

Intro to Apologetics

- I. A worldview is a network of related presuppositions through which a person interprets everything they know and are aware of
 - A. Most people do not consistently hold to their own professed worldview
 - B. Rom 1:18-25: the connection between Ethics and beliefs
 1. Also: note: each of Paul's letters end with the ethical consequences of the doctrinal statements
- II. There is *absolute Truth*, man has access to this knowledge—though man does not know it exhaustively, he does have knowledge of it (Rom 1:18-25)
 - A. Prov 1:7: Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge
 - B. If all truth is in Jesus (John 14:6; Col 2:3), then to deny this means that one is ultimately unable to establish their truth claims
- III. In order for a worldview to be correct, it must provide the basis/foundation for:
 - A. Absolutes:
 1. In knowledge/Truth/Logic
 - a. Such absolutes are undeniable: Law of non-contradiction
 2. Absolutes in Ethics/Morality
 3. Uniformity of nature
 4. Personal Freedom (List could also include: Human Personality; Unification of Nature; Mind of Man; Dignity of Man; One and the Many or Unity and Diversity. . .)
- IV. Christianity must be true because only it provides the absolute source (God): only it provides the necessary preconditions for intelligibility for man's reasoning, ethics, and dignity
 - A. God is Absolute, Holy, Eternal and Personal (Exod 3:14; Lev 11:45; Mal 3:6).
 - B. God's knowledge is original, comprehensive, and relative: There is no mystery surrounding His understanding and no source
 - C. God provides the basis for both the diversity and unity of all things and thereby provides the foundation for the existence of particulars and their intelligibility (unity)
 - D. Therefore, he provides the basis for:
 1. Knowledge, Truth, Logic (Col 2:3)
 2. Morality (Lev 11:45)
 3. Freedom (Num 23:19)
 4. Existence (Heb 2:10)
- V. Other arguments for the Truth of Christianity that could be made include:
 - A. Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus
 - B. Evidence for the Inspiration of the Bible

- C. Arguments from the fulfillment of Prophecies
- VI. Objections to the Christian Worldview
 - A. Some reject the existence of God (Atheism, agnosticism, skepticism)
 - B. Some accept the wrong god (Deism, Pantheism, Polytheism,
 - C. Some reject the Bible as the revelation of God
 - 1. Textual accuracy
 - 2. Historical veracity
 - 3. Possibility of miracles
 - D. Some accept the wrong revelation (Book of Mormon, Qur'an, or some personal opinions)
- VII. Isn't arguing wrong?
 - A. All one must do is argue against the person who claims this to find that they cannot defend themselves without contradicting themselves
 - B. Arguing is the foundation upon which the church was built: Cf Acts 9:22; 17:2, 17; 18:4; 19:8-9
 - C. One should not be argumentative: arguing for the sake of arguing
- VIII. Tools of apologetic reasoning: how the unbelievers reason
 - A. Conjecture; not research
 - 1. Thus, it seems likely that the biblical text has been corrupted over the years
 - 2. To say that monks 'tampered' with it must be followed with actual evidence that monks tampered with it
 - 3. Often their contentions have no awareness of the actual evidence
 - B. Philosophical bias: miracles are not possible; therefore, the Bible can not be true
 - 1. Argument is not valid unless the Bible were not true

Accuracy of the Copies of the New Testament Documents

- I. Can we have an accurate copy of the N.T without having the original mss? (Skeptics, incl. Mormons, make this contention)
 - A. It is not necessary to have the original manuscripts
 1. As long as there are *enough* manuscript copies that are *early* the content of the originals can be ascertained
 2. The level of certainty being dependent upon the number, age and accuracy of the manuscripts
 3. Common causes of errors in the mss:
 - a. *Parablesis*: 2 lines begin/end with same word; omit line (facilitated by *homoeletion*—2 lines with same ending; or *homoiarcton*—2 lines with same beginning; results in an omission *haplography*; results in words appearing a second time *dittography*)
 - b. E.g. Luke 12:8-9 ‘And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; 9 but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God’ (both verses end in ‘the angels of God’ and some mss omit verse 9)
 - B. The N.T meets these requirements better than any work from ancient history
- II. The number of manuscript copies for the N.T compared to secular works
 - A. The number of manuscript copies of the N.T in Greek is well over 5,700
 1. 263 Uncials; 2812 Miniscules; 2200+ Lectionaries
 - B. Including other languages the number of manuscript copies exceeds 30,000
 1. 8,000+ Latin
 2. Other languages: Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Gothic, Slavonic
 - C. This does not include the citations of the NT in the writings of the early church fathers
 - D. Manuscript issues simply do not alter Christian doctrines
 1. Matt 24:36: some mss are missing ‘nor the Son?; but this is undisputed in Mark 13:32
 2. Mark 1:41 is disputed on whether or not Jesus was angry: but he is indisputably angry in Mark 3:5
 3. 1 John 5:7-8: The early church did not know of this verse and yet Chalcedon affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity
 - E. The avg. number of manuscript copies for other works from antiquity is less than 20
 1. Homer is second to the N.T with 643
 2. Only 2 other writers have more than 20: (Demosthenes 200; Sophocles 100)
- III. The age of the manuscript copies for the N.T compared to secular works
 - A. The oldest fragment of the N.T is within 25 years of the original

