

More than a Defense

A Rational Christian Perspective

by Jonathan Bartlett

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What is Apologetics and What Can You *Do* with It?

Skeptical Arguments

Can a Christian both believe by faith and have rational reasons for what they believe? Does reasoning about God prevent faith in God?

Key Points

What's in the word "faith"?

- The modern word "faith" is very different from what the Bible teaches.
 - The Bible never asks you to have an unwarranted belief in anything. The idea that "faith" means believing in something without evidence is from a **modern confusion of words**.
 - Faith means that, given what we know about God and His character, **we will trust what God has said for our lives**.
 - Therefore, understanding the rationality of the Christian message is not at odds with faith.
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What is Apologetics?

- Apologetics is the **rational defense of the Christian faith**, from the Greek word apologia, which means "an answer."
 - Apologetics brings a variety of different evidences to support different aspects of Christianity, from the historicity of the gospels to the rationality of Christian doctrine.
 - The modern Church is undergoing a huge revival in apologetics as the Christians in every discipline are showing how **Christianity is proved true through careful study**.
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What does Apologetics Do?

- Few people are "argued in" to the kingdom of God, though this can happen.
- Apologetics, theology, and philosophy are **not replacements** for an intimate life of faith.
- Apologetics, theology, and philosophy provide **a deeper understanding, and larger applicability**, of our life of faith.
- Apologetics helps Christians **stand firmly and confidently** in their beliefs.
- Apologetics helps Christians **resist sin**.
- Apologetics helps **remove barriers** for people coming to Christianity.
- Apologetics provides a **rational foundation** for the engagement of Christians in the world.

What is After Apologetics?

- Apologetics is essentially defensive - showing that it is reasonable to hold these truths for ourselves.
- Once the rational ground for Christianity is established, then Christianity can be used as a **fundamental source** for future knowledge.
- In the long term, this will lead to the radical revival of every field of inquiry by **incorporating Christian principles** in the foundation and application of these fields.

Dialogue Tips

1. The foundation of apologetics is **careful thinking**. Listening, thinking, and speaking carefully are important for properly understanding what the other person is saying, and giving an adequate response.
2. In every discussion, be sure you **define your words** and **hold to those definitions**. Often times, two people in conversation will be using the same words but have different meanings. Also, some people equivocate (use two definitions of the same word), and use evidence for one meaning of a word as if it were evidence for another meaning of the word.
3. Don't be too hasty. **Real questions take time to find answers**. The road to finding answers is long, but worth the journey. Don't be afraid to say that you don't know but will find out.
4. Always try to think of **more possibilities** than those being presented. We are all often held prisoner by our own or others' preconceptions about what the possibilities are.
5. Be humble enough to **understand other people's points from their own perspective**. This takes effort and practice, but it transforms dialogues from fruitless (where you talk past each other because you never really understood their position) to fruitful (where you can get to the heart of what they are thinking and feeling). If you don't do this, you are only speaking for your own personal benefit, not theirs.
6. Be aware that **not every disagreement is logical**. Often times emotions, experiences, wishes, and even sin can modify our thinking or others' thinking. Know when a disagreement isn't based on logic, and look for the real root.

Can We Trust the Gospel Accounts?

Skeptical Argument

How can I trust a 2,000-year-old account of miraculous events told by superstitious fishermen? Is it even possible to know what the original New Testament has said when all we have are copies of copies of copies of copies?

Key Points

The New Testament Writers Were Concerned with Evidence

- The first known resurrection account is in 1 Corinthians 15, written around 53 AD (only 20 years after the event), and it lists people who were there and can be consulted for its trustworthiness. It also points out that this knowledge is not new at the time, but Paul had preached it for many years before this (1 Cor 15:1-2).
- Paul gives a chain of evidence in Galatians 1:18 for what he tells us about the resurrection of Jesus - it comes straight from Peter approximately 5 years after Jesus' resurrection.
- Paul made two separate trips to Jerusalem to talk with the original witnesses to confirm the accuracy of what he was preaching (Gal 1-2).
- The introduction to Luke gives us his historical methods and goals.
- The book of Acts makes it clear which parts Luke was personally present for (the "we" verses), which is also confirmed in the other NT letters. (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-15, 21:1-18, 27:1-28; 28:1-16, Philemon 24, Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:11)
- The Biblical accounts focus on accuracy rather than being convincing - it was women, who were not generally thought of as credible witnesses, who were the first to find the tomb empty. If it was a made-up account, a male would have been the witness to give credibility to the story.

The Early Church Was Concerned with Evidence

- The early days of Christianity had both authentic and forged accounts of Christ and His apostles.
- One of the main tasks of the early Church was separating out the real from the false information that was available.
- The New Testament is a compilation of the books believed by the early Church to be authentic, inspired, and helpful for the Church at large.
- The early Church, in its dialogues, focused on the evidence for Christianity, its reasonableness, and the evidence for their claims.
- The early Church did not easily accept books into the canon of scripture. There were many debates in the early church discussing the validity of books, their authorship, and their inspiration.

The New Testament Compared with the False Gospels

- The New Testament is very knowledgeable with local geography and customs.
- The false gospels seem to only be aware of Jerusalem and Nazareth.
- The New Testament reflects the names of people in the time that it took place.
- The false gospels reflect the names of people in the time and place that they were written.
- The New Testament gospels focus on the person of Christ, not the author.
- The false gospels are careful to point out who it was that wrote the gospel.
- The New Testament gospels have other internal indicators of their authenticity.

The Gospel Documents Have Been Reliably Handed Down

- The gospels were quoted by other authors between 90-160 AD, and their quotations reflect the documents we have today.
- Numerous fragments of the NT from as early as 130 AD are known, and their contents reflect the documents we have today.
- We have two relatively complete Bibles from around 350 AD (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus).
- Comparatively, many books from antiquity whose contents are unquestioned first appear over 1,000 years after they were authored, and sometimes referring to a time hundreds of years before they were written.
- An entire field of study is devoted to making sure that the Bible we have is based on the very best manuscripts.

The Basics of the Gospel Story are Universally Accepted

- Jesus lived.
- Jesus was believed by the people at the time to perform miracles.
- Jesus had disciples.
- Jesus was crucified.
- Jesus' body was missing.
- A large number of people claimed to have seen Jesus after his body was missing.
- The disciples were changed, and a group of unschooled fishermen went to transform the world, claiming Jesus rose from the dead, and suffered to death affirming this claim.

