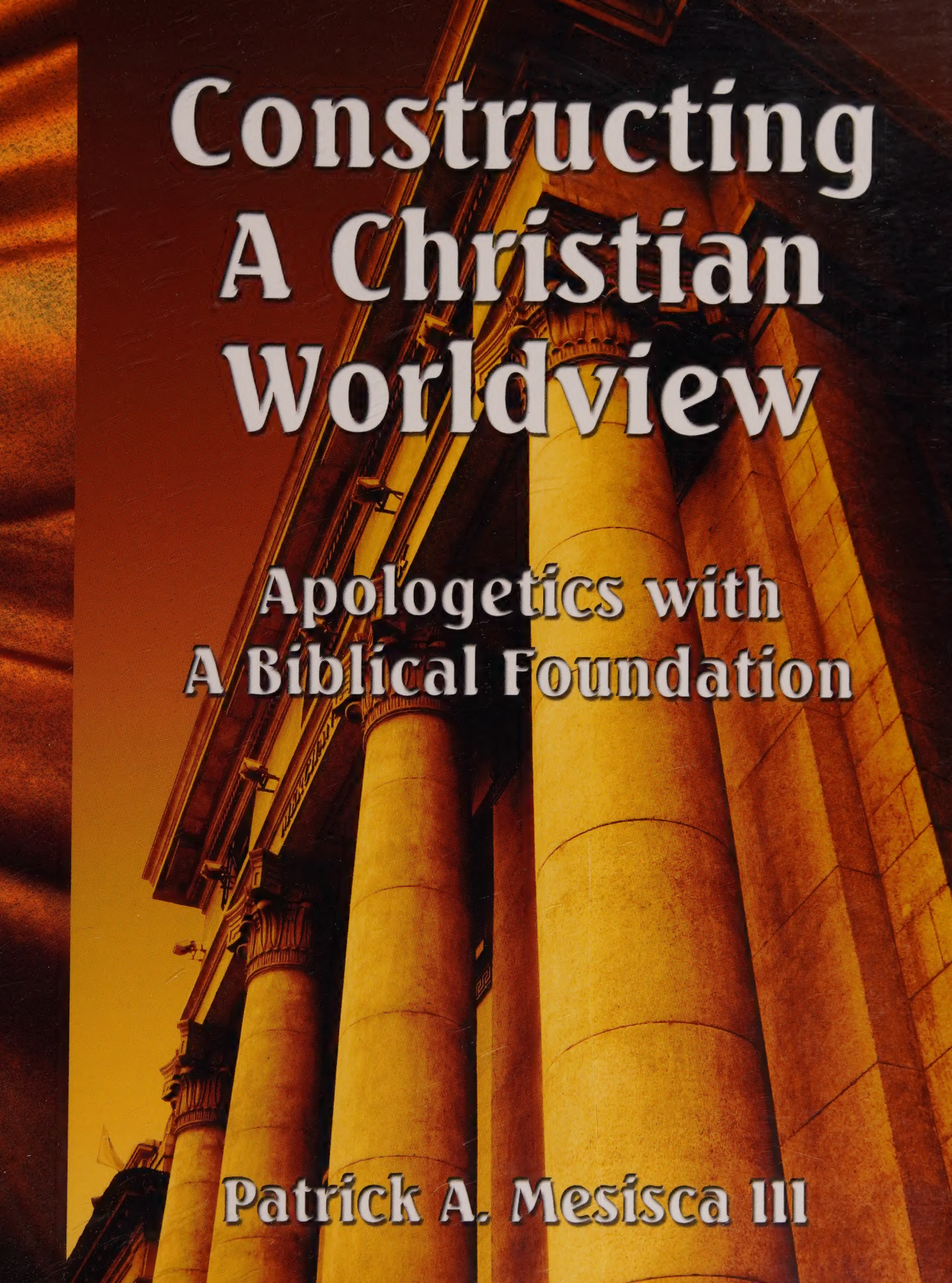
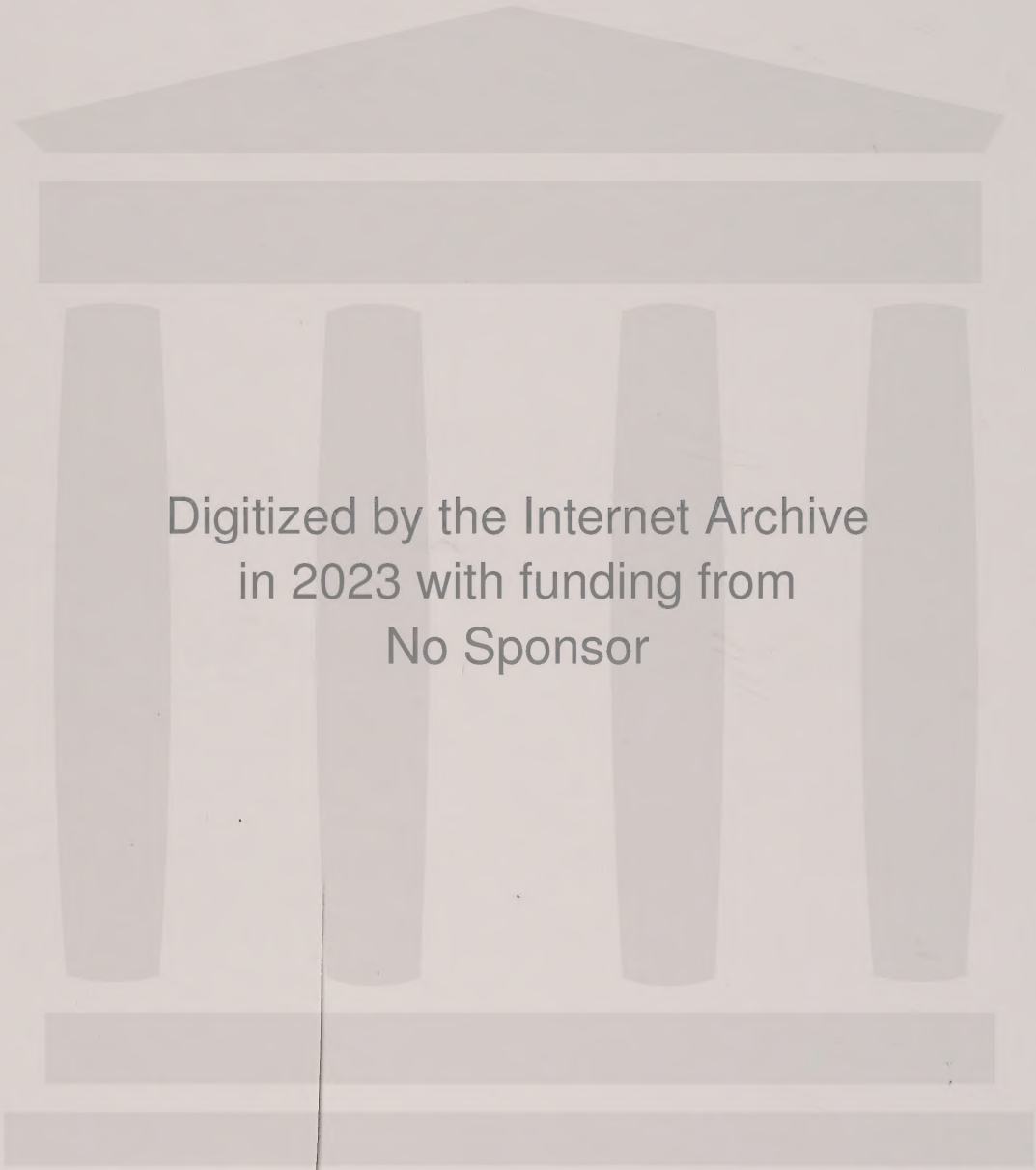

Constructing
A Christian
Worldview
Apologetics with
A Biblical Foundation
Patrick A. Mesisca III



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CONSTRUCTING A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

APOLOGETICS WITH A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

To Earl Chambers,
Keep defending the faith
Patrick Mesisca

Patrick A. Mesisca III

Constructing A Christian Worldview

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Dedicated …

To my grandparents, Ken and Betty Oden, for their countless prayers and support throughout my life; including introducing me to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To my parents, Patrick Jr. and Suzanne Mesisca, for their spiritual leadership, guidance, and unconditional love. For loving me through a physically difficult birth, for supporting me through life's most challenging times, and for teaching me that the love of God extends to all people, no matter how different they are from me.

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To my son and daughter for motivating me to leave a legacy and explain a biblical Christian worldview. If God takes me home before you are old enough for me to talk to you about these things, please take the contents of this book to heart and know that your daddy loves you!

In loving memory of my father-in-law: Pastor Al Somers.

To my church family at Christ's Church of Baldwin Park, California for all of the love, support and partnership in the ministry. Continue to encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

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INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

An Architectural Design

"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ."
-- 1 Corinthians 3:10-11

The Christian worldview is under a great philosophical attack today. Unfortunately, many Christians are unprepared for challenges aimed at causing their personal faith to crumble. This book is designed to help Christians understand the philosophical pillars of the Christian worldview in a way that will help them withstand the scrutiny of philosophical persecution and defend the Christian faith. It is my prayer that Christians who read this book will be encouraged by the overwhelming amount of evidence and solid philosophical argument in support of the Christian worldview. More importantly, I pray that the Holy Spirit will illuminate the truth to all readers in a way that would bring them to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that would last for eternity.

The following is a brief overview of each philosophical pillar of the Christian worldview that will be analyzed in more detail throughout this book. It is important at the beginning of any construction to have an adequate architectural development plan. Look at this section as such a plan. It will present the foundational structure and purpose for each pillar of the Christian worldview. After catching a glimpse of the overall structure of each pillar, we can then begin constructing the details of the Christian worldview with more precision.

Why Study Philosophy & Apologetics?

Philosophy and apologetics are essential disciplines for Christians for a few reasons. First, philosophy is an unavoidable aspect of life. Philosophy encompasses the foundation for decisions people make, relationships they cultivate, and the way they think about life. Second, Christians have a responsibility to develop their personal relationships with God and to learn how to be more aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Studying philosophy should help Christians understand the implications of their Christian beliefs in every aspect of life. Third, Christians have a responsibility to other Christians, as well as to those who oppose the Christian faith, to be able to give a reason for the hope that they have (1 Peter 3:15). This book will provide Christians with the tools needed to respond to some of life's toughest questions and provide a starting point for what will hopefully be a lifetime of building a solid Christian worldview that will stand for eternity.

Epistemology: The Pillar of Knowledge

The ground of knowledge

Christians must affirm epistemology, the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge. As a pillar of the Christian worldview, epistemology presents a strategy to help Christians affirm their own faith as well as justify their core beliefs to others. Christians claim that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Christians argue that the exclusivity of Jesus' teaching has its foundation in objectively true events (i.e. the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ). Christians also claim that salvation is attained through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ entails not only knowable facts about Jesus but also a personal, relational experience with the Savior. Therefore, developing an apologetic for knowledge is important for all Christians because it provides a foundation for them to know the content of the Christian faith and develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

Agnostics and skeptics believe that knowledge is either impossible or irrelevant. People in our society are embracing these philosophies, especially in discussions on religious belief. The threat of skepticism from college professors like Bart Ehrman and historical philosophers like David Hume demand an intelligent response from Christians who claim to have objective knowledge of historical truth (particularly dealing with the miracles of Jesus Christ). It is in light of contemporary skepticism towards knowledge that we must apply a study of epistemology to the Christian worldview. The pillar of epistemology includes an explanation of some important foundational definitions and concepts that must be understood in preparing a defense of the Christian worldview.

Responding to Postmodernism: Establishing the Pillar of Truth

Postmodernism encompasses a period in history (including the present) and a philosophical denial of objective reality, objective truth, and objective moral values. Philosophically, postmodernism is cultural relativism. Cultural relativism is the philosophy that truth and moral values are reduced to cultural preferences.

It is imperative for Christians to understand the destructive nature of post-modernism. The denial of objective reality, objective truth, and objective moral values presents an ultimate threat to the entire structure of

the Christian worldview. The Bible affirms the existence of objective reality (including an objective spiritual reality), objective truth (including Jesus' claims to be the truth), and objective morality (some actions are morally right and some are morally wrong).

In developing a defense against the destructive forces of postmodernism, the ideas about reality, truth, and morality that were prevalent during the modern era (time period roughly between the 17th – 20th centuries, including the Enlightenment) are compared to the ideas of postmodernism (ideas that developed after the modern era). Problems with denying objective reality, objective truth, and objective morality are emphasized in practical argument in an effort to demonstrate the flaws of postmodern philosophy. Practical arguments are also presented to help provide Christians with the tools necessary to defend the Christian understanding of objective reality, objective truth, and objective morality in discussions with postmodernists.

Arguments for God's Existence: The Pillar of God

Attacks against theism abound in many academic institutions and throughout our society. Therefore, Christians must be prepared to defend theism.

The arguments for God's existence discussed in this chapter are the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, and the teleological argument. Pascal's wager is analyzed as an argument designed to present the consequences of belief in God to those who are indifferent about belief in God's existence. A response to Stephen Cahn's article about the irrelevance of philosophical arguments for God's existence is included because Christians should be encouraged by the evidence and philosophical arguments that support belief in God's existence. A response to renowned historical atheist Bertrand Russell regarding the apparent logical problem with belief in an uncaused, eternal God is provided in light of a proper understanding of God's eternality as established in the ontological argument.

It is not as important to know the specific steps of each labeled argument, as it is to develop a comprehensive apologetic for theism. While there certainly is a place for philosophy students to know the details of each step in each specific argument for God's existence, the ultimate goal for the Christian apologist is to be able to present a comprehensive apologetic for theism in an effort to provide others with reasons for the hope that we have as Christians (1 Peter 3:15).

The Soul: The Pillar of Consciousness

The existence of the soul is an essential pillar of the Christian worldview because it defines the essence of humanity and establishes a foundation for a justified belief in free will and eternal life. This chapter analyzes advanced philosophical arguments for and against the existence of souls. The Christian understanding of the soul has traditionally been substance dualism. Substance dualism is the position that human beings are composed of a material substance (body) and an immaterial substance (soul). The substance dualist position helps affirm the Christian understanding of God's creation (particularly the origin of human life), the existence of free will, and the existence of an afterlife. The substance dualist understanding of the soul will be compared to several physicalist explanations for consciousness. One common problem among all physicalist explanations of consciousness is providing an adequate and logical account of the origin of consciousness. How does life evolve from non-life? How does consciousness come from a constant state of non-consciousness? These questions must be answered. Through a rather advanced analysis of the competing philosophical views that seek to explain conscious phenomena, substance dualism provides answers to difficult questions that physicalist accounts fail to answer.

This section will provide those with an appetite for deeper level thinking to engage in more advanced philosophy and apologetics. Every Christian should be encouraged by the philosophical arguments that establish justification for belief in the existence of souls and life after death.

Free Will: The Pillar of Freedom

Are people free to make choices? Is freedom to choose only an illusion? If God is sovereign and knows the future, how can man exercise a freedom of will that could influence a future event? Do Christians choose to

follow God, or does God mandate who will follow Him? Christian apologists have dealt with these questions for centuries. It is important for Christians to have a basic understanding of the broad spectrum of the free will theories as they wrestle with the compatibility between God's sovereignty and man's ability to "freely" choose. The spectrum of the free will dilemma presented in this chapter includes fatalism and determinism, libertarianism and free will theism, as well as compatibilist positions. Two other theories, agnostic autonomism and the antinomy position, are also presented in an effort to resolve the philosophical dilemma between the determinist and libertarian perspectives.

While it is important for Christians to be aware of the philosophical explanations regarding a human freedom of the will, it is also important for them to be able to explain two apparently contradictory biblical concepts: God's sovereignty and man's moral responsibility. The Bible affirms that God is sovereign over His creation and knows the future. The Bible also commends and condemns people for their decisions. Ultimately, justice is distributed to people based on the choices that they make and presupposes the ability to choose. It seems highly unjust to punish people for actions that they could not control. Therefore, in order for justice to prevail, one must be able to discern when a person is capable of exercising a freedom of the will and when a person is not. If free will is an illusion or does not exist, then how does one justify punishments and rewards? These issues will be presented in this chapter. The pillar of freedom must exist in a Christian worldview that affirms the justice of punishments and rewards.

The Problem of Evil: The Pillar of Explaining the Presence of Evil

At first glance, a discussion about evil may be one that most Christians would want to exclude from their worldview. However, under closer examination, one will come to realize that an explanation for the presence of evil does fit into the Christian worldview. An objective definition of evil can only exist alongside an objective standard of good. According to the Christian worldview, the goodness of God makes goodness an objective standard. Evil, by definition, is anything that departs from the objective standard of goodness. Therefore, the Christian worldview affirms the existence of objective evil as anything that departs from God's objective standard of goodness.

This section provides a philosophical overview of the contributions made by Christian apologists to resolve the logical problem of evil. The logical problem of evil states: if God were all-powerful, He would be able to stop evil and if God were all-good, He would desire to stop evil. The existence of evil, therefore, is evidence that one or both of these statements are false. Because the problem of evil is such a popular argument against the Christian worldview, it is essential to erect a pillar of explaining the presence of evil within the structure of the Christian worldview. The existence of evil is something that every worldview must explain. Ultimately, the Christian worldview provides a superior explanation for the existence of evil in the world than an atheist worldview.

Ethics: The Pillar of Applied Morality

Ethics helps Christians identify how to behave morally and in a manner glorifying to God. Ethical tensions abound in our society even for those who use the Bible as their guide. It is sometimes difficult to discern the correct moral path even though the Bible provides an outline for moral living. Different ethical systems for making moral decisions make the process of discerning moral behavior much more complicated in a pluralistic society.

By erecting the pillar of applied morality within the confines of a Christian worldview, Christians are acknowledging that moral behavior matters. While disagreement among Christians will certainly arise in discussions on the various moral issues that impact our lives from abortion to war, it is important for every Christian to value and practice morality according to the directives of Scripture.

This chapter will provide an overview of the importance of moral behavior. It will provide answers to the question: "Why be moral?" The origin of morality will be explained from the naturalist perspective as well as the theist perspective. Different ethical perspectives will be presented and then analyzed in relation to biblical

teachings. Guidelines for ethical deliberation are offered to help people ask the important questions that will hopefully lead them to a God-honoring solution to any ethical dilemma.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: The Pillar of Miracle

The crux of the Christian worldview is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible makes it explicitly clear that the Christian faith rises or falls on this final pillar. As an apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is constructed, the words of the Apostle Paul are just as relevant today as they were when they were originally written to the Corinthians. "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He has raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:13-15).

There is powerful evidence supporting the resurrection of Jesus Christ. An examination of the evidence includes: 1) the transformation of the lives of the disciples soon after Christ's death (including a boldness of many of them to die a martyr's death); 2) the reliability of the biblical accounts through eye-witnesses who saw the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-7); 3) the presence of a Christian church today in the midst of great historical persecution; 4) the absence of the physical body of Jesus Christ in any tomb; and 5) the inability of those who oppose Christianity to adequately explain the empty tomb.

It is Time to Begin Construction

It is now time to begin our construction of the Christian worldview. As you wrestle with these issues, remember that you are building a worldview that will last for eternity. The ideas that we embrace about the world will not only affect our eternal destination, but will also influence the lives of others with whom we interact. Take time to digest the concepts presented in this book. Read the sources cited throughout the book. Remember, Rome was not built in a day … neither was anyone's worldview!

CHAPTER ONE

WHY STUDY PHILOSOPHY & APOLOGETICS?

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."
-- 1 Peter 3:15-16

Why should anyone expend time and energy with philosophy and apologetics? Since people have been influenced by philosophy their entire lives (whether they have realized it or not), philosophy and apologetics are important for sustaining a long-term Christian faith. These disciplines provide people with the tools to evaluate the ideas that continue to influence them. People are influenced by philosophy at an early age. Consider students in elementary school who are not only learning basic information, but are also forming ideas that will shape their lives. For example, when an elementary school student learns about dinosaurs, many of the books require a commitment to an evolutionary theory that presupposes billions of years of macroevolution. People need to separate the science of studying dinosaur fossils from the philosophical commitments they make when drawing conclusions. Unfortunately, many young people do not understand that science and philosophy are separate disciplines.

People frequently confuse the disciplines of philosophy and science in discussions and debates about teaching creationism in public schools. Recent debate on creationism in public schools resurfaced in our media when Sarah Palin, the former governor of Alaska and Republican Vice-Presidential candidate in the 2008 Presidential election, suggested that our country should allow creation instruction. Two years before her Vice Presidential nomination, Sarah Palin said, in a gubernatorial debate, "Teach both. You know, don't be afraid of information. Healthy debate is so important and it's so valuable in our schools. I am a proponent of teaching both. And you know, I say this too as the daughter of a science teacher, growing up with being so privileged and blessed to be given a lot of information on both sides of the subject -- creationism and evolution. It's been a healthy foundation for me. But don't be afraid of information and let kids debate both sides."[1]

Some of the responses to Palin's plea to teach both illustrate confusion between the philosophies of creationism and evolution and the science of creation and evolution. In an article criticizing Palin's position, Michael Lang said, "And using Palin's logic, maybe we should teach the cooking of magic potions in home economics class too. In fact, we should teach any kind of whacked out methodology as an alternative to traditional subjects and with the rationale being 'fair and balanced' curricula."[2] Michael Lang's comment reflects a commonly flawed understanding that creationism is a religion or a "wacked out alternative methodology," while evolution is a traditional subject (science). The reality, however, is that science is a separate discipline from either creationism or evolution. Creation and evolution are philosophies about science. They are theories derived from the observable data that has been confirmed through repeated observation. To be honest about science, people must separate what is confirmed through repeated observation (science) from the theories about origins (philosophy).

To clarify the problem, it is important to identify philosophy as a second order discipline.[3] A first order discipline is the study of the actual content of a subject (i.e. 1+1=2 is mathematics). A second order discipline is the study of the issues about the content of subjects (i.e. Do numbers exist? is philosophy). Philosophy studies the pertinent questions and theories about first order disciplines. Common first order disciplines are science, mathematics, history, and English.

For a better understanding of the distinction between first and second order disciplines, consider the following example of a common scientific experiment. In science class, when a student dissects a frog and analyzes the various systems within a frog, he or she is doing science. But, when a student draws conclusions about where frogs came from or how they evolved through the so-called evolutionary system, then he or she is doing philosophy. Science is the discipline of gaining knowledge through observing consistent results to similar tests. Therefore, one must wonder how naturalism and macroevolution are scientifically observable. While microevolution is observable, macroevolution is not. Microevolution is the observation of slight changes within a species. Macroevolution suggests great changes across species. The public school system has embraced macroevolution in order to promote philosophical naturalism. Philosophical naturalism is the belief that natural causes sufficiently account for everything that exists. If science is the discipline of gaining knowledge through observing consistent results to similar tests, then both creation and naturalism would fall beyond the realm of science. Creation and naturalism each draws its own theoretical conclusions about what the observable, scientific data suggests. Because creation and naturalism are both philosophies, rather than science, perhaps Palin's suggestion to teach both creation and evolution (naturalism) in the public schools is not as far-fetched as Michael Lang suggests.

Learning how to evaluate philosophies is an essential part of Christian apologetics. Apologetics, originating from the Greek work *apologia*, means to defend. Christian apologetics is the discipline of defending the Christian worldview against ideas that oppose it. A worldview is the sum total of a person's beliefs about the world; it is the big picture that directs a person's decisions and actions.[4] The Christian worldview not only includes doctrine, but extends to the way Christians think about various issues. Therefore, Christian apologetics presents a defense for what Christians believe about God, Christ, salvation, etc. as well as a defense for what Christians believe about issues such as abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, etc. While there may be as many views from the Christian perspective on these issues as there are Christian denominations, a Christian apologist who truly desires to defend the Christian faith must keep the Bible as the central focus of the task.

As we begin our journey constructing a Christian worldview by establishing each topic as though it were a pillar of a building, we must remember why the task is so critically important. Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash" (Matthew 7:24-27).

It is important for Christians to ground the foundation of their worldview in the teachings of Jesus Christ. When the trials of life hit like a violent storm, they may shake you but they will not destroy! Although you may lay a foundation upon the solid rock of Christ, you will still continually be held accountable for the upkeep of your structure. As any building is subject to leaks, holes, cracks, and conditions that might eventually destroy the entire structure, so any Christian is subject to similar types of spiritual conditions that could bring the entire structure down if hit by the perfect storm. Unfortunately, the secular teaching of our day is infiltrated with philosophies that provide the ingredients for such a perfect, destructive storm. Christians may crumble under the intellectual scrutiny of secular philosophy if they are not grounded in the truth, do not know why they believe what they believe, and do not know how to respond in an intellectual manner.

As a pastor and a theology teacher, I am concerned about the negative impact that much of the contemporary, secular philosophy is having on our young people. I am also deeply concerned for Christians in general as we seek to practice Christian ethics within a society whose moral compass is pointing in so many different directions. My concern for our young people is validated by The Barna Group, which specializes in Christian-based research and provides statistics on a variety of Christian related topics. In an article written in September 2006 entitled, "*Most Twentysomethings Put Christianity on the Shelf Following Spiritually Active Teen Years*," The Barna Group emphasizes, "The most potent data regarding disengagement is that a majority of twentysomethings (61% of today's young adults) had been churched at one point during their teen years but they are now spiritually disengaged (i.e., not actively attending church, reading the Bible, or praying). Only one-fifth of twentysomethings (20%) have maintained a level of spiritual activity consistent with their high school experiences. Another one-fifth of twentysomethings (20%) was never significantly reached by a Christian community of faith during their teens and has remained disconnected from the Christian faith."[5] Concerned Christians must question the factors that contribute to spiritual disengagement.

What should pastors, Christian educators, parents and friends of these young people do to help them remain engaged in their Christian walk through such a critical time? The answer to this question requires a dual approach upon which each component must carry equal weight. Young people need to be equipped with well-informed Christian responses to the intellectual attacks they face as they develop their own thoughts about the world and reality. But beyond the academic preparation which this book and many others like it seek to provide; parents, pastors, teachers, family members, and friends need to remember that the driving influential factor for portraying the truth of Christ to a lost and broken world is love! Those who share a common concern for our young people and/or have experienced the brokenness of knowing some of the 61% who are disconnected in their walk with Christ during their twenties need to remember to respond in love.

The central reason why I have chosen to teach apologetics and have devoted my life to ministry is my love and concern for people, which flows out of a genuine love and devotion to Christ. As you continue to walk through the journey of this book and construct each pillar of the Christian worldview, you must constantly remember the foundation of each pillar is Jesus Christ. It should be with an undying devotion to serve Jesus

Christ and a genuine concern for others that we embark upon the strenuous adventure of engaging a rebellious culture with the timeless truths of orthodox Christianity.

Scripture Commands Believers to Defend the Faith

1 Peter 3:15-16

"But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

According to this passage, all Christians are to set apart Christ as Lord. Every Christian should exemplify Christ in such a way that his or her relationship with Him sparks questions from non-believers. When Christians express true joy through circumstances where others lose all hope, there is an opportunity to share Christ. When Christians endure persecution and suffering with the peace that surpasses all understanding, there is an opportunity to share Christ. A Christian's testimony of faith in Christ will cause those who do not understand the foundation of the Christian's hope to ask questions. When the opportunity arises to give the reason for the hope that we have, Christians should respond with an informed answer, as well as with an attitude of gentleness and respect.

Anyone can discover his or her level of obedience to this passage by asking three questions: First, have you set apart Christ as Lord? Second, are you ready to answer the tough questions? Third, are you mature enough to respond with gentleness and respect?

If you have set apart Christ as Lord, then are you ready to answer the tough questions raised against the Christian faith? The material in this book is not only meant for seekers, but also for strongly committed Christians who desire to strengthen their faith by finding answers to the tough questions that challenge the foundation of the Christian worldview. The answers to the tough questions presented in this book are rooted in the Scriptures. For this reason, biblical references provide support for each pillar of the Christian worldview.

Finally, are you mature enough to respond to antagonistic arguments with gentleness and respect? Those who oppose Christianity do so for a variety of reasons. One is simply a hatred for Jesus Christ (who He is, what He did, what He taught). Jesus taught His disciples that those who hate me will also hate you (Matthew 10:22). Therefore, as followers of Christ, we should expect persecution and antagonism to some degree. Prime examples of suffering for the cause of Christ are the disciples and early Church fathers who laid down their lives for their Savior. While Christians in America today may or may not be asked to sacrifice their physical lives for Christ (i.e. Columbine High School students), they are facing intellectual persecution against their faith. Therefore, not only is it essential to set apart Christ as Lord and always be prepared to give an answer, but it is also important to respond to all people with gentleness and respect. In fact, what someone says may often be negated by the way it is said. Christians should not give antagonists a reason to reject a well-informed argument for Christianity because of an immature response. A mature response is essential to affirming the points of contention and presenting a resolution so that those who oppose the Christian arguments further must oppose them based on the argument itself rather than the attitude of the presenter.

When faced with philosophical opposition to the Christian faith, I have a few suggestions that should help Christians remain gentle, respectful, and confident. First, realize that those who oppose you are not attacking you as much as they are attacking Christ (the one who sent you). Second, remember that Christians are called to love and pray for those who persecute them (Luke 6:27-29). Third, remember that just because you do not have an answer to a difficult question that does not mean that a good answer does not exist. It would be wiser to humbly recognize that you do not have an immediate answer than to make one up on the spot when faced with a question you do not feel equipped to answer. Nothing is more affirming to a non-believer than conflicting answers by Christians who have not thought through the issues. A mature Christian makes it a priority to find an answer to the question and return to the one who asked it after he or she has found a quality answer.

When someone with advanced academic degrees asks you tough questions, calmly remember that a Master's degree or a Ph.D. should not be used to intimidate people who do not hold those credentials. A person with an advanced education does not necessarily hold all of the correct positions on every issue. Furthermore, if a

college professor with advanced degrees discourages you with tough questions that you cannot answer, you may want to consult a Christian who does know the answer to the tough, perplexing question(s). Your responsibility in serving Christ is to find answers to tough questions that challenge the Christian worldview. This responsibility is not only for helping others understand the truth, but also for strengthening and affirming your own faith in Christ.

When I was a student at Biola University, Dr. J.P. Moreland taught me how to point out the biases of antagonistic professors by asking them this question: "*What are the five or six best sources from the Christian perspective and the three or four best arguments from those sources that you wrestled with before arriving at your view?*" This question does a couple of things. First, it points out any intellectual bias on the part of the teacher. The sources he or she provides will reveal if both sides of the issue have been considered before arriving at a conclusion. Second, it sets up an opportunity to speak to the professor in private and present him or her with some Christian sources and arguments for consideration. It is important to look at both sides of an argument before arriving at a conclusion and this question helps hold people accountable to intellectual honesty. However, please do not forget to show gentleness and respect (even privately) when approaching people with this question.

Jude 3

"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."

Jude 3 commands Christians to engage in apologetics. The author of the book of Jude may very well have been Judas, the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19). If this is the same Jude, then this author was a non-believer during Jesus' life and did not convert to Christianity until after the resurrection. According to John 7:5, "Even his own brothers did not believe in him." However, Acts 1:14 confirms the belief of Jesus' brothers after the resurrection. While only speculation, it may very well be that Jude refers to himself as a servant (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ, rather than his brother (*adelphos*), because he felt unworthy to be called "brother." Jude's unworthiness to be called brother may have been the result of his rejection of Jesus during His earthly life and ministry. In William Barclay's commentary on Jude, Barclay considers all of the possible authors for the book of Jude (Judas of Damascus, Acts 9:11; Judas Barsabas, Acts 15; Judas Iscariot; Judas, not Iscariot, John 14:22; and Judas who was the brother of Jesus, Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3) including the possibility of pseudonyms to explain the author of Jude and concludes (in light of five objections) that Jude, the brother of Jesus, is most likely the author.[6] If the author is indeed Jude, the brother of Jesus, there may be a special emphasis on apologetics from Jude's own experience as he urges others to contend for a faith that was not only entrusted to the saints, but also validated to him by post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ Himself.

Jude 3 portrays a shift of the intention of Jude's writing in light of the opposition of certain godless men who exchanged the grace of God for a license to commit immorality and deny Jesus Christ. Jude originally wanted to write a letter about the shared salvation among believers in Christ. This letter may have included a message about our unity in Christ through the power of His resurrection, a message about the sacraments, or even an echo of Paul's writings about joy or love in the communion of the faith. However, scholars can only speculate as to the contents of such a letter because the real book of Jude is about defending the faith in the face of persecution. It is also a message about persevering in the faith together with those who share the common bond of salvation in Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to contend for the faith? The word that Jude uses for contend is *epagonizesthai*, which contains the root of our English word "agony."[7] Contending for the faith may be agonizing at times, but it is clear that defending our faith is our Christian duty. In today's society, many people shy away from arguing about the objectivity of truth. However, when Christians retreat to a comfort zone of disengagement on the critical issues, they are not being obedient to Scripture. Jude 3 makes it clear that Christians have the responsibility to argue for the faith, even when the argument becomes uncomfortable. Furthermore, retreating to a comfort zone of disengagement may impede Christians from expressing their love and concern for the lost, which is the fundamental reason for doing apologetics in the first place. It is out of a genuine concern for the lost that Jude shifts his purpose for writing this letter to the theme of defending the faith. It is with the same concern that we

need to shift our studies in Christian churches, schools, and even on the mission field to apologetic training so that Christians have the ability to engage the culture rather than retreat to a comfort zone of disengagement.

Matthew 22:37

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

After silencing the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Pharisees returned together with a question about the law. They asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" What is intriguing about this question is that the Ten Commandments, all of the minor commands in the Pentateuch, and even the Pharisees' own interpretations of the commands were implied in this question. Jesus' responded with two simple commands: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself."

What does it mean to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind?[8] To love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind simply means to be consciously aware of His presence in all that you do. In today's Christian community, there tends to be a separation of sacred and secular. Christians may love the Lord their God on Sundays, but not necessarily at parties on Friday nights. In fact, during football season, some Christians might even be hard pressed to love the Lord their God on Sunday morning! However, in order to fulfill this command, Christians should not fall into the sacred/secular distinction trap, but do everything in word or deed as if doing it for the Lord (Colossians 3:17). Loving the Lord your God should be demonstrated by the way an athlete plays his or her sport. It should also be demonstrated by the manner in which a student studies for an exam. Do you study for the sake of grades only, or do you study to learn so you can be a better servant of Jesus Christ? Do you play your sport to win at all costs, or do you look for ways to honor God with your athletic ability? Do you always strive for a personal best which will glorify your Savior? Through honest self-evaluation and accountability, as well as spending consistent time in prayer and God's Word, it will become more evident where we need to love the Lord our God more consistently.

Apologetics Strengthens the Faith of the Believer

Apologetics should strengthen the Christian's faith. As one examines the evidence for the Christian faith, the believer's personal faith should be strengthened by the answers revealed by the Holy Spirit. Often, apologetics reveals answers that quench the personal doubts of the believer by reinforcing an understanding of the basis for his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

For example, a new Christian may believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. However, he may be overcome by doubt when he encounters an argument against miracles. Apologetics may quench the believer's doubt about the resurrection of Jesus Christ by providing evidence and arguments for miracles and refuting arguments against them. One's faith in the Christian worldview as a whole can be strengthened by examining the evidence for it in light of arguments against it. Apologetics may strengthen the believer's faith when arguments and evidence are fairly evaluated.

Apologetics Removes Obstacles of Unbelief

Apologetics is also a component of evangelism. Apologetics may be strategically used to help non-believers answer the questions that have been life-long obstacles to genuine Christian faith. While arguments do not provide saving grace (only Jesus Christ provides salvation), apologetics may be used to help people grow in their understanding of God and His plan for their lives. Many Christians, including several well-known historical and contemporary Christian apologists, began as atheists or skeptics and were led to a commitment to Christ through an unbiased examination of the evidence combined with the working of the Holy Spirit. Consider the following Christian apologists:

C. S. Lewis [9]
(1898 - 1963)

Clive Staples Lewis, a twentieth century Christian apologist, converted from atheism to Christianity in 1929. He was a notable Christian author of numerous apologetics and children's books. One of his most notable children's books was *The Chronicles of Narnia.* Some of his apologetic works include *Miracles*, *The Problem of Pain*, *God in the Dock*, *The Abolition of Man*, and *Mere Christianity*. *Mere Christianity* is an apologetics masterpiece that begins with an argument for morality based on the observation that people argue. Lewis points out that when men argue they are not simply pointing out a preference claim but are stating that the other person is objectively wrong. Furthermore, Lewis argues that the man who does not believe in an objective right or wrong is a hypocrite because he finds himself in a contradiction as soon as he sees another person doing something unfair or unjust to him. Lewis demonstrates that no one can consistently deny moral truth because it is part of human nature rooted in the character and nature of God.

Lewis also presents an argument based on the work and person of Jesus Christ. He shows that Jesus claimed to be God and that there are three possibilities to His claim: He was a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. Lewis concludes, based on the character and teachings of Jesus, that He could not have been a liar or a lunatic and therefore must be the Lord.

Josh McDowell [10]
(1939 - Present)

In the preface of his book, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh McDowell tells about his conversion from atheism to Christianity. McDowell explains that after being challenged by a group of Christians at his college, he set out to travel throughout the United States and Europe to gather information for a book that would not only disprove Christianity, but would "make an intellectual joke of it." However, as Josh examined the evidence, he was troubled with what he was finding. He said, "I would go to bed at ten o'clock at night and lie awake until four in the morning, trying to refute the overwhelming evidence I was accumulating that Jesus was God's Son. I began to realize that I was being intellectually dishonest. My mind told me that the claims of Christ were true, but my will was pulling me in another direction." Over time, Josh realized that he had found the truth but he was not willing to go where it was leading him. Finally, he surrendered to God and became a Christian. McDowell's books, such as *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, *More Than A Carpenter*, and *Beyond Belief To Convictions*, highlight the evidence and arguments that he wrestled with as an atheist.

Lee Strobel [11]

Lee Strobel was a life-long atheist and skeptic until his agnostic wife, Leslie, became a Christian and shared the Gospel with him. Lee, a journalist for the Chicago Tribune, began investigating the claims of Christianity after he personally witnessed the positive results in his wife's character due to her conversion to Christianity. Strobel took a journalist's approach and an open mind to his research. He traveled throughout the world interviewing experts in the fields of science, archaeology, philosophy, and biblical studies. Strobel eventually became convinced that science supports the theory of creation. He believes that the creator of the universe resembles the God revealed in the Bible. Furthermore, Strobel became so convinced of the truths of Christianity, by the overwhelming amount of evidence for the Bible's reliability through eyewitness accounts, fulfilled prophecy, and the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that he became a Christian on November 8, 1981. The arguments that Strobel encountered and the interviews that he conducted on his journey to faith are documented in his popular books: *The Case For Faith*, *The Case For Christ*, and *The Case For A Creator.* Recently, Strobel added another book to his "Case For" series with *The Case For The Real Jesus.*

Why Some People Reject a Sound, Logical, Christian Argument

On the Monday after Thanksgiving break, class resumed to continue our study of apologetics. In the front row, one of my top students began crying and with big tears in his eyes said, "Apologetics is a waste of time. These arguments do not work!" In an effort to understand, I asked him why he thought studying apologetics was a waste of time. He explained that over the Thanksgiving break, he attempted to share the cosmological argument with his atheist uncle in order to convert him to the Christian faith. The student explained that his uncle rejected the argument point for point. He was very distraught by his uncle's response. This was not the student's expected result after spending three months studying apologetics and two weeks learning arguments for God's existence. However, to encourage those who find themselves in similar situations (presenting logical Christian arguments backed with solid evidence to support each point only to find the argument rejected), it is important to remember the following: 1) Natural human tendency is to rebel against God; 2) Many people simply do not want to believe; and 3) Belief or unbelief is ultimately God's work.

Natural human tendency is to rebel against God

Genesis 3 – The Fall of Man

Genesis 3 highlights the events that usher in the fall of humanity. The fall of humanity is a category of theology that explains what has gone wrong with the world. Genesis 1:31 says that God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. If God created everything and saw that all of it was good, then how did humankind receive a fallen, sinful nature? How did God's good creation become so evil? (There will be more information on the origin and problem of evil in chapter seven).

Genesis 3 explains that humankind's fall arose from the sin of Adam and Eve. The serpent who enticed Eve to eat the fruit from the forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil deceived her. However, before anyone accuses Eve of being a Lone Ranger sinner at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, there is a view that Adam may actually be guiltier than Eve (even though Eve did partake of the forbidden fruit first). Genesis 3:6b states, "She also gave some to her husband *who was with her and he ate it.*" It is completely plausible from the text to assume that Adam had been overseeing the transaction between Eve and the serpent and did nothing to stop her. A chronological account of the passage reveals that Adam was the only one to get the instructions directly from God about abstaining from the fruit on the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:15-17). God gave the command directly "to the man" when Eve had not yet been created (Genesis 2:21-23). Needless to say, both the man and the woman are guilty of sinning against God because both deliberately defied God's instruction. However, it may just be the case that Eve defied God's indirect instruction that she received from Adam. Adam, however, defied an instruction that he received directly from God. But does the story of the fall of Adam and Eve really account for man's sinful nature today?

Romans 5:12 – The Imputation of Sin

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all have sinned" Was the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to all men?

Romans 5:12 makes the imputation of Adam's sin upon all of humankind a harsh reality. Imputation is the ascribing of innocence or guilt upon someone for the actions of another. The doctrine that Adam's sin is imputed upon humankind teaches that in the eyes of God all of humankind is guilty of sin as if they participated with Adam in the Garden sin themselves. The doctrine of the imputation of sin says that everyone is equally guilty of sin, even those who have not broken a command. Who are those who have not broken a command? No one living before the commandments were given could have broken a commandment that had not yet been made. However, the remainder of the passage in Romans 5 makes it clear that even those who lived before the issuing of the Ten Commandments were still guilty through the imputation of Adam's sin. Furthermore, if Adam's sin were not imputed to all men, then theoretically it would be possible for people to live perfect lives

with no real need for a redeemer; no need for Jesus' atonement. However, if the sinful nature is passed on from generation to generation and extends to every human being, then it is impossible for anyone to break the mold of sinful nature and live a sinless life rendering Jesus' atonement on the cross unnecessary. Every human being needs the atonement of Jesus Christ to cover the sinful nature imputed by Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 – Imputation of Sin and Salvation

"For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

In 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, Paul connects the imputation of Adam's sin upon the human race to the imputation of Christ's atonement on the cross for those who believe. According to the Old Testament, sin is only satisfied in God's eyes by the death of a pure animal. However, Hebrews 9 and 10 explain that the sacrifices of animals serve as a reminder of sin but do not take away sin (Hebrews 10:3-4). Hebrews 9:1-14 makes the case that animal blood could only cleanse the external aspects of life, but failed to cleanse man's conscience. Hebrews 9:14 provides good news for believers in Christ. It establishes the superiority of Christ's blood to cleanse consciences and purify people to serve the living God. Furthermore, Hebrews 10 continues to explain how the atonement of Christ on the cross is able to do what animal sacrifices were unable to do. The message of Hebrews proclaims that Christ's sacrifice is everlasting! The point, however, is the literalness of both imputations. Adam's sin is literally imputed upon the human race, rendering every human being sinful. Likewise, atonement for sin is imputed upon every human being who accepts Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Romans 1:20-28 – The Depravity of Man's Sinful Nature

The depravity of man's sinful nature is made dauntingly clear in Romans 1:20-28. Through God's creation, humanity can see the attributes of God revealed. Although the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), humanity has turned away from God as the primary explanation of all things. Unfortunately, many people have turned their worship to the creation itself. In Greek mythology, people worshipped gods who looked like men (Zeus, Neptune, Hercules, etc.). The Greeks also elevated animals in their worship and attributed the power of healing to them. Consider the worship of Asclepius and the serpent around his staff. People in ancient Greece frequently went to an early death because they believed the serpent possessed healing powers within its venom only to find out later that the venom was deadly. In today's society, people have continued to replace the worship of the creator with the worship of all sorts of created things. In Mormonism, for example, man even elevates himself to the position of godhood.

Not only has man replaced the worship of the creator with the worship of creation, but he has substituted God's morality with his own. In Romans 1, men exchanged natural relations with women for unnatural ones with other men. Not only is this a passage about the sinfulness of homosexuality, but it also serves as an example to show just how depraved man had become. A sinful nature is imputed upon humankind through Adam's sin and sin continues to increase as one's choices continue to reflect an appetite for sin leading to further rebellion against God. It is no wonder (based on the imputation of Adam's sin) that humanity would continue to rebel against God.

The noetic effect of sin is a theological concept that analyzes the impact that sin has on man's mind (particularly man's ability to know truth). John Calvin understood the concept of the noetic effect of sin to mean that man's nature is so depraved that he would never choose to serve God on his own.[12] According to Calvin's understanding of the noetic effect of sin, man would only be able to serve God once God intervened and changed man's desire about serving Him. There are ongoing debates about the negative impacts sin continues to have on man's ability to know truth. Does the sinful nature affect man's mind in such a way that he would never be able to choose God on his own? Does man have an initial freedom of the will to make good, godly choices on his own? These questions are discussed in more detail in chapter six.

Many people do not want to believe

Another reason why people may reject a well-presented, logical, Christian argument is that they do not want to believe. There may be several reasons why someone may not want to believe: not wanting to make a commitment, not wanting to be accountable, negative emotions connected to childhood experiences or to the church, and the list continues. One of the most common reasons people reject Christianity is an unwillingness to be held accountable to a higher authority. In their minds, if they can dismiss the idea of God or Christianity as a valid concept, then they can dictate their own morality and avoid accountability. In addition, when people recognize the truth of Christianity and are willing to surrender their lives to God, they may have to undergo serious life changes (especially when the lifestyle that they have been living is contrary to the lifestyle that God would require of them). For example, if Jacob is a non-believer who enjoys a promiscuous lifestyle on Friday and Saturday nights that includes drug and alcohol abuse as well as premarital sex, he may not want to believe in God because he recognizes that the behaviors he enjoys are incompatible with biblical mandates for sincere Christian practices. Jacob does not want to change the behavior that he enjoys on the weekends to conform to a lifestyle that would honor God. Therefore, his rejection of God is not based on a consideration of the evidence or argument for Christianity, but upon a desire for immoral behavior over a lifestyle of service to God.

Belief or unbelief is ultimately God's work

Christian apologists would do well to remember that they are merely vessels upon which God works in the lives of the unsaved. The vessels are not responsible for the salvation or decisions of others. While Christians do have a responsibility to share the truth, the results of their sharing are always left to God. Therefore, Christians should be courageous and bold for their faith. God is the one who determines the results of evangelism and Christians receive a blessing from God when He uses them in matters that impact eternity.

John 3:16-18

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

Most people are familiar with the words of John 3:16. I remember watching a baseball game on television and a fan behind home plate held up a sign with John 3:16 on it in an effort to make an impact for Christ. While we may all be familiar with John 3:16; are we all familiar with the verses that follow? John 3:16 clearly shows us what God did, "*sent His Son,*" and why God did it, "*so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" In the verses that follow, however, clarity is given to Jesus' intent "*not to condemn the world but to save the world.*" While Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees and scribes may have sounded condemnatory at times, His true purpose was to save them. Furthermore, verse 18 makes it clear that a person's condemnation is determined by non-belief. If people have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, they are not condemned. However, those who do not believe stand condemned already because of their non-belief.

As Christians, it is important to remember that we are messengers in the process of delivering God's truth to others. God is ultimately the one who knows and determines who will be saved and who will not be saved. Therefore, pursue apologetics with great vigor, be bold in each and every encounter, and be thankful that God has chosen you not only to be able to see the truth and accept it, but to carry on the task of delivering it to others regardless of whether or not they accept.

Beginning Thoughts

As you embark upon a lifetime of learning how to defend the Christian faith, it would be wise to practice a few disciplines that will prepare you to be the best Christian apologist that you can be. First, cover your encounters with prayer. Luke 6:27-28 reminds us to pray for our enemies. While the non-believer is not necessarily your enemy (he may actually be your best friend or closest relative), prayer must still be an essential part of your life. Paul's prayer for the Philippians, "that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and continue to be pure and blameless until the day of Christ," may also be a prayer for Christians today.

Second, remember that you are filled with the Holy Spirit and have the power to do the tasks that God asks you to do. Acts 1:8 says, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Romans 1:16 emphasizes the boldness we must possess, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."

Third, identify the people you will engage in apologetic discussions. Write down their names. Pray for them. Make it a priority to spend time with them. Remember that their decision to follow Christ or to reject Him is not a reflection of you or your arguments. God has privileged you with an opportunity to share with them as He continues to work in their lives and in yours.

Finally, become familiar with your own personal testimony. You need to be able to explain how you became a Christian. In our society, people enjoy stories. While testimonies are subjective in nature, a short personal testimony will reflect what God has done in your life. Sharing your testimony may provide an opportunity to answer people's questions about Christianity and speak the truth of Jesus Christ into their lives.

CHAPTER TWO

EPISTEMOLOGY

The Pillar of Knowledge

"All men by nature desire to know."
-- Aristotle, Metaphysics 1:1

When establishing the philosophical structure of the Christian worldview, discussions regarding knowledge, rationality, and justified or unjustified beliefs are important for two reasons. First, Christians affirm knowledge of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Knowledge of Jesus Christ is both personal (how He reveals Himself to me) and objective (Jesus lived on earth, performed miracles, died on the cross, and rose from the dead). Second, when Christians share Jesus with others, they believe that other people can know Him. The pillar of knowledge will not only strengthen the believer's faith by affirming his or her personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but it will also provide Christians with a solid foundation for sharing Jesus Christ with others.

What is Epistemology?

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge, rationality, and justified or unjustified beliefs. In order to establish that knowledge is attainable and applicable to the Christian worldview, we will examine the following introductory issues: 1) the problem of skepticism, 2) a definition of knowledge, 3) an explanation of how we know things, and 4) an explanation of the types of things that we know.

What is skepticism?

Skepticism is a philosophy that requires certainty for knowledge. Skeptics doubt whether knowledge is even possible. Therefore, the problem with skepticism is determining whether people ever have knowledge about anything. If they do have knowledge in one area (mathematics), do they have it in other areas (morality or religion)?[1] There is one fatal philosophical flaw with skepticism: it is self-refuting. A self-refuting claim is one that contradicts itself by its own premises. For example, if someone said, "John is a married bachelor," that would be a self-refuting claim because to be "married" is to be united in holy matrimony but to be a "bachelor" is the opposite, by definition. Skepticism is self-refuting because either the skeptic is a true skeptic and cannot know for certain that his skepticism is true (rendering it possible that skepticism is false) or the skeptic knows for certain that skepticism is true (maintaining a logical contradiction). Furthermore, if one violates his skepticism by asserting that he knows that skepticism is true, then he is also opening up the possibility for other certainties to be known.

The self-refutation of skepticism is important because it establishes at a very foundational level that knowledge is a plausible concept. It makes sense to believe that people can know things. While debates abound regarding the types of things people can know, to abandon knowledge altogether is ill advised in light of the self-refuting nature of skepticism.

What is a belief?

A belief is accepting a proposition to be the case. A proposition is the content of a belief, thought, or sentence. When someone accepts the content of a proposition to be the case, it is his or her belief. A person's belief is a belief only because the person affirms the content of a proposition. For example, a child may believe that "Santa Clause and his elves make toys in the North Pole." The child believes the proposition by accepting the contents of the proposition to be the case. When the child grows up and becomes an adult, he or she will most likely reject the contents of the proposition about Santa Clause. When he or she rejects the contents of the proposition about Santa Clause, he or she no longer believes the proposition.

Unfortunately, for many people, religious beliefs are like beliefs about Santa Clause: they are beliefs that people affirm during childhood, a time when they need comfort, or for some subjective reasons that may never be substantiated. When an argument challenges our fundamental Christian beliefs, it is important to recognize that the Christian does not claim to affirm myths or false stories like those about Santa Clause and his elves. Christians claim that the fundamental beliefs of the Christian worldview are not only grounded in a subjective experience, but in objectively substantiated evidence and argument. The affirmation that Christian beliefs are objectively true leads us to the next question: what is truth?

What is truth?

There are many theories regarding the definition of truth. It is beyond the introductory spectrum of this work to examine all of the theories of truth. The correspondence theory of truth will be examined in this chapter. According to the correspondence theory of truth, truth is a relation of correspondence between a belief and reality.[2] The ultimate test for the truth of any belief is how it relates to reality. Reality is the way things actually are. Reality is composed of individual things (chairs, desks, animals, people, etc.) and the properties that individual things possess (colors, height, weight, etc.) that exist outside of one's own mind. Individual things and their properties stand in relation to other individual things and their properties. For example, a person that has the property of being 6 feet tall stands in the taller than relation to the person who has the property of being 5 feet tall.

To illustrate truth as a relation of correspondence between a belief and reality, consider the following: When someone affirms the content of a proposition (The light is red), he or she believes the content of the proposition. However, it is not accepting or affirming the content of a proposition that makes it true; the content of a proposition is true only when it accurately corresponds to reality. If someone formed the belief that the green light was red, the person would have a false belief because his or her belief about the light does not accurately correspond or relate to the way the light is in reality.

To better understand the correspondence theory of truth, consider another example. If someone believes "a circle has four equal sides," one simply believes "a circle has four equal sides" by affirming the content of the proposition. However, it is not affirming the statement "a circle has four equal sides" that makes it true. What makes the proposition true or false is whether the statement corresponds to reality. In this case, the proposition "a circle has four equal sides" is false because the proposition does not accurately relate or correspond to reality. Propositions that correspond to reality are objectively true; propositions that do not correspond to reality are objectively false. Christians argue that the fundamental beliefs of the Christian worldview (i.e. God exists, Jesus rose from the dead, people experience life after death) correspond to reality and are objectively true.

What is justification?

Justification includes the reasons why someone believes the content of a proposition. When someone gives reasons for holding a proposition, that person is presenting justification. While people do not need to justify beliefs before they affirm them, people should justify beliefs when trying to convince others. Because Jesus Christ requires Christians to share their faith with others, it is important for Christians to be able to provide strong justification for the fundamental beliefs of the Christian worldview. Furthermore, because so many Christian young people are abandoning their faith as if they are abandoning belief in Santa Clause, it is important for Christians to provide justification to those who doubt, question, or challenge the fundamental beliefs of the Christian worldview.

When you provide justification for your beliefs, it is important to acknowledge that some reasons for holding a belief may be better than others. While there certainly is a time and place for personal testimony, those who challenge the Christian worldview may not be as strongly influenced by subjective experiences as they might be by a presentation of argument and evidence. Therefore, it is important for Christians to become familiar with the arguments and evidence supporting their beliefs so that they are better prepared to justify those beliefs when opportunities arise (1 Peter 3:15).

When someone uses justification to defend beliefs or persuade others that a belief is objectively true, it is important to establish the reliability of the justification. One step to strengthen the reliability of justification is to assure that the person who acquired the justification did so with properly functioning mental capacities and sensory faculties. If someone who is colorblind justifies the belief that the green light is red, the person's color blindness should be taken into consideration when assessing whether the justification actually supports the truth of the belief. In addition, if someone is under the influence of a mind-altering drug and forms a belief while under the influence of the drug, his or her justification is clearly compromised.