1. John Rylands Manuscript (P52) A.D. 125 (114-138); contains 5 verses of the Gospel of John (18:31-33, 37-38)
- B. The oldest copy of a complete book of the N.T is within 125 years of the original
1. Bodmer Papyri (P66, P75: A.D. 200; contains most of the Gospels of John and Luke) (P72: all of 1&2 Peter and Jude)
- C. The oldest copy of the entire N.T is within 250 years of the original
1. Codex Vaticanus (vellum) (B) A.D. 325-350; contains all of the N.T and the Greek O.T.
 2. Codex Sinaiticus (vellum) (Aleph) A.D. 340; contains all of the N.T and half of the O.T.
- D. The average age of manuscripts for other works from antiquity is over 1,000 years
- IV. The accuracy of the N.T copies is 99.5% GNT4 and NA27 agree 100%
- A. More than 150,000 variants
1. 99% of them are insignificant
 2. Most involve a missing letter; the inversion of words ('Christ Jesus' instead of 'Jesus Christ')
 3. Total of about 50 variants are significant: but never is a verse in question that relates to a major doctrine of Christianity
 4. The New Testament has over 20,000 lines of which only 40 are in question (400 years)
 5. None of the passages in question have anything to do with the essential doctrines of Christianity
 6. 99% of the NT is unquestioned

Date of the Writing of the New Testament

- I. Gospels:
 - A. Mark A.D. 60-65
 - B. Matthew A.D. 65
 - C. Luke A.D. 60-65
 - 1. Luke was written prior to Acts (Acts1:1)
 - 2. Luke 1:1-4
 - 3. Acts should be dated no later than 65 (preferably 62)
 - a. Acts ends abruptly with Paul in jail in Rome (60-62)
 - b. If Acts were written later than 62 it would have included important events: 62 Death of James; 64 Fire in Rome and the subsequent; persecution of Christians; 65 Deaths of Peter and Paul; 66-70 War between Rome and the Jews; 70 Destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24)
 - c. Perhaps, these events were not included because they hadn't happened yet
 - D. John A.D. 95
 - 1. Age 95 does not mean he is necessarily senile
 - 2. Events he describes are not ones that a person is likely to forget
 - 3. He is been telling the story for 65 years
 - 4. As much as 90% of the sermons of Jesus were taught in an easily memorizable form
- II. Acts A.D. 62
- III. Letters:
 - A. Paul's (13) A.D. 65
 - B. Hebrews ?
 - C. James A.D. 62
 - D. Peter's (2) A.D. 65
 - E. John's (3) A.D. 90-95
 - F. Jude A.D. 60
- IV. Revelation A.D. 95
- V. Therefore approx 20/27 books of the N.T. were written within 35 years of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus

Gospels and the Rules of Evidence

- I. NT Writers claim to be historical
 - A. Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:21-22; 1 John 1:1-3; 2 Pet 1:16; Acts 10:36-42; 1 Cor 15:3-8
- II. Every document, apparently ancient, when found in the place where and under of persons with whom it should reasonably be expected to be found, and bearing no evidential marks of forgery, the law presumes to be genuine and the opposing party has the burden of proof (See: Greenleaf, 16)
 - A. Presumption of the Law: Charity; i.e., all persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty
- III. All persons are presumed to be familiar with their own affairs and, therefore, reliable
 - A. Matthew
 - 1. Jew
 - a. Familiar with opinions, ceremonies and customs of Jews
 - b. Familiar with Sacred writings of Jews
 - 2. Eyewitness
 - 3. Tax Collector
 - a. Familiar with Greek language, public affairs
 - b. Familiar with fraud, cunning and much deception
 - B. Mark
 - 1. Lived in Jerusalem
 - 2. Converted by Peter
 - 3. Traveled with Paul and Barnabas
 - C. Luke
 - 1. Native of Antioch; Gentile
 - 2. Companion of Paul
 - 3. Physician
 - a. Gospel displays a keen interest in minute details
 - b. 1:1-4 displays every legal attribute of an inquisition; result of careful inquiry
 - D. John
 - 1. Jew
 - 2. Eyewitness
 - 3. Intimate relations with Mary
- IV. Gospel accounts display all the features of true history
 - A. Narratives are like other true witnesses