Dialogue Tips

1. Many arguments against the historical reliability of scripture, if applied to other ancient histories, would actually do more damage to the rest of ancient history than to Christianity. Thus, one can lose Christianity only by losing most of what we know about ancient history.
2. Many other arguments against the historical reliability of scripture are based on the assumption that miracles cannot occur. However, starting with this idea says more about the prejudices of the person holding the premise than where the weight of the evidence lies.
3. The transformation of the disciples themselves, like the transformation of people today, is one of the most telling proofs of the truth of Christianity.

New Testament Dating and Authorship

The Gospels, Acts, and Revelation

Book	Author	Date	Notes
Matthew	Matthew the apostle	Unknown, probably after Mark but before Luke	Church history notes that Matthew wrote down the sayings of Jesus in Aramaic or an Aramaicized Greek. Current "Matthew" is probably a combination of a translation of these sayings into Greek integrated with the text of Mark.
Mark	John Mark - companion of Paul, Barnabas, and Peter (Acts 12-15)	45-60 AD	Papias records that Mark is the collection of Peter's reminiscences of the life of Jesus.
Luke	Luke the Physician	Before 64 AD (before the second volume - Acts)	Part of a two-part work with Acts, based on the introductions. Often referred to as "Luke-Acts". Luke was a gentile or a Hellenistic Jew. Longest book in NT, most comprehensive account.
John	John the Apostle - testified by Irenaeus, who is in a direct line from John through Polycarp.	90 AD	A theological reflection on the life of Jesus. Writer claims to be an eyewitness, and gospel is full of details of topography, custom, names, and other vivid details.
Acts	Luke the Physician	Before 64 AD (Acts ends before Paul's martyrdom and Nero's persecution)	Luke marks his first-person experiences in the journeys using "we".
Revelation	John the Apostle	According to Irenaeus, written during the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD)	

Paul's Letters (arranged by date)

Book	Date	Situation	Authenticity ¹
Galatians	48-50 AD	2nd Missionary Journey (somewhere in Acts 15:40-18:17)	Undisputed
1 Thessalonians	50 AD	In Athens (Acts 17:16-34) or in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)	Undisputed
2 Thessalonians	50 AD	In Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)	Contested
1 Corinthians	55 AD	3rd Missionary Journey, in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-41)	Undisputed
2 Corinthians	56 AD	In Macedonia (Acts 20:1)	Undisputed
Romans	57 AD	In Greece (Acts 20:2)	Undisputed
Philippians	60-62 AD	Roman Imprisonment (Acts 28:14-31)	Undisputed
Philemon	60-62 AD	Roman Imprisonment	Undisputed
Colossians	60-62 AD	Roman Imprisonment	Contested
1 Timothy	65 AD	Pastoral Letters	Disputed
2 Timothy	65 AD	Pastoral Letters	Disputed
Titus	65 AD	Pastoral Letters	Disputed

¹ "Authenticity" refers to the authenticity regularly ascribed by typical secular historians, not my own views. Knowing this is helpful in knowing which letters are best to draw from to establish what the original Christians believed when talking to non-Christians.

The Other Letters

Book	Author	Date	Notes
Hebrews	Unknown (Paul and Luke often suggested)	Well before 95 AD (first quoted then in 1 Clement), probably before destruction of temple in 70 AD	Writing either from or to Italy
James	James the Brother of Jesus	Before James Death in 62 AD. Possibly 45-50 AD before Judaizing controversy (Acts 15).	Has same greeting as James' letter in Acts 15
1 Peter	Peter the Apostle	Probably 63-64 AD from Rome, shortly before his martyrdom.	Closely follows Peter's preaching style
2 Peter	Peter the Apostle	Probably 63-64 AD from Rome, shortly before his martyrdom.	This letter's authenticity is heavily disputed
1-3 John	John the Apostle	Unknown	
Jude	Jude	Unknown	Possibly the brother of Jesus - he and James both refer to themselves as "slaves of Christ"

Is it Rational to Believe in God?

Skeptical Argument

"We are all atheists about most of the gods that humanity has ever believed in. Some of us just go one god further." (Richard Dawkins)

Key Points

Different Types of Evidence

- **Personally Plausible Evidence** - this is evidence that make an idea plausible to an individual, but the arguments and evidences are not publicly available. For instance, if I think that person X might be innocent of a crime because I know their character, that is personally plausible evidence.
- **Personally Compelling Evidence** - this is evidence that you find convincing but that you might not be able to relate to someone else, such as the testimony of the Holy Spirit. This should not be dismissed, but it is personal, not public (I can't see or feel what the Holy Spirit has put on your heart).
- **Publicly Plausible Evidence** - this is evidence that is knowable through a publicly-available mechanism (rational thought, experience, etc.), but doesn't make a fully compelling case. This has the effect of making an idea available in the marketplace of ideas, but doesn't give it a preferred place. In other words, it is rational to believe it or disbelieve it.
- **Publicly Compelling Evidence** - this is evidence that is publicly accessible and makes a strong case for a specific idea or position. It does not necessarily mean that it is irrational to disbelieve the position, but rather the weight of the publicly available evidence leans heavily to one side.
- **Public Witness of Christians** - the way that Christians live and think provides a public witness to Christ that is independent of other types of testimony. The public witness of Christians can bridge the gap between personal and public types of evidence.
- *Public evidence is what allows Christians to take their faith public* - to engage in the world from a specifically Christian position. It moves Christianity beyond a mere preference or a secret club to instead be within the realm of public knowledge.

How Can We Know About God?

- God's direct testimony to us directly through the Holy Spirit (John 15:26, John 16:13-14, Romans 8:16)
- God's testimony to us through nature (Roman's 1:19-20, Psalm 19:1-4)
- God's testimony to us through reason (Psalm 14:1-2)
- God's testimony to us mediated through others (Hebrews 12:1, Matthew 5:16)
- God's testimony to us mediated through the scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16)
- We can start at any place, and they naturally lead to the others.

What Can We *Show* About God?

- What we can show is less than what we can know, since what we can show must come from *shared* premises and experiences and exclude private ones.
- The basic features of the world tell us about God, and confirm what the Bible teaches:
 - The rationally-ordered universe suggests a mind
 - The beginning of the universe suggests a transcendent cause
 - The existence of consciousness suggests personality

All Philosophies Rely on Some Conception of God

- One definition of deity is that it is that which is self-existent, or not requiring or having something else for a cause.
- According to this definition, every philosophy, including atheism, includes deity.
- Since atheism holds the laws of physics to be self-existent, they are the atheist's deity.
- Therefore the question is *not* "is there a God?" but "what is the nature of God?"
- As we have shown, the evidences point towards the Christian picture of God

Is the God that Christians Worship Just a Jewish Tribal God?