Another step to strengthen the reliability of justification is to consider the context of the justification that supports the proposition under analysis. If a child believes in Santa Clause and justifies his belief because his

parents told him that Santa Clause would bring him presents on Christmas Eve, the child's justification may be refuted by an examination of the source of the story which may include the timeless tradition of parents telling their children the story of Santa Clause or reading *The Night Before Christmas*. The story of Santa Clause and his elves was never perpetuated as historically true. The context of a story should be taken into consideration when assessing the reliability of one's justification.

Another step to strengthen the reliability of justification is to consider the reliability of the sources of the justification that agree or disagree with the proposition under analysis. Sometimes the available sources are biased in ways that prohibit an accurate presentation of the relevant data. Such biases should not be used as adequate justification for forming reliable beliefs about a particular issue.

A final step to assure the reliability of justification is to evaluate and resolve the defeater arguments that may refute the justification for a particular belief. A child may form the belief that Santa Clause lives in the North Pole with his elves simply because his parent's told him. However, when his first grade friend tells him that Santa Clause does not exist, he must engage the defeater argument that must be resolved in order to intellectually maintain his belief in Santa Clause. In this case, if the young boy cannot resolve the defeater argument, he may continue to affirm his belief in Santa Clause but he could not KNOW that Santa Clause exists unless he is able to resolve the defeater.

Kinds of knowledge

Knowledge may be divided into three different categories:[3] 1) propositional knowledge – knowing facts; 2) knowledge by acquaintance – gained by being directly aware of something; and 3) know how – the ability to perform a particular task. Propositional knowledge consists of the contents of a true proposition or a fact. Knowledge of acquaintance is expressed by the awareness of someone's surroundings when his or her sensory faculties are working properly and nothing is prohibiting his or her perception (i.e. poor lighting or a mind-altering drug). Know-how is gained simply by doing, even if one is unaware of how he or she is doing it (i.e. one may be able to play a song on the guitar without being able to explain how he or she is doing it). The differences between the three kinds of knowledge may be expressed further by the following example: A baseball fan may know facts about his favorite team (propositional knowledge) without possessing the same kind of knowledge that the players on the team possess (knowledge by acquaintance) or having the experience of hitting a ninety-five mile per hour fastball (know how).

What is knowledge?

Plato proposed the standard definition of propositional knowledge in his dialogue *Theaetatus*, written in 360 B.C. Plato defined knowledge as justified, true, belief. According to Plato, someone possessed knowledge if he or she held a belief (accepted a proposition to be the case), the proposition was true (corresponded to reality), and it was justified (he or she had good reasons for believing it and those reasons were formed in a reliable way).[4]

Plato's definition of knowledge was the standard definition until 1963. In 1963, Edmund Gettier published a three-page paper entitled, *"Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"* The paper was composed of two short counter examples that demonstrated that a person could have a justified, true, belief but might not have knowledge. Here are the original examples:[5]

> It is claimed that Smith and Jones have both applied for the same job. Smith has a justified belief that Jones will get the job and that Jones has ten coins in his pocket. The justified belief is formed after the company's president assured Smith that Jones would get the job and Smith personally counted ten coins in Jones' pocket. Upon gaining this information, Smith forms the justified belief that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. However, unknown to Smith, he himself gets the job and accidentally finds tens coins in his pocket. Therefore, the justified belief that the man who has ten coins in his pocket turned out to be true so that Smith had justified, true, belief. But did he also have knowledge?

Smith has strong evidence that Jones owns a Ford. Smith's evidence might be that Jones has at all times in the past within Smith's memory owned a car and it was always a Ford, and Jones has just offered Smith a ride while driving a Ford. Let us imagine now that Smith has another friend, Brown, of whose whereabouts he is totally ignorant. Smith selects three places quite at random and constructs the following three propositions: a) Either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Boston; b) either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona; and c) either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Brest-Litovsk. Jones does not own a Ford, but is at present driving a rental car. And by sheer coincidence, and entirely unknown to Smith, Brown really is in Barcelona. Here is an example where Smith does not KNOW that Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona, even though proposition (b) is true, Smith believes (b) and Smith is justified in believing that (b) is true.

The Gettier counter examples suggest that Plato's standard definition of knowledge is insufficient. According to Gettier, the examples show that a person who has justified, true, belief does not necessarily have knowledge. It may be possible for someone to have a justified belief that accidentally happens to be true. In such a case, the person holding a belief that accidentally happens to be true would have justified, true, belief but not have knowledge. Therefore, while truth and belief are conditions that one must have before knowledge is possible (necessary conditions); they are not conditions that compose an infallible definition for knowledge (sufficient conditions).[6]

If justified, true, belief does not equal knowledge as suggested by the foregoing Gettier counter examples, is skepticism true by default? Some philosophers may be tempted, in light of the Gettier counter examples, to retreat to the self-refuting philosophy of skepticism. However, one must avoid such a conclusion based on the following reasons: 1) Skepticism is still self-refuting and 2) There may be solutions to the Gettier counter examples. Perhaps further examination may help identify a solution to the Gettier problem and solidify Plato's standard definition of knowledge.[7]

Further examination of the Gettier examples raises the question whether the people in the examples have adequate justification. If the people in the examples lack real or enough justification, then knowledge still equals justified, true, belief when someone has more justification than demonstrated in the Gettier counter examples. The problem with this view, however, may be how people know when they have enough justification to satisfy an infallible definition of knowledge.

A second solution to the Gettier counter examples is to affirm the examples and show that while justification, truth, and belief are necessary conditions for knowledge they are not sufficient conditions. Thus, a sufficient condition for knowledge, in order to solve the Gettier counter examples, must be added to justified, true, belief.

A third solution to the Gettier counter examples would be to abandon the standard definition of knowledge altogether and replace the justification condition with another condition and add that other condition to true belief. Thus, knowledge would be true, belief plus another condition.

The search for an infallible definition of knowledge continues among philosophers today. However, the absence of an infallible, sufficient definition by no means affirms skepticism. It may be that one of the three suggested solutions to the Gettier counter examples would provide an infallible, sufficient definition for knowledge. Christians should be aware of the Gettier problem so they are better prepared to share the truth of the Gospel in a skeptical society.

Do people need to explain how they know that they know in order to know something?

It is unnecessary to require an explanation of how people know what they claim to know before they can know something. There are two reasons for this: 1) Practically speaking, people know many things without first providing an explanation of how they know those things and 2) Placing the burden of having to explain how people know that they know before they can know leads to an infinite regression of having to know how you know how you know how you know…. before you could ever know anything at all. Knowledge would be impossible due to an infinite regression of having to explain how one knows things before one could actually have any knowledge at all.

Consider the first reason: People know many things without explaining how they know them. For example, a student goes to his history class and listens to an hour-long lecture about the American Revolution. During the lecture, the student learns that the Boston Massacre occurred on March 5, 1770 as British soldiers fired their muskets into a crowd of people killing five and injuring several others. After the event, the new governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, withdrew his British troops out of Boston and relocated to nearby harbor islands. The captain of the British soldiers, Thomas Preston, was arrested with eight of his men and charged with murder. Now, the question must be asked, "Upon listening to the teacher's lecture about the American Revolution, does the student know the information without explaining how he knows it?" The answer is clearly "Yes!" The student does not have to explain how he knows the information in order to have knowledge and demonstrate it on an exam. If explaining "How you know that you know" was a criterion for knowledge, then a student could never leave a classroom knowing anything without first explaining how he knew that he knew it. Now, while a student may be required to give justification for his beliefs (i.e. stating his teacher's credentials, the credibility of the textbook, etc.), it is not necessary for the student to have to explain how he knows what he knows about the American Revolution before he can know information about that historical era.

In regards to the three forms of knowledge (propositional knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance, and know how), people may gain knowledge in all three categories without first having to explain how they know that they know something. For example, as demonstrated above, a student may know that the Boston Massacre occurred on March 5, 1770 based on reading the history textbook or listening to the lecture without ever explaining how he or she knows that he or she knows that information. Regarding knowledge by acquaintance, a bus driver may have knowledge of a red light in front of him that causes him to stop at the corner without having to explain how he knows that he knows that the light is red. Finally, the very definition of "know-how" knowledge implies that a person does not have to be aware of how he is doing something in order to "know how" to do it. A football kicker demonstrates his "know how" knowledge of kicking a thirty-yard field goal simply by doing it.

Can people have knowledge of religious claims?

When it comes to religious claims like "God exists," "Jesus rose from the dead," "I am going to heaven when I die," many people think that it is impossible to have knowledge of these types of statements. The skeptic's argument is that because someone cannot be certain about such claims, he or she cannot have knowledge of them. However, if certainty is a criterion for knowledge, then the following question must be asked: How certain can the skeptic be that certainty is a criterion for knowledge? This question necessarily arises in light of the self-refuting problem of skepticism.

When engaging in a conversation with an atheist or philosophical naturalist about the validity of one's knowledge of such topics as the existence of the supernatural, perhaps the following question is warranted: How certain is the atheist/philosophical naturalist that everything that exists is explainable solely by natural causes and that it is a fact that God does not exist? Philosophical naturalism is the name given to the view that everything in the world is explainable by natural causes. Does philosophical naturalism really prove that God does not exist? No, because the evidence for such a claim is not present. Do Christians have adequate justification to claim that they KNOW that God exists? Some philosophers will continue to maintain that the answer to the question, "Can one KNOW that God exists?" must also be "No!" However, if the evidence for God's existence is overwhelmingly in support of such a claim and the arguments against it can be defeated, then one has stronger justification for affirming God's existence than denying it.

The Element of Faith

According to Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see." Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." These verses may cause people to think that religious statements exist outside the realm of knowledge, and cannot be known because they are only a matter of belief. However, it is by faith that people can be certain of God's existence and sure of their eternal salvation.

In *Love Your God With All Your Mind*, J.P. Moreland identifies three historical understandings of faith.

> Throughout church history, theologians have expressed three different aspects of biblical faith: *notitia* (knowledge), *fiducia* (trust), and *assensus* (assent). *Notitia* refers to the data or doctrinal content of the Christian faith. *Assensus* denotes the assent of the intellect to the truth of the content of Christian teaching. Note that each of these aspects of faith requires a careful exercise of reason, both in understanding what the teachings of Christianity are and in judging their truthfulness. In this way, reason is indispensable for the third aspect of faith — *fiducia* — which captures the personal application or trust involved in faith, an act that primarily involves the will but includes the affection and intellect too.[8]

Faith, as *notitia*, encompasses one's intellectual understanding of the facts, creeds, and doctrinal statements of Christianity. Faith, as *assensus*, identifies one's personal agreement with the *notitia* aspect of the Christian faith. When one affirms a creed or signs a doctrinal statement, he or she is exercising *assensus* faith. The English word "assent" meaning "to agree with" is derived from *assensus*. Faith, as *fiducia*: trust or confidence, builds on *notitia* and *assensus* and should be understood as something that exists in degrees or percentages. Faith as trust or confidence is not measured as either 100% or 0%. Faith, as trust or confidence (*fiducia*), is present in different degrees on different issues. As you grow in your understanding of the Bible, God's will for your life, relationship with Jesus, or apologetic arguments, your faith (*fiducia*) should be strengthened to a higher percentage. Increasing the percentage of faith is a sign of growth and maturity. For example, you may begin a study in apologetics (i.e. arguments for God's existence) with many doubts and questions. Your faith (trust and confidence) that God exists may only be at 60%. At 60% faith, you believe "God exists" enough to call yourself a Christian (*assensus*), but you are really unaware of the reasons why you believe that God exists. At 60% faith, you are not very confident about your belief that God exists. At 60% faith, you could be easily swayed by an argument presented by an atheist that says that God does not exist. By examining the arguments for and against God's existence, you may find your faith strengthened to such a high percentage of faith (trust and confidence) that there is no doubt in your mind that God exists. This is the essence of a faith that is certain of the existence of unseen realities.

The Bible affirms that faith is present in degrees or percentages. In Matthew 17:14-23, Jesus healed a boy who the disciples could not heal. After the disciples witnessed Jesus' miracle of healing, they ask Him, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" Jesus responded, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:19-20). Jesus not only rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith, but He also taught them about the mighty power that a small amount of faith possesses. Christians should grow in their faith in Jesus Christ as they study and get to know Him better. As our faith grows in our relationship with human beings as we get to know them better, so our faith in God should also grow, as we trust Him more.

The Bible also presents a case for degrees and percentages of faith in Jesus' response to His disciples' request to increase their faith. In Luke 17:1-6, Jesus is teaching His disciples about the dangers of sin and the importance of forgiveness. In the middle of His lesson, the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith. He does not correct them and say that faith cannot be increased. Rather, Jesus says, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it will obey you.'" Again, Jesus taught His disciples about the power of faith. A small amount of faith can do powerful wonders and faith certainly can be increased.

Another example that illustrates faith as being present in degrees or percentages is found in Jesus' rebuke of Peter in Matthew 14:22-33. During the fourth watch of the night (between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m.), Jesus walked on water towards His disciples who were in a boat in the middle of the lake.[9] When the disciples saw Jesus, they were afraid. They thought He was a ghost. Peter spoke up, "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water." Jesus encouraged Peter to come. When Peter began taking steps towards Jesus, a wind came up and Peter began to sink. Peter's fear caused him to cry out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. Jesus rebuked Peter for his "little faith" when He said, "You of little faith, why do you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). Jesus' rebuke of Peter suggests that it is possible to have more faith, even much faith.

In contrast to Peter's "little faith," Hebrews 11 commends some Old Testament people for their strong faith in God. Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Rahab are among some of the Old Testament people

commended in Hebrews 11 for their faith. After commending the Old Testament people for their faith, the writer of Hebrews says, "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect."

How strong is your faith? If your spiritual life were a cup, how full of faith would it be? Would it include a few drops? Would it be overflowing? If one aspect of faith is trust and confidence, how confident are you that the Christian doctrines are true? How confident are you that the events in the Bible are historically accurate? How confident are you that God exists? How confident are you that Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead? How confident are you that God is faithful and will keep His promises? We all must answer these questions. Ascribe percentages to each question regarding your own faith. As you study the contents of this book, identify the areas where your faith is growing. Also, identify areas where you are lacking faith. Make it a priority to answer unresolved questions. As the goal of an intensely focused physical exercise program is to enhance your physical strength, this book was ultimately written to help increase your spiritual strength. How strong you become is ultimately between you and God. While many of you do not need arguments to strengthen your faith, others will be surprised how much more confident they are that Christianity is true after they become aware of the overwhelming amount of evidence in support of the Christian worldview.

Knowledge in the Religious Realm is Important to Christianity

Many religions focus on a subjective experience rather than objective knowledge. Therefore, when someone says, "I know," in many religions, he is actually claiming that he feels deeply and passionately about his religion. For many religious people, the phrase, "I know" is not based on objective evidence and the correspondence theory of truth. However, while people do embrace Christianity on subjective grounds (God will meet my needs, grant me comfort in a time of great loss, etc.), a close examination of the claims of Christianity will reveal that Christianity is not reduced to a subjective experience that contradicts reality. Christianity is composed of objective truth claims that correspond to reality. Therefore, the Christian worldview rests not merely in subjective feelings but in objective truths. The implications of the truth claims made by Jesus Christ not only affect the way we live our lives but also the eternal destination of every person on earth.

The Bible affirms that knowledge is an essential aspect of the Christian worldview. Luke appeals to Theophilus with the evidence that he carefully investigated in order for Theophilus to know the certainty of the Gospel's claims (Luke 1:3-4). In John 17:3, Jesus teaches that knowing God is eternal life. In Philippians 3:10-11, Paul wants to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and to share in His suffering.

Before Luke 1:3-4, John 17:3, and Philippians 3:10-11 are analyzed in further detail, let us examine two types of knowledge in relation to religious belief. Dr. Henry Holloman, Biola University Theology professor, expressed two different types of knowledge with the terms "spiritual I.Q" and "spiritual I Do." The "spiritual I.Q." involves the head knowledge of information that one knows about God, Jesus, the Bible, or any religion for that matter. In fact, anyone can attain a higher "spiritual I.Q." by simply accumulating more information or facts about a particular religion. Furthermore, one could possess a high "spiritual I.Q." without any relationship with God or redemptive working of the Holy Spirit in his or her life whatsoever. The "spiritual I.Q." is reduced to "knowledge about" or factual knowledge of a religion. Indeed, students possess a spiritual I.Q. of Christianity when they learn facts from the Bible. Whether that information affects the practice of their lives is irrelevant to "spiritual I.Q."

"Spiritual I Do," however, is the practice or application of biblical truth to one's life. Practice or action is essential for any Christian who seeks to honor God and grow in his or her relationship with Him (James 2:14-26). When a person practices what the Bible teaches, he or she is exercising his or her "spiritual I Do."

Another way of expressing these two types of religious knowledge is by the terms "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy." Orthodoxy refers to right beliefs, while orthopraxy refers to right actions stemming from those beliefs. It is possible to have orthodoxy without orthopraxy. It is possible to have a high spiritual I.Q. without ever applying the principles of Scripture. However, the goal of a mature Christian should be to accumulate knowledge about God so that he or she is better equipped to serve Him. On the one hand, knowledge about the Bible without the appropriate application that encourages spiritual growth is wasted knowledge. On the other hand, a lack of biblical knowledge may lead people into misapplying biblical principles or misrepresenting

orthodox Christianity. Therefore, orthodoxy and orthopraxy are essential elements for Christian growth to occur. Now let us examine what Scripture teaches about religious knowledge and why it is particularly important to the Christian worldview.

Luke 1:3-4

"Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

The Gospel of Luke is unique because Luke is the only Gentile among the four Gospel writers: the other three were Jewish. Luke was a doctor by profession and his Greek language usage was more advanced than the other writers. He was able to examine evidence and draw conclusions from the perspective of a well-informed, highly educated man. The beginning of Luke's Gospel is a presentation to Theophilus who was most likely a high official in the Roman government. The appeal to Theophilus was not based on feelings and emotions but upon a thorough intellectual investigation of the evidence. The fact that Luke's presentation was based on a careful examination of evidence demonstrates that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has evidence worthy of examination. Such evidence could either confirm or deny Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. While an examination of the evidence for Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection will be presented in later chapters, it needs to be established that what set apart Christianity as unique at the beginning was its objective evidence.

The Gospel message was originally based on substantiated facts. Luke appeals to those facts in the introduction of his Gospel. Luke took the initiative to carefully investigate the evidence and present his case to Theophilus. Luke's case was not based on an acceptance of fables and stories unsupported by evidence. Luke's investigation was supported by historical facts reliably accounted for by eye-witnesses. As Luke carefully examined the facts for himself, every person needs to embark on his or her own personal investigation of the Gospel message. Christians, skeptics, agnostics and even atheists must come to terms with the overwhelming amount of evidence in support of the authenticity and reliability of the Gospel accounts. Each Christian has the responsibility to personalize the data not only for growing in the faith, but also for giving a personalized account of the evidence to others, as Luke gave to Theophilus.

John 17:3

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

Knowledge is set forth in this passage as a criterion for eternal life. The Greek word for eternal is *aionis*. The meaning of this word is not focused as much on the duration of one's life as it is on the quality of one's life. Eternal life (*aionis*), while it does encompass a life that will last for eternity, is also a quality that is the greatest quality of all. There is, however, only one person for whom *aionis* can properly be applied and that person is God. Eternal life is, therefore, nothing other than a life with God. To experience the *aionis* life on earth is only possible for those who fellowship with God. Certainly, the only way to experience the *aionis* life forever is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.[10]

The knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ is an intellectual knowledge, on the one hand, and an intimate relational knowledge, on the other. The "spiritual I.Q." and the "spiritual I Do" advanced by professor Holloman are both encompassed in the knowledge that composes eternal life. While it is important for Christians to grow in their intellectual knowledge about God, it is also important to develop closer intimacy with God. To know God, therefore, is not only an intellectual endeavor, but also an intimate relationship.

Philippians 3:10-11

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

When Paul says that he wants to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, the word that he uses for "know" comes from the Greek word *ginoskein* which almost always indicates personal knowledge. The focus of Paul knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection is an experienced-based knowledge rather than an intellectual-only knowledge. While the New Testament had its Greek word for experiential knowledge, the Old

Testament had its Hebrew word for relational and experiential knowledge as well. The Old Testament uses the Hebrew verb *yada* "to know" as the equivalent to the New Testament verb used here by Paul: *ginoskein*. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew verb *yada* was used to refer to the sexual intimacy of Adam and Eve. "Adam knew Eve and she conceived and gave birth to Cain" (Genesis 4:1). The aim of Paul's knowledge of Christ and the power of His resurrection is clearly one of intimate, practical, experiential knowledge rather than an academic or "intellectual-only" knowledge.[11] Concerning Christ and the power of His resurrection, Paul desires the "spiritual I Do" type of knowledge. While the practical aspect of knowing Christ entails suffering (to the point of martyrdom), Paul considers it a privilege to suffer because it ultimately brings us relationally closer to our Savior.

Concluding Thoughts

Plato's definition of knowledge (justified, true, belief) was the standard definition of propositional knowledge until Edmund Gettier's counter examples demonstrated a possible flaw in the standard definition. A response to Gettier should not retreat to the illogical conclusion of skepticism. Re-establishing Plato's definition of knowledge in some form should be the Christian's response to Gettier. Regardless of the sufficient conditions for knowledge, truth and belief are necessary conditions for knowledge. One could not know a proposition unless he or she affirms the proposition through belief and that the proposition accurately corresponds to objective reality.

People may demonstrate, by the criteria mentioned in this chapter, that they have knowledge when they have justified, true, belief and the justification was formed in a reliable way. Those who say they are certain that their religious claims are true, trust the evidence that was part of the justification process. A condition that strengthens faith is the ability to resolve arguments against your belief. It is difficult to ascribe knowledge to a statement that has been proved false by evidence and argument. Therefore, in order to convince others that we do possess knowledge, arguments against what we claim to know should be countered and resolved.

As we continue constructing the pillars of the Christian worldview, we will examine arguments and evidence that both support and oppose the Christian worldview. Through an examination of the arguments and evidence, being guided by the Holy Spirit, your faith should be strengthened. May Luke's appeal to Theophilus serve as words of encouragement as you continue your journey "that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

CHAPTER THREE

RESPONDING TO POSTMODERNISM

Establishing the Pillar of Truth

"To say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true"
-- Aristotle, Metaphysics $1077^{B}26$

"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
-- John 14:6

Postmodernism encompasses a time in history (including the present) and a philosophical denial of objective reality, objective truth, and objective moral values. Philosophically, postmodernism is cultural relativism. Cultural relativism is the philosophy that truth and moral values are reduced to cultural preferences.

It is imperative for Christians to understand the destructive nature of post-modernism. The denial of objective reality, objective truth, and objective moral values presents an ultimate threat to the entire structure of the Christian worldview. The Bible affirms the existence of objective reality (including an objective spiritual reality), objective truth (including Jesus' claims to be the truth), and objective morality (some actions are morally right and some are morally wrong).

In developing a defense against the destructive forces of postmodernism, the ideas about reality, truth, and morality that were prevalent during the modern era (time period roughly between the 17th – 20th centuries, including the Enlightenment) are compared to the ideas of postmodernism (ideas that developed after the modern era). Problems with denying objective reality, objective truth, and objective morality are emphasized in practical argument in an effort to demonstrate the flaws of postmodern philosophy. Practical arguments are also presented to help provide Christians with the tools necessary to defend the Christian understanding of objective reality, objective truth, and objective morality in discussions with postmodernists.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism may be defined in two ways: chronologically and philosophically. The chronological definition of postmodernism refers to a particular period after the Modern era. The Modern era, including the Enlightenment period, is understood by most historians to be the time roughly between the 17th – 20th Centuries.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a shift of thought began to develop. People were no longer content to accept the dogmas and doctrines passed down to them by generations of Church history and tradition. By the end of the eighteenth century, the questioning of religious history, tradition, and authority that became prominent in the seventeenth century developed into a greater acceptance of natural explanations for reality and a greater rejection of supernatural phenomena.[1] The Enlightenment thinkers placed humans and human reason on a pedestal and elevated the importance of man over God. Enlightenment thinkers began to view God in terms of the story of their own lives rather than being a part of God's story. The elevation of reason over "superstition" resulted in the Enlightenment being labeled "The Age of Reason."

The Age of Reason contributed a natural progression of principles that have strongly influenced the philosophy of the 21st Century. A great emphasis on human reason influenced thinkers to elevate their interests in examining nature. Reason and nature opened the way for the third principle of the Enlightenment – "autonomy."[2] The autonomous thinker no longer blindly affirmed the religious dogma of the Church in obedience to Church authority. Rather, the autonomous thinker would now test the claims of the Church and begin developing his own thoughts about reality. Although autonomy was a value during the Enlightenment period, truth still existed as a relation of correspondence and people could still try to convince others of the truth. The value of autonomy also did not give people a license to live however they pleased but simply demanded that each person discover and follow the natural law. The way that man would discover the natural law was through his individual use of reason rather than external authority.

The Age of Reason stamped a period when people could begin questioning the authority of the Church and could determine whether statements about God's existence, creation, and morality were true. The Age of Reason consequently impacted the Christian community both positively and negatively.

The Age of Reason had a positive impact on Christian apologetics. The emphasis on reason brought a greater need for an intellectual approach to Christian apologetics. If people were no longer going to accept Christian dogma solely on the authority of the Church, Christians would have a greater responsibility to investigate the evidence for the Christian faith and defend it with reason. One of the positive impacts that the Enlightenment had on Christian apologetics is that it opened the door for Christians to engage culture by intellectualizing the faith and demonstrating that it is compatible with reason and evidence. The Christian worldview is not irrational. It welcomes a thorough investigation of the evidence and requires that we trust that which makes sense to believe.

While the Age of Reason had a positive impact on Christian apologetics, it also opened the door to the philosophical struggles that our society faces today. The questioning of Church authority, prevalent during the Age of Reason, opened the door for postmodern thinkers to question truths that the Enlightenment philosophers thought were self-evident.

One of the reasons that the Age of Reason brought such opposition to the Christian Church is that the Church was not prepared to intellectually engage the culture with evidence, reason, and argument for the fundamental beliefs of the Christian worldview. While the secular society progressed in influencing people to test the authority of the Church for themselves, the Church responded largely by retreating to the comfort zone of privatized religion. It was the lack of social engagement with secular philosophy that has contributed largely to the dilemma that the Church faces today which is this – Christianity is looked upon by many in the secular society as a privatized religion that has little or no relevance to the way people live their daily lives.

Philosophically, postmodernism is cultural relativism. Cultural relativism maintains that there are no objective truths or objective moral values that are true for all cultures. According to cultural relativism, cultures or groups determine their own truths or moral values. Postmodernists who affirm all cultural values as equal illustrate cultural relativism. Consequently, postmodernists believe that no culture has a right to correct another culture's morality.

The philosophy of postmodernism is producing a culture that is replacing objective truth and objective morality with relative truth and relative morality. Because the United States is a country composed of different cultures with different backgrounds, beliefs, and values, it is imperative for Christians to prepare a response to the postmodern understanding of relative truth and relative morality in order to defend the Christian faith that has a foundation firmly established on objective truth and objective morality.

Deconstructionism

One problem with the denial of objective truth in cultural relativism is illustrated more clearly when postmodernism is applied to literature. Applying postmodern philosophy to literature results in deconstructionism. In deconstructionism, there is no objective meaning within a text to be discovered by the reader. Therefore, the reader is free to create his or her own meaning of a text. In regards to cultural relativism, different groups may create different interpretations of any piece of literature to support the group's view rather than discover an objective meaning intended by the original author or original context. What results from deconstructionism is a loss of objective meaning for any piece of literature. If any group can define for itself the meaning of any piece of literature, the results on Christian evangelism would be devastating. When a Christian shares the pathway to salvation through Jesus Christ with an atheist, a skeptic, or a Muslim; it is assumed by the objectivist (Christian) that the objective truths identified in Scripture apply to all people. However, if deconstruction is the case and the truth of a piece of literature is culturally relative (determined by the group) rather than universally objective (true for everybody), then the atheist, skeptic or Muslim could simply respond to the Christian's message by saying, "Well, that's just your interpretation." Deconstructionism is dangerous because it allows individual groups to interpret any piece of literature to mean whatever the group wants it to mean without any regard for an author intended meaning or an interpretation that is universally true and applicable to all people.

Deconstructionism is a classic case of *eisogesis* versus *exegesis*. *Eisogesis* has as its pre-fix the Greek word *eis*, which means "into." *Eisogesis* is reading a meaning into a text. This is exactly what postmodernists do when reading a piece of literature. They freely insert their own subjective meanings into the literature with no regard for the author-intended meaning or original context. In contrast, *exegesis* has as its pre-fix the Greek word *ex* which means "from" or "out of." *Exegesis* is drawing a meaning out of a text. In opposition to deconstructionism, the modern era's approach to literature sought to discover the meaning of a text by studying the author's intent or the immediate context of the literature to better understand the intended meaning of the original text.

The Philosophical Differences between Modernism and Postmodernism

The main philosophical differences between modernism and postmodernism can be divided into three main categories: 1) Metaphysical realism, 2) Truth, and 3) Objectivity. These three categories reveal the three main points of contention between the philosophies of modernism and postmodernism.

Metaphysical Realism

Metaphysical realism is the belief in a real, external reality outside of an individual's mind. A Modernist (metaphysical realist) affirms the existence of a metaphysically real world outside of his or her own mind and believes that such a world is discovered. Postmodernists, who deny metaphysical realism, believe that there is no objective reality to be discovered. Rather, people are left with their own subjective realities that they create themselves (within their own minds). The consequences of the postmodern denial of metaphysical realism will be addressed later in the chapter.

Correspondence Theory of Truth

The correspondence theory of truth (see chapter two) is currently being threatened by postmodernism. According to postmodernism, truth is a construct of meaning created by individuals or groups and is not related in any way to an external reality (a reality that exists outside of one's mind). Therefore, it is common for postmodernists to respond to a Christian presentation of the Gospel by stating, "Well, that may be true for you, but it is not true for me." In response to such a statement, I offer the following cases in order to illustrate that everyone affirms the correspondence theory of truth in practice even if it is denied in theory. In other words, people may say that truth does not correspond to reality but the following cases provide evidence that it does.

Case # 1 – The Starbucks Case

Suppose a postmodern professor does not believe in external reality. In a lecture, the professor proposes an argument for the denial of metaphysical realism in an effort to refute the correspondence theory of truth. The student (who believes in the correspondence theory of truth) approaches the professor after class in his office and asks him to meet him later that evening at the Starbucks down the street. In so doing, the student and professor agree to meet at a particular time (5:30 pm) on a particular date (October 18th) at a particular Starbucks location (on the corner of Baseline and Haven). Note: if the professor shows up at the agreed date, time, and location, he has used the correspondence theory of truth. The professor first used the correspondence theory of truth in processing the content of the conversation that took place in his office. He used the theory again when he arrived on time at the correct Starbucks prepared to discuss why he does not believe that truth corresponds to reality. Can you point out the contradiction between the professor's beliefs and his practice?

Case # 2 – The Red Light District

Suppose the same postmodern professor has just given a two-hour lecture on the postmodern theory of reality. His lecture included an explicit denial of metaphysical reality and the correspondence theory of truth. The professor then went out to the parking lot and got in his car to drive home. After exiting the freeway, he approaches a red light on a street corner that is two blocks away from his home. In his eagerness to get home and see his wife and children, he speeds through the red light. Consequently, a police officer pulls him over and proceeds to write him a ticket for $350. Could the professor get out of the ticket with a postmodern argument (similar to the two-hour lecture given in the classroom just moments ago) or is there a stark inconsistency between the material discussed in the lecture and reality? Do you think the police officer will disregard the infraction upon hearing the professor argue that the light was not red for him? Could the professor get off the hook by arguing that the streetlight does not even exist for him and the red light was only a construct of the police officer's mind? No! This case presents another situation where truth is a relation of correspondence between a

thought (there is a red light in front of me) and reality (there is a red light in front of me). People cannot consistently apply postmodern philosophy to their daily lives without encountering some major obstacles to their worldview as expressed by these two examples. While postmodernism may sound good in a philosophy classroom lecture, it is impractical when applied to everyday experiences.

Objectivity

Postmodernists often use objectivity to expel Christian arguments from classroom discussions. They frequently tell Christians in secular classrooms that they cannot participate in the discussion because they are not objective. What does it mean to be objective? The word "objective" has two different meanings. The traditional (modern era) concept of "objective" is called rational objectivity. Rational objectivity is the ability to discern between good and bad reasons for affirming a belief in an effort to discern whether the belief is true or false. The postmodern concept of "objective" is called psychological objectivity. Psychological objectivity is the absence of bias or commitment towards any particular conclusion. Let us examine the differences between rational and psychological objectivity in an effort to determine which definition is more consistent with a Christian worldview.[3]

Psychological Objectivity

When a postmodernist says, "You should be objective" they are talking about psychological objectivity. In psychological objectivity, people are to remain equally unbiased or uncommitted (50% / 50%) about every issue. However, are people really unbiased (50% / 50%) on every issue? No! It is impossible to remain unbiased on every issue. While people may be unbiased (50% / 50%) about the issues that they know nothing or very little about, they certainly are not psychologically objective about the issues that they have studied intensely.

An absence of bias is a poor goal for education. First, if an absence of bias is the goal of education in the secular institutions, then why should a student study anything? Students come to a class with limited knowledge about subjects and are expected to learn. Part of the learning process includes the formation of judgments about the issues. How can education adequately promote learning while at the same time promote an absence of bias via psychological objectivity? If the goal of education is to be psychologically objective about a topic and most students are psychologically objective about topics before they study them, then why should anyone study anything? How do students develop well-informed positions on issues in institutions whose goals are to encourage them to be psychologically objective? Furthermore, psychological objectivity is detrimental to people's understanding of practical knowledge. For example, are science teachers psychologically objective about whether the earth is flat? Are math teachers psychologically objective about whether a square has four sides? Are history teachers psychologically objective about whether a constitution of the United States actually exists? If the answers to these questions are "No," then why are Christians being forced to remain psychologically objective about issues that they have formed reliable conclusions about?

Rational Objectivity

In opposition to psychological objectivity, the objectivity of the Modern era (rational objectivity) taught that people have the ability to discern between good and bad reasons for affirming a belief in an effort to determine whether one's belief is true or false. Therefore, people should examine the evidence for a belief and determine whether someone has good reasons for affirming his or her belief. Unfortunately, psychological objectivity does not promote productive debate among scholars who hold competing views in an effort to arrive at objective truth. Psychological objectivity allows for everyone in the discussion to be correct. It forces everyone in the discussion to affirm (unbiased and with or without good reasons) all opposing views. Rational objectivity, however, promotes not only a pursuit of objective truth but also an engaging way of arriving at it. Only when students and professors are free to share the reasons for their beliefs, examine the evidence, and draw logical conclusions will true learning actually take place.

The difference between psychological and rational objectivity is critical for Christian apologists to grasp (especially when preparing for college). Christians hold dogmatic views about objective reality, objective truth,

and objective morality. Therefore, it is unacceptable to allow postmodernists to mandate psychological objectivity upon every student in a classroom or every person in a discussion. It is unacceptable for a Christian who believes in a monotheistic God to be forced to equally affirm atheism, agnosticism, or Hinduism. It is also unacceptable for a Christian who believes that Jesus is the only way to salvation to be forced to be unbiased towards the doctrine of salvation that teaches that all religions lead to salvation (universalism). It is also unacceptable for Christians who oppose homosexuality to be forced to affirm it as a morally equal practice to heterosexuality (especially when the Bible affirms heterosexuality and explicitly condemns homosexuality). If the postmodern understanding of objectivity (psychological objectivity) continues to be affirmed in our society, then people will naturally embrace all beliefs as equal and lose the foundation to determine the objective truth of certain beliefs and/or the objective morality of certain behaviors.

No Meta-Narrative

Postmodernists not only deny metaphysical realism, the correspondence theory of truth, and rational objectivity, but they also deny the existence of a meta-narrative. A meta-narrative is a universal story that applies to all people. For example, Christians affirm a meta-narrative that includes God creating the universe, the fall of man, and the restoration of man through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Christians affirm that the Bible reveals a meta-narrative that is true for all people. It is the meta-narrative revealed in the Bible that drives evangelism and missions. However, postmodernists deny the existence of a meta-narrative. Postmodernists argue that rather than a universal story that is true for all people, each individual group determines reality, truth, and morality for itself.[4]

No Dichotomies

Postmodernists not only deny metaphysical realism, the correspondence theory of truth, rational objectivity, and the existence of a meta-narrative, but they also argue against the existence of dichotomies. A dichotomy is a separation of two opposing parts. Applied to philosophy, a dichotomy is a separation of opposing beliefs. For example, a separation between Eastern and Western thought would be an example of a dichotomy. Postmodernists reject all dichotomies. Postmodernists deny that an actual separation between beliefs exists such that no actions, beliefs, or thoughts could ever be affirmed as being objectively better than others.[5] For example, a Christian has no foundation for arguing that heterosexuality is better than homosexuality, if dichotomies do not exist. If one denies dichotomous thinking, then theism could never be affirmed as being superior to atheism, a woman choosing to give birth to her child would not be morally better than having an abortion, and being honest could never be affirmed as being morally better than cheating in any objective sense. In postmodernism, no individual or group can ever oppose the actions or beliefs of another individual or group on any objective grounds because there are no objective "better or worse than" actions or beliefs once one denies all dichotomies.

As illustrated above, a denial of dichotomies results in a philosophical system that affirms all beliefs and values as equal. My concern as a pastor and a teacher is that it will become more and more difficult for Christians to evangelize a lost world whose basic philosophical assumption is that every individual person and group possesses the truth for themselves. Such a position may render the Gospel message irrelevant for many people who have defined their own truth and who can no longer recognize the difference between objective right beliefs or values and wrong ones.

Responses to Postmodernism

Self-Refutation

The first response to postmodernism is to point out the self-refuting nature in the denial of dichotomous thinking. Simply demonstrate that if there is no such thing as dichotomous thinking (better or worse than statements) then postmodernism should not be a view worth holding under the assumption that it is a better view than modernism.[6] While postmodernists will never explicitly say, "postmodernism is better than modernism,"

they demonstrate this belief in their destruction of modern-era philosophy. When postmodernists claim that people should affirm that "All beliefs are equal," they are implicitly affirming the acceptance of dichotomous thinking. They are demonstrating an acceptance of dichotomous thinking by either explicitly or implicitly affirming that the statement "All beliefs are equal" is better than the statement "Some beliefs are better than others."

The Christian apologist must push the issue against the postmodernist at this point. If dichotomies really do not exist (no beliefs are intrinsically better than others are), then a dichotomy between modernism and postmodernism cannot exist. The postmodernist must concede that the belief, "All beliefs are equal" is not intrinsically better than the belief, "Some beliefs are better than others." So, "Why should anyone accept postmodernism?" Postmodernism is self-refuting as a worldview because in one breath the philosophy affirms that all beliefs are equal and in the next breath, postmodern philosophers promote their position as superior to modernism.

Do Unto Others

The "Do unto others" argument reveals a contradiction by extending a consistent application of relativism to everyday experiences. It is one thing to theorize about relativism, it is quite another thing to live it out consistently. C.S. Lewis pointed out the hypocrisy of relativism in *Mere Christianity* when he said, "Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining, 'It's not fair.'"[7] C.S. Lewis observed the double standard involved in relativism. Relativists claim that there are no objective moral standards until someone does something against the relativist that he or she believes is objectively morally wrong. One of the ways to point out the fatal philosophical flaw in postmodernism's "relative" view of morality is to do unto others as they do not want you to do to them. Do something to the relativist that would cause them to appeal to objective moral values such as fairness and justice.

As a teacher trying to convince my students to affirm objective truth and objective morality, I have learned that people usually demonstrate a distain for relativism when injustice is imposed upon them. Therefore, I challenge my postmodern thinking students to abandon relativism by imposing the following statement upon them: "All postmodern students will receive a grade of F in my class if they are postmodernists at the end of the semester." Most students who hear this assertion will perk their heads up and demand an explanation on the spot. My explanation is simple, "If you are a postmodernist and believe that truth and morality are relative, I am simply announcing my own moral preference towards postmodern students. An F is the grade that I believe 'postmodern thinking' students should receive if they embrace moral relativism at the end of the semester."

Students usually complain. However, as soon as a student says, "That's not fair" he or she is doing exactly what C.S. Lewis observed. Many people will affirm postmodern philosophy about truth and morality until that truth or morality affects them personally. Then, they turn to the objective position. However, if there is no objective morality, then what is objectively wrong with a teacher giving an F to a student who earned a higher grade just because the teacher does not like the student's personal beliefs? Furthermore, one could argue, if there is no objective morality that governs all people, what would prohibit a teacher from distributing grades by pulling random letters out of a hat. As soon as someone objects to the teacher's manner of grading and appeals to an objective standard for teachers to produce grades, then one is no longer a relativist but an objectivist.

If someone is a consistent postmodernist, then he or she does not believe that reasons are necessary to justify beliefs. If postmodernism is the case, then people affirm beliefs for their own reasons (or maybe no reason at all). If postmodernism is the case, then nobody could object to even the most appalling of imposed beliefs.

To demonstrate the flaw of cultural relativism, consider the uproar that occurred after the United States was struck by terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001. If cultural relativism is the case, then an American could never object to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 as being objectively morally wrong. Unfortunately for the postmodernist, the best objection to any terrorist attack could only be: "I did not prefer what happened!" When an American objects to the terrorist attacks that occurred on 9/11, he does so under an assumed universally accepted moral code that people should not crash planes into buildings and destroy innocent lives and public property. However, postmodernism cannot provide a decent response to terrorism based on principled grounds.

Postmodernism affirms that cultures or groups do not have the right to impose their values on other cultures or groups. Postmodernists might be inclined to think that the terrorists were imposing their moral values on Americans during the attacks on 9/11 (rendering the terrorist attacks wrong). However, postmodernists would ultimately have to concede that if the events of 9/11 were acceptable to group A (Muslim terrorists), then group B (America) could not object on universally objective grounds. The reason Americans would not have the right to object to terrorist attacks imposed by other groups is because no culture or group has the authority to determine that another culture or group's actions are morally wrong. When postmodernists object to morally horrific acts imposed between cultures, they are violating their own principle. Postmodernists value the principle: "cultures determine their own morality." However, it would be a contradiction for a postmodernist to allow an American to object to Muslim terrorism on principled grounds while simultaneously shutting the door on a valid Christian objection to homosexual marriage, abortion, or euthanasia on principled grounds. If postmodernism would allow an American to argue that terrorism is wrong because it kills innocent people, why can't a Christian object to abortion for the same reason?

Tolerance

Postmodernists often affirm their position in the name of tolerance. They claim that tolerance is a virtue that should be upheld in people's interaction with one another. In the secular classroom, tolerance is imposed by forcing students to be politically correct by affirming beliefs that they may ordinarily reject. There are two responses to the postmodern view of tolerance that should be advanced by Christian apologists.[8]

First, if postmodernism is true, then there are no virtues such as justice, fairness, and tolerance. Therefore, to embrace postmodernism on the virtue of tolerance when postmodernism does not embrace any virtues is self-refuting.

Second, the very definition of the word "tolerance" has two different meanings. Modernists and postmodernists disagree on the definition of tolerance. The modernist definition is more in line with the traditional meaning of tolerance. The traditional definition of tolerance, as defined by Webster's dictionary, is to recognize and respect other's beliefs, practices, etc. without sharing them. The traditional view of tolerance means that a tolerant person is one who disagrees with another's practices or beliefs but does so with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15) not affirmation and acceptance. On the other hand, the postmodern definition of tolerance says that people are to affirm the beliefs and practices of others as equal to their own. The contradiction with the postmodern definition, however, is that the postmodernist is tolerant of other people's beliefs until those beliefs threaten or disagree with his own view of postmodernism. This is a classic case of self-refutation.

Scripture supports the concept of objective truth

The Bible supports a modernist (objective) view of truth and morality. From Moses and the prophets to Jesus and the apostles, truth and morality are presented as objective. A postmodern (subjective) perspective on truth and morality is condemned in Scripture. There is a common recurring theme in the book of Judges that says, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). The proverbs expand on the dangers of man setting his own standard for truth and morality. "All a man's ways seem right to him, but the Lord weighs the heart" (Proverbs 21:2). "There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers; those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth" (Proverbs 30:12). "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12). The teachings of Jesus warn people of the sins that come from following their own sinful hearts (Matthew 15:19). In the epistles, the growth of a postmodern-type of rebellion is a sign of the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Let us consider some other significant biblical teachings on objective truth and morality. These passages should solidify the case that the Bible affirms objective truth and morality.

Psalm 86:11

"Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth."

Psalm 86 is a combination of a lament and a petition by David. David begins the psalm by pleading for God to answer him and to protect his life. Asking for grace and joy, David pleads with God again to hear his prayer and grant him mercy. David acknowledges that there is no one like God and no work as great as the Lord's work. He also recognizes that all of the nations will eventually bow down to God (a common theme throughout Scripture) for He alone is God. David continues his petition by asking God to teach him His way so that he can walk in the truth.

There may be many ways for a man to live his life, but there is only one true way. Only one way that corresponds to reality. David affirms an objectivist view of truth when he asks God to show him that way. We all have much to learn about our own pursuit of truth from this prayer of David. One lesson is to ask God to teach us His way so that we can take that way and live by it more consistently. The truth is that God is teaching us His way. We may recognize it better through prayer, meditation, memorizing Scripture, reading and studying His Word, listening to biblically-sound sermons, and enjoying fellowship with the family of believers.

John 18:38

"What is truth?"

In John 18:38, Pontius Pilate asks the question that many philosophers continue to wrestle with today: "What is truth?" An understanding of the circumstances of Jesus' trial will demonstrate an incredible irony about the biblical understanding of truth.

John 18-19 records Jesus' trial before Pilate. The passage records the dialogues between Jesus and Herod Antipas, Jesus and Pilate, and Pilate and the Jews. When this passage is analyzed carefully, you may begin to wonder who is actually on trial. While Jesus is condemned to death by crucifixion, He gives no answer to Pilate's inquiry about where He is from. After not responding to Pilate's inquiry, Pilate tells Jesus that he has the authority to release or crucify Him. Jesus responds, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above." In other words, the ultimate authority to crucify or set Jesus free comes from the Father, not the Jews, and certainly not Pilate.

What is interesting about the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate is what occurs behind closed barracks in Pilate's palace. As Pilate questions Jesus, he tries to discover the truth through interrogation. Pilate begins by asking Jesus if He is the King of the Jews. Jesus responds to Pilate's questions with a question, "Is that your idea or did others talk to you about me?" It is time for every individual to personally come to terms with this question that Jesus asks, especially for those who have been raised in a "Christian home." It is not enough to call ourselves Christians only because we were raised in Christian homes. It is not enough that your parents told you about Jesus or may have forced their Christian beliefs upon you. The purpose of studying Christian philosophy and apologetics is to examine the evidence and follow it to its logical conclusions for ourselves. It is time to begin making your own decision about Jesus. Notice what happened to Pilate! When he examined the evidence about Jesus, he found no fault in Him. I hope that you will reach the same conclusion about Jesus. Rather than reaching it timidly as did Pilate, you must reach it with great boldness and conviction. Will you take a stand to defend Christ even to the point of rejection by the multitudes?

While we have seen a contextual flow of the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate, the probing in the middle of the discussion is quite ironic. While still in the inner barracks of Pilate's palace the first time, Pilate asked Jesus, "So you are a king, then?" Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Pilate responded with the relevant question, "What is truth?" It is ironic that Jesus is the Truth! Pilate is looking the truth in the eyes as he is asking the question, "What is truth?" Truth is not only a proposition that corresponds to reality; truth is also encompassed in a person: the very person of Jesus Christ. Jesus' divinity, life, testimony, and teachings correspond to reality and are objectively true. He validates His claims to be the Truth in the correspondence sense by resurrecting from the dead. An examination of the arguments for and against the

resurrection of Jesus Christ will be evaluated in chapter nine. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that proves that He is the Truth!

John 14:6

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Jesus' statement in John 14:6 affirms an objective and personal definition of truth. Jesus not only taught that truth was objective, but He also taught that He was the truth. Postmodernists have fought to discredit Jesus as the only objective means for attaining eternal life. However, an examination of the context of Jesus' message to His disciples will reveal that objectivity was the intent of His message. Certainly, Jesus was not teaching His disciples that He needed to die for them so that they could create their own pathway to God. Neither was Jesus saying that He provided one of many pathways to salvation.

Jesus was teaching His disciples that He would have to go away and prepare a place for them. In His lesson, He taught His disciples that He would come back for them and eventually they would be with Him in the place where He was going. If this sounds vague, imagine the perplexity of the disciples as they heard this teaching for the first time. Your response may have been similar to Thomas', "We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" While Jesus' teaching caused initial doubt in the minds of His disciples, it became much clearer when Jesus responded, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

In this statement, we recognize three facts about Jesus. First, Jesus claimed to be the Way. The way is further expressed in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it." The way that leads through the narrow gate is Jesus Christ. Christianity has been accused of being exclusive in its criteria for eternal life claiming that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. However, the exclusivity of Christianity for eternal salvation is not the idea of some elite Christian organization or denomination based on a biased opinion. The belief that salvation is "only attained through Jesus Christ" comes from the words of Jesus Christ Himself. If salvation is attained through a variety of means and Jesus' claims of exclusion are not true, then Christianity is unjust by falsely condemning people who do not believe in Jesus to eternal separation from God. However, if Jesus is correct (His life and works demonstrate that He is the Messiah), then the exclusivity of Christianity is not cruel and unjust, but graciously loving. If Jesus' claims of exclusivity are true and He is indeed the only way to eternal life, then the revelation of such truth is one of the greatest acts of love and kindness ever revealed. Remember, Jesus warned people of the danger of the destination of other roads and confirmed that the only way to salvation (an eternal life with God) is through Himself. His warning was clearly an act of love!

Second, Jesus claimed to be the Truth. Remember, truth is a relation of correspondence between the content of a proposition and external reality. Jesus revealed Himself as the truth, which isolated Him. Jesus made a bold proclamation that all eternal pathways apart from Him lead to destruction. He also presented His works and teaching as corresponding to reality (the way the world actually happens to be). If Jesus is the truth, then this is the revelation of all time for all people. Therefore, it is essential to examine the evidence so that you can make an informed decision for yourself as to whether or not Jesus' claims of being the truth actually do correspond to reality.

Finally, Jesus claimed to be the Life. As "the Life," Jesus is the One who gives purpose and meaning to life. John Piper summarizes the purpose for man's life in his book, *Desiring God: Meditations of A Christian Hedonist*, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."[9] Christians must realize that the purpose of life is about pleasing God forever. Therefore, learning how to glorify God and enjoy Him is something that we must learn and do on earth because it is ultimately, what we will be doing for eternity.

Jesus also speaks to Martha about being the life when He says, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25). In His conversation with Martha, Jesus emphasized that the resurrection would prove His authority to grant eternal life to others. While Jesus' atonement on the cross was the provision for eternal life,

His resurrection provided the assurance that we will live forever with Him in the home that He is preparing for us.

John 8:31-32

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really one of my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

Jesus said that by holding on to His teachings, we will prove to be His disciples. The word "disciple" literally means learner, but may be more accurately reflected as imitator. A true disciple of Jesus is not just one who listens and learns from His teachings, but one who takes it a step further and practices what He taught. If we practice what Christ preached and imitate Him, not only will we prove to be His disciples, but we will also know the truth and the truth will set us free. What is the truth? The truth is that which corresponds to reality. As we discover the truth, as it relates to Christ and His teachings, we discover the answers to the age old questions that people have been asking about life: "Why am I here?," "What is my purpose?," "What should I devote my life to?," "What should I do for a career?," "What should I do with my material possessions?," "How should I collect material possessions?," "What should I do for pleasure, entertainment?," "What can I do to serve my creator?" All of these questions have answers waiting to be discovered in the teachings of Christ. Jesus' teachings provide us with the content to discern what is of value in this life and what is not. Everything we need to know about life is there in the teachings of Jesus!

In John 8:32, Jesus said that the truth will set us free. But, from what will the truth set us free? The truth of Christ has set us free from many aspects of bondage.[10] Truth has set us free from fear. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind." The disciple of Christ may suffer, become isolated from people who choose to do wrong, and even go to a martyr's death. No matter what believers are called to endure, there is nothing to fear. Followers of Christ are reminded that He is always with them. God will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). With this promise, believers can face all things with courage and boldness, knowing that Jesus has set us free from the bondage of fear.

Not only has the truth set us free from fear, but it has also set us free from ourselves. Paul recognized the freedom from self in 1 Corinthians 15:31, when he said emphatically, "I die daily." Paul recognized the need for a daily crucifixion of our personal and selfish desires in the process of experiencing the freedom of being new creations in Christ. When we are free by the truth of Christ, we are set free from a life of selfish ambition and vain conceit.

Christ's truth also brings us freedom from other people. Many people are driven by the opinions and affection of others. For many, the desire for affection often leads to a life consumed with gaining the acceptance of others. Unfortunately, pursuing and/or gaining acceptance from others is often harmful to the health of people's spiritual and psychological development. The good news for those in bondage to the opinions of others is that the truth of Christ sets them free to please only an audience of one: God.

The truth of Christ not only sets us free from the bondage of fear, self, and others, but it also sets us free from the bondage of sin. Everyone is under the curse of sin, but not everyone is held captive by it. Unfortunately, sin has taken mastery over people's lives and it is trying to destroy them. We are really left with a choice: either we learn to master our sin and control it, or it will take mastery over us. Through the truth and power of Christ, we are set free from the bondage of sin's reign over us. Jesus also provides people with the power to control their sinful desires and pursue the sanctification process of becoming more like Him.

While the truth of God has set us free from the bondage of fear, self, others, and sin, it has also set us free to do something. Many criminals who have been released from prison go back into the world only to continue to commit the same crimes for which they were originally incarcerated. One must wonder if the authorities would release a person from prison if they knew that he or she would return to the very same criminal activity. This type of behavior may seem odd, yet it is observed among many followers of Christ who have been set free from the bondage of sin's incarceration. Why would a Christian return to the behaviors, thoughts, attitudes, and bondage for which Christ had set him free? While we must remember what Christ saved us from, we must never forget what Christ saved each one of us to do. We have all been given unique gifts, talents, and interests for which we can serve God better and it would be a good use of our time and energy to refine those gifts and talents and continue to look for opportunities to use them to glorify God and serve one another.

Romans 1:25

"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie."

Romans 1:18-25 condemns the Gentile world for suppressing the truth of God. Paul argues that God is being revealed to them clearly through nature so that they are all without excuse. Although God has made His presence known to them, they still committed a great blasphemy by serving and worshipping created things rather than the Creator. In the midst of this great guilt, they exchanged the truth of God for a lie. The worship of false gods, materialism, and created beings such as birds, reptiles, and animals or even humankind is a great blasphemy to the One who deserves our undivided praise and worship.

The real question to consider, in light of our criticism of postmodern truth and morality, is how similar was the culture of Rome (when Paul wrote this letter) to the culture of our American society today? What are people exchanging for the worship of the immortal God in our society? What is the great guilt or blasphemy in our society? We must realize that God is the one timeless constant in a world of change. But even in a world that has changed so drastically since this letter was written around A.D. 57, there is still such a great similarity in the rebellious nature of man. As in the days of Paul, men continue "to exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve created things rather than the creator who is forever praised."