- B. Detailed events that constantly went against their interests
 - 1. See also; Matt 8:26; 14:26, 29; 15:15, 16; 16:8, 12, 21; 17:26; 20:24; Mark 4:11-13, 33-34, 40; 6:50, 52; 7:17, 18; 8:17, 18, 21, 33; 9:18; 10:9, 10, 31, 32, 35-37, 41; 14:37-41, 66-72; Luke 9:45, 46, 55; 18:32-34; 22:22-24; 22:34; 24:1-12; 24:38, 41
 - 2. Peter lied: denying to even know Jesus
 - a. If the Resurrection were a hoax, then why would they even have given an impression that the leader of this hoax had lied in the past
 - 3. Jesus said to Peter, “get behind me Satan” (Matt 16:23)
 - 4. Yet, to Judas he said, “friend”? (Matt 26:50)
 - C. Enough discrepancies to show that they did not conspire
 - 1. Variations can be accounted for by:
 - a. Jesus used different versions in the course of His teaching
 - b. Translation from Aramaic to Greek
 - c. Narrative variations are normal in oral performance
 - d. Deliberate variation in which the author intended to stress one feature
 - 2. Jesus’ words were highly memorable:
 - a. Aphorism simple to remember
 - b. Parables have a simple story line
 - 3. Rabbi’s known to use notebooks as memory aids (2 Tim 4:13?)
 - D. Substantial agreement
- V. Honesty: Men ordinarily speak the truth when there is no significant motive
- A. Testimony of the Gospels is against their interests
 - 1. Promoted Jesus; who was crucified as a criminal
 - a. Deut 21:23: Cursed
 - 2. They became poor
 - 3. Lived to high moral code
 - 4. They were arrested; beaten; killed
 - B. Much of the Gospel material is contrary to their interests
 - 1. Make themselves look foolish; selfish; ignorant; liars; cowards; stupid. . . .
 - C. Do not offer any polemics for their acts or in defense of their character
 - D. False witnesses do not detail events
 - 1. Luke 3:1-2; 1 Cor 15:3-8

Were the Gospel Writers concerned with Accurate History?

I. Named persons in the Gospels

- A. Most of the named characters were eyewitnesses who originated the traditions that their names are associated with
- B. Public persons who were known apart from the story of Jesus (Herod, Pilate) are usually named
- C. Beneficiaries of healings are usually unnamed
- D. Persons who encounter Jesus only once are usually unnamed
- E. Disciples of Jesus are usually named
- F. Exceptions or oddities:
 - 1. Why is Cleopas named and the other not?
 - 2. Jairus is named (Mark and Luke)
 - 3. Bartimaeus (Mark)
 - 4. Lazarus (John)
 - 5. Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:40)
- G. 4 Times Matt and/or Luke retains a name given in Mark
- H. Matt and Luke's tendency to omit names is explained by the fact that by the time they wrote such persons had become too obscure (Note: personal names are usually least well remembered features of remembered events)

II. Anonymous persons in Mark

- A. Woman who anointed Jesus (14:3-9)
 - 1. No indication in Mark who she was
 - 2. But Mark notes that this woman will be remembered for this act forever (9)
 - 3. This woman was likely in grave danger for she had anointed Jesus as the Messiah
 - 4. Though John identifies her as Mary the sister of Lazarus (John 12:1-8)
 - 5. But Lazarus was sought out by the religious leaders; who wanted to kill him (John 12:10)
 - 6. Thus, Mary is not identified at all lest she be revealed as the sister of Lazarus
- B. Danger and secrecy in account of the arrangement for a place to hold the Last Supper (14:12-16)
 - 1. Man with a jar is obviously a prearranged sign
 - 2. Jesus does not want the place of the meal known: but, why not?
 - 3. Mark 14:1: Mark has already informed the reader of the plot to kill Jesus
 - 4. And Jesus knows of Judas' plot; thus, it was an effort to keep the location a secret from Judas

5. If the place were publicized among the 12 then Judas may have known because the disciples did not know of Judas' plans
 6. Anonymity of the home further protected the owner who was likely a member of the early church who lived in Jerusalem
- C. The story of the obtaining of a colt for the Triumphal entry (11:1-17):
1. We might assume that Jesus made arrangements with the owner, but, why would 'bystanders' allow strangers to take a colt; how did they know the 'password'? (note Luke says 'its owners': 19:33)
 2. Arrangement affirms that Jesus has entered a danger zone and must be very cautious about His actions
 3. Anonymity of the person further protected the owner who was likely a member of the early church who lived in Jerusalem
- D. Mark 14:43-52 High Priest's servant's ear cut off by 'one who stood by'
1. Why anonymous? Person has committed a serious offense and could have seriously harmed the man
 2. Anonymity is for the man's protection
 3. This assumes that the tradition was formed in Jerusalem and early: when such protection was still needed
 4. Note Mark also does not refer to the HP by name (14:53; Caiaphas); though he mentions Pilate (15:1)
 5. This follows from the fact that the family of Caiaphas was primarily responsible for the persecution of Jesus' followers; Annas's son Ananus II was responsible for the execution of James in A.D. 62
 6. Whereas, there was no reason for Pilate, who was removed from office in A.D. 37 with a bad reputation, not to be blamed
 7. Persons are named in John (18:10, 26): note in John the servant is present at the denials of Peter—Peter is fearful of being indicted for association with Jesus and with this crime
 8. by the time John writes Peter is no longer in need of anonymity

