  - Most religions have their own holy books, so how can Christians claim that the Bible is the only “Word of God”
- Uniqueness of the Bible
  - The Bible is unlike any other book or writing that has ever existed. It is unique, different from all others.
  - Professor M. Montiero-Williams, former Boden Professor of Sanskrit, held this perspective after studying Eastern books for 42 years and comparing them with the Bible:



*“Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table, but place your own Holy Bible on the right side—all by itself, all alone—and with a wide gap between them, For...there is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever...a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged over by any science of religious thought.”*

- Unique in its Unity
  - The Bible is unified and harmonious even in the midst of its diversity
  - It was written over a period of 1,500 years.
  - It was written by over 40 different authors from every walk of life including: kings, military leaders, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, tax-collectors, poets, musicians, scholars, and shepherds.
  - It was written in different places: wilderness, dungeon, on a hillside, inside prison walls, in exile
  - It was written at different times: during periods of war, periods of peace and prosperity, and captivity

- It was written on three continents:  
Asia, Africa, and Europe
- It was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
- It was written in different literary style:
  - Poetry, Historical narrative, Song, Romance, Didactic treatise, Personal correspondence, Memoirs, Satire, Biography , Law, Prophecy, Parable, Allegory
- The Bible is unified across each of the 66 books even when addressing a diverse number of subjects
- It was written coverings hundreds of controversial subjects:
  - Marriage, Divorce, and remarriage
  - Homosexuality
  - Adultery
  - Obedience to authority
  - Parenting
- Diverse in content, authorship and origin, yet maintains a perfect consistency of message.
- Its words point unerringly to Christ, whose work on the cross was ordained by God—the true author of the Bible—before the world began.
- Despite this marvelous array of topics and goals, the Bible displays a flawless internal consistency. It never contradicts itself or its common theme.
- The unity of Scripture demonstrates its supernatural inspiration.
- W.F. Albright (archaeologist)  
“The Bible towers in content above all earlier religious literature; and it towers just as impressively over all subsequent literature in the direct simplicity of its message and the catholicity of its appeal to men of all lands and times” (*The Christian Century*, November 1958)





- Unique in its Circulation
  - Most books that are on the bestseller list sell a few hundred thousand copies. Others might sell a couple of million. It is very rare to find a book that has sold over ten-million copies.
  - Bible has sold billions of copies. It is the best selling book of all time.
  - The Cambridge History of the Bible reported: “No other book has known anything approaching this constant circulation”.
- Unique in its Translation
  - Not only has the Bible sold more copies than any other book in history, it has been translated into more languages than any other book.
  - According to United Bible Societies, the Bible has been translated into over 2,500 different languages.
- Kenneth Boa:
 

“The Bible has been subjected to more abuse, perversion, destructive criticism, and pure hate than any other book. Yet it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers; it continues to stand the test of time while its critics are refuted and forgotten. No other book has enjoyed such popularity--the Bible has been copied and circulated far more extensively than any other book in human history.”
- Unique in its Survival
  - Although it was written on perishable materials and had to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, the Scriptures have never diminished in style or correctness, nor has it ever faced extinction.
  - The Bible has withstood attacks by its enemies unlike any other book. In 303 A.D., the Roman Emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping and to destroy all of their Scriptures.. Yet only 30 years later, Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the official religions of the Roman Empire



- Centuries slater, Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. Yet only 30 years later, his house was being used to store Bibles an his printing press was used to print Bibles.
- Unique in Prophecy
  - What do fulfilled prophecies tell us about God?
    - God is Sovereign (He is in control)
    - God is Omniscient
    - God has a purpose or plan
  - What do fulfilled prophecies tell us about the Bible?
    - God has indeed spoken these words
    - The Bible has authority
    - The Bible contains truth
    - The Bible is unique
  - A few of over 300 Prophecies concerning Jesus:



- The Bible contains over a hundred significant prophecies about the Messiah (the savior God sends into the world) and Jesus fulfilled them all.
- Three prophets - Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah – identify the exact ancestral lineage of the Messiah (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, ...Jesse, David... Jesus)
- The prophet Micah identifies the birthplace of the Messiah (Bethlehem Ephrathah), but another prophet said the Messiah would be called a Nazarene, and a third prophet Hosea states that the Messiah comes out of Egypt. Although these are seemingly contradictory, yet they are all correct.
- Born of a virgin, seed of a woman
- Preceded by a messenger (John The Baptist)
- Teacher of parables

- Would perform miracles (lame would walk, deaf would hear, blind would see)
- Daniel – over 500 years prior to Christ prophesized the exact time of the Messiah
- Zechariah prophesized over 400 years before Jesus that he would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
- David prophesized that the betrayer would be a friend
- Isaiah prophesized that the Messiah would be wounded and bruised, and by his stripes we would be healed; Isaiah also said that the Messiah would be killed with criminals.
- David prophesized that the Messiah would be pierced in his hands and his feet and that people would divide his garments and cast lots for the robe (did not want to tear it)
- David prophesized that the Messiah's bones would not be broken; however, the two criminals on either side of Jesus did have their bones broken
- Isaiah prophesized He would be buried in a rich man's tomb
- Christ said that he would be put to death, buried and on the third day would be resurrected
- Other Prophecies:
  - Hundreds of other prophecies concerning places, events, and people run throughout the Scriptures
- Unique in Archeological Confirmation
  - Nelson Glueck (renowned Jewish archaeologist):  
*"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."*
  - Dr. William Albright, probably the foremost authority

in Middle East archaeology in his time:

*“There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament. At this time, the number of archaeological discoveries that relate to the Bible number in the hundreds of thousands.”*

- A few items from the Bible that have been confirmed by archaeology:
  - Accuracy of Luke (geography, government officials and titles, historical occurrences, etc.)
  - Existence of the Hittite empire
  - Anchors from The Apostle Paul’s Shipwreck at Malta
  - Sennacherib’s Prism (mentioning King Hezekiah)
  - Pool of Siloam and the Pool of Bethesda
  - Ba’al Worship
- Compared to sacred texts like the Qur’an
  - Its author, Muhammad, performed no miracles to back up his message (even when he was asked to by his followers - Sura 17:91-95; 29:47-51).
  - Only in much later tradition (the Hadith) do any alleged miracles even show up and these are all quite fanciful (like Muhammad cutting the moon in half) and have zero reliable testimony to back them up.
  - The Qur’an makes clear historical errors.
  - The Qur’an makes judgments against Christians for believing things that they do not (nor have they ever) believed.
    - Teaches that Christians believe the Trinity is the Father, the Mother (Mary), and the Son (Sura 5:73-75, 116)
    - Teaches that Christians believe that God had sex with Mary to have a son (Suras 2:116; 6:100-101; 10:68; 16:57; 19:35; 23:91; 37:149-151; 43:16-19).
  - If the Quran is really from God, then it should at least be able to accurately report what Christians believe.