Paul's evaluation of the Roman lifestyle is similar to our evaluation of postmodern philosophy. In Romans 1 and in postmodern philosophy today, man is the object of his own affection. It is a philosophy where man makes his own rules. It is a philosophy where man has become his own god. Perhaps, Rome in the A.D. 50's was not much different from the postmodern society of America in the 2000's. Believers and non-believers alike would do well to evaluate Paul's message to the Romans. Romans 1 is just as relevant and convicting towards our postmodern society today as it was towards the Roman world in the AD 50's. If you consider the rampant disrespect for God, the desire for constant pleasure, and the rise of immoral behavior, the two societies are not very different.

Concluding Thoughts

All Christians need to be informed about postmodernism's devastating influences upon our society. Postmodernism is especially influential at the undergraduate collegiate levels of philosophy (Philosophy 101 and Student Life) and within the teenage culture. Postmodernism may not be as prevalent at the higher levels of college education (Master's and Doctorate levels) because most scholars are aware of the self-refuting nature of postmodernism and the philosophical problem of maintaining self-refuting claims. However, it is a Christian's responsibility to educate and warn people about the dangerous ideologies in society. It is part of an effort to be better prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15). In addition, if Christians in America have not yet experienced postmodernism firsthand (either through a friend, a family member, a teacher, or even as a struggle within themselves), they do not have to look far to see postmodernism's influence upon our society. Postmodernism is often displayed in the media through television, movies, and even some music. It would be wise to listen for the voice of postmodernism in our culture. While many postmodernists do not identify themselves explicitly as "postmodernists," the more aware people are of the philosophy, the more they will recognize it when they encounter it.

This chapter was an introduction to postmodernism. The evaluation served to define postmodernism as a philosophy and to highlight the main controversial ideas between postmodernism and modernism. Within the chapter, three modernist responses to postmodernism were articulated. Five Bible verses were also discussed in order to demonstrate the Bible's position on truth and morality. The Bible affirms the correspondence theory of truth. The Bible also teaches that truth is directly related to Jesus Christ. In regards to morality, the Bible affirms objective moral values that have been established by God and should be universally followed by all people.

CHAPTER FOUR

ARGUMENTS FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

The Pillar of God

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
-- Psalm 53:1

Attacks against theism abound in many academic institutions and throughout our society. Therefore, Christians must be prepared to defend theism.

The arguments for God's existence discussed in this chapter are the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, and the teleological argument. Pascal's wager is analyzed as an argument designed to present the consequences of belief in God to those who are indifferent about belief in God's existence. A response to Stephen Cahn's article about the irrelevance of philosophical arguments for God's existence is included because Christians should be encouraged by the evidence and philosophical arguments that support belief in God's existence. A response to renowned historical atheist Bertrand Russell regarding the apparent logical problem with belief in an uncaused, eternal God is provided in light of a proper understanding of God's eternality as established in the ontological argument.

It is not as important to know the specific steps of each labeled argument as it is to develop a comprehensive apologetic for theism. While there certainly is a place for philosophy students to know the details of each step in each specific argument for God's existence, the ultimate goal for the Christian apologist is to be able to present a comprehensive apologetic for theism in an effort to provide others with reasons for the hope that we have as Christians (1 Peter 3:15).

What is an argument?

The word "argument" carries with it an initial negative connotation because it is often confused with the manner in which one argues. For example, if I say, "Today, I am going to argue with an atheist," one may think that I am going to start a yelling match with someone who denies the existence of God. However, if my argument turns into a shouting match, as many arguments among relatives, friends or children do; then I have demonstrated a way of arguing rather than an argument itself. A teenager could present an argument with his parents regarding why he should be allowed to spend the night at his friend's house on Friday night without ever raising his voice. Likewise, in contrast to a yelling match, when a philosopher talks about an argument what he actually means is the presentation of a case. Making an argument is the ability to present reasons and reliable evidence in a convincing manner for your case.[1] Arguments are hardly convincing when they are reduced to shouting matches. Therefore, the next time you encounter a point of disagreement with someone; it would be wise to engage in the conversation in a polite, gentle, and respectful manner: calmly make your case, give good reasons for your belief, and support your reasons with reliable evidence. This is the essence of respectful argumentation.

What do you mean by prove?

When someone asks if it is possible to prove that God exists, the first question to ask is "What do you mean by prove?" In today's society, there are different understandings of what constitutes adequate criteria for proof. First, there is the scientific proof. Scientific claims are proved true or false by repeated observations and conclusions. However, when someone sets out to prove that God exists or that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he can hardly do so through repeated observation. People should recognize that any proof for an event that occurred in the past (like the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the invasion of Pearl Harbor, the creation of the universe, or the resurrection of Jesus Christ) is not provable scientifically (through repeated observation). Historical events are not proved by repeated observation because they are "one time" events. While science may be helpful in developing a philosophical worldview, one cannot determine through repeated observation the origin of the universe. Furthermore, it has already been argued that science is constantly changing with the improvement of scientific instruments. If much of what we know has been discovered in other ways besides repeated observation (i.e. historical events), then there must be other criteria for proof than repeated observation.

Another theory for proof in our society is universal consensus. This argument for proof states that if there is a universal consensus (an agreement among everyone), then the premise must be true. However, a *universal* consensus means that there is no debate about the issue because all sides agree that the conclusion is true. If there was a debate, then both sides eventually conceded to a common conclusion. However, applied to science,

how often does an actual *universal* consensus occur (if ever)? While there may be agreement about what is observed, mere consensual agreement does not necessarily make a proposition true. For example, there was a time when the majority consensus was that the earth was flat. However, when the ability to observe the earth improved, the majority consensus shifted to an agreement that the earth is round. A consensus does not mean that what everyone agrees upon is necessarily true. A consensus only shows that people agree.

In reality, there may not be any such thing as a universal consensus (even on scientifically validated facts). Regarding the form of the earth, for example, even in the year 2010, there are groups of people who still believe that the earth is flat. These people, I believe, are wrong. The reason for mentioning them is to illustrate that if there are disagreements about the shape of the earth in 2010 with all of the current scientific evidence to support that the earth is round, there may certainly be disagreements about other scientific issues, rendering a "universal consensus" an inadequate criterion for proof.

Even if people assume that there are universal consensuses, a majority who is silencing the minority position could have coerced the consensus. This seems to be happening in secular education concerning the philosophy of origins. The majority has embraced scientific naturalism and has silenced (by force) the intelligent design movement. When a science professor at a secular university wrote about intelligent design as a possibility for origins (even without implying that the intelligent designer was God), the professor was ostracized by his peers, lost tenure, and eventually lost his job.[2] This example demonstrates that what may appear to be a consensus from a distance may really be coercion.

A consensus may also be pronounced by an activist group without providing an open invitation for debate. In such cases, a consensus is not an adequate criterion for proof. The consensus can possibly be wrong upon further research. The pronounced "consensus" may not be a consensus at all. An open debate will allow for both sides to be heard in an effort to arrive at truth.

A final theory for proof is philosophical. A philosophical proof is not the same as a scientific proof. A philosophical proof also does not need to be held by a majority vote or consensus. Philosophical claims are proved much the same way as someone proves that a criminal committed a crime when there were no eyewitnesses present to observe the crime. How does an attorney convince a jury that a criminal committed a crime when he has no eyewitnesses to call?[3] He examines and presents the evidence for his case and then draws the logical conclusions that follow. Is there enough evidence to prove that God exists? Is there enough evidence to demonstrate that God created the universe? Let us enter the courtroom of philosophical argumentation for God's existence and examine the evidence. Let us also evaluate the rebuttals from the opposition and consider a verdict!

The Ontological Argument

St. Anselm (1033-1109 A.D.) wrote *Proslogion*, a controversial argument for God's existence known as the ontological argument.[4] The ontological argument derives its meaning from the Greek word *ontos* which means being. It is based on being and existence. Anselm wrote the ontological argument while pondering the cosmological argument. However, years of teaching experience have led me to believe that understanding the ontological argument will help people understand and appreciate the cosmological argument. With that in mind, let us examine Anselm's ontological argument.

Anselm begins the ontological argument by recognizing that when a fool says in his heart that there is no God (Psalm 14:1), he demonstrates that he understands what is meant by the term God. The term "God" means "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." God is, by definition, a being by which nothing greater can be conceived. However, if God does not exist, then He would not be the greatest possible being by which nothing greater could be conceived. Anselm states that it is better to exist in reality than only in the mind. What exists only in the mind could never be greater than something that exists in reality because what exists only in the mind does not even exist. Therefore, if God only exists in the mind and not also in reality, then He would not be the greatest possible being that could be conceived. What exists in reality and in the mind is greater than that which only exists in the mind. For example, consider a horse and a unicorn. The horse is greater than the unicorn on the basis that the horse actually exists in reality. The unicorn is nothing because it only exists in the mind. What makes the horse greater than the unicorn is that the horse actually exists in reality. The unicorn

would not be greater than anything that actually exists in reality because the unicorn does not actually exist. Following the analogy and applying it to God, if God only exists in the mind and not in reality, then God is not only not the greatest being that could be conceived but God would not be greater than anything that actually exists in reality. Therefore, if God is the greatest being by which nothing greater can be conceived, then God must exist in reality and not only in the mind.

The ontological argument certainly has its critics. Guanilo, a critic of Anselm, objected to the ontological argument on the basis of conceiving of a perfect island that does not exist in reality.[5] According to Guanilo, someone could conceive of a perfect island that exists in the mind but does not exist in reality (a place where someone could visit in the real world). He applied this concept to the idea of the most perfect being and argued that God may (as the island) exist only in the mind and not in reality.

Anselm's response to Guanilo's first objection is based on necessary existence. According to Anselm, God is a necessary being. A necessary being is a being who must exist and cannot not exist, a being whose very non-existence is illogical. Those who understand the difference between necessary existence and contingent existence better understand the concept of God as a necessary being. Necessary existence is primary, essential existence. A necessary being is one that does not rely on the existence of anything else for it to exist. As a necessary being, God is an eternal being who did not have a beginning or need a beginning in order to exist. A necessary being is self-sufficient for its own sustained existence. A necessary being is a being who cannot not exist and whose very non-existence is illogical.

In contrast to necessary existence, contingent existence is existence that does rely on the existence of something else logically prior to it. Human beings are contingent beings because our existence relies on the existence of something logically prior to us, namely our parents. God, however, as a necessary being, does not rely on anything else for the origin of His existence or sustained existence. God, as a necessary, eternal being did not have an origin of existence. As an eternal being, God always was and there was never a point when God was not. In response to Guanilo's island example, the difference between the island and God is the difference between contingent and necessary or finite and infinite. Anselm argues that someone could conceive of a greatest possible island that does not also exist in reality because the island is contingent, limited, finite, and physical. However, because God is necessary, unlimited, infinite, and eternal, it would be impossible to conceive of His non-existence; especially in a world where everything else that exists is contingent. Contingency depends on necessity at some point in order to put the contingency into motion. The problem of contingency without a necessary being will be discussed more thoroughly with the cosmological argument. Anselm rests his case by stating that "only in the case of an absolute perfect being must a necessary being that exists in the mind also exist in reality. An absolute perfect being, a necessary being, must exist and cannot not exist; for failure to exist would make the being not absolutely perfect because it is greater to exist in reality than only in the mind."

Guanilo's second objection to the ontological argument is based on conceiving and doubting. Guanilo argues that if God's non-existence were inconceivable based on definitions, no one could doubt. However, people do doubt or deny God's existence (atheists, skeptics, and agnostics). Therefore, God's existence cannot be proved by definitions which is what the ontological argument attempts to do.

Anselm's response to Guanilo's conceiving and doubting argument returns to the need for a definition of necessary existence. Anselm says, "A necessary being is a being whose very essence is existence. A necessary being is a being that cannot not exist." While atheists, skeptics, and agnostics may doubt or deny God's existence, it would be illogical to affirm the non-existence of a necessary being. A non-existent necessary being is a violation of the law of non-contradiction. A person would be just as illogical to maintain the non-existence of a necessary being as he or she would to argue for the existence of married bachelors or an only-child who has a biological sibling.

Guanilo's third and final objection to the ontological argument is based on man's mental limitation. Guanilo argues that "we cannot even begin to conceive of the most perfect being possible." The idea of God is so far beyond the limitations of man's mind that man cannot even begin to think about such a great being. If man cannot even begin to think about such a great being, then such a great being does not have to exist (especially by definitions).

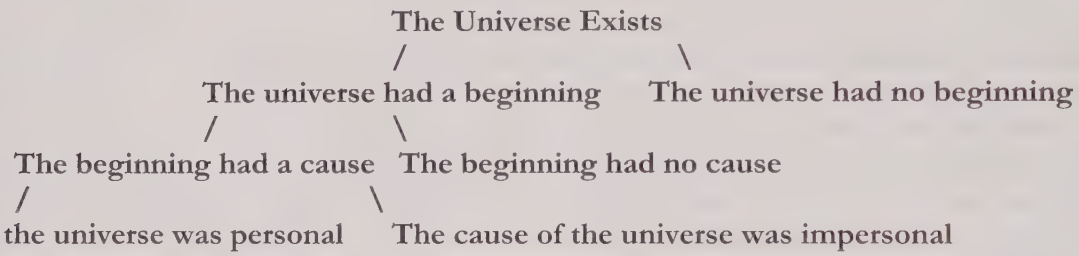
Anselm's response to Guanilo's final objection is a denial of the argument that man cannot begin to conceive of the most perfect being possible. Anselm provides six reasons why the concept of the most perfect

being is conceivable.[6] The most perfect being is conceivable because: 1) God is a common and familiar word, 2) Faith and consciousness provide content for the belief, 3) Not all conceptions are sensible images/abstract thoughts are possible, 4) God can be understood indirectly the way the sun is understood by its rays, 5) Degrees of perfection make the most perfect being a rational concept, and 6) Even an atheist knows what he is denying when he says that God does not exist.

The Cosmological Argument

There are many versions of the cosmological argument. One of the most popular versions is the *kalam* cosmological argument. The *kalam* argument originated among medieval Islamic scholars who set forth an argument for God's existence according to the following deductive format: 1) All beginnings have a cause, 2) The universe had a beginning, 3) Therefore, the universe had a cause.[7]

The Cosmological argument assumes the existence of the universe. For those who are arguing with someone who does not believe that the universe exists or that its existence is knowable, please review the discussion on metaphysical realism in chapter three. Once the existence of the universe is established, then the cosmological argument can be advanced. The following version of the cosmological argument is a combination of versions and will be used to argue for a personal, caused, beginning of the universe. Scientific data and the ontological argument (necessity versus contingency) will help affirm each premise of the argument. The cosmological argument suggested for an introductory study of apologetics is demonstrated in the following format:[8]



The universe had a beginning

Before we consider the arguments for the beginning of the universe, consider the logical implications of a universe with no beginning. Carl Sagan, a well-known atheist philosopher, advanced the theory that the universe was eternal. Sagan coined the popular phrase, "The universe is all that is, was, or ever will be."[9] If the universe has been here forever, as Sagan suggested, the implication would be that the causes and effects of contingency have also been occurring for infinity. However, this is illogical in light of the fallacy of infinite regression. The fallacy of infinite regression says that the contingency of cause and effect cannot regress backwards for infinity without an ultimate first cause. The realm of contingency demands a first cause, at some particular point in the finite past, to begin the contingent cause and effect process. The first cause of the contingency process cannot be restricted to the cause and effect process itself. Therefore, the first cause must be something other than the effect that it caused. The first cause must be either greater than or equal to the effect that it caused. This is why the ontological argument was introduced before the cosmological argument. According to Anselm, the observations of contingency demanded a necessary existence for the existence of the contingent universe to come into being.

J.P. Moreland argues that events themselves are contingent and limited in number as they take place within a particular time restraint.[10] Consider the following example: If there are an infinite number of events between Monday's lecture and Friday's exam, then we would never arrive at Friday's exam. But, we did arrive at Friday's exam, therefore there could not have been an infinite number of events within a given time period. Likewise, if there were an infinite number of events in the universe, as Carl Sagan suggests, then we would have never arrived at the point in time that we are right now.

What scientific evidence supports the theory that the universe had a beginning at some particular point in the finite past? Remember that scientific conclusions are based upon the repetition of observable tests. While no one has successfully observed life coming from non-life, or something coming from nothing, scientific observations lead to conclusions that follow from what is observable. What is scientifically observable in regards to evidence for the beginning of the universe? Matter and energy are observable! The first and second laws of thermodynamics, two scientific laws, present compelling scientific evidence for the beginning of the universe.

The first law of thermodynamics has been used by natural evolutionists to establish an argument that the universe is eternal and did not have a beginning. In its popular form, the first law of thermodynamics roughly states, "Energy can neither be created nor destroyed."[11] The first law of thermodynamics is a law of energy conservation. The law recognizes that calories of energy can transfer from one object to another, can be stored within an object, and can be converted into mechanical energy. However, throughout this process, not one calorie of energy actually goes out of existence. In other words, energy changes form and transfers from one object to another, but it never goes out of existence.

Another understanding of the first law of thermodynamics says, "The amount of actual energy in the universe remains constant."[12] This definition makes no claims about how the energy came to be in the universe. It also does not say if the universe was created or always in existence. Without the philosophical conclusions attached, the first law of thermodynamics only makes the statement that energy does not just disappear or randomly pop into existence. Therefore, the statement, "Energy cannot be created or destroyed" which expressed scientific and philosophical dogmatism in the age of scientific naturalism is nothing more than an observation that energy does not disappear or randomly pop into existence on its own. The honest conclusion from the first law of thermodynamics is that it promotes neither Sagan's theory (the universe was always in existence) nor creationism (that the universe had a beginning that was caused by a personal creator). The honest conclusion one must draw from an examination of the first law of thermodynamics is that it is a statement about the status of energy in the universe. It says nothing, whatsoever, about the origin of energy in our universe or the power that may sustain it.

While the first law of thermodynamics, properly understood, does very little for the case that the universe had a beginning, the second law of thermodynamics does just the opposite. The second law of thermodynamics says, "In a closed system, the amount of usable energy in the universe is decreasing." Norm Geisler points out that the second law of thermodynamics does not interfere with the first law of thermodynamics in a way that one law might cancel the other out. Rather, the second law of thermodynamics amplifies the first law.[13] The second law recognizes that while energy cannot disappear or randomly pop into existence, usable energy is decaying in the universe. Energy will eventually achieve maximum entropy. This means that the usable energy in the universe will eventually be all used up. Think about the implications of the second law of thermodynamics concerning a beginning to the universe. Is it possible that the universe is eternal and that the law of entropy has been occurring for eternity? Obviously not! If the universe is eternal and the law of entropy is valid, then the amount of usable energy in the universe would have been completely used up an infinite amount of time ago. However, if the law of entropy supports a decay of usable energy over time and the usable energy in the universe has not reached a maximum state of entropy at the present time, then there must have been a beginning to the process of entropy at some particular point in the finite past.

An analogy that illustrates the law of entropy is an unraveling ball of yarn. A ball of yarn that is in the process of unraveling represents usable energy as it decays or runs down. Is it possible for a finite ball of yarn to have been unraveling for an infinite amount of time without having reached a point of maximum entropy (having completely unwound) now? No! In fact, if the ball of yarn had been in the process of unraveling for infinity, then it would have completely unwound an infinite amount of time ago![14]

Following the analogy to its logical conclusion, if the universe had been in the process of entropy for an infinite amount of time then it would have reached the point of maximum usable energy distribution (entropy) an infinite amount of time ago. However, the energy in the universe is still in the process of entropy. The universe has not yet reached the state of maximum energy distribution now. Therefore, the evidence presupposes a beginning to the universe where the process of entropy began sometime in the finite past. The second law of thermodynamics provides scientific affirmation for the beginning of the universe. It also provides evidence for a rebuttal against the argument that science has proved that the universe is eternal.

The beginning of the universe had a cause

The second law of thermodynamics and the fallacy of infinite regression provide compelling evidence for the beginning of the universe. The law of causality also helps affirm the beginning of the universe. The law of causality is the self-evident law that every effect has a cause logically prior to it.[15] The law of causality affirms that everything that has a beginning has a cause. If the universe had a beginning, which the second law of thermodynamics implies, then the beginning had to have a cause. Contingent things do not cause themselves. Contingent things come from causes logically prior to them. From our experience, it seems that contingent things produce other contingent things or that contingent existence relies on other contingent existence for its own existence. The problem with the observation that contingency produces contingency is that it leads to an infinite regression of cause and effect without a first cause.[16]

The solution to the problem of the infinite regression of contingent events is discovered by understanding the implications of the ontological argument. If God is a necessary being (a being who does not have a cause), then He would be an excellent candidate for beginning the process of contingency and avoiding the fallacy of infinite regression of contingent events. While it is not the purpose of this step of the cosmological argument to assert that the cause of the beginning of the contingent universe is God, it is the purpose of this step to establish a cause for the contingent universe. Whether the cause of the contingent universe was a necessary being like God or not is debatable at this point. However, the law of causality together with the second law of thermodynamics and the fallacy of infinite regression support a strong case that the universe had a caused beginning. The case that the cause was personal will be established in the final step of the cosmological argument.

The cause of the beginning of the universe was personal

Before the beginning of contingency, there was a constant eternal state of physical nothingness. In order to account for the origin of matter, either something physical (atoms, ions or something else) just popped into existence on its own, or at a particular point in the finite past, a personal, necessary being began the contingency process. It is important to define nothingness as the absence of material reality. However, when one thinks about the origin of the universe, he or she must consider the origin of time, space, energy and matter. A spiritual reality, a necessary being, could still exist amidst the non-existence of space, time, energy and matter. It is logically impossible for an infinite regression of contingent events to go backwards for eternity without a first cause, according to the fallacy of infinite regression of contingent events. It is also impossible for matter or energy to have popped into existence on its own, according to the first law of thermodynamics. Therefore, if it can be demonstrated that the universe had a beginning and the beginning had a cause, then the next step is to ask if the cause of the beginning of the universe was personal or impersonal.

The personal cause of the universe is established by considering that time, space, and matter did not exist prior to the beginning of the universe. The cause of the universe would have had to be timeless, spaceless, and immaterial. The only way for the first event to have come about from a timeless, spaceless, and immaterial state of affairs and at the same time be caused is if the event is a result of the free will action of a personal being.[17]

In summary, it is reasonable to believe that the universe had a beginning that was caused by a personal, necessary being. However, the cosmological argument does not say anything about what this being is like (other than that He must be eternal and necessary). The cosmological argument is certainly not a proof that the God of the Bible exists, but it is a strong argument that the world had a beginning that was directed by the actions of a personal being. The cosmological argument at the very least makes a strong case for some form of theism.[18] Another argument for theism is established by the observation of an overwhelming amount of precise detail found within the physical structures of the universe. For an argument in favor of a personal designer of the detailed structures in the universe, we now turn to the teleological argument for God's existence.

The Teleological Argument

The teleological argument is an argument connecting the details discovered in the universe to a designer of the universe. Like the cosmological argument, the teleological argument starts from human experience. The teleological argument implies that God is the best hypothesis to account for the experiences that we have. The etymological meaning of the teleological argument stems from the Greek word *teleos* which means design. Cambridge University mathematician and English theologian, William Paley (1743-1805), originally created the argument. Paley's *Natural Theology* compares the complexity of the structures discovered in nature to the complexity of the design and purpose found in a watch. The following is an excerpt from Paley's famous work:

> In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone and was asked how the stone came to be there, I might possibly answer that for anything I knew to the contrary it had lain there forever. But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place. I should hardly think of the answer I gave before, that for all I knew the watch might have always been there. Why is it not as admissible in the second case as in the first? For this reason, and for no other, namely, that when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive -- what we could not discover in the stone -- that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose.[19]

While Paley used the example of a human eyeball as the structure that demanded a designer, there are many other examples of scientific details that demand a better explanation than random chance for their origins. In fact, as scientific experimentation has advanced over recent years, the teleological argument has become even more credible for the existence of an intelligent designer. Let us examine the argument according to the following three steps:[20]

All design implies a designer

There is design in the universe

Therefore, there must be a designer of the universe

All design implies a designer

As every effect depends on a cause, the more intricate the effect, the more likely it has been designed for a purpose. In order to demonstrate that all design implies a designer, teleological philosophers have used the following examples to illustrate the point. The following examples illustrate how designs imply a designer.

The automobile

Consider how an automobile is intricately designed so it can travel from destination A to destination B. When my '06 Toyota Tundra stops running properly, I am forced to either fix it myself or hire an auto mechanic to make the necessary repairs. I would never think that the automobile was pieced together by chance. I would also not wait for it to fix itself by random chance, regardless of the period of time that I might have to wait. No, I recognize that the automobile designers at Toyota designed my automobile for a purpose. When the machine malfunctions, it needs the attention of a personal designer to repair it so that it is able to continue functioning and fulfill the purpose for which it was designed.

Mount Rushmore

Mount Rushmore is a famous mountain in South Dakota known for the four presidents' faces carved in the side of it: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. Doane Robinson conceived of the idea in 1923. It was not until 1924 that the carvings began at the hand of carver

Gutzon Borglum. Borglum thought the site was perfect for such a grand design because the carvings would face southeast and would be in the sunlight for most of the day. In addition, he was carving into granite rock, which was not only white in color, but is very resistant to erosion: eroding only one inch every 10,000 years. It is an interesting historical fact that Borglum died in March of 1941 and his son, Lincoln, took over the job. In October of 1941, funds for the project ran out and the carving process was shut down.[21] However, the faces of the four presidents were recognizable icons and many admire the masterpiece today.

Would anyone think that such an intricate work was a product of erosion over billions of years? Is it plausible that the faces on Mount Rushmore came about spontaneously without a guided hand? Of course not! The reason why people would not expect erosion or an accident as a valid explanation for the faces on Mount Rushmore is that Mount Rushmore looks like it was designed by an artist. Even if someone was unaware of the history of its creation, it is still more reasonable to believe that it was designed by a master carver. Like Mount Rushmore, the universe has intricacies that we will soon examine in more detail. These intricacies warrant the work of a master designer over unguided events of random chance or cosmic accident.

Shakespeare's Hamlet

Hamlet, written by William Shakespeare between 1599 and 1601, is a famous tragedy set in Denmark. The play recounts how Hamlet took revenge on his uncle Claudius, who murdered Hamlet's father, the King. Claudius took the throne and married Hamlet's mother. The play vividly explores themes of treachery, revenge, incest, and moral corruption. It is considered by many to be a masterpiece. Would anyone attribute such a masterpiece to monkeys randomly typing on a computer or someone closing his eyes and randomly picking Scrabble letters out of a bag? What are the probabilities that the play is a product of a monkey randomly hitting keys on a computer or Scrabble letters randomly being selected from a bag? Are these hypotheses even remotely plausible, given the intricacies of the story of Hamlet and how it explores various themes common to man? Is it more probable to understand Hamlet as a product of the great literary mind of William Shakespeare? When the complex information found in one protein molecule is considered, conclusions about the origin of life seem to parallel the explanation for the origin of Hamlet: it is more likely the product of an intelligent designer than random chance.[22]

Let us progress to the next step of the teleological argument and examine the intricate design in the universe. In the second step, we will determine whether the intricate design in the universe is only apparent or whether it looks like something that was formed by an intelligent designer.

There is design in the universe

As scientific technology and experimentation have improved, the teleological argument has been strengthened. We have already established how scientific advancements have led to the destruction of past scientific myths about the form of the earth. Is it possible that recent scientific advancements could put an end to naturalism as a valid explanation for origins? Let us examine some scientific realities and determine whether the intricacies of these realities warrant an intelligent designer.

The human eyeball

The human eyeball is a fascinating element of the human body. That the human eyeball works to produce sight and allows what is seen to be remembered in the mind is either a cosmic accident or a construction of a master designer. Consider the intricacies of a human eyeball. The elements that must properly work together in order for sight to occur do not appear to have constructed themselves accidentally.[23] The eye functions like a video camera. Light rays come from objects and arrive on the cornea first. The cornea provides 70% of the refractive power of the eye. After refracting the light rays, it directs them to the lens through an opening which passes light called the pupil. The lens bends and refracts the rays again. It makes a fine adjustment to focus the light rays on the retina. This adjustment is similar to the auto-focus function on cameras. The auto-focus

function is due to the lens' ability to change its refractive power by altering its form and thickness. This function is called accommodation. After the light rays are bent at the lens, they pass through the vitreous (the jelly-like substance filling the back part of the eyeball) and reach the retina. The retina, which makes up the inner lining of the eyeball, functions like a camera film, or a CCD of a digital video camera. Light rays are then converted into electrical impulses by the retina and carried to the brain by the optic nerve. These impulses are processed and perceived as images by the brain.[24]

What is fascinating about this analysis is how science textbooks compare the function of an eyeball to that of a camera or video camera. While many will quickly recognize that cameras are products of designers (i.e. Kodak, Olympus, Canon or Nikon), they will not concede that the eyeball is a product of intelligent design. How is it that natural processes of random chance unguided by an intelligent designer could have formed an eyeball? An empirical examination demonstrates the similarities between the design of a camera and the structure of an eyeball. Given the intricacies of the human eyeball, an intelligent designer is a more likely candidate for the cause of its function than natural evolution and random chance. Furthermore, the ability to observe the human eyeball in detail has made the case for an intelligent designer of the eyeball even stronger today than it was in the 1800's when this argument flourished in the writings of William Paley.

DNA structure

The structure of DNA is both highly advanced and particularly unique among a wide variety of individuals. Every human being has his or her own individual DNA code within the molecular structure of his or her cells. But what is in DNA? How does the structure of DNA promote intelligent design? DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is the molecular structure of a cell formed from nucleotides; it is shaped like a double helix. Philosophers and scientists have compared DNA's advanced structure to languages and computer software. Chuck Colson says that a single cell of DNA contains as much information as the Encyclopedia Britannica - all thirty volumes - three or four times over.[25] The advanced structure of DNA has shifted the debate from simply "a designer of life" to "a designer of the advanced, unique structure within a living cell" that is too advanced to allow for naturalistic explanations. What makes DNA function are not the chemicals from which it is composed (bases, sugars, phosphates) but the sequence of the patterns. The chemicals of DNA are grouped into molecules (called nucleotides) that act like letters in a message. They must be in a particular order if the message is going to be intelligible. If the letters are not in a given order, then the message is unintelligible.[26] When considering the arguments for intelligent design, one must ask the question: Is the advanced sequence of chemical structure for which DNA works a product of random chance or an intelligent designer? The advanced structure in DNA is much like the advanced structure of information written in a book. While a physical explanation of how the ink sticks to the paper is certainly available, no mere physical explanation can account for the reasoning behind why the letters are arranged in the order that presents an intelligible and highly specifically detailed message (consider the above Hamlet analogy).

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Anthropic Principle (Excelent)

The word "anthropic" originated from the Greek word *anthropos* which means "man." The anthropic principle states that the physical structure of the universe is exactly what it must be in order to form and sustain life.[27] The universe is finely tuned to form and sustain life. By "fine tuning," philosophers typically mean that the elements necessary for life to exist must be within such a minute window of circumstances that any slight deviation from those circumstances would render the universe life-prohibiting.[28] Consider the window of degrees of temperature that the universe must have experienced in order for life to begin. In order to produce life at the time it began, British physicist Paul Davies estimated a finely tuned number that must be accurate within 1 part in 10^{60} degrees. In other words, if the temperature was not precisely what it was when life began, there would still be no life on earth. The fact that life exists is evidence that the conditions for life to begin were present at one time in the finite past. Furthermore, not only must the temperature of planet earth have been within a particular window of degrees for life to begin, it must remain within a particular window of degrees in order to sustain life. Davies acknowledged that such stunning accuracy is surely one of the greatest mysteries of cosmology.[29]

The anthropic principle should also be applied to other fine-tuning issues such as chemistry and gravity. Had the ration of carbon to oxygen been slightly different, no life could have formed.[30] The existence of life also depends on gravity to be finely tuned for a cell to be able to function. However, naturalistic evolutionary theory cannot explain how gravity pieced a cell together without the guiding hand of an intelligent designer. When the finely tuned components of life are properly understood, they resemble machinery or artwork that has been finely tuned by an intelligent designer.

Irreducible Complexity

Michael Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, developed the concept of irreducible complexity in *Darwin's Black Box*. Irreducible complexity is a single system of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to immediately stop functioning. Behe demonstrated that the cell, the foundational building block of life, is an irreducibly complex system itself such that it could not have been constructed piece by piece over a long period, as natural macroevolution suggests. Behe explained the concept of irreducible complexity with the example of a mousetrap. He explains, "A mousetrap cannot be assembled gradually. You cannot start with a wooden platform and catch a few mice, add a spring and catch a few more mice, add a hammer, and so on, each addition making the mousetrap function better. No, to even start catching mice, all the parts must be assembled from the outset. The mousetrap does not work until all its parts are present and working together."[30]

When it comes to an examination of the universe, many things are irreducibly complex within themselves. Like the mousetrap, they could not have evolved piece by piece over a long period and still maintained the ability to function properly within their environment. Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), a famous apologist and theologian, presented an argument which explains the principle of irreducible complexity as it applies to living organisms. Schaeffer said, "Suppose a fish evolved lungs? What happens then? Does it move up to the next evolutionary stage? Of course not, it dies." A fish would obviously not be able to live if it followed the processes described by Darwinian evolution. Somewhere in the process of macroevolution, the fish would have lost its ability to adapt in its environment. As it began to adapt lungs, it would have died.[31]

Critics have objected to Shaeffer's argument with the tadpole problem. However, a quick examination will show how the tadpole problem does not present an adequate case against Shaeffer's objection to naturalistic evolution. A tadpole turning into a frog is sometimes used to explain natural evolution. However, three responses to the tadpole problem should be given: 1) The transformation from a tadpole to a frog is not as gradual as the Darwinian/natural evolutionary theory demands, 2) A tadpole does not change kinds as it transforms into a frog (it remains an amphibian throughout its transformation), and 3) a tadpole is only an immature frog that is not fully grown and developed. An example of a young animal maturing into adulthood is not an example of naturalistic evolution but an example of maturity for which all living things undergo.

Another example of irreducible complexity is the bat. Chuck Colson argues that the transitional phases of evolution in the fossil records do not explain the evolutionary processes in bats that allowed them to develop wings over a long time period.[32] Evolutionists propose that the bat evolved from a small, mouse-like creature whose forelimbs (front toes) developed into wings by gradual steps. But, picture the steps: As the front toes grow longer and the skin begins to grow between them, the animal can no longer run without stumbling over them; and yet the forelimbs are not long enough to function as wings. Therefore, during most of its hypothetical transitional stages, the poor creature would have limbs too long for running and too short for flying; it would flop around helplessly until it became extinct. Colson concludes that there is no conceivable pathway for bat wings to be formed in gradual stages. This conclusion is confirmed by the fossil records, where we find no transitional fossils leading up to bats. The first time bats appear in the fossil records, they are fully formed and virtually identical to modern bats.

Another problem for natural macroevolution regarding irreducible complexity is the human eyeball (as described above). A human eyeball is of no use if all of its parts are not completely formed and working together. Any slight alteration to its working form would destroy its function, making sight impossible. How then could sight evolve by the slow process of alteration as described by naturalistic macroevolution? Even in Darwin's day,

the complexity of the eye was offered as an argument against his theory and he simply responded by saying that trying to explain the eye gave him "a cold shudder."[33]

Therefore, there must be a designer of the universe

Abduction

Abduction is a form of inference routinely used in everyday life. It is commonly described as an inference to the best explanation. Abduction involves the selection of the best explanation for a particular event or phenomenon, given all the available evidence.[34] There is always the chance that evidence discovered in the future will undermine a past abduction in favor of some other explanation. Abduction is the inferential method used in forensic science, intellectual property law, insurance claims investigation, and cryptography. Abduction is also used in many of the sciences, archaeology, and apologetics. The inference typically proceeds as follows:

1) A singular event has occurred (i.e. someone dies).

2) Several possible explanations are offered. Is it accidental death, natural death, or some form of homicide?

3) Given all of the available evidence, the single competing explanation that best explains the evidence should be preferred.

Abduction is typically competitive. A "best explanation" suggests that at least one alternative is available for comparison. Given the overwhelming amount of teleological evidence, abduction favors intelligent design over the competing view of naturalistic evolution in the study of cosmological and biological origins. The universe appears to have too many detailed intricacies within it for naturalistic evolution to be a better explanation for the data. When scientists examine the intricacies of the human eyeball, they find them comparable to the structure of a camera. When microbiologists observe the cell, they observe the flagellum and the mitochondria functioning like a finely tuned machine. When scientists observe DNA's advanced code for distinguishing individual identity, they observe a code that looks like an advanced language. When philosophers apply abduction to these discoveries, intelligent design is the only intelligible conclusion.

Ockham's Razor

Ockham's razor is a principle by William of Ockham (1285-1349). It is also known as the principle of parsimony. The principle of Ockham's razor is commonly expressed as "the simplest explanation is the best explanation." In other words, "the fewest is the truest." In an evaluation of Ockham's razor, Norm Geisler points out that this is not what Ockham had in mind. In the form given by Ockham, the principle affirms that "causes should not be multiplied without necessity." In other words, people should not present more reasons than are necessary to satisfactorily explain the data. While the true explanation of the data may require many reasons to satisfy an explanation (so that having fewer would make the explanation false), complicating a problem by adding unnecessary reasons or causes makes reasoning incorrect.[35]

Regarding the origin of the universe, the origin of consciousness or mind, and the intricacies of the particles that compose the physical universe; an intelligent designer is a more plausible explanation than any naturalistic explanation. Necessity and contingency, the first and second laws of thermodynamics, the fine-tuning found within the universe, the anthropic principle, and the law of irreducible complexity all help to establish that an intelligent designer is the best explanation for the complexity of the data.

Arguments Against Intelligent Design Theory

Naturalists who deny supernatural phenomena (God, miracles, life after death) oppose the intelligent design theory in favor of other theories that support their naturalistic worldview. For example, William Provine, historian of science at Cornell University, said, "Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear – and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans."[36] Provine's statement encompasses the essence of the naturalist response to the intelligent design theory. If a personal mind has not directed creation for a particular purpose, then everything that we experience came about by accident. Despite the arguments for God's existence (ontological, cosmological, and teleological), naturalists still vehemently reject intelligent design as a valid explanation for cosmic and biological origins. Let us examine some of the most popular arguments against intelligent design.

David Hume (1711-1776)

David Hume was a famous British empiricist whose belief in God has been debated by contemporary philosophy scholars. As an empiricist, Hume was a skeptic about the existence of things that could not be proved by observation and sense experience. He believed that all ideas must be validated by sense experience. Since there were no sense experiences of concepts like God, Hume rejected the concept of God as meaningless.

One of Hume's most famous works in philosophy of religion is his criticism of the teleological argument, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.[37] Since the teleological argument is based on analogy, Hume attempted to refute the argument by attacking the analogy. He argued that the watch analogy was a bad analogy because the universe resembled an animal or a vegetable just as much as it resembled a watch. Furthermore, Hume argued that even if the watch analogy was accepted, one could not justifiably infer any relevant information about the watchmaker. Hume argued that although some people believe that the universe was designed, relevant information about whom or what caused the universe could not be inferred. Moreover, people would never be able to prove, from the evidence within the universe, that the universe was created by the kind of creator that most religious people worship.

Hume replaced the argument for a designer with the argument that the universe only appeared to have complex design. Hume argued that the appearance of intelligent design actually came about by a random series of chances. Given enough time, any random combination of circumstances could arise. Therefore, Hume proposed an alternative to Paley's design argument. He argued that the intricacies discovered within the universe are only apparent intricacies that are a result of accidental causes.

Many Worlds Hypothesis

The many worlds hypothesis says that an infinite number of concrete universes exist, actualizing a wide variety of possibilities that happened by chance. Life on earth is explained as one of an infinite number of possibilities. Theoretically, the more worlds that exist, the more reasonable it is to believe that a world with advanced life could arise spontaneously by chance.[38]

The many worlds hypothesis might sound plausible, but the theory lacks supporting evidence. First, if many worlds do exist, what caused the initial process of worlds causing other worlds? How does anyone know "scientifically" that worlds produce other worlds? The burden of proof is on the proponents of the many worlds hypothesis to establish credible evidence that an infinite number of concrete universes exist.

Even if other worlds happen to exist, that does not mean that they came about by random chance. In fact, quite the contrary! If other worlds actually exist and this is proven scientifically, it would simply push back the inevitable question of origins. If our universe is a by-product of another concrete, finite universe, then where did that concrete, finite universe come from? It is simply not sufficient to use the many worlds hypothesis for the origin of this universe without reflecting upon the necessary versus contingency problem discussed under the ontological argument. An explanation for the first cause of the many worlds still needs to be addressed. The

many worlds hypothesis is a violation of Ockham's razor (the principle of parsimony) when intelligent design theory provides a better alternative to explain the observable data. The many worlds hypothesis multiplies universes (causes) unnecessarily in order to explain an effect (life on earth) without adequately accounting for the first cause of the first universe.[39]

Furthermore, if life on other planets were discovered, such a discovery would provide stronger evidence for the existence of an almighty, necessary being. The discovery of other worlds, particularly life on other planets, would not favor the naturalist's theory of origins. The naturalist's theory of the origin of life on earth states that all of the ingredients necessary for life to evolve by chance just happened to be present in the same place at the same time by accident. The chances of the miracle of life occurring just once without the direction of a divine mind is much less likely than it coming into being at the direction of an infinite, intelligent designer. The discovery of life on other planets would provide a stronger case for God's miraculous work of creation. Such a discovery would provide another example of Psalm 19:1 which says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Charles Darwin (1809-1882)

Charles Robert Darwin is most famous for the discoveries he made upon a ship called the HMS Beagle. Darwin began his theory of evolution by observing differences in finches. His famous theory of evolution teaches that all living creatures originated from a common form. In one of his most famous works, *On The Origin of Species* (1859), Darwin says that many forms originated from either one form or a few forms. At one point, Darwin acknowledged some eight to ten created forms. Darwin said, "I believe that animals are descended from at most four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number."[40] His second edition even gave credit for the origin of life to the Creator. Yes, Darwin's second edition acknowledged that God breathed life into the few forms or progenitors by which every other life form evolved. It was not until his later work, *The Descent of Man* (1871), when Darwin proclaimed that humans had evolved from a lower common life form by means of natural processes.[41] *The Descent of Man* has influenced much of what is being taught in secular science classrooms today. Scientists frequently use Darwin's theory to promote scientific naturalism. However, while Darwin does account for the origin of man from a lesser primate, he did not originally oppose the idea of a creator for the origin of life.[42]

What is fascinating about Darwin's observation of differences among finches is how it does prove evolution. However, the kind of evolution that Darwin's observation proved is not the same kind of evolution being promoted by philosophical naturalists. Darwin's observation is evidence for microevolution. Microevolution says that living things change within their kinds. For example, one can crossbreed a lion and a tiger and produce a liger. However, lions, tigers, and ligers are all forms of cat. Another example of microevolution is the crossbreed between a donkey and a horse resulting in a mule. However, even in the case of a mule, the mule is barren and cannot reproduce with another mule.

Students are often surprised when I tell them that I have an example of evolution at home. My wife and I own a puggle named Pizzelle. Our puggle is a crossbreed between a pug and a beagle. The observations of changes within a species (such as puggles) are examples of microevolution. Microevolution has been scientifically validated and accepted even among the most conservative of biblical creationists (including literal-day creationists). It was this type of microevolution that was confirmed by Darwin on the HMS Beagle. The problem with Darwinian evolution is that it took the illogical plunge from microevolution into macroevolution and from macroevolution to philosophical naturalism with only the evidence for microevolution to support it.

If design needs an explanation then so does the designer

Some naturalists demand an explanation for the designer behind the "so-called" design. However, this expectation results in the logical fallacy of infinite regression. If someone must explain the explanation, then must they also explain the explanation of that explanation? A demand for an explanation of an explanation would only lead to an infinite regression of explanations.

Are there truths in other areas that people know without being able to explain the explanation of them? For more information on this problem, review the argument for whether one needs to know how they know that they know before they can justifiably know something. This is explained in chapter two.

The need to explain the explanation as a criterion for knowledge is an unnecessary burden of proof because it would lead to an infinite regression of demands to explain an infinite number of needless explanations. Most things that people know, they know without having to explain how they know them. The evidence examined above provides enough support to justify belief in an intelligent designer of this complex universe. While Christians can provide evidence for a designer and explain God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture, being forced to provide an explanation for the designer of the universe is an unnecessary burden of proof.

Pascal's Wager[43]

Mathematician, scientist, and philosopher, Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) in response to an age of rationalism and skepticism that questioned the existence of God because it was not empirically provable, created Pascal's wager. Pascal's apologetic works, though only found in pieces, were discovered in the notes that he had been working on when he passed away. The "Thoughts" (French titled *Pensees*) included his now famous wager argument. Pascal's wager may not be as effective on atheists or people of other religions as it might be on skeptics and agnostics who doubt whether God exists (or whether His existence is knowable). The people in the middle of belief and non-belief may benefit the most from Pascal's wager. However, we ought to remember that God is ultimately in charge of the conversion of a non-believer, skeptic, agnostic, etc. The Christian apologist is only the humble messenger. With that in mind, let us now consider Pascal's wager.

The Diagram:

	God Exists	God Does Not Exist
Believe	Eternity In Heaven	Temporary Life (w/ wasted sacrifices)
Do Not Believe	Eternity In Hell	Temporary Life (w/ no eternal purpose)

Consider the following explanation of the diagram:

If God exists and you believe, the consequence is eternally positive.

If God exists and you do not believe, the consequence is eternally negative.

If God does not exist and you believe, you have lived a moral life of sacrifice with no eternal consequences positive or negative.

If God does not exist and you do not believe, you lived a life of choices with no eternal consequences positive or negative.

The Assessment:

Given the eternal outcomes of one's chosen belief system, it would be wisest to live as though God does exist. Pascal's wager challenges the agnostic to live a Christian lifestyle using eternal consequences as the motivating factor. Some people's biggest obstacle to sincere Christian faith is not the content of the Christian worldview but the lifestyle that it demands. Therefore, Christian apologists should use Pascal's wager to challenge agnostics to live the Christian lifestyle. Overcoming the obstacle of living the Christian lifestyle may help bring them a step closer to genuine faith. Church attendance and moral living would be prerequisites to this challenge, but genuine faith is the ultimate goal.

Objections and Responses to Pascal's Wager

Objection #1

The first objection to Pascal's wager questions whether people have the ability to choose their beliefs. Critics of the wager object by saying, "My beliefs are not under my control. If I do not believe in God, then I cannot believe in God anymore than I can believe in the one-eyed, one-horned, flying purple people eater."

Response to Objection #1

Most people's beliefs are under their control. People's actions are definitely under their control in most circumstances. One's ability to think and reason is under his or her control. The skeptic needs to be challenged to take what is under his control (i.e. going to church, associating with intelligent Christian people, stop engaging in immorality) and make a logical, well thought-out decision regarding his or her worldview. Living a Christian lifestyle before coming to a sincere faith can help people determine the truth about God in a practical way. God will honor a sincere pursuit of truth. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

Objection #2

The second objection to Pascal's wager challenges the response to Objection #1. Christian apologists should not urge non-believers to live out the Christian lifestyle as a means of helping them achieve sincere faith. This objection maintains that God would not honor a person who acts like a Christian but does not truly believe.

Response to Objection # 2

The purpose of Pascal's wager is not to promote false Christianity by urging non-believers to act like Christians without ever challenging them to come to sincere faith in Christ. Objection # 2 fails to acknowledge that the Christian lifestyle is often the biggest obstacle for the non-believer. Once the non-believer gets over the obstacle and begins living the Christian lifestyle, then he or she is a step closer to genuine faith. But, those who promote Pascal's wager as a means of evangelism must acknowledge that the purpose of the wager is to motivate people towards genuine, saving faith rather than a superficial belief that the Bible itself speaks against. "'Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons, and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers'" (Matthew 7:21-22).

Objection #3

Another objection to Pascal's wager is to assert with certainty that God does not exist, rendering the wager worthless. The critic claims that the probability of God existing is zero; he or she is certain that God does not exist.

Response to Objection #3

How certain are you, that God does not exist? On what grounds can you prove that God does not exist? When backed into a corner, many atheists will admit that the evidence points to a designer without making a commitment about what the designer might be. If a philosopher has disproved the existence of God with complete certainty (in light of the philosophical arguments for God's existence and the abundant evidence for a designer), such a conclusion has not been presented for open criticism. Philosophical arguments usually never end with a certain probability of 100% or 0% but argue that it is best to believe A rather than B based on the evidence.

Objection #4

The fourth objection to Pascal's wager is based on the results of someone placing a bet in the square "I Believe That God Exists." Some skeptics are afraid to bet that God exists because if it turns out that reality actually lands on the square "God Does Not Exist," then they would have based their lives on a lie. If this scenario turns out to be the case, then the skeptic would not only have based his or her life on a lie but he or she also would have sacrificed his or her temporary pleasures for no eternal benefits.

Response to Objection #4

It is true that if someone bets on "God Exists" and it turns out that He does not exist that he or she would have based his or her life on a lie and sacrificed temporary pleasures for no eternal benefits. However, consider the other possibility of the bet. If someone bets that God does not exist and in fact, He does, then his or her life would have been based on a lie with eternal damnation as the consequence. Pascal's wager is about examining the options in light of the eternal consequences. If it turns out that God does not exist, what has anyone lost for eternity? But, if it turns out that God does exist, what are the eternal consequences of belief versus non-belief? "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

Objection #5

The fifth objection to Pascal's wager is based on man's unwillingness to change his sinful lifestyle when he still has doubts about God's existence. People object to conforming to God's standards because they love to sin. Some people are simply unwilling to give up a sinful lifestyle, even if it turns out that God does exist. The lust for sin and the desire to live however they want override the eternal consequences that await them if God actually does exist.

Response to Objection #5

Does anyone really love sin enough to risk eternal damnation for it? Pascal's wager is about examining the consequences of people's choices regarding belief in God. When it comes down to it, objection #5 places the temporary life on earth over the eternal consequences. In other words, those who use this objection are ultimately saying, "A lifetime of living how I please is worth an eternity in hell." However, a wise person should be able to see that an eternity with God is worth the cost of temporary sacrifices. When the consequences are weighed, it seems foolish to sacrifice an eternal life for a temporary one. Also, people need to consider that the sinful lifestyle

may not be all that it is cracked up to be. When people trade a sinful lifestyle for a moral lifestyle in order to honor God, they will find the exchange well worth the sacrifice.

An Evaluation of an Argument against Arguments for God's Existence

Stephen M. Cahn wrote a controversial article in *Philosophy of Religion* entitled, *"The Irrelevance to Religion of Philosophical Proofs for the Existence of God."*[44] Cahn argues that philosophical proofs for God's existence are irrelevant and have no effect on the lives of believers or non-believers. His thesis explains why religious believers have so little interest in philosophical proofs for God's existence. Cahn says that a lack of interest is entirely reasonable because of the little or no relevance the arguments for God's existence have upon religion. He asks the question, "What difference does it make in people's lives if God exists?" He answers the question by showing how a belief in God provides security for some people. In contrast, he argues that many more people feel a loss of personal freedom from a God who has a planned out will for their lives. Others, he says, would serve God out of fear and be willing to be obedient to a moral code advocated by such a Being.

Cahn argues that arguments for God's existence are irrelevant for religious belief because people find the will of God through a self-validating experience, which carries its own guarantee of infallibility. A philosophical proof for God's existence is of no use to the theist because if the proof is shown to be valid, it simply confirms what the theist already believes from his personal experience. On the other hand, if a philosophical proof is shown to be valid for a naturalist, such a proof does not provide any such information that the theist can utilize in his religion so the proof is rejected. Cahn concludes that if experience determines whether someone believes in God, then philosophical proofs for God's existence are meaningless.

Cahn does find one positive reason for keeping philosophical proofs for God's existence in the philosophy curriculum. Philosophical arguments for God's existence are useful for discussions about important philosophical issues that might be of value in studying arguments for God's existence in a classroom environment. Cahn says that to refute philosophical proofs for God's existence is not to reject religion. Likewise, to affirm proofs for God's existence is not to defend religion. For Cahn, arguments for or against God's existence do not affect religious belief because religious belief is always justified by personal experience.

In response to Cahn's argument, belief in God's existence may not only be validated by personal experience, but also by evidential argument. People do not need evidence or apologetics to become Christians. However, validation for the Christian faith transcends personal experience and includes objective evidence. One would expect to find evidential support for a belief that is objectively true in the correspondence sense. Therefore, the more evidence one has to support God's existence, the stronger one's justification is going to be that God actually exists. Furthermore, the arguments for God's existence demonstrate that belief in God is rational (it makes sense to believe in God's existence). Not only is belief in God rational, but theism is more rational than atheism. Theism can account for the origin of objective morality better than atheism. Theism can account for an ultimate first cause of a finite, contingent universe better than atheism. Theism can account for the existence of consciousness in animals and humans better than atheism. The arguments for God's existence may not convince everyone who hears them that God exists, but together they make a compelling case that He does.

What caused God?

Bertrand Russell presented an argument against theism in a lecture entitled *Why I Am Not A Christian.* In the lecture, Russell said,

> I may say that when I was a young man and was debating these questions very seriously in my mind, I for a long time accepted the argument of the First Cause, until one day, at the age of eighteen, I read John Stuart Mill's Autobiography, and I there found this sentence: "My father taught me that the question 'Who made me?' cannot be answered, since it immediately suggests the further question 'Who made god?'" That very simple sentence showed me, as I still think, the fallacy in the argument of the First Cause. If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If there can be anything without a cause, it

> may just as well be the world as God, so that there cannot be any validity in that argument. It is exactly of the same nature as the Hindu's view, that the world rested upon an elephant and the elephant rested upon a tortoise; and when they said, "How about the tortoise?" the Indian said, "Suppose we change the subject." The argument is really no better than that. There is no reason why the world could not have come into being without a cause; nor, on the other hand, is there any reason why it should not have always existed. There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination. Therefore, perhaps, I need not waste any more time upon the argument about the First Cause.[45]

The first response to Russell's argument (and John Stuart Mill's assertion) is to return to the scientific evidence for the beginning of the universe. The first and second laws of thermodynamics (together with the necessary versus contingency argument) present more than adequate evidence for a beginning to the universe.

The second response to Russell is that just because the evidence for the finite, contingent universe demands a first cause; it does not follow that God (the necessary being) also needs a cause. In fact, a correct understanding of God as an eternal, infinite, necessary being (as established in the ontological argument) is enough to resolve Russell's demand for a cause for God.

Concluding Thoughts

After defining "proof" and "argument" philosophically, four classic arguments for God's existence were analyzed. The first argument, the Ontological argument, established a case for God's existence based on the definition of necessary existence. The Ontological argument demonstrates how a necessary being must exist to explain the existence of a contingent universe. The second argument, the Cosmological argument, began with the assumption that the universe exists and reasoned that the contingent universe demands a personal, caused, beginning. Scientific laws and logical reasoning demonstrate the personal, caused, beginning of the universe. The third argument was the Teleological "design" argument. The Teleological argument used scientific evidence and abduction to demonstrate that the intricacies found in the universe rule out mere accidental chance to adequately account for the existence of finely tuned phenomena such as the human eyeball and DNA. Pascal's wager was presented as a challenge to those who are in doubt about God's existence. Pascal's wager offers an argument for belief in God based on the consequences of belief versus non-belief. Pascal concluded that it would be better to choose to believe that God exists than to believe that God does not exist because of the eternal consequences of Christian belief. Responses to objections against Pascal's wager were provided in an effort to urge those in doubt to affirm an authentic belief in God. Finally, arguments by Stephen M. Cahn and Bertrand Russell were considered in light of the overwhelming amount of evidence and philosophical arguments in favor of God's existence.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SOUL

The Pillar of Consciousness

"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"
-- Matthew 16:26

Do the scientifically observable, physical components that function with consciousness exhaustively explain what is occurring within a person as one is processing what he is reading, contemplating a moral choice, or yelling "ouch" while being pricked with a needle? Does belief in God provide a better explanation for the origin of consciousness in finite beings like man and animals than the physicalist explanations?