Ancient non-Christian Evidences for the New Testament

- I. Non-Christian sources (i.e., historical documents and archaeological discoveries) confirm numerous events recorded in the N.T. Furthermore, no source has ever contradicted the N.T.
 - A. Tacitus (55-120):
 - Christians were named after *Christus*
 - Jesus was put to death during the reign of Pilate
 - B. Seutonius (117)
 - Jews expelled at Rome after an instigation of *Chrestus*
 - Christians were punished for the fire in Rome
 - C. Josephus (37-97)
 - Many customs, geography, religious sects and beliefs that parallel the NT
 - James, the bro of Jesus, who was called the Christ
 - Jesus performed feats; Condemned by Pilate; Died by crucifixion; Disciples reported that Jesus had risen
 - D. Pliny the Younger (112)
 - Christians worshipped Jesus as though he were a god; Christians were highly ethical people; Met weekly before sunrise; sang hymns; and reassembled to eat
 - E. Talmud; *Sanhedrin* 43a
 - *Yeshu* was hanged on the eve of Passover; Guilty of 'sorcery'
 - F. Lucian (2nd Century Greek satirist)
 - Jesus was worshipped by Christians; Jesus taught in Palestine; Jesus was crucified
 - Relates many of the characteristics of early christians: disdain for wealth, etc
- II. Archaeological discoveries have verified claims of the N.T. that were previously thought to have been mistaken
 - A. 1968 discovery of Yohanan
 - Died by crucifixion; Buried in a private tomb; Legs broken
 - B. Archaeology and John
 1. Pools of Bethesda (John 5:19)
 2. Pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7)
 3. Well at Sychar (John 4:5)
 4. Pavement where Pilate tried Jesus (John 19:13)
 5. Solomon's porch at the Temple precincts (John 10:22, 23)
 - C. Caesarea inscription

Resurrection of Jesus: Testimony of the Disciples

- I. Eyewitnesses
- II. The testimony of the Resurrection Jesus—not in the best interests of the disciples
 - A. However, other than “saving face” they gained only hardships
 - B. They were poor (Acts 11:29)
 - C. They lived to a high standard of morality
 - D. They were severely persecuted
 - E. Many of them died for their belief
- III. Disciples proclaimed the message of a “Resurrection” in Jerusalem shortly after the events allegedly occurred
 - A. Home of the Jews
 - B. Place of the tomb
 - C. Concept of a Resurrection in the Christian sense was unknown at the time (Mark 9:9-10, 31-32; John 2:30-22; Luke 24:36-45)
- IV. Christians proclaimed the message of Christ: a crucified criminal
 - A. To the Jews Jesus was a blasphemer (Mark 14:64) and cursed (Deut 21:23)
 - B. To the Romans Jesus was crucified criminal
- V. Where’s the body?

Resurrection of Jesus: Testimony of Paul

- I. Paul before his conversion
 - A. Strong Jewish background; well educated
 - B. Religious conviction against Christians
 - C. Personally persecuted Christians
- II. Paul the Christian
 - A. Paul goes from the hunter to the hunted
 - B. Incurs (2 Cor 11:23-33)
 - 1. Hostilities throughout his life: from Jews within and without the Church
 - 2. Outside the Church, the Jews violently oppose his message
 - 3. Endangered virtually everywhere he goes:
 - 4. Relatively poor
 - 5. Paul spends at least 6 out of the next 32 years in prison
 - C. A.D. 65 killed for the charge of burning down Rome under Nero

Non-Canonical (biblical) Writings

From the *Da Vinci Code*:

“Teabing pointed to a passage. ‘The Gospel of Philip is always a good place to start.’ Sophie read the passage:

And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him ‘Why do you love her more than all of us?’

The words surprised Sophie, and yet they hardly seemed conclusive. ‘It says nothing of marriage.’

‘*Au Contraire.*’ Teabing smiled, pointing to the first line. ‘As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word *companion*, in those days, literally meant *spouse.*’”
(*DVC*, 246)

I. Introduction

- A. The discussion over the issue of the Gospels is usually made out to look as though the early had a dozen gospels to choose from and that they only chose the four they did because these gospels reflected their beliefs
- B. Other the other hand, the argument goes, there are other gospels that just as accurately depict the life of Jesus; but the picture we get from them is radically different from the canonical gospels

II. Key questions that are asked of these documents

- A. Date of composition
- B. Geographical connection: where was it written?
 - 1. If it was written a great distance away it becomes questionable as to the historical veracity
- C. Historical and Culture accuracy
 - 1. Does the document display familiarity with the customs and culture of the era under discussion
 - 2. e.g., the episode of the woman caught in adultery has the language and culture of the 1st century: therefore, it may be an ancient tradition
 - 3. Gospel of Peter fails here!
- D. Author’s intent: What is the author’s motivation?
 - 1. This often reflects the era in which it was penned

III. Gospel of Thomas

- A. 144 Sayings of Jesus
 - 1. Teach a gnostic, mystical form of Christianity; One is saved by being freed from materialism, greed, etc.; Jesus’ teachings focus on the inner, mystical, private, and personal
- B. Work appears to have been written in Syriac no earlier than late in the 2nd century
 - 1. Nicholas Perrin has observed that the Syriac version of Thomas has catch words in each of the sayings that connect them; thus explaining the order of the sayings