- One source – Muhammed (bad person; nothing to substantiate his credibility as a prophet)
- War verses; one out of every 55 verses (convert, enslave, tax or kill); (*Secrets of the Koran*, by Don Richardson)
- First 89 chapters contains 27 accounts of the Exodus story without mention of the Passover
- About 20% of the text is considered to be incomprehensible (p. 67, *Secrets of the Koran*)
- “Abrogation” – means to destroy or annul a former law by an act of legislative power, by authority or by usage; should be understood as “substitution” necessary for progressive revelation
  - Contradicts Qur’an as eternal speech of Allah
  - Can Allah change his mind and is not immutable?
  - Or is Allah not omniscient or all-knowing?
- Result: No contest between the Bible and other ‘sacred’ texts



## How can the Bible be accepted when it supports genocide or ethnic cleansing?

- Related Question:
  - Today, ISIS is:
    - moving across the Middle East
    - following their faith
    - in obedience to their god
    - killing people as they go
    - Viewed as committing acts of genocide.
  - ..How is that any different from Israel:
    - Moving into Canaan
    - following their faith
    - in obedience to their God
    - killing people as they went?
- The Issue:
  - Over the last decade atheists have strongly expressed their resentment for the Old Testament God.
  - They condemn Him as a Being they wouldn't want to worship (if they could believe He existed) because of the 'moral atrocities' He has brought upon groups of people throughout history.
  - They perceive these laws and actions as being evil, genocidal, misogynistic, homophobic, and hateful,.
  - Richard Dawkins summarizes the New Atheism's sentiment perfectly when he writes in *The God Delusion*,
    - *"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully"*

- Christopher Hitchens remarked on the Old Testament God when he wrote *God is Not Great*:
  - *“The Bible may, indeed does, contain a warrant for trafficking in humans, for ethnic cleansing, for slavery, for bride-price, and for indiscriminate massacre, but we are not bound by any of it because it was put together by crude, uncultured human mammals”*
- Daniel Dennett writes in *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Phenomenon*:
  - *“Part of what makes Jehovah such a fascinating participant in stories of the Old Testament is His kinglike jealousy and pride, and His great appetite for praise and sacrifices”*
- Sam Harris writes the following in *Letter to a Christian Nation*:
  - *“One look at the book of Deuteronomy reveals that he [God] has something very specific in mind [stoning] should your son or daughter return from yoga class advocating the worship of Krishna”*
- Responding to the Critic:
  - Does Atheism Provide an Objective Moral Foundation for Judging the Old Testament God?
    - Richard Dawkins concedes this point:
      - *“In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. . . . DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music”*
- A Biblical Response to the Canaanite Invasion
  - God waited and warned the people groups involved
    - **God was not eager to bring about this type of justice**

- Genesis 15:13-16  
*Then the LORD said to him (Abraham), “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions... In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”*
- Exodus 23:27  
*“I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way...”*
- He commanded the Israelites to accept and assimilate any immigrants from these nations, showing God was not interested in genocide
- He sought not to destroy individual people, but to destroy the religious and cultural centers that promoted their particular evil
  - **The “obliteration language” is certainly daunting.**
  - An understanding of the language of hyperbolic semitic “war texts” offers a different image of God emerge. Read carefully, the historical accounts show that God’s intent was to get rid of destructive cultural influences and world views, but not necessarily the people in them.
  - The hyperbolic exaggeration of war texts is recorded in many documents of other Ancient Near East cultures of the time (all examples cited from Historical Backgrounds of Biblical History, by Jack P. Lewis).
    - An Egyptian monument commemorating Merneptah’s conquest of Canaan noted, *“Plundered is the Canaan with every evil...Israel is laid waste; his seed is not.”*
    - The Babylonian Chronicle makes this claim of Nebuchadnezzar: *“...the Egyptian army withdrew*



*before him. He accomplished their defeat and to non-existence beat them” - and then goes on to talk about what they did to all the soldiers in the army who escaped.*

- Esarhaddon once claimed that he led Sidon’s people into exile, *“teeming subjects which could not be counted.”*
- When Mesha secured a Moabite victory of Israel, he claimed, *“Israel has perished forever.”*
- When Shalmaneser defeated Ahab, he penned this commentary: *“I spread their corpses everywhere, filling the entire plain with their widely scattered soldiers...I made their blood flow down...the district. The plain was too small to let all their souls descend into the nether world, the vast field gave out when it came to bury them. With their corpses I spanned the Orontes before their was a bridge.”*
- So the Bible records that God’s plan was to:
  - “wipe them out” (Exodus 23.23)
  - “throw them into confusion” (Exodus 23.27)
  - “make them turn their backs and run” (Exodus 23.27)
  - “drive them out of your way” (Exodus 23.28)
  - “struck down” (Psalms 135.10)
  - “dispossessed” (Numbers 21.32)
  - “destroy them” (Deuteronomy 9.3)
  - “subdue them before you” (Deuteronomy 9.3)
  - “annihilate” (Deuteronomy 9.3)
  - “delivered them over to you” (Deuteronomy 7.2)
  - “defeated them” (Deuteronomy 7.2)
- These biblical “war texts” use words that fall into two categories: dispossession or destruction .

- God tells his people that He himself would “wipe out” Israel’s enemies (Exodus 23:23), but explains this means to slowly drive them out ahead of time (verse 29).
- God tells the Israelites their specific role: “demolish their gods and break their sacred stones to pieces” (verse 24)
- There is a violent military aspect to this, BUT **the destruction was for the worship centers and cultural systems that created and sustained systemic horrors, not necessarily the people who committed them.**
- He exercised *lex talionis* (a principle which says that punishment cannot exceed the crime).
- God DID NOT command that all men, women, and children everywhere were to be killed
  - Joshua 6:21  
*Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword*
  - Deuteronomy 2:34  
*And we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction<sup>1</sup> every city, men, women, and children. We left no survivors.*
  - Deuteronomy 3:6  
*And we devoted them to destruction, as we did to Sihon the king of Heshbon, devoting to destruction every city, men, women, and children.*
  - This level of destruction was reserved for military outpost/fortified cities like: Jericho and Ai
  - Paul Copan:  
*“There is no archaeological evidence of civilian populations at Jericho or Ai” (Is God a Moral Monster)*

- Israel's Warfare Methods illustrate they were not attempting to commit "bloodthirsty massacres"
  - Most of the battles Israel fought on the way to Canaan were defensive
    - Amalekites attacked Israel (Exodus 17:8)
    - King Arad of Canaan attacked Israel (Number 21:1)
    - King Og of Bashan attacked Israel (Numbers 21:33; Deuteronomy 3:1)
    - Five kings attacked Gibeon, which Joshua defended (Joshua 10:4)
  - All the battles after Joshua's time were defensive
  - God prohibited Israel from conquering other nations
    - Moab and Ammon (Deuteronomy 2:9,19;)
    - Edom (Deuteronomy 2:4-5: 23:7)
  - Israel was not allowed to have a standing army
  - Israel was not allowed to have a professional army (it was made up of volunteer amateurs)
- Summary concerning so-called genocide in the Bible:
  - The Canaanites were wicked
    - There were justifiable reasons for the Amalekite culture to be judged
    - God gave a clear, fair notice of intent
    - God's purpose and intent were widely known
  - Terms like Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing are not accurate: Fuels hatred
  - Paul Copan:
 

*"On closer analysis, the biblical text suggests that much more is going on beneath the surface than obliterating all the Canaanites."*



## How can the Bible be accepted when it supports slavery?

- Related Question:
  - It is true that the Bible does not formally and explicitly condemn slavery as an institution?
- Sam Harris (Atheist) writes that slaves are human beings who are capable of suffering and happiness. Yet the Old Testament regards them as “farm equipment”.
- Slavery in the Old Testament:
  - Hebrew servanthood and indentured servitude
    - Hebrew debt-servanthood was more like apprentice-like positions to pay off debts
    - It was like the indentured servitude during America’s founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
    - In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in employee, temporarily embedded within the employer’s household.
    - Through failed crops or other disasters, debt tended to come to families, not just individuals. One could voluntarily enter into a contractual agreement (“sell” himself) to work in the household of another: “one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells himself” (Leviticus 25:47).
    - A wife or children could be “sold” to help sustain the family through economically unbearable times — unless kinfolk “redeemed” them (payed their debt). They would be debt-servants for 6 years.
    - A family might need to mortgage their land until the year of Jubilee every 50 years
    - An Israelite servant’s guaranteed eventual release within 7 years was a *control or regulation to prevent the abuse and institutionalizing of such positions.*

