

Northview University: Worldviews 101

“Learning to Love God with Your Worldview”

Session 6: “Defending the Truth of the Christian Worldview”

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Introduction

- A. The nature of Christian apologetics (1 Peter 3:15 *apologia* = “defense”)
 - 1. **Negative** apologetics: Show that Christianity is NOT FALSE by responding to specific criticisms or accusations (e.g. the problem of evil).
 - 2. **Neutralizing** apologetics: Show that other worldviews are FALSE because they are inadequate, inconsistent, or unlivable. (See session 5 notes, sections III, IV, V, and VI.)
 - 3. **Positive** apologetics: Show that Christianity is TRUE and worth our life’s commitment. (See session 5 notes, section I.A.)
 - a. Evidences in nature
 - b. Miracles
 - c. Fulfilled prophecy
 - d. The nature and reliability of scripture
 - e. Personal experience
 - f. Social benefits
- B. Worldviews, “Proof,” and “Disproof”: (Cf. Hebrews: The new covenant is “better.”)
- C. Personal and professional “testimony”: Why do I believe that the Christian Worldview is true or better than any other alternative?
 - 1. Time considerations
 - a. Why did I *initially* believe?
 - b. Why do I *continue* to believe?
 - 2. Two types of considerations
 - a. Objective grounds (what is “_____” of me)
 - b. Subjective grounds (what is “_____” of me)

D. Overview of main points

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Geography | 2. Family | 3. Church Community |
| 4. Theology | 5. History | 6. Personal Adversity |
| 7. Philosophy | 8. Anthropology | 9. Cosmology |
| 10. Biology | 11. Mortality | 12. Eternity |

I. Geography

A. I was born and raised in America, not in Pakistan or India or China, etc.

B. Accepting the worldview of your geographic area does not, by itself, make it _____;
nor does it make it _____.

II. Family

A. Scriptures

1. 2 Tim 1:5 “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”
2. Deut 6:1-7 “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged” (1-2).

B. Background

1. Parents & Grandparents
2. Father/Mother-in-law
3. Wife
4. Children/Grandchildren

III. Church Community

A. The “Church” of *Christ* vs. “Christendom” or “religion.”

Steven Pinker: “Religions have given us stonings, witch-burnings, crusades, inquisitions, jihads, fatwas, suicide bombers, and abortion clinic gunmen” (*How the Mind Works*, 555).

B. Biblical Christianity vs. Scriptures

1. Founded by Christ (Matt 16:16-18).
2. One body unified by the Spirit.
 - a. Rom 12:5 “So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”
 - b. 1 Cor 12:11-13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
 - c. Eph 4:4-7 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
3. Called to _____ one another.

- a. Rom 15:2 “Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.”
- b. 1 Cor 10:23-24 “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.”
- c. 1 Cor 14:12,26 “So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.... What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”
- d. Eph 4:29 “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”

C. A biblically-functioning church

IV. Theology (God)

A. Sovereign (and transcendent)

B. Righteous

C. Immanent Savior

1. “Immanuel” = God _____ us (Matt 1:23).
2. Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
 - a. Father
 - b. Son, Jesus (Phil 2:5-11; John 1:1-3,14; John 14:8-11).
 - c. Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5; 8:9-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13-14; Eph 4:30)

D. Love (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8; Eph 2:3-5; 1 John 3:1; 4:7-9.

E. Full of grace and truth (Jn 1:17).

V. History

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

B. **Predictive prophecy**. (Also see session 5, section I.B.3.)

1. Some specific prophecies regarding Jesus.
 - a. To be born of a virgin (Is 7:14).
 - b. To be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
 - c. To be heralded by a forerunner [John the Baptist] (Is 40:3; Mal 3:1; cf. Matt 11:7-15).
 - d. The messiah will heal the blind, deaf, and lame (Is 35:5-6; cf. Matt 11:2-6).
 - e. Jerusalem’s king will come on a donkey (Zach 9:9; cf. Matt 21:1-11).
 - f. 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.”
 - g. 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?”
 - h. Jesus’ body will not decay (Ps 16:10; Acts 2:24-32).