2. Thomas reflects the order of material in Tatian's *Diatessaron* was composed in A.D. 175
3. 'Thomas' is named as 'Judas Thomas': the name that he is referred to by the Syrian church

IV. Gospel of Peter

- A. Found in 1880's in Akhimm, Egypt, in the coffin of a monk who died during the 9th c: Mss fragment has no beginning or end; thus, no title: Also found were the Apocalypse of Peter, an account of the martyrdom of St Julian, fragments of a Greek version of Enoch
 1. It is assumed that it is the long lost Gospel of Peter since it was found with the Apocalypse of Peter: Eusebius and Bishop Serapion had warned of the existence of a false Gospel attributed to Peter (4th century)
- B. Whether or not it is the lost *Gospel of Peter* it dates from the 3-5th centuries
 1. Author was ignorant of the 1st century Palestinian customs
 - a. Has Jewish priests spending the night in the graveyard
 - b. Ignorant of Jewish burial customs and laws of purity
 2. Fragment is anti-Semitic

V. Gospel of Mary

- A. The book purports to tell of the revelations that Jesus gave to Mary Magdalene
 1. Appears that the book is contending against the rules as found in the PE: e.g. the right of women to teach
 2. No reference to Mary as having a marriage relationship with Jesus; Just the recipient of special revelation
- B. Conservatively dated no earlier than A.D. 150

VI. Secret Gospel of Mark

- A. Fraudulent work of Morton Smith
 1. Recently published photographs of the work have allowed scholars to confirm that Smith penned the work himself
 - a. Greek letters are written in the style of Smith's writings elsewhere: including his distinctive manner of writing theta and lambda
 - b. Writing contains what is called the 'forger's tremor': examples include the lifting of the pen in the middle of a letter; shaky lines

VII. Gospel of Judas

- A. Papyrus dating from A.D. 220-340
- B. Text claims that Judas Iscariot was Jesus' greatest disciple who alone was able to understand Jesus' most profound teachings: 'You will exceed them all'; 'For you will sacrifice the man who clothes me'
 1. They conspired to arrange Judas' betrayal of Jesus

VIII. Gospel of Philip

- A. *Gospel of Philip* 63:32-64:10: “And the companion of the [. . .] Mary Magdalene. [. . . loved] her more than [all] the disciples [and used to] kiss her [often] on her [. . .].”
 1. Parallel reference in 58:34-59:4: which is a kiss of fellowship
 2. Thus, even if this were a kiss on the mouth, it does not necessarily have sexual connotations
 3. Book was written in Coptic: not Aramaic or Hebrew: there is no word in Aramaic which means both ‘companion’ and ‘spouse’
 4. *Koinonos*: ‘companion’: can mean ‘wife’ in a spiritual context (wife in Greek is *gyne*)

IX. Jesus Papers

- A. Michael Baigent’s best selling book: he claims that: alleged documents that quote Jesus as calling himself ‘The Messiah of Israel’ and clarifying that he never claimed to be God, but only God’s spirit embodied
- B. Baigent said that he met someone who claimed that in 1961 he was excavating under a house in Jerusalem and found 2 ancient Aramaic documents; the documents were later shown to Yigael Yadin and Nahman Avigad who confirmed that the documents were from the time of Jesus; Baigent was later permitted to see them but not to photograph them at an antiquities dealer whose identity is unknown; Baigent doesn’t know Aramaic so he didn’t actually read them
 1. So we have an author with dubious credibility
 2. An unidentified antiquities dealer
 3. Archaeologists who confirmed them are both deceased
 4. No photographic evidence

Christianity and Paganism

‘Falsehood can make a trip around the world before Truth can even get its boot on’

I. Mystery religions

- A. Variety of religious movements in the eastern Mediterranean in the early Roman empire
- B. ‘Mystery’: because its initiates were sworn to secrecy; they had sacred rites, often a common meal, and a special sanctuary
- C. Oldest was the cult of Demeter; established between 800-500 BC in Greece
- D. Most popular was Mithras—derived from Persian influence
 - 1. As a mystery religion it cannot be dated prior to A.D. 90 (no evidence of Mithraism in the ruins of Pompeii A.D. 79); vast majority of texts date from 140 onward
- E. Cybele and Attis were primarily non-Romans until mid-late first century
- F. Most were tied to the vegetation cycle

