

“Christian Apologetics: Why Should I (or Anyone) Be a Christian?”¹

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I. Introduction

A. Biblical Christianity.

1. A comprehensive interpretation of the world that entails a distinctive way of life that serves God and His Son, Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit and with the guidance of God’s revelation in nature and in scripture.
2. Fundamentally, a biblical Christian “loves God with heart, soul, mind, and strength” (Mk 12:30) and loves others as oneself (Mk 12:31).

B. Alternative beliefs and ways of life (i.e., worldviews).²

1. **Theistic worldviews** (worldviews that affirm a god or God)

a. Deism:

- (1) God created the universe but has not acted within the universe since the creation.
- (2) E.g. Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Antony Flew.

b. Pantheism:

- (1) The universe is seen as a “divine oneness”—everything is connected. Humans often seen as a part of the oneness of nature/god.
- (2) E.g. Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age, Taoism, Animism, Paganism, Wicca.
- (3) E.g. Deepak Chopra, Eckhart Tolle, Richard Gere.

c. Religious Sects (with more apparent connection to an established religion) and Cults:

- (1) They reject or modify some important aspect of the Christian view of God or humanity.
- (2) Sects: E.g. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons).
- (3) Cults: E.g. Scientology.

d. Islam:

- (1) Allah is the one God (with no “associates” or “son”) who is Master over all.
- (2) Muslims must “submit” to Allah’s will and his message dictated to Muhammad in the Koran.

2. **Non-Theistic worldviews** (worldviews that deny God).³

a. Secular Humanism (Modernism):

- (1) An optimistic worldview that stresses the power of reason and science and the problems and perils of religion.
- (2) E.g. Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, CSI.

b. Nihilism:

- (1) A pessimistic worldview that denies any sufficient basis for truth, meaning, or value.
- (2) E.g. Friedrich Nietzsche; Kurt Cobain; “Seinfeld.”

c. Existentialism:

- (1) A worldview that emphasizes freedom, feeling, and personal experience as a response to an absurd universe.
- (2) E.g. Jean Paul Sartre; Albert Camus; “Ferris Buehler.”

d. Postmodernism:

- (1) A perspective that stresses a denial of absolute truth due to the way language structures reality and constructs meaning. There is no universal truth; there are only different “stories” by individuals and cultures.
- (2) E.g. Jean Francois Lyotard’s “incredulity toward metanarratives”; Nietzsche’s rejection of Truth; Richard Rorty; Michel Foucault; “Inception”; “Matrix.”

¹ Several relevant online video presentations are available as a part of a six-part lesson series given at Northview Church in Carmel, Indiana. Go to <http://media.aspireone.com/mediaplayer/nvcl/?> and select the “Northview University” tab. Week 5 is “Discerning Deficiencies in Other Worldviews”; Week 6 is “Defending the Truth of the Christian Worldview.” The last session is my personal and professional testimony for “why I believe.” More information and session handouts can be accessed at <http://www.worldvieweyes.org/northview.html>.

² See my “Worldview Comparison Table.”

³ Prominent “new atheists” include Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett, and Victor Stenger. Those especially noted for their criticism and rejection of traditional, historic Christianity include Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, Robert Price, Michael Shermer, and John Loftus.

- C. Fundamental worldview and life-style differences: Why should I be a Christian rather than something else?
- D. Apologetics and “proof.”
- E. Apologetics and the whole person: “rational” (Modernist) or “relational” (Postmodernist) apologetics?

II. Biblical Goals and Guidelines for Apologetics.

- A. Be **ready to defend** and **correct**.
 - 1. 1 Pet 3:15 “... always *being* ready to make a defense [*apologia*] to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” (Cf. Acts 22:1; 24:10; 26:12)
 - 2. Jude 3 “Contend earnestly for the faith.”
 - 3. Titus 1:9 “... Be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”
 - 4. 2 Tim 2:25 “... correcting those who are in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”
- B. Be **strong** in the **truth** with the “full armor of God.”
 - 1. 1 Pet 3:15 “... always *being* ready to make a defense [*apologia*] to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” (Cf. Acts 22:1; 24:10; 26:12)
 - 2. Jn 8:31-32 “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’”
 - 3. Jn 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
 - 4. Rom 1:18-24 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness ... they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.”
 - 5. 1 Tim 2:4 “God ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
 - 6. 2 Tim 2:15-19 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”
 - 7. Eph 6:10-20 “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.... Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist ... “ (v. 14 NIV).
- C. Be **sensitive**. Often, it’s as important how we say something as what we say.
 - 1. 1 Pet. 3:15 “... with gentleness and reverence.”
 - 2. 2 Tim 2:24-25 “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all ... with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition”
 - 3. Jude 22 “Have mercy on some, who are doubting.”