- God is at work in every culture preparing them for the gospel (prevenient grace).
- Every person on earth is a descendent of both Adam and Eve and Noah, and therefore someone in their history is the knowledge of God.
- Not every foreign name for God is idolatrous - many people know that there is a Creator God whom they are estranged from. Melchizedek in Genesis 14 did not come from Abraham and did not use Abraham's name for God (El Elyon instead of YHWH).
- God is against all forms of idolatry, but claims that He has sheep from other folds (John 10:16).
- All of these people need Christ, just as the Jews needed Christ, even though their conception of God was essentially correct. Even if we know who God is, we all need Christ as savior! (Matthew 28:19-20)

Dialogue Tips

1. Note that the bar is always set higher on the theistic position than the atheistic position. This is good, because we can show that not only do people require a higher standard of evidence from us, that we are able to meet it, too.
2. Many arguments against God are more emotionally appealing than intellectually appealing.
3. Many arguments against God's existence are based on misunderstanding God - thinking about Him as a part of creation rather than transcending it.
4. It is good to find the premises that you agree on and start from there.
5. Be in tune with the Holy Spirit yourself to lead you in your conversations.
6. Be able to understand whether the other person (or yourself) is making an argument that their position is compelling, or just plausible.
7. Remember that not everything coming from a non-Christian viewpoint is wrong.
1 Thessalonians 5:21 tells us to question everything, but hold on to the good stuff.

Observable Features of the Universe and Christian Theism

Feature of the Universe	Theistic Context	Naturalistic Context
Life (Genesis 1:20-30)	The living God created living beings.	Life arose from non-living materials over long periods of time for no reason.
Consciousness	God, as a conscious being, created other conscious beings.	Consciousness arose from non-conscious matter for no reason.
Rationality of the Universe (Psalm 19:1-6)	God created the world in His wisdom.	(a) The universe luckily has rational features. (b) There are an infinite number of universes, and we live in the one that has rational features. (c) The world is not rational, it is only our minds that make it seem that way.
Rationality of our Minds (Genesis 1:26)	God created rational beings to understand His world.	Our minds evolved to help us survive, not necessarily hold true thoughts (i.e., Amoeba's survive perfectly fine without holding true thoughts). Therefore, we should not expect our thoughts to actually match reality, only to increase our survivability.
Choice (Joshua 24:15)	God is capable of free choice and action, and created beings who had their own, limited capabilities of choice.	Choice is an illusion. Everything we do is dominated by physical processes, and therefore a requirement of law or a byproduct of chance. No free choice exists.
Moral Law (Romans 2:15)	The moral law is a reflection of the nature of God and His intention with the universe.	Morality is a subjective feature of modern cultures but is not real in any fundamental sense. All of the processes of physics which brought about morality were non-moral processes.
Intrinsic Value of Humanity (Genesis 1:26-27, Ephesians 2:10, Romans 5:8)	Humans are valuable because they are made in the image of God.	Humans are just another creature sharing the earth. There is no more intrinsic value in a human than a fly or a dolphin. The processes that created humans were inherently valueless and place no value on humans or any life. All such value is merely social construction.

Common Arguments Against God's Existence

Argument	Response
Who created God?	The proofs for God's existence assert that everything that <i>begins</i> to exist has a cause. Every philosophy relies on some entity that is self-existent. Every philosophy requires an uncreated being.
If God can do all of these things, and interacts with us in complex ways, that means He is complex and full of parts.	This comes from a misunderstanding of simplicity and complexity. God can be simple with complex effects because God is not a thing within the world. Our understanding of God comes from analogies from things in creation. By those analogies, God seems complex, because we are of a lower form than He is. If we were to try to reduce God to a set of rules, then He would certainly seem complex, because any rule that we would try to make would not be able to properly contain the bare truth of God. Think about when we model an atom with a computer. The model (the computer) is larger and more complex than the atom! What the atom does simply, the model does with much complexity, because they are fundamentally different.
If God exists, why doesn't He do a miracle right now to prove His existence, like moving the stars right now to write "I am God" in the stars?	Given each person's unique special requests, if God did these things, it would make total chaos of the world, with no one being able to determine if their actions were about to be undermined by God granting someone else an outrageous request. If He just caused us to experience these things (without them actually happening) we would chalk it up to hallucinations. Instead, God has done better - the very creation is imbued with evidence of His existence. Carolyn Arends said "I hoped that you would write to me a message in the stars, as if the stars themselves were not enough." God does perform miracles, but the radical-ness of the requests from the atheists would mean that we would live in a world that we could neither understand nor influence. By living under God's orderly universe, we live in a place that we can understand and our actions can have real meaning and effects, and also we can understand the nature of God from what He has made.
If you were born in a different country you would probably believe in a different god.	This may be true, but it is of little importance to whether or not God exists. It is also true that if we lived in a different time or place, we might have a different conception of medicine, matter, etc. This might provide a sense of "philosophical vertigo," but doesn't really pose a rational challenge. God has called Christians to bring the light of Christ to the nations, so that, in the future, everyone will have a chance to choose to accept Christ's salvation.
We are all atheists about most of the gods that humanity has ever believed in. Some of us just go one god further.	(1) Actually, we all believe in some sort of deity, whether it is an idol of the material world or the true God. The question is whether or not our understanding of deity is correct. (2) Not every name for God refers to a different God. Though many cultures are indeed idolatrous, missionaries have discovered that numerous cultures know who God is and that they have been separated from Him, and are excited to know that Jesus reconciles them back together. These names for God shouldn't count as "other gods" but rather "other names for God."

Idols and False Doctrines: Applying Christianity in the World

Skeptical Argument

“I think that a [way to improve religious tolerance] might be for everybody to keep their religious beliefs to themselves in their own private spaces, and not to show them off in public spaces.”