- The release-year reminded the Israelites that poverty-induced servanthood was not an ideal social arrangement.
- Servanthood existed in Israel precisely because poverty existed: no poverty, no servants in Israel. And if servants lived in Israel, this was voluntary (typically poverty-induced) — not forced.
- The Dignity of Servants in Israel
  - The intent of Israel’s laws was to combat potential abuses, not to institutionalize servitude.
  - Old Testament legislation sought to prevent voluntary debt-servitude.
    - The poor could glean the edges of fields or pick lingering fruit on trees after their fellow Israelites’ harvest (Leviticus 19:9,10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:20,21; cp. Exodus 23:10).
    - God commanded fellow-Israelites to lend freely to the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7,8), and to not charge them interest (Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:36,37).
    - When the poor could not afford sacrificial animals, they could sacrifice smaller, less-expensive ones (Leviticus 5:7,11).
    - People were to automatically cancel debts every 7 years. And when a master released his debt-servants, he was to generously provide for them — without a “grudging heart” (Deuteronomy 15:10).
- Old Testament Laws compared to Ancient Near East laws of slavery
  - Anti-Harm Laws : One marked improvement of Israel’s laws over other ANE law codes is the *release of injured servants* (Exodus 21:26,27).
  - Anti-Kidnapping Laws : Another unique feature of the Mosaic Law is its condemnation of kidnapping a person to sell as a slave — an act punishable by death

(Exodus 21:16; cp. Deuteronomy 24:7). Kidnapping, of course, is how slavery in the antebellum South could get off the ground.

- **Anti-Return Laws** : Unlike the antebellum South, Israel was to offer safe harbor to foreign runaway slaves
- New Testament Slavery
  - During the first century, 85 to 90 percent of Rome's population consisted of slaves in both lowly and prestigious positions.
  - Household slaves were much better off than even the free-born poor. The poor were often day laborers competing for jobs that went to the well-connected slaves.
  - Slaves like Onesimus were paid for their work, which provided them the means to eventually buy their freedom.
  - Some slaves owned other slaves themselves (think of the parable of unforgiving servant, who owed his master, but was in turn owed by another worse off than he was).
  - Even nobleman were known to sell themselves into the service of greater noblemen so they could move up in the Greco-Roman world
  - The New Testament presupposes a fundamental equality because all humans are created in God's image (James 3:9)
  - New Testament writers addressed underlying attitudes regarding slavery:
    - Christian masters called Christian slaves "brothers" or "sisters."
    - The New Testament commanded masters to show compassion, justice, and patience.
    - Their position as master meant responsibility and service, not oppression and privilege.
    - New Testament writers, like Jesus their Master, opposed the dehumanization and oppression of others.

- Paul gave household rules in Ephesians 6 and Colossians 4 not only for Christian slaves but for Christian *masters* as well.
- Slaves are ultimately responsible to God, their heavenly Master.
- But *masters* are to “treat your slaves in the same way” — namely, as persons governed by a heavenly Master (Ephesians 6:9).
- Commentator P.T. O’Brien points out that “Paul’s cryptic exhortation is outrageous” for his day.
- Critics claim New Testament writers keep quiet about slavery, but:
  - Paul would have considered antebellum slavery with its slave trade to be an abomination — an utter violation of human dignity and an act of human theft.
  - In Paul’s vice list he condemns “slave traders” who steal what is not rightfully theirs .(1 Timothy 1:9, 10<sup>9</sup> *understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers,*<sup>10</sup> *the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine*
- Critics wonder why Paul or New Testament writers did not condemn slavery and tell masters to release their slaves.
  - They repudiated slave trading
  - they affirmed the full human dignity and equal spiritual status of slaves
  - they encouraged slaves to acquire their freedom whenever possible (1 Corinthians 7:20–22)
  - their revolutionary Christian affirmations, if taken seriously, would help tear apart the fabric of the institution of slavery, which is what took full effect several centuries later

- This repudiation of treating humans as cargo assumes the doctrine of the image of God in all human beings.
- Summary:
  - Jesus and New Testament writers opposed oppression, slave trade, and treating humans as cargo.
  - The earliest Christians were a revolutionary, new community united by Christ — a people transcending racial, social, and sexual barriers
  - The forms of servitude and slavery practiced in a biblical context bear little resemblance to the tyrannical type of slavery found in the American antebellum South and in other modern Western countries
  - The institution of slavery was so deeply rooted in ancient culture that it could not be dismantled overnight
  - Slaves in the Old Testament were recognized as full persons who possessed human dignity and basic rights
  - Just because the New Testament writers did not condemn slavery outright, does not mean that they believed that it was acceptable .







# CREATION

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- **While the Bible does not present itself as a science book, it does at times provide scientific explanation for events.**
- The Questions:
  - Who : is the source of all things
  - Why : all things exist
  - How : things were brought into existence
- The Answers:
  - God
    - Genesis 1:1  
*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*
  - For His Glory and Pleasure
    - Colossians 1: 16  
*For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*
    - Revelation 4:11  
*“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”*
  - Out of Nothing ‘Ex Nihilo’
    - Genesis 1:1
    - ‘Bara’: Hebrew word indicating creation from nothing
- A Question of Origins
  - *The origin of the universe* (question of cosmology)
  - *The origin of life* (question of biochemistry)
  - *The origin of species* (question of biology)
  - *The origin of humanity* (anthropology)

- Origin of the Universe
  - 6 Models:
    - 1 Naturalistic Models (Nature as the source)
    - 5 Theistic Models (God as the source)
      - 3 Theistic Evolution Models (God used evolution)
      - 2 Theistic Creation Models (God used creation)
    - Intelligent Design encompasses the 4 models
  - Naturalistic Evolution Model (NE):
    - The origin of everything can be explained through science and empirical observation.
    - Naturalism is true: there is no supernatural reality.
    - No Purpose
    - Common Descent of all life
    - Old Universe
  - Nonteleological Evolution Model (NTE):
    - God is the source of the universe's existence
    - No Intervention: There is no intervention of the supernatural after the foundation of the universe.
    - No purpose
    - Common Descent of all life
    - Old Universe
  - Planned Evolution Model (PE):
    - God had a definite plan in mind, which was set in motion at the moment of creation.
    - The early chapters of Genesis should be viewed as an ancient genre wherein the emphasis is placed on the actor rather than the action, on God as creator rather than the process of creation.
    - No Intervention: God has the capacity to intervene in nature but does not need to do so because of the perfection of the original creation.
    - Purpose in the design of the universe

- Common Descent: Adam and Eve were not individuals
- Old Universe
- Directed Evolution Model (DE):
  - God brought the universe into being
  - He continues to act or intervene in it, not only in the lives of individuals in response to prayer, but also in creative events, to bring about his plans.
  - Does not involve superseding natural laws as much as *direction* of low probability events
  - Purpose: God has purpose in and for the universe
  - Day-age creation or Gap model
  - Adam and Eve are individuals
  - Old Universe
- Old-earth Creation Model (OEC):
  - God brought the universe into being
  - The Creator acted sequentially in creation, according to the order referred to in Genesis, over a long period of time.
  - God intervenes
  - Purpose in the design and working of God in the universe
  - Adam and Eve are individuals
  - Old Universe
- Young-earth Creation Model (YEC):
  - The Creator finished creation in a period of six twenty-four hour days, in the order listed in Genesis, within the past ten thousand years.
  - God intervenes
  - Purpose in the design and working of God in the universe
  - Adam and Eve were created *de novo* (“afresh”, instead of by slow natural processes) by God.
  - Young Universe (< 10,000 years)