III. Types of Apologetics and Biblical Examples.

- A. **Negative Apologetics:** Replying to specific accusations or criticisms to show that Christianity is **not false**.
 - 1. E.g. The Egyptians thought that Moses’s staff turning to a snake was mere magic (Ex. 7:9-12).
 - 2. E.g. The disciples of Jesus were accused of stealing Jesus’ body (Matt 28:11-15).
 - 3. E.g. Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul, ruler of demons (Matt 12:22-29).
 - 4. E.g. Tertullus accuses Paul of being a pest and desecrating the temple (Acts 24:1-21).
 - 5. E.g. Festus accuses Paul of being insane (Acts 26:22-32).
 - 6. E.g. The apostles accused of following “cleverly devised tales” or fables (2 Pet 1:16-21).
 - 7. E.g. The implied charge that scripture is just a “matter of one’s own interpretation” (2 Pet 1:20-21).
 - 8. E.g. The claim that Christians “all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar [the state]” (Acts 17:5-8).
 - 9. E.g. The problem of evil: The accusation that the existence of evil is incompatible with the existence of an all good, all powerful, and all knowing God.
- B. **Positive Apologetics:** Attempting to show that Christianity is **true**.
 - 1. **Evidences in nature.**
 - a. Ps 19:1-6 “The heavens are telling the glory of God ...” (cf. Ps 8:1-9).
 - b. Rom 1:18-32 “... Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse....”
 - 2. **Miracles.**
 - a. 1 Kings 18 Elijah vs. prophets of Baal.
 - b. Ex 10:1-2 [Egyptian plagues] “... Go tell Pharaoh ... that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you may know that I am the Lord.”
 - c. Jn 20:30-31 “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

- d. Acts 2:22-24 "... Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst ... you nailed to a cross ... But God raised Him up again"
- e. 1 Cor 15:1-20 "Christ died ... was buried and ... was raised on the third day If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless."

3. **Fulfilled prophecy.**

- a. Lk 24:25-27 [Resurrected Jesus on the way to Emmaus]: "And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."
- b. Acts 17:2-3 "And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.'"
- c. Acts 26:22-23 "So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."
- d. Deut 18:18-22 "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken" (22).
- e. Some specific prophecies regarding **Jesus**:
 - (1) To be born of a virgin (Is 7:14).
 - (2) To be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
 - (3) To be heralded by a forerunner [John the Baptist] (Is 40:3; Mal 3:1; cf. Matt 11:7-15).
 - (4) The messiah will heal the blind, deaf, and lame (Is 35:5-6; cf. Matt 11:2-6).
 - (5) Jerusalem's king will come on a donkey (Zach 9:9; cf. Matt 21:1-11).
 - (6) Prophesied descriptions of the crucifixion and of Jesus (Is 53; cf. Matt 27:11-14, 27-31, 33-37): "He was pierced for our transgressions"; "like a lamb that is led to slaughter ... He did not open His mouth"; "He had done no violence nor was there any deceit in His mouth."
 - (7) Description of the crucifixion and words spoken (Ps 22:1-8; cf. Matt 27:45-46; Mk 15:33-34): e.g. "Why have You forsaken Me?"
 - (8) Jesus' body will not decay (Ps 16:10; Acts 2:24-32).
 - (9) Jesus [as Lord] will sit at the right hand of God—an allusion to the ascension (Ps 110:1; cf. Acts 2:33-36).