— Alan Murray, President of the European Network on Religion and Belief

Key Points

Ways to Relate Faith in Public

- **Separation** - keep faith private - “my faith is a matter of personal taste.”
 - **Identity** - toleration - “my faith is part of who I am and how I was raised, you just have to accept the package like you would accept my race.”
 - **Engagement** - “because my faith is true, it will help me develop a true picture of the world.”
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The Need for Engagement

- Every coherent aspect of life is undergirded by a philosophy - art, science, law, entertainment.
 - If you don't learn to engage these philosophies in these mediums, they will transform you without you realizing it.
 - If you do learn to engage these philosophies in any medium, then even false philosophy will simply be practice for understanding how to apply God's principles everywhere.
 - 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 - our job is to cast down every philosophy that exalts itself above God.
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Engagement Strategy: Critical Reflection

- Examine the issue, and see if it touches any aspect of Christian theology.
 - If it doesn't, dig deeper until you can find an aspect of Christian theology that it touches.
 - Examine the aspect of Christian theology. Dig deeper until you not only understand *what* it teaches but also *why* God made it this way.
 - Now you are in a better position to understand, apply, explain, and defend the principle to others.
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Engagement Strategy: Identify the False Doctrine

- Theology centers around several broad doctrines - creation, humanity, sin, salvation, etc.
- Most philosophies usually try to answer those same questions.
- Those philosophies can be compared and contrasted in their understanding of doctrines.
- Every TV show then becomes an opportunity to practice applying Christianity to the world.

Engagement Strategy: Replacing Idols

Nancy Pearcey has developed a 5-step strategy for analyzing worldviews based on identifying God-substitutes in non-Christian philosophies.

1. **Identify the Idol** - Most non-Christian worldviews arise from taking a part of creation and making a god out of it. Idols can be made of the material of the world itself (physicalism/naturalism), the mind (idealism), personal experience (post-modernism), or even the traditional idol made by human hands. The first step in analyzing a worldview is to find out what part of creation is being promoted into the place of God.
2. **Identify the Reductionism** - Having something in creation in the place of God throws the created order out of balance, and that will mean having a reduced understanding of humanity and human dignity. After identifying the idol, identify how the idol leads to a lower view of human life or creation.
3. **Test the Idol Against the World** - By putting something else in God's place, this usually also diminishes our understanding and view of creation, leading to certain features of reality that don't make sense under the idol. Therefore, we should identify what these things are and show how the idol leads to a non-sensical or reduced view of the world.
4. **Test the Idol Against Itself** - Many idols are self-refuting. That is, the claim, when taken seriously, undermines itself. For instance, a claim that no truth exists means that such a claim cannot be true (since truth wouldn't exist). Therefore, the claim undermines itself. Showing how an idol is self-refuting is one of the easiest paths to showing its untruth.
5. **Replace the Idol** - Once an idol has been shown to undermine our understanding of the world and of ourselves, show how God makes better sense of the world we find ourselves in.

Dialogue Tips

- Make careful use of scripture. Simply mechanically quoting scripture gives the impression that Christianity is just about quoting a book. Instead, learn the principles behind the scripture, and teach *both* the scripture *and* the fundamentals behind it.
- Use pop culture to talk about Christianity. You can demonstrate how being a Christian helps you think deeper about everyday things.
- Watch TV with your kids and ask them questions about what happened. Why did things happen the way they happened? What was the person who wrote the episode trying to show? Was this idea true or false?
- Remember that even bad philosophies have good parts. Don't automatically dismiss everything that has a non-Christian origin. Instead, subject it to careful examination, and find out *both* where they get it right *and* where they go wrong.
- Most political views are based on doctrines of humanity, sin, and salvation. The most common flaw is to leave out original sin - that sin is born within each and every human.
- Note that skeptical philosophies are almost always self-defeating, either directly undermining their own claims to knowledge, or escaping it only by giving a special exemption for themselves. Christianity, at its core, is not skeptical, but founds knowledge in the positive claim that humans are made in the image of God. Faith can provide support for its own assertions, but skepticism cannot.
- Always practice humility—even though we try to look through the lens of Christianity, our own human limitations can get in the way.
- God is the one who changes hearts—our humility gives God the space to do that in His way.

Creation and Evolution: What's the Big Deal?

Skeptical Argument

How can someone from the 20th century still believe in creation?

Key Points

Darwinism as a Designer Substitute

- There are many theories of evolution, of which Darwinism is the primary version (known technically as the *modern synthesis*).
- Darwinism entails:
 - All beings descended from a single **Universal Common Ancestor**.
 - The process of evolution proceeds by happenstance heritable variations (i.e., random mutations) where the beneficial ones are filtered by **natural selection**.
 - New species evolve by the accumulation of numerous **small changes** by natural selection.
 - All processes of evolution are **material causes** - that is, God did not intervene anywhere along the line.
 - **Diversity precedes disparity** - an increasing number of creatures that have small differences eventually leads to creatures that have large differences.
 - **Deep time** - there was a long period for this process to occur in.
- Natural selection is intended to be a *designer substitute* - to show how the things that were normally attributable to God did not need Him to come about.
- There are multiple types of evolution, and the preference for Darwinism indicates not that people are searching for answers, but that people are searching for ways to avoid God in science.

Continuums of Belief in Origins Ideas

Instead of marking out specific positions, here are several continuums on which beliefs about origins can be understood. Each of these continuums have a variety of positions along the continuum that a person can take:

- **Causation in History:** *Material to Non-Material*
- **Continuity of Life:** *Universal Common Descent to Special Creation of All Species*
- **Mechanism of Change:** *Happenstance to Programmed Modifications*
- **Design in Nature:** *Real to Only Apparent*
- **Earth History:** *Infinite to Recent*
- **Role of Noah's Flood in Earth History:** *Mythical to Local to Earth-wide*

Common Positions in Origins Debates

- Atheistic Evolution
- Theistic Evolution (TE)
- Intelligent Design (ID)
- Old-Earth Creationism (OEC)
- Young-Earth Creationism (YEC)

Is Darwinism True?

- Argument from **engineering** - objects with functional purposes require forethought and planning to work, since each “functional step” is actually a holistic combination of modifications.
- Argument from **taxonomy** - taxonomic groups are divided by rank - Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species. Higher taxonomic groups do not have intermediate steps that connect them. The information from current life and the fossil record shows that the larger groups are not connected, and that disparity (large changes) preceded diversity (small changes), the opposite of Darwinism.
- Argument from **mutations** - different parts of the genome affect different aspects of organismal development. Mutations in those related to the basic body plan are always lethal or highly degenerative.
- Argument from **mutation generation** - most interesting mutations actually turn out to be the result of cellular *programs* to generate those kind of mutations, showing that they aren't the result of accident but rather design.
- Argument from **selection** - natural selection is not powerful enough to get rid of mutants which have only minor detrimental effect - the influence of selection is drowned out by the randomized effects of mating. This leads to degradation, not an increase in complexity.

The Spiritual Problem of Materialist Views of Evolution

- We do what we practice.
- If we practice leaving God out of certain disciplines, we will develop a habit of doing this.
- Practicing a habit of leaving God out of the world leads to doing the same in your own life.
- Instead, in every area of our life, we should focus on answering the question, “what does God have to do with this?”
- We should do so even if it is against professional norms - God has not called us to be of the world, but to be ambassadors of His kingdom in the world.