This chapter provides a basis for defining the essence of human consciousness. Is human consciousness reduced to physical phenomena? Does a non-physical component (i.e. soul) provide a better explanation for the existence of consciousness than a physicalist paradigm? An important pillar of the Christian worldview is the existence of the soul. The existence of the soul provides a foundation for the existence of God based on the origin of consciousness. The existence of the soul also helps Christians affirm justice and the doctrine of eternal life. While this chapter includes large and often intimidating words, the concepts that the terms imply are being promoted in college philosophy classrooms. Therefore, it is important that young Christian apologists be made aware of the concepts that these terms express so that they are well prepared to defend their faith against the intellectual attacks that seek to destroy the Christian worldview.

In this chapter, we will erect the pillar of consciousness and defend the concept of the soul by analyzing several theories regarding the origin and presence of consciousness in animals and humans. Two views of dualism will be analyzed: interactionism and epiphenomenalism; and three views of physicalism will be analyzed: materialism, behaviorism, and functionalism. Epiphenomenalism falls more into a physicalist category for consciousness than a supernatural category, although it is traditionally discussed in the dualist category for reasons that will be explained later. Two versions of the emergent property view, a popular physicalist view on the origin of consciousness, will also be discussed. Each one of the naturalist theories will be critiqued in relation to the substance dualist (interactionism) position. The substance dualist (interactionist) view of body and soul will resolve questions about the origin of consciousness, the first person perspective, personal identity through physical and mental change, and libertarian free will that the physicalist views fail to adequately address.

Interactionism: Substance Dualism

The most common form of dualism is called substance dualism. Substance dualism says that humans are composed of two realities: an immaterial reality (soul or mind) and a material reality (the body). The words "soul" and "mind" are frequently used interchangeably in substance dualism. However, some philosophers separate the concepts of soul and mind.

According to interactionism, a popular form of substance dualism, souls have causal interaction with bodies and bodies have causal interaction with souls. As the name "substance dualism" suggests, the two realities (immaterial souls and material bodies) are equally real realities that interact with each other in causal relationships. The interactionism that occurs between the soul and the body is demonstrated by a will of the soul to lift the right hand before asking a question and exercising that ability by actually lifting the hand before asking the question. The interactionism between the body and the soul is demonstrated by the response of the soul yelling "OUCH!" when the finger is pricked with a needle. Both of these examples demonstrate that there is causal interaction between the soul and the body and vice versa.[1]

Rene Descartes is commonly associated with advancing interactionism. While Descartes' philosophy of mind is detailed and complicated, he believed that reason would lead people to believe that the body affects the mind and the mind affects the body (interactionism).[2] However, Descartes frequently reduced consciousness only to the mind such that there was a mind/body problem rather than a preferable soul/body problem. Descartes could not explain how the interactionism between a non-physical entity (a mind) could causally interact with a physical entity (a body). The inability to explain how this interaction works provided an opportunity for critics to attack substance dualism. The causal interaction between an immaterial mind or soul and a material body is not precisely explained in any form of substance dualism. Although two examples were provided to demonstrate that bodies and souls interact, an explanation for how bodies and souls interact is missing.

In *Body & Soul*, J.P. Moreland and Scott Rae distinguish Descartes' substance dualism from a preferred Aristotelian/Thomistic substance dualism. Unlike Descartes, who reduced conscious activity to the mind, Aristotelian/Thomistic substance dualism (originating from the teachings of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas) says that the mind is a faculty of the soul but it is the soul that animates the body and makes it alive. According to the

Aristotelian/Thomistic view, the soul could exist without the body but the body could not be animated without a soul. According to Moreland and Rae's version of Aristotelian/Thomistic dualism, the primary substance is the soul. The body is an ensouled biological and physical structure that depends on the soul for its existence.[3] While the details of this distinction are reserved for more advanced discussions in philosophy of mind, it was important to distinguish between these two forms of substance dualism at the outset of this introductory presentation because one form reduces consciousness to the mind while the other form attributes the life of the body to the presence of the soul. To avoid confusing those being introduced to philosophy of mind and the relevant issues for constructing a Christian worldview, substance dualism will be identified as an interaction between two realities: soul (immaterial substance) and body (material substance) for the remainder of the chapter.

One serious problem for substance dualism is the question about whether there is an immaterial substance called a soul. The substance dualist must be able to explain 1) that immaterial souls are individual realities that actually do exist and 2) how such immaterial souls interact with physical bodies so that the soul wills and causes the hand to raise and also causes the yelling of the word "OUCH!" when the body is pricked by a needle.

The substance dualist argues that the soul is an immaterial reality. *Nephesh* and *psyche* are the respective Hebrew and Greek words for soul, life, consciousness, or the self of an individual or animal. The soul is the animator of the body; it is the consciousness within a body.[4] The soul is causally related to the body so that the soul causes events like the standing and walking of the body across a room. The body is also causally related to the soul so that damage to the physical body (i.e. brain damage) would impair the soul's ability to animate the body. From a Christian perspective, the soul has the ability to remain conscious while separated from the body. This is Paul's understanding in 2 Corinthians 5:6-9 when he said, "Therefore, we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."

While the soul is the animating consciousness of the body, what is the "stuff" that makes the soul a substance? According to substance dualism, the body and the soul are individual substances that interact with one another. But what the immaterial nature of the soul is composed of remains a mystery. The soul is not a material substance that is capable of "where-ness" as a body is capable of "where-ness." A soul is more accurately reflected in "what-ness" which is animating consciousness. While connected to a physical body, the soul possesses "where-ness" only to the degree that the body possesses "where-ness" as the soul interacts with the body. In other words, "my soul" is seated in a chair in my classroom writing a book because my body is seated in a chair simultaneously writing a book. My soul is not located spatially in my body somewhere.[5]

While the substance dualist maintains that the soul causally interacts with the body, the substance dualist also maintains that the soul is not located anywhere specifically in the body. Some critics of substance dualism argue that if the soul cannot be located in the body, then it cannot be demonstrated that a soul is the animator of a body. However, it has been demonstrated (through the raising hand and pin-prick examples) that both the soul and the body and the body and the soul causally interact with one another. Exactly how the interaction between an immaterial soul and a physical body works is a request for an intervening mechanism between body and soul which may not exist. J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig explain, "A question about how A interacts with B is a request for an intervening mechanism between A and B that can be described. One can ask how turning a key starts a car because there is an intermediate electrical system between the key and the car's running engine that is the means by which turning the key causes the engine to start. The 'how' question is a request to describe the intermediate mechanism. But the interaction between body and soul may be, and most likely is, direct and immediate. There is no intervening mechanism, and thus a 'how' question describing that mechanism does not even arise."[6]

Some critics have objected to substance dualism on the grounds that it is a violation of Ockham's razor. As described in chapter four, Ockham's razor states that "causes should not be multiplied without necessity." In other words, one should not present more reasons than are necessary to satisfactorily explain the data. Substance dualists are often accused of adding an unnecessary component (soul) when consciousness can be satisfactorily explained based only on one component (the body). Substance dualists rebut the accusation by arguing that the immaterial component (the soul) offers a better explanation for the origin of consciousness, a first person perspective, personal identity through change, and libertarian free will than any physicalist paradigm; all of which

will be discussed later in the chapter. It will be argued that substance dualism does not violate Ockham's razor when it comes to arguments that cannot be resolved within a strictly physicalist paradigm.

While substance dualism is the traditional Christian view of consciousness, some philosophers have argued that consciousness is not an immaterial substance. Property dualists argue that consciousness is an illumination of the physical body (a property of the body itself). Affirming consciousness as a property of the body is known as epiphenomenalism or property dualism.

Epiphenomenalism: Property Dualism

Property dualism says that there is one substance (physical) that produces mental states (properties). Consciousness occurs when matter reaches a particular state that is capable of providing a state of conscious affairs. Consciousness, as a property, is something that matter has within itself as a leaf has the property of greenness or an apple has the property of redness. Properties, like redness and greenness, can be in many different things (substances) at once. The substance, like the leaf or the apple, would remain the same substance even if the property (redness or greenness) is replaced by another property. For example, when a leaf (substance) changes from green to red (properties) in the fall, it is still the same leaf (substance), although the properties within the leaf are different. According to property dualism, consciousness is a property inherent within some matter. Furthermore, consciousness does not have a causal relationship with the body. While matter may produce consciousness when it reaches a particular state, consciousness does not exercise any causal ability over the matter whatsoever.[7]

In Thomas Huxley's essay, *Animals as Conscious Automata*, taken from a larger work titled *Methods and Results, Essays by Thomas Huxley*, Huxley argues that animal consciousness is entirely explained by biological mechanisms that give rise to conscious experiences such as pains, pleasures, fears, etc. While Huxley's argument is for animal consciousness, it is a logical extension to explain how consciousness also works in humans.[8] Huxley was a well-known proponent of Darwinian evolution. His work influenced the position of consciousness held by many natural evolutionists today. Huxley's view of consciousness is known as epiphenomenalism. Epiphenomenalism says that some physical events cause mental events (consciousness) but mental events do not have any causal power over physical or other mental events. Epiphenomenalism is actually more compatible with materialism than with substance dualism. It is a form of dualism because mind (consciousness) is not reduced to matter as it is in physicalism. In epiphenomenalism, mind is a function that comes from matter when matter reaches a suitable structural arrangement for consciousness to emerge. In epiphenomenalism, as a property or function of the body, the mind (consciousness) ceases to exist when the body dies.[9]

Materialism: Physicalism

Materialism and physicalism are interchangeable terms given to any theory that asserts that human beings consist of physical bodies only (that persons are entirely material entities). In *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*, D.M. Armstrong argues for a version of reductive materialism which identifies mental states as a part of the central nervous system. According to Armstrong, consciousness is yet to be thoroughly explained by science. He argues that scientists can currently observe mental states by observing particular behavioral effects. However, nobody knows the precise nature of what is occurring or causing the mental activity. Armstrong hypothesizes that just as biologists discovered that the gene was identical to DNA, so neuroscientists will someday discover that particular mental phenomena are identical to particular brain and neurological activities.

Armstrong argues that reducing consciousness to brain activity is no longer a clear opposition to common sense. Today, physicalism is frequently taught in the public schools as being compatible with Darwinian evolution. One of the most difficult tasks of any introductory philosophy teacher who teaches a lesson on the philosophy of mind is to convince the introductory student that there is a clear distinction between mind (soul) and brain activities. The demonstration analogies of a pin prick causing the consciousness to yell "OUCH!" or consciousness causing the raising of the physical arm are not convincing arguments for the materialist. The materialist argues that a pinprick in the finger causes pain and intentions cause movements because the relations between the body, the brain, and central nervous system are sufficient to explain such "conscious" behavior.

According to Armstrong, when people understand the basics of the curriculum learned in an introductory physiology class, they have the foundation for a physicalist explanation of consciousness.[10]

Another popular physicalist view is the eliminative materialism of Paul M. Churchland. Churchland says that common mental concepts such as beliefs, feelings and desires are theoretical constructs of a folk psychology. Churchland argues that traditional theories about the soul and mental consciousness have been replaced with new, contemporary concepts known to be a necessary part of a clearer scientific enlightenment.[11] Eliminative materialism denies any mental state whatsoever and reduces all mental activity to physical components. While eliminative materialism reduces mental phenomena to physical activity, it does not necessarily reduce consciousness to brain activity 'only' as does reductive materialism. The eliminative materialist, therefore, does not say that mental states are reduced to brain states, but argues that because mental states do not exist at all, any appearance of what may commonly be referred to as a mental state (i.e. pain) can now be understood in physical terms like C-Fibers firing in a certain way. For example, when I observe Marcus grimacing in class because he is experiencing a painful headache, it is not his soul and body interacting as held by the substance dualist. Marcus' grimace and experience with feeling pain is also not reduced to particular brain activity only, as held by reductive materialism. According to eliminative materialism, the physical entity named Marcus is having a physical experience that may encompass one or more functions of the body. It is physical activity within the entity called Marcus that is being observed by his grimace when the C-Fibers fire and cause the sensation of pain.

Behaviorism

In the 1960's, psychologist B.F. Skinner promoted a theory called behaviorism. Behaviorism is a view of psychology that denies the reality of mental states on the basis that they are not scientifically observable. Skinner influenced thousands of psychology students through his work entitled *Walden Two* (1948, reprinted 1976). In *Science and Human Behavior* (1955, reprinted 1983), Skinner described and defended behaviorism as the only adequate method for a psychological explanation for human behavior. Behaviorism requires that behavior be explained apart from the qualitative inner states that appear to be taking place within human deliberations. Behaviorism also requires that all behavior must consist of purely physical explanations arising solely from physically explainable causes. Skinner argued that the events affecting an organism must be capable of a description in the language of physical science. Such a commitment to physicalism, as an adequate explanation for human behavior, is what makes psychology (particularly behaviorism) a science rather than a philosophy, according to Skinner. Skinner believed that science was physically demonstrable but philosophy was wrecked with biases and unobservable prejudices. Skinner's views on psychology and philosophy explain why he promoted behaviorism which sought to explain human behavior on solely physical and observable criteria. While J.B. Watson, not B.F. Skinner, was the founder of behaviorism, Skinner did much to advance the theory, particularly in the field of psychology.

Chuck Colson criticized Skinner's argument that behaviorism is a science that is free of philosophical biases and prejudices. Colson observed that Skinner and the behaviorists believed that they were purifying psychology of all philosophical prejudices rendering behaviorism completely scientific and objective. In reality, of course, they were simply injecting their own philosophical prejudices. They were creating a new brand of scientific utopianism, which *Walden Two* sought to advance.[12] In *Walden Two*, Skinner said that the flaws in human nature are a result, not of moral corruption, but of learned responses -- responses that can be unlearned so that people can then be reprogrammed to be happy and adjusted, living in harmony in a utopian society. Behaviorism is not only a materialistic philosophy, but the writings of Skinner also promote utopian philosophy. Those who wish to embrace Skinner's so-called un-philosophical, scientific-observable approach to psychology should be aware of his philosophical commitments to physicalism and utopianism. Nobody, including behaviorists, can escape the second order discipline of philosophy.

Functionalism

Functionalism, as a philosophy of mind, is a popular view of consciousness in our contemporary society because it explains human consciousness in terms of computer activity. The analogy of human consciousness to a

computer is that the brain and neurological or physical systems are the hardware and the consciousness or soul is the software. Functionalism is theoretically different from behaviorism. Functionalism arose as a response to behaviorism due to the inability of behaviorism to adequately account for bodily experiences that do not influence behavior. Behaviorism failed to provide a physical explanation for a number of emotional, introspective states like anger, grief, and regret. Functionalism addresses the pitfalls of behaviorism by demonstrating a causal connection between physical entities (brains, neurological system, etc.) and conscious activity.

Unlike behaviorism, consciousness is not identical to physical entities in Functionalism. Functionalism explains consciousness as occurring on two different levels, much like computer activity occurs on two levels. Brain activities are equated to the hardware of a computer (level one). Consciousness is the computer software (level 2). Functionalists usually describe this activity with the analogy of a calculating machine. Suppose, for example, that a person commands a computer to add the numbers 2 and 5. On level one, the computer relies solely on the hardware. On the second level, the computer's software is calculating the answer. Since computers have different hardware that works in different ways, no one can describe the process of calculation as solely the activity of the hardware itself. Instead, functionalists argue that the process of calculation is simply realized by the hardware. In functionalism, the software is a function of the hardware.

An important factor of functionalism is that consciousness occurs on different levels, similar to that of computer activity between the hardware and the software. However, functionalism fails to define the software of consciousness. If the software of functionalism were an immaterial substance (i.e. soul), then functionalism would be compatible with substance dualism. Functionalism is incompatible with eliminative materialism and behaviorism because both of these views argue that consciousness is a result of physical activity only. Although functionalism is not entirely incompatible with substance dualism, most contemporary functionalists are materialists. Functionalism only makes claims about the multifaceted function that produces consciousness. It does not make any philosophical commitments or identification regarding the software component itself.

The philosophical views of consciousness that have been introduced thus far will be divided into two categories for the remainder of this chapter. Substance dualism will stand alone as an immaterial view of consciousness. Epiphenomenalism, reductive and eliminative materialism, behaviorism, and functionalism are categorized under a physicalist explanation of consciousness. As mentioned above, while epiphenomenalism is a form of dualism (property dualism) it is more compatible with physicalism than immaterialism because the conscious activity is only an effect of the physical entity after physical matter reaches a particular state. Reductive and eliminative materialism, along with behaviorism, are placed in the physicalist category for reasons explained above. Functionalism, although not entirely incompatible with substance dualism, is placed in the physicalist category for further evaluation because it is most commonly associated with physicalism by most contemporary philosophers.

The Origin of Consciousness

In the documentary-style film, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, Ben Stein interviewed several professors and scientists about allowing intelligent design to be taught in secular academic institutions. Through his interviews, Stein discovered that the intelligent design theory has been expelled from the secular science classrooms. In many cases, it is not even permissible to discuss it.

In the documentary, Stein uncovers some startling opinions about the origin of life from those who emphatically oppose intelligent design. Stein asks the question, "Where did consciousness come from?" When the answers to this question are analyzed and conclusions are drawn, intelligent design is demonstrated to be a highly intelligible position. Attributing intelligent design to a personal creator who resembles the God of Christianity may indeed be the most intelligible position.

Ben Stein asked the question, "Where did consciousness come from?" more precisely, "How do we get from mud (primordial soup) to a conscious, thinking being like man?" Michael Ruse, professor of history and philosophy of biology (a specialist in Darwinian evolution) at Florida State University, believes that it is more plausible that the building blocks for consciousness developed and arranged themselves in the precise order necessary for consciousness to begin "on the backs of crystals." Ruse argues that crystals have components of

change and so, through a long process of change, the necessary materials for consciousness arose over time. When asked directly by Stein whether Ruse thought his crystal theory was more plausible than intelligent design theory, Ruse responded with an emphatic "Yes!"[13]

In another interview with Paul Comstock, Ruse addressed the issue of irreducible complexity as presented by Michael Behe. Ruse said, "Darwinians like me reply that the phenomena of irreducible complexity do not do what Behe claims, 'Complex things tend to be put together from other parts of the body/cell, and that these parts have functions.' It may just be that after a complex entity is put together, natural selection then removes unneeded parts and now the entity could not function if one or more parts were removed."[14] Ruse's argument is that natural selection takes over after the complex entity is put together. However, Ruse fails to recognize that the very notion of "being put together" fits the intelligent design theory better than the physicalist theory (especially when the issue of consciousness is considered).

Stein's film climaxes in an interview with renowned, open-atheist, Richard Dawkins (author of *The God Delusion*). Stein is surprised that Dawkins would admit that intelligent design is possible. While he adamantly states that there is no God, Dawkins does admit that the detail discovered in molecular biology possibly suggests a "signature" of some intelligent designer. Dawkins adamantly rejects the hypothesis that such a "signature" (i.e. detail in molecular biology) could be a sign of some god. He argues that if it is a "signature" of intelligent design that such a designer would have to be of higher intelligence than mankind and also must have come about itself by a series of observable processes.[15] However, if the design in the universe is a work of an intelligent designer who is a product of natural processes himself, then accounting for the existence of something rather than nothing would lead to an infinite regression of natural processes (or an infinite regression of intelligent designers who are themselves a product of an infinite regression of natural processes). Considering the argument about necessity and contingency in chapter four, Dawkin's hypothesis crumbles under the fallacy of an infinite regression.

If the theories of Ruse and Dawkins are inadequate explanations for the origin of consciousness, then the question must be asked, "Are there any physicalist accounts for the origin of consciousness that are superior to the substance dualist position?" Does the lack of a satisfactory explanation for the origin of consciousness from a physicalist worldview provide support for substance dualism? Unlike physicalism, substance dualism can account for the origin of consciousness. Consciousness in animals and human beings originated from the creation of the necessary being who Himself is necessary consciousness. Before a victory for substance dualism is declared, let us examine one more popular physicalist theory for the origin of consciousness.

There is a popular view of the origin of consciousness among natural evolutionists called the Emergent Property View. According the EPV, consciousness is not identical to physical structures nor does it come from particular physical structures. Rather, the EPV says that consciousness is its own property (or series of properties) that supervenes over matter. Consciousness is its own entity that comes into being in some way that is not related to the physical system or dependent upon a physical system's particular function.

J.P. Moreland points out, in a rebuttal against the EPV, that "if mind emerges over a structured brain out of nothing and that this fact is not anchored to the nature of the brain, then it is hard to see why mind emerges time and again over just this type of structured matter and not over a nickel or a bowling pin."[16] What is the efficient causality of consciousness in human beings (if it is not the ordered structure of the brain or neurological activity)? The EPV does not give causal power to minds themselves. The EPV does not allow a parent mind to be the causal efficacy of a child mind. Even if this were the case, if the EPV allowed it, it would still lead to an infinite regression of parent minds causing child minds without a first mind (Note: the EPV does not make the claim that minds beget other minds).

Scientifically, the EPV does have a fatal flaw. It claims that consciousness emerges out of nothing and supervenes over the brain. However, scientifically, (which is rooted in the ability to observe data repeatedly) things do not just pop into existence out of nothing (first law of thermodynamics). Even if consciousness is not an observable entity, its emergence is tied to the brain and the brain is an observable object. J.P. Moreland notes, "It is not very promising to account for the emergence of mind by saying that it came from nothing."[17] Such an assertion violates our basic observable experiences and it presupposes the problem that if consciousness can emerge from the structure of matter like a brain, then it would be able to emerge from other physical structures, which has never been demonstrated.

One version of the EPV, however, says that consciousness does not emerge from nothing, but rather from the potentiality found within the substance itself. J.P. Moreland explains this version of the EPV, "When a property emerges in a substance, it comes to actuality from potentiality, not from pure non-being. The property was in the substance potentially and when it emerges, it becomes actualized."[18] This version of the EPV is more plausible than the original version which proposes that mind simply emerges from nothing. However, this version is still incompatible with the views of physicalism that maintain that the only reality that exists is that which is empirically observable based on physical laws. Given physicalism's materially limited criteria for reality, J. P. Moreland seems to put the plausibility of this version of the EPV to rest when he argues, "If mind is potential in matter, then physicalism seems to become some form of panpsychism, the view that mind is ultimate. Matter no longer is describable in terms of familiar physical properties and laws alone. Now it contains elusive mental properties."[19] If this version of the EPV is accepted by physicalists, it seems to open the door for non-physical, unobservable realities to fit the paradigm of the physicalist worldview. Such an acceptance on the part of physicalists would either be contradictory to the physicalist worldview or open the door for other exceptions like souls, objective morals, or maybe even God to somehow fit within the confines of a physicalist worldview. Moreland identifies a major problem for physicalists who accept this version of the EPV, "If mind can emerge from matter when a high-level system reaches a certain point of complexity, why is it not possible for a larger scale Mind to emerge at a later period of evolutionary development? The EPV, then, could not rule out Hegelianism, the view than mind emerges from matter all the way up to the existence of God Himself .... And it should come as no comfort to an atheist, who is trying to save some form of minimal physicalism, to be told that his view seems to imply some form of emergent theism. At very least, emergent theism could not be ruled out by this version of the EPV."[20]

Arguments For Substance Dualism [21]

Does physicalism fail to adequately account for the origin of consciousness? If so, does substance dualism provide a more plausible account for the origin of consciousness?

The inadequacy of physicalism to satisfy a philosophy of the origin of mind opens the door for a consideration of arguments in favor of substance dualism. Substance dualism says that human beings are composed of two substances: a physical substance (body/brain) and an immaterial substance (soul). As previously demonstrated in this chapter, the explanations for consciousness from a physicalist perspective reduce consciousness to physical activities without providing an adequate explanation for what a mental phenomenon is or how it began. If consciousness is a property of the physical substances that cause it, what kind of a thing is consciousness? Is consciousness not a soul as maintained by substance dualism? Does the property of consciousness exist in other substances besides brains? These are questions that physicalists must answer in order to maintain a rational explanation for consciousness within a physicalist paradigm. The problems with physicalism's ability to fully account for the origin of consciousness should encourage an examination of some arguments for the substance dualist position.

Origin of Consciousness

Substance dualism does not have the same problem accounting for the origin of consciousness as physicalism. From a Christian substance dualist position of the soul, finite consciousness comes from necessary consciousness which is possessed by God. If God is the necessary being, as described in the Ontological argument, then it is not logically fallacious to believe that consciousness in animal and human life finds its origin in God. Belief in God (the necessary consciousness) avoids the problems that physicalism encounters when it comes to an explanation for the origin of consciousness. Those who object to the belief that God is the uncaused cause of consciousness on the grounds that God needs a cause should review the response to Bertrand Russell's "What Caused God?" argument explained in chapter four.

First Person versus Third Person Perspective

When I have a personal experience like drinking a Dr. Pepper, eating a Dodger Dog, or watching a movie, I use the first person perspective to describe the experience I am having now or had in the past. The first person perspective describes a point of view that is unique to me. I alone know my first person perspective in the way in which I know it to be. For example, suppose you and I watch the Cubs play the Dodgers on Wednesday night. My background in baseball, favor for the Cubs, and love for hotdogs will give me my own unique experience. Even if you share the same affinities for baseball, the Cubs, and hotdogs, the fact that I am directly aware of myself as an owner of my own body and mental states is evidence that I am not merely a product of physical activities. If I am only a function of physical activities (if I am only a brain), then there would be no such first person perspective to be aware of when I have an experience. All reality would be described in third person terms. While it does make sense to describe other people's experiences in third person terms, it does not make sense for me to describe my own experiences only from a third person perspective. I have a uniquely first person perspective about every experience that I have ever had. My unique first person perspective provides evidence for affirming that consciousness is not only a result of physical activity.

This issue brings up a discussion on the existence of *qualia*. *Quale* is a Latin word that means "what kind." *Qualia* are used in philosophy to describe unique first person perspectives. Daniel Dennett explains *qualia* as "an unfamiliar term for something that could not be more familiar to each of us: the way things seem to us." He goes on to explain that *qualia,* or the singular *quale,* may be a difficult term to define. It is best understood through examples. Look at a glass of milk at sunset; *the way it looks to you* -- the particular, personal, subjective visual quality of the glass of milk is the *quale* of your visual experience at the moment. The *way the milk tastes to you then* is another, gustatory *quale*, and *how it sounds to you* as you swallow is an auditory *quale*. These properties of conscious experience are prime examples of *qualia*."[22] While *qualia* could be used to promote a postmodern metaphysics that states that we are stuck in only our first person perspectives to the degree that we cannot know any truth other than the way things appear to us, the concept of *qualia* in philosophy of mind poses a problem for the physicalist perspective of the mind. How does physicalism account for one's unique first person perspective when it is so different from another person who is sharing the same external experience?

One argument against physicalism, as an account of consciousness, is the physicalist's inability to adequately account for *qualia* from a purely physicalist paradigm. The analogy of the Chinese room by John Searle demonstrates that a functionalist account of consciousness from a materialist perspective falls short of providing a valid account of *qualia*. Remember, functionalism is traditionally associated with a materialist account of consciousness. Functionalism says that consciousness in animals and humans is no different "functionally" as the conscious activity of a working computer: the software and the hardware. John Searle's Chinese room analogy raises some interesting issues for discussion with those who believe that consciousness does not have a personal, qualitative, first person perspective.

> Imagine that you are locked in a room, and in this room are several baskets full of Chinese symbols. Imagine that you (like me) do not understand a word of Chinese, but that you are given a rule book in English for manipulating the Chinese symbols. The rules specify the manipulations of symbols purely formally, in terms of their syntax, not their semantics. So the rule might say: "Take a squiggle-squiggle sign out of basket number one and put it next to a squoggle-squoggle sign from basket number two." Now suppose that some other Chinese symbols are passed into the room, and that you are given further rules for passing back Chinese symbols out of the room. Suppose unknown to you that the symbols passed into the room are called "questions" by the people outside of the room, and the symbols you pass back out of the room are called "answers to the questions." Suppose, furthermore, that the programmers are so good at designing the programs and that you are so good at manipulating the symbols, that very soon your answers are indistinguishable from those of a native Chinese speaker. There you are locked in your room shuffling your Chinese symbols and passing out Chinese symbols in response to incoming Chinese symbols … Now the point of the story is simply this: by virtue of implementing a formal computer program from the point of view of an outside observer, you behave exactly as though you understand Chinese, but all the same you don't understand a word of Chinese.[23]

The Chinese room analogy shows that the person inside the room passing symbols and answering questions is functioning as though he or she understands Chinese, but the person inside the room clearly does not understand the language within his or her own personal understanding (*qualia*). The analogy presents a picture of what computers are like and how human consciousness is fundamentally different. The computer has the ability to respond and spit out answers. However, human consciousness, unlike the computer, possesses the *qualia* or "what it is like" function from the first person perspective to possess understanding. The unique awareness of the first person perspective in human consciousness is not explainable from a completely physicalist account of consciousness. If consciousness is explained as an immaterial substance (namely a soul), then it is the immaterial substance that would account for the direct awareness occurring within the first person perspective or *qualia*.

Personal Identity through Change

Suppose that consciousness is reduced to brain activity or that one of the physicalist accounts for consciousness is true. If "I" am only a brain or only composed of physical parts, then a valid question must be asked, "Am I the same person before and after physical changes occur?" The substance dualist position accounts for the same personal identity through physical bodily change (such as age or amputation) as well as changes that may impact one's mental state (such as brain damage). The substance dualist position satisfies an answer to the problem of personal identity through change because the soul is its own substance and will endure on its own as the body goes through changes. However, if I am only composed of physical parts and those physical parts are altered or changed, it is difficult to see just how I would literally be the same person after physical changes occur. This is problematic on several accounts because the physical human body endures many changes throughout a lifetime (hair loss, loss of cells, replacement of atoms). Without an enduring self or immaterial soul, it is difficult to see (from a purely physicalist perspective) just how one is literally the same person at death as he or she was at birth.

If someone argues that a person does not possess the same personal identity through physical change, then this would radically affect our justice system, our marriages, and our jobs in an extremely negative way. It just seems to be the case that a criminal who receives a life sentence should remain in prison even after undergoing physical change. It also seems to be the case that a couple who is married for fifty years will celebrate their 50th anniversary, despite physical changes. If someone were not literally the same person after a mind-altering event like a stroke, this would radically affect our relationships with those who have experienced such mind-altering events. Nevertheless, the physicalist account of consciousness fails to explain how someone is the same enduring self through physical change. The substance dualist position accounts for the same identity through physical or mental changes. Substance dualism argues that "I" am not merely a changing physical entity, but an immaterial entity (soul) that is the same person through physical or mental changes (including physical death).

Libertarian Free Will

Libertarian free will is the ability to choose between two options without any conditions that determine someone's action. Briefly, libertarian free will is the ability to choose otherwise. Many philosophers have argued that if physicalism is true, then libertarianism is false and determinism is true. Determinism is the view that given A, B must occur and could never have not occurred. If consciousness is a by-product of physical activities only, then every person's action is reduced to brain states or some form of physical activity. According to physicalism and determinism, physical activities (i.e. brain states and/or the neurological system) are the determining factors of people's actions, rendering libertarian free will false. However, if determinism is true, then the following problems arise: 1) Why should someone trust his or her thoughts or instincts when thoughts or instincts are only a by-product of physical states? 2) Why should someone be held responsible for a choice like cheating or stealing if he or she did not have the ability to choose otherwise? These are questions that physicalism struggles to answer. The substance dualist position resolves the problem of physical determinism by establishing libertarian free will in the essence of the soul. Particularly, the soul has volition (the ability to make choices) because it was created by God who also possesses volition (the choice to create). If I am a soul (an immaterial entity with the ability to

exercise causal interaction with the body), then I can rely on my thoughts and instincts because of my soul's interactive control over my body. According to interactionism (substance dualism), the soul interacts with the body to exercise discernment over matters like choosing what to think about or deciding and/or controlling what to eat when the hunger instinct kicks in. Someone could hold me responsible for moral behaviors (i.e. cheating or stealing) because the soul possesses the causal efficacy over the body to control what it does as well as the ability to discern and know what to do in certain situations. In the next chapter, we will discuss free will by analyzing a variety of different views. Nevertheless, if physicalism is true, then libertarianism is most likely false. If determinism is true, then determinists have to explain how moral responsibility, punishments and rewards are justified. The free will debate, expressing the conflict between determinism and libertarian freedom, is discussed in the next chapter.

What evidence is there for eternal life?

Five arguments for the existence of souls provide a compelling case that eternal life is possible. 1) The awareness of one's own introspective states demonstrates that conscious states are not identical to physical activity (see John Searle's Chinese room analogy). 2) The lack of an adequate physicalist explanation for the origin and presence of consciousness provides support that a non-physical or immaterial substance exists (a soul) and it is at least plausible that such a substance could continue to exist after the physical death of the body (2 Corinthians 5:6). 3) Given the argument for the soul as an enduring self (personal identity) through physical change, it could follow that the enduring self (or soul) would survive various physical and mental changes connected with the body. The argument for the soul as an enduring self through physical change could also be applied to the belief that souls survive the death of the physical body. 4) The argument connecting libertarian free will to a substance dualist position of the soul raises questions about justice in regards to choices made in the body. The issue of ultimate justice demands a continuation of life after death. The Bible teaches that God is the ultimate distributor of justice (Romans 12:19-21). However, justice is often not completely accomplished here on earth. Therefore, in order for God's justice to be satisfied, there must be an eternal life (especially for cases where justice is not satisfied on earth). The concept of ultimate justice requiring eternal life for its complete satisfaction is developed more thoroughly in chapter seven. 5) The Bible teaches that eternal life corresponds with reality. If it can be demonstrated that the Bible is reliable, then the case for eternal life would be strengthened. The biblical account affirms that Christians have an ultimate victory over death through Jesus' atonement on the cross and His bodily resurrection from the dead (Romans 6:1-14).

As I was completing the writing of this book, I encountered an interesting study aimed at providing scientific evidence for the existence of souls and life after death. An article in Newsweek Magazine (issued November 9, 2009) entitled *Heaven Can Wait*, presented a review of a new book titled *Life After Death: The Evidence*. In his book, Christian apologist Dinesh D'Souza considers near death experience to be a compelling case for the soul and life after death. While the Newsweek article is wrought with emotional appeal about a man who lost his son and does not take comfort in believing that his son is experiencing life after death, the article does acknowledge a study that will be conducted by Dr. Sam Parnia (director of AWARE: Awareness During Resuscitation) to determine the validity of near death experiences. In the AWARE study, randomly generated images will be projected in the rooms of critically ill patients, in locations where they can be viewed from only above – by someone having an out-of-body experience, for instance. If patients who survive NDEs can identify these images, then several centuries of physicalism in philosophy of mind will have to be re-written. The physicalist simply cannot account for an out-of-body experience of this magnitude from a purely physicalist paradigm. The Christian community who believes that conscious souls do survive the death of the physical body eagerly awaits the results of Parnia's study which should be published within the next year. Parnia told Newsweek that researchers at 20 hospitals have identified about 600 subjects for interviews.

Concluding Thoughts

Arguments for the soul are important for Christian doctrine because the Bible teaches that the consciousness of man will live beyond the death of the perishable physical body. Also, arguments for the substance dualist position of consciousness provide evidence for the Christian belief that God is necessary consciousness who created finite, limited minds. A short examination of substance dualism was given as a means of providing a comparative analysis of substance dualism to various physicalist accounts of consciousness. The physicalist explanations for consciousness: epiphenomenalism, reductive and eliminative materialism, behaviorism, and functionalism were then presented. Physicalist explanations for the origin of consciousness (how it got there) were examined. The examination of physicalism included a currently popular view in evolutionary biology called the emergent property view. Two versions of the emergent property view were explained and examined with criticisms made by J.P. Moreland. Finally, four arguments for substance dualism were presented: 1) Origin, 2) First person perspective, 3) Personal identity through change, and 4) Libertarian free will. Finally, five arguments for life after death were considered in an effort to demonstrate how the substance dualist position fits into a Christian worldview. We will now turn to an analysis of the free will debate. Do forces outside of our control determine our actions or do we exercise libertarian free will?

CHAPTER SIX

FREE WILL

The Pillar of Freedom

Everything must either be or not be, whether in the present or in the future, but it is not always possible to distinguish and state determinately which of these alternatives must necessarily come about.

-- Aristotle, *The Sea Battle*

Are people free to make choices? Is freedom to choose only an illusion? If God is sovereign and knows the future, how can man exercise a freedom of will that could influence a future event? Do Christians choose to follow God, or does God mandate who will follow Him? Christian apologists have dealt with these questions for centuries. It is important for Christians to have a basic understanding of the broad spectrum of the free will theories as they wrestle with the compatibility between God's sovereignty and man's ability to "freely" make a choice. The spectrum of the free will dilemma presented in this chapter includes fatalism and determinism, libertarianism and free will theism, as well as compatibilist positions. Two other theories, agnostic autonomism and the antinomy position, are also presented in an effort to resolve the philosophical dilemma between the determinist and libertarian perspectives.

While it is important for Christians to be aware of the philosophical explanations regarding a human freedom of the will, it is also important for them to be able to explain two apparently contradictory biblical concepts: God's sovereignty and man's moral responsibility. The Bible affirms that God is sovereign over His creation and knows the future. The Bible also commends and condemns people for the choices they make. Ultimately, justice is distributed to people based on their ability to choose. It seems highly unjust to punish people for actions that they could not control. Therefore, in order for justice to prevail, one must discern when a person is capable of exercising a freedom of the will and when a person is not. If free will is an illusion or does not exist, then how does one justify punishments and rewards? These issues are presented in this chapter. The pillar of freedom must exist in a Christian worldview that affirms the justice of punishments and rewards for the choices people make.

Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C.)

As a student of Plato (427-347 B.C.), many considered Aristotle's philosophy to be a reaction to the metaphysics and epistemology of his predecessor. However, Aristotle made significant and unique contributions to the field of philosophy. He did more than reproduce the theories of his teacher. He is the founder of traditional logic and his laws are still accepted today. However, in our postmodern society, it has become more and more common for people to reject the laws of logic and embrace irrational thoughts, beliefs, and philosophies. Certainly, the arguments developed and presented in this book build on a foundational understanding and acceptance of the laws of logic. Many Christian arguments rely heavily upon the laws of logic. Jesus frequently appealed to logical reasoning in His messages. Even the Christian doctrines of the trinity and the incarnation do not violate the laws of logic as some have claimed (see appendices A and B). Aristotle's three fundamental laws of logic are as follows:

1. Law of identity states that any one thing is itself and cannot be any other thing.

2. Law of non-contradiction states that something cannot possess opposite properties at the same time and in the same sense.

3. Law of excluded middle states that something is either the case or it is not the case.

The application of these laws, while essential to making rational thought possible, present a unique dilemma to the issue of free will. In his work, *The Sea Battle*, Aristotle presents the problem with the law of excluded middle as applied to future events.[1] In sum, either a future event will occur or it will not occur. But suppose the event will occur. If it will occur, then it is true now that it will occur. However, if it will not occur, then it is true now that it will not occur. Since these are the only two possibilities, fatalism seems to be true. Fatalism is the view that the result has already been determined so that nothing could happen, other than what has already been determined to happen. Should fatalism replace the law of excluded middle when it comes to future events? Are the events of the future sealed in some way so that no decision in the present can make a difference? Do people have the libertarian free will to affect future events? What unique challenges arise when God is said to be sovereign or in control of the future? What shall we make of the punishments and rewards that are handed out

to people for the choices that they make? It is to these questions that we now turn in our analysis of the conflicting theories about free will.

A Survey of the Free Will Debate

Throughout my years as a student and teacher of philosophical theology, I have referred to the discussion within the field of free will as "The Free Will Debate." The views discussed in this chapter will clarify my use of the phrase "Free Will Debate" as we survey the spectrum of the debate from determinism to libertarianism.[2] Perhaps, as we survey the free will theories, you may be led to accept a compatibilist position between determinism and libertarianism. Determinism is the view that given A, B must occur and could never have not occurred. Libertarianism says that given choices A and B, one can literally choose either; no pre-determining factors impede one's ability to choose otherwise. While it will be argued that determinism and libertarianism apparently contradict in such a way that both could not be true at the same time, some philosophers have attempted to demonstrate that determinism and libertarianism are compatible. The search for compatibilism has created a detailed spectrum of views to analyze when studying the topic of free will. Let us begin with an analysis of fatalism.

Fatalism

Fatalism is the view that the result has already been pre-determined so that nothing could happen, other than what has already been determined to happen. In other words, fatalism is the belief that all results are inevitable outcomes of events that are uncontrollable. The justification for fatalism is two-fold. First, the logical argument, as demonstrated by Aristotle, says that if an event is going to happen in the future, then it must be true right now that the event will happen in the future so that nothing can deter the event that will occur from occurring. Consider the application of fatalism to sporting events like the Super Bowl. On February 6, 2011, two undetermined teams will play Super Bowl XLV at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington Texas. According to fatalism and Aristotle's logical problem of the law of excluded middle applied to future events, the statement "The Cowboys will win the Super Bowl" is either true or false. If it is true that the Cowboys will win the Super Bowl on February 6, 2011 then it is true right now (a date prior to February 6, 2011) that the Cowboys will win the Super Bowl on February 6, 2011. However, if it is false that the Cowboys will win the Super Bowl on February 6, 2011 then it is false right now (a date prior to February 6, 2011) that the Cowboys will win the Super Bowl.

Some philosophers have taken fatalism a step too far and have adopted a "fake fatalism." Fake fatalism says, "If it is true that the Cowboys will win the Super Bowl, then they will win the Super Bowl. However, if it is false that the Cowboys will win the Super Bowl, then they will not win the Super Bowl. So why should the Cowboys practice? Why should they even bother playing the game?" Those who hold to "fake fatalism" have assumed that some events are inevitable and others are not. Therefore, they feel like not giving an effort towards the events that will influence an unavoidable result. But fatalism holds that every event (including decisions to practice and what plays to run in the game) has an inevitable outcome so that what will occur must occur. According to fatalism, neither the coach nor the players possess the ability to influence any outcome other than what will inevitably occur.

The second argument for fatalism is unique to theism, especially when an omnipotent and omniscient God is considered. If God knows prior to February 6, 2011 who will win the Super Bowl on February 6, 2011 and God has the omnipotent power to bring about what He already knows will occur, then "that team" must win the Super Bowl and fatalism is true.

Richard Taylor presented an argument for fatalism in *Metaphysics*.[3] Taylor considers a fictional man named Osmo who encounters a mysterious book titled, "The Life of Osmo." The book accurately depicted the reader's life story from his birth in Mercy Hospital in Auburn, Indiana where he was born on June 6, 1942 to his nearly fatal bout with pneumonia at the age of five. Because the book was written years before he was born and yet so accurately described the details of his life, Osmo turned pale. Osmo's amazement with the book soon turned to dismay as he realized that the book is only twenty-nine chapters long. In his curiosity to see how the book ended, he turned to the last page which read, "And Osmo, having taken Northwest flight 569 from O'Hare perishes

when the aircraft crashes on the runway at Fort Wayne, with considerable loss of life, a tragedy rendered more calamitous by the fact that Osmo had neglected to renew his life insurance before the expiration of the grace period." Taylor goes on to explain that Osmo thought he would just not get on that plane and by exercising his free will, which he assumed that he had at the time, he would avoid such a tragic fate. However, about three years later, Osmo went berserk when he was on flight 569 from O'Hare bound for St. Paul and the pilot announced they were going to land in Fort Wayne instead. According to one of the flight attendants, he tried to hijack the plane and divert it to another airfield. The Civil Astronautics Board cited the resulting disruptions as contributing to the crash that followed as the plane tried to land.

Taylor uses this story to build the case for fatalism. He points out that Osmo became a fatalist due to the set of true statements about his life both past and future. Osmo came to know what some of these statements were and believed them. Osmo did not believe that certain things were going to happen to him no matter what, like dying in a plane crash when he was not even on a plane or that he was going to break his leg skiing whether or not he even went skiing. That kind of fatalism is ridiculous. Osmo's fatalism was justified by the knowledge he had gained from the book coupled with his inability to alter his life path from any other events of the past recorded in the book. While it may appear that Osmo was not a fatalist because he tried to alter his destiny at the last minute of his life by trying to hijack the plane that was re-routed to Fort Wayne airport, Taylor argues that the reaction of fear that ultimately caused the crash was due to a fatalistic form of reasoning. Furthermore, while Osmo may have tried to alter his destiny in the last minutes of his life, Taylor argues that the evidence for fatalism lies in Osmo's fear upon hearing that the plane had been re-routed to Fort Wayne and his inability to change what was written in the book about his life: Osmo actually died in the plane crash. There is nothing that anybody can do in the present to alter events in the future that are inevitable. For Taylor, every event in the future is inevitable and is no more capable of being altered than events that have occurred in the past.

Taylor raises the question of whether fatalism is as true for you and me as it was for Osmo. In Osmo's case, fatalism is determined by two factors: 1) there exists a set of true statements about his life, both past and future; and 2) he came to know what those statements were and believed them. Now, the first factor seems to be true as illustrated above in the Super Bowl analogy. There exists a set of true statements about our lives both past and future. The difference between Osmo and us, however, is that we are unaware of the future events; but Osmo was aware of them. It was his awareness that ultimately led him into fatalism. Although Taylor's case was based on logic rather than theology, Christians must acknowledge that our beliefs in the sovereignty and foreknowledge of God appear to include determining factors that closely resemble Osmo's book of life. For if God knows when I am going to die so that my death could not occur at any other moment than the moment determined by God, then fatalism would be true. The problems with fatalism will be examined in a critique of determinism in the next section as determinism and fatalism are closely related.

Determinism

Determinism is the view that given A, B must occur and could never have not occurred. Determinism and fatalism are similar because in both views, the result is unavoidable and whatever happened in the past could not have happened otherwise. According to determinism, events are caused by other past events and are the causes of future events. Consequently, determinism is based on the emphasis of a series of impersonal causes and effects like one would expect to find in materialist, behaviorist, or functionalist philosophies of mind. It comes as no surprise that many determinists are found in the scientific fields promoting scientific naturalism. However, as illustrated under fatalism, belief in an all-powerful and all-knowing God who knows the detailed events of the future also leads to determinism (even fatalism) and so it comes as no surprise to find some Christians embracing determinism.

A popular determinist in the history of philosophy was Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677). Spinoza denied the traditional view of libertarian freedom. He also denied chance, claiming that it is logically impossible that the events that did happen could have happened in any other way than they did. Spinoza denied substance dualism between mind/soul and matter and believed that there is only one underlying reality, seen inwardly as mind and thought, and seen outwardly as matter and motion. Since there are not two different substances (only two different perspectives), Spinoza did not face the problem of interaction between mind/soul and matter.

According to Spinoza, libertarian free will is an illusion. Man considers himself free because he is inwardly aware of his actions but not of the causes of his actions. Spinoza believed that man's apparent choices were as binding to the laws of causality as the physical realities are bound to the laws of physics. Spinoza gave an example of a stone projected into space that thought it determined its own trajectory and target; same as with the human perception of our ability to choose and direct our own paths. Like the stone, human beings are bound to move in the direction guided by nature's laws, but conscious only of our desires, we fabricate the false idea of free will.

Spinoza was an atheist who demanded that the concept of God be explained as an application of the laws of nature. That is, God cannot be something outside nature that controls it, but must necessarily be part of it. According to Spinoza, the term "God" is a reference to nature: an impersonal force of natural laws working together.[4] God is not a personal loving Being who desires an eternal relationship with His people. Spinoza was unsurprisingly excommunicated from his Jewish community in Amsterdam. Christians also condemned him for being an atheist. Nevertheless, all the while, Spinoza remained very devoutly religious by applying religion to his scientific paradigm that God could be explained completely by impersonal terms of natural laws. Spinoza saw the anthropomorphic God as an abomination, completely rejecting the wonder of nature for which he believed accounted for the origin of life. According to Spinoza, nature (not a personal, necessary Being) is the true expression of God and each of us is part of it.

Spinoza's concept of God, as applied to his scientific naturalism or atheism, influenced other scientists to embrace a similar concept of God. Rather than God being the traditional personal, necessary Being who desires a relationship with His people, God is an impersonal force within nature found through an examination of the natural sciences. Spinoza's most notable student was Albert Einstein.

In an analysis of Einstein's philosophy, Chuck Colson presents Einstein's determinism dilemma in a fictitious tea party discussion between Einstein and three clergymen.[5] In the discussion, Einstein reveals his affirmation of Spinoza's God, a deity revealed in the orderly harmony of the universe. Einstein says, "But what I cannot accept is the idea of a personal God who punishes or rewards people. My religion has no dogma, no personal God who punishes or rewards people. A real scientist must be convinced of the universal operation of the law of causation, and he cannot for a moment entertain the idea of a being who interferes in the course of events."

While Einstein's explicit denial of a personal creator is apparent, his determinism is expressed in the dialogue that follows when he remarks, "If the personal being is omnipotent, then every event everywhere in the universe is his work – including every human action, every human thought, every human feeling. So how is it possible to think of holding people responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an almighty being?" The answer, we may quickly assume, is free will. However, Einstein goes on to establish his "Spinozian" view that free will is an illusion. His 'scientific' conclusion leads him to believe that there is no room for any alternative other than "a universe utterly bound by natural law." Einstein goes on to deny moral responsibility on the notion that free will cannot exist because science demonstrates that everything that exists (including the human mind) is a product of cause and effect. In the conclusion of this fictional dialogue with the clergymen, Einstein gets frustrated with the discussion as the clergymen continue to press the free will argument. In frustration, Einstein retreats to his violin where he found that in music the same order exists as in his scientific work.

Determinism is not unique to Christian theology. Determinism is a view frequently held by atheists. Determinism is justified by those who affirm physicalism because if events are determined by their causes and there are no personal agents (like God or souls), then determinism would naturally follow.

The physicalist view of determinism has a fatal philosophical flaw. This form of determinism results in one of the two following fatal options: 1) an infinite regression of cause and effect or 2) a regression of determining causes, which began by an impersonal first cause, which itself was not a product of cause and effect. Therefore, determinism violates the very scientific paradigm for which it is trying to affirm because the process of determining causes are either endless (infinite regression) or are themselves empirically unverifiable. For the theist who holds to determinism, however, the problem of infinite regression of cause and effect does not apply. The theistic view of determinism says that God is the determining cause of all things. God does not have a determining cause Himself because He is eternal and necessary.

Determinists do need to address the issue of personal responsibility for moral behavior. If determinism is true, then there is no plausible reason why a criminal should be punished or rehabilitated for criminal behavior or

a child rewarded for good behavior. Why is the criminal not rewarded for embezzling thousands of dollars and a child punished for earning straight A's on a report card? The answer seems obvious: because justice requires someone to receive the consequence (positive or negative) equal to the deed. Also, consistent with punishments and rewards is the assumption of personal responsibility. A deaf man is not punished for not obeying instructions he could not hear. However, a parent would be exercising justice by punishing a rebellious teenager who hears instructions but chooses not to obey.

Libertarianism

Libertarianism says that given choices A and B, someone can literally choose to do either one, and no determining factors impede someone's ability to choose otherwise. Briefly, one has the ability to actually choose otherwise.[6] Libertarianism does not demand that all choices carry equal weight (50% / 50%). Some choices are 70% / 30% others may be 99% / 1%. However, regardless of the percentage of weight someone attributes to a particular choice, libertarianism recognizes that people may freely choose otherwise, even when influential factors are present.

Libertarians appeal to intuition for justification that libertarian free will is true. For example, it appears to me that I have the libertarian freedom to decide to eat dinner at Mc Donald's, Taco Bell, Panda Express, or even at home. In fact, other options that I am not even aware of might also exist. However, I still feel that I have the freedom to choose between these options. Currently, I am on a diet, which includes going to the gym everyday and eating healthy. Does this commitment influence my decision about what to eat for dinner? Certainly, it might influence my decision, but I do not feel that being on a diet would determine my decisions the way determinism suggests. If I choose a McDonald's Big Mac, large fries, and a strawberry shake, I would be going against my commitment to eat healthy. However, this certainly seems like a viable option as I struggle to decide where and what to eat. Suppose now that I have entered a "Biggest Loser" contest with some of my friends at work. We have a $500.00 pool for whoever can lose the most weight during the next three months. This factor still will not determine my choice to go home and eat a healthy salad, but it certainly may strongly influence my decision. Regardless of all the influences, from the smell of French fries as I pass Mc Donald's to my desire to lose weight and win a competition, I still feel free to make choices about what I eat. My belief in libertarian free will justifies the feelings of guilt or pride that come along with each weekly weigh in. The feelings of guilt and pride seem to come from an intuition that I have enough libertarian free will to choose my meals and to do the things that I need to do that will result in consistent weight loss. The example of the dieter is one example used to promote the argument for libertarian free will. If determinism is the case, then I would not be responsible for the weight that I gained or lost throughout and at the end of the competition. Furthermore, if determinism were the case, then my feelings of guilt or pride for my weight results would not be justified.

The fatalist would argue that people could not lose any more weight than what they lost by the end of the competition and the determinist would add that the weight loss was a product of causes and effects that were out of the contestants' control. The determinist would also argue that feelings of guilt for weight gain or pride for weight loss stem from an illusion (not an intuition) that the contestants were free to do otherwise. The libertarian, however, is not so quick to turn away from his strong intuition that he controls the amount of weight that he loses by the choices that he makes. As the competition ends, some contestants choose to work out longer and harder in the gym, eat healthier meals, and get adequate sleep because of a belief that those choices will lead to a winning weight loss number!

Libertarians also appeal to the justification of punishments and rewards for actions that are results of people exercising their libertarian freedom. Libertarians point out that sometimes punishments are justified and sometimes they are not. In the case of criminal activity, whether somebody is punished or rehabilitated depends on one's ability to exercise his or her libertarian free will. Courts often decide, based on physical and biological evidence, whether someone who committed a crime could have done otherwise based on his or her ability to choose. While determinists argue that no criminal could have done other than what he did do based on mitigating circumstances such as childhood development, family influences, education, income, etc.; libertarians insist that justice demands the ability to discern when someone could have done otherwise.

Libertarians not only appeal to the justification of punishments as a means of validating their belief in libertarian free will, but they also appeal to rewards. When I was a child, I could not sleep a full night in my own bed. Every night, I would crawl out of bed and sneak into my parents' bed. In an effort to get a full night's sleep, my parents offered me the reward of a trip to Disneyland if I could sleep one whole month of nights in my own bed. I slept in my own bed every night for a month and went to Disneyland.