4. **The nature and reliability of scripture.**

- a. 2 Tim 3:14-17 "... all Scripture is inspired by God"
- b. 2 Pet 1:20-21 "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
- c. Jn 10:34-36 "... and the Scripture cannot be broken."

5. **Personal experience.**

- a. Jn 9:25-30 "... One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see."
- b. Paul's testimonies to the Jews (Acts 22), to Felix (Acts 24:10-23) and to Agrippa (Acts 26).

6. **Social benefits of the Christian way.**

- a. Doing what is good and profitable to humanity (Titus 3:8 "This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.")
- b. Doing good for all (Gal 6:9-10 "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.")
- c. Showing concern for the poor and enslaved (Matt 6:1-3; 19:20-21; Lk 4:17-19; 14:12-14; Gal 2:9-11; Jm 2:1-9).
- d. Providing for one's own (1 Tim 5:8 "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.")

C. **Neutralizing Apologetics:** Attempting to show other worldviews **false or significantly problematic.**

- 1. 2 Cor 10:5 "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God"
- 2. Rom 1:21 "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
- 3. Titus 1:9-11 "... able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

IV. Neutralizing Apologetics: A General Strategy and Examples.

A. General strategy.

1. Analyze the worldview's logical implications.
2. Compare the worldview's position and its implications with the **claims** of its advocates.
3. Compare the worldview's position and its implications with the **actual behavior** of its advocates.
4. Ask probing QUESTIONS to expose perplexing problems.

B. Applying the General Strategy to **Pantheistic Monism** (and New Age).

1. Consider the worldview content and its logical implications.
 - a. Everything is ultimate "ONE" (Monism).
 - b. The physical world is "illusory."
 - c. Language and logic are deceptive and must be transcended.
2. **Claims** and **behavior** of Pantheists and New Agers.
 - a. Follow the "right" duties (including moral duties) as prescribed by *dharma*, the principle of order in the universe.
 - b. Eliminate all desire (Buddhism) by following the 8-fold path (Buddhism) or "fulfill one's duties in the right way to fulfill one's desires" (Hinduism).
 - c. Improve the human condition (e.g. peace, well-being).
3. **Key responses**
 - a. "Right" duties, paths, and techniques presuppose a fundamental distinction to what is NOT "right." If everything is "ONE," how can this distinction be justified?
 - b. If everything is "ONE," then "evil" itself cannot be justified or explained.
 - c. The use of language and logic cannot be avoided.
 - d. The progress of science reveals the "reality" of nature and capacity of our reason and our physical senses to have knowledge of it.
 - e. It seeks "oneness" with the universe, but it creates a giant gap between the physical ("outer") world of the senses and the "internal" world of one's experience. It produces a fragmented existence.
 - f. Only something that is both "transcendent" AND "immanent," powerful AND personal, can provide an adequate and coherent perspective that makes sense of everything. (The Christian worldview offers this.)

C. Applying the General Strategy to **Naturalistic Worldviews**.

1. The naturalistic worldview and its logical implications.
 - a. Everything is explainable in terms of purely materialistic and impersonal causes without any cosmic intelligence.
 - b. Implications for meaning, ethics, etc.
 - c. Examples.
2. The naturalistic worldview and its logical implications.
3. **Claims** of many Secular Humanists (vs. worldview implications).
 - a. Humans have freedom, value, and uniqueness.
 - b. Human reason and science give us truth.
4. The naturalistic worldview and its logical implications.
5. **Behavior** of many Secular Humanists (vs. worldview implications).
 - a. Loving, giving, gracious, etc.
 - b. Condemn unjust, even immoral, actions (e.g. racism, slavery, rape, child abuse).
6. The naturalistic worldview is **INCONSISTENT** with the actual claims and behavior of non-theists.

V. Key Considerations for Why Christianity is Better Than Any Other Worldview Alternative. (Cf. The book of Hebrews' emphasis on "better")

A. Cosmology & Teleology.

1. A dilemma for naturalists.
 - a. If the universe is eternal, then science should say it's eternal. But ...
 - b. If it's not eternal, then how did it originate? Was it "self-caused"?
2. The universe **began**.
 - a. 19th century: universe widely held to be eternal.
 - b. The "Big Bang" idea (Edwin Hubble, 1929).
 - c. Initial strong resistance to the Big Bang idea.
 - (1) Arthur Eddington, a British astrophysicist, wrote, "Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of Nature is repugnant to me.... I should like to find a genuine loophole."
 - (2) Fred Hoyle disliked this model because the "big bang theory requires a recent origin of the Universe that openly invites the concept of creation" (*The Intelligent Universe*, p. 237).