Dialogue Tips

- Evolution means a lot of different things to a lot of people. Don't discuss evolution, discuss something more specific, like common descent, natural selection, or the origin of life.
- Remember that we can learn even from those whom we disagree with.
- Remember that there are more positions than the common ones. Take the time to understand what the other person thinks.

The Age of the Earth Debate

Skeptical Argument

“Billions of years explains so much, that if you don’t believe it, your worldview becomes crazy, untenable, and self-inconsistent” — Bill Nye

Key Points

Why do Most Geologists Say that the Earth is Old?

- Sequences of layers around the earth
 - Radiometric dating techniques
 - Uniformitarianist habit
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Why do Many Christians Say that the Earth is Young?

- Creation week in Genesis 1
 - Reiteration of creation week in 10 commandments (Exodus 20:11)
 - Jesus’ genealogies trace back to Adam.
 - The Genesis story indicates there was no human death nor animal predation prior to the fall.
 - The concept of the fall and Christ’s salvation for original sin fits in better with a young earth.
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How Do Christians Reconcile these Positions?

- Theistic Evolution - Genesis is a mythological telling of the relationship between God and man, so any conflict of science is irrelevant, since that is not the point.
 - Old-Earth Creationism - Genesis tells true history, but speaks in a way that its listeners could understand. Genesis 1 records the outlines of pre-history, but the “day” language is primarily symbolic.
 - Young-Earth Creationism - Genesis tells true history, and is also correct about the age of the earth. Modern geology has mistakenly interpreted the effects (i.e., rock layers) of Noah’s flood as being the “millions of years” often spoken of.
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Noah’s Flood and the Age of the Earth

- While Genesis 1 is the reason why many people hold to a young earth, it is Genesis 6-9 (Noah’s Flood) that explains why those who hold to the idea find it reasonable.
- On an old earth, the layers of the earth are the results of accumulation of sediment over millions of years.
- On a young earth, the layers of the earth are the result of the catastrophic, year-long flood during Noah’s time.
- Those who hold to an old earth view the flood as a local or mythical event, those who hold to a young earth view the flood as a global event.

Evidences for a Global Flood Causing the Earth's Layers

- Lower rock layers are regional and continental in extent, upper layers are local in extent.
- Lower rock layers show evidence of having been transported long distances.
- Numerous evidences of rapid, catastrophic burial of fossilized animals.
- The evolutionary “tree of life” is actually just a list of creatures in order of elevation (and therefore in the general sequence with which they would have been destroyed by the flood).
- Lack of erosion between strata - layers with “million year” gaps don’t have any erosion. Thin layers can be traced across many miles.
- Many fossils still have recoverable soft tissues in them, indicating a younger age.
- Worldwide markers of the start and the end of the flood (great unconformity and K/T boundary)

How This Affects Our Lives

- While not as big of an issue as creation and evolution, the question of Noah’s flood affects our outlook on life.
- Using Noah’s flood instead of millions of years as the backbone for understanding Earth history helps us ground our understanding of the world on the Bible, rather than the other way.
-
- When you understand that the flood caused most of the layers of the earth, every road cut becomes a demonstration of God’s power, judgment, and salvation, and every fossil a testimony to scripture.
- The young earth view is a better foundation for understanding the theology of the cross.

The Ultimate Question

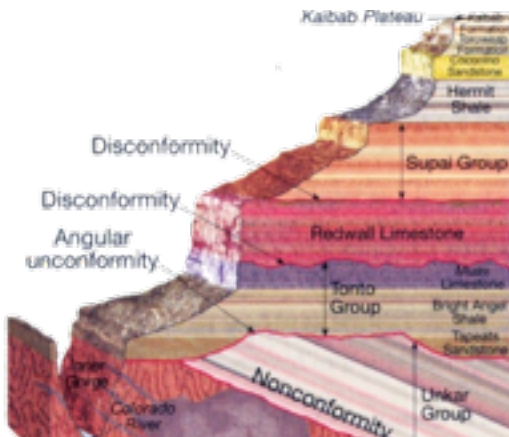
- Ultimately, the question is simply whether or not our beliefs are *true*. Even if it is uncomfortable, Christians are committed to truth.
- Determining the truth is difficult work, as it requires re-evaluation of different evidences under different assumptions - a task that is difficult for many people.
- Unwinding the differences between facts, assumptions, and opinions is difficult work, as many people unwittingly confuse these categories, or rely on previous work which confuses these categories.
- Also difficult is sifting through outright lies that are made on all sides of the issue.
- It is also possible that definitive evidence for any particular view may not be forthcoming.
- The first step should be to be open to discussion of the various issues.
- These issues may not be resolvable in our lifetime. We must, at minimum, commit ourselves to analyzing viewpoints through the lens of Christ.

Dialogue Tips

- The age of the earth is a very difficult topic to have a reasonable dialog about.
- Having a reasoned, informed opinion is probably the best apologetic, as it demonstrates that Christians take the facts and evidences of the world seriously.
- Always deal honestly with the evidence, even when it goes against your own position.
- Be careful to unmask assumptions and opinions masquerading as facts.

What's the Flood Got to Do With It? Old-Earth vs. Young Earth

Below is a description of the main geologic periods in earth history, and how they are considered in young earth and old earth perspective. On the left is a picture of the grand canyon, roughly aligned with where the layers exist on the chart. The great unconformity is a worldwide boundary marking a sudden appearance of sedimentary rock and the first multicellular fossils. YECs view this as the start of the flood. The K/T boundary is a worldwide marker which is considered a “mass extinction” event, with relatively few fossils immediately above the boundary. YECs view this as the end of the flood. Also notice how the fossils start at the deepest part of the sea and move upward in elevation. YECs consider this to be evidence that the fossil record is simply one worldwide ecosystem that was overcome bit-by-bit as the floodwaters rose.



Geo Period	Organisms	OE Time	YE Time
Cenozoic	Modern	present-65 mya	Post-flood
K/T Boundary	Mass Extinction	66 mya	End of Flood
Mesozoic	Dinos/Birds	67-250 mya	Flood
U. Paleozoic	Reptiles	250-400 mya	Flood
L. Paleozoic	Fish	400-600 mya	Flood
G. Unconformity	Start of Fossils	~600 mya	Start of Flood
Precambrian	Microbes	600+ mya	Pre-Flood

Erosion - Now and in the Fossil Record

Note in the picture below how all of the layers are relatively even, but modern erosion has broken up so much of the landscape. If this had happened over and over again across millions of years, the layers would not be so even, but rather have lots of erosion and refilling over and over again.