- i. Jesus [as Lord] will sit at the right hand of God—an allusion to the ascension (Ps 110:1; cf. Acts 2:33-36).
2. Prophecy and probabilities: Taking only eight prophecies concerning Christ,¹ mathematician Peter Stoner calculated the mathematical probabilities for these events happening by chance to the same person to be 1 in 10²¹.

C. Continuity of God's story.

1. Hebrew scriptures: Adam > Abraham > Moses > Israel
2. Jesus
 - a. 2nd Adam (Rom 5:13-15; 1 Cor 15:44-46).
 - b. Abraham's "seed" (Gal 3:16-17)
 - c. Moses
 - (1) 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.'")
 - (2) Jesus has more glory than Moses (Heb 3:1-3).
 - d. Israel and the "new covenant" (Heb 8:7-13).

D. Christology.

1. Christ's **words**.
 - a. E.g. John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
 - b. 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?'"
2. Christ's **works**.
 - a. 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.'"
 - b. 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.'"
3. **Christ's resurrection**.
 - a. 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.'"
 - b. 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).
 - c. John 20:1-18

¹For example: Christ would be born in Bethlehem; he would be betrayed by a friend; he would be sold for the price of a slave; he clothes would be distributed by lot at his death.

- 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."

4. **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).

E. **Literary record (scripture).**

1. **Adequate** for God's purposes.

- a. 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."
- b. 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."

2. **Reliable.**

a. Claims of **eyewitnesses**

- (1) 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"
- (2) 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."

b. **Historical confirmations** (cf. Archaeology)

c. **Textual support** for the New Testament

Ancient Manuscript Information and Comparisons²

| AUTHOR | BOOK | DATE WRITTEN | EARLIEST COPIES | TIME GAP | # of COPIES |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|---|-------------------------|
| Homer | <i>Iliad</i> | 900 B.C. | c. 400 B.C. | c. 500 yrs. | 643 |
| Herodotus | <i>History</i> | 480-425 B.C. | c. A.D. 900 | c. 1,350 yrs. | 8 |
| Thucydides | <i>History</i> | 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 | <i>Galic Wars</i> | 100-44 B.C. | c. A.D. 900 | c. 1,000 yrs. | 10 |
| Livy | <i>History of Rome</i> | 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 | <i>Annals</i> | A.D. 100 | A.D. 1100 | c. 1,000 yrs. | 20 |
| Pliny Secundus | <i>Natural History</i> | A.D. 61-113 | c. A-D. 850 | c. 750 yrs. | 7 |
| New Testament | | A.D. 50-100 | 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. | 5366 |

² 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*.

Earliest New Testament Events and Books³

| 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 executed by Herod Agrippa I (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 16-19) | AD 50 Paul writes 1 <i>THESSALONIANS</i> from Corinth. AD 51 Paul writes 2 <i>THESSALONIANS</i> from Corinth. |
| AD 53-57 Paul's 3 rd missionary journey | AD 53 Paul writes <i>GALATIANS</i> from Antioch. AD 56 Paul writes 1 <i>CORINTHIANS</i> . AD 57 Paul writes 2 <i>CORINTHIANS</i> . AD 57 Paul writes <i>ROMANS</i> . |
| 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 <i>ACTS</i> . AD 65-70 Gospel of Matthew AD 95 Gospel of John |

F. **Victory** (Israel, the church).

1. E.g. Abraham's offspring (Gen 12:1-3).
2. E.g. Israel's deliverance from captivity (Ex. 1:7; 12:35-37).
3. E.g. The promise to the church (Matt 16:15-18) "... the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

VI. **Personal Adversity**

VII. **Philosophy**

A. **Epistemology:**

1. We have been created with the adequate capacity "to _____."
2. Made in God's image to "rule" and to "subdue" (Gen 1:26,28).