I tell this story to illustrate the following responses from determinists and libertarians. A determinist would say that the knowledge of a prospective Disneyland trip caused me to sleep in my own bed for a month. My parents did not reward me for sleeping in my own bed (good behavior) but rather used Disneyland as a factor that controlled the behavior that they desired. Libertarians, on the other hand, would say that the knowledge of a prospective Disneyland trip did not control my decision to sleep in my own bed every night for a month. Even with the hope of a trip to Disneyland nestled in my head, I could have still crawled into my parents' bed. According to libertarianism, I exercised the self-control necessary to sleep in my own bed for one month and was truly rewarded for the exercise of self-control.

The student who is punished or rewarded for earning particular grades on a report card illustrates another practical example of punishments and rewards. It is common to hear stories about students who get privileges taken away for a period following a poor grade update. But has anyone analyzed the reasons why parents punish children for poor grades? Our intuition tells us that punishment disciplines children to make better decisions when placed in a similar situation. A parent is justified in punishing a child who earns an "F" on a test if the reason for earning the "F" was under the student's control (like choosing not to study before the test). However, suppose a student earns an "F" on a test and the student worked hard but earned a low grade due to a severe learning disability. While it seems appropriate for a parent to discipline the student who chose not to study, it does not seem justified for the student with the learning disability to face the same punishment. This analogy demonstrates a key aspect of our justice system: punishments for particular behaviors presuppose the existence of libertarian free will.

Libertarians have certain criteria that must be true for libertarian free will to exist. If libertarianism is true, then human beings must first be causal agents. As a causal agent, man must be capable of making a decision and seeing it to fruition without the determining causation of some other factor. Also, if libertarianism is true, there must have existed more than one option that could have occurred besides the one that actually did occur. In fatalism, nothing could have occurred besides what did occur. Using the analogy of the Super Bowl, the libertarian argues that prior to the 2010 NFL season every NFL team has a chance at winning Super Bowl XLV. The libertarian choices throughout the season are factors that help determine the outcomes of games. While libertarianism maintains that human agency produces the results of a choice, the choices that people make do not have to carry an equal balancing weight. All that must be possible is that the causal agent has the ability to make a different choice than the one he or she actually made.

To better illustrate libertarian freedom, philosophers use analogies to show that the odds of making a choice do not have to be equally weighted. A libertarian choice could be more heavily weighted on one side either by outside forces or by the desires and beliefs internal to a person. If libertarianism is true, people must be able to choose otherwise, even in cases where influential factors are present.

Let us consider the example of choosing between ice cream and liver with onions. Suppose you enter a room, on the table is a bowl of your favorite ice cream, and next to it is a plate of liver and onions. Which one would you choose? Suppose you choose the ice cream. What factors led you to that choice? Were you ever free to really choose the liver and onions? Did a negative experience with liver and onions in the past cause you to choose the ice cream? Did a positive experience with ice cream in the past cause you to choose the ice cream? The determinist says that you were never free to choose the liver and onions if you chose the ice cream because there are so many factors about you and your experiences that caused or determined you to eat the ice cream. Suppose now that you just went to the doctor and found out that you were lactose intolerant. If you eat or drink milk products, you will get sick. Does this information deter you from choosing the ice cream? Suppose you just started a diet. Does this fact influence or determine you to eat the ice cream or the liver and onions? This analogy excites more questions about the free will debate than it provides answers. However, it does whet the appetite for thinking deeply about the consequences of libertarianism and determinism.

The above situation not only helps philosophers ask some of the key questions within the free will debate, but it also helps illustrate a key issue about libertarian freedom. Libertarians believe that while humans exercise causal agency over their choices, not all choices carry equal weight. In the case of the ice cream versus liver and onions, the person in the room must always be able to choose the opposite thing even when factors such as taste, smell, diet, illness, etc. factor into the choice. In other words, even if I am on a diet, I must still be able to choose the ice cream. Even if I am lactose intolerant, I must still be able to choose the ice cream. Even if the ice cream is my favorite flavor, I must still be able to choose the liver and onions. Although there may be many influential factors motivating me towards eating the ice cream, libertarianism demands freedom to choose the liver and onions.

Free Will Theism (Open Theism)

There is no doubt that the debate between determinism and libertarianism has its theological components. If theological determinism is true, then God causes all things (including evil). We will consider the problem of evil, from a determinist perspective, in the next chapter. While extreme determinism has its theological problems, extreme libertarianism has its struggles as well. One of the ways that philosophers of religion have sought to resolve the conflict between man's libertarianism and God's sovereignty has been to elevate man's freedom above the sovereign control of God. This position is known as Free Will Theism or Open Theism.

Free Will Theism teaches that God knows all things and is therefore omniscient. However, while traditional theology maintains that God knows all things past, present, and future; Free Will Theism teaches that God does not know the future because the future has not happened yet. According to Free Will Theism, God's omniscience is restricted only to the past and the present.[7] The Free Will Theist view of God's knowledge leads to a position where God takes risks regarding the future based on His knowledge of the past and present. God also learns about man and his choices by the mistakes man made in the past. In the case of creation, for example, God did not know that Adam and Eve would sin in the garden when He created them. God took a risk in creating Adam and Eve. He created them good and they became bad by misusing free will. The sin of Adam and Eve, however, took God by surprise. Free Will Theists are quick to point out biblical references like Genesis 6:6, "The Lord was grieved that He made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain," to justify the belief that God regrets decisions based on man's misuse of free will. According to Free Will Theism, God does not override man's free will in most cases. One of the inconsistencies with this view is that in cases of fulfilled prophecy and some answered prayers, God does override man's libertarian freedom. However, Free Will Theists maintain that while God can override man's free will at times, it is a rare and special case in which He does.[8]

While it may be tempting to reconcile the sovereignty of God with man's libertarian free will by affirming Free Will Theism, other theological problems arise on a closer examination. First, Free Will Theism assumes that God's divine foreknowledge and man's libertarian freedom conflict so that both cannot be true at the same time. However, as we shall see, a compatibilist view of free will may provide a solution to the dilemma without compromising either God's divine foreknowledge or man's libertarian free will. Second, God's foreknowledge of future events is presupposed throughout the Bible in passages such as 1 John 3:20, Hebrews 4:13, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Isaiah 46:9-10, Isaiah 42:8-9, Psalm 139, and Romans 8:28-30. While there are many other passages in the Bible that proclaim God's knowledge of future events, these verses alone provide compelling evidence that a denial of God's divine foreknowledge is incompatible with Scripture. Third, in order to maintain a consistent doctrine, Free Will Theists, like Gregory Boyd, maintain that there are no true or false statements about the future.[9] However, while fatalism may not entirely be true; there is some support for the belief that there exists a set of true or false statements today about events that have not yet occurred (see Super Bowl example).

Fatalism and determinism deny man his libertarian free will so that man is not responsible for his own choices. Extreme libertarianism (Free Will Theism) compromises God's divine foreknowledge so that He cannot or does not know the future until man exercises his libertarian freedom in the present. Given the flaws in determinism and extreme libertarianism, perhaps there is some warrant to the compatibilist positions of free will. Let us now examine compatibilism as an attempt to reconcile the current dilemma.

Compatibilism

Compatibilism says that the two seemingly contradictory positions of determinism and libertarianism actually do come together. Compatibilists argue that there is no contradiction between the statements: 1) all actions are causally determined and 2) agents are free to choose otherwise. Compatibilists also argue that any conflict between determinism and libertarianism is resolved when freedom is properly understood. Two main compatibilist positions help to explain how determinism and libertarianism are compatible. The two views are hard compatibilism and soft compatibilism.[10]

Hard Compatibilism

Hard compatibilism requires that determinism be true in order to make libertarian free will possible. According to hard compatibilism, people cannot freely choose otherwise unless a free choice is caused by something like a desire or a belief. It just may be that preferences, desires, and beliefs cause or determine what free agents will choose. Hard compatibilists point out that without such causal factors, actions would reduce to unguided random events and free will actions would not be possible.

To illustrate how a hard compatibilist would defend his or her position, consider the liver and onions versus ice cream analogy (as discussed above). The hard compatibilist recognizes that factors like smell, taste, diet, and lactose intolerance are determining factors that cause the selection of the ice cream or the liver and onions. The hard compatibilist argues that people could not freely choose the ice cream or the liver and onions without the determining factors like smell, taste, preference, diet, or other factors that guide them towards a particular item. Without determining causes, the hard compatibilist says that freely choosing the ice cream or the liver and onions would be impossible. Without determining causes, the action of choosing would be a random action and choices are not random actions.

Soft Compatibilism

Unlike hard compatibilism, soft compatibilism says that libertarian freedom does not require that determinism is true in order to allow someone the freedom to choose. The soft compatibilist says that libertarian freedom is compatible with determinism. Determinism does not provide a compelling argument to destroy someone's belief in libertarian free choice.

Using the ice cream and liver with onions analogy, although it may be determined that I choose the ice cream over the liver and onions, it does not follow that I did not freely choose the ice cream. The soft compatibilist does not recognize incompatibility between determinism and libertarian freedom. The soft compatibilist also does not require determinism to be true in order for someone to be able to make a libertarian free choice.

Molinism

Molinism is an advanced theory of compatibilism attributed to 16th Century Jesuit theologian, Luis de Molina. Popular contemporary Molinists (advocates of middle knowledge) are William Lane Craig and Alvin Plantinga. Molinism seeks to bring together the seemingly incompatible concepts of God's sovereignty and man's libertarian free will (especially when applied to salvation).

There is debate in theology about whether God chooses whom He is going to save or man chooses to be saved. Christians, often called Calvinists, believe that God chooses the saved. John Calvin taught that man is so depraved (total depravity) that there is nothing about man that he would freely choose God apart from God first choosing to save man. Christians who believe that man freely chooses salvation follow a view called Arminianism, established by Jacobus Arminius as a rival view to Calvinism in the 16th and 17th centuries. While the Calvinist/Arminian debate hinges on whether salvation is determined by God's election/predestination or man's free will, Molinism does not consider God's election/predestination and man's free will to be mutually

exclusive.[11] The goal of Molinism is to account for God's sovereignty and man's libertarian free will simultaneously without compromising one over the other.

According to Molinism, God possesses three types of knowledge: natural knowledge, middle knowledge and free knowledge.[12] These three types of knowledge are called moments. These moments do not exist sequentially, but are believed to co-exist with God's omniscience. Let us examine each one of these types of knowledge and demonstrate how they help bring about compatibility between the sovereignty of God and the libertarian free will of man.

God's natural knowledge is knowledge of all necessary and possible truths. A necessary truth is a statement that must be true and whose opposite is impossible. A possible truth is a statement that is possibly true in a logically possible world, but does not have to be actually true in the actual world. For example, a unicorn is logically possible but not actual. Although all actual truths are also logically possible truths, not all logically possible truths are actual truths. Under the category of natural knowledge, God knows what could possibly exist within the realm of logical possibility. God's natural knowledge also includes not only all logical truths but all moral truths as well.

God's middle knowledge is knowledge of what all free agents would do in any situation.[13] God's middle knowledge is frequently called the knowledge of counterfactuals because God knows what could have come about if the world was different in any way or if someone would have made a different choice. It is through middle knowledge, argue the Molinists, that God is justified in sending someone to hell who does not accept the grace of Christ's atonement. Molinists hold to the sinful nature of all humanity imputed by the sin of Adam. Therefore, God is not only just for sending someone to hell because of sinful nature and personal rejection of general and/or special revelation, but He also knows (through middle knowledge) that whoever did not choose to follow Christ would have never chosen to follow Him in any given situation. If God knows what people would choose in any given situation, then those who end up in hell are those who would have never accepted Christ under any other circumstances (i.e. living during any other time, culture, age, etc.). Some who hold to middle knowledge explain God's justification for eternal punishment upon those who never hear the Gospel on the grounds that God knows every possible choice someone could have made in any given situation. Therefore, those who never hear the Gospel or reject it even once could justifiably end up in hell if God knows that they would never have accepted it under any circumstances. Molinists are usually Arminian regarding the doctrine of salvation.

God's free knowledge pertains to all of the facts of the actual world that He freely chose to create. The idea that God is unaware of the details of His creation is not plausible in Molinism. Molinism uses the concept of free knowledge to argue that God knows the facts of His creation better than the creation knows the facts. This is often illustrated when man finds a scientific theory to be false after further research sheds more light on the matter. In this case, the experimentation caused man to change his view on a matter that God knew to be true all along.

While Molinism is a complicated theory because it holds to three types of knowledge for God, the theory of God's middle knowledge does help to resolve the apparent contradiction between God's sovereign control and man's libertarian free will. According to Molinism, God does not cause someone to choose salvation in a deterministic manner that impedes one's libertarian freedom. God simply knows who will freely choose salvation because He knows what is necessarily, logically, and morally possible (natural knowledge), He knows what people will freely choose in any given situation (middle knowledge), and He knows people better than they know themselves (free knowledge). These three types of knowledge provide a solid basis for understanding how God could be sovereign and know all things (even future events) and still allow people to make libertarian free will choices.

Agnostic Autonomism

Alfred R. Mele (1951 – present) is a philosophy professor at Florida State University who has coined the phrase "agnostic autonomy." Agnostic autonomy questions the traditional views on determinism, libertarianism, and compatibilism. Etymologically, agnostic autonomy declares that one does not know (agnostic) how much libertarian freedom (autonomy) a person possesses. However, agnostic autonomy affirms that people possess enough autonomy to be responsible for most of their decisions. The agnostic autonomist recognizes good

arguments from both the libertarian and compatibilist positions on free will and consequently becomes agnostic about which view is correct. The agnostic autonomist essentially rejects determinism because people seem to exercise libertarian free will when they act contrary to desires that might otherwise determine their actions. Alfred Mele suggests that due to the lack of definitive arguments on the existing positions within the free will debate, the issue of which view of free will is correct will not be settled until further thought, discussion, and debate takes place.[14]

Agnostic autonomy may be a position to consider for those who do not find determinism, libertarianism, compatibilism (soft or hard) or Molinism to be convincing viewpoints. Rather than being frustrated by the lack of resolution on the issue, people should take it upon themselves to do further research to resolve any conflicts that remain. Christians must remember that while we might be agnostic about how the sovereignty of God and the libertarian free will of man are compatible with one another, we cannot be agnostic about the biblical and theological teachings that establish both doctrines as true.

The Antinomy Position

Another way of resolving the contradiction between determinism and libertarianism is to accept the problem as an antinomy. An antinomy is the acceptance of a contradiction without a sufficient explanation for how the contradiction is to be resolved. The antinomy position accepts a violation of the law of non-contradiction and refuses to seek an acceptable, logical resolution. Unlike agnostic autonomy, which recognizes that further discussion, research, and debate might eventually lead someone to an intelligible conclusion; the antinomy position affirms that there may never be any further arguments that would resolve the dilemma. Antinomies are not encouraged by teachers and philosophers who strive to encourage deeper thinking and discussion among their students in hopes of inspiring them to solve the toughest philosophical dilemmas.[15] Finally, antinomies are subject to criticism for being illogical because the law of non-contradiction does not allow two opposites to be true at the same time and in the same sense.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter presented a survey of the wide range of beliefs surrounding the free will debate. Aristotelian logic defended fatalism and determinism. Aristotle argued that what is true of the future must be true in the present so that no other possibility besides what does occur could have occurred. Fatalism and determinism certainly seem to be the case as someone looks back and reflects on his or her life. Given a traditional belief in God's divine sovereignty and foreknowledge, the cases for fatalism and determinism seem to be strengthened. As I reflect on my life journey, including my job, wife and family, and other key components like the lives and deaths of loved ones, I am encouraged by the fatalist and determinist positions. It seems to me that God led me to study at Biola and that I could not have gone to college anywhere else. It also seems, through a series of circumstances and answered prayer, that God led me to teach apologetics to high school students. I feel inclined to accept fatalism or determinism when I think that my wife Liz is the person that God ordained me to marry or that God had a plan for my son and daughter long before my wife and I met. These feelings are consistent with Scriptures that speak of God's plan and sovereignty (See Psalm 139:16; Jeremiah 1:5).

While fatalism and determinism appear to be true as I analyze life in retrospect, my intuition that libertarian free will is true becomes stronger as I reflect upon my life from another perspective. Before I decided to attend Biola, I applied to and visited other colleges. I remember deliberating over which school to attend before arriving at my conclusion. While my deliberation included much prayer and counseling, I still believe that I decided to attend Biola. It also seems that my wife and I chose each other in the process of deciding whom to marry. While I admit that the experience of dating my wife was as no other dating experience that I have ever had and that experience may very well have been God's divine direction, I still believe that I chose to marry my wife. Part of pre-marital counseling urges people to evaluate the seriousness of entering into a life-long commitment of marriage. People are responsible for their marriages and certainly seem free in a libertarian sense, when selecting a marriage partner. The feelings of personal responsibility for the choices I make lead me to embrace libertarianism.

Is it possible that because I feel a sense of God's divine intervention, on the one hand, and a sense of personal responsibility and libertarian freedom on the other, that both are true simultaneously? Compatibilism argues that both determinism (whether by God or other circumstances) and libertarian freedom are simultaneously true. However, if they are simultaneously true, then how are they simultaneously true? Are they true in the hard compatibilist sense such that I cannot even make free choices without determining factors being present? Are they true in the soft compatibilist sense such that determinism is not incompatible with libertarianism (although determinism is highly unlikely)? The issue of compatibilism is critically important in traditional Christianity because the Bible and traditional Christian theology teach that God is sovereign and man is responsible for his choices. No better theological discussion highlights the sovereignty of God and the libertarian choice of man than the debate about the role of libertarian free will in the process of salvation. Does God choose whom He will save as the Calvinist maintains or does man choose salvation on his own initiative as Arminianism suggests? Does Molinism (the affirmation of divine middle knowledge) help settle the debate between God's sovereignty and man's libertarian free will?

While compatibilism may suffice for some to resolve the conflicts of the free will debate, it may only raise more questions for others. Agnostic autonomism is a view for those who are not convinced by determinism, libertarianism, or some form of compatibilism. Agnostic autonomism encourages those who are not persuaded by the existing arguments to do more research in hopes that an adequate solution will eventually be found.

If this chapter has caused more distress than comfort, then I officially welcome you to the field of philosophy. Unlike some other disciplines that encourage a regurgitation of information, philosophy requires higher level thinking about issues that often do not have easy, ready-made answers. I once opened a fortune cookie that read, "It is harder to ask the right questions than to find answers to the wrong questions." This Chinese proverb reveals an essential approach to our study of philosophy. The real difficulty may not be in finding answers to questions about free will, but in learning to ask the right questions that will lead us to adequate solutions to the problems. If you are troubled by the free will debate and have not yet resolved how God's sovereignty and man's libertarian free will are simultaneously true, then I invite you to continue your journey by praying for an answer, reading Scripture, and studying the volumes of philosophical works that further address the issues introduced in this chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The Pillar of
Explaining the Presence of Evil

"It seems God does not exist because if one of the two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the name God means that he is infinite goodness. If God exists there would be no evil discoverable, but there is evil discoverable, therefore God does not exist."

-- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica: Whether God Exists?*

Tragedies have caused some people to question the existence an all-powerful, all-good God. When evil strikes, discussions about the sovereignty and benevolence of God tend to resurface. "Resurface" is a key word because philosophers have debated the apparent dilemma between the presence of evil and the existence of an all-powerful, all-good God for centuries. The dilemma between the existence of an all-powerful, all good God and the presence of evil is known as the problem of evil. Discussions about the problem of evil demand an intelligent response.

From my years as a pastor and a teacher, questions about the compatibility between an all-powerful, all-good God and evil are the most frequently asked questions among students and the most deeply troubling questions among my fellow church members. Questions about the compatibility between an all-powerful, all-good God and evil are logical and emotional. Some people simply cannot understand logically how evil could exist in a world governed by an omnipotent and omni-benevolent God. Others simply do not understand how an all-powerful and all-loving God could allow a child to die at a young age, allow people to starve to death, or allow good people to spend eternity in hell. Regardless of the specific issue, the problem of evil is a legitimate threat to the Christian worldview. However, after we analyze the significant contributions of some of the sharpest philosophical responses to the problem, we will arrive at conclusions that should help strengthen the Christian's faith in an all-powerful and all-loving God despite the presence of evil in the world.

In order to adequately account for the presence of evil in a world created and sustained by an almighty, sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omni-benevolent, just and righteous God; we must accomplish three tasks. The first task: to define the logical problem of evil and explain the need to uphold each step. The second task: to analyze the historical and contemporary arguments that attempt to resolve the problem of evil. The third task: to present a biblical solution to the problem of evil in light of global, national, and personal evils that often lead people away from faith in an all-powerful, all-good God.

The Problem of Evil

This expresses the logical problem of evil:

1) God is omnipotent (all-powerful)

2) God is omni-benevolent (all good)

3) Evil exists

Those who oppose belief in the traditional, Judeo-Christian God, based on the logical problem of evil, try to establish a contradiction in maintaining all three premises simultaneously. David Hume summed up the problem as follows, "Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil."[1]

There are quick and easy ways to resolve the logical problem of evil if someone is willing to compromise one or more of the above premises. However, as we will discover, compromising one or more of the above premises in order to resolve the apparent logical problem of evil will only cause more problems. An adequate Christian apologetic will resolve the logical problem while simultaneously upholding traditional, Judeo-Christian theism. We will now demonstrate the dangers to traditional Judeo-Christian theism when one or more premises are compromised.

Premise # 1 -- God is omnipotent

One way to resolve the problem of evil is to abandon belief in God's omnipotence. Some theologians have attempted to explain away the omnipotence of God by giving the power of evil equal or more power than the Almighty Himself. A view that gives equal weight to both good and evil is dualism. Dualism is the view that there are two co-eternal principles in conflict with each other, in this case: good and evil.[2] There is a metaphysical dualism that includes other conflicts of co-existence such as matter and spirit or soul. While metaphysical dualism

was briefly discussed in chapter five, some have adopted a form of eternal dualism between good and evil to solve the logical problem of evil. St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and C.S. Lewis spoke adamantly against eternal good and evil dualism. C. S. Lewis said:

> The two powers, the good and the evil, do not explain each other. Neither good nor evil can claim to be the Ultimate. More ultimate than either of them is the inextricable fact of their being there together. Each of them, therefore, is conditioned -- finds himself willy-nilly in a situation; and either that situation itself, or some unknown force which produced that situation, is the real Ultimate. You cannot accept two conditioned and mutually independent beings as self-grounded, self-comprehending Absolute.[3]

Dualism is a philosophy concerning the eternal conflict between good and evil. Christian philosophers have demonstrated that an eternal conflict between good and evil is incompatible with Judeo-Christian theism. Judeo-Christian theists do not argue that good and evil eternally co-exist. Rather, Judeo-Christian theists maintain that God is the eternal Ultimate. While God is eternally good, evil did not exist until it came about initially by Lucifer (Satan). If evil comes into being at some time in the finite past, then it could not exist co-eternally with good as the dualist believes.

Another theological position that resolves the logical problem of evil by denying God's omnipotence is Free Will Theism. The following excerpt from Gregory A. Boyd's book, *Letters From A Skeptic*, captures a Free Will Theist's perspective of God in relationship to evil.

> Your question in your last letter about God's foreknowledge is a good one, but I think it is based on a misconception about what God's omniscience (His knowing everything) entails. In the Christian view, God knows all of reality -- everything there is to know. But to assume he knows ahead of time how every person is going to freely act assumes that each person's free activity is already there to know -- even before he freely does it! But it is not. If we have been given freedom, we create the reality of our decisions by making them. And until we make them, they do not exist. Thus, in my view at least, there simply is not anything to know. So God cannot foreknow the good or bad decisions of people and they, in turn, create their own decisions. Now I should tell you that this is not the traditional Christian position. The traditional Christian understanding is that God does foreknow the free actions of everybody.[5]

As an advocate for the traditional, Judeo-Christian view of God, it is unacceptable to alter or deny the doctrine of God's foreknowledge. First, altering the traditional doctrine of God's foreknowledge may lead to a slippery slope of altering other important theological doctrines. If this occurs, then man has created a god who is radically different from the God portrayed in the Bible and recognized by the prophets, apostles, and saints of the early church.

Second, theologians who alter the traditional doctrine of God's foreknowledge still must explain the biblical teachings that express God's foreknowledge through prophecy. They also must explain how God has a plan for people's future and knows what they will do (Psalm 139:16 and Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 26:21-25, 34). For more refutation of Free Will Theism, see the arguments under libertarian free will in chapter six.

Premise # 2 -- God is omni-benevolent

A second way to resolve the problem of evil is to modify the idea of God's goodness. While few who call themselves "Christian" would deny the goodness of God explicitly, some have suggested that God's goodness should be understood differently than traditional, Judeo-Christian theism understands it.

The theology of Gordon H. Clark includes one of the most subtle denials of God's omni-benevolence. Clark (1902-1985) was a strong determinist who believed that God determined and causally controlled all things, including human acts. If Clark were alive today, he would not hesitate to account for the tragedy on September 11, 2001 as God's decree. Clark believed, as expressed in his writings, "That if a man gets drunk and shoots his family, it was the will of God that he should do it."[6] Clark did draw a distinction between God's preceptive will and His decretive will. God's preceptive will is the law of God (i.e. The Ten Commandments). God's preceptive

will is what ought to be done. God's decretive will, however, causes every event. God's decretive will causes what is done.[7] Clark admitted, "It may seem strange at first that God would decree an immoral act, but the Bible shows that He did."[8] Clark goes on to explain his denial of God's omni-benevolence when he says, "Let it be unequivocally said that this view certainly makes God the cause of sin. God is the sole ultimate cause of everything. There is absolutely nothing independent of Him. He alone is an eternal being. He alone is omnipotent. He alone is sovereign."[9] In an examination of Clark's position, Millard Erickson points out that Clark affirmed that God is the ultimate cause of sin, not the immediate cause of it. God does not commit sin; humans commit sin, although God wills it decretively. God determines that it should happen and is the ultimate cause of it. It was Judas, not God, who betrayed Christ. God neither sins nor is responsible for sin.[10]

The main problem with Clark's view is his inability to separate God "willing evil" from God "being evil." Clark attempts to separate "the willing of evil" from "the doing of evil" in his writings by placing God above the law -- "*Ex-Lex.*" Clark tries to establish an argument based on "*Ex-Lex*" stating that whatever God does could never be evil because God is above the standard of right and wrong. While it may be sinful for a human being to cause another human being to sin, it would not be sinful for God to cause a human being to sin because the relationships between humans are different from the relationship between humans and God. Clark argues that the laws of God do not even apply to God Himself. He gives stealing as an example. God cannot steal because everything already belongs to Him.[11]

The problem with Clark's position on God and evil is that he fails to demonstrate how God could decree evil and not be evil. Ultimately, Clark redefines the definition of God's goodness so that whatever occurs is good (only because God caused it and God is good). This type of reasoning separates the goodness of God from the goodness of human beings. The problem is that what God does in decreeing evil is good but what man does in doing evil is evil. It is unclear how God could decree the acts of terrorism on September 11, 2001 and still be good. How is it that God's decree of evil is good but man's action of carrying it out is evil? Clark's response is that God is not evil because He is not violating a standard that is above Him. God cannot violate any moral standards because God is ultimately above or beyond the moral law. Placing God above good and evil so that God causes man to do evil acts and is still ultimately good is one glaring problem with Clark's determinism.[12]

Altering the definition of God's goodness has allowed theologians like Gordon H. Clark to claim that the problem of evil has been resolved. However, this solution requires people to be comfortable with believing that God ultimately causes evil (like a drunk shooting his family or terrorists crashing planes into buildings killing thousands of innocent people) while remaining omni-benevolent. The problem with this solution is that it implies that God has an evil disposition that sometimes expresses itself in malevolent ways through His decrees. This solution also severely threatens the doctrines of God's omni-benevolence, holiness, righteousness, and justice upheld by traditional Judeo-Christian theism.

Premise # 3 -- Evil exists

A third solution to the problem of evil is to deny the reality of evil. If evil does not exist (if what appears to be evil is only an illusion), then there is no need to try to defend evil's coexistence with an omnipotent and omni-benevolent God. The denial of evil is found in the philosophical worldview of pantheism, the writings of atheist Benedict Spinoza, and the literature of Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science).[13]

Pantheism's denial of evil is rooted in the philosophy that "all is one and one is all." Pantheism does not draw distinctions between good and evil because all things come together equally as one thing. In pantheism, evil is not separate from God because all reality is a unifying whole.

The philosophical physicalism of Benedict Spinoza also denies the reality of evil. Spinoza believed that only one substance or reality existed. While this substance is physical, Spinoza called this substance god. He maintained that there exists only one reality, which is physical, and all distinguishable things are modes or attributes of that substance.[14] Evil, therefore, does not really exist as its own entity. The illusion of evil is something produced and explained by material causes alone.

The founder of Christian Science and author of *Science and Health*, Mary Baker Eddy, also denied the reality of evil. Eddy explicitly denied the reality of evil when she said, "Evil is an illusion, and it has no real basis. Evil is

a false belief. God is not its author. Evil is a lie" (Science and Health, p. 48). In another writing entitled *No and Yes*, Eddy said, "There was never a moment when evil was real."[15]

Although the denial of evil would solve the logical problem of evil, it may actually lead to more philosophical problems than it would solve. Experience is a practical refutation of the denial of evil (if we can trust experiences to form reliable beliefs about reality). Take Mary Baker Eddy for example, her own statements about evil contradict her personal experiences with evil. If disease, death, and ailments are only illusions, then why was she unable to cure her own ailments, heal her own sickness, and escape her own death? It seems that evil is more than a mere illusion. Evil is a harsh reality. Every human being feels the harsh reality of evil every single day. The evil of watching a loved one suffer from a debilitating disease, like cancer, is evidence of evil's reality in the world. It would be more evil to tell someone who was suffering from such a disease that his or her suffering was not real but only an illusion. Pastoral counseling assumes the reality of evil when helping someone through a problem. The deeply imbedded feeling that terrorism is wrong also assumes that evil is a reality. If evil is only an illusion, then when people express negative reactions to atrocities such as terrorism, famine, or natural disasters, they are merely expressing an opinion rather than making a statement about reality. This solution reduces reality to a postmodern view of metaphysics, as addressed in chapter three. To avoid more theological and philosophical problems, people would be better served to try to explain how evil fits into a world created by an all-powerful, all good God rather than to deny the existence of evil altogether.

A Summary of the "Quick Solutions" to the Logical Problem of Evil

While the logical problem of evil would be solved if one of these solutions could be accepted, it is unacceptable to embrace a solution that denies Judeo-Christian theology. The Judeo-Christian worldview embraces the omnipotence and omni-benevolence of God as well as the reality of evil. Denying God's omnipotence, omni-benevolence, or the reality of evil leads to heresy. For example, if people embrace the solution that God is not omnipotent, they run into the heresies of dualism or finite godism. If people embrace the solution that God is not omni-benevolent (or alter the concept of divine goodness), then they would struggle with defining what God is like, what pleases God, and how God would respond to certain people in certain situations (like the repentant sinner). A denial of God's goodness would also be problematic and inconsistent with the biblical teachings on God's holiness (1 Peter 2:22), omni-benevolence (Psalm 136), justice (John 5:30), and righteousness (Psalm 111:3). Finally, people would be far-fetched to adopt the third solution (deny the reality of evil) in light of our daily experiences with evil. If the denial of God's power and/or goodness and the denial of evil are inadequate for resolving the logical problem of evil, then the discussion must continue in an effort to discover a more theologically sound solution. Is it possible that God could be all-powerful and all good in a world where evil exists? The following is an analysis of arguments presented by philosophers and theologians who affirm the existence of evil in a world created and sustained by an omnipotent and omni-benevolent God.

Philosophical Theologians

Although some philosophers and theologians have denied one or more premises in the logical problem of evil in an attempt to solve the logical problem, others have found a solution that maintains the belief that God is all-powerful, God is all-good, and evil exists. The philosophical theologians highlighted for discussion are St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, C.S. Lewis, and Stephen Davis. Although these philosophers do not exhaust the wide-range of material written on the problem of evil, they do represent unique contributions that help identify the main issues necessary for discovering an orthodox Christian response. In contrast to the orthodox Christian contributions, John Hick's solution to the problem of evil is considered for the sake of discussion. While Hick's view stands in stark contrast to traditional, orthodox Christian theism, his contribution raises important questions about theology that need to be addressed by Christian apologists.

St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.)

St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was born in northern Africa, which is modern-day Algeria. Although a devoutly Christian mother raised Augustine, he wandered away from his Christian roots and dabbled in paganism. His spiritual journey included affirming Manichaeanism and Neo-Platonism. Manichaeanism combined the beliefs of many religions and ultimately affirmed that reality is grounded in two gods, one good and one evil. Neo-Plantonism, on the contrary, affirmed that all reality emanated from one, impersonal and unknowable God. Realizing the spiritual and intellectual failures of these false religions, Augustine eventually found Jesus Christ and became arguably the greatest Christian theologian and apologist from the first Christian millenium.[16] While Augustine refuted heresies and promoted Christian theism and ethics, the influences of Neo-Platonism and the desire to denounce Manichaeanism are apparent in his response to the problem of evil.

Augustine's response to the logical problem of evil is commonly referred to as the Free Will Defense. His contribution to solving the problem of evil has become so popular that contemporary philosophers commonly call the line of arguments that follow the Free Will Defense: "Augustinian tradition."[17] Augustine begins his response to the logical problem of evil by presenting an overwhelming amount of evidence for God's existence independent of the problem of evil. He argues that given the amount of evidence for God's existence (see chapter four); it would be foolish and wrong to deny the existence of God's power and goodness. Rather than altering the traditional view of God or denying His existence, Augustine affirms the traditional view of God's omnipotence and omni-benevolence when attempting to solve the logical problem of evil. The Augustinian tradition seeks to find an explanation for evil in a world created and sustained by an omnipotent and omni-benevolent God. Augustine's discussion with Evodius demonstrates his belief that God is omni-benevolent. The dialogue begins with Evodius' question, "Tell me, please, whether God is not the cause of evil." Augustine replies, "But if you know that God is good (and it is not right to believe otherwise), God does not do evil."[18]

Augustine dismissed the notion that God was the cause of evil based on his knowledge of God being good. Excluding the possibility that God is the cause of evil, Augustine located the cause of evil elsewhere. Augustine located the root cause of evil in the will of libertarian agents (angelic and human). He said, "Either the will is in the first cause of sin, or else there is no first cause."[19] By this statement, Augustine recognized that the misuse of free will is the ultimate cause of evil, not God.

Augustine argued that evil is a reality, but it is not a substance. He defines evil as augmented or diminished good. He explains, "The good in a created thing can be augmented or diminished. For good to be diminished is evil. When a thing is corrupted, its corruption is an evil because it is a privation of good."[20] If Augustine is correct, the existence of evil is wholly and completely dependent upon the existence of good. Augustine goes on to argue that good could exist without evil, but evil could not exist without good.

Philosophers, through the centuries, have tried to illustrate how evil depends upon good for its existence. One classic analogy, presented by C.S. Lewis, says, "A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line."[21] In other words, as straight is the standard for judging a line; good is the standard for judging an action or motive. An action or motive that falls from the standard of good is, by definition, evil. Of course, one may ask, "What is good?" If good is relative, then so is evil. However, if good is a standard, then evil is anything that violates the standard of goodness. Furthermore, the standard of goodness must come from something objective in order to avoid relativism. The objective origin of good, according to Augustine, is rooted in the nature and attributes of God.

Augustine's overwhelming desire to make evil dependent upon good goes back to his days in Manichaean dualism. In Manichaean dualism, evil is eternally equal to good. Good and evil are eternal battling forces for which neither becomes victorious over the other. In order to combat the heretical views of his past (Manichaean dualism), Augustine argued that evil had an origin that came into existence at some particular point in time in the finite past.

Augustine's justification for God allowing evil lies in his belief that, in the end, God's power and goodness will prevail over all of the evil in the world. One objection to Augustine's justification for evil is gratuitous evil. Gratuitous evil is evil that does not have a greater good connected to it in any way. Gratuitous evils do not produce positive results. However, Augustine did not have to believe that every individual evil event, motive, or action produces a good in the end. All Augustine must believe is that God's power and goodness will prevail over

evil in the end. God's justice and omnipotence assure us that, in the end, God's goodness will ultimately prevail over evil as a whole.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274 A.D.)

Thomas Aquinas was a theologian, philosopher, and consummate apologist of the medieval church. Born in Italy, he joined the Dominican order. He studied in Naples, Italy and Paris, France. In 1326, the Roman Catholic Church canonized Aquinas. Throughout his career, Aquinas wrote several extensively detailed works including *De Anima* (On the Soul), *De Ente et Essential* (On Being and Essence), *De Veritate* (On Truth), *On The Power of God*, *Summa contra Gentiles*, and *The Unity of the Intellect Against the Averoeists*. Aquinas' most influential and notable work went into his systematic theology, *Summa Theologica*, which was still unfinished at his death.[22]

Aquinas, like many Christian apologists, recognized that the logical problem of evil was a threat to traditional Christian theism. In *Summa Theologica*, he identified the problem of evil as follows: "It seems that God does not exist; because if one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the name God means infinite goodness. If therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable; but there is evil in the world, therefore God does not exist."[23] While Aquinas recognized evil as one objection to Christian theism, he also recognized that naturalism could account for everything people see in the world, rendering belief in God unnecessary.

Given the identified problems with Christian theism, Aquinas presented five arguments for God's existence. The five *a posteriori* arguments (arguments from experience) were: 1) motion, 2) efficient causality, 3) possibility and necessity, 4) the gradation of things, and 5) the governance of the world.[24] Once he established a case for the rationality of theistic belief, Aquinas argued that the problem of evil would become a secondary problem for maintaining Christian theism. Aquinas believed that questions about the problem of evil would change once it was demonstrated (by the five arguments for God's existence) that God exists. The question would change from "How can an omnipotent and omni-benevolent God exist in a world overrun by evil?" to "Why does evil exist in a world where God is all powerful and all good?"

While Aquinas' approach to apologetics was unique, he was led to similar conclusions to that of his predecessor. Aquinas and Augustine had similar definitions for evil. For Aquinas, evil was a departure from the objective standard of goodness grounded in the nature and attributes of God (as was Augustine's definition). Seeking precision in his definition for evil, Aquinas recognized two absences of good. The first absence of good is negation. Negation is the absence of a property that was never intended to be in a subject. Negation, therefore, is not evil. The second absence of good is privation. Privation is the absence of a property that should be in a subject but is not. Christian apologist Norm Geisler explains the two different absences of good, "It is important to note that a privation is not the same as a mere absence. Sight is absent in a stone as well as a blind person. But the absence of sight in the stone is not a privation: absence of something that ought to be there. Since the stone by nature ought not to see, it is not deprived of sight as is the blind man. Evil, then is a deprivation of some good that ought to be there. It is not merely a negation."[25]

Concerning the cause of evil, Aquinas believed that evil is caused accidentally. An accidental cause of evil occurs when evil is a result of an action that originally was intended for good.[26] Take the original sin of Adam and Eve, for example. One reason why Eve ate the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is because she believed that it would be good for her "to be like God and know good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). It took her by surprise when she realized that she was naked and ashamed, rather than experiencing a more desirable result. Aquinas said that evil comes about by accident because it is essentially an incidental effect of some good that was originally intended. If you are honest with yourself, you may find this to be true in a number of evils that arise in your own life.

The accidental aspect of Aquinas' argument serves as the foundation upon which he sought to answer the question, "Who or what caused evil?" If evil is a privation of good and God created all things good, then where did evil come from? Aquinas proposed two answers to this question. First, God sometimes wills evil in order to bring about a greater good that would not have come about any other way. Second, human beings are the accidental cause of evils that are not willed by God to bring about a greater good.[27] According to Aquinas, God is good in willing evil that produces a greater good that could not have come about any other way. Furthermore,

God must know that a misuse of human free will, which results in evil, is a better scenario than any other option available. Other options available to God would have been not to create anything at all, not to create human free will, or to override every human free will decision that was about to go wrong.

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716 A.D.)

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz was a great rationalist German thinker whose contributions to philosophy included works done in the areas of epistemology, metaphysics, arguments for God's existence, and the problem of evil. While Leibniz was well schooled in epistemology and metaphysics, as evidenced in his *Discourse On Metaphysics* (1686), an overview of his work reflects a life-long passion for resolving the logical problem of evil. Leibniz viewed the problem of evil as an intellectual problem rather than a terrifying threat to the meaning he had found in life.[28]

Leibniz's philosophical treatment of the logical problem of evil was occasioned by the peculiar circumstances in which he found himself. In his devotion as a tutor and librarian for the queen of Prussia, Leibniz encountered the disturbing religious skepticism of Pierre Bayle (1647-1706 A.D.).[29] Bayle's work sought to use the logical problem of evil to undermine arguments for religious faith. Bayle's work was never meant to defend atheism, but rather to thwart arguments used to defend religious belief. Bayle drew a definitive line between philosophy and Christian faith and challenged people to choose philosophy over Christian belief. Bayle writes:

> One must necessarily choose between philosophy and the Gospel. If you do not want to believe anything but what is evident and in conformity with the common notions, choose philosophy and leave Christianity. If you are willing to believe the incomprehensible mysteries of religion, choose Christianity and leave philosophy. Once again, a true Christian, well versed in the characteristics of supernatural truths and firm in the principles that are peculiar to the Gospel, will only laugh at the subtleties of the philosophers … Faith will place him above the regions where the tempests of disputation reign. Every Christian who allows himself to be disconcerted by the objections of the unbelievers, and to be scandalized by them, has one foot in the same grave as they do.[30]

The inclusion of Bayle's philosophy in this analysis demonstrates the historical context upon which Leibniz responded to the logical problem of evil. Leibniz admitted that the logical problem of evil intrigued him throughout his entire life. However, it was not until encountering Bayle's arguments that Leibniz sought to create a rationalist response to the logical problem of evil.[31]

Leibniz's argument against the problem of evil demonstrated a strong Augustinian influence. Leibniz began with the assumption that God already exists. The dilemma was intended to create a better understanding of the purpose that God has for evil. As Augustine began his approach with arguments from natural theology set forth independently from the problem of evil, Leibniz deduced the existence of God by means of a sophisticated version of the ontological argument. Following the arguments from Augustine and Aquinas, Leibniz saw evil as an imperfection that came from limitation: a privation of good. He agreed with Aquinas that evil came about in an accidental way. He also agreed with Augustine that ultimate good would prevail over evil in the end. In his famous work on the problem of evil, *Theodicee*, Leibniz said, "The best plan is not always that which seeks to avoid evil, since it may be that evil be accompanied by a greater good."[32] Leibniz affirmed that some evils include a good received during or after evil is endured.

While Leibniz followed Augustine's free will tradition, he also contributed his own unique thought to the discussion. Leibniz's unique contribution to solving the logical problem of evil was "the best of all possible worlds" argument. Leibniz introduced his famous *Theodicee* by anticipating the following objection: [33]

1. Whoever does not choose the best is lacking in either power or knowledge or goodness.

2. God did not choose the best in creating this world.

3. Therefore, God was lacking in either power or knowledge or goodness.

Leibniz does not promote the above deductive argument in his writings, but challenges it. He confidently affirms the first premise and would have to agree with the conclusion, if he could not demonstrate how the world (created by an all-powerful, all good God) is the best choice. The remainder of *Theodicee* is his argument that the present world, where evil obviously exists, is the best of all possible worlds that God could have created. This world is the best of all possible worlds because:[34]

1. Whoever does not choose the best is lacking in either power or knowledge or goodness.

2. God is not lacking in power or knowledge or goodness.

3. God chose to create this world (as opposed to another world or not to create at all).

4. Therefore, this present world must be the greatest of all possible worlds that God could have chosen to create.

This argument is the crux of Leibniz's contribution to solving the logical problem of evil.[35] For Leibniz, a world where evil came about by a misuse of free will must be the greatest possible world. If God is all powerful and all good, the present world (containing evil) must be the greatest of all possible worlds that God could have created. Leibniz would argue as follows: if not creating was better than creating a world with the capacity for evil to arise from a misuse of free will, then God would not have created. If creating man without free will had been better than creating man with free will, then God would not have created man with free will. If overriding man's free will every time he attempted to sin was better than allowing evil to come out of a misuse of free will, then God would override man's free will in such cases. According to Leibniz, because God is all powerful and all good, the world that God created (with the capacity for evil) must be the greatest world that God could have chosen to create.

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963 A.D.)

Clive Staples Lewis' work was popularized through the media of his day, which included several radio broadcasts. His unique ability to communicate with the common person and children made his work one of the greatest influences upon Christian apologetics in the twentieth century. Although Lewis was an Oxford University professor and former atheist, he did not consider his philosophical ability something to be praised. Rather, Lewis used simple language to address the most profound issues surrounding the Christian faith. Lewis humbly remarks in the preface to *The Problem of Pain*,

> If any real theologian reads these pages he will very easily see that they are the work of a layman and an amateur. Except in the last two chapters, parts of which are admittedly speculative, I have believed myself to be restating ancient and orthodox doctrines. If any parts of the book are original, in the sense of being novel or unorthodox, they are so against my will and as a result of my ignorance. I write, of course, as a layman of the Church of England: but I have tried to assume nothing that is not professed by all baptized and communicating Christians.[36]

What makes C.S. Lewis' work appealing to a wide audience is not only his skill to articulate the most profound truths in a simple way, but also the humble attitude in which he approached his work. C.S. Lewis left a legacy of profound wisdom. He also provided a practical paradigm for putting 1 Peter 3:15-16 into practice. By studying the writings of Lewis, Christians will not only be better prepared for defending the Christian faith, but they will also encounter a man who presented his arguments with gentleness and respect.

Lewis' approach to the problem of evil was philosophically Augustinian. Like Augustine, Lewis viewed evil as a privation of good. Good, of course, is an eternal attribute of God. Lewis' definition of evil mirrored

Augustine's understanding. Lewis said, "Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled."[37]

Lewis also followed Augustinian tradition in his understanding of the origin of evil. In his masterpiece *The City of God*, Augustine examined the belief that pride was the root cause of Adam and Eve's sin. In agreement with the Augustinian concept of the origin of evil in humanity, Lewis argued that pride was and still is the cause of evil. Lewis says:

> This sin described by Augustine as the result of pride, of the movement whereby a creature (that is, an essentially dependent being whose principle of existence lies not in itself but in another) tries to set up on its own to exist for itself. Such a sin requires no complex social conditions, no extended experience, no great intellectual development. From the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of self as self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or self for the centre is open to it. This sin is committed daily by children and ignorant peasants as well as by sophisticated persons by solitaries no less than by those who live in society: It is the fall in every individual life, and in each day of each individual life, the basic sin behind all particular sins: at this very moment you and I are either committing it, or about to commit it, or repenting it.[38]

Another Augustinian influence in Lewis' response to the problem of evil is the belief that God will overwhelm evil with goodness in the end. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis presented pain as the manner in which God gets humanity's attention. Lewis observed, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, and shouts in our pain: it is his megaphone to arouse a dead world."[39] There is no doubt that God uses evil for good. While He may not use every detail of evil for good in the moment, we can trust in faith that the amount of good in the end will certainly out-weight the amount of evil.

Let us examine the concept of evil as a megaphone for arousing a dead world. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the goodness in humanity began to prevail. People from all over the country were helping at ground zero, citizens were volunteering to enlist in the United States military, and some people even came to Christ. I remember a church service that I attended in Atlanta, Georgia about a year after 9/11. A man who was about to be baptized shared his testimony about how he accepted Christ soon after 9/11. It was the Sunday after the terrorist attacks that this man first stepped inside of a church. The Sunday I visited his church, the man was baptized as an outward symbol of an inward faith that he received soon after 9/11. I have since heard and read countless stories of people who were saved because the terrorist attacks got their attention.

I wonder if God does have a way of using evil for good in ways that we may not understand, given our limited and finite perspective of reality. Lewis thought that man's finite, limited perspective of the world might account for his inability to explain the presence of evil in a world created by an omniscient, all powerful and all good God. Lewis explained, "If God is wiser than we, His judgment must differ from ours on many things, and not least on good and evil. What seems to us good may not be good in His eyes, and what seems to us evil may not be evil."[40]

Perhaps the most interesting and unique contribution that Lewis made to resolve the logical problem of evil is how he turned the problem around. The problem for Lewis was not explaining evil in a world created by an all powerful and all good God. For Lewis, the real problem was that if the universe is so bad, or even half as bad, how on earth did human beings ever come to attribute it to the activity of a wise and good creator?[41] This question is very problematic for those who believe that Christianity is a product of mythology. If the Christian God is a figure of mythology, then where did the concepts of omnipotence, omni-benevolence, and divine foreknowledge come from in such an empirically evil universe? The only practical answer is that God actually exists and the truth of His existence is manifest to us through His goodness (as well as general and special revelation). Evil, on the other hand, being a privation of good, can lead people to an understanding of goodness and ultimately to an understanding of God.

Lewis' struggle with the problem of evil transcended the intellectual debate and invaded his personal life. Lewis lost his wife to cancer. It was in light of his personal experience with pain that he wrote two profound books on the issue: *The Problem of Pain* and *A Grief Observed.* Writing these books may or may not have eased Lewis' heavy heart, but it allowed him to seek God in the midst of trials. This ultimate good arises out of evil.

John Hick (1922 - present)

John Hick introduced a theological perspective on the problem of evil which is radically different from the Augustinian tradition. By deliberately opposing Augustine's Free Will Defense, Hick embraced an alternative view that supposedly presented a superior solution to the logical problem of evil that he claimed was based on the teachings of Early Church Father Irenaeus. Hick argued that his approach to solving the logical problem of evil was based on Irenaeus' teachings and that Irenaeus' teachings were far different from the teachings of Augustine. Hick said,

> I believe that we find the light that we need in the main alternative strand of Christian thinking, which goes back to important constructive suggestions by the early Hellenistic Fathers of the Church, particularly St. Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202). However, Irenaeus himself did not develop the defense, but he did -- together with other Greek speaking writers of that period, such as Clement of Alexandria -- build a framework of thought within which a defense became possible which does not depend upon the idea of the fall of man, and which is consonant with modern knowledge concerning the origins of the human race. Thus, this defense cannot, as such, be attributed to Irenaeus. We should rather speak of a type of defense, presented in various ways by different subsequent thinkers (the greatest of whom has been Friedrich Schleiermacher), of whom Irenaeus can properly be regarded as a patron Saint.[42]

One problem with Hick's position is his attribution of his theology to Irenaeus, a Christian Church father from the second century (130-200 A.D.). Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, who was the disciple of Jesus and author of the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and Revelation. Irenaeus was especially important in the field of apologetics for his arguments against Gnosticism: a cult that emphasized secret knowledge (*gnosis*) as the means for salvation. Irenaeus specifically argued against Marcion, the leader of Gnosticism, who taught that the Old and New Testament presented two distinctly different gods. Irenaeus defeated Marcion's arguments by demonstrating the inter-relationship between Testaments. He taught that the Old Testament foretold the coming of Christ and was not a presentation of a different God than the one revealed in the New Testament. Furthermore, Irenaeus argued for the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus when many heretics were preaching only a spiritual resurrection. The reason for detailing Irenaeus' theology is to show his incompatibility with Hick's heretical position on salvation.[43] Irenaeus' classic work, *Against Heresies*, was an apologetic for the truth of Christianity against the heresies that threatened the Christian church in his day. It is ironic and erroneous for the name "Irenaeus" to be attached to the heretical teachings of John Hick, especially when Irenaeus spent so much of his life defending the truth of orthodox Christian theology against heresies.

Hick's solution to the problem of evil can best be described in four steps. These four steps help decipher the main differences between Hick's position and the Augustinian tradition. The following categories will help summarize Hick's position: 1) original relationship, 2) evolutionary process, 3) God's necessary purpose for evil, and 4) the eschatological purpose.

Original Relationship

According to John Hick, humankind evolved from animals into an intellectual, ethical and moral animal. Hick blatantly rejects the view that the story of Adam and Eve recorded in Genesis 2 and 3 is an historical narrative. He calls the story of Adam and Eve "a mythology from the perspective of many modern theologians." In accord with his evolutionary approach to the origin of humanity, Hick defines the human being as an animal. However, the human animal is uniquely intelligent, having evolved a large and immensely complex brain. Furthermore, the human being is ethical -- that is a gregarious as well as an intellectual animal, able to realize and respond to the complex demands of social life.[44]

While Hick maintains that humankind is no more than an advanced and evolved animal, he also maintains that humanity's original relationship with God was not close and intimately personal as portrayed in Genesis 2. Rather, Hick argues that in order to logically account for an evil choice to arise from a human being, human beings could not have been in close, intimate, and personal relationships with God in the beginning. If human

beings had the type of relationship with God that Genesis 2 describes, they would have never chosen to sin. Rather than being close, personal, and intimate, Hick describes humanity's original relationship with God as being no more different than it is today. The relationship that people had/have with God is not close, intimate, and personal but transcendent. It was/is transcendent in an epistemic (knowing) sense, rather than a physical sense. Distant from God, human beings seek and find God by making a series of free will choices.[45]

Evolutionary Processes

Hick believes that humans are living at an epistemic distance (a distance in the cognitive sense) from God. He argued that the evolutionary process (which includes a series of free will choices) will bring humanity into a knowledge of and relationship with God. Because humanity is originally immature (without knowledge of God or morality), it is through the evolutionary process of making choices that man enters into the proper understanding of right and wrong as well as into a relationship with God. The evolutionary process, which leads people to a relationship with God, is logically necessary given the human situation. According to Hick, "If the end state which God is seeking to bring about is one in which finite persons have come in their own freedom to know and love Him, this requires creating them initially in a state which is not that of their already knowing and loving Him. For it is logically impossible to create beings already in a state of having come into that state by their own free choices."[46] Hick rejects the traditional view of creation, which affirms that humanity was originally in a harmonious relationship with God. Rather, he argued that humankind could not have been created by God in a morally harmonious relationship with the Creator because harmony with God is the goal of humanity not the origin. Of course, Hick does not acknowledge libertarian free will as a possible culprit to man's fallen state. Traditional orthodox Christian doctrine teaches that humanity was in a harmonious relationship with God in the beginning but freely chose to rebel and consequently fell out of the ideal relationship. This is another difference between Hick's view and the Augustinian Free Will Defense.

God's Necessary Purpose for Evil

According to John Hick, humankind was originally in a state of seeking God rather than a close, intimate, and personal relationship with Him. In a world where humanity seeks to find morality and a relationship with God through free will choices, evil becomes necessary. According to Hick, evil is the necessary means by which God brings people into closer fellowship with Himself and with others. Evil is a necessary condition for spiritual and moral maturity. Hick wrote, "The development of human personality -- moral, spiritual, and intellectual -- is a product of challenge and response. It does not occur in a static situation demanding no exertion and no choices."[47] Hick acknowledges that a right choice does not always produce a positive result; neither does a wrong choice always produce a negative result. It is in a world where we do not know the result of our choices that draws us into closer harmony with God and with our fellow men.[48] Evil events and circumstances make people aware of God and mature them into the kinds of people that God created them to be. Evil is therefore "necessary" because without evil, man would never mature to the place where God desires him to be.