The “Death Pose”

The “death pose” is a name given to the position that most fully intact dinosaurs and bird fossils display, with their head thrown back in deep contortion. This is evidence that they suffocated or drowned and were buried almost



God and the Moral Order

Skeptical Argument

I defy you, or anyone, to name one more moral deed that I would not do unless I became a Christian. — Christopher Hitchens

Key Points

What is the Source of Morality?

- **Transcendental morality** - this view holds that moral imperatives are objective and external to individual and societal preferences, and are largely independent of time, location, and situation.
 - **Socially constructed morality** - this view holds that instead of being transcendental, each society develops its own rules for what is right and wrong, but there is no external template.
 - **Individually constructed morality** - this view says that the important thing is for the person to believe that they are doing the right thing.
 - **Evolutionary Morality** - this view says that morality is an evolved brain response, similar to our desire for food, and is neither external nor can be chosen. Kind of like an itch.
 - A question to clear up the distinctions: *Is torturing the innocent wrong just because we prefer to not do it, or is it objectively wrong like $2 + 2 = 5$?*
-

Why do Christians Believe in Transcendental Morality

- Transcendental morality is consistent with our moral intuitions. When we are wronged, we believe the wrong to be transcendental, not just a violation of preference.
 - In every non-transcendental morality, morality is reduced to the level of a desire or habit, and can make no “ought” claims against anyone.
 - Christians view transcendental morality as being consistent with a transcendent law-giver.
 - Atheists tend to be divided, with some holding to concepts of constructed morality and others trying to cling to a transcendent morality in absence of a transcendent being.
-

A few Important Distinctions

- **Knowing Morality** - this is the ability to know the right thing to do in a particular circumstance.
- **Performing Morality** - this is the ability to perform actions that are consistent with morality
- **Grounding Morality** - this is the ability to understand the meaning and source of morality
- **Teaching Morality** - this is the ability to effectively convey moral truths to others
- **Sociological Morality** - how people actually *think* and *behave* about morality in a society
- Many people get these confused during discussions about the source of morality, and it is important to make proper distinctions.

Can You Hold to a Transcendent Morality Without God?

- Everybody is capable at least some good, because we are all created in the image of God.
- Everybody is able to know morality, at least in part, because God has written it on our hearts.
- There is **no proper grounding** for a belief in a **transcendent morality** apart from God.
- If you teach moral conclusions without justifying their transcendence, you are merely teaching preferences which later generations may feel free to discard in favor of their own preferences.
- Atheists often confuse this argument by trying to answer the question of whether they can provide *grounding* of morality with the question of whether they can *know/perform* morally.

The Euthyphro Dilemma

- “Are actions moral because God says commands them, or did God command them because they are moral?” (this was originally put forth in Plato’s Euthyphro dialogue)
 - If actions are moral because God commands them, then it means that evils such as torture would be moral simply if God changed His mind.
 - If you respond that actions are moral whether or not God commands them, then it means that there is a moral standard beyond God’s decrees, making God irrelevant to the question of morality.
- The answer - God both the *source* of morality and the *creator* of the moral order.
 - Goodness is God’s nature.
 - God created the universe *according to His nature*, where the natural moral order reflects that nature.
 - God’s commands enable us to live in a manner that is consistent with the morality of that order.
 - In short, God commanded us to do what is right according to the natural world that He designed according to His nature.
 - God Himself is the standard with which His commands are aligned.

Can You Get Transcendent Morality Without God?

- Many atheist philosophers have attempted to get transcendent morality without God.
- Usually, this is done by sneaking in some aspect of transcendent morality and then showing that you can use that assumption to find subservient moral truths based on it.
- The problem is that the hidden transcendent moral claim, even if true, is not *justifiable* according to atheism.

Is a Transcendental Morality Consistent With So Much Evil in the World?

- Detecting evil requires a transcendent moral standard.
- The existence of evil requires the reality of good.
- The harder question is the question of suffering, which will be next week’s topic.

Dialogue Tips

- Remember that all of our moral intuitions require a transcendental morality.
- Remember that the basic question is not whether you can *be* good, but whether you can properly *ground* the reality of a transcendent good.

The Problem of Evil and Suffering

Skeptical Argument

No one can believe in a good God if they've sat at the bedside of a dying child.

— Bertrand Russell

Key Points

What is the Problem of Evil and Suffering?

- **The intellectual problem** - is evil and suffering compatible with the goodness of God?
 - **The emotional problem** - how do we believe in God's goodness while we are suffering?
 - Intellectual answers given ahead-of-time can help emotional issues of suffering, but rarely do they help when given in the moment. In the moment, compassion is the key.
-

Evil and Transcendent Morality

- In order to recognize true evil, transcendent morality must exist as a comparison.
 - As we saw in the previous lesson, a transcendent morality requires a transcendent source, which is found in the person of God.
 - Evil and suffering requires us to use what we know about God from the rest of revelation in order to trust Him with our sufferings.
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Moral Evil and the Fall

- The existence of evil people is a natural result of human freedom.
 - Being made in God's image, humans were able to choose between good and evil.
 - Adam and Eve chose rebellion, and since then we are born naturally rebelling against God.
 - In order for our world to be rational, causes must have knowable effects.
 - If we were unable to choose evil, then it would not mean that we were moral, but rather amoral.
 - If God shielded us from every evil action, it would make the world irrational.
 - Therefore, to preserve our status as moral agents, and to keep the world rational, humans face the consequences of not only their own evil actions, but those of others.
-

Suffering as a Source of Healing

- Suffering, even when the result of evil, can be redemptive.
- Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
- We are called to participate in Christ's sufferings to be more like Him (Phillipians 3:10, Romans 8:17).
- Suffering leads to future joy when Christ's work behind everything is revealed (1 Peter 4-5).

Why is there Natural Evil?

- Moral evil is readily explainable by human free will, but what about natural evil, such as diseases and natural disasters?
- Adam's fall and the curse affected all of creation, not just Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:17-18).
- Nature is affected by the fall as much as humans are (Genesis 6:11; Romans 8:18-23).
- Many natural disasters are the aftershocks of God's judgment in the flood.

Why do Christians do Bad Things?

- Christians or the Church doing bad things is a reason people give for avoiding Christianity.
- This is similar to saying that one should avoid a hospital because of the sick people there.
- Christianity states plainly that all are sinners in need of saving, therefore identifying sinners in need of saving does not count as evidence against Christianity.