- Implications of the various models
  - Do you believe in God?
    - No: **Naturalistic Evolution**
    - Yes:
      - Do you believe in Evolution?
        - Yes:
          - Do you believe God has designed the universe with purpose?
            - No: **Nonteleological Evolution**
            - Yes:
          - Do you believe God is intimately involved in the universe?
            - No: **Planned Evolution**
            - Yes: **Directed Evolution**
        - No: I believe in Creation
          - Do you believe in a literal interpretation of Genesis 1?
            - No: **Old Earth Creation**
            - Yes: **Young Earth Creation**
- Problems with the Naturalistic Model
  - The existence of the universe
    - If God did not create the universe how did it get here?
    - Nothing cannot produce something
  - The fine-tuning of the Universe
    - The odds of having the universe that exists is astronomical
    - Includes:
      - Fundamental Constants
      - Mass of the Cosmos
      - Our Place in the Universe
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UplilaC4kRA>



- A monkey randomly hitting keys on a keyboard will eventually produce the entire collection of Shakespeare's works—at least if the monkey types for an infinite amount of time. The truth of the previous statement relies on (at least) two conditions. First, the monkey must actually use all the keys in a random fashion. Second, but more important, the keyboard must contain all the necessary letters and punctuation to produce Shakespeare's works.
- Solution: Multiverse —There are an infinite number of universes and it was inevitable that one would be like ours
- Problem: Where did all the universes come from? Issue of Causality
- Origin of Life
  - Abiogenesis: Scientific name for the origin of life
  - One of the biggest problem is that no one was around to record what happened, so there is no direct evidence
  - 2 Primary lines of argument
    - Life came from non-life: Evolutionary models
    - Life came from creation: Creation models
  - Problems:
    - Life from Non-Life
      - Never been proven
      - Never been duplicated
    - Cells:
      - Nearly universal and ideal code
      - Independent of carrier:
        - Information in a cell is transmitted from generation to generation by the DNA, and transferred from DNA to RNA to protein, but where did it originate in the first place?
  - Specified complexity

- Irreducible complexity: biochemical machinery of the cell originating spontaneously on its own
  - Reproduction : development at the same time in the same location of different genders to allow for reproduction
- Origin of Species
  - Focal point of the debate between evolution and creation
  - Darwinism:
    - Charles Darwin: *The Origin of Species by Natural Selection*
      - Paleontological Evidence
      - Geographical Evidence
    - Fossil Record
      - Sorting: different fossils in different layers of rock
        - Lower layers contain marine life and non-extant (extinct) forms
        - Higher layers contain more current species
        - Simpler fossils in lower layers and more complex forms in higher layers
      - Geographical Distribution:
        - Lower layers are common across the world
        - Higher layers contain forms common to that region
      - Dating
        - We do not date fossils
        - We date the layer
        - Radiocarbon Dating (radioactive elements have a distinct decay rate)
      - Problems:
        - No transitional fossils
        - All 32 mammal orders appear abruptly and fully formed in the fossil record.
        - No single location contains all layers

- Gradualism
  - Gaps in the Fossil record that were believed to be filled in eventually—The gaps are still there
- Neo-Darwinism
  - Because of the gaps and lack of indication of gradual change in species
  - Punctuated Equilibrium : proposes that once a species appear in the fossil record they will become stable, showing little net evolutionary change for most of their geological history and that changes in species results from cataclysmic events
    - Stasis: Species change very little over time
    - Saltation: An abrupt change from one form to another
  - Genetics : most significant advancement in the evolution model in the last hundred years
    - Changes between forms are the result of genetic mutations.
    - In *Life: An Introduction to Biology*, Dr. Simpson wrote: “Mutations are the ultimate raw materials for evolution”.
    - Problems:
      - Mutations are random: In order for the changes required by evolution mutations would have to occur in specific, controlled circumstances.
      - Mutations are very rare.
        - It is estimated that “the frequency of a majority of mutations in higher organisms between one in ten thousand and one in a million per gene per generation”
      - Good mutations are even rarer: Accounting for less than one tenth of one percent of all mutations.

- Origin of Humans
  - Most of the physical evidence comes from:
    - Fossils
      - Number of remains is quite limited and poor quality
      - How many:
        - A few thousand fossils mostly made up of a few fragments of bone
        - Less than a hundred significant sized
        - Only 4 complete skeletons
      - Differences among human-like fossils
        - Skull (size, shape, teeth, jaws)
        - Upright posture
        - Size and position of thumb and big toe
      - No pattern of transformation in the fossils
    - Similarities between humans and apes
      - Anatomical level: similar features
      - Molecular level
        - Chromosomes
          - Apes have 24 pairs of chromosomes
          - Humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes
          - Chromosome 2 in humans appears to be the result of 2 joined together
      - DNA Sequence:
        - Once stated that chimps and humans were 98.5% genetically identical
        - Human genome: 3 billion base pairs
        - Chimp genome: 2.7 billion base pairs
        - About 95% similarity in genes, but about a 20% difference in the expression of the genes (amount of protein, etc.)



- Shortest Chromosome:
  - Of 231 functional genes: Only 17% are identical
- Result:
  - 83% of protein genes are different
  - 20% show major differences
  - Actual percent of genetically identical is around 50%
- From a Creationist perspective man is:
  - A special animal, specially created with a special purpose
  - According to Genesis 1 man is unique in that:
    - He is created in the Image of God (Genesis 1:26)  
*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them"*
- Bara and Asah in Genesis 1
  - Bara: Hebrew word for "Create"
  - Asah: Hebrew word for "Form"
  - Man was both Formed and Created
    - Formed from the dust of the earth
    - Created as a spiritual being in the image of God
  - Bara is used 3 times in Genesis:
    - Genesis 1:1
      - "God created matter"
    - Genesis 1:21
      - "God created life"
      - Animals and that have breathe
      - Consciousness

- Genesis 1:27
  - "God created man"
  - Spiritual beings
  - In the Image of God



# ETHICS

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- **The Bible has much to say concerning the sanctity of life and issues related to the ethical and moral behavior of man. Yet due to the advancements of man there are issues present today that are not all clearly, concisely, and directly addressed in the Scriptures.**
- As a result it is important to develop a foundation of understanding concerning the teaching surrounding these issues from the Bible so that they can be applied properly and with all wisdom.
- Issues that are addressed in the following sections include:
  - Abortion
  - Capital Punishment
  - Euthanasia
  - Stem Cell Research
  - Homosexuality
- While not a comprehensive list of issues these do reflect many of the most prevalent issues of our time
- Since we will be drawing from the teaching of the Scriptures for insight into these ethical issues, we will first discuss the claim by skeptics that Christians pick and choose passages in Scripture to use in defense of their position.