Eschatological Purpose

Eschatology is the study of end times and last things. Hick's eschatology is not about the rapture of the church, but about the result of the process of human maturity. Hick's ultimate eschatology is universalism. Universalism is the belief that every human being will eventually be in heaven, nobody goes to hell. According to Hick, all human beings eventually mature and are brought into a close, intimate, and personal relationship with God. However, this is not something that one can observe on this earth. People die in this life rejecting God. In *Death and Eternal Life*, Hick rejected the traditional concept of heaven and hell and adopted a position that allows for a series of lives beyond this one.[49] Through a series of lives, man can continue the maturing process by making free will choices and eventually find God. In his "modified reincarnation" doctrine, man is born and dies several times until he eventually finds God and is saved. By accepting universalism, Hick claimed that evil could only

adequately be explained in a world created by an all-powerful and all-good God if God used evil to bring *all* people into paradise with Him.

Stephen Davis (1940 - present)

Stephen Davis is a philosophy professor at the Claremont Colleges in California. He has written extensively on the problem of evil. An evaluation of Davis' response to the problem of evil brings us back to the Augustinian Free Will Defense. Davis begins his thesis with the presupposition that people ought to believe what is rational to believe and that human reason is the normative guide to all belief and action.[50] Davis then argues that it is unacceptable to reach a conclusion that denies one or more of the following: 1) God is all-powerful, 2) God is all good, and 3) evil exists. Davis is adamant about not compromising one or more of these three premises while seeking a solution to the logical problem of evil. Davis argues,

> I will not be interested in any "solution" which denies that evil exists -- e.g., which claims that evil is "an illusion of the material sense," or some other sort of metaphysically unreal thing. Nor will I be interested in any "solution" which denies God's omnipotence -- e.g., which says that God is very powerful but is simply not able to prevent evil. Nor will I be interested in any "solution" which denies that God is wholly good -- e.g., which says the he has an evil or demonic side which sometimes expresses itself in malevolent acts.[51]

Davis begins his argument by distinguishing between the logical problem of evil (LPE) and the emotive problem of evil (EPE). Davis' definition of the logical problem of evil is similar to Aquinas' definition. Davis identifies the logical problem of evil as follows: [52]

> If God is omnipotent, it seems that he is *able* to prevent evil.
>
> If God is perfectly good, it seems he is *willing* to prevent evil.
>
> Why then does evil exist?

The emotive problem of evil (EPE) encompasses the personal struggles people face in accepting that God is all powerful and all good in the midst of their own personal tragedies. Experiences with evil in the world make people feel that the statement "God is all powerful and God is good" is false.[53] Davis' argument includes not only a response to the logical problem of evil (which he solves in a couple of pages) but also to the emotive problem.

To solve the logical problem of evil, Davis returns to the Augustinian Free Will Defense. He says that given all of the arguments that he has studied that attempt to solve the logical problem of evil, the Augustinian Free Will Defense seems to be the most reasonable solution that does not compromise one or more of the three premises: 1) God is all powerful, 2) God is all good, and 3) evil exists.[54] Davis argues that evil is not a necessary attribute of reality. It is very possible that evil would not have to exist. It may be that while God allows evil, and is therefore indirectly responsible for evil, God is not the direct cause of evil. Davis argues,

> God is indirectly responsible for evil in the sense that he created the conditions given which evil would come into existence (i.e. he gave man free will), and he foreknew the evil choices man would make. But given these conditions it was not inevitable that evil exist. The non-existence of evil was still possible; humans could have chosen to obey God. Sadly, they didn't.[55]

Thus far, Davis agrees with the ancient philosophers who supported the Augustinian tradition. Davis does take issue, however, with one of the contributions made by Gottfried von Leibniz. Remember, Leibniz claimed that the actual world must be the best of all possible worlds for God to be all powerful and all good and still allow evil. However, Davis challenges Leibniz's argument claiming that the concept of the best of all possible

worlds (with any inclusion of evil) seems incoherent. Davis' argument against Leibniz's "greatest possible world" argument is presented by analogy. Davis argues:

> Take the notion of the tallest conceivable man. This notion is incoherent because no matter how tall we conceive a tall man to be, we can always conceptually add another inch and thus prove that he was not, after all, the tallest conceivable man. Just so, it may be argued, the notion of the greatest possible world is incoherent. For any possible world, no matter how much pleasure and happiness it contains, we can think of a better one (one with slightly more pleasure and happiness). Accordingly, there logically cannot exist such a world, and the Free Will Defense need not claim that this world is the best of all possible worlds.[56]

Davis argues that the best of all possible worlds scenario does not need to be affirmed in order to consistently believe that God is all powerful, God is all good, and evil exists. Even if Davis' argument against the greatest of all possible worlds concept is false (even if the best of all possible worlds scenario is coherent), the Augustinian Free Will Defense does not have to affirm it. Davis says, "Surely better worlds than this world are quite conceivable, in my opinion. For example, so far as I am able to tell, this world would have been morally better had Hitler not hated the Jews."[57] Therefore, the greatest of all possible worlds scenario is not necessary to the Augustinian Free Will Defense.

While Davis rejects Leibniz's "best of all possible worlds" argument, he goes on to argue that the Free Will Defense must maintain that 1) the amount of good that will exist in the end must outweigh the amount of evil that will exist and 2) this favorable balance of good over evil could not have been obtained by God any other way.[58]

Davis solves the logical problem of evil by showing that the premises 1) Evil exists and 2) God is all powerful and God is all good are possibly true, are consistent and in conjunction with each other. Davis also demonstrates that free will beings created by God are ultimately to blame for evil and that the amount of good that will eventually overwhelm evil could not have been accomplished in any other way. Davis writes,

> All the evil that exists in the world is due to the choices of free moral agents whom God created, and no other world which God created would have had a better balance of good over evil than the actual world will have.[59]

Davis argues that his presentation has demonstrated that the premises 1) God is all powerful, 2) God is all good, and 3) Evil exists are consistent with one another. They do not contradict each other. Therefore, he concludes that the logical problem of evil is solved and that it would be apparently false to claim that the logical problem of evil demonstrates a logical contradiction within Christian theism.[60]

After solving the logical problem of evil, Davis addresses three objections to his position.[61]

Objection # 1 -- How could perfectly and morally good creatures do evil?

If the whole creation was perfectly and morally good, then human beings were perfectly and morally good. But if human beings were perfectly and morally good in the initial stages of creation, then they would have never freely chosen to sin and rebel against God. However, they did sin against God so either 1) a perfectly morally good being freely chose to sin against God or 2) human beings were not created perfectly and morally good.

Response # 1

Davis answers this objection by redefining the phrase "very good" as found in Genesis 1. Davis agrees that if God created all things as perfectly and morally good, then Adam and Eve would have never freely chosen to sin. But, Davis redefines "very good" not as perfectly and morally good but as harmoniously good. Thus, human beings were created "very good" in the same sense that rocks, hills, skies, and seas were created "very

good." Humans were not created in a perfect moral state (incapable of doing evil) but rather in a spiritually immature and morally neutral state (capable of good or evil).

This response could also apply to Lucifer and his rebellion against God. The argument is that Lucifer was created good. The capacity for doing evil that accompanies free will is not the same as being evil. The capacity for doing evil that comes with free will may be better than not having any free will at all. Being created with the ability to do evil may also be a better type of free will than a free will that is limited to only choosing good (if this type of free will is even possible). Therefore, God's "good" free will beings would not have to possess the inability to do evil. If the potential for doing evil were better than any other option, God would be just in creating free will beings with the capacity to do evil.

Objection # 2 -- Why could an omnipotent being not have created free will beings that always choose the good?

If God made humans so that they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could He not have made beings so that they always freely choose the good? If there is no logical impossibility in a being's freely choosing the good on one or several occasions, then there cannot be a logical impossibility in a being freely choosing the good on every occasion. God was not, then, faced with a choice between making a computer-like creature that always did what it was programmed to do and making persons who, in acting freely, could sometimes go wrong: there was open to him the obviously better possibility of making beings who would act freely but always do right. Clearly, God's failure to avail Himself of this possibility is inconsistent with his being both omnipotent and wholly good. While J. L. Mackie originally presented this objection, there have been many versions of this objection.

Response # 2

In responding to J.L. Mackie's objection, Davis points out that it is a major assumption to conclude that God could have created free will agents who are both free and always choose the good. If agents were truly free, no one could have coerced them to behave as they did (not even God). Therefore, God is not responsible for Adam and Eve's sin or for the sins committed by people today. Rather, free moral agents (human and angelic) are responsible for the evil in the world.

Objection # 3 -- How does the Augustinian Free Will Defense apply to natural evils (earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, diseases, famines, etc.)?

If the Free Will Defense works at all, it is perhaps only a solution to part of the logical problem of evil (the part that contains only moral evil). But how can such natural evils like earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, diseases, and famines be attributed to moral agents? This seems absurd, which is precisely why we call such evils *natural* in the first place.

Response # 3

Davis admits that for a long time this particular objection baffled him. However, he quotes the works of Alvin Plantinga (another Free Will Defense advocate) to answer this third objection. Plantinga has redirected the problem of evil towards a biblical understanding of Satan as the root cause of evil. Plantinga attributes much of the evil we find in this world to Satan and his cohorts in the following excerpt from *God, Freedom, and Evil*:

> Satan, so the traditional doctrine goes, is a mighty nonhuman spirit who, along with many other angels, was created long before God created man. Unlike most of his colleagues, Satan rebelled against God and has been wreaking whatever havoc he can. The result is natural evil. So the natural evil we find is due to the free actions of nonhuman spirits.[62]

Plantinga acknowledges that many philosophers have objected to his argument because they deny the reality of a devil and his demons. However, Plantinga insists "the truth is not decided by majority vote." Furthermore, he argues that attributing natural evils to Satan and his demons is in logical accord with the Holy Scriptures and the Augustinian Free Will Defense.[63] While some may argue that it is improbable that Satan and the demons are behind natural evils, it is more difficult to argue that it is illogical or inconsistent with either biblical teachings or the Free Will Defense.

Davis argues that all three objections to his position fail. It is logical and consistent for theists to believe that 1) God is all powerful, 2) God is all good, and 3) Evil exists. Davis wraps up his argument by saying, "Those who push the logical problem of evil argue that Christians and other theists contradict themselves by believing in the omnipotence and omni-benevolence of God as well as the existence of evil. We can now see that this is not true. The Free Will Defense successfully rebuts this."

Although Davis has solved the logical problem of evil and successfully responded to key objections against his position, his presentation cannot come to a close without discussing the emotive problem of evil (EPE). The emotive problem of evil is the deep feeling that some people have that God is either not all powerful and/or not all good because of the amount of evil that they personally experienced or observed in the world. The emotive problem of evil is not a philosophical or logical problem, but a faith problem. One solution to the emotive problem of evil may require pastoral counseling to help people who have been scarred by intense personal suffering come to a stronger trust in the omnipotent and omni-benevolent God of Scripture.

Perhaps another solution to the emotive problem of evil is a faith affirmation of the following two premises: 1) Natural evil is caused by choices of free will moral agents such as Satan and demons and 2) God's policy decision to create free moral agents is wise because freedom will turn out cost efficient. Because it cannot be demonstrated that Satan and demons are behind natural evils, it is up to the individual to either believe it or postulate a solid argument showing why it would be illogical to believe that Satan and his demons are behind natural evils. In response to the second premise: How do people know if freedom will turn out cost efficient? The answer is clearly "We do not know!" However, we also do not know that it will not turn out cost efficient. Therefore, Davis' arguments cannot be accepted or rejected based on the evidence alone but must be accepted on faith.

Must Christians believe that all natural evils are a direct result of satanic or demonic activity in order to make natural evils compatible with the Augustinian Free Will Defense?

No. Christians do not have to maintain that every single natural disaster is a direct result of satanic or demonic activity. They do have to maintain, however, that there would be no natural disasters if Adam and Eve had not sinned. Before Adam and Eve sinned, the universe was set so that man would live with God on earth forever. Earth was a paradise where man enjoyed a more personal and intimate relationship with God than he did after he sinned. Because of the fall of man, death entered the picture (Romans 5:12 and Romans 6:23). Both physical death and spiritual death became harsh realities for all of humankind after the fall of man in Genesis 3. It is completely reasonable to affirm that no natural disasters would have occurred if Adam and Eve had not sinned. Natural disasters are part of a fallen world that resulted after the fall of Adam and Eve. Natural disasters do not have to be a direct result of satanic or demonic activity every single time. They may be indirectly tied to the fall of Adam and Eve, given that the environment that allows for natural disasters would have never become a reality if Adam and Eve had not sinned. However, now that all of creation has fallen from the ideal state for which it was originally created, natural disasters occur quite regularly.

Sometimes natural disasters are a result of God's judgment upon a fallen world. In Genesis 6-8, God brought a natural disaster in the form of a flood upon all of humanity in order to destroy humankind because of the immense corruption. God made His intention for the flood clear to Noah when He said, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth." God also brought ten plagues upon Egypt in the form of miraculous and natural disasters in order to demonstrate His powerful majesty and authority over the false gods, Pharaoh, and over all of Egypt (Exodus 7-11). The purpose for God's miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt was made clear to Moses when God told

him, "I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it" (Exodus 7:4-5). While the plagues of Egypt are more than natural disasters, the reason why God brought the plagues upon Egypt was to demonstrate His divine power and authority. It really may be no different (in some cases) today than it was in the disastrous events of Genesis and Exodus. God may allow, or even cause, natural disasters for the purpose of revealing His power, bringing judgment upon sinners (from which no one is immune), or speaking to us through a megaphone (as C.S. Lewis suggested).

Regardless of whether natural disasters are a result of demonic activity, a result of a fallen world, or the wonders and/or judgment of God, natural disasters present mankind with an opportunity to demonstrate goodness and love towards one another. When a recent earthquake struck Haiti, an opportunity became available for people to reach out to those in need. Christian churches and humanitarian groups went to the locations struck by the quake and began ministering to those in need. The ministry was not exclusively preaching and teaching but practically providing for the needs of the people. While critics question the existence of an all powerful and all good God in a world where tragedies occur, others are able to see beyond the tragedies to the opportunities that each tragedy provides for the goodness of humanity to touch the lives of those in need.

A Fresh Look at Evil

Perhaps when it is all said and done, we have to come to terms with our limited perspective on reality. What appears to us to be the greatest of all evils may actually be a blessing in disguise. Furthermore, just because we may not see the good amongst the evil right now, it does not follow that there is not "a good" waiting to occur later on in the future. Remember, God has the authority, power and time to make all wrongs right. Sometimes, He brings justice upon the earth. Other times, true justice will not occur until life on this earth is over. Consider the following examples:

The Suffering of Job

The book of Job is an excellent study on evil and its ability to perfect character. It also makes the case that God can use evil to test His most faithful servants. The idea that all evil is a direct punishment from God for some specific sin is not plausible from Job. "Job was blameless and upright, a man who feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:8). In the first chapter of Job, God allowed Satan to test Job in order to demonstrate that his faithfulness to God was sincere and not a result of divine blessings or gifts that he had received. Satan tested Job by taking away his property and children (Job 1:12-20). Job was then afflicted with a horrible physical disease as a further test of his character (Job 2:7-8). Job's wife encouraged him to let go of his integrity, curse God, and die (Job 2:9). His three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar gave him the silent treatment for seven days and seven nights because they saw how great his suffering was (Job 2:11-13). When Eliphaz did speak to Job, he accused him of suffering for some sin that he felt Job must have committed. Eliphaz said, "Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of His anger they perish" (Job 4:7-9). In the face of personal accusation, Job defended himself as innocent before God. His suffering was not a result of some sin. Towards the end of the book of Job, Job prayed for his three friends and God heard his prayer. God rebuked Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for their foolishness and commanded them to offer seven bulls and seven rams as a burnt offering for themselves (Job 42:7-9). They were obedient to God's command and God accepted Job's prayer (Job 42:9). The Lord then made Job prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before (Job 42:10). Job lived a long life and saw his children and their children to the fourth generation (Job 42:16-17).

The point of this synopsis is to illustrate that while Job's wife and friends did not understand why Job was suffering, God still had a purpose that was meant for good. Even when we do not understand why we are suffering, if we believe God is all powerful and all good, then our response should be one of trust (especially in our darkest moments). Furthermore, if we focus on the two-fold blessing at the end of the book of Job, we may miss the deeper purpose for suffering. While Job happened to be blessed two-fold at the end of his story, God used his suffering as a model for faithfulness. Job suffered in order to demonstrate his true faithfulness to God.

The legacy of Job's example of faithfulness through suffering was another purpose for his suffering. Job demonstrated the ultimate act of service to God by suffering in a manner that would glorify God and influence the lives of those who choose to follow his example. We must all remember to be faithful to God when we are receiving blessings and when we are suffering. The purpose for our obedience in the midst of suffering should not be for personal gain. God may allow us to suffer and not receive a long life or twice as many possessions as a reward. The ultimate test of true allegiance is when someone loves completely, expecting nothing in return. The greatness of God demands such an allegiance from each one of us.

The Death of Lazarus (John 11)

The story surrounding the death of Lazarus provides us with another example of man's limited perspective on evil.[64] When Lazarus became deathly ill Jesus did not rush to heal him. Rather, Jesus stayed where He was for two more days. Upon His arrival to Bethany, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. Jesus was overcome by grief because of seeing others weep over Lazarus. Jesus Himself wept, but it is unclear as to whether He wept for Lazarus or over the suffering that others were experiencing. Given Jesus' close relationship with Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, either reason for Jesus' weeping would be acceptable. However, given Jesus' personal understanding of the eternal perspective, it is my opinion that Jesus was most likely weeping over the sorrow of others. The point that needs to be emphasized here, however, is that some of the people from Bethany could not understand why Jesus, who could open the eyes of the blind man, could not have prevented Lazarus from dying. I imagine, from the perspective of the citizens of Bethany during the four days Lazarus was dead, that there was much questioning about the omnipotence and omni-benevolence of Jesus. However, when Lazarus arose from the dead, the purpose of his death was revealed. The reason why Lazarus died was ultimately for the glorification of God. Although Lazarus died temporarily, Jesus' words remained true when He said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:4).

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ may go down in history as the greatest injustice of all time. Jesus was an innocent man. He committed no sin. Pilate even announced that he found no basis for any charge against this man (John 19:4). Yet, He who was innocent was falsely accused of blasphemy by the Jews and given the ultimate punishment of death by crucifixion (2 Corinthians 5:21). The death of Jesus temporarily put an end to Christianity. With the exception of John, the disciples fled the scene and were nowhere to be found. One can only imagine what life was like after the crucifixion for those who earnestly believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Did they anticipate the physical resurrection of Christ by recalling a spiritual interpretation of Jesus' prophecy regarding the destruction of the temple? "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19). Given the disciples' response to the actual resurrection of Jesus and knowing that their Jewish background would not have supported the concept of resurrection before God's ultimate judgment, the disciples were not awaiting the resurrection of Jesus after His crucifixion. The fact that the disciples fled the scene out of fear for their own lives is further evidence that the days immediately following Jesus' crucifixion were not filled with hope and joyful anticipation. The days immediately following the crucifixion were most likely filled with questions, extreme sorrow, and an element of defeat. The concept of the physical resurrection of Jesus was so far removed from the disciples' minds that even those like Thomas, who encountered the resurrected Jesus, needed to validate the visual experience by physically touching His body and physically examining His scars. The time of despair between the crucifixion and the resurrection provides another example of man's limited perspective on evil. The disciples could not see, from their perspective on Friday and Saturday, what great hope would come to the world through the resurrection on Sunday. The death of Jesus was essential for the atonement of sin once and for all (Hebrews 10:10) and His resurrection provides the basis for the legitimacy of the Christian faith and eternal salvation (1Corinthians 15:16-19).

The examples of suffering in the stories of Job, the death of Lazarus, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ provide evidence that God does have a purpose for allowing evil. In Job, God allowed suffering to demonstrate

Job's sincere faith, to purify his character and the character of his three friends, and to provide an example for us of how to remain faithful during life's most difficult trials. The story of the death of Lazarus shows us that man's perspective is limited and that God sometimes allows evil for revealing His glory. The example of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ causes us to evaluate temporary suffering in light of God's bigger picture. God took one of the greatest evils of all time (the crucifixion of Jesus Christ) and turned it into the greatest miracle of all time (the resurrection of Jesus Christ) in a matter of three days. We ought to learn, from these three examples alone, the importance of trusting God in the midst of our suffering. We definitely need to learn how to look beyond our crosses and find the hope that lies within the resurrection. Sometimes that hope is found in the midst of our suffering. Sometimes that hope is found soon after our suffering subsides. But sometimes that hope will not be fully realized until we get to heaven and have a clearer understanding of God's plan. If you are in the midst of personal suffering, may you be encouraged to look beyond your temporary suffering and find the hope that is only available through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. May the words of Christian public speaker Tony Campolo echo through your mind and give you hope, "It's only Friday, but Sunday is coming!"[65]

Concluding Thoughts

The problem of evil is one of the most common objections to Christian theism. The logical problem of evil was identified as follows: 1) God is all powerful, 2) God is all good, and 3) Evil exists. Christians must demonstrate how these three premises come together when experience leads them to believe that one or more premises are false. For the Christian, it is essential to explain how these three premises come together without compromising one or more of them. Specific theological problems were addressed when one or more premises in the logical problem of evil are compromised. We then began an historical analysis of philosophers who made a significant contribution to solving the problem of evil. St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, C.S. Lewis, Stephen Davis and Alvin Plantinga all made considerable contributions to solve the problem of evil while maintaining a traditional, orthodox Christian position. John Hick's argument was presented in order to demonstrate a contrary view. Hick's position clearly violates traditional Christian orthodoxy on the origin of man, the origin of sin, heaven and hell, and salvation. Such a view should not be adopted by traditional, orthodox Christians who seek to solve the problem of evil in a manner compatible with the Bible. An evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's justification for natural evils was also addressed. Finally, a biblical perspective on suffering was presented through commentary on the stories of Job, the death of Lazarus, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in an effort to provide a biblically encouraging perspective on our own experiences with suffering and evil.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ETHICS

The Pillar of Applied Morality

"We are discussing no small matter, but how we ought to live."
Plato, *The Republic*

Ethics helps Christians identify how to behave morally and in a manner glorifying to God. Ethical tensions abound in our society even for those who use the Bible as their guide. It is sometimes difficult to discern the correct moral path even though the Bible provides an outline for moral living. Different ethical systems for making moral decisions make the process of discerning moral behavior much more complicated in a pluralistic society.

By erecting the pillar of applied morality within the confines of a Christian worldview, Christians are acknowledging that moral behavior matters. While disagreement among Christians will certainly arise in discussions on the various moral issues that impact our lives from abortion to war, it is important for every Christian to value and practice morality according to the directives of Scripture.

This chapter will provide an overview of the importance of moral behavior. It will provide answers to the question: "Why be moral?" An explanation for the origin of morality will be provided from the naturalist perspective as well as the theist perspective. Different ethical perspectives will be presented and then analyzed in relation to biblical teachings. Guidelines for ethical deliberation will be provided to help people ask the important questions that will hopefully lead them to a God-honoring solution to any ethical dilemma. Finally, a biblical assessment of real-life moral issues will be examined. When constructing a Christian worldview, it is important to know what the Bible says about the real-life issues people face today.

Plato (427-347 B.C.)

In his classic work, *The Republic*, Plato used the myth of Gyges to raise the question, "Why be moral?" The myth of Gyges tells of a man who discovers a magic ring that makes him invisible and therefore gives him the power to secretly do whatever he wants without any consequences. Plato asked the question, "If people had the opportunity to do whatever they wanted without facing consequences, would they want to be moral?" Plato argued that in the end, it is always in the individual's best interest to behave morally. It is even in an individual's best interest to behave morally when doing so does not produce an additional benefit or avoid any particular harm. Plato was not as concerned about identifying right and wrong actions as he was about defining what makes a good person.[1] Plato understood the soul to be the core of human personhood. In *The Republic*, he used the concept of a city to explain the various workings of the soul. Plato believed that the soul, like a city, was comprised of parts. He argued that the soul had three components: the vegetative, the passionate, and the rational. The vegetative component accounts for human desires. The passionate component explains emotions. The rational component produces the ability to think and gain knowledge. Plato presented a strong connection between producing a good society and developing into a good person.[2]

What is Morality?

A moral claim is determined by phrases that include "should" or "ought." If an action or thought "should" be done, then it is moral. If the action or thought "ought not" be done, then it is immoral. While some philosophers use the terms moral and ethical interchangeably, there is a technical difference. Morality is the actual content of right and wrong. Ethics is the process of determining whether an action is right or wrong.[3] Therefore, morality (doing what is right) is achieved through ethics (the process of deliberation). Whether morality is reduced to or set apart from legal "shoulds" and "oughts" depends on an understanding of the origin of morality and a philosophy of ethics.

The Origin of Morality

There are three views about the origin of morality that stem from two competing worldviews. One naturalistic position argues that morality evolved from basic animal practices into more advanced human behaviors. Another naturalistic position says that each society must agree on the definition of morality for the benefit of achieving maximum harmony within a particular culture or group. The Christian worldview establishes the origin of morality in the nature and character of God. Let us briefly examine these three positions.

Naturalistic Evolution Explains Moral Intuitions

The naturalistic worldview argues that morality evolved from basic animal practices into more advanced human behaviors. Naturalistic evolutionists point to animal behaviors, like a band of chimpanzees withholding food from one of its members in order to punish him for selfishness, as examples of foundational and rudimentary moral behavior.[4] According to this view, morality is reduced to natural animal instincts. These instincts evolved so the animals could survive. Sociobiology is a practice of evolutionary psychology which attempts to explain morality (the behavior encompassing "should" and "ought") within a naturalistic evolutionary paradigm.[5] Is morality explainable from a completely naturalistic paradigm? Is it possible that our moral intuitions naturally evolved over millions of years for the purpose of preserving life?[6]

If our moral intuitions are a product of natural evolution and reduced to natural impulses, then how should someone behave when his or her natural impulses conflict? Sometimes man experiences the natural impulse to give food or money to a beggar on the corner. This is generally accepted as a good moral action. However, sometimes man experiences the desire to hurt innocent people intentionally. This is recognized as evil. The problem here is how people determine which action is right and which action is wrong when natural impulses are directing behavior.

If our moral intuitions are a product of natural evolution and are reduced to natural impulses, then would not some of the most horrendous natural impulses be morally right if those impulses help extend the human race? The horrible act of rape (which is morally wrong in all circumstances) could be justified as morally right because it preserves the human race. Some people may justify rape based on the impulse to rape someone. If impulses drive our moral behaviors in order to extend the human race, it is difficult to see how rape would not be justified as morally right.

If our moral intuitions are a product of natural evolution and reduced to natural impulses, then why is moral behavior so unnatural? People do not naturally desire to do good acts. Parents have to teach their young children to share. People have to hold one another accountable to avoid acting upon natural instincts in various situations. The battle with immorality is an intense battle due to our sinful nature. It is clearly not our natural human tendency to be moral.

The Society Determines Morality

The second view claims that laws define the morality of a society. In this case, what is agreed upon by a particular culture and/or what is set down as the law is morally right. The purpose of the law is to promote the survival and function of the community. Is society's definition about what is right and wrong an adequate explanation for the origin of morality?[7]

If morality is reduced to a social agreement, then we set a foundation for a majority to rule over a minority without any factors guiding the morality of the majority. If the majority wanted to bring back slavery because it valued racism or bigotry, there would be no moral guidelines to direct the majority's actions, apart from the social agreement. If the majority wanted to persecute a minority group, as Hitler and the Nazis persecuted the Jews, there would be no factors guiding the moral behavior of the majority's imposition upon the minority. There must be some morality outside of the social agreement to help determine whether the laws that the majority decided to govern with were moral themselves.

If morality is determined by the laws of the majority, then upon what grounds can a minority group object to evil governments? For example, Jesus' moral teachings went against the majority view of Pharisaical Judaism. Jesus healed on the Sabbath and was accused of breaking the Pharisaical Sabbath law. Jesus' response was that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. We know that Jesus did not break God's command by healing the man with the shriveled hand on the Sabbath day. Jesus objected to the majority view held by Pharisaical Judaism and challenged them about the morality of healing. Jesus said, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). Jesus challenged the majority view of Pharisaical Judaism on many occasions throughout His earthly ministry. However, if the majority always determines what is morally right by affirming social agreements, then social reformers like Jesus would always be immoral based only on the rejection of the majority view.

The social agreement view is also problematic because, on many occasions, a social contract is unnecessary for determining moral behavior. C.S. Lewis argues that man knows by nature what is right and what is wrong. It is for this reason that man's moral intuition was called the Law of Nature.[8] If we already know, intuitively, that feeding the homeless is moral and rape is immoral, then why do we need a social agreement to define moral behavior?

God is the Originator of Morality

According to the Christian worldview, God is the author of morality. God is holy and commands His followers to strive for holiness (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:15-16). While every sinful human being falls short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), we are still called to strive for holiness as an offering to God (Romans 12:2).

Christians argue that morality only makes sense if there is a moral lawgiver. If morality is a product of random chance, then there really is no objective reason why someone should obey moral laws at all. But, if God does exist, then there is a solid objective foundation for the existence of objective morality as well as an objective reason to obey it.[9]

Recall the Teleological argument for God's existence as explained in chapter four. The Teleological argument builds a case for a designer based on the overwhelming amount of detail observed in the universe. The moral argument is similar; it builds the case that God instills our moral intuitions of right and wrong in each one of us (not by random accident or chance). In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis argues that the human intuitions about moral behavior are neither a product of nature (random, accidental occurrences) nor a product of man's creation (social agreement). If they were either, then humankind would not have any real obligation to keep its' own moral standards. Furthermore, Lewis' most troubling observation about humankind was that people ought to behave in a certain way and they do not in fact behave that way. Lewis goes on to demonstrate that the moral intuitions within mankind are best explained by understanding God as the author of morality who has "set eternity in the hearts of all men" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).[10]

The Christian understands morality as a reflection of the very nature of God Himself. God is good and all of His attributes are good. This understanding should be the driving force behind all moral behavior. My actions should be in accord with God's standards which are in accord with His nature. I should desire to show compassion and grace to others because God is compassionate and gracious. I should desire to administer justice and fairness to my students because God is just and fair. The existence of God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral laws and our obligation to obey them.

Why Be Moral?

The question, "Why be moral?" is one that every person must answer. The answer to this question depends upon how valuable morality (doing the right thing) is to someone. While we will be looking at different philosophies of ethics in the next section of this chapter, it is important to first identify reasons why people should value moral behavior.

For the Christian, morality is a means of honoring God. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Jesus was not only referring to the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses (Exodus 20:1-17), but also to the details of His own teachings about salvation, truth, and moral behavior. In the Great Commission, Jesus exhorted His disciples to teach others everything He had commanded them (Matthew 28:20). This would include His moral teachings as well as His theological teachings. Certainly, part of the goal of honoring God is to obey Jesus' moral teachings. Jesus said that one way you will be able to distinguish His true followers from the false teachers (sheep from wolves) is by the fruit that they bear (Matthew 7:15-23). This would not only include theological teachings but moral choices as well. Paul clearly discouraged Christians from continuing their immoral lifestyles and taking advantage of God's forgiveness when he said, "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:1). James also reminds us that moral living is a sign of true faith. "Faith by itself, if not accompanied by action is dead" (James 2:17). Therefore, Christians should value morality as a means of honoring and glorifying God.

Christians should also value morality as a means of becoming better people. What does it mean to be a good person? One answer to this question is directly associated with Jesus Christ Himself. To truly be a "good" person in the eyes of God, one must seek reconciliation with God through the atonement of Jesus Christ. It would be impossible to separate true goodness from reconciliation with God. Therefore, the first step to being a good person is being right with God.

Jesus makes the case that being good is associated with an understanding of Himself as God's Son. When the rich, young ruler approached Jesus and said, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responded by saying, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone" (Luke 18:19). Here Jesus connects goodness with His deity. Some scholars have tried to separate the moral teachings of Jesus from His theological teachings. They claim that Jesus was just a good moral teacher, but not the Son of God. However, if Jesus was not the Son of God, as He claimed to be, then none of His teachings are good! Jesus' teachings are only good, if He is who He claimed to be. Jesus performed good works to demonstrate that His claims about His deity were true. Therefore, if Jesus is not divine, then His moral teachings would also be compromised and not worthy of emulation. Furthermore, because Jesus said, "No one is good except God alone," the case is even stronger that true goodness is only compatible with an acceptance of Jesus' deity. To separate the moral teachings from the theological teachings of Jesus would ultimately be immoral and wrong in itself, according to Jesus' teachings.

An answer to the question, "What does it mean to be a *good* person?" is associated with the pursuit of being more like Jesus. If Jesus is God and no one is good except God, then being a better person is in accordance with being more like God. How does one know how to be more like God? By being more like Jesus! The more my life reflects the theological and moral teachings of my Savior, Jesus Christ, the better person I will become. Peter reminded Christians of the importance of the pursuit of holiness when he wrote, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15-16). One way to pursue holiness is to strive to emulate Christ by exercising the fruit of the Spirit in our attitudes, thoughts, and relationships. One step that we could all take to becoming better people today is to begin practicing the fruit of the Spirit more faithfully. Will you make a commitment to practice love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

Besides honoring God and striving to become more like Jesus Christ, there are other reasons to choose the moral life. One reason to be moral would be to help build a functioning society. Even if a person is not a believer in Jesus Christ (or God for that matter), being moral is an obligation or duty that people have to contribute to a properly functioning society. While denying God's existence makes it difficult to define whose moral values should be obeyed (see the previous discussions on the origin of morality from the naturalistic perspectives), it would be beneficial for developing a functional society to practice the objective moral virtues expressed by the Bible in proper context. (For an explanation on the importance of context in order to determine moral values from the Bible, see the discussion on slavery later in the chapter). For now, take honesty for example. What would a society look like if people did not practice honesty? Unfortunately, we see the devastation of dishonesty in our society everywhere we look: executives embezzle money for personal gain, students cheat on exams, potential employees lie on resumes. Our society would certainly be more harmonious and productive if people practiced honesty with more fervor, regardless of their religious beliefs.

Another reason people should be moral is for their physical and emotional well-being. In, *None of These Diseases*, Dr. S.I. McMillen connects one's physical, mental, and emotional health to a moral lifestyle. He says, "No one can appreciate so fully as a doctor the amazing large percentage of human disease and suffering which is directly traceable to worry, fear, conflict, immorality, dissipation, and ignorance – to unwholesome thinking and unclean living … Someday man may awake to the fact that the teachings of Christ are potent and powerful in preventing and curing diseases."[11] The overwhelming amount of suffering linked to immoral behavior is evidence that a moral life is a physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthier life. When we see how stress and anxiety lead to heart problems, sexual immorality to sexually transmitted diseases and emotional guilt, and smoking to lung disease and cancer, we begin to see the connection that Dr. McMillen is making. It may actually be in a person's best interest, for a better quality of life, to affirm and practice the teachings of Jesus.

The question "Why be moral?" is an important one for everyone to ask, not only initially but also daily. Everyone is forced to make ethical decisions on a wide spectrum of circumstances at various points in life. It is

for this reason why each one of us must wrestle with this question and form an answer. We also must recognize the importance of identifying other people's answers to this question as we encounter people with ethical systems that are different from our own. It would benefit everyone to not only have a firm grasp of a personal foundation for making moral decisions, but also have the knowledge to identify other people's foundations for making moral decisions. After all, would it not be beneficial to be able to identify the ethical value system of your doctor, professor, boss, or financial advisor? To help you identify and develop your own ethical value system or the ethical value systems of others, we will now examine the most common ethical systems adopted by people in our society.

Theories of Ethics

Many ethical conflicts in our society come from the absence of an objective, universal moral compass. A conflict about moral behavior between cultures and individuals does not make the task of determining morality impossible, but it does make it more difficult. The task of determining the morality of an action is even more difficult when a person is unaware of his or her own ethical theory. Having a basic understanding of the theories of ethics will help one understand the philosophical foundation for his or her moral reasoning and behavior as well as the foundation for understanding the moral reasoning and behavior of others.[12]

Ethical Egoism

According to ethical egoism, the moral action is that which is always in the best interest of the one making the decision. The actions that best promote one's own personal agenda are moral and those that do not are immoral. As the term "ego" reflects the individual "I", one way to express the philosophy of ethical egoism is to refer to it as ethical "I-ism." Whatever produces the best result for me is, by definition, moral. While ethical egoists are not necessarily narcissistic or concerned about self-praise, when it comes to making decisions they will always choose the action that produces the best result for them personally. An ethical egoist will only help others when it produces a positive result for the egoist himself. Furthermore, an egoist may avert a temporary benefit for a greater benefit later on. Ethical egoists are concerned with their own personal self-interests, but not always in the short-term. Sometimes egoists consider their long-term best interests when making a moral decision.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism states that the moral action is that which produces the best result for the largest amount of people. In utilitarianism, the ends always justify the means, when the means produce the best result for the majority of people involved. While utilitarians believe that people should maximize good consequences, they disagree about the definition of "good consequences" and the most desirable way to achieve them. Some utilitarians are hedonists because they believe pleasure is the ultimate goal of any behavior or decision. Other utilitarians believe that there are objectively good values such as honesty, justice, and fairness that should be the intended goal of an action. Nevertheless, utilitarians agree that moral behavior is "result oriented." The manner in which those results are achieved is of no concern to the utilitarian.

Emotivism

Emotivism affirms that morality is reduced to emotions. Emotivism has its roots in the moral philosophy of David Hume. Hume taught that morality is more of a matter of sentiment than of fact. In emotivism, there are no objective morally right or wrong actions. For example, it would not even be correct for an emotivist to make the statement, "Homosexuality is wrong." The emotivist can only make preference statements about behaviors like, "I do not like homosexuality." If an emotivist does utter the statement, "Homosexuality is wrong" it is taken as an opinion regarding one's personal feelings about homosexuality, rather than an objective moral claim. Moral statements are reduced to emotionally driven remarks about behaviors.

Relativism

According to relativism, the individual or culture determines morality. For individual relativism, morality is reduced to the personal interests of the individual. Relativism is very similar to ethical egoism and emotivism. The key difference between individual relativism and emotivism is that in individual relativism the relativist is saying "Homosexuality is wrong" when he or she is saying "I do not like homosexuality." However, when an emotivist says, "I do not like homosexuality" he or she is not saying "Homosexuality is wrong" but simply that he or she does not prefer homosexuality. In individual relativism, there are at least right and wrong moral values for the one uttering the statement; even if those right or wrong values cannot be imposed or applied to anyone but the individual making the statements. In emotivism, there are no moral values (even for the one making statements about moral behavior). However, according to individual relativism, moral values are determined by the individual only. There are no universal moral values.

Cultural relativism says that a culture or group determines its own moral values, but no culture can impose its own moral values upon another. In cultural relativism, there are no universal moral values that should be obeyed by all cultures. Each individual culture creates and follows its own moral values.

Deontology

Deontologists argue that moral actions are right when they conform to the relevant, correct principle of moral duty. A correct principle of moral duty is one that is intrinsically right or derived from a principle that is intrinsically right. Deontology derives its meaning from the Greek word *deon*, which means "binding duty." A deontologist does not determine which actions are moral by the results of an action because deontology is not result oriented. Deontologists determine moral behavior based on the duty someone has to fulfill an intrinsically moral obligation. Most deontologists believe that promises, contracts, and oaths should be kept because they are morally binding, even when keeping them does not produce a positive result.

Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics connects moral behavior to personal character. According to virtue ethics, moral virtues such as honesty, loyalty, and justice are examples of objective moral realities in the world. When practiced, virtues develop character and make somebody an objectively good person. Plato and Aristotle promoted the theory of virtue ethics in the pursuit of determining what it meant to be a good person. Like deontology, virtue ethics is not as concerned with results as with the practice of intrinsically good moral behavior which builds character and develops good people. If we desire to be good people, then we should become familiar with the moral virtues and strive to practice them in our daily lives. Although the virtues that build character are found throughout the Bible (Galatians 5:22-23 and 2 Peter 1:5-9), the most common virtues are identified in alphabetical order for your immediate attention and practice in your daily life.

Common Moral Virtues for the Pursuit of Moral Character

Acceptance, Bravery, Caution, Compassion, Courage, Curiosity, Determination, Devotion, Discretion, Discipline, Faith, Flexibility, Focus, Forgiveness, Friendship, Generosity, Gentleness, Gratitude, Honesty, Humility, Humor, Impartiality, Industrious, Innocence, Joy, Justice, Kindness, Love, Loyalty, Majesty, Moderation, Obedience, Openness, Patience, Peace, Perseverance, Prudence, Reliability, Responsibility, Self-Control, Sensitivity, Simplicity, Sincerity, Sobriety, Spontaneity, Steadfastness, Strength, Toughness, Tranquility, Trust, Trustworthiness, Work

A Christian Response to the Six Theories of Ethics: A Biblical Analysis

A Biblical Analysis of Ethical Egoism

The Bible does not condemn ethical egoism outright. Certainly, people may be led to practice Christian morality for personal, self-interested reasons. People may choose to be obedient to God in order to receive blessings and avoid curses. This certainly seems to be a motivation for Israel in some cases throughout the Old Testament (see Deuteronomy 27-30). It certainly would have been in Pharaoh's best interest to "Let God's people go!" (Exodus 7-11). Many sermons appeal to a "better life" by keeping God's commands. Some people even accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior because they conclude that it would be in their best interest to do so.

While the Bible does not condemn egoism entirely, it does call for an adequate balance between the value for self-interests and the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4 clearly states that we should not act only on selfish ambition, but consider other people's interests in our decision-making processes. The passage goes on to exhort people to follow Jesus' example of humility. The proper definition of humility is exercising an accurate view of one's self in relation to others. An accurate view of one's self is below self-pride and arrogance but above self-loathing and low self-esteem; it considers equally the positive aspects as well as the negative aspects of one's abilities. When we possess an accurate picture of our gifts and talents in light of our weaknesses and shortcomings, then we will experience true humility.

A Biblical Analysis of Utilitarianism

While the Bible does not encourage utilitarianism from the standpoint that "the ends justify the means," when it comes to moral behavior, the Bible does recognize the value of sacrificing self for the good of others. There is no greater example of an individual's sacrifice for the good of the majority than Jesus' willingness to give up His earthly life for the salvation of sinners. Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 say, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Not only did Jesus lay His life down for a majority group (sinners), the context of these verses demands that we do the same. Before presenting Himself as the prime example of sacrifice, Jesus says, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave" (Matthew 20:26-27). Jesus was not only referring to Himself when He made this statement, but also to His followers who were wondering about the qualifications of greatness in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus defines the greatest love as a sacrificial love when He says, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:3). Jesus is the prime example of someone who does an action that is in the best interest of the majority when He voluntarily goes to His death on the cross.

The fact that we are called to demonstrate our love by laying down our lives could have two different meanings: literal or figurative. Literally, we may or may not be given the opportunity to make the ultimate sacrifice for others by laying down our lives for them. However, we do see an example of someone laying down his life for the good of the majority when a soldier dies in the battlefield for the cause of freedom. Jesus says that laying down your life for the good of others is an example of love at its best!

While we may or may not ever be called to lay down our lives for others in death, we are expected to do so in life. We figuratively lay down our lives by choosing to sacrifice our own interests for the good of others. Christians are called to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, as a spiritual act of worship (Romans12:1). With this in mind, we know that there is more to life than self-service. There must be a strong consideration for others in the decisions that we make. While the Bible does not affirm utilitarianism to the degree that morality is defined solely by the good that it produces for a majority, sometimes the morally right action is selfless, as in the case of someone laying down his or her life for a friend (literally or figuratively).

A Biblical Analysis of Emotivism

A Christian recognizes that God experiences emotion. Throughout the Old Testament, God expressed anger over the disobedience of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus, who is very nature God, wept over the death of Lazarus (John 11:35), became angry at the Temple when He witnessed the people buying and selling (Mark 11:15-19), and was overcome with grief, sorrow, and anguish in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:34; Luke 22:44-45).

God does not only experience emotion, but human beings experience it as well. While God's emotional expression is done without sin, man's emotional expression sometimes accompanies sinful behaviors, thoughts, or motives. The Bible warns us about the dangerous connection between emotional expression and sin. Psalm 4:4 blatantly tells us, "In your anger, do not sin." The anger (emotion) is not the sin, but emotions frequently lead people to sin. Jesus expressed this point a step further when He warned people not to follow their hearts because the heart (emotion) leads to sin. "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man unclean. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man unclean" (Matthew 15:18-20).

While emotions are not evil in themselves, the fact that they may lead people to the various types of sins mentioned by Jesus is evidence that emotions should not be the sole, guiding factor for making moral decisions. The wise man must not be led only by emotion, but also by the intellect. The fact that we are not to conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds as a manner of testing and discovering God's pleasing and perfect will is stronger evidence that the Bible affirms the use of the intellect in making moral decisions (Romans 12:1-2). The Bible does not condone blind emotional responses for determining morality. Rather, the Bible tells us to train our minds to think pure thoughts and to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-8 says,

> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

A Biblical Analysis of Relativism

The Bible firmly denies individual and cultural relativism and affirms objective truth and objective moral values grounded in the very character and nature of God. For a biblical refutation of individual and cultural relativism, review the arguments presented in Chapter Three.

A Biblical Analysis of Deontology

A common objection to deontology is that moral obligations often conflict. From a biblical standpoint, how should people respond when they are faced with situations where moral obligations or biblical commands conflict? For example, when visiting his Buddhist family in China, should a Christian young man violate the second commandment and bow down to a Buddha statue, which is part of his family's custom, or should he violate the fifth commandment and dishonor his father and mother by not bowing down to the idol?

While it is inevitable that our moral obligations will conflict at some point, there may be some helpful guidelines for determining the best moral choice. For the Christian, there is a solution to the conflicting obligation dilemma. This solution is based on whom the action is directed. The Christian's first responsibility is to fulfill his moral obligation to God. The Christian's second and third obligations are directed toward government and family. According to this hierarchical view of deontology, when moral values conflict, people are morally obligated to fulfill their moral responsibilities to God above all other moral responsibilities. In the case

mentioned above, the young man would be morally justified to disobey his parents by not bowing down to the Buddha idol because to bow down to the idol would be a direct offense to God Himself.

The hierarchical view of deontology may also help explain the moral justification in Bible stories where moral values conflict. Consider Daniel's deliberate violation against King Darius' edict that anyone who prays to any god except the king for thirty days will be thrown into the lion's den. Upon learning that the decree had been published, Daniel retreated to his upstairs room and prayed to his God three times a day (Daniel 6). While this violated the law of the land and the obligation to obey governing authorities, Daniel was morally justified in breaking the king's decree in order to serve God. Given Daniel's responsibility to obey God first and government second, Daniel did what was morally right by being obedient to God first. While the Bible makes it clear that men should obey governing authorities (Romans 13), servants should obey their masters (Ephesians 6:5-8), and children should obey their parents (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3), man's primary obligation is to God (Exodus 20:1-6; Matthew 22:36-38). Jesus confirms the concept of a hierarchy of moral responsibilities where God is on the top of the list when He says, "Anyone who loves his father and mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37).

Another example of how the hierarchical view of deontology resolves an apparent biblical conflict is found in the actions of the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:15-21. In the story, the Pharaoh of Egypt gave a direct order to the Hebrew midwives to murder the Hebrew male newborns. But the Bible tells us that the midwives feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live (Exodus 1:17). Not only did the midwives deliberately disobey the governing authority (Romans 13:1), they also lied to the Pharaoh. The Bible explicitly condemns lying (Proverbs12:22). When interrogated about why they allowed the Hebrew boys to live, the midwives told the Pharaoh a lie saying, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive" (Exodus 1:19). The biggest problem here is not that the midwives disobeyed the governing authority or even that they lied to the Pharaoh, but that God blessed them for it (Exodus 1:20-21).

How could God bless the midwives for disobedience and lying? A deontological perspective on ethics may help to solve this apparent biblical problem. The Hebrew midwives found themselves in an ethical dilemma of obedience to the Pharaoh (killing innocent babies) or obedience to God (thou shall not murder). From the deontological "duty ethics" perspective, saving innocent lives is a higher moral obligation than obedience to governing authorities. When the government commands actions that deliberately violate the clear teachings of God's Word (as in the case of prayer in Daniel 6 or killing innocent babies in Exodus 1:15-21), the believer who is loyal to God is not obligated to obey the governing authorities. The decision involving which command to keep or break is not relative or arbitrary to the one doing the action, but based upon the authority figure who issued it. The authority of God (saving innocent lives) is above the authority of any government who issues unjust decrees to murder innocent victims. Therefore, from the deontological perspective, the Hebrew midwives were justified for disobeying and deceiving the governing authority in order to secure the protection of innocent lives. Furthermore, the Bible tells us that the midwives were rewarded "because they feared God." It was due to their fear of God, not man, that the midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's command. It was because of their reverence for God that they were commended.

From a deontological perspective, we must remember that there exists a hierarchy of moral responsibilities. The responsibility to save innocent lives is a higher moral obligation than obedience to governing authorities or telling the truth. In this case, the midwives chose the higher moral obligation and so should we. Consider the story above about the young man who visited his family in China and faced a conflict between obedience to parents (Ephesians 6:1) and obedience to God (Exodus 20:1-6). The moral obligation to honor God supersedes the obligation to obey parents when a real moral conflict between the two exists.

Another example of how the hierarchical view of deontology resolves an apparent biblical conflict is found in the actions of Rahab in Joshua 2. When the Israelite spies went to Jericho to spy out the land, they took refuge in Rahab's home. The king of Jericho issued a message to Rahab to bring out the men who were staying with her because they were spies. Rahab responded to the king with a lie telling him that she did not know which way the spies had gone, but that they had left her place at dusk before the closing of the city gates. All the while, the men were hiding on the roof under the stalks of flax she had laid out for them. God blessed Rahab and her family by sparing them when Jericho was finally destroyed. However, did God bless Rahab because she lied to

the king and protected the spies? How could the Bible revere a woman who blatantly lied to her governing authorities when the Bible commands people to obey the government? Note: The Bible commends Rahab for her acts of faith in James 2:25 and Hebrews 11:31.

While God blessed Rahab and spared her life for protecting the spies and aiding in the overthrow of Jericho, the Bible does not explicitly say that God blessed her because she lied. Although, the moral dilemma that she faced may not have given her any other options. She did not have access to an option that would have allowed her to tell the truth to the king and protect the lives of the spies. Therefore, from a deontological perspective, Rahab violated a lesser moral obligation in order to obey a higher moral obligation. According to the deontological ethic, Rahab's actions were moral because she fulfilled her duty to God.

Daniel 6, Exodus 1:15-21, and Joshua 2 provide biblical examples of people who were justified in breaking a lesser moral obligation in order to obey a higher moral obligation. Therefore, the deontological perspective is compatible with a biblical worldview and is even used to resolve some apparent problem passages.

A Biblical Analysis of Virtue Ethics

Although the Bible contains support for a deontological system of moral reasoning, it also emphasizes the development of personal character and places a high value on virtue. The Gospels express the importance of becoming more like Jesus Christ and the Epistles develop this thought through the doctrine of sanctification. Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Jesus Christ which is part of the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life (Romans 15:16). While the Bible does not provide a specific list of all the virtues and vices, we catch glimpses of them in the Old Testament as well as in the teachings of Jesus and the Epistles. Proverbs, for example, contrasts the actions of the wise with those of the fool (virtues versus vices) and provides some lists of deeds that are detestable to the Lord (Proverbs 6:16-19). In the Gospels, the Sermon on the Mount highlights characteristics of a virtuous life (Matthew 5-7). In the Epistles, Galatians 5 provides a list of vices (Galatians 5:19-21) and virtues (Galatians 5:22-23). Romans 5:4 offers encouragement to believers who suffer because suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. 2 Peter 1:5-9 lists the following virtues as a test for effective Christian ministry,

> For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

Guidelines for Making Moral Decisions

In *Moral Choices*, Biola University professor Scott Rae presents a seven step model for helping people make tough moral decisions.[13] While the Bible should always be the Christian's guide for making decisions, we have already established that sometimes moral values conflict. When moral values conflict, 'doing the right thing' often involves ethical deliberation. While Rae's model will never guarantee that people who use it will make the right decision, it will ensure that they are at least asking the right questions to help them resolve any ethical dilemma. People with different ethical perspectives may answer these questions differently. This model for making moral decisions is not distinctively Christian. The answers to these seven questions should help you accumulate the information necessary for making difficult moral decisions.

1. What are the relevant facts of the case?

It is important, at the beginning of any ethical deliberation to have a complete understanding of the facts involved in the case. Many disputes in life would have been resolved if people would have had a better

understanding of the issues. To accumulate the facts necessary to solve an ethical dilemma, it is important to ask the following questions: 1) What do we know? and 2) What do we need to know?

2. What is the ethical issue?

Ethical dilemmas are only dilemmas because of the competing interests at hand. Most of the decisions we make in life such as "What will I eat?" or "What will I wear?" are not ethical dilemmas. In the second step, it is important to identify the ethical conflict. This is usually expressed in an X versus Y formula when X equals one important interest and Y equals a competing interest.

3. What principles are involved in the case?

After the ethical conflict is identified, the deliberation process involves several principles. The principles include, but are not limited to, moral values, biblical principles, laws, and cultural taboos. In the deliberation process, principles should be given a weight value for comparison. For example, in the case of Daniel 6, Daniel gave the principle of honoring God a higher weight value than honoring the king. In this case, the biblical principle "Love the Lord your God" was given more weight in the deliberation process than the legal principle set forth by the king. Christians will most likely give biblical principles more weight than cultural principles or laws because their primary loyalty is to God. Ethical deliberation includes the process of identifying the principles involved in the case and assessing a weight value in order to help determine a course of action. If principles do conflict, people must be prepared to know which principles are worth breaking. They must also be willing to break the lower principles in order to be obedient to the higher ones.

4. What are all of the alternative courses of action?

Ethical deliberation often involves critical and creative thinking. By considering all possible courses of action, some alternatives will be eliminated immediately because they are not practical or because they violate a clear principle that someone is not willing to violate. However, the more alternatives people can identify, the greater the likelihood that some very good options will be revealed that would resolve the ethical dilemma.

5. What are the best alternatives (after they have been compared to the principles)?

After identifying the principles involved in the case (step 3) and all of the possible alternative courses of action (step 4), it is now time to establish the best alternative choices of action by comparing each alternative to the principles. Often, the ethical dilemma is resolved at this point because the principles have helped to establish which option is the best course of action. However, sometimes there are still some viable options, even after several options have been eliminated through the comparison process. If there are still competing courses of action after comparing the alternatives to the principles, then deliberators must continue to step six.

6. What are the consequences for each decision?

If the principles have not narrowed the deliberation process to one available course of action, then people must consider the consequences of the remaining courses of action. Remember that a consequence is simply a result of an action. A consequence could be positive or negative. Therefore, people must consider the positive and negative consequences of the remaining courses of action before making a final decision. The consequences should be weighted in light of the fact that some positive consequences are more beneficial than others and some negative consequences are more detrimental than others. The severity of the consequences must be considered when evaluating the final course of action.

7. What is the final decision?

At some point, a decision must be made. The deliberation process cannot continue indefinitely. Some ethical decisions are tougher than others and often do not have easy solutions.

Ethical Issues

The remainder of the chapter includes insight on ten of the most frequent ethical issues that I have encountered as both a pastor and a teacher. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the Pro's and Con's of each ethical issue, this section will provide a biblical assessment of each topic. May your opinions and convictions about each topic not conform to the image of this world, but reflect God's will -- His good, pleasing, and perfect will as revealed in His Word (Romans 12:1-2).