Is the God of the Old Testament Moral?

Many people think that the Old Testament laws reflect injustice, rather than justice. Different criticisms require different responses, but here are some general considerations that apply to a number of issues:

- The goal of the law was to help Israel (and us) to understand what righteousness is, not for specific punishments and provisions.
- The law, as given, was provisional for the time and people of Israel. It was meant to lead them from where they were to Christ when He came.
- Many of the Old Testament laws were there because of the hardness of the hearts of the people (Matthew 19:8).
- Many of the customs and terminology of the Old Testament are foreign to us, or have different meanings and significances to us than they did at the time. We should read it from their perspective, not ours.
- There are many things that we take for granted in being in a post-resurrection society that were not possible before it. The very differences between pre-resurrection and post-resurrection society is evidence and testimony to Christ, who viewed Himself as the fulfillment of the law.
- Should we expect that a transcendent God's view of what is good is different from our own finite, local perspective?
- We should keep in mind that many of our moral ideals that we are using to compare to the Old Testament may be more shortsighted than we realize.

Dialogue Tips

- Be sure to separate the logical and emotional problems of evil and suffering. Suffering people don't need logical answers, they need compassionate friends.
- Other appeals to evil and suffering are based on scoring rhetorical points.
- Many people over-generalize to "religion." Religious theologies differ radically, one can't blame Christians for the acts of Islam any more than one can blame atheists.
- It is always good to compare any claim of what atrocities that Christians are blamed for with what happens in parts of the world that have never seen Christianity, or the world before Christianity.

Christian Policy Analysis

Key Points

What is a Policy?

- Policies are any rules or protocols that govern an entity.
 - People use policies for governing families, offices, and political entities.
 - Good policy-making is important at any organization at any level.
 - Every human development starts with laying ground rules.
 - Christianity can lend itself to several important aspects of policy making.
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God's Law - the Source of Good Policy

- Psalm 119:97-104 says that the law makes David wiser than his enemies, and more understanding than his teachers and elders.
 - David lists two things he does with the law:
 - Obey it. Obedience itself brings understanding.
 - Meditate on it. Thinking deeply about God's laws bring wisdom.
 - Meditating on God's law helps us establish principles for creating policies in other domains.
-

Policy Ideals from the Ten Commandments

- The ten commandments (Exodus 20:2-17) are a testimony to excellent policy-making
 - The ten commandments have a **few** important, understandable, and foundational rules.
 - Limiting the number of rules increases their importance, their ability to teach, and their ability to be obeyed.
 - G. K. Chesterton - "When you break the big laws, you do not get liberty, you do not even get anarchy. You get the small laws." In other words, instead of having general rules that apply universally to situations, you get thousands of tiny laws governing every aspect of life.
 - In other words, good policy based on simple, important foundational rules prevents the need for meddling.
 - Underlying the ten commandments are other important principles of good policy-making.
-

Good Policies Channel Our Energies into Creative Activities

- Several commandments focus on marshalling our desires and energies into creative, instead of destructive or unimaginative ends.
- "You shall not steal" - doesn't say you shouldn't "have" - it just limits your ability to have to those who expend creative efforts.
- "You shall not covet" - doesn't say you shouldn't "want" - it just means that our wants should be creative instead of merely copying them from what other people already have.

Good Policies are for Everyone

- None of the commandments have exceptions.
- In the “Sabbath” commandment, the ways that people might weasel out of the commandment by making exceptions for other people are explicitly rejected.
- In the commandments, the social benefit comes from everyone following the policy. You can also notice the social destruction that would be caused by reversing the commandments.

Good Policies Continue to be Good Policies in the Future

- God’s commands are forever (Isaiah 40:8), just as God’s kingdom is forever (Psalm 145:13).
- As God’s ambassadors, the policies we implement should similarly have a long-term view.
- Many modern policy decisions are being made for short-term reasons and justifications.
- Since the late 1800s mathematicians have had tools to analyze aspects of policy to infinity.

Good Policies Continue on Each Generation

- Good policies take into account handing the policies to the next generation.
- Good policies have a mechanism of transmitting them to the next generation (Deut 11:19).
- Good policies are those who do not undermine themselves in future generations, and provide for stable implementation across generations.
- Proverbs 13:22 - A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children

Good Policies Teach Good Attitudes

- Most people forget that one of the primary purposes of laws and policies is to *teach*
- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) shows that the intent of the law was not just to abrogate a problem, but to show the path towards a pure heart.
- The *teaching aspect* of any policy should be considered as a primary consideration.
- When reading the Bible, the Old Testament often focuses on how to avoid doing bad, while the New Testament focuses on the deeper attitude towards doing good.
- The New Testament focus on positive principles allows for even fewer rules (Matthew 22:37-40), but requires a deeper heart commitment.
- If your group is cohesive and deeply committed, New Testament-style heart principles are more effective. For groups with shallower commitments, Old Testament-style principled prohibitions are more effective teachers.

Dialogue Tips

- If you only stay at the surface of what scripture says, and don’t meditate on it to find out why it says those things, you miss out on half of what God has to say.
- Meditating on scripture, and learning the foundational reasons for what God says in scripture, helps you to explain, defend, and teach scripture to a skeptical generation.
- It is almost never advisable to retreat into a “religious liberty” stance on important matters. The reason why Christian principles can be applied in public is because they are *true*, not just because they are part of our religious heritage. Retreating to “religious liberty” is essentially claiming that the point is a matter of preference, not truth, and any preference should be allowed.

Social Apologetics

Key Points

Christians in Society

Christians often don't participate in solving society's problems with the gospel because:

- They don't know **what** the Bible teaches.
- They don't know that the Bible's teachings help **everyone**.
- They think the problems are **too big** for them to solve.
- They think the opposition is **too strong** to move.
- They don't think that engaging the world is an **important** task.

The task of social apologetics is to *confront* and *convince* the world that God's **ways** are true, to stand for justice and against evil in society.

The Geometry of the Kingdom of God

- Being originally born in the world, we often get used to the way that it looks and works, and what its limitations are.
 - God calls us to be born of the spirit and be freed from the limitations of the flesh. (John 3:1-8)
 - As God's faithful people, the issues that we once thought were big from the perspective of the world become thin - we have seen behind the curtain of the world. (Mark 11:23-24)
 - Often times the very things that cause something to look large and impossible are the very things that make them fragile.
-

Goliath as a Paper Tiger

Many of the world's seemingly permanent social problems just needed some people to stand up and say "no in the name of Jesus." The giants actually wind up being paper-thin (1 Samuel 17).