- (3) Einstein introduced a contrived constant into his general theory of relativity in order to avoid a “big bang” that was otherwise implied by his theory. (He later admitted that this was his worst “philosophical blunder.”)
- d. Eventual acceptance of Big Bang cosmology.
 - (1) 1965: Penzias and Wilson unexpectedly detect a level of “background radiation” that was consistent with Big Bang cosmology.
 - (2) 1990-1993: Various satellites confirm a Big Bang idea.
 - (3) Reactions by scientists.

“What we found is evidence for the birth of the universe.... It’s like looking at God” (George Smoot, Cosmic Background Explorer [COBE] project leader).

“It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time” (Stephen Hawking, Cambridge University).

“For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries” (Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, p. 116).

- 3. The universe **began just right** to allow human life.
 - a. The “Anthropic Principle”: The physical constants and the ratios among them are incredibly precise to allow human life to exist.
 - b. Examples:
 - (1) 1965: Penzias and Wilson unexpectedly detect a level of “background radiation” that was consistent with Big Bang cosmology.
 - (2) Expansion rate of universe. It “must be fine-tuned to an accuracy of one part in 10^{55} ” (Hugh Ross, in *The Creation Hypothesis*, ed. Moreland, p. 163).
 - (3) The strength of gravity. (See the “cosmic ruler” illustration by Robin Collins in *The Case for a Creator*, ed. Lee Strobel, pp. 131-132).
 - (4) Electromagnetic force: Increase or decrease by 1 part in 10^{40} and you can have only LARGE stars (if decreased) or only small stars (if increased). (e.g. Hugh Ross coin illustration)
 - (5) Ratio of proton mass to electron mass (proton 1,836 times heavier).

Stephen Hawking: “The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [e.g. ratio of proton to electron mass] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life” (*A Brief History of Time*, p. 125).

- c. Effect on scientists, including many skeptics and atheists.
 - (1) 1965: Penzias and Wilson unexpectedly detect a level of “background radiation” that was consistent with Big Bang cosmology.
 - (2) Fred Hoyle (1915-2001; atheist/agnostic):

“A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect as monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”

- (a) Estimated the chances of life originating on earth: 1 in $10^{40,000}$ power!
- (b) Number of estimated atoms in the visible universe: 10^{80} power.
- (c) “Panspermia Hypothesis”: Life came to earth from elsewhere in the universe.
- (3) Arno Penzias (1933-): Nobel winner in physics.

“Astronomy leads us to a unique event, a universe which was created out of nothing, one with the very delicate balance needed to provide exactly the conditions required to permit life, and one which has an underlying (one might say ‘supernatural’) plan” [quoted in Margenau and Varghese, eds., *Cosmos, Bios, and Theos*, p. 83].

- (4) Alan Sandage (1926-2010) called “the grand old man of cosmology” by the New York Times.

“I find it quite improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. God to me is a mystery but is the explanation for the miracle of existence, why there is something instead of nothing” (*New York Times*, Mar. 12, 1991).

- (5) Antony Flew (1923-2010), one of the most widely published atheists in the 20th century, rejected his atheism at age 81 and became a Theist (or Deist).

“I think the most impressive arguments for God’s existence are those that are supported by recent scientific discoveries.... I think the argument to Intelligent Design is enormously stronger than it was when I first met it” (“My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism,” in *God is God; God is Great*, ed. William Lane Craig and Chad Meister [InterVarsity, 2009], 228-246. (See the online interview at <http://www.biola.edu/antonyflew>.)

"I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence. I believe that this universe's intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God" (*There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, p. 88).