## Aren't Christians inconsistent because "they pick and choose which of the rules in the Bible to obey ?

- Related Question:
  - "Christians ignore lots of Old Testament texts—about not eating raw meat or pork or shellfish, not executing people for breaking the Sabbath, not wearing garments woven with two kinds of material and so on. Then they condemn homosexuality. Aren't you just picking and choosing what you want to believe from the Bible?"
- Skeptics think, if Christians truly believed that the entire Bible was the Word of God, then we would follow every command given in the Bible, right?
  - Since Christians don't obey every command, then they are inconsistent and must not really believe that the Bible is the Word of God
  - Skeptics point to verses like:
    - Leviticus 11:4,7  
*Nevertheless these you shall not eat . . . the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you.*
    - Deuteronomy 22:11  
*You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.*
- Responding to a Christian's "selective" following of the Old Testament laws:
  - Many of the prohibitions on issues like homosexuality are not found only in the Old Testament Law.
  - A biblical understanding regarding an issue is not based solely on a few passages but often upon a foundation of teaching throughout Scripture.
  - Old Testament law was given to the Nation of Israel
  - The Old Testament Law is not binding on Christians today

- Christ fulfilled the Law
  - Jesus came to fulfill all that was written in the Law and the Prophets.
  - Matthew 5:17-18
    - <sup>17</sup> *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*
- Christians are not under the Law of Moses but are under the Law of Christ
  - Galatians 6:2
    - Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*
  - Matthew 22:37-38
    - <sup>37</sup> *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment.*
- The Mosaic Covenant was a temporary covenant that has been replaced by the New Covenant under Christ
- This does not mean the Old Testament law is irrelevant today. Many of the commands in the Old Testament law fall into the categories of “loving God” and “loving your neighbor.”
  - Many of the moral laws are expressed in other places of Scripture and should be followed
  - Many of the civil laws regarding maintaining separation from the practices of other nations may be wise to follow (tattoos?)
- Traditionally the Old Testament law is viewed as consisting of 3 types of laws:
  - Moral Law: Some of the laws were to reveal to the Israelites how to obey and please God (the Ten Commandments)

- Sacrificial Law : Some of the laws were to show the Israelites how to worship God and atone for sin (the sacrificial system)
- Civil Law : Some of the laws were intended to make the Israelites distinct from other nations (the food and clothing rules).
- These “divisions” of the Law are not clear-cut.
  - "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18) is followed in the very next verse by the law "do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material" (19:19).
  - Should verse 18 be applied as binding, while verse 19 is dismissed as not applicable altogether?
- It is often difficult to determine into which category a particular law falls.
  - Even the Ten Commandments, the clearest examples of so-called moral laws, present problems for the moral, civil, and ceremonial distinctions.
  - For example: Is the Sabbath law moral or ceremonial?
- J. Daniel Hayes offers an Approach to applying Old Testament Law:
  - Our approach should:
    - Consistently treat all Old Testament Scripture as God's Word
    - Not depend on arbitrary non-textual categories
    - Reflect the literary and historical context of the Law
    - Reflect the theological context of the Law
    - Correspond to New Testament teaching.
  - Steps to apply the Old Testament Laws today:
    - Identify what the particular Law meant to the initial audience
      - Identify the historical and literary context of the specific law in question.
      - Were the Israelites on the bank of the Jordan

preparing to enter the land (Deuteronomy) when the law was given, or were they at Mount Sinai soon after the Exodus (Exodus, Leviticus)?

- Was the law given in response to a specific situation that had arisen, or was the command describing requirements for Israel after they moved into the Promised Land?
- What other laws are in the immediate context? Is there a connection between them?
- How did this particular law relate to the Old Covenant?
- Did it govern how people were to approach God?
- Did it govern how they were to relate to each other?
- Did it relate to agriculture or commerce?
- Was it specifically related to life in the Promised Land?
- What did this specific law mean for the Old Testament audience?
- Determine the differences between the initial audience and believers today
  - What are the theological and situational differences between Christians today and the initial audience.
  - For example believers in the present church age are under the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant. Thus they are not under the laws of the Old Covenant.
  - Christians live under secular governments and not under a theocracy, as did ancient Israel
  - Christians do not worship God through sacrifices as Israel did
- Develop universal principles from the text
  - What are the universal, timeless principles.

- Each of the Old Testament laws had a meaning for its first audience, a meaning that is related to the Old Covenant.
- That meaning is usually based on a broader, universal truth, a truth that is applicable to all God's people, regardless of when they live and under which covenant they live.
- What broad principle may be applied today?"
- Correlate the principle with New Testament teaching
  - Filter the universal principle through the New Testament teaching regarding that principle or regarding the specific law being studied.
  - Some of the Old Testament laws, for example, are restated in the New Testament as commandments for New Testament believers
- Apply the modified universal principle to life today
  - The universal principle developed in the previous step is applied to specific situations in believers' lives today
- Summary:
  - Christ changed how we worship, but not how we live.
  - Identify, Determine, Develop, Correlate, and Apply the universal principle of the laws to today.





# Sanctity of Life

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- **Sanctity of life addresses issues such as:**
  - Abortion
  - Genetic Engineering/ Bioethics
  - Capital Punishment
  - Euthanasia
- **Why is life to be regarded so highly:**
  - Because people are made in God's image
  - Genesis 1:26  
*<sup>26</sup>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. <sup>27</sup>So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*
  - Human life has an inherently sacred attribute that should be protected and respected at all times.
  - The sanctity of life means that humanity is more sacred than the rest of creation
  - Man has been made to have dominion over all creation
    - Genesis 1:28  
*<sup>28</sup>And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*
    - Psalm 8:4-7  
*what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.<sup>6</sup> You have given him*

*dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,<sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,<sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

- Man has an entirely different status from other animals.
  - No animal is made in God's image or has a soul.
  - The value of animal life is never elevated to the level of man
- Uniquely in the created order, it is human life which is specially protected in the Bible.
  - God gave humanity the authority to kill and eat other forms of life (Genesis 9:3),  
*Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.*
  - The murdering of other human beings is expressly forbidden, with the penalty being death (Genesis 9:6)  
*Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.*
- Man is the only part of God's creation that he has provided a way for salvation
- John Davis:
  - Being created in the "image and likeness of God" means
    - being created to share the status of Christ's royal sonship (Gen. 5:3; Col. 1:15),
    - reflecting on earth God's heavenly authority (Gen. 1:26, 28; Ps. 8:6–8), glory (Ps. 8:5; 2 Cor. 4:4), and righteousness (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
- Jeremiah 1:5  
*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

- Luke 12:6-7

<sup>6</sup> Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup> Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

- Ephesians 2:10

<sup>10</sup> *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

- *Isaiah 49:5*

And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant...

- Job 12:10

*In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.*



# Abortion

- **Abortion has become the most divisive political and social issue in late twentieth century America.**
- What is Abortion?
  - Abortion is taking the life of an innocent human being
  - Not simply talking about killing, BUT Murder
- 2 Views:
  - Pro-Life : The unborn entity is fully human from the moment of conception. Abortion (narrowly defined) results in the intentional death of the unborn entity. Therefore, abortion entails the intentional killing of a human being. This killing is in most cases unjustified, since the unborn human being has a full right to life
  - Pro-Choice : The view that the unborn is either not a person and therefore does not have rights given to others under the 14th amendment and that while in the womb a woman has the right to choose whether to continue carrying the unborn fetus or to discard it if unwanted.
- Argument:
  - Premise 1: It's wrong to take the life of an innocent human being without adequate justification.
  - Premise 2: Abortion takes the life of an innocent human being without adequate justification.
  - Conclusion: Therefore, abortion is wrong.
- Evaluating the parts of the issue:
  - Is Abortion killing?
    - A new biological life is created at conception.
    - The unborn is a life that is forcibly stopped (taken)
  - Is the unborn innocent?
    - Yes
  - Is the unborn a human being?