II. Response

- A. Christianity as an historical religion
 - 1. Christianity clearly distinguishes itself from the ancient myths in that the myths were never intended to be read as actual history (1 John 1:1-4)
 - 2. Even if the parallels were legitimate, it would not mitigate the strong evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and the historical reliability of the NT
- B. In virtually every instance Christianity dates to an earlier period than every one of these alleged comparisons
 - 1. If so, then the borrowing was from them of Christianity
- C. Parallels are not very parallel
 - 1. Any alleged parallel with the resurrection of Christ vanishes in that the ancient myths are commonly cyclical events that are patterned after the vegetation cycle: they are not the deaths of historical figures; and their resurrections are not salvific
 - a. Marduk: no clear reference to his dying and therefore a resurrection
 - b. Same with Dionysius
 - c. Tammuz: no references to appearances of him resurrected, nor an empty tomb: also, the myth was tied to the changing of the seasons
 - d. Tammuz was later identified with Adonis, who was loved by Aphrodite; there are 4 texts that speak of his resurrecting but they all date from the 2-4th centuries A.D.
 - e. Resurrection of Attis dates no earlier than the A.D. 150
 - f. Osiris was allegedly killed by his brother Seth and sinks his coffin in the Nile, Isis, his sister, finds him and revives him; later he is chopped into 14 pieces, and scattered them around the world; Isis feels compassion for

him and looks for his body parts to give them a proper burial; she finds 13 pieces, puts them together and buries him: this is not a resurrection

- i. The accounts are found in Plutarch in 2nd C A.D.; but they do parallel earlier Egyptian accounts that likely pre-date Christianity
 - ii. The Egyptian conception of the afterlife, however, does not parallel the Christian conception: the Egyptians believed one had to be mummified, needed nourishment, magical spells had to be used, and special entities of the person's soul/personality hovered over his body (the *Ba* and the *Ka*)
 - iii. Osiris was not resurrected but revived to be the king of the underworld
2. Parallels to the Virgin Birth: Alleged parallels—Zeus falls in love with a princess Semele and impregnates her: Hera, Zeus' queen arranged to have Semele burned, but Zeus rescues the fetus and has it sown into his own thigh until Dionysius is born—are cases in which the gods lust after women and give birth to half human and half divine offspring; The offspring's existence begins at conception; Never put into an historical context
- a. Thus, there is no indication that Dionysius was born of a virgin
 - b. They are often cases of the gods lusting after human woman and not a child being born without a father
 - c. Krishna was born as the 8th child of his mother—hardly a virgin

III. Jesus and the Mysteries: *Mithras*

- B. Claim: Mithras was born of a virgin, in a cave, on Dec 25th, was a great traveling teacher, had 12 disciples, sacrificed himself for peace, buried in a tomb, raised 3 days later, was called 'Logos, Messiah,' and they had a common meal that paralleled communion
- C. Mithras was not born of a virgin but from a rock
- D. That he was born on Dec 25th does not conflict with early Christianity because early Christianity didn't know the date of Jesus' birth; the first date celebrated by Christians was Jan 6th
- E. Mithras was not a great teacher or traveler with 12 disciples
- F. Mithras didn't sacrifice himself for world peace; instead, he killed a bull
- G. Nothing is known about his death: thus, to say that he was buried and resurrected:
- H. Titles of Mithras are all attributed to him long after the advent of Christianity
- I. Common meals are found in most ancient religions
- J. The practice of the *Taurobolium* was not practiced until the 2nd c; it hardly parallels the Jewish sacrificial system and the NT conception of being 'baptized' into the death of Jesus (Rom 6)
 1. The earliest attested practice of this was in the cult of Attis: dates to the time of Antoninus Pius A.D. 160
 2. Inscription concerning 'reborn for eternity' dates from A.D. 375

IV. Zoroastrianism

- A. Zoroaster lived sometime between the 11th and 6th c BC
- B. Notion that he was conceived by his mother drinking a sacred haoma drink appears in the 9th c AD

Key References for Apologetics in the Bible

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen

1 Peter 3:15-16 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Romans 1:18-25 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For 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. 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. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Colossians 2:3 In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ

Matt 12:30; Luke 11:23: 'He who is not with Me is against Me'

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

2 Timothy 2:23-25 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth

Matthew 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. ²⁵ "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. ²⁶ "And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. ²⁷ "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth

2 Timothy 4:3-4 ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Christian Apologetics Suggested Resources

Texts in **bold** type are the standard works in a given subject area: recommended for serious students

Texts in **red** are must reads for all graduate students

Texts in **orange** are recommended for the laity

Texts in **blue** are recommended for serious students

Worldviews and Christian Apologetics

Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready*: One of the foremost minds of the 20th c that you never heard of (presuppositionalist)

Beckwith, Craig, & Moreland, eds., *To Everyone an Answer: An excellent work covering a range of topics regarding the defense of the faith*

Francis S. Collins, *Readings on the Reasons for Faith*. San Francisco: Harperone, 2010.

Chuck Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?:* Classic work on Worldviews

Paul Copan, *How do you Know You're not Wrong?:* a very readable work addressing various objections to defending the Christian Worldview

Bryan A. Follis, *Truth with Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer*: A good intro to the apologetics of Schaeffer

Alister McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers & Skeptics Find Faith*.

Michael Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.

Michael Lodahl. *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur'an Side by Side*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.

Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*: Geisler is one of the foremost Evidentialist scholars of the 20th century. college level

Norman Geisler and Paul Feinberg, *Introduction to Philosophy*: college level work

Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*: College level

Norman Geisler, *Is Man the Measure?:* A good work on humanism

Norman Geisler and Ron Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook on Christian Evidences*:

Douglas Geivett, *In Defense of Miracles*: Best work on defending the existence of the miraculous

Os Guinness, *God in the Dark: The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of Doubt*: Os is a classic thinker and his writings are always worth a read. Good work for someone who is plagued by doubt

Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a Christian World View*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983

Arthur F. Holmes, ed., *The Making of a Christian Mind*, Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1985

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*: Always a classic and a must read: addresses more than just apologetic concerns. Very meaty

Sean McDowell, *Ethix*: Good work especially for youth!

Alistair McGrath, *The Passionate Intellect*, Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2010.

J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View*, Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1984

J. Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh, *Truth is Stranger Than it Used to Be*, Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1995

J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City*: Excellent; college level apologetics work

David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*: A very good, indepth introductory level work on worldviews. May even replace the Colson work which Pearcey co-authored

W. Gary Phillips and William E. Brown, *Making Sense of Your World from a Biblical Viewpoint*, Chicago: Moody, 1991.

Richard Pratt, *EveryThought Captive*: a good high-school level book introducing the Presuppositional approach to apologetics

Philip Graham Ryken, *What is the Christian Worldview?:* Good intro to Worldviews

Francis Schaefer, *How Should We Then Live?:* Schaefer's classic work tracing the decline of western thought

James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*: Very Good introduction and overview of the major Worldviews

James Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*: Another classic work by Sire on Worldviews

James Sire, *Why Good Arguments Often Fail: Making a More Persausive Case for Christ*: Starts with a discussion of logical fallacies; then discusses various other reasons even good arguments fail

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*: An excellent work and very good to read

Sunshine, Glenn S. *Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Worldviews from Rome to Home*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*: A Classic work from a presuppositional approach

Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*: A classic explanation of the presuppositional method

Bradley R. E. Wright, *Christians are Hate-filled Hypocrites . . . And Other Lies You have been Told*, Bethany House, 2010.

Philip Yancey, *What Good is God?*, Faithwords, 2010.

Zacharias, Ravi and Norman Geisler, eds. *Who Made God: And Answers to Over 100 Other Tough Questions?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

Biblical Apologetics

Carl E. Armerding, *The Old Testament and Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.

Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*: best work on this topic (see related works by Blomberg as well)

Darrell L. Bock. *The Missing Gospels*. Addresses the issue as to why we have only 4 Gospels by a leading NT scholar

Ellis Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994.

F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*: one of *Christianity Today's* 100 most influential works of the 20th century

Craig Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*: Excellent work: one of the leading scholars on this topic. More detail than in Strobel's *Real Jesus*

Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. The standard work on the authenticity of the Gospels and the life of Jesus.

Simon Greenleaf, *The Testimony of the Evangelists*: a lawyer examines the testimony of the Gospel writers

Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*: addresses issues of external evidence for the life of Christ

Craig Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the NT Accounts*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

J. Ed Komoszewski, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace, *Reinventing Jesus*: Excellent very good recently published work: in part a response to the *Da Vinci Code*

Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson, *He Walked Among Us*: Very good but older work on the historical Jesus

John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*: one of “Christianity Today’s 100 most influential works of the 20th century

Lee Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus*: Excellent look into the major skeptical arguments against the NT and the Life of Jesus: must read!

Michael Wilkins and J. P. Moreland, *Jesus Under Fire*: Excellent work on the historicity of the life of Jesus. Originally a response to the Jesus seminar

Resurrection of Christ

Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*: simple, concise, great for evangelism

Gary Habermas and Michael Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection*: Habermas’ most recent work on the resurrection.

Michael Licona, *Paul Meets Muhammed*: Very well done. The book mocks a debate between the Apostle Paul and Mohammed. Represents the standard Muslim responses and a Christian evaluation of them

Frank Morison, *Who Moved the Stone?*: First published in 1930. This work is a very good investigation into the resurrection from one who started the work as a skeptic and ended it as a Christian!

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*: Excellent: thoroughly addresses the issue and other NT evidences; fun to read

Clifford Ross, *The Case for the Empty Tomb*: A look at the evidence for the resurrection from the perspectives of leading lawyers

The Problem of Evil

Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.

Norman Geisler, *The Roots of Evil*: A small but philosophically heavy work

C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*: A fun to read story examining the nature of people and the issue of Hell

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith*: Excellent work dealing with a variety of objections to Christianity including the problem of evil

N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*: Good work on the problem of evil

Philip Yancey, *Where is God When it Hurts*: A provocative look at pain and suffering

Ethics

Francis Beckwith, *Politically Correct Death*: An absolute must read: Excellent: superb!: the best work addressing the Abortion issue and related arguments. Anything by Beckwith is worth a read

M. Daniel Carroll, *Christians at the Border*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

John and Paul Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World*

Joel B. Green ed., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Norman Geisler, *Christian Ethics*: evidentialist work on Ethics

Rae, Scott B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.

Andrew Sloan, *At Home in a Strange Land: Using the OT in Christian Ethics*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Science and Religion

Behe, Michael, *Darwin's Black Box*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Nigel Brush, *The Limitations of Scientific Truth: Why Science Can't Answer Life's Ultimate Questions*: A good philosophical investigation

John Collins, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2003. If you make one purchase and are willing to put some time into these issues, this is your book. Excellent

William Dembski, *Intelligent Design*. Downer's Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1999.