4. Biblical connections.
 - a. Isa. 45:18 "For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited)"
 - b. Ps. 19:1-2 "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge." (See my sermon on Psalm 19 at <http://lincolnchristian.edu/GeneralInformation/Podcasts/Seminary.FA10.2010-11-10rknopp.mp4>.)
 - c. Rom. 1:20 "... since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made"

B. Biology.

1. The **origin of life**.
 - a. The origin of life requires:
 - (1) The right materials (i.e., 20 amino acids).
 - (2) The right sequencing of the materials to form proteins.
 - (3) Information (and a communication system) to direct the process of sequencing (e.g. DNA).
 - b. Darwinism does not, and cannot, explain the *origin* of life; life must already exist for natural selection to work.
 - c. The information dilemma,
 - (1) Existing information (in DNA) is necessary for life.
 - (2) But existing life is necessary for DNA.
 - (3) How did the information originate?
 - d. Living organisms possess "complex specified information" (CSI): DNA specifies the order of very complex sequences of amino acids and proteins.
 - e. Purely naturalistic processes cannot generate CSI.
2. The **diversity of life** and the problems with Darwinian evolution.
 - a. The **evidence** problem (see Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*).
 - (1) The fossil problem (acknowledged by Darwin).

"Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory. The explanation lies, as I believe, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record" (Darwin, *Origin of Species*, in chap 6, "On the Imperfection of the Geological Record").

- (2) The prevalent but problematic evidences for macro-evolution (see Wells, *The Icons of Evolution*).
 - (a) E.g. Haechel's embryos
 - (b) E.g. Peppered moths
 - (c) E.g. Four-winged fruit flies
 - (d) E.g. Darwin's finches
- b. The **time** problem.
 - (1) 19th century: earth only about 100 million years old.
 - (2) 20th century: Big Bang gives more age (universe 12-14 billion years; earth 4.5 billion years).
 - (3) But the "Cambrian explosion" occurs within about 10 million years.
- c. The **mechanism** problem.
 - (1) Darwin: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down" (*Origin of Species*).
 - (2) Michael Behe: "An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing, would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution.... if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on" (Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, p. 39, emphasis added). This is Behe's notion of "irreducible complexity."
 - (3) Note Dean Kenyon, *Of Pandas and People*. Kenyon was once a leading evolutionist and co-author of *Biochemical Predestination* (1969), a widely used textbook, but he rejected his own view because of the insurmountable problems with it.
- d. The **paradigm** problem: Naturalistic evolution has competing, and incompatible, theories of evolution.
 - (1) Gradualism (Richard Dawkins): evolution had to be very gradual.

- (2) Punctuated Equilibrium (Stephen Gould): evolution had abrupt spurts along with long periods without much change; evolutionary change was *not* gradual.

C. Theology.

1. Sovereign (and transcendent).
2. Righteous
3. Immanent Savior
 - a. "Immanuel" = God WITH us (Matt 1:23).
 - b. Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
 - (1) Father
 - (2) Son, Jesus (Phil 2:5-11; John 1:1-3,14; John 14:8-11).
 - (3) Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5; 8:9-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13-14; Eph 4:30)
4. Love (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8; Eph 2:3-5; 1 John 3:1; 4:7-9).
5. Full of grace and truth (Jn 1:17).
6. Contrast the Christian God with lack of any God (atheism), the lack of a personal God (pantheism, animism), and the lack of an intimate, incarnate God (Islam).