- When does life begin?
- The view that the unborn is a human being from the moment of conception is called the Genetic Viewpoint.
  - While the zygote is not a developed human, genetically it lacks nothing that makes up a human being. Ontologically the zygote is human.
- Does humanness mean that the fetus is also a Person?
  - The Substance View recognizes that the fetus is ontologically a person and that its nature does not ever change during its development.
  - Recognizes the full personhood of the unborn based on the fact that its nature is set at conception and while development of the unborn causes it to change in appearance and begin to have noticeable feelings there is no development of properties relating to its very nature as a person.
  - Personhood does not require body parts or rational thinking or other parts of a human in order for it to be a person.
- A few Arguments given in favor of Abortion (Pro-Choice)
  - The fetus is just a part of a woman's body
  - The Aborted is not Alive
  - It is not a 'viable' life
  - It is not a 'human being'
  - It is not a person
  - A woman has a right to her own body
  - The child is going to have a bad quality of life
  - It is unwanted
  - Rape or incest
- If the unborn is an innocent Human Being , none of these arguments are justifiable to allow abortion
  - Are there justifiable circumstances for an abortion?
    - To save the life of the mother? Possibly
    - In the case of rape or incest? No



# Capital Punishment

- What is capital punishment?
  - The death penalty. The execution of a prisoner for a capital crime
- Capital Punishment in the Bible:
  - Noahic Covenant
    - Genesis 9:6  
“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.
    - Noahic Covenant is a permanent, universal covenant—still in effect today
    - God gave man the authority to exercise judgment upon each other for murder
    - The high value of human life, created in the image of God is the reason for such a harsh judgement
  - Mosaic Covenant
    - Exodus 21
    - Numerous offenses punishable by death
      - Premeditated Murder (Exodus 20)
      - Involvement in the Occult (Exodus 22; Leviticus 20:6; Deuteronomy 18-19)
      - Sexual sins: Rape, incest, adultery, and homosexuality (Leviticus 20:11-13)
  - New Testament
    - Did Jesus set aside capital punishment?
      - John 8:7: The Woman caught in adultery
    - There is no place in the New Testament that specifically says capital punishment is right or wrong.
    - Be Subject to governing authorities
      - Romans 13:1-4,  
Let every person be subject to the governing

authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, <sup>4</sup> for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

- Acts 25:10-11,  
<sup>10</sup> But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. <sup>11</sup> If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar."
- Objections to Capital Punishment
  - The government is committing murder (Exodus 20:13)
    - Context gives governing authorities the right to execute judgment
  - Validity and Ability to apply to our culture today
    - No longer under the Mosaic Law
    - But what about Noahic Covenant
  - Innocent people might be put to death
  - Doesn't deter crime
  - The New Covenant replaces judgment with mercy



# Euthanasia

- “Euthanasia” is a broad term for mercy killing
  - Taking the life of a hopelessly ill or injured individual in order to end his or her suffering.
  - Mercy killing represents a serious ethical dilemma.
  - People do not always die well.
  - Some afflictions cause people to suffer through extreme physical pain in their last days, and euthanasia may seem like a compassionate way of ending this pain.
  - Other patients may request euthanasia to avoid the weakness and loss of mental faculties that some diseases cause, and many feel these wishes should be respected.
  - Euthanasia also seems to contradict one of the most basic principles of morality, which is that killing is wrong.
- The Three Pillars
  - Ordinary Care vs. Extraordinary Care
    - Ordinary Care
      - Ordinary care refers to treatment that would be expected given the medical circumstances related to the patient’s health.
      - An example of ordinary care would be the use of prescriptions for diabetes patients, or providing CPR to a person who experienced a heart attack.
      - These treatments can be considered ordinary when they are appropriate for the person.
    - Extraordinary Care
      - Extraordinary care are those treatments that are beyond a reasonable benefit for the patient.
      - An example of this type of care would be providing medicine for a patient when they are too far gone for the treatment to help improve their condition



- The distinction between ordinary and extraordinary care is not simply a medical one, but a moral decision.
- Difference between killing someone and allowing someone to die
  - Killing involves causing the death (either intentionally or unintentionally) of another.
  - Killing is Allowing someone to die occurs when a person's health has degraded to the point where death will occur if extraordinary care is removed.
- Privacy, Autonomy, and Liberty
  - Grounded upon the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - Recognizes that patients who are competent have the right to deny medical attention even if they are advised by physicians that treatment can be beneficial.
- These three arguments (“three pillars”) of support for the American consensus in medical ethics are consistent with the Christian tradition as well as the Hippocratic Oath.
  - The Hippocratic Oath has two primary elements:
    - To do no harm but to provide medicine to help relieve suffering
    - To not employ medicine beyond its purpose when it is no longer effective in its treatment.
  - The American consensus agrees with this oath and its moral obligation to help others whenever possible and to not over extend the use of medicine when unnecessary.
- The Christian Tradition (CT) also agrees with these three arguments.
  - There is a moral obligation to medically assist when possible but also to not exceed treatment beyond its ability to help or benefit the patient.
  - Because of the view of murder given in Scripture allowing a person to die by removing care that does not benefit the patient does not fall under any part of the definition of murder.

- Because of the biblical view of resurrection Christians know that this life is only the beginning and that life continues beyond the grave.
- Man is created with free will in the image of God and therefore should be able to decide for themselves whether to receive medical care and the extent of it.
- Each situation may be different and should be regarded and handled with great respect, sincerity, and desire to care for the patient.



# Stem Cell Research

- The potential medical benefits of curing disease and saving countless lives makes it difficult to take a stand against this type of advancement in medicine.
- Those who do speak out against stem cell research are often viewed as being against life-saving treatment and having no compassion for the suffering that others go through that might be prevented by this type of treatment
- **What are stem cells?**
  - Specialized cells that during the first few days after conception are unspecified, meaning that they have not yet begun the process of becoming a certain type of cell.
  - These are known as stem cells and have the potential of becoming any kind of cell. By manipulating these cells, scientists believe they can be used to treat disease, repair damaged organs, regenerate biological functions, and even rejuvenate and restore older cells
- **What kinds of Stem Cells are there?**
  - Embryonic Stem Cells: Human embryonic stem cells are the cells from which all 200+ kinds of tissue in the human body originate.
  - Adult Stem Cells
- **Specialization of Stem Cells**
  - Totipotent cells:
    - Capable of developing into any type of tissue and are the only type of stem cell that can develop into a whole individual.
    - Only found in the earliest stage of embryonic development before it reaches the blastocyst stage and basically consists of the fertilized egg.

- Pluripotent cells
  - Similar to totipotent in that they are able to develop into virtually any type of tissue but they cannot develop into another embryo like totipotent cells.
  - Pluripotent cells are found in the embryo once it reaches the blastocyst stage which is generally four to seven days after conception.
  - These pluripotent cells will develop further and eventually specialize into a specific types of cells that make up every part of the human body. Once a cell has differentiated itself is can only produce more of the same type of cells.
- **What are human embryonic stem cells and how are they obtained?**
  - Typically, they are derived from human embryos, often those from fertility clinics who are left over from assisted reproduction attempts (e.g., in vitro fertilization).
  - It is estimated that over 400,000 frozen embryos are 'available' in clinics
  - When stem cells are obtained from living human embryos, the harvesting of such cells necessitates destruction of the embryos.
- Use and Medical Success with Stem Cells
  - The potential use of stem cells is staggering.
  - Kirby Anderson, president of Probe Ministries, calls stem cell research "enormous and intoxicating"
  - While there has been success in the use of stem cells, most of them have come from the use of adult stem cells.
  - It is estimated that over 70 medical benefits have been found in the use of stem cells derived from adults
    - several forms of cancer
    - auto-immune diseases
    - cardiovascular damage
    - liver and bladder disease
    - wounds and other metabolic diseases

- The use of embryonic stem cells (ESC) has not resulted in any substantial benefits to date, but is often described as having great potential
- Objections to Stem Cell Research
  - The use of embryonic stem cells (ESC) can only be obtained at the cost of the life of the embryo. The biblical view regarding the personhood of the unborn is that from the moment of conception the unborn is a fully human person
  - The practice of extracting embryonic stem cells is the intentional killing of a human person
  - No objections to the use of Adult Stem Cells



# Homosexuality

- David Kinnaman:

In our research, the perception that Christians are “against” gays and lesbians...has reached critical mass. The gay issue has become the “big one”, The negative image most likely to be intertwined with Christianity’s reputation. It is also the dimension that most clearly demonstrates the unchristian faith to young people, surfacing a spate of negative perceptions: judgmental, bigoted, sheltered, right-wingers, hypocritical, insincere, and uncaring. Outsiders say hostility toward gays—not just opposition to homosexual politics and behaviors but disdain for gay individuals—has become virtually synonymous with the Christian Faith.