William Dembski, *The Design Revolution: semi technical work defending intelligent design*

William Dembski, ed., *Darwin's Nemesis: Philip Johnson and the Intelligent Design Movement*: one of the most recent works on ID

William Dembski and James Kushiner, eds., *Signs of Intelligence*: 14 essays by leading ID thinkers

Thomas B. Fowler and Daniel Kuebler, *The Evolution Controversy: A Survey of Competing Theories*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007

H. Wayne House, *Intelligent Design 101*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008

Cornelius Hunter, *Science's Blind Spot: The Unseen Religion of Scientific Naturalism*: Exposes the philosophical emptiness of modern science

Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, Downer's Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1991. A classic look at evolution by a now-retired UC Berkeley law professor

Alister McGrath. *Surprised by Meaning*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2011.

J. P. Moreland, *Christianity and the Nature of Science*: Moreland is one of the great minds in Evangelical Christianity. Exc work on the philosophy of science

Denyse O'Leary, *By Design or By Chance?* Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2004.

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*: A very good and indepth introductory level work on worldviews

John Polkinghorne, *Testing Scripture: A Scientist Explores the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Vern Poythress, *Redeeming Science: A God-Centered Approach*: A very interesting and provocative approach to this issue by one of the leading minds in evangelical Christianity

Lee Strobel, *The Case for the Creator*: excellent work that addresses all the major issues in regard to the evidence for God based on the design in the universe

Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*: very good work on the anthropic principle by a Christian astronomer

Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?*: A leading work on this issue. A more recent publication (2000). Wells is a biologist at UC Berkeley

World Religions, Atheism, and Humanism

Francis Beckwith and Stephen E. Parrish. *See the Gods Fall: Four Rivals to Christianity*: An excellent introduction to apologetics and to exposing alternative worldviews

Francis Beckwith and Greg Koukl, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*: The best critique of Relativism available

George W. Braswell, Jr., *Islam: Its Prophet, Peoples, Politics, and Power*: Braswell is one of the authorities on Islam and this is his best book

George W. Braswell, Jr., *Islam and America*: Another good work by Braswell

Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.uh

Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam*: Considered by most as the standard apologetic work on Islam

Michael Licona, *Paul Meets Muhammed*: Very well done. The book mocks a debate between the Apostle Paul and Mohammed. Represents the standard Muslim responses and a Christian evaluation of them

Bruce A. McDowell and Anees Zaka, *Muslim and Christians at the Table*: This is a good work on establishing communication and building bridges (the name of a ministry they established on the east coast) with Muslims

Alister McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine*: McGrath is a great thinker. This book is a response to one of the leading atheist writers in the public market-place

Larry A. Poston and Carl F. Ellis, Jr., *The Changing Face of Islam in America*: Very good work discussing Islam and America

Francis Schaefer, *A Christian Manifesto*: A Call for Christians to re-establish a Christian foundation in Government, Law, and Life

Samy Tanagho, *Glad News! God Loves You my Muslim Friend*: Great insights for sharing with Muslims

Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage*: Zacharias is superb at exposing the weakness of non-Christian worldviews

Websites*

Worldviews and Apologetics

www.biblicalworldview.com Worldview Matters and Think Again! Workshops include a great, definitive list of worldview resources, and Christian Overman was a pioneer in worldview thinking...unfortunately, this is a little dated.

<http://www.tektonics.org/> Good website addressing some of the most common objections to Christianity and the Bible

www.rzim.org Ravi Zacharias International ministries' site: broadcasts, podcasts, videos, teaching resources, and bibliography lists of resources categorized by topic. For example, you search for "The Problem Of Evil" and get a resource list of 13 different books on the subject.

<http://leestrobels.com> Lee's own personal website. Full of video interviews of leading Christian authors, speakers, and pastors.

www.probe.org Probe Ministries' website is constantly updated with articles, reviews, and news clips. Fairly easy to navigate

Intelligent Design

www.iscid.org The website for the International Society for Complexity and Design. A technical website for those interested in advanced discussions on these

<http://origins.org> William Dembski's website. Loaded with articles and resources.

www.reasons.org/ Hugh Ross' website full of evidence for the existence of the Christian God from astronomy. Some very technical material and some for the 'average Joe.'

* We recommend these sites for their general content but do not necessarily endorse everything they contain

Resurrection of Christ

www.apologetics.com Full of articles on all topics dealing with defending the faith

www.equip.org The website for the Christian Research Institute

Science and Religion

<http://www.asa3.org/> The American Scientific Affiliation website is for Christians who are involved in Science. Their views are very diverse and represent the full range viewpoints among Christians

<http://www.icr.org/> Best website for those interested in examining the young-earth creationist viewpoint

<http://www.iscid.org/> Put out by the International Society for Complexity, Information, and Design. Full of very technical papers and research on Science and Design

<http://origins.org/> This website features articles and links on ID, Evolution, Theism, etc.