D. Anthropology.

1. **The "self":** A unique, individual identity and awareness is not reducible to, or explainable by, mere matter.
2. A Christian worldview accounts for the capacity for **freedom**.
 - a. Gen 2:16 "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely"
 - b. God's requirement of repentance *presupposes* freedom (Acts 17:30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent").
3. A Christian worldview accounts for personal and social **meaning** and **value**.
 - a. Humans created in the "image of God" (Gen 1:26-27 "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, ...' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.")
 - b. Human life is inherently valuable (Gen 4:9-10 "Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.'")
 - c. Provisions given by God (Matt 6:26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?")
4. A Christian worldview offers a sufficient basis for **meaningful relationships**.
 - a. The family.
 - b. The church.
 - (1) The church of *Christ* vs. "Christendom" or "religion."
 - (2) Founded by Christ (Mt 16:16-18).
 - (3) Unified by the Spirit (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:11-13; Eph 4:4-7).
 - (4) Called to edify one another (Rom 15:2; 1 Cor 10:23-24; 1 Cor 14:12,26; Eph 4:29).
5. A Christian worldview offers a sufficient basis for **social concern and justice**.
 - a. Do what is good and profitable to humanity (Titus 3:8): "This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."
 - b. Do good for all (Gal 6:9-10 "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.")
 - c. Show concern for the poor and enslaved (Matt 6:1-3; 19:20-21; Lk 4:17-19; 14:12-14; Gal 2:9-11; Jm 2:1-9).
 - d. Provide for one's own (1 Tim 5:8 "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.")
6. The Christian worldview offers encouragement through **personal adversity**, consolation for **inevitable mortality**, and justifiable hope for **eternity**.
7. **Other worldviews.**
 - a. There is no "self."
 - b. Freedom is an illusion.
 - c. There is no ultimate basis for human meaning or value.
 - (1) E.g. The Nihilists rightly recognize that, without God, this is the case.
 - (2) E.g. Those who accept karma and reincarnation must, if the ideas are applied consistently, attribute current human value to works done in a previous life-form. Why would someone born severely maimed be "worth" helping? Why should we be motivated to help them if they are where they deserve to be?

E. Philosophy.

1. Epistemology.

- a. We have been created with the adequate capacity “to know.”
- b. Made in God’s image to “rule” and to “subdue” (Gen 1:26,28).
- c. Other worldviews cannot justify our capacity to know.
 - (1) E.g. Non-theistic worldviews cannot justify the very use of human reason to give us “truth.”
 - (2) E.g. Pantheistic worldviews emphasize the deceptive character of reasons and our physical senses.

2. Ethics.

- a. An adequate morality must ultimately be based in a transcendent Being (who is Good by His very nature).
- b. Other worldviews cannot adequately justify our ethical needs or deepest intuitions.

F. History.

1. God’s redemptive activity (e.g. revelations, miracles).

2. Predictive prophecy (see section III.B.3 above).

3. Continuity of God’s story. (Especially contrast with Islam and the Koran)

- a. Hebrew scriptures: Adam > Abraham > Moses > Israel > Jesus > Church.

b. Jesus

- (1) 2nd Adam (Rom 5:13-15; 1 Cor 15:44-46).
- (2) Abraham’s “seed” (Gal 3:16-17).
- (3) Moses
 - (a) A prophet like Moses (Acts 7:37 “This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, ‘GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.’”)
 - (b) Jesus has more glory than Moses (Heb 3:1-3).
- (4) Israel and the “new covenant” (Heb 8:7-13).

4. Christology.

a. Christ’s **words**.

- (1) E.g. John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”
- (2) E.g. John 11:25-26 “Jesus said to her [Martha], ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?’”

b. Christ’s **works**.

- (1) E.g. Lk 5:24 (cf. Matt 9:6; Mark 2:10) “‘But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,—’He said to the paralytic—‘I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.’”
- (2) E.g. John 11:43-44 “When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’ The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’”

c. Christ’s **resurrection**.

- (1) Matt 28:1-6 (cf. Mark 16:1-6) “... The angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.’”
- (2) Luke 24:1-9 “... and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” (vs. 5-7).
- (3) John 20:1-18 [Mary Magdalene: “I have seen the Lord.”]
- (4) Acts 2:22-24 “... Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst ... you nailed to a cross ... But God raised Him up again ...”
- (5) 1 Cor 15:1-20 “Christ died ... was buried and ... was raised on the third day If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless.”

d. Christ’s **post-resurrection appearances**: Over 40 days, in different settings, on at least 10 occasions.

- (1) To Mary and Mary Magdalene (Matt 28:5-10; Mk 16:1-11).
- (2) To Peter (Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5).
- (3) To Cleopas and friend (Lk 24:13-35; Mark 16:12-13).
- (4) To the apostles without Thomas (John 20:19-24; Lk 24:36-40).