- The questions are being asked a lot recently:
  - Are Christians hypocritical and selective when it comes to the Bible’s condemnation of homosexuality?
  - With all that the Bible condemns, why the focus on homosexuality and same-sex marriage?
  - Is homosexuality wrong? Is the Bible really against it, or is has it been misinterpreted?
- A proper understanding of God’s view toward homosexuality must begin with understanding God’s view of man and sexuality.
- Two mindsets :

The problem is that the secular and Christian mindsets do not understand one another. It is too easy to forget, for example, that each has a radically different view of human nature.

  - Christian Mind:
    - The Christian believes that humanity has a purpose and a metaphysical significance.
    - Human nature cannot be reshaped to our preferred ends.

- God determines what is acceptable
- Secular/Natural Mind:
  - Confine their account of human nature to physical causes.
  - Freedom in deciding what does or doesn't count as moral behavior.
  - The secularist can argue that, provided that no-one is abused or exploited, sex can be "for" whatever we choose.
- Man:
  - Made in the Image of God (Genesis 1:26-27)
  - Made Male and Female (Genesis 1:27)
  - Made to Complete one another
    - Genesis 2:18-23
 

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." <sup>19</sup> Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Sex /Sexuality:
  - God designed sex primarily for men and women to complete one another
  - God designed sex for procreation
  - God designed sex for pleasure—when done within the guidelines of marriage between one man and one woman

- Genesis 1:24  
<sup>24</sup>Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
- Human beings were not given the gift of sex but rather were given the gift of marriage, with sex as an essential part of that gift.
  - Marriage is a lifelong and exclusive sexual union.
  - This union aims at new life
  - It strives to create a family unit which can create and welcome a new generation .
  - The Christian and the secularist both believe that “love” is important in sexual relationships.
    - But the secularist tends to define “love” as an emotional experience
    - Christians define love as a commitment: a decision to value another more than oneself.
  - Secularists will be just as happy with contractual relationships that should only be maintained while all parties are happy and fulfilled
  - The Christian will see the covenant made in marriage as the proper end of romantic love
  - Marriage is not what a young Christian does to get God’s permission to have sex!
  - It binds men and women together physically and personally
- 5 Points to remember concerning Sex and Marriage
  1. When the Bible says “it is not good for man to be alone” it is not suggesting that Adam merely lacked a romantic partner!
    - Sex is about so much more than the satisfaction of our romantic longings.
    - Adam lacked a family, and marriage is the foundation of a new family.



2. The Bible affirms that God's creation is good, and that we ought to enjoy it.
    - However, creation is God's, and the Christian cannot enjoy it in any way he chooses.
    - The world has a definite purpose, and we should not manipulate it to our own ends, passions or desires.
  3. Sex is not merely about physical pleasure:
    - It connects us to another person and grants us the power to create new life.
    - Whether we like it or not, whether we recognize it or not, sex is a profound personal and physical union between a man and a woman.
  4. Ultimately, the purpose of sex is to create the next generation.
    - When a man and woman have sex, their bodies are attempting to create a new life.
    - Effectively, they say to one another "I am willing to have a child with you."
    - Sex fulfils its purpose when it creates new families.
  5. Marriage has a spiritual dimension
    - Because marriage is a means of bringing new life into the world, it is a sign that "love is stronger than death".
    - Love, commitment and faithfulness are so integral to marriage it is used in the Old Testament to picture God's relationship with his people.
    - Paul borrows that image and uses it to illustrate Christ's love for the Church.
- The Logical Conclusion:
    - Marriage is designed by God to be the union between one man and one woman
    - Sex is to be enjoyed ONLY within the boundary of marriage
    - Therefore, homosexuality is not acceptable whether within or outside of marriage

- Biblical Prohibitions Concerning Homosexual Behavior
  - Old Testament
    - Leviticus 18:22  
*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.*
    - Leviticus 20:13  
*If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.*
    - Genesis 19:4-7  
*<sup>4</sup> But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup> And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." <sup>6</sup> Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, <sup>7</sup> and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.*
      - Jude 7  
*<sup>7</sup> just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire*
  - Both before the law was given and then under the law, homosexuality was considered to be sin for Israelites and non-Israelites. This was true for consensual and non-consensual cases. It resulted in God's judgment and death.
  - The Old Testament clearly condemns male homosexuality along with adultery, bestiality, incest and any sex outside the covenant of marriage.
  - The New Testament does not lessen this concern but amplifies it.
- New Testament
  - Romans 1:21-28  
*<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile*

*in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.<sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools...,<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,<sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;<sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.*

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-1

*<sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

- 1 Timothy 1:8-15

*<sup>8</sup> Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,<sup>9</sup> understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers,<sup>10</sup> the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,<sup>11</sup> in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.*

- Conclusion:
  - Homosexuality is indeed sin.
  - The New Testament condemns both male and female homosexual behavior. The Apostle Paul, for example, points specifically to homosexuality as evidence of human sinfulness. His point is not merely that homosexuals are sinners but that all humanity has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
  - In Romans, Paul refers to homosexuality in terms of “dishonorable passions,” “contrary to nature” and “shameless
  - As New Testament scholar Robert Gagnon has stated, the Bible’s indictment “encompasses every and any form of homosexual behavior.”
  - It, along with all other sins, reaps the judgment of God. These Scriptures confirm that.
  - Yet that is not where it stops. Nor should we as we discuss the Biblical view of homosexuality.
  - **The Biblical and Christian view of homosexuality is that it is wrong, but God’s grace—just like it did for us—offers freedom from sin to all people.**
- Arguments for Homosexuality
  - The passages in the Old Testament Law are no longer to be enforced
  - The passages in the New Testament that speak of ‘*men committing shameless acts with men*’ refers to immoral forms of homosexuality.
    - Paul did NOT say that men and women gave up their natural Desires
    - Paul stated that men and women gave up their natural Function
    - The Greek word *kreesis*, translated “function” in this text, means “use, relations, function, especially of sexual intercourse.”

- Aren't people born gay? Isn't there a "gay gene" ?
  - At best, the evidence for a genetic and/or biological basis to homosexual orientation is inconclusive. In fact, since the early 1990s, numerous studies attempting to establish a genetic cause for homosexuality have not proven to be valid or repeatable
  - While media headlines and reporting of these studies have given the impression that science is closing in on a "gay gene," it's important to note that each study suffers from significant problems and limitations. Some examples:
    - From the 1991 Hypothalamus (Brain) Study, Simon LeVay, who self-identifies as gay, said: "It's important to stress what I didn't find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn't show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain."
    - And from the 1991 Twins Study, Richard Pillard – also a gay man – admits: "Although male and female homosexuality appear to be at least somewhat heritable, environment must also be of considerable importance in their origins."
    - And from the 1993 X Chromosome Study, Dean Hamer – also a gay man – said: "environmental factors play a role. There is not a single master gene that makes people gay. I don't think we will ever be able to predict who will be gay."
    - More recently, Dr. Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, summed up the research on homosexuality saying that "sexual orientation is genetically *influenced* but not *hardwired* by DNA, and that whatever genes are involved represent *predispositions*, not *predeterminations*"

- Summary:
  - Recent studies have shown that 3-5% of the US population consider themselves homosexuals, not the often used 10% figure.
  - God views homosexuality as a sin but not any greater than many other sins mentioned in the passages observed earlier.
  - The case for a "gay gene" has simply not been made.
  - How should Christians respond to the issue:
    - Love and compassion without acceptance and approval of sin
    - Recognize there is a difference between one who is repentant of their sin and one who is justifying it, just as with other addictions to sinful behavior
    - Do not isolate opposition to this sin from others that affect God's design for godly living
    - Because this sin is so prevalent in our society and is changing the climate of our culture it deserves attention, and therefore is not an issue of being hypocritical or selective
    - Recognize the distinction between same-sex attraction and same-sex acts
    - While changes in a person's desires can happen, it is often done slowly
      - "not...a quick 180-degree reversal of sexual desires, rather, a gradual reversal in their spiritual understanding of themselves as men and women in relationship to God.