Abortion

Abortion is the termination of a pregnancy involving the expulsion of an embryo or fetus.[14] The debate about whether abortion is moral is grounded in the nature of the fetus or embryo (unborn). Abortion is equated with murder because the unborn is an innocent human life. Murder is the willful taking of innocent human life. What does the Bible say about the nature of the unborn?

The starting place for this discussion must be a biblical understanding of human nature itself. The Bible declares that humankind (this includes male and female) is made in the Image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). *Homo sapiens* are distinguished from all other kinds in creation because they 'alone' were created in the Image of God. The Image of God in humankind was present after the fall in Genesis 3 and it extends to every human being, regardless of race, religion, age, ability or disability.[15]

If humanity bears the Image of God, then human life is sacred in the eyes of God and should be considered sacred in the eyes of human beings. If humankind bears the Image of God, then the taking of innocent human life would be morally wrong. The ultimate question about abortion is whether the unborn is a human being (created in God's Image). If the unborn is not yet human (only potentially human), then abortion may not be morally wrong in the sense of terminating an innocent life. How does the Bible establish that the unborn is actually a human being created in God's image, rather than a mere potential human being or lifeless mass of cells?

The Greek and Hebrew terms used of the unborn demonstrate that God values the life of the unborn just as much as He values the life of a person who has already been born. The Greek word *brephos* refers to unborn, newborn, and young children throughout the New Testament (Luke 1:41, 44; 2:16; 18:15; 1 Peter 2:2). The use of *brephos* demonstrates that God does not distinguish the value of human beings based on whether or not they have been born. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *geber* refers to someone at conception, a young boy, and an adult male (Job 3:3; Exodus 10:11; Deuteronomy 22:5; and Judges 5:30). Therefore, based on a biblical word study, there is no biblical distinction between the value of the life of an unborn person and the value of the life of a fully-grown adult.[16]

Beyond a basic Greek and Hebrew word study, the Bible continues to demonstrate that God values an unborn person in the same way that He values a fully-grown adult. In Jeremiah 1:5, God says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." This passage demonstrates that God called Jeremiah to be a prophet while he was in the womb. God did something in the life of Jeremiah while he was still in the womb that He did with other prophets while they were adults. Therefore, we have a solid biblical example of God's view of the unborn having the same value or status as someone who is fully-grown.

Another passage that recognizes God's plan for the unborn is Psalm 139:13-16. In this passage, David says,

> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not

> hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:13-16 affirm that God is intimately involved in the development process of the unborn child. The unborn child is a product of God's magnificent handiwork; the miracle of life for which God is personally involved!

In the New Testament, the Greek word *brephos* is used in Luke 1:41-44 in reference to Elizabeth's unborn baby who leapt for joy in the womb upon hearing Mary's greeting. Not only is the word *brephos* later used in Luke 2:16 to refer to the baby Jesus laying in a manger, but the theological implications of Christ's incarnation also must be considered in regards to the development of the unborn. Jesus Christ, at conception, is God "incarnate" as He takes on human flesh. Jesus does not become fully human at birth, but He is both fully God and fully human all the way through the developmental process taking place in Mary's womb. The reason Luke 1:39-44 is significant to the abortion debate is because it expresses the reaction of the six month old fetus within Elizabeth's womb (John the Baptist) to the news about the days-old fetus (Jesus) within the womb of the virgin Mary.[17] This passage develops a case historically, etymologically, and theologically that the nature of the unborn is equal to the nature of a person who has already experienced birth.

In contrast to the passages above that clearly support the "Pro-Life" view of the unborn, Exodus 21:22-25 is often used as a counter-argument demonstrating that the value of the unborn is not the same as the value of someone who is fully-grown. The argument here is while a fine is administered to fighting men who hit a woman and cause a miscarriage (verse 22), capital punishment is administered to men who cause the death of a woman (verse 23). The difference in punishment suggests a difference in the value of life between the unborn and the fully-grown woman.[18] Exodus 21:22-25 says,

> If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely, but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, or tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Hebrew scholar, Umberto Cassuto's *Commentary on the Book of Exodus* translates the passage as follows:

> When men strive together and they hurt unintentionally a woman with child, and her child comes forth but no mischief happens -- that is, the woman and the child do not die -- the one who hurts her shall surely be punished with a fine. But if any mischief happens, that is, if the woman dies or the children die, then you shall give life for life.[19]

Cassuto's translation clarifies the meaning of the passage and builds the consistent biblical case that the unborn life is of equal value to a life that has already experienced birth.

Further support for Cassuto's translation of Exodus 21:22-25 is expressed by the proper translations of relevant Hebrew words. The Hebrew word *yatsa* is sometimes mistranslated as "miscarriage" when it should be properly translated as "to come forth" or "to give birth." While the Hebrew word *yatsa* may be used for a stillborn baby, it is never used for a miscarriage! In this passage, the translation of the word *yatsa* is best taken to mean a live, premature birth rather than a miscarriage resulting in the death of an unborn baby. This interpretation is strengthened by the existence of another Hebrew word for miscarriage (*shakol*), which is not used anywhere in this passage.[20] If the writer wanted to express that an actual miscarriage resulting in the death of the unborn was undoubtedly being referred to here, he would have used the Hebrew word *shakol* rather than *yatsa*. From the Hebrew words used in this passage, there is no reason to believe that a fine is given when a man causes a miscarriage resulting in the death of the unborn. Rather, a fine is administered when a premature birth is caused, resulting in physical pain to the mother or some other inconvenience (shy of the unborn's death). The Hebrew word used for the mother's offspring here is *yeled*, which is the same word used of babies and young children elsewhere in the Old Testament (Genesis 21:8; Exodus 2:3). Therefore, Exodus 21:22-25, in proper context,

cannot be used to support abortion or the devaluation of the unborn. Properly understood, this passage actually does the opposite. It establishes the high value that God places on all of human life and demands just punishments for people who commit crimes against the innocent.

Abortion in the cases of pregnancy due to rape or incest

As an expression of compassion, should abortion be allowed in cases of rape or incest? The appeal to emotion is strong when a Pro Choice advocate appeals to a hurting woman who has been victimized by rape or incest as an acceptable occasion for abortion. Rather than being led by emotion, the appropriate guide for determining moral behavior must be Scripture (especially in cases where pastoral or Christian counseling is given to people who are facing extreme tragedies such as rape or incest). As we have already pointed out, the Bible views the unborn as an innocent human life, not an unconscious mass of cells. Therefore, abortion is murder, even in the case of rape or incest because abortion is the willful taking of innocent human life.

"Two wrongs do not make a right!" It is difficult to see how abortion relieves the torment for a rape or incest victim over the long haul. While abortion may relieve a temporary burden for the mother, abortion is an irrevocable, unjust crime against an innocent person (the unborn).[21] Why should the unborn be given the death penalty for the crime of the father (in the case of rape or incest)? Why should the unborn be denied the right to life so the mother does not have to endure a nine-month gestation? These questions must be addressed when abortion is being considered in cases of rape or incest.

Alternative to abortion

If you are contemplating an abortion (or know a girl who is contemplating an abortion), please consider adoption. There are thousands of married couples who are unable to have their own children or who simply have a desire to adopt a child. One of these families could provide an adequate home for your child. Adoption provides a double blessing. Not only will the child be blessed with the gift of life, but a family will be blessed with an opportunity to raise that child as its own.[22]

Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol consumption is a controversial issue among Christians. Although the Bible explicitly condemns drunkenness, it does not condemn the use of alcohol in every situation. After all, if Jesus turned the water into wine at the wedding of Cana and it was considered the best quality (maybe even the most potent), then why should Christians not consume alcohol at weddings and parties today? Furthermore, Jesus used wine to institute the Lord's Supper with His disciples. Wine is still used in some churches today. Is alcohol consumption in church services morally wrong? Let us examine what the Bible says about alcohol consumption so that we may discern what alcohol's role should be in our lives!

Some people have appealed to Proverbs 31:6-7 as biblical affirmation for social drinking and alcohol abuse. Proverbs 31:6-7 says, "Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more." However, in proper context, there is a condemnation of alcohol consumption just two verses prior. The condemnation is for those who are of sound-mind, particularly those in leadership.[23] Proverbs 31:4-5 says, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer, lest they drink and forget what the law decrees, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights."

After the condemnation of alcohol consumption for those in leadership, the passage goes on to express a proper use of alcohol. The passage affirms alcohol consumption for medicinal purposes.[24] "Giving beer to those who are perishing (dying) and wine to those who are in anguish (physical pain and suffering)" denotes the medicinal purpose of alcohol consumption. While Proverbs 31:4-7 allows the use of alcohol for medicinal purposes, the passage in its entirety condemns the abuse of alcohol, consistent with the rest of Scripture.

In Bible times, wine was often used for medicinal purposes.[25] In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul tells Timothy, "Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses." This is clearly not

a passage promoting social use or abuse of alcohol. Paul tells Timothy to use only a little wine. He also directs the use of "a little wine" to cure his stomach ailment (another example of the medicinal purpose).

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus refers to a medical use for alcohol. Jesus uses the Good Samaritan as the example of the only person (not the priest or Levite) who stopped between Jerusalem and Jericho to help a man who was robbed and beaten by a group of robbers. The Good Samaritan provided aid by pouring oil and wine on the man's wounds (Luke 10:34). Jesus is referring to a medical usage of wine to cleanse open wounds. Sometimes wine (alcohol) was used internally (for stomach ailments) and other times it was used externally (for cleansing open wounds).

When it comes to the use of alcohol for the sake of getting drunk, the Bible clearly condemns such behavior. Ephesians 5:18 clearly states, "Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery." Instead of drinking alcohol and practicing immorality, the Bible encourages people to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, drunkenness is listed among several characteristics of those who are wicked and will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is not saying that those who drink alcohol are going to hell. But, if drunkenness is a characteristic of wickedness, then it would be wise for Christians who consume alcohol to protect themselves from drunkenness at all costs.

Some people have used Jesus' miracle at the wedding of Cana to justify social drinking (see John 2:1-11). However, this miracle possesses deep Messianic symbolism when Old Testament prophecies are considered. While the consumption of wine (or alcohol) in excess is associated in the Old Testament with the pronunciation of woes (Isaiah 5:11; Amos 6:6; Micah 2:11) and disgrace along with judgment (Amos 6:6-7), the Old Testament prophets also saw wine as symbolic of the Messianic age (Matthew 9:17). Therefore, when Jesus changed the water into wine, He expected people to recognize that the Messiah had now come to them. This miracle should have gotten the attention of every Jew who was familiar with the Old Testament prophecies. As the water literally changed into wine, the times were also changing as the Messianic age had finally arrived. Jesus' miracle of turning the water into wine at the wedding of Cana is not a biblical warrant for social drinking. This miracle has Messianic implications deeply rooted in Old Testament prophecy.

The wine used in biblical times was much different from strong alcoholic beverages used today. The wine used in biblical times was diluted with water (three parts of water to every two parts of wine).[26] Therefore, the alcohol content was not near what is found in strong drinks today. Someone could drink a little "diluted" wine with a meal and would not experience any harm. It may have even been advised to mix a little wine with water because wine was used as a water purifier.

Although the Bible condemns alcohol abuse, there will be Christians who socially drink while others remain abstinent. As for myself, I made a commitment at a young age to never consume alcohol and I have kept that commitment. While I do not judge people who drink, I have a few personal reasons for abstaining from alcohol consumption. First, alcoholism is a hereditary problem that runs in my family. I honestly do not know whether I am an alcoholic or not. One way to guarantee that I will not succumb to alcoholism is to remain abstinent. Second, I have learned that remaining abstinent from alcohol has provided opportunities for me to share my faith with people that would not have come about if I had been drinking. Third, I desire not to drink alcohol because alcohol abuse is a serious struggle for some people in our society. Because I sympathize with the struggling and recovering problem drinkers, I have chosen not to consume alcohol. I do not want my actions to cause people to stumble. Although alcohol consumption is a controversial issue among Christians, the Bible is clear about the danger of causing other people to stumble. Will you take Paul's advice seriously and apply it to alcohol consumption? "It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall" (Romans 14:21).

Capital Punishment

Although Christians have different views on capital punishment, the Bible affirms God's position on the issue in the very first book of the Bible. In Genesis 9, after He has just destroyed most of His fallen creation with the flood as an act of divine judgment, God instituted capital punishment as a means of protecting innocent human life. Genesis 9:1-6 says,

> Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.'

This instruction was given before the institution of the Ten Commandments and should not be viewed as a contradiction to the sixth commandment: "You shall not murder." Genesis 9:6 is an affirmation of God's universal position on the sanctity of innocent human life. (For more discussion on a biblical position on the sanctity of human life, see the abortion discussion). Some Bible critics have drawn attention to an apparent contradiction between passages like Genesis 9:6 or Exodus 21:12-25 (which promote capital punishment and the taking of human life) and Exodus 20:13 which clearly states, "You shall not kill" (King James Version). At first glance, this looks like an obvious contradiction. It is common for those who oppose the death penalty to argue that capital punishment is murder: it is a contradiction for the Bible to affirm killing someone who has murdered another.

However, in Genesis 9:6, the Bible clearly affirms taking the life of a criminal who is found guilty of taking innocent human life. The concept of life for life is not contradictory to the ethics of love and compassion, as some have suggested. Those who affirm the justice of capital punishment point out the difference between the words "murder" and "kill." The Hebrew language and some English translations do a better job of illustrating the different meanings of these two words. The Hebrew word for murder is *ratsach*, which is the word expressed in the sixth commandment found in Exodus 20:13. The Hebrew word *harag* is translated kill. There is a clear distinction in the understanding of the Hebrew language between murder (*ratsach*) and kill (*harag*). 'Murder' is the unlawful termination of innocent human life. 'Kill,' in contrast to murder, is the termination of guilty life, which is the result of properly instituted capital punishment. 'Kill' would also refer to accidental death or the taking of a life in war. 'Kill' is also the word of preference for the termination of animal life. While the King James Version does not express an accurate translation of the sixth commandment: "Thou shall not kill," the New King James Version and the New International Version do reflect the Hebrew language correctly: "You or Thou shall not murder."[27] Differences between translations are not problems with the inerrant Word of God, but with the wording of particular translations. The Bible affirms the justice of capital punishment (life for life) and explains how a society should determine when it is necessary. Deuteronomy 19:13, "You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, so that it may go well with you" expresses how a society that institutes the principle of Genesis 9:6 will be a better society for doing so. The rest of the passage, Deuteronomy 19:15-21, presents the details of how a society should apply capital punishment to its justice system.

> One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime, the two men involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against his brother, then do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from among you. The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you. Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

True justice demands an equality of weights and balances between the crime committed and the punishment allotted. God is righteous, just and fair and has established the principle of capital punishment as a means to justice within a society. The concept of 'an eye for an eye,' 'tooth for a tooth' and 'life for a life' was to be followed as part of a legal system that would implement justice. Leviticus 24:19-20 is a clear explanation of a justice system that practices just punishments (punishments that equally fit the crimes). Leviticus 24:19-20 says,

"If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye and tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured."

A crime is not always determined by the action itself but against whom the action is committed. The act of killing an innocent victim (murder) may not be the same as killing a guilty murderer (capital punishment). The act of killing an innocent human (murder) may not be the same as killing an innocent animal (hunting). Talbot School of Theology professor Kevin Lewis expressed this concept of justice when he said, "If you kill a cockroach, no punishment is allotted because there is no inherent value in a cockroach. Kill your neighbor's dog and you receive a large fine or temporary imprisonment (as in the case of Michael Vick) because the inherent value of a dog is greater than that of a cockroach. Kill your neighbor and receive life in prison or the death penalty (life for life) because the inherent value of a human being is greater than both a cockroach and a dog."

While the analogy could stop there to establish a case for capital punishment based on the inherent value of human beings, Lewis takes it a step further and establishes a case for the justification of eternal punishment in hell. Lewis continues, "If God is inherently the greatest being that exists, what is an adequate punishment for crimes committed against such a being?" If God is the greatest possible being, then the only just punishment for crimes committed against such a being would be the greatest punishment possible: eternal punishment. Therefore, Lewis argues that the concept of hell (eternal punishment) is justified because crimes or sins were committed against the greatest being possible (eternal God). Physical death and eternal hell would be just punishments for crimes (sins) committed against the greatest being because they are the harshest punishments available. In short, because God is so great, the punishment for sin committed against such a great being must be the greatest punishment possible to achieve true justice!

A biblical example of capital punishment occurs in 1 Kings 18:40 where the prophets of Baal received the death penalty for their rejection of God. Some people have argued that the death penalty was too harsh of a punishment for a group of people who simply chose not to believe. Critics of the Bible have argued that this passage is a prime example of religious intolerance. However, a clear understanding of Old Testament law will help resolve the critics' disputes. According to the Mosaic Law, even Jewish prophets were given the death penalty for giving false prophecies (Deuteronomy 18:20). Furthermore, idolatry (Exodus 22:20), blasphemy (Leviticus 24:25-26) and adultery (Leviticus 20:10) were punishable by death. The prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18 were guilty of these sins and therefore worthy of capital punishment, according to Old Testament law. Also, capital punishment is justified in light of the fact that the prophets of Baal also engaged in treason against the Jewish theocracy.[28] Their deaths were justifiable because they deliberately betrayed God who is sovereign over all of life (Deuteronomy 32:39; Job 1:21) and absolutely fair in executing justice (Genesis 18:25).

Some people have suggested that Jesus' New Testament statements "But I tell you" negate Old Testament principles like "an eye for an eye." One proof text for such a claim is Matthew 5:38-42 which says,

> *You have heard that it was said*, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' *But I tell you,* Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

While people have used Matthew 5:38-42 to negate the principle of an eye for an eye, others understand Jesus' "But I tell you" teaching to be a correction of the Pharisaical misinterpretations and misapplications of the "eye for eye" concept. Jesus' teaching should not be taken as a negation of the entire principle altogether. Jesus' "But I tell you" statements may also be understood as the antitheses that prepare the reader for discussions on the relationship between the teachings of Jesus and the standards of the Old Testament. The New Testament teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount may also refer to personal relationships, while the Old Testament "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth" statements were to be maintained properly by the governing judicial system.[29] Whichever interpretation people accept, Jesus is not contradicting the Old Testament. He is expressing man's need to go beyond the principles and laws of the Old Testament in order to honor God. There are no clear teachings of Jesus Christ that negate the principles embodied in the justice of the death penalty.

Capital punishment was established by God in the Old Testament and re-affirmed in the New Testament when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate in the inner room during His trial. Jesus answered Pilate saying, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin" (John 19:11). In this passage, Jesus affirmed that the power to execute Him did not come from Pilate, but from the will of God. Furthermore, when Jesus was crucified, He did not correct the thief who said, "Don't you fear God since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41).[30]

In the book of Acts, the Jews imprisoned Paul under the false accusations of causing trouble (riots) and desecrating the Temple. In Paul's defense to Festus, he not only appealed to his innocence of the charges against him, but also to the affirmation of the death penalty for crimes that warrant it.[31] The following dialogue between Paul and Festus appears in Acts 25:8-11:

Paul: "I have done nothing wrong against the Law of the Jews or against the Temple or against Caesar."

Festus: "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

Paul: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

In Romans 13, Paul urges Christians to submit to their governing authorities as an act of submission to God. He argues that because God has established the governing authorities for the protection and good of the people, to rebel against those authorities would be an act of rebellion against what God has established. Furthermore, he argues that those who are obedient to the governing authorities will have nothing to fear because the governing authorities are there to serve and protect the innocent and enforce punishment upon those who rebel. The wrongdoers who rebel are the ones who should fear because the government "does not bear the sword for nothing." The phrase "bear the sword" is a Roman symbol of capital punishment.[32] The New Testament affirms the government's responsibility to inflict the death penalty upon criminals who commit crimes that warrant it.

It is clear that the Bible affirms the principle of capital punishment and has established the government as the means for implementing it in society. In cases where capital punishment is necessary, a few thoughts need to be considered: Is the mode by which capital punishment is carried out humane, in light of the fact that all men bear the image of God? Is the criminal found guilty beyond reasonable doubt, in order to avoid the execution of an innocent victim? Is the demand for justice by the family of the innocent murder victim overshadowed by the demand for compassion towards the guilty criminal? As Scripture commands compassion towards people individually and consequences for actions to be carried out corporately, there is a place for continued debate about the application of the death penalty today.

Dishonesty & Lying

We have already established that it may be morally justifiable to deceive people in order to obey a higher moral law. While dishonesty, lying, and deception may be justified in cases where someone is trying to keep a higher moral law (the protection of innocent lives), lying for the sake of lying is always wrong. A distinction exists between lying and withholding the truth.[33] A "lie" is intentionally deceiving someone who has a right to know the truth. "Withholding the truth" may be justified in cases where someone does not have the right to know the truth. Such a distinction is illustrated by comparing the stories of Ananias and Saphira in Acts 5, the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:15-21, and Rahab and the spies in Joshua 2. In Acts 5, Ananias told a lie when he had a moral obligation (duty) to tell the truth. In Exodus 1:15-21 and Joshua 2, the truth was purposely withheld from people who did not have the right to know the truth.[34] In Exodus 1:15-21 and Joshua 2, if the authorities had known the truth, then there would have been a greater occurrence of evil (the death of innocent people).

In light of the conflict of views among Christians on this issue, further discussion is necessary to identify real life situations where withholding the truth is morally permissible. Should a Christian man lie to protect his family from the threat of murder? Should a Christian in the military lie to protect his men from the enemy? Should Christian parents lie to their children about what they bought them for their birthdays? Should a man lie to his wife who asks, "Do I look fat in this dress?" These questions invite further discussion about the moral issue of lying and whether deception is morally justified when conflicting or awkward situations arise.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a complicated issue because it entails a very broad spectrum of assistance in the process of dying. The word euthanasia derives its meaning from the Greek words *eu* = good; *thanatos* = death.[35] Euthanasia is aiding someone in the process of dying so that he or she may die well. However, there is scholarly debate about the definition of a "good death." Some Christians, like Paul Ramsey, have argued that because death is an unnatural aspect of life, resulting from the fall of man, there is no such thing as a good death (or dying with dignity).[36] According to Ramsey, death is an indignity that is inconsistent with man's eternal destiny in Christ.

Whether people agree with Ramsey or not, euthanasia is a social issue that Christians need to analyze underneath the metaphorical microscope of a biblical worldview. Before a biblical perspective on euthanasia can be explained, the different categories of euthanasia must be identified.[37] Euthanasia is divided into two categories: active and passive. Active euthanasia involves doing something (i.e. giving a lethal injection) to cause the death of a person. Passive euthanasia, however, involves withholding the necessary elements that would be needed to sustain life (medicine, food, and/or water); so that without those elements the patient naturally dies. Those who wish to be more technical about the issue have acknowledged a third category that may be placed between active and passive euthanasia: physician-assisted suicide. In physician-assisted suicide, the physician provides the patient with the medical means necessary for the patient to take his or her own life.

In regards to a Christian ethic on euthanasia, active euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide may be immoral, while passive euthanasia would be moral if it does not violate any biblical mandates. Active euthanasia is reduced to murder as the physician himself injects the patient or performs the necessary procedures to take the patient's life. Physician-assisted suicide is engaging in accomplice to murder because the physician provides the patient with the means for taking his or her own life. Passive euthanasia, however, may not be unethical or immoral because it is simply withholding the means (or devices) necessary for sustaining a life that would naturally die on its own. Allowing the natural death of a terminally ill patient by terminating life support or withholding the necessary life-supporting elements is generally acceptable, both morally and legally, given one of the following conditions: 1) if a competent adult patient requests it, 2) if the treatment is clearly no benefit to the patient, or 3) if the burden to the patient outweighs the benefit.[38] Given this brief overview of euthanasia, we can now analyze what the Bible says about human life and euthanasia.

Human life is sacred in the eyes of God. The discussion on the sanctity of life in the abortion section should be considered in a discussion on euthanasia. Similar to the abortion debate, a human life should not be valued on the basis of nominalism but on being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Nominalism holds that individual things do not have natures but things are categorized and named only because of their similarities in appearance. If nominalism is the standard upon which a human being's value is determined, then euthanasia could be justified towards the handicapped, the elderly, or anyone who either does not physically look like the norm or who is unable to contribute to society. The utilitarian ethic is paramount to this discussion because putting an innocent person to death may have its social benefits, especially when medical costs, hospital space, and other social issues are considered. If active euthanasia or doctor assisted suicide become social norms, the fear is that they may lead to a slippery slope of euthanizing those who are not chronically ill but who are a financial burden to society.

Not only should human life be valued as sacred because it was created in the image of God, but the Bible affirms that God is the one who decides when someone should die. Deuteronomy 32:39 says, "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal." Because God is ultimately in charge of life and death, it is never an individual's "right" to decide who will live and who will die.

If I have the right to commit suicide or assist someone else in the process of taking his or her own life, then how should Christians approach the biblical teachings on perseverance through suffering? Romans 5:3-5 provides all the encouragement we need to continue to persevere through trials. Paul explains that we are to rejoice in our sufferings because "we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us."

A prime example of perseverance was Job. In the midst of Job's great anguish, his wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?" (Job 2:9-10). Here is a biblical lesson that should be applied to the discussion on euthanasia. No matter how painful life becomes, perseverance has eternal value. We see another example in the suffering of Jesus. Jesus chose the painful path to the cross, rather than avoiding the pain by committing suicide. If Jesus saw His painful path to death as an avenue for ministry, we might see it the same way also.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality continues to be a controversial topic as the homosexual community seeks to develop a stronger platform for normalizing homosexual behavior. This section will not only include an overview of the biblical teaching on homosexuality, but also an analysis of recent claims that science has proved that people are born homosexual (perhaps with a gay gene). Proponents of homosexuality commonly argue that homosexuality is moral because homosexuals are born gay and, therefore, should be free to practice homosexual behavior. Furthermore, if God creates people "homosexual," they should have the opportunity to fulfill their God-ordained destiny. Before considering the scientific evidence for homosexuality, let us examine what the Bible teaches about it. Through a biblical analysis, we may learn about the compatibility between homosexuality and a biblical, Christian worldview.

The Old Testament condemns homosexuality. It views homosexual sex as immoral (Leviticus 18:22) and illegal, worthy of capital punishment (Leviticus 20:13). However, apart from being called an abomination or detestable (NIV) in Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13, homosexuality is among a long list of sexual sins that are forbidden and worthy of condemnation, according to God's standards (Leviticus 18). The following is an explanation of Leviticus 18 and 20 regarding the list of sins worthy of condemnation along with homosexuality: Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable (Leviticus 18:22). Homosexuality is condemned in the context of a list of immoral sexual behaviors including sex with relatives who are not your wife (18:6-18), sex with a woman during her monthly period (18:19) and sex with animals (18:23). Sacrificing a child to Molech was also listed among these sins (18:21). If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads (Leviticus 20:13). Homosexuality was not only immoral, but also illegal in Old Testament times. While homosexuality was worthy of the death penalty in Old Testament times, cursing father and mother, adultery, incest, and sex with animals were also worthy of the death penalty (Leviticus 20).

The Old Testament confirms God's attitude towards homosexuality in the condemnation of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). Ezekiel 16:43 and 50 use the same language found in Leviticus 18, "detestable," to describe the sins of Sodom. In 1 Kings 14:9, male prostitution and "detestable practices" are among the rebellious actions of Judah under the reign of Rehoboam when "Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord." Judges 19:23 describes homosexuality as a "disgraceful thing." Clearly, the Old Testament condemns all homosexual sex and does not distinguish between wholesome and perverted homosexual relationships. In accord with the Old Testament, all homosexual sex (even in the context of a monogamous relationship or marriage) is "detestable."

The New Testament also forbids homosexual sex. In Romans 1, Paul forbids the practice of homosexuality in the context of God's creation and the process of restoration. Paul presents the argument that homosexuality is a consequence of rebellion against God. In rebellion against God, man is practicing all kinds of sinful activity. The practice of homosexuality is one example of man's rebelliousness against God's created order. Romans 1:24-27 says,

> Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

The un-natural nature of homosexuality appears not only in the text of Romans 1 where Paul describes homosexual acts as unnatural and indecent, but also from our observation of the design of the human body. The human body is not designed for homosexual sex. Francis Beckwith argues that the definition of sex is a union between a male and a female; a homosexual union is not equal to a heterosexual union by the definition of the term "sex."[39] While it is beyond the scope of this section to argue against the naturalist who maintains that God is not the creator and designer of the human body (see chapter four), Christians who hold to a biblical worldview of creation understand God's teleological purpose for sex and His design of the human body to fulfill a particular purpose.

While Romans 1 is the dominant New Testament rebuke of homosexuality, other Pauline epistles condemn homosexuality as well. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 lists homosexual offenders among those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Although this passage does not promote a works-based salvation, it is to be interpreted in light of the lesson in Romans 1. The sinful activities listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 stand as symptoms of a greater problem: rebellion against God. While it is one thing to be a homosexual because you practiced it in the past and repented, it is another thing to be an active practicing homosexual. It is difficult to reconcile an ongoing willful practice of these sins while simultaneously seeking the Kingdom of God and desiring a close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. These sins stand as signs of personal rebellion against God. To make the point clearer, after presenting the types of people who will not inherit the Kingdom of God, Paul says in verse 11, "This is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." Paul's statement in verse 11 separates those who are saved and have turned away from their rebellion against God from those who deliberately continue to rebel against Him.

Although the teachings of Jesus do not explicitly condemn homosexuality, Jesus does appeal to God's created order when He gives His guidelines for marriage in Matthew 19. Jesus not only speaks on His own accord, but also expects His listeners be familiar with the teachings in Genesis about God's intent for sexuality and marriage. Jesus says, "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:4-6).

While Jesus did not explicitly forbid homosexuality, He provided an example of how Christians should respond to people who are struggling with sin and rebellion against God. Jesus approached the tax collectors, prostitutes, sinners, and social outcasts in order to demonstrate His love for them. Jesus loved sinners and chose to include them in His inner-circle, despite their sin and rebellious nature. It would do the Christian community well to be more Christ-like in response to the homosexual community. While Jesus did not condone immoral behavior, He modeled love for sinners that they might repent and experience life to the fullest.

One step that the Christian church must take in reaching out to homosexuals is to recognize the difference between homosexual attraction and homosexual activity.[40] There is a distinction between the desire to engage in homosexual activity and the activity itself. People may struggle with sinful desires and reap the benefit of overcoming those desires. This would certainly be better than being held captive to the bondage of sin. Many homosexuals have come to acknowledge their sin, have repented (turned away) and live a life free from homosexuality. We must remember that Christ did not die so that people could continue as captives of sin. Jesus

died so that sinners could be set free from the bondage of sin and death. Galatians 5:1 reminds us, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."

Some proponents of homosexuality have argued that the Bible is out of date concerning homosexuality. They argue that recent studies have proved that homosexuality is biological. Therefore, it is a justified moral behavior. The argument suggests that recent scientific discoveries have determined facts about humanity that the writers of Scripture did not know when they called homosexuality a sin. However, a quick rebuttal to this argument will point out that many Christians believe the Bible is the Word of God. Therefore, if a mistake were made about homosexuality being a sin, then God who possesses infinite knowledge of His creation would have made the mistake. A more in-depth argument about the biological connection to homosexual behavior involves analyzing the actual studies on this subject.

Are people really born homosexual?

In *Ethix: Being Bold in a Whatever World*, Sean McDowell debunks recent studies which attempt to link a biological connection to homosexual behavior.[41] McDowell challenges a scientific experiment performed on identical twins conducted by Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard that ultimately concluded that homosexuality is hereditary. The experiment was performed on homosexual men and their identical twin brothers in an attempt to scientifically prove that homosexuality is biological. However, the experiment revealed an unexpectedly low percentage (about 50%) of homosexual twins were both gay. Mc Dowell says, "If sexual orientation was determined by genetics then all of the twins in the study should have been 100 percent equally homosexual."[42]

McDowell challenged another study performed on the hypothalamus of the human brain by Dr. Simon LeVay. LeVay's study examined whether there was a difference in brain size between homosexual men and heterosexual men. After studying the brains of forty-one cadavers, LeVay observed that some of the neurons in homosexual men were smaller than those found in heterosexual men. He naturally concluded that the difference accounted for sexual orientation.[43] McDowell pointed out several problems that have been identified with LeVay's study and conclusions: 1) LeVay admitted that his findings were overstated by the media, 2) No scientist has ever found a conclusive link between the area of the hypothalamus under analysis and a cause for sexual orientation, 3) The sexuality of LeVay's subjects were questionable (the medical charts of the bodies that were studied did not identify sexual orientation). McDowell also argued that no other scientific experiments on the human brain have ever demonstrated a causal link to sexual behavior.[44]

McDowell presented a third study conducted in 1993 by Dr. Dean Hamer. Hamer claimed to have discovered the "gay gene." In an examination of seventy-six men, who met the criterion of having a gay brother, Hamer found a common pattern of homosexuality in maternal relatives over paternal relatives. This study concluded that the homosexual gene was inherited through the X chromosome of women. While the experiment got the attention of the media, McDowell recognizes the ultimate problem of cause and effect. McDowell says, "Just because a majority of the homosexual men have shared genetic variations does not mean this variation is the cause of the homosexual behavior."[45] McDowell also acknowledges that Hamer's results could not be duplicated in another scientific experiment held in a Canadian laboratory. Failure to duplicate the results in another scientific experiment raises doubts about the integrity of his first experiment.

McDowell draws the conclusion that the problem with trying to connect physical causes to sexual orientation is the reality that much of our sexuality is developmental. Doctors are unable to determine anyone's sexual preference regarding race, hair color, and eye color by examining one's physical make-up, so why would anyone ever expect to make such a discovery regarding homosexuality?

Suppose, however, that science does (beyond any doubt) conclusively determine that sexual orientation is caused by one's biological make-up. Would such a discovery justify homosexual activity? If someone's biological make-up gave him the propensity to murder, would such a discovery justify murder? If someone's biological make-up determined that he was a homosexual, then it is conceivable that a discovery may find a biological connection between someone's genes and pedophilia. Would such a discovery then justify pedophilia? Why not? What about polygamy, incest, and bestiality? These sexual perversions would also have to be morally acceptable if a biological connection to sexual preference is conclusively established, according to the reasoning of our modern secular media.

As Christians, we may want to consider another alternative to the justification of immoral behavior if it is scientifically connected to biological make-up. Rather than justifying immoral behavior because it is biologically connected, we may want to recognize that we would expect to find propensity to sin in specific areas due to our fallen and sinful DNA. Due to Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, all of us have a sinful nature. Therefore, why wouldn't a more specific propensity to sin in a particular area (like homosexuality or murder or cheating) also be passed on through the sinful nature and manifest itself in some physical (genetic) form? In other words, a physical connection to a particular sin would only validate the biblical teachings on sinful nature rather than give people permission to practice immorality.

Are those who oppose homosexuality homophobic?

Some advocates of homosexuality argue that those who oppose homosexuality are homophobic. Two points can be made against such an accusation.

First, if morality is determined by one's biological make-up and homosexuality is justified and should not be opposed, who is to say that those who hold the view "homosexuality is wrong" do not hold it because of their genetic make-up? If I object to homosexuality because I have a genetic make-up causing me to be homophobic, then why should I be persecuted for my "homophobia?"

Second, a Christian who opposes homosexuality does not do so based on a fear of homosexuals (homophobia), but on the belief that homosexuality is immoral and harmful. If homosexuality is harmful to one's soul (relationship with God) as the Bible indicates, then those who oppose homosexuality do not oppose it because of fear (phobia), but based on love towards those who practice homosexuality. Furthermore, if homosexuality is physically harmful to people (which is indicated by a wide range of diseases such as gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, herpes, and HIV and AIDS), then people should oppose homosexuality on the basis of love towards those who practice it and face the dangers of these physical diseases. Given the moral and physical health problems that are associated with homosexual activity, it would be more of a hate crime to remain silent about the dangers of homosexuality and idly watch as people continue to destroy their lives.[46]

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

Marriage

In this section, we will identify the biblical definition of marriage. We will then discuss the biblical guidelines for an acceptable divorce in the eyes of God and present some advice for those who have experienced divorce. Finally, we will highlight the biblical criteria for a re-marriage and present some advice for those who are either considering re-marriage or who have already re-married.

The secular world defines marriage as a legally binding contract between two people. The Bible defines marriage as a binding covenant between a man and a woman and God until death or divorce due to adultery or spousal abandonment. God instituted marriage between a man and a woman in Genesis 2:21. Jesus re-emphasized that marriage was God-ordained when He said, "They are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). Both Genesis and Jesus affirm that marriage is a covenant instituted by God and designed only for the union between a man and a woman. The marriage union, as a covenant with God, reflects the very nature of the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons who together make one God. Likewise, a man, a woman, and God are three beings who unite in agreement together as they affirm their roles in the acceptance of the marriage covenant. A married couple is a union in the eyes of God.

Paul has some important words regarding marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:1-6,

> Now for matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him

alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except for mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self control. I say this as a concession not as a command.

Paul says, "It is good for a man not to marry." Why would Paul utter such a statement? One reason is understandable, given the context of Paul's anticipation of Christ's imminent second coming when he wrote 1 Corinthians. Paul is saying that the Christian's focus needs to be on Christ's return and eternal matters, rather than earthly affairs: such as marriage and the worldly responsibilities that accompany it. Paul expresses this thought further in 1 Corinthians 7:32-34 when he says, "I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs – how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world – how he can please his wife – and his interests are divided." In light of Paul's belief that the Lord was going to return soon, marriage was not as valuable to Paul as a life devoted solely to the purpose of serving God.[47]

Another observation from Paul's exhortation in 1 Corinthians 7:1-6 is that given the increase of immorality, each husband should have his own wife and each wife should have her own husband. While polygamy may not be at the forefront of our conversations about marriage, it is practiced today. Dateline NBC aired an episode about Tom Green who is a husband to five wives.[48] The story of Tom Green informed the world about the contemporary problem of polygamy (plural marriage). The story revealed that Green married the daughters of women who had previously been married to him. Further examination revealed that one of Green's wives (Hannah) was thirteen years old when they married. An interview with the wives portrayed them as "happy-go-lucky" regarding their marriage to Tom. The episode ended with an interview with Tom Green from prison. Green was imprisoned for pedophilia and marriage to a minor. The episode revealed that polygamy was rampant in Colorado City, Utah. A disturbing interview with the mayor confirmed the nonchalant attitude towards plural marriage in Colorado City. While polygamy continues as a practice by minority groups of fundamentalist Mormons, the Bible clearly condemns plural marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:1-6.

A final observation of Paul's teaching about marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:1-6 is his instruction not to deprive one another from sex, except for a time to focus on prayer. God designed sex for the institution of marriage. Therefore, married couples have a responsibility to meet one another's needs in that particular area. Paul encourages married couples to meet one another's sexual needs in order to avoid sexual temptation that might present itself outside the marriage. How many marriages ended in divorce because people withheld sex as punishment or simply refused to engage with their partners? How many marriages would have been saved if couples had taken Paul's instruction seriously? We may never know!

Before we examine Paul's teaching about marriage to the Christians of Ephesus, an important difference between his teaching in 1 Corinthians and his teaching in Ephesians must be addressed. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul said "It is better for a man not to marry" (v. 1) because "an unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs, but a married man is concerned about the world and pleasing his wife" (v. 32-34). In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul presents marriage as the most precious relationship in life, whose only parallel is the relationship between Christ and the Church. How should Christians who believe in the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture account for the difference of emphasis between the message to the Corinthians and the message to the Ephesians?

William Barclay's commentary on Ephesians points out a significant time gap between the writing of 1 Corinthians and Ephesians. Barclay says, "In these nine years, Paul had realized that the Second Coming of Christ was not to be as soon as he had thought. By the time Ephesians was written, Paul and his people were living, not in a temporary situation, but in a more or less permanent situation."[49] In 1 Corinthians, Paul presents marriage from the perspective of anticipating the imminent Second Coming of the Lord. In Ephesians, nine years later, Paul's teaching about marriage changed as he realized that Christ might not be returning as soon as he had expected.

While critics label such passages as contradictory, understanding the context helps resolve any conflicts. A closer examination of the context reveals that both teachings on marriage are true. There is no real contradiction between 1 Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5. The teaching in Ephesians provides excellent guidance for married couples, as well as an expression of Christ's love for the church. The teaching in 1 Corinthians 7 is also true: it may actually be better for some people not to marry so that they may devote more energy to serving the Lord,

rather than pleasing or providing for a spouse. As long as both concepts are true, there is no valid contradiction between the teachings of 1 Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5, regarding the issue of marriage.

In his exhortation to the Christians of Ephesus, Paul uses the institution of marriage to describe Christ's relationship to the church. In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul lays out a lesson on spousal submission and connects it to the church's submission to Christ. Earlier we discussed how the institution of marriage (covenantal union between male, female and God) reflects the Trinity. Now, we see how the submissive love that a wife has for her husband is symbolic of the Church's submission to Christ. Marriage is a sacred institution from God's perspective. God's value of marriage is reflected when He uses the institution of marriage to describe the sacred institution of His Holy Church. Ephesians 5:22-33 is one of the most misunderstood passages on marriage relationships in the Bible. However, it is also one of the most insightful, when properly understood. Ephesians 5:22-33 says,

> Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery— but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Although this passage is rich in theological teaching regarding Christ's relationship with His church, there is an immediate context that speaks specifically to the relationship between a husband and a wife. Some people have used this passage out of context in order to promote male dominance over women. However, the lesson is about mutual love, respect, and submission. The passage does not end with "Wives, submit to your husbands … For the husband is the head of the wife." The passage continues to illustrate why wives should submit to their husbands. Wives should submit to their husbands because husbands are the God-ordained leaders of the family and symbolize Christ's authority over the Church. Furthermore, husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the Church and gave His life for her. Husbands, then, are to love their wives sacrificially, not selfishly or domineeringly. The problem with marriage relationships today may not be with the woman's unwillingness to submit. The problem may be with the husband's unwillingness to love his wife sacrificially, as Christ loves the Church. After all, what woman would not willingly submit to a husband who loved her sacrificially and always considered her interests ahead of his own (Philippians 2:3-4)?

This passage not only reveals the need for mutual love and submission in a marriage relationship, but it also establishes the husband as the head of the household. I remember the conversation I had with my father-in-law when I asked his permission to marry his daughter. He gave his blessing for me to marry her on the one condition that I would lead her. He explained that leadership does not entail dominance over every decision, but it does command respect and responsibility for the decisions that are ultimately made. As the husband of his daughter, I am striving to honor his condition by being a loving leader. While he is no longer here on earth to observe our marriage, he knew before his passing that his daughter would be led by a man who would apply the teaching of Ephesians 5:22-33 to his marriage. All Christian couples would do well to apply the teaching of this passage to their marriages.

Divorce

Divorce must be addressed with sensitivity and discernment. Recent statistics show that 40-50% of first marriages in the United States end in divorce.[50] Divorce rates in some countries exceed 50%. Surprisingly, the divorce rate increases with the second (60-67%) and third (73-74%) marriages.[51] Some people think that because

the Christian view of marriage is so sacred that Christian marriages would be the least likely to end in divorce. However, atheists are quick to point out that those with no religious affiliation actually have a lower divorce rate than the Christian community.[52] Do you think practice makes perfect? Couples who live together before they are married actually have a 40-85% higher divorce rate than those who did not cohabitate before marriage.[53] In light of these staggering statistics on divorce, there is hope in the old saying, "The couple who prays together, stays together."

In an article for CNS News, John Rossomando reports, "The divorce rate among Christians who have received premarital counseling, attend church regularly, and daily pray together experience only one divorce out of 39,000 marriages or 0.00256%."[54] Given these statistics, Christians must practice genuine Christian faith in their daily lives. Christians must also understand the biblical teachings on divorce in case their marriages are ever in danger of ending in divorce or they find themselves in a position to counsel others who may be contemplating, or even experiencing, divorce.

God clearly states His position on divorce to the prophet Malachi, "I hate divorce" (Malachi 2:16). However, there are some occasions where God permits it. As we analyze the passages that give exceptions to the biblical teachings against divorce, we must remember to approach this issue with sensitivity towards those who have experienced divorce. Those contemplating divorce, even if it is biblically warranted, must remember that divorce should always be the very last resort.

One of the most popular passages on divorce comes from the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19:3-11. When the Pharisees came to Jesus to test Him, they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," He replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, *except for marital unfaithfulness*, and marries another woman commits adultery." The disciples said to Him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given."

While Jesus clearly expresses that divorce is not allowed, except for marital unfaithfulness, critics are quick to point out that this phrase is absent from the parallel passages in Mark 10:11,12 and Luke 16:18. The best solution to this textual dilemma is that Mark and Luke do not include the Matthian saving clause because it was already in Jewish Law. While the actual phrase "except for marital unfaithfulness" is solely in Matthew's account, all of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) agree that Jesus taught that divorce was wrong.[55]

There was a 1st Century debate among Jewish teachers about what constituted an acceptable divorce. The two schools of thought derived their views from a phrase in the Mosaic Law. Deuteronomy 24:1 states, "If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house …" The phrase, "something indecent about her" was open for discussion and debate among the Jewish scholars regarding the specific criteria for a biblical divorce. The school of Shammai was conservative and only allowed divorce when sexual sin was committed. Shammai interpreted "something indecent" as only a sexual sin. The school of Hillel was much more liberal and allowed a man to divorce his wife if she spoiled his dinner, if she went with unbound hair, if she spoke to men on the streets, if she spoke disrespectfully of his parents in his presence or if she was a brawling woman whose voice could be heard in the next door.[56] In 1st Century Jewish culture, the school of Hillel prevailed; marriage was taken lightly and divorce was extremely common.

Given the context of the 1st Century Rabbinic debate on divorce, Jesus found himself cast in the middle of the controversy by the Pharisees. Would Jesus' response side with Hillel and allow a man to divorce his wife for any reason? Or would Jesus agree with Shammai and only allow divorce for sexual immorality? One may think that Jesus' exception clause "except for marital unfaithfulness" was an agreement with the school of Shammai. However, under closer examination, Jesus was neither in total agreement with Shammai nor Hillel because both rabbinic schools viewed marriage as a social contract that could be violated either by sexual sin (Shammai) or any reason (Hillel). Jesus, however, appeals to a higher standard for marriage by appealing to God's

ordination in Genesis 2. Jesus is essentially saying that because marriage is so sacred, divorce is not permitted. However, because man is sinful, the only exception for allowing divorce would be marital unfaithfulness.

While the phrase "marital unfaithfulness" is ambiguous, a Greek word study helps limit the focus. In Matthew 19:9, Jesus uses the Greek word *porneia* as the exception clause. Thus, divorce is only allowed for *porneia*. What is *porneia*? While there is debate about the meaning of the word *porneia*, the best interpretation is "sexual immorality." Therefore, Jesus does not allow divorce, except for occasions where sexual immorality invades the bond of marriage. However, even in the case of sexual immorality (adultery), divorce should always be the last resort. All opportunities for reconciliation and healing should be exhausted before divorce.

Paul includes another exception for divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:15. Paul says, "But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us into peace." If an unbeliever abandons his or her spouse, the believing partner is no longer bound to the covenant of marriage.

The only explicit biblical grounds for divorce are sexual immorality and abandonment. The Bible does not mention any other exceptions for a justified divorce. Christians have long-debated whether spousal abuse justifies a biblical divorce. Those who say "No" argue that, in cases of abuse, separation may certainly be necessary but the marriage should continue. Those who say "Yes" argue that spousal abuse is an abandonment of duties and therefore loosely fits the abandonment criterion for divorce set forth by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15. The problem with "spousal abuse" as a criterion for a biblically justified divorce is that the Bible does not explicitly address the issue. Regardless of a Christian's position on "spousal abuse" as a criterion for a biblically justified divorce; Christians should agree: 1) there is a responsibility to protect innocent lives from physical abuse and 2) divorce should always be the last resort.

Finally, divorce is not the unforgivable sin. Unfortunately, the Christian community often does more damage to divorcees than help in the healing process. If you have experienced a divorce, my encouragement to you is that while God's ideal standard was not met for your marriage that does not mean that God has abandoned you. We all need to remember to seek the comfort of Christ when we have been hurt (Philippians 4:7). We also need to remember that no matter what sin we have committed, there is hope for forgiveness. 1 John 1:8-10 provides a great reminder, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives."

Remarriage

Divorcees are not to remarry, according to 1 Corinthians 7:11, "A wife is not to separate from her husband and if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband." Jesus said, "Anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9). Divorce, due to adultery, is the only explicit biblical grounds for remarriage (when the marriage ended in divorce rather than death). Divorce, in cases of abandonment, does not necessarily constitute biblical grounds for remarriage (unless the divorce was due to *porneia* or *porneia* occurred after the separation). Remarriage is biblically permitted for widows and widowers (Romans 7:3 and 1 Corinthians 7:39). Therefore, if your spouse dies, then it is biblically acceptable to re-marry. However, in Paul's judgment, people are happier if they remain unmarried (1 Corinthians 7:40).

Concerning someone's second marriage whose first marriage ended in divorce: what should someone do if he or she realizes that his or her divorce was unbiblical? Should he or she leave his or her second marriage to restore relationship with the original spouse? Should he or she live in fear that every time he or she is sexually intimate with his or her new spouse that they are committing adultery in the eyes of God? While these are valid questions, the most reasonable answer is to confess the sin of divorce and your responsibility in the divorce. Second, claim the promise of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Third, if you have re-married, pursue the relationship with your new spouse in a God-honoring marriage. Demonstrate the mutual love for one another as Ephesians 5:22-33 ascribes. Fourth, pursue the godly disciplines in your marriage that statistics have demonstrated make an impact on the longevity of marriage: prayer, church attendance, Bible study, service and humility.

God's instructions about sex are abundant and clear. While some people may be shy about discussing the topic of sex, God was not shy about sex when He spoke His Word. This section will provide the necessary information for leading a biblical discussion on sex. Let's begin with an analysis from Scripture.

God's ideal for sex is within the confines of a marital relationship. He sets forth His standard at the creation of man. In Genesis 1:27-28, God created male and female and gave them the mandate to be fruitful and multiply. In Genesis 2:4-24, God provides a detailed analysis of the creation process upon which He institutes sex as a union between Adam and Eve or husband and wife (Genesis 2:24). The marriage union is consummated with sex. We have already discussed that a biblical definition of marriage is a covenant (not merely a contract). God may not have only designed sex for procreation but also for the consummation of the marriage covenant.

The account of Adam and Eve illustrates God's ideal for sex, within the confines of marriage. Genesis 2:23-25 expresses God's standard for sex, "The man said, 'this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.' For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."

God's standard for sex within the confines of marriage is confirmed by passages that express "the two becoming one" (Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31). As previously explained, in the assessment of marriage, marriage is a reflection of God's nature. As God is triune, so in marriage God views the two: male and female as coming together as one. While marriage binds people together spiritually, sex binds people physically. God's ideal is for the physical unifying act of sex to be solely within the confines of the spiritually binding relationship of marriage.

The argument that sex outside of a marriage relationship is sinful and morally wrong appears in an overwhelming number of biblical passages. Because sexual immorality was so prevalent throughout history, as it is in our day, there is no shortage of biblical mandates against it. Let us examine a few.

In Leviticus 18, every sexual relationship, except that between heterosexual couples in marriage, is prohibited. All forms of incest (sex with relatives), homosexuality, adultery, cult prostitution, premarital sex, and even bestiality (sex with animals) are forbidden. While there is no explicit reason for forbidding such acts, the implicit reason is that these acts violate the normative structure of the family, according to God's design. Keeping God's standard for the family was central for maintaining the preservation of Israel as a society set apart as God's holy nation.

Sexual immorality is included in various lists of sins that believers are to avoid. Consider the following passages: Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; and Revelation 21:8. Sexual immorality does not stand alone from other sins like drunkenness, stealing, lying, and hatred. However, sexual immorality (along with the other vices) does stand in contrast to the attributes of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. One goal for a Christian should be to strive to please God by living according to the Spirit rather than the flesh (Romans 8:5-17).

The Bible explicitly forbids sexual immorality among believers and demands that sex be kept within the confines of a committed, heterosexual, marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4). The Bible also discourages associating with a Christian who claims to be following Christ while simultaneously engaging in and boasting about his participation in sexual immorality. Paul distinguishes between associating with the sexually immoral of the world (as Jesus did) and not associating with a Christian who practices such things. There is a clear distinction between association with a sinner who does not know the truth and association with a Christian who deliberately and willfully rebels. Paul's clear instruction is in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11,

> I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

In 1 Corinthians 5:9-11, Paul forbids association with a Christian who practices a variety of sins including sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, slander, drunkenness, and swindling. The general teaching in this passage is to not associate with people who claim to be Christians yet practice the vices of rebellion. The danger of such association is that you too may drift into the same kind of destructive behavior.

While sexual immorality is included among several other destructive sins, it does stand out from other sins as uniquely dangerous in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20,

> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

As Christians, we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1). We should not deliberately mix our lifestyle of commitment to Jesus Christ with the sinful lifestyle of the world. In fact, the same passage that tells us to be living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God also tells us not to conform to the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). While the world continues to devalue marriage and engage in all kinds of sexual sins, Christians should have a high value for marriage and save sex for the union for which God created it.

In the Old Testament Song of Songs, Solomon celebrates sex in marriage and compares it to God's love for the church. The Song of Songs is organized into four major sections: courtship (1:1-3:5), marriage and consummation (3:6-5:1), conflict (5:2-6:3), and reconciliation (6:4-8:14). Sexual restraint is exercised during courtship (2:7, 3:5) and sex is not fully enjoyed until after the wedding procession (3:6-7) and ceremony (3:11). The Song of Songs implies that sex should be restricted to the confines of marriage.

Joseph provides an Old Testament example of how a Christian should handle sexual temptation in Genesis 39. While temptation is not a sin, temptation may lead someone into sin. When faced with the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife, Joseph refused. However, Potiphar's wife continued to make daily advances at Joseph and he continued to refuse; he even isolated himself from her. When she finally caught up with him, she trapped him. She grabbed him by the cloak and invited him to bed with her. Without even thinking, Joseph's initial reaction was to leave his cloak in her hand and flee the scene. Although he left his cloak behind and it became evidence against him in a false accusation of sexual assault, he also left Potiphar's wife behind (the source of the sexual temptation).

Sexual temptation is one of Satan's schemes to destroy people. 1 Peter 5:8-9 warns, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering." Satan has used sexual temptation to lure people into sins that have cost them their families, ministries, and jobs. We would do well to be aware of Satan's schemes. By resisting temptation, we will protect ourselves from Satan's schemes and provide an example for others. The world needs committed Christians who will abstain from sexual temptation and live a life pleasing and holy to God (Romans 12:1-2).

What should someone do if he or she has already engaged in sexual immorality? First, confess the sin and do not keep repeating it. Second, claim the promise of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Third, realize that, while physical virginity cannot be restored, God can renew your mind through the powerful forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ. Fourth, surround yourself with friends who share a common commitment to sexual purity and help hold one another accountable.

How can people avoid sexual temptation in a society saturated with sexually explicit material? First, choose not to watch or fix your attention on sexually explicit material found in movies, television shows, commercials, billboard ads, websites, magazines, and other materials that flaunt sexual content. Second, remain faithful to prayer and God's Word. It is through a deliberate focus on the continual presence of God and a regular meditation on His Word that we are equipped with the tools for resisting the temptations of the evil one (Psalm 1). Third, plan the details of your dates and avoid time alone or situations where sexual temptation can

arise. If you are married, avoid the appearance of evil by refusing to be alone with members of the opposite sex in isolated locations. Always have a same-sex accountability partner.