- (5) The apostles with Thomas (Jn 20:25-29; 1 Cor 15:5).
 - (6) The Lake of Tiberias appearance (Jn 21).
 - (7) The appearance to the 500 (1 Cor 15:6).
 - (8) The appearance to James (1 Cor 15:7). Note James's radical conversion (Mk 3:21,31-32; Jn 7:1-5; Acts 15:13-ff; Gal 1:19; 2:9).
 - (9) To the eleven in Galilee (Matt 28:16-20).
 - (10) To Saul (Acts 9:1-9; 22:1-11; 26:9-19).
5. Literary record (**scripture**).
- a. **Adequate** for God's purposes.
 - (1) Jn 20:30-31 "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."
 - (2) 2 Tim 3:16-17 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
 - b. **Reliable.**
 - (1) Claims of eyewitnesses
 - (a) 1 John 1:1-4 "... What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ... we proclaim to you ... and these things we write"
 - (b) 2 Pet 1:16 "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."
 - (2) Archaeological confirmations.
 - (3) Textual support for the New Testament.

Ancient Manuscript Information and Comparisons⁴

AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	# of COPIES
Homer	Iliad	900 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 500 yrs.	643
Herodotus	History	480-425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	History	460-400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,380 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs.	200
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100-44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	History of Rome	59 B.C. - A.D. 17	4th. cent. (partial); mostly 10 th century	c. 400 yrs. c. 1,000 yrs.	1 partial; 19 copies
Tacitus	Annals	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus	Natural History	A.D. 61-113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50-95	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	+ 50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	Over 5,600

Earliest New Testament Events and Books⁵

Historical Event (approx. date)	New Testament book or Reference
AD 30 Jesus crucified & resurrected.	
AD 30 Jesus' ascension: 40 days later.	
AD 30 Pentecost: 50 days later (Acts 2).	
AD 34 Saul's conversion (Acts 9)	
AD 37-40 Paul's 1 st visit to Jerusalem and visited with James, brother of Jesus (Gal 1:17-20).	
AD 41 Paul & Barnabas in Antioch for one year (Acts 11:25-26).	
AD 44 James, brother of John, executed by Herod Agrippa I [reign AD 41-44] (Acts 12:1-3).	
AD 44-46 Paul's 1 st missionary journey (Acts 13:4-52; 14:1-26).	
AD 48-49 Council at Jerusalem with Paul, Titus, James, Peter et al. (Acts 15; Gal. 2:1-10).	
AD 49-52 Paul's 2 nd missionary journey (Acts 15:36 – 18:22) [Inscription discovered in 1905 in Delphi refers to "Junius Gallio," proconsul in Achaia. The inscription is dated to AD 51 or 52. Esp. note Acts 18:12-16.]	AD 50 Paul writes 1 THESSALONIANS from Corinth. AD 51 Paul writes 2 THESSALONIANS from Corinth.
AD 53-57 Paul's 3 rd missionary journey (Acts 18:23 – 21:16)	AD 53 Paul writes GALATIANS from Antioch. AD 56 Paul writes 1 CORINTHIANS. AD 57 Paul writes 2 CORINTHIANS. AD 57 Paul writes ROMANS.
AD 58 Paul travels to Jerusalem and is arrested (Acts 21-23).	
AD 58-60 Paul appeals his case to Rome (Acts 24-26).	
AD 60-61 Paul journeys to Rome (Acts 27:1-14).	
AD 63-67 Paul set free from prison	AD 60-70 Gospel of Mark
AD 67-68 Paul arrested and is executed in Rome.	AD 65-70 Gospel of Luke AD 65-70 Luke writes book of ACTS. AD 65-80 Gospel of Matthew AD 95 Gospel of John

⁴ For basic comparisons, see Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. One volume. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), p. 38. Specific information on biblical materials is drawn from *The New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* and Lee Strobel's *The Case for the Real Jesus*.

⁵ Not all New Testament books or even books traditionally attributed to Paul are listed here. This table reveals that, while the synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke) were written in their current forms some 30-50 years after Jesus, the earliest New Testament documents are Paul's, which fall within 20 years of Jesus' death and resurrection. In addition, Paul's earliest interactions with the Jewish-Christian Church (e.g. Peter, James) that are attested to in the book of Acts by Luke and by Paul's own writings (e.g. Galatians) fall within 10 years of Jesus' death and resurrection. And these writings support an essential agreement between Paul and the other apostles in their message—a message that was publically proclaimed within two months of Jesus' death and resurrection (see Acts 1-2).