# PAIN

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- The Questions We Ask:
  - Why does God allow so much suffering?
  - Why did God allow my father to die before he could see his grandchildren?
  - Why does God not protect the children from terrible suffering?
  - Why did God allow such a good man to die so early, why not someone that is mean?
  - Could God not stop the worst of the evils in this world?
  - How could there be any purpose in all of this?
- Answers We Give
  - In the complexity of planning and directing the lives of billions of people some bad things will necessarily happen
  - God will bring some good from this - Greater Good
  - It is a mystery; we do not know the mind of God in this matter
    - God's knowledge does not extend into the future, therefore God does not know what man will do and therefore He cannot stop him before he does it.
  - God is judging people for their disobedience to him
  - Human suffering provides a way for greater dependence or trust in God
  - The prospect of the greatness of heaven makes the sufferings of this world bearable and divine reward will outweigh any suffering we may bear now.
- What Should We Do?
  - Consider that we claim a Christian Worldview
  - That this worldview gives answers that are raised in the human heart

- One of the persistent questions of humanity is the problem of evil, or the matter of suffering
- Our answers must be:
  - Biblically accurate
  - Theologically consistent
  - Contextually relevant
  - Personally applicable
  - An explanation for why God allows evil is called a Theodicy
- What is a Theodicy?
  - A theodicy is an attempt to explain the ways of God to man in reference to the existence of evil in this world.
  - We use the word evil in a broad sense and mean suffering in general, not exclusively in the theological sense.
  - All suffering is not evil, but all suffering comes about because of evil.
    - Example: Tripped on the stairs and broke an ankle
  - Suffering/evil is that which is unpleasant, destructive, painful, distasteful, and so forth
- Why Have a Theodicy?
  - The question before us is not how evil entered the world
    - We know that sin entered the world through one man's disobedience and death by sin.
    - Romans 5:12  
*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*
    - Natural, moral, and physical (and enough psychological) suffering resulted immediately
  - The question that plagues the hearts of man is why an all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing God allows the terrible evils in this world to continue



- The Dilemma :
  - If God:
    - Is All-Loving and therefore wants the best for us
    - Is All-Powerful and can prevent pain and suffering
    - Why doesn't He prevent it?
  - Epicurus (Greek philosopher)
    - Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?'*
- Understanding evil in relationship to the Nature of God
  - God is all loving but that attribute is not viewed in a vacuum apart from his other attributes
  - God is also righteous and just
  - Evil can exist and God still be God.
  - The existence of Evil does not change the nature of God
- Responses to the Problem of Evil:
  - A Response from Free Will (also Creation–Order )
    - God has given man free will to make choices that might result in suffering
      - Some suffering is the direct result of our choices
      - Some suffering is the indirect result of others' choices
    - God is therefore not responsible and is not required to interfere
    - Natural evil is the result of sin in the world
      - Romans 8:22
        - For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now*
    - Evil will remain in this age/ Ultimately destroyed in the next age
    - Weakness: Diminishes God's Sovereignty

- A Response for the Greater Good
  - God's purposes transcend our understanding
  - Even if we cannot understand it, we know that God will work all things for His purpose
  - Romans 8:28  
*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*
  - Makes God seem to be cold and uncaring
  - Seems that God could find another way
  - It is hard to find any good in some evils
    - 100,000 die in a Tsunami:
    - How much good would it take to outweigh the evil?
    - Is it enough to say "If one person came to know Christ as a result...?"
  - There is some purpose for pain and suffering:
    - Joseph told his brothers that God used his suffering for good
    - Genesis 50:20  
*Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?"<sup>20</sup> As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*
    - Designed to keep us from self-destruction
- A Response from God's Glory
  - God may allow suffering for His glory
  - John 9:3  
*As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

- A Response from Judgment
  - God may use calamity (natural evil) as well as man-made evil to judge man
- A Response from Perspective
  - God sees things from an eternal perspective
  - Sinful man deserves much worse than suffering in this world—he deserves eternal suffering
  - A discussion of human depravity in relation to the problem of evil is absolutely necessary
  - “Why do bad things happen to good people?” is based on the false assumption that people are “good.” Given the reality of human depravity the problem with this question should become immediately apparent. Man is *not* innately good
  - The Christian isn’t surprised at the moral evil in the world; on the contrary, he *expects* it.
  - So the question is not “Why do *bad* things happen to *good* people?” but rather ... “Why do *bad* things happen to *bad* people?” We could even push this question one step further. The real question could be posed this way: “Why do *good* things happen to *bad* people?”
- Randy Alcorn:
 

*“The Bible never sugarcoats evil...The Christian worldview concerning this central problem is utterly unique. When compared to other belief systems, it is singularly profound, satisfying, and comforting....I’m convinced that Christianity’s explanation of why evil and suffering exist beats that of any worldview. Its explanation of why we can expect God to forever deliver His redeemed people from evil and suffering is better still. The answers revealed in Scripture not only account for how the world is, they offer the greatest hope for where the world is headed”*



# MAP

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- Reasonable Faith: <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/>
- Andy Bannister: <http://www.andybannister.net/>
- Breakpoint: <http://www.breakpoint.org/bp-home>
- IDEA Center (Intelligent Design & Evolution Awareness Center): <http://www.ideacenter.org/>
- Answers in Genesis: <https://answersingenesis.org/>
- Faithful Thinkers: <http://lukenixblog.blogspot.com/>
- Oklahoma Apologetics Alliance: <http://oklahomaapologetics.com/>
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- Apologetics 315: <http://www.apologetics315.com/>
- Please Convince Me: <http://pleaseconvinceme.com>
- Stand to reason: <http://www.str.org/>
- Thinking Christian: <http://www.thinkingchristian.net/>
- Probe Ministries: <http://www.probe.org/>
- One Minute Apologist: <http://www.oneminuteapologist.com/>
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- Every Student: <http://www.everystudent.com/>
- Christian Apologetics Alliance: <http://www.christianapologeticsalliance.com/>
- Reasons for God: <http://www.reasonsforgod.org/>
- Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry: <https://carm.org/>
- C.S. Lewis Society - Apologetics.org: <http://www.apologetics.org/>

- Creation.com: <http://creation.com/>
- Come Reason: <http://www.comereason.org/>
- Tough Questions Answered: [toughquestionsanswered.org](http://toughquestionsanswered.org)
- Worldview of Jesus: <http://worldviewofjesus.com/>
- Think Christianly: <http://www.thinkchristianly.org>
- Worldview of Jesus: <http://worldviewofjesus.com/>





# "apologize"

from the Greek... (απολογία)  
meaning

"to give an answer,  
a defense for,"

..always be ready to give an answer to  
everyone who asks you to give a reason  
for the hope that you have...

1 peter 3:15