- **Peter and John**: defying the Jewish council for the freedom to preach (Acts 4:1-31)
- **St. Telemachus**: putting an end to the gladiator fights against the Roman world
- **John Bunyan**: not bowing to get state licensing to preach
- **Martin Luther**: establishing the freedom of dissent against the pope
- **William Wilberforce**: putting an end to the British Slave Trade against the British Empire
- **André Trocmé**: defying the German holocaust
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.**: putting an end to segregation in America

Social Reformation and Christianity

- Jesus followed society when society exercised just authority, and countered society where it didn't.
 - Should we pay taxes? (Matthew 22:17-21)
 - Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? (Luke 13:14)
 - What about the money changers in the temple? (John 2:14-17)
- Jesus engaged in both personal transformation and social reformation.
- God makes just society a priority, and not just for Israel. (Isaiah 10:1-4)
- Loving your neighbor means a whole host of things, not only salvation. (Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27-37; Matthew 25:31-46)
- God calls us to benefit the whole world. (Genesis 12:2-3; Matthew 5:13-16)
- C.S. Lewis - "dead things go with the stream, but only living things can go against it"
- Evidential/Rational Apologetics shows the *plausibility* of the gospel, but the work of the Church in society makes it *credible* to others.

We are to Stand Even When it Doesn't End Well

- Stephen opposed the crowds trying to stone him. (Acts 6-7)
- William Tyndale opposed the divorce of King Henry VIII, but was burned at the stake.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer went *back to Germany* to oppose Hitler and his own country, and was executed in his plot to defeat Hitler.

How to Stand with God's Power

In order to stand with God's power, we must:

- Know what God says.
- Believe what God says.
- Decide that we will side with God rather than the world.
- Pray for wisdom and knowledge of where and how to stand.

Most of the people who took a stand did so after many years of study and prayer. It takes study and prayer to know what God wants us to do and to have confidence in it when the time comes.

The Political Temptation

- Don't think in solely political terms.
- Does it matter if abortion is defeated by law or because people stop going there or because people stop doing it?
- Know that we stand with God's power, not with the world's power. (Matthew 4:8-10)
- All earthly solutions are only approximations of God's kingdom.
- Confusing God's kingdom with kingdoms on earth prevents us from seeing where God would reform us today.

Reaching Out with Apologetics

Key Points

Integrity and Humility

- God is truth, and we must always be truthful in everything we say.
 - People often listen if they think they are getting honest answers not just the party line.
 - Being an imitator of Christ lends credence to the other things you have to say.
 - Proceeding with humility, gentleness, and respect helps people listen to you.
 - Don't "spike the football" - intellectual one-upmanship turns a dialogue into an argument.
 - Knowing the factual truth from apologetics is an aid in bringing people to Christ, but not necessarily the method.
-

Apologetics is not Salesmanship

- Salesmanship approaches to the gospel are tempting because we are concerned about the eternal salvation of the world and our friends, and want them to be with us forever.
 - Jesus did not call us to make sales, but disciples.
 - Sales techniques focus on style, not substance; on assent, rather than transformation.
 - Winning intellectual assent to a proposition is not the same as repentance and trust in Christ.
 - It is repentance and trust that is required for salvation, not assent.
 - We need approaches that are more fundamentally transformative than the sales model.
-

Approach 1: Digging Deep

- Christians should be **deeper readers** - not just of the Bible, but of books, of the culture, and of the situation others find themselves in.
 - Christians often stop at the shallow surface, not digging down to what the deeper context of the Bible is, nor the deeper context of people's lives.
 - Before you quote a verse, ask yourself if you know what issues the chapter is discussing.
 - Before you answer someone's problem, ask yourself if you know why this came to be a problem for them.
 - Deep digging cannot be done in a day or a week - it is a long-term commitment to be humble before God and others, and offer understanding long before solutions.
 - Deep digging puts trust that God will use us to reveal Himself on His own timetable.
 - Not all interactions can be deep, but the best ones usually are.
-

Approach 2: Signs from Beyond

- God has put in the world many things which point to Him.
- Putting people in closer touch with these things can lead a person closer to faith.
- Getting people to think about the deeper significance of their lives can lead them to faith.
- Direct people to the things that point beyond themselves (nature, children, society, etc.).

Approach 3: Winning Through Losing

- There is often an unhealthy desire to “win the argument.”
- Jesus won by losing. He won because His integrity beat the power of death.
- If an argument becomes a “tit for tat,” simply stopping the argument causes the person to focus on what they last said, rather than trying to come up with a response to you.
- Public confession and repentance of sin demonstrate Christ’s salvation power.
- Winning an argument is about you. Discipleship is about them following Christ.

Approach 4: Helping People See Themselves

- Most people have trouble seeing themselves from God’s perspective.
- The Old Testament prophets often employed dramatic methods to help drag kings out from their self-oriented perspectives (2 Samuel 12, 1 Kings 20, 1 Kings 22).
- The prophets were creative in how they convinced people to take a hard look at themselves.
- Letting the other person have the last word in an argument helps the person examine his own position more deeply and find out if that is really what they think.
- Giving other people the opportunity to give *you* advice helps them reflect on their own life.

Applying Apologetics Knowledge with Gentleness

- It is easy to come on too strong with apologetic arguments, so sometimes it is best to use apologetics in a roundabout way.
- A good teacher will ask a question that will inspire others to make the same discoveries you made. This helps you lead them to truth without force-feeding.
- Apologetics can help you formulate a question that will show their own arguments to be self-defeating. Don’t make the question rhetorical: help them to search for the answer and discover it for themselves.
- The apologetic tools we have covered will help you understand some of the underlying issues that are in play, so you better know how to approach people.

Some Advice When Talking to a Lost Generation

- Know not only when you are using a different vocabulary, but also different dictionaries.
- Find out not only what their hangups are, but where those come from. Usually the real problems are below the surface.
- Know how immorality affects argument. Some are against God because God exposes sin. Ask, “if you were to be convinced that Christianity was true, would you become a Christian?”
- The actual arguments from most of the lost are actually very shallow, meaning that they really need compassion more than solid argument.
- Having compassion on a hurting person is more beneficial than winning an argument.
- Remember that people are coming from real lives of hurt and pain. Questions that sound intellectual may be deeply personal.
- Give real answers and real “I don’t know” when you don’t have an answer.
- Know when to stop talking: the point where you stop talking is usually what is remembered the most, even if the person tries to counter it.
- Being Jesus to others is often the most powerful thing we can do to change a life when the opportunity arises.