Some Resources on Christian Apologetics and Science

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INTERNET RESOURCES⁶

<http://www.4truth.net>. Offers practical information for engaging in intelligent discussions of faith and worldviews.
<http://www.afterall.net/citizens/moreland>. Website of Christian philosopher J. P. Moreland at Biola University.
<http://www.alwaysbeready.com>. A Christian apologetics ministry that attempts “to give an intelligent, Biblically accurate and gracious defense of the Christian faith.”
<http://www.answersingenesis.org>. A young earth creationist website headed by Ken Ham.
<http://www.arn.org>. Access Resource Network website that is full of resources on science, evolution, and intelligent design. Includes links to a number of leaders within the Intelligent Design movement.
<http://www.apologetics.com>. “Apologetics.com exists to remove intellectual impediments to Christian faith, thereby enhancing believers’ confidence in, and weakening skeptics’ objections to, the gospel message.”
<http://www.bethinking.org>. This website “aims to bring together the best possible resources for thinking about and communicating the Christian faith.”
<http://www.carm.org/>. “Its purpose is to equip Christians and refute error.... CARM offers a concise, comprehensive explanation of the Christian faith along with logical analysis of errors in popular beliefs, both secular and sacred.”
<http://www.colsoncenter.org>. The Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview. The site includes a large, searchable library of resources arranged by category and links to other resources.
<http://www.ctlibrary.com/topics/religion/worldviews>. Resource files from *Christianity Today*.
<http://www.discovery.org/csc/>. The Discovery Institute’s website for the Center for Science and Culture.
<http://www.everystudent.com>. This is a Christian site that claims to be “a safe place to explore issues about college, life, and what it might be like to know God.”
<http://www.faithandevolution.org/>. Website by the [Center for Science and Culture](#) at the [Discovery Institute](#) that critically examines both naturalistic evolution (e.g. Richard Dawkins) and theistic evolution (e.g. Francis Collins).
<http://www.garyhabermas.com>. Website of Gary Habermas, a Christian scholar who provides “a strong argument for the philosophical possibility of miracles and the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.”
<http://www.icr.org>. Institute for Creation Research home page. ICR advocates a young earth creationist perspective.
<http://www.josh.org>. A website for the ministry of Josh McDowell, a prominent Christian author and speaker who addresses key questions about Jesus, the Bible, the resurrection of Christ, etc.
<http://www.leaderu.com/menus/apologetics.html>. A part of Leadership U that includes links to many documents pertaining to apologetics (including some to science).
<http://www.leestrobels.com>. Website of former atheist and former *Chicago Tribune* reporter, Lee Strobel, who is now a popular Christian apologist and author.
<http://philofreligion.homestead.com/Plantingapage.html>. A website that features Alvin Plantinga, a notable Christian philosopher who teaches at the University of Notre Dame.
<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/>. The website of William Lane Craig, a leading Christian apologist who has engaged in numerous debates with religious skeptics and atheists.
<http://www.reasons.org>. Reasons to Believe website by Hugh Ross, an astronomer who argues for the compatibility between biblical creation and a very old universe.
<http://www.risenjesus.com>. Website of Mike Licona, a Christian apologist who is the Apologetic Coordinator at the North American Mission Board, a domestic missions agency of the Southern Baptist Convention.
<http://www.rzim.org/USA/home.aspx>. Ravi Zacharias International Ministries.
<http://www.str.org>. “Stand to Reason trains Christians to think more clearly about their faith and to make an even-handed, incisive, yet gracious defense for classical Christianity and classical Christian values in the public square.”
<http://www.veritas.org/>. “Veritas Forums are university events that engage students and faculty in discussions about life’s hardest questions and the relevance of Jesus Christ to all of life.” The site offers event information and access to audio and video presentations at Veritas events.

⁶ Annotated descriptions placed within quotation marks are taken directly from the website.