³ Not all New Testament books or even books traditionally attributed to Paul are listed here. This table is intended to reveal that, while the synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke) were written in their current forms some 30-40 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.

3. Other worldviews cannot justify our capacity to know.
 - a. E.g. Non-theistic worldviews cannot justify the very use of human reason to give us “truth.”
 - b. E.g. Pantheistic worldviews emphasize the deceptive character of reasons and our physical senses.

B. Morality

1. An adequate morality must ultimately be based in a _____ Being (who is Good by His very nature).
2. Other worldviews cannot adequately justify our ethical needs or deepest intuitions.
 - a. Non-theistic worldviews cannot explain or justify a “universal moral sense” that any moral criticism or condemnation *presupposes*.
 - b. Pantheistic (and Monistic) worldviews cannot ultimately distinguish between “good” and “evil.”

VIII. Anthropology

- A. The “self”: A unique, individual identity and awareness is not reducible to, or explainable by, mere matter.
- B. A Christian worldview accounts for _____.
 1. Gen 2:16 “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely”
 2. 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”).
- C. A Christian worldview accounts for human _____ and _____.
 1. 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.”)
 2. 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.’”)
 3. 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?”)
- D. A Christian worldview offers a sufficient basis for _____ concern and justice.
 1. 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.”
 2. 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.”)

3. 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).
4. 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.")

E. Other worldviews

1. There is no "self."
2. Freedom is an illusion.
3. There is no ultimate or universal human meaning or value.
 - a. E.g. The Nihilists rightly recognize that, without God, this is the case.
 - b. 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?

IX. Cosmology & Teleology

- A. A biblical worldview accounts for the _____ of the universe. (Cf. Session 5, section VI.A.)
 1. The universe is either eternal or not.
 2. Current scientific consensus: It is not eternal (e.g. "Big Bang" cosmology).
 3. But how do we account for a "Big Bang"?
- B. A biblical worldview of divine creation accounts for the _____ of the universe that make human life possible. (Cf. Session 5, section VI.B.)
 1. The "Anthropic Principle": The universe seems incredibly "fine-tuned" to allow the existence of human life on earth.
 2. Other worldviews
 - a. Mere chance?
 - (1) Fred Hoyle (atheist/agnostic): 1 chance in $10^{40,000}$ that life originated on earth.
 - (2) Number of estimated atoms in the visible universe: 10^{80} .
 - b. Infinite universes?
 3. Its effect even on skeptics and atheists (e.g. Antony Flew).
- C. A biblical worldview accounts for the _____ in the universe (e.g. the human eye).

X. Biology

- A. A biblical worldview accounts for the _____ of life. (Cf. Session 5, section V.C.5.)
 1. Darwinism says *nothing* about the *origin* of life.
 2. The information problem:
 - a. Existing information in DNA is necessary for life.
 - b. But existing life is necessary for DNA.

- c. Purely naturalistic processes cannot account for the origin of information that is necessary for life to begin and exist.
- B. A biblical worldview accounts for the _____ of life. (Cf. Session 5, section V.C.1-4.)
- C. A biblical worldview accounts for the _____ of life.

XI. Mortality

- A. Biblical reminders
 - 1. Heb 9:27 "... It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."
 - 2. 1 Thess 4:13 "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope."
- B. Memorable examples

XII. Eternity

- A. Jesus' death and resurrection pioneer the way for our

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- 1. Acts 2:24 "But God raised Him [Jesus] up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."
 - 2. Rom 6:5 "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection."
 - 3. 1 Cor 15:22-26 "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death."
 - 4. 1 Cor 15:52-55 "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. 'O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?'"

- B. There will be a New _____ and New

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- 1. 2 Pet 3:10-13 "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

2. Rev. 21:3-5 “And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’ And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’”

Conclusion

- A. Key considerations *for me*.
- B. Do _____ believe?
- C. _____ do believe?
- D. Will I _____ what I believe?