Slavery

In his "*Call to Renewal*," a keynote address to religious leaders, Barack Obama made the following remark about slavery in the Bible, "Which passages of Scripture should guide our public policy? Should we go with Leviticus, which suggests slavery is okay?"[57] Such a comment sparks questions about the biblical practice of slavery. Does the Bible condone slavery?

First, the Bible denounces slavery along with a host of other sins. 1 Timothy 1:8-11 states,

> We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers -- and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

The fact that slave traders are mentioned among a list of people who act explicitly contrary to God's nature, character, and Word should immediately put to rest any thoughts that the Bible condones slavery.

Critics have said that the Old Testament approves of slavery and the New Testament condemns it. Does the Old Testament approve of slavery? A correct understanding of Old Testament slavery will help to resolve the conflict. Slavery was used as an economic means of paying off debt in the Old Testament, Leviticus 25:39-40 emphasizes, "If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave. He is to be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident among you." Furthermore, Exodus 22:3 explains that slavery was a form of punishment for criminals to make restitution for their crimes. As criminals today are forced to do labor to pay for their crimes, so it was in the Old Testament. However, labor during or instead of imprisonment for a crime is hardly slavery!

The Old Testament also gives the following guidelines for how people should treat servants/slaves. The following passages explain how the law prohibited inhumane acts towards slaves (the servants who were under a master's care).

> "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year he shall go free without paying anything" (Exodus 21:2).

> "If a man beats his male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, but he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two, since the slave is his property" (Exodus 21:20-21).

Were paying off debt and punishment for crimes the only uses of slavery in the Old Testament? The book of Exodus records that Israel was held captive as slaves by Egypt. The type of slavery Israel experienced in Exodus seems to be very similar to the oppressive type of slavery practiced in the South in the 1800's. The Exodus story does not portray the types of slavery described thus far. However, while the Egyptians practiced slavery, the Bible does not condone the practice of oppressive slavery. Although the Bible records the account of the Israelites while captive by Pharaoh, it does not follow that the Bible condones it. We might list other examples such as murder, rape, and adultery that are accurately depicted in the biblical accounts, yet maintain that the Bible does not condone such practices. In fact, Leviticus 25:42-43 makes the case that because God brought Israel out of Egyptian captivity, an Israelite must not be sold into slavery. Furthermore, the biblical teachings on human equality not only provide a compelling case that God did not approve of slavery throughout biblical times, but also that He would not condone slavery today (Genesis 1:27; Acts 17:26-28; Galatians 3:28). Paul makes the case that all people are equal in Christ when he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Bible critics have accused Paul of affirming slavery in his letter to Philemon. It seems, at first glance, that Paul affirms slavery in his dialogue with Philemon by sending him back to his owner Onesimus. However, Paul is not sending Philemon back to Onesimus as a slave, but as a dear brother (Philemon 16). Paul urges Onesimus to treat Philemon as he would treat Paul himself (Philemon 17). The book of Philemon does not justify slavery when viewed in context.[58]

The last book of the Bible, Revelation, also condemns slavery. In a condemnation upon Babylon, Revelation 18:11 says, "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes anymore." Among the cargoes that nobody buys anymore are the cargoes of the bodies and souls of men (slaves).[59]

Finally, Ephesians 6:5-9 and Colossians 3:22-4:1 address slave owners and slaves regarding their interaction with one another. However, a more appropriate way of interpreting these passages is to understand them as instructions for employee/employer relationships. Both texts urge employers to treat their employees fairly. These passages also exhort employees to work for their earthly masters as though they are working for the Lord. These passages do not promote slavery in the sense of demeaning and abusing people against their will for another's personal benefit. These passages speak of the importance of employers valuing workers and treating them with respect as well as employees valuing employers and working hard for them.

That human beings were created in the image of God is the philosophical underpinning for the abolition of slavery. Nowhere in the Bible is oppressive slavery affirmed as a God-honoring principle. When the biblical passages are scrutinized, we find that the Bible opposes slavery and the demeaning of human life.[60]

War

War is a sensitive topic for many people, especially for those who have lost loved ones in war or know people who are currently serving in a war. Not all Christians agree on a single standard biblical approach to war. Most Christians affirm one of three positions on war: Pacifism, Activism, or Just War Theory. We will analyze the biblical passages used to establish each position on war and attempt to arrive at the one position that best accounts for the passages on war taken as a whole.

Pacifism

The position that Christians should not fight in any war because they are called to a life of peace is called Pacifism. Pacifists acknowledge that Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and that His followers are called to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). In the same sermon where Jesus calls His followers to be peacemakers, He gives specific guidelines to turn the other cheek and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-38). Furthermore, in Romans 12:19-21, Paul recalls Deuteronomy 32:35 and Proverbs 25:21, 22 when he says, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Pacifists also use the argument previously discussed under the capital punishment discussion. They argue that the sixth commandment says, "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). We have already discussed that the correct rendering of this command is "You shall not murder." The distinction between "murder" and "kill" is in the appropriate Hebrew words *ratsach* and *harag* respectively. For a more thorough explanation of the "murder/kill" distinction, please review the capital punishment section.

Pacifists also argue that only God has the authority to decide who will live and who will die (Job 1:21). Therefore, because war involves taking life, the pacifist believes that it is beyond his responsibility to participate in activities that involve causing people's deaths.

Pacifists frequently appeal to war as a worldly endeavor and point out the Bible passages that urge Christians to separate themselves from the world. Pacifists, who use this argument, appeal to the following passages:

> My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place (John 18:36).
>
> Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing, and perfect will (Romans 12:2).
>
> For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

Pacifists also argue that a person's highest moral responsibility is for reconciliation. They argue that Christians should be trying to bring people back to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 says,

> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

However, if we engage in war, we are not engaging in evangelism. We are also not exercising the ministry of reconciliation that God has called Christians to do.

Activism

Activism is the position that Christians should participate in every war encouraged by the government because the government is a divinely ordained institution (see Romans 13). Activists believe that to disobey the governing authorities would be an act of disobedience towards God.

God's original command to humankind to subdue the earth and exercise dominion over creation is the activists' initial grounds for justifying war. Activists argue that war is a necessary means of protecting life and exercising a God-ordained authority to subdue the earth and exercise dominion.

Activists also point out all of the wars in the Old Testament as biblical justification for their position. Some of these wars were preventative strikes (2 Samuel 5:17-25; 11:1-2); others were wars of national defense (1 Kings 20). But others were more aggressive in nature, designed to drive Israel's enemies out of the Promised Land (Joshua 6-12).

Activists also appeal to the New Testament to justify their position. The primary passage from the New Testament used to support activism is Romans 13. Romans 13:1-7 makes the case that governing authorities are to enforce God's justice upon a society. Therefore, Christians should serve in every government-mandated war as an act of obedience towards God. Romans 13:4-5 specifically states, "He (the governing official) is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore it is necessary to submit to the authorities." Titus 3:1 similarly states, "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities." 1 Peter 2:13-14 makes a similar case, "Submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right."

Just War Theory

While Pacifism and Activism are polar opposite positions on the ethics of war, the just war theory argues that some wars are justified and others are not. It is the Christian's responsibility to participate in the just wars and boycott the unjust wars.

Just war advocates do not focus on every war in the Bible to justify their position. They also do not assume that because war was justified in biblical times that it would also be justified today. Just war advocates focus on the "just" wars in the Bible (i.e. Genesis 14, Joshua 6-12, 2 Samuel 5:17-25, and 1 Kings 20) and weigh the "peace" teachings of Jesus accordingly. Jesus did speak about personal forgiveness and emphasized the importance of not seeking personal vengeance. However, the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount on personal morality are taken out of context when applied to the governmental enforcement of corporal justice and the declaration of war. In the discussion on capital punishment, murder was defined as taking an innocent life so that governing officials could morally enforce capital punishment. Likewise, one would be guilty of murder (even in the act of war) if one killed an innocent, non-threatening human being on his own initiative. However, the act of killing a human being would not be murder if: 1) the person whose life was taken was not innocent (i.e. he or she was guilty of a capital offense or posed a threat to the life of an innocent person) and 2) the life was taken after appropriate governing officials issued an instruction to kill the person in compliance with biblically just laws.

Just war theorists believe that war should be a last resort, declared only after the exhaustion of all peacemaking opportunities. Just wars are determined by a set of conditions, which require a "yes" to *all* of the following questions: [61]

1. Does the war have a just cause?

2. Does the war have a just intention?

3. Did the war arise as a last resort?

4. Was the war initiated by properly instituted governing officials?

5. Was the war declared for the ultimate purpose of restoring peace?

6. Are the means of force used in the war proportionate to the threat?

7. Does the war respect and protect non-combatant civilians?

The just war theory may be a better biblical response to war than Pacifism, given that the context of Jesus' teachings on peace apply more to personal relationships than corporal punishment or defense. Furthermore, while vengeance is the Lord's in the end, God has ordained certain governing officials with the responsibility of exercising authority to the degree of inflicting capital punishment and declaring war.

The just war theory may also be a better biblical response to war than Activism. Activism suggests a "blind allegiance" to governing officials on the premise that God ordained the governing officials for their tasks. However, the Bible gives examples of governing officials who were acting contrary to the law and authority of God. When the law of the land conflicts with the law of God, the Christian's responsibility is to obey God. In Exodus 1:19, the Hebrew midwives fulfilled their moral duty by forsaking the Pharaoh's orders. The midwives disobeyed the governing official in order to protect the innocent lives of the Hebrew male babies. Daniel was also justified in continuing to pray after the king issued an edict abolishing all prayer to any god other than the king himself (Daniel 6). While these biblical examples do not apply to war specifically, they do provide examples of biblically permissible disobedience to governing authorities who exercise authority contrary to the clear will of God.

The just war theory is the best explanation for resolving biblical conflicts such as the command not to use violence (2 Corinthians 10:3-4) and the command to protect and provide for one's family (1 Timothy 5:8). Generally, Christians should live in peace with all men. However, Christians also have a responsibility to protect innocent lives. When the two responsibilities conflict, violence may be the only means necessary for someone to fulfill his duty to protect innocent lives.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter introduced Plato's question "Why be moral?" Three views on the origin of morality were analyzed and it was argued that belief in God is the best source for objective moral values. Plato's question was then expressed as a question that everyone must ask themselves. The following ethical philosophies were also presented: egoism, utilitarianism, emotivism, relativism, deontology, and virtue ethics with a biblical analysis of each ethical philosophy. Seven guidelines for making a moral decision were then examined to help people resolve ethical dilemmas. A biblical assessment of the following moral issues was also provided: Abortion, Alcohol Consumption, Capital Punishment, Dishonesty/Lying, Euthanasia, Homosexuality, Marriage, Sex, Slavery, and War. We must remember that information without practice is useless. The purpose of this chapter is to bring people to a better understanding of biblical ethics so that they will be better equipped for honoring the Lord Jesus Christ with their choices and actions.

CHAPTER NINE

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The Pillar of Miracle

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went into the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus" (Luke 24:1-3)

"Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.' Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!"
(John 20:26b-29)

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have"
(Luke 24:38-39)

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all of the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born"
(1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

"He Lives, He Lives, salvation to impart. You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart!" These words from the famous hymn *He Lives* have affected my life through my walk with my Savior. However, as an intellectual Christian thinker, I have come to appreciate that my faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ goes far beyond a feeling within my heart and has a solid foundation deeply rooted in the evidence. Some evidence for the resurrection that I have come to appreciate include: 1) the transformation of the lives of the disciples soon after Christ's death (including a boldness of many of them to die a martyr's death); 2) the reliability of the biblical accounts through eye-witnesses who saw the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-7); 3) the presence of a Christian church today in the midst of great historical persecution; 4) the absence of the physical body of Jesus Christ in any tomb; and 5) the inability of those who oppose Christianity to adequately explain the empty tomb.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and refute the objections against it. While a philosophical analysis of the Christian worldview has already been presented, the crux of the Christian worldview is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible makes it explicitly clear that the Christian faith rises or falls on this final pillar. These words of the Apostle Paul are an apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and are just as relevant today as they were when they were originally written to the Corinthians. "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He has raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:13-15).

Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides a solid foundation for a justified belief that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead. In chapter four, abduction (inference to the best explanation) was introduced as the process of gathering data and arriving at the conclusion that best fits the evidence. The following four pieces of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ warrant the process of abduction in favor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us examine the evidence and answer the following question: "Is it reasonable to believe that Jesus Christ actually resurrected from the dead?"

The transformation of the lives of the disciples soon after Christ's death

There is no doubt that the historical records of Jesus' death portray his closest followers as being in a state of fear before, during, and soon after His crucifixion. Peter denied Christ three times out of fear that association with Christ might bring him to the same fate (John 18:15-18, 25-27). Even more evidence that the disciples were in a state of fear is their absence at their leader's crucifixion. John 19:25-27 tells us that only a few women disciples (his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene) were present at the crucifixion with Jesus' most beloved disciple (John). John was the only one of the twelve apostles present at the crucifixion: the most humiliating moment of Jesus' life.

Not only does the evidence show a defeated group of disciples immediately following the crucifixion, but it also shows the spread of the Gospel (good news about Jesus' resurrection) just days after His crucifixion. According to all four gospel accounts and Paul's letters, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. Jesus was on the earth demonstrating proof of His resurrection for forty days before ascending into heaven (Acts 1: 3). During the forty days, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:10-18), Peter and then the Twelve, more than five hundred brothers at the same time, James, and then to Paul (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). Jesus challenged Thomas to touch His resurrected body and examine His scars for proof of authenticity (John 20:24-29). Jesus also ate with His disciples (John 21:12; Acts 1:4) which is further evidence of a physical resurrection. While the biblical accounts of post-resurrection appearances provide enough evidence for affirming the bodily resurrection of Jesus, John 20:30 says, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing that you might have life in his name."

The spread of Christianity began because the disciples believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as soon as three days after His death. The biblical accounts provide evidence that the followers of Jesus experienced what they claimed to have experienced. In other words, Christianity is not based on a fabrication of events or stories that developed years later. Paul affirms in 1 Corinthians (dated about AD 54) that Jesus' post resurrection appearances were authentic and that many eyewitnesses were then still alive who could testify to the authenticity.

The transformation of the lives of the disciples is a key factor for affirming the historicity of Jesus' resurrection. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, it is difficult to understand why the disciples did not remain defeated and scared long after the death of their leader. The fact that the disciples became bold and fearless missionaries so soon after the death of their leader is evidence that they had an experience of some sort that motivated them to action. While we will examine other possible scenarios for the transformation of the disciples later, the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ three days after His death remains the best explanation when all of the evidence is considered.

The manner in which the disciples were persecuted and put to death for their belief in the resurrected Christ is further evidence that Jesus actually rose from the dead. Atheists and agnostics point out that followers of other religions are willing to die for a lie (i.e. Islamic terrorists), therefore the death of the disciples is only evidence that they believed in a resurrection, not that the resurrection actually occurred. However, when we consider that the disciples claimed to have been eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ, we are not dealing with people who died for a false belief. It is obvious that Jesus' disciples possessed a different historical vantage point than Islamic terrorists or people who sacrifice their lives for a cause that they believe to be true even when that cause is later determined to be false (i.e. The People's Temple, Heaven's Gate, or Branch Davidians). Unlike people who are deceived into dying for a lie, the disciples were in a position to know (based on personal examination) whether Jesus really rose from the dead or not. Paul argued in 1 Corinthians 15 that there were five hundred people who saw the risen Christ at the same time, many of whom were still alive when Paul wrote the letter. That the disciples were persecuted and killed for something that they knew from firsthand, personal experience to be true is much more likely than voluntarily dying for something that they knew to be false and had nothing to gain for their fabrication.

An examination of how the early followers of Christ died is further evidence that the earliest disciples actually experienced a resurrected Jesus. Rational people would not die for a belief that they would have known to be false and had nothing to gain by maintaining it. The following is a brief explanation of how some of the early Christians were persecuted and put to death for their belief in the resurrected Jesus: [1]

Peter: denied Christ three times out of fear of his own death due to association with Christ. He was eventually crucified upside down because he did not consider himself worthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord.

Jude, the brother of Jesus: crucified at Edessa.

Bartholomew: cruelly beaten and crucified.

Thomas, Didymus "Doubting Thomas": stabbed to death with a spear.

Luke, author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts: hanged on an olive tree. Tradition tells us that Luke's corpse was later beheaded.

Barnabas: killed in 73 AD with little known facts.

Simon the Zealot: crucified in 70 AD.

James, the brother of Jesus: a one-time skeptic; became a disciple after the death of Jesus. He was beaten and stoned at the age of 94.

Matthias, the disciples who took Judas Iscariot's place: stoned and beheaded.

Mark: dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria in front of the false god, Serpias.

Stephen: stoned (Acts 7:60).

James, son of Zebedee: killed by Herod.

Phillip: scourged, crucified and stoned.

Matthew, also called Levi: died by the sword, or a spear.

Andrew, brother of Peter: crucified.

Paul: beheaded by Nero.

John: died of natural causes

Clement of Rome, bishop of the church at Rome (90-99 AD), mentioned in Philippians 4:3: Emperor Trajan ordered an anchor to be tied around his neck and thrown into the sea.

Ignatius of Antioch, a disciple of the Apostle John: died in 107 AD because of his outspoken beliefs in the resurrected Christ. He died by being thrown into a pit of lions in Rome.

Polycarp (75-155 AD), the bishop of Smyrna, was famous for defending orthodox Christianity against the heresies of Marcion and Gnosticism: the Roman proconsul urged him to recant his belief in Jesus and proclaim Caesar as Lord in exchange for his life. Polycarp responded, "86 years I have served Christ and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who saves me?"

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the best explanation for why the disciples and early church fathers were willing to go to their deaths without recanting their beliefs in Christ; it is also the best explanation for the transformation of two followers of Christ in particular: James, the brother of Jesus and Saul, whose name was changed to Paul.[2]

The Bible presents James as a man who did not believe in Jesus during His earthly ministry. John 7:5 says that even Jesus' own brothers did not believe in Him. However, in Acts 1:14, James is listed as a follower of Jesus among a list of disciples including Peter, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, and others. Most scholars attribute the change in James to his personal experience with the resurrected Christ. Paul tells us that Christ appeared particularly to James before He appeared to the rest of the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:7). The appearance of the resurrected Christ to James is the best explanation for his conversion from skepticism to early church leadership of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15:13; 21:18).

The post resurrection appearance to Paul is also the best explanation for his conversion into one of the greatest Christian missionaries of all time. Acts 9 records Paul's transformation from a murderous persecutor of Christ's disciples to a faithful follower of Christ. On the road to Damascus, Saul (whose name would later be changed to Paul) saw a light from heaven and heard the voice of Jesus Christ say, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" Jesus replied, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:4-6). When Saul got up from the ground, he was blind and for three days did not eat or drink anything (Acts 9:9). Jesus commanded Ananias to seek out Saul and place his hands on him to restore his sight (Acts 9:11-12). When Ananias met Saul at the house of Judas, he placed his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength (Acts 9:17-19).

The conversion of Saul (persecutor of Christians) into Paul (missionary for Christ) is best explained in light of an actual experience with the resurrected Christ. Paul would later go on to the mission field and proclaim a message to both Jews and Gentiles about the hope found only in the resurrected Christ. Paul's words to the Philippians clearly express his greater appreciation for his new role in Christ over his old position in Pharisaical Judaism.

> If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:4b-11).

The transformation of the lives of the disciples is strong evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, it is difficult to explain why the disciples would have endured so much turmoil for something they would have known to be false by firsthand experience. Furthermore, two important figures who at one time opposed Jesus became avid followers after having a personal experience with the post-resurrected Jesus. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, it is difficult to explain why and how James and Paul would have ever become Christians.

The reliability of the biblical accounts through eye-witnesses who saw the risen Christ

Throughout this chapter, many Bible passages have been used to establish the authenticity and historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. But are the biblical accounts reliable? If the Bible is not a reliable source, then obviously it cannot be used to defend the historical accuracy of the resurrection of Jesus. If, however, the Bible is a reliable source, then it can and should be used to defend the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. Let us examine some arguments for the reliability of the New Testament.

The New Testament passes three general tests for historicity: the bibliographical test, the internal evidence test, and the external evidence test. Christian apologists have argued that the evidence in each one of these tests overwhelmingly exceeds the evidence in support of secular documents from antiquity. Therefore, if someone rejects the historicity of the New Testament based on these three objective tests, he or she would also have to reject the secular writings.[3]

The Bibliographical Test

The bibliographical test is based on manuscript evidence. There are two categories for the bibliographical test: 1) number of manuscripts and 2) the time lapse from the copies to the original events or original sources. In regards to the number of manuscripts, the New Testament significantly outnumbers its secular counterparts. In regards to time, the New Testament copies are significantly closer to the original events than its secular counterparts. The following chart provides the results of the bibliographical test on secular writings.[4]

Author	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	# of Copies
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 years	10
Livy	59 B.C.-17 A.D.			20
Plato (Tetralogies)	427 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 years	7
Tacitus (Annals)	100 A.D.	1,100 A.D.	1,000 years	20
Pliny the Younger (History)	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 years	7
Thucydides (History)	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 years	8
Suetonius (De Vita Caesarum)	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 years	8
Herodotus (History)	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 years	8
Horace			900 years	
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1,000 A.D.	1,400 years	100
Lucretius	Died 57 or 53 B.C.		1,100 years	2
Catullus	54 B.C.	1,500 A.D.	1,600 years	3
Euripedes	480-406 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1,500 years	9
Demosthenes	383-322 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1,300 years	200
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1,400 years	5
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 years	10

A quick examination of the bibliographical evidence for these ancient historical works reveals that we possess a relatively small number of manuscripts and a long period of time lapse from the originals, roughly one thousand years.

In contrast, the New Testament bibliographical evidence includes an overwhelming number of copies written in a relatively short amount of time from the originals. Regarding the number of copies, roughly 5,700 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament exist. There are 8,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate (a Latin translation of the Bible done by Jerome in 382-405 A.D.). There are also more than 350 copies of the Syriac version (Aramaic translation) of the New Testament. The most astonishing piece of bibliographical evidence is that the entire New Testament can be reproduced from the citations found in the sermons of the early church fathers. When the early church fathers preached a sermon, they would write out verbatim the passages they were preaching on. This preserved the entire New Testament in some thirty-two thousand citations in writings of the early church fathers prior to the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.[5]

While the number of New Testament manuscripts significantly outweighs the number of ancient manuscripts for secular historical works, the time factor also favors the New Testament manuscripts. The earliest undisputed New Testament manuscript is the John Ryland Papyrus, dated between 117 and 138 A.D. Copies of entire New Testament books are found in the Bodmer Papyri dated from around the year 200 A.D. Most of the New Testament, including all four Gospels, is available in the Chester Beatty Papyri dated about 250 A.D. This is a significantly very short interval of time in contrast to other ancient historical documents.[6] The time factor for New Testament manuscripts caused noted British manuscript scholar Sir Frederick Kenyon to conclude, "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed."[7]

Recent debate about the original authorship of the Gospels has resurfaced in light of skeptic arguments that direct attention to an 85-200 year gap between the original events of the Gospels (30-33AD) and the manuscript evidence (117-250 AD).[8] In response to those who question that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John actually wrote the four Gospels, a few thoughts need to be considered. It is affirmed by most New Testament scholars that Mark's Gospel was the first one to be written. The early church uniformly attested that Mark wrote this Gospel. The writings of Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origin are among the early church fathers who affirmed Markan authorship. Most New Testament scholars affirm that while Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark, Peter gave most of the information to him. Remember, Peter admitted being an eyewitness to the events recorded in the Gospels when he said, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). Matthew used Mark's Gospel as a source for writing the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew was the tax collector who followed

Jesus and was an eyewitness to the ministry and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus (Matthew 9:9-13; 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13; 1 Corinthians 15:5 and 7). Luke was not an eyewitness to the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, but he investigated several sources before writing his Gospel. Luke's Gospel opens with the following statement, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:1-4).

Concerning the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), there is good reason to believe that the originals were completed before 70 A.D. Mark's Gospel was most likely completed between 55-65 A.D., Matthew's Gospel was most likely completed between 58-68 A.D., and Luke's Gospel was most likely completed before 70 A.D.[9] The reason that the synoptic Gospels were most likely completed before 70 A.D. is because the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. The Gospels affirm Jesus' prophecy of the Temple's destruction, but do not mention the fulfillment of the prophecy. Surely such a significant historical event as the destruction of the Temple would have been included if it had occurred before the Gospels were completed. Furthermore, if the stories recorded in the Gospels were produced over a long period of time, rather than a short period of time after the death and resurrection of Christ in 33 A.D.; then surely an account of the Temple's destruction would have been recorded in the manuscripts dated 117-250 A.D. The omission of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in manuscript evidence dated after 70 A.D., in light of Jesus' prophecy to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days (Matthew 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; 15:29; Acts 6:14), is evidence for an early date of original synoptic Gospel authorship prior to 70 A.D.[10]

The Book of John, on the other hand, was written after the last of the synoptic Gospels (probably 66-68 A.D.). John's Gospel does not necessarily require a date prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. because of his familiarity with the topography of Jerusalem (John 5:2; 19:13). Most New Testament scholars date his three letters and Revelation after his Gospel. The probable range for John's Gospel is 60-90 A.D.[11] Remember that John was the youngest of Jesus' apostles and the last living apostolic eyewitness of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The latest date for the Gospel of John (90 A.D) recognizes that John would have been an old man when he wrote it. The evidence that John was an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry is expressed in his first letter, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:3).

The dating of New Testament authorship is important for establishing the authenticity and reliability of the copies. The closer the original documents are to the historical events, the more likely the copies will accurately reflect actual events. William Foxwell Albright, one of the world's foremost biblical archaeologists reported in an interview in Christianity Today, "In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the first century A.D. (very probably some time between 50 and 75 A.D." Albright concluded, "Thanks to the Qumran discoveries, the New Testament proves to be in fact what was formerly believed to be: the teachings of Christ and his immediate followers."[12]

The evidence for early dates of New Testament authorship is forcing liberal scholars to reconsider late-date theories. Dr. John A.T. Robinson, a liberal scholar, came to some interesting conclusions in his book, *Redating the New Testament.* His research led him to the conclusion that the entire New Testament was written before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.[13]

The Internal Evidence Test

The internal evidence test is based on the reliability of the testimony of the document in question. Does the New Testament claim to contain eyewitness accounts of historical events? Yes! Much of the New Testament claims to have been written by eyewitnesses or by those who thoroughly investigated the claims of the eye witnesses. Consider the introduction to Luke's Gospel,

> Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

> Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

Peter also claimed to have been an eyewitness, along with the other disciples who were preaching the Gospel of Christ. Peter states, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16).

Paul affirms that he received the Gospel message by revelation from Jesus in the opening of his letter to the Galatians when he writes, "I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12). While Paul was not an eyewitness to the events of Jesus life, death, and resurrection, he does establish his authority to write Scripture and proclaim the resurrection of Jesus from an experience with the post-resurrected Jesus.

The New Testament includes eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Christ by women (a highly uncredible first century source). In the first century, women did not have the same social equality that they have today. Women were viewed as the property of their fathers or husbands and were considered lower class citizens than men. The first century Jewish and Roman cultures were male-dominant. Therefore, a story including women as heroines (the first ones to discover the empty tomb) is most likely historically true. It would be highly unlikely that a fable about the first century would include women as the focal point of the story.

As a whole, the resurrection appearances as recorded in the New Testament help apologists develop a compelling case for the historicity of the resurrection. The New Testament acknowledges women as the first ones to discover the empty tomb and bases the foundation of spreading the news about the resurrection of Jesus on their testimony. The biblical accounts also record several appearances to the disciples (including doubting Thomas' encounter, Peter's three-fold confession, and a declaration that Jesus appeared to James who was not a believer during Jesus' earthly ministry). 1 Corinthians 15:6 states that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred people at the same time and many of them were still alive for questioning at the time Paul wrote his letter.

Critics of the New Testament have argued that the Bible is not reliable or trustworthy because of contradictions (particularly between Gospel accounts). However, differences in accounts do not necessarily amount to contradictions. The differences between the Gospels may be attributed to the different perspectives, angles, or emphases of the writers. Reliability and trustworthiness are established on whether the account accurately portrayed what actually took place not whether all of the details exhaustively agree.

The issue of contradictions between Gospel accounts presents an interesting dilemma for the Christian apologist. If the Gospel accounts contain differences, which they do, the critic cries, "contradiction." However, if all four Gospels agreed on every single detail, the critic would cry, "collusion." Collusion occurs when people get together and agree on what they will say before offering a fraudulent, illegal, or deceitful testimony. It seems then that the critic would have an argument against the Gospel accounts whether they agreed on every detail or not. Such a dilemma sets up a nearly impossible burden for the Christian apologist. However, while the Gospels contain differences in details, because the accounts of different writers emanated from different vantage points, the Gospels do not disagree on matters of history and theology that are essential to orthodox Christian faith.

The External Evidence Test

The external evidence test asks whether outside sources confirm, deny or call into question the document under analysis. In other words, what sources are there apart from the document under examination that would confirm the inner testimony of the document itself? There are two ways in which the external evidence test can be applied to the New Testament: 1) an examination of external literary sources and 2) archaeology.

In the first century, the foundations for the reliability of the New Testament were so firm that even the heretics themselves could not question them. Because the New Testament includes claims of eyewitness testimony chronologically close to the biblical events themselves, the overwhelming number of hostile witnesses could have easily refuted a falsification or fabrication of events in any form. In other words, if the New

Testament documents claim to include eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Jesus and He did not rise from the dead, then the New Testament documents could have been proved false in the first century. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, those who opposed the early Christian movement would have had no problem debunking the fraud of Christianity before it had the chance to grow. Remember how quickly the Christian church was able to debunk the Da Vinci Code theories when the movie hit the big screen in May 2006.

Early church father Irenaeus acknowledged that the heretics' references to the Gospels are evidence that the Gospels were historically accurate. Irenaeus wrote, "So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and starting from these documents, each one of them endeavors to establish his own particular doctrine."[14] It is interesting how even those who opposed the orthodox Christian movement referred to events in the Gospels to establish their own heresies. The fact that the heretics could not successfully deny or refute the Gospel accounts, but had to meet them head on with their own interpretations is further evidence for the historicity of the Gospel accounts.

When archaeology is examined, the case for the accuracy of the New Testament is strengthened even further. Volumes of books have been written to express the overwhelming archaeological evidence found throughout the Bible lands that confirm events recorded in both the Old and the New Testaments. Having studied in Israel, Turkey, Greece, and Rome and having personally examined the land and the archaeological evidence in support of biblical events, I have come to appreciate the unique reliability of the Bible through the field of archaeology. Examples are included in the following chart:

Location	Event	Evidence	Reference
Jerusalem, Israel	Hezekiah blocked The Gihon Spring	The Gihon Spring	2 Chronicles 32:30
Megiddo	Solomon's chariot city	Stable compounds Solomonic Gate	2 Chronicles 9:25; 1 Kings 9:15
Jericho	Walls of Jericho fell	Ruined walls	Joshua 6:3-20; Hebrews 11:30
Timnah, Israel	The Lord promises the ability to dig copper from the ground	Copper mines	Deuteronomy 8:9
The Sea of Galilee	Fishing Jesus silenced storm	1 C. Boat discovered Violent storms appear quickly on clear days	John 21 Mark 4:35-41
Church of Beatitudes	Sermon on the Mount	Land flourishes in the Spring	Matthew 5-7 Matthew 6:25-34
Mamertime prison: Rome, Italy	Paul imprisoned by Nero Beheaded by Nero	Tradition Tradition	2 Timothy 4:6
Corinth, Greece	Paul speaks against Immorality	Temple of Aphrodite Temple prostitution The great mountain	1 Corinthians 6 2 Corinthians 12:20 1 Corinthians 13:2
Philippi, Greece	Paul and Silas imprisoned	Ruins of a jail cell	Acts 16
Turkey/Greece	Seven Churches of Revelation	Ruins of the seven cities explain context	Revelation 2-4

A Testimony for the Word of God

The bibliographical, internal, and external evidence for the New Testament's reliability may or may not convince determined skeptics that the Bible is the Word of God. However, another argument that the Bible is the Word of God is the countless lives that have been changed by it. Although subjective experience cannot be the determining factor for the truth of a worldview, the fact that lives are regenerated by the Holy Spirit provides evidence consistent with a biblical worldview. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of God." 1 Peter 1:23 explains, "We are born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 affirms, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." As long as the Word of God continues to save the lost and change the lives of people who stand in opposition to the truth, the Bible will continue to testify for itself that it is indeed the Word of God!

Where do you place the authority of the Word of God in your life?

There is a choice that we must all make in regards to how we will respond to the authority of Scripture. Some people place their own authority over the authority of Scripture and use the Bible to justify all kinds of sins that the Bible clearly opposes. Even an atheist can use the Bible, out of context, to justify atheism. Psalm 14:1b says, "There is no God." However, in proper context, Psalm 14:1 reads, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The dangers of supervening one's own authority above the authority of Scripture range from justifying all kinds of evil to affirming cults and false religions in the name of the Bible.

While some people place their own authority over the authority of Scripture, others recognize the authority of the Bible as the Word of God and place themselves in submission to it. While there is certainly room for discussion regarding different interpretations and applications of Scripture in areas that are unclear (i.e. literal or figurative days of creation, modes of baptism, and the preterist or futurist views of Revelation), believers in this category submit themselves to the clear and plain teachings of Scripture without corrupting it with their personal agendas.

In my opinion, we would be better off if we submitted to the plain and clear teachings of Scripture as acts of reverence and submission to God. We do not have the authority to randomly select those biblical teachings we will practice from those we will not based solely on our preferences. Obviously, mandates like maintaining a kosher diet and performing animal sacrifices should no longer be practiced today because of the fulfillment of Old Testament Law through the work of Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17-18). However, Christians must distinguish between the sacrificial aspect of the Law that should no longer be practiced today and the moral aspect of the Law that should still be practiced today (Romans 3:21-31).

The presence of a Christian church today in the midst of great historical persecution

Since the time Jesus Christ began His earthly ministry, there has been opposition to the Christian movement. The Gospels record several accounts where the Pharisees and other opponents of Jesus tried to pigeonhole him into a contradiction or flat out tried to kill Him. The crucifixion of Jesus is evidence of the burden His message placed on the religious and governmental authorities of His day. While the persecution of Christianity did not end with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the fact that the Christian movement survived such a great amount of historical, political, and philosophical persecution and remains active today is quite astonishing in itself. The resilience of the Christian movement through such harsh persecution may find its best explanation in the protection of the Almighty Himself. Let us examine some of the persecution that the Christian movement has endured since its inception.

The death of the disciples and early church fathers has already been demonstrated to be strong evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact that the disciples were persecuted and killed so chronologically close to the events that they claimed to have witnessed firsthand is strong evidence for its truth. While people have died for a lie believing that it was true, the disciples would have died for something that they knew was a lie; if the resurrection was a first century fabrication. Furthermore, it is remarkable that given the multitude of the disciples

who boldly went to horrendous deaths for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, no one recanted! At the brink of persecution and torturous deaths, not one disciple broke down and recanted his belief that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

When the great political leaders who opposed the Christian faith throughout history are considered, it is remarkable that their efforts were unable to put a stop to the Christian movement once and for all. The history books tell us horrible things that Nero did to Christians, including feeding them to lions and torching them on stakes. It was like music to Nero's ears to hear the cries of Christians as they went to their deaths by burning.

Historical attempts to destroy the Bible provide further evidence of the supernatural work of God to preserve not only the Christian movement but also the Word of God. The edict of Diocletian (303 A.D.) was a mandate to destroy all Bibles in an effort to persecute the Christian church. This mandate serves as evidence that the Bible was indeed in existence by 303 A.D. and did not evolve or collate at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. as suggested by the Da Vinci Code.[15] The fact that the Bible withstood such mandates of destruction and that the manuscripts agree with one another in history and theology is further evidence for the supernatural preservation of God's Word and the Church.[16]

While historical and political persecution has tried to destroy the Christian movement and its literature, philosophical persecution has also tried to put an end to the Christian movement. It is not within the realm of this work to provide a detailed analysis of the philosophical persecution that the Christian Church has endured throughout history. However, a few key opponents to the Christian movement are worthy of mentioning only to demonstrate that philosophical attacks on the basic doctrines of Christianity have been made over the years. A few philosophical opponents to the orthodox Christian movement are Charles Darwin (more precisely contemporary Darwinian evolution), Bertrand Russell, David Hume, Charles Templeton, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Bart Ehrman, and the Jesus Seminar. One of the most recent philosophical challenges against the Christian definition of truth is postmodernism (see chapter three).

In light of all of the persecution that the Christian church has faced since its inception, it is remarkable that it still exists today. In fact, the existence of the Christian church today is evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead in the first century, I am convinced that there would not have been a Christian movement after His death. The Christian church is alive and active today because of an objective claim that originated with the disciples of Jesus Christ in the first century. The fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in the first century is the reason why Christians gather today. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, there are no objective reasons why anyone should even be a Christian. If this sounds harsh or makes you feel uncomfortable, perhaps you should realize that this is not merely my belief or opinion about Christianity. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, also states the fact that the Christian church depends on the objective, historical event of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

> But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

The absence of the physical body of Jesus Christ in any tomb

We have already established that if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead in the first century, those who opposed the Christian movement could have refuted the claims of Christians back then in such a way as to make Christian belief intellectually implausible today. One of the ways that the opponents of first century Christianity could have put an end to the Christian movement would have been to reproduce the physical dead body of Jesus Christ. If the dead body of Jesus Christ had been found, then tangible, hard evidence would have been provided to demonstrate the falsification of the disciples' claims that Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead. However,

failure to produce the physical dead body of Jesus from any tomb helps solidify the Christian case that it is at least plausible to believe that Jesus resurrected from the dead three days after His death by crucifixion.

Arguments Against the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

While the empty tomb is tangible, objective evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it does not prove that Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead. Perhaps there is another explanation for the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. In light of our examination of other possible scenarios for the empty tomb (other than a bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ), it is unacceptable to examine alternative scenarios apart from all of the evidence in favor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Remember, the purpose of this chapter is to argue the case that it is reasonable to believe that Jesus Christ actually resurrected from the dead. In the following section, we will consider the other possible explanations for the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. However, we will do so in light of all of the evidence previously discussed for the resurrection of Jesus. We are still in pursuit of an answer to the question, "Is it reasonable to believe that Jesus Christ actually resurrected from the dead?" A critical examination of the most popular arguments against the resurrection of Jesus Christ will help us answer the question.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is impossible because resurrections do not occur

A common argument against the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that miracles are impossible. David Hume's work, *Of Miracles*, a chapter taken from a larger work entitled *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1776), was very influential for the school of thought that denies miracles.[17] Many religious critics have adapted Hume's denial of miracles to fit their own philosophical objections to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, Hume's line of thinking has crept back into mainstream discussions on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, Hume's argument was refuted centuries ago.

Hume's basic argument against miracles succumbs to circular reasoning. The issue to consider is whether Jesus Christ actually resurrected from the dead. Hume argues that Jesus did not rise from the dead because miracles (like resurrections) cannot occur. However, if it is an historical fact that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, then miracles do occur. The problem with Hume's reasoning is that he assumes that Jesus Christ could not have historically risen from the dead because miracles do not occur. Hume has not proven, however, that the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ did not occur or that miracles cannot occur. Miracles cannot be proved the same way scientific statements are proved because miracles cannot be repeated. A miracle can only be proved in the manner in which one proves an isolated historical event. An examination of the evidence and abduction are necessary to prove such occurrences.

Some philosophers, like Anthony Flew, have recognized Hume's question-begging assumptions as fallacious reasoning and have advanced a different interpretation of Hume's reasoning. They have argued that Hume was not advancing an argument against the existence or possibility of miracles, but an argument that no kind of evidence available to us would be sufficient to show that a miracle has occurred.[18] Now, this is an entirely different argument. If Hume is arguing, as some critics interpret, that there is not enough evidence for belief in miracles (more precisely, the resurrection of Jesus Christ), then the Christian must respond with the arguments and evidence already discussed in this chapter. The transformation of the lives of the disciples, the manner in which the disciples faced persecution and death for their beliefs, the historical reliability of the biblical accounts by eye-witnesses, the existence of a Christian church today that originated in the first century in the face of great persecution, and the absence of the physical body of Jesus Christ provide compelling evidence that the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ did actually occur.

To argue, as Hume does, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ could not have occurred because miracles do not occur is inadequate because it assumes that miracles do not occur without offering proof that they did not or could not have occurred. Also, to argue (as some interpreters of Hume suggest) that there is simply not enough evidence available to conclude that miracles have occurred does not take into account the overwhelming amount of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Anthony Flew, a one-time atheist who advanced the version of Hume's argument that there simply is not enough evidence to support belief in miracles, recently became a theist. Flew attributed his conversion to theism

to the abundant detailed evidence in support of an intelligent designer. The conversion of Anthony Flew, who was once a prominent advocate for atheism, is very problematic for atheists and skeptics who continue to argue that evidence for God and the miraculous is still lacking. While there may have been a shortage of evidence for an intelligent designer when Hume objected to miracles in the 1700's, recent scientific discoveries support the theory that an intelligent designer is responsible for the details discovered in the universe. For a detailed analysis of the scientific discoveries that support an intelligent designer and consequently would support belief in miracles, please review the teleological argument in chapter four.

The Swoon Theory

The swoon theory is the belief that Jesus was not actually dead when He was taken off the cross and placed in the tomb. Swoon theorists argue that the post-crucifixion appearances of Jesus Christ were not resurrection appearances but resuscitation appearances. Muslims, as well as critics of Christianity who reject the miracle of resurrection traditionally hold the resuscitation view. The Koran says that Jesus only pretended to be dead (Surah IV: 157). H.E.G. Paulus also propagated the swoon theory in *The Life of Jesus* (1812). Paulus' version proposed that Jesus was given drugs or sedatives to ease the pain of crucifixion and simply passed out.[19]

In response to the swoon theory, consider this account of Jesus' death from John 19:31-37,

> Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken,' and, as another Scripture says, 'they will look on the one they have pierced.'

John's account says that Jesus was already dead when the soldiers approached Him to break His legs. The act of breaking the legs of a victim of crucifixion would speed up the process of death by asphyxiation. Crucifixion was traditionally a long, arduous process that would result in a death of exhaustion and ultimately asphyxiation. During the process of crucifixion, victims would lift themselves up with their feet just enough to fill their lungs with air. When the soldiers broke a victim's legs, the process of lifting the body to gasp for air was halted and the victim would die of asphyxiation. The fact that the Romans honored the Jews' request to speed up the process of death because of the coming Sabbath is significant. But even more significant is the record that Jesus was already dead when the Roman soldiers approached Him. The significance of this historical fact is that it fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy that "not one of his bones would be broken" (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; and Psalm 34:20). In response to the swoon theory, the fact that the Roman soldiers did not break Jesus' legs because He was already dead is extremely significant.

Another important fact from John's account of Jesus' death is that instead of breaking His legs, the soldiers pierced His side (John 19:34). The significance of this historical fact is that it fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies that "He would be pierced for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5) and that "they looked upon whom they pierced" (Zechariah 12:10). Beyond the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy is the significance of what happened when they pierced Jesus' side. When the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, blood and water appeared. This ensured that Jesus had died on the cross (John 19:34). An article entitled "*On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ*" in *The Journal of the American Medical Society* reported, "Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge."[20]

Joseph of Arimathea stole the body

In 1965, Dr. Hugh Schonfield published a book called *The Passover Plot* which claimed to shed new light on the history of Jesus. In his book, Schonfield suggested that Jesus had instructed Joseph of Arimathea to remove His body from the tomb so that it would appear as though Jesus was the Messiah. The resurrection appearances were then explained as cases of mistaken identity. Schonfield also suggested that the disciples willingly faced persecution (such as death) because they were duped by the hoax and simply did not know any better.[21]

In response to *The Passover Plot*, an appeal to the historical account of Joseph of Arimathea as recorded in the Gospels will establish his character qualities and a highly improbable window of opportunity to accomplish such a daunting deception. Luke 23:50-51 says that Joseph was a member of the Council, a good and upright man who had not consented to the Jews' decision and action. John 19:38, the parallel passage of Luke 23:50-51, says that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. Joseph of Arimathea does not seem to be the type of person who would fabricate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the moral and ethical teachings of Jesus during His earthly ministry do not allow a deceptive conspiracy theory to have originated at the direction of Jesus or Joseph.

Perhaps the character qualities of Joseph and Jesus, as revealed in the Bible, are not enough to debunk the concept of *The Passover Plot.* However, the window of opportunity to steal the body from the tomb and dispose of it in an efficient manner does not make *The Passover Plot* very plausible. As a devout Jew, Joseph would not have violated the Sabbath in order to steal the body. If he had attempted to steal the body at night, his torch of light would have been seen. The day after the Sabbath, Roman guards were keeping watch over the tomb in order to ensure that the disciples would not steal the body. It would have been impossible to pass the guards who were protecting the tomb of Jesus (Matthew 27:62-66). The fact that the women came to the tomb and found it empty the next day (Luke 24:1) does not give Joseph the window of opportunity needed to carry out the scheme. Furthermore, if Joseph had stolen the body, where did he put it? The body of Jesus Christ has never been found. In addition, the growth of the Christian movement beginning with claims that Jesus rose from the dead caused intense controversy in the first century. Such controversy would have produced an intense desire among those who opposed the Christian movement to expose any resurrection fraud, if indeed there was a fraud. There really is no motive, opportunity, or method for the Passover plot to have occurred. There is also no explanation for the various physical appearances of Jesus to His disciples. The assertion that all of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus are cases of mistaken identity is simply not acceptable in light of Jesus' appearance to Thomas and the list of appearances provided by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul challenged first century skeptics to confirm the resurrection appearances of Jesus by confronting the five hundred witnesses who saw the resurrected Jesus firsthand. Certainly, their testimonies would have silenced any "Passover plots" that may have been circulating in the first century.

Jesus' disciples stole the body

The idea that Jesus' disciples stole the body and fabricated the resurrection story is contrary to their character.[22] With the exception of a few incidences like the betrayal of Judas and the three-fold denial of Peter, the disciples were generally honest and morally upright men. Peter says, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). The disciples' surprise reaction to the empty tomb is further evidence that they did not anticipate that Jesus was really going to rise from the dead (John 20:9). Also, the disciples would have faced the same dilemma as Joseph of Arimathea, regarding the window of opportunity to steal the body as well as the means of adequately disposing of it. It is highly improbable that the disciples would have evaded the guards at the tomb and successfully stolen the body. But, the most compelling piece of evidence against this theory is the manner in which the disciples boldly faced persecution and death for their belief that Jesus actually resurrected from the dead. If the disciples stole the body and fabricated the story of Jesus' resurrection, then they would have died horrendous deaths for something they knew to be false. The fact that the disciples had nothing to gain but persecution and death makes it highly unlikely that they stole the body and lied about the resurrection. Dr. Simon

Greenleaf, the famous Royall Professor of Law at Harvard agrees, "If then their testimony was not true, there was no possible motive for this fabrication."

The Roman or Jewish authorities stole the body

The argument that the Roman or Jewish authorities stole the body is utterly absurd. Why would those who opposed the Christian movement do the very act that would promote the spread of Christianity? If they had the body of Jesus in their possession, they could have silenced the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection appearances by revealing the dead body.[23] Furthermore, if they had stolen the body, why did they try to accuse the disciples of stealing it? (Matthew 28:11-15) This theory also does not explain the many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to a variety of different people at different times (1 Corinthians 15:3-7; John 20 and 21).

The women went to the wrong tomb

Some people have suggested that the women went to the wrong tomb, saw it empty, and began proclaiming that Jesus resurrected from the dead. A famous liberal theologian, Kirsopp Lake, suggested that the women had gone to the wrong tomb early on Sunday morning and asked the gardener where Jesus was laid. The gardener then responded, "He is not here," and the women rushed off to proclaim the resurrection before the gardener could turn and say, "He is over there."[24]

Kirsopp Lake's argument is a twisted version of John 20:10-28. In John's account, Mary Magdalene does see Jesus and mistakes Him for the gardener. However, upon questioning 'the gardener' about the whereabouts of the body of Jesus, she realizes that 'the gardener' is actually Jesus. It is her realization that she has seen the resurrected Jesus that prompts her to go to the disciples with the confirmation of His resurrection.

There is a similar situation of the mistaken identity of the risen Christ in John 21:4-7. In this account, Peter and the disciples do not recognize Jesus standing on the shore early in the morning. After the miraculous catch of fish, however, they realize it is Jesus standing on the shore. In both cases (John 20:10-28 and John 21:4-7), the identity of Jesus Christ is realized shortly after His mistaken identity. Therefore, Lake's theory is inconsistent with the Gospel accounts of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ. Lake's theory also does not consider that many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus help to confirm his actual resurrection.

The argument that the women went to the wrong tomb omits a key piece of evidence: the body of Jesus Christ has never been discovered in any tomb. If the women had gone to the wrong tomb, the correct tomb would have been revealed by those who opposed the Christian message in the first century.[25] The critics would have been happy to immediately put an end to the Christian movement. The fact that those who opposed the Christian movement in the first century never produced the dead body of Jesus makes Lake's theory (and those like it) very difficult to accept as a compelling alternative to resurrection hypothesis.

Jesus rose as a spirit but not physically

Some critics of the resurrection of Jesus have asserted that the resurrection was only a spiritual appearance rather than a physical, bodily resurrection. Docetism is the Gnostic view connected to this theory. Gnostics believe that Jesus' pre-crucifixion body and post-resurrection appearances were non-physical. The Gnostic argument comes from the belief that matter is evil and God would not indwell a physical (evil) body.[26]

One theological problem with the Gnostic belief that Jesus' pre-crucifixion body was not a physical body is that Jesus' death on the cross was necessary for our salvation for a final and complete atonement of sin and ultimately our salvation. If Jesus did not die on the cross, then He did not atone for sin as the Scriptures propound. Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins (1 Corinthians 15:16). Paul's assertion is an essential element of orthodox Christian doctrine. Although Jesus' death on the cross completed the atonement for sin, victory over sin and death is realized by the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is simply not enough to believe that Jesus Christ returned only as a spirit. If Jesus did not resurrect physically from the dead, then there is no demonstrable guarantee that Christians will survive beyond the grave. Paul appeals to the resurrection of Jesus as assurance of atonement and hope for eternal life in 1 Corinthians 15.

The many accounts of Jesus confirming His physical, resurrected body to His disciples is very problematic for docetists. John 20:26-29 records the encounter that Jesus had with doubting Thomas. In order to extinguish Thomas' doubts, Jesus encouraged him to reach out and physically examine His post-resurrected body and crucifixion scars. In John 21:12-14, the post-resurrected Jesus ate bread and fish for breakfast in the presence of His disciples. Luke also records an account of Jesus eating fish with His disciples (Luke 24:41-42). Even more compelling evidence, in the case against Docetism, are the words of Jesus to His disciples, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have" (Luke 24:38-39).

Jesus' resurrection appearances were hallucinations

In his book, *The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond the Grave*, Richard Carrier makes the following assertion about the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus:

> I believe the best explanation, consistent with both scientific findings and the surviving evidence is that the first Christians experienced hallucinations of the risen Christ, of one form or another. In the ancient world, to experience supernatural manifestations of ghosts, gods and wonders was not only accepted, but often encouraged.[27]

While some people have been swayed by Carrier's position, a closer examination of the facts will demonstrate how unlikely a hallucination of Jesus would have been, even in the first century. First, the argument that experiences of ghosts, gods, and wonders were accepted and encouraged in the first century is irrelevant to whether or not Jesus actually rose from the dead. Rising interests in the occult and the supernatural phenomena in our society do not allow us to separate facts from fiction or reality from illusion. Furthermore, the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus does not allow for the conclusion drawn by Carrier. If only one grieving disciple claimed to have seen the risen Christ, then maybe the hallucination theory would be at least worthy of consideration. However, the fact that Jesus appeared to hundreds of people at the same time does little to support the hallucination theory. Also, the fact that Jesus confirmed His bodily appearances by eating with His disciples and allowing them to touch His physical body does not allow for the hallucination conclusion either. The absence of the physical body of Jesus in any tomb also makes the hallucination theory all the more unlikely.

When it comes to the post resurrection appearances of Jesus, the fact that five hundred people saw the risen Christ at the same time makes it highly unlikely that those people were experiencing a hallucination (1 Corinthians 15:6). Of the five hundred people who saw the resurrected Christ, many of them were still alive when Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians. Therefore, the witnesses could have confirmed the authenticity of Jesus' resurrection firsthand. Also, the fact that Jesus appeared to more than one of the disciples at the same time on different occasions also makes the hallucination theory all the more unlikely (Luke 24:41-42; John 21:12-14; 20:30-31).

The Family Tomb of Jesus was discovered

A documentary film that aired in 2007 on the Discovery Channel claimed to have discovered the tomb housing the skeletal remains of Jesus Christ and His family. The film was produced by Hollywood director James Cameron and filmmaker Simcha Jacobovich.[28] While the episode caused a momentary, sensationalistic stir, when the details of the episode were evaluated under scrutiny it became clear that this was not the lost tomb of Jesus Christ.

The tomb under analysis is what archaeologists and historians have labeled "The Talpiot Tomb." This tomb is located just south of the old city of Jerusalem. The tomb was originally discovered in 1980 but the controversial episode on the Discovery Channel aired in 2007. The time gap between the actual discovery of the tomb and the controversial theory promoted by the Discovery Channel has caused many to question the tomb's authenticity. New Testament professor John Hutchison explains,

> This is not a new archaeological find, but only a rehashing of information that has been known for more than two decades. I think it's important to remember that this ossuary evidence has been around since 1980, and was the subject of a BBC documentary in 1996. During these years, reputable international scholars and archaeologists have examined the ossuaries and have discounted this theory. Amos Kloner, the first archaeologist to examine the site, has said that this theory fails to hold up by archeological standards, but makes for profitable television. Oscar-winning directors like James Cameron and reputable sources like the Discovery Channel generate interest in projects like this; however, nothing new has really been discovered that was not known in 1996. Reputable archaeologists, most of whom are not orthodox Christians, have denied any significance to this find.[29]

The theories expressed on the Discovery Channel's episode of *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* are full of assumptions and lack substantiation. One of the assumptions made in the documentary was that the name *Yeshua* must have been Jesus of Nazareth. However, the Hebrew name, *Yeshua*, could be translated Jesus or Joshua and was consequently an extremely popular name in the first century. *Yeshua* is sixth among the top most popular first century names. While the episode tries to make the case that "Yeshua, son of Joseph" narrows the focus to Jesus of Nazareth, it fails to point out that Joseph is the second most popular name used by first century Jews in Palestine. In reality, many men could have fit this description in first century Palestine. The documentary also failed to mention a key fact acknowledged by archaeologist Amos Kloner: the phrase "Jesus, Son of Joseph" has been discovered on three or four other ossuaries and is not unique to the Talpiot Tomb in the documentary. Biola professor Dr. Clint Arnold pointed out that if this were the ossuary of the Jesus known in the New Testament, why did the tomb not identify Him by one of His more popular names, such as "Jesus of Nazareth" or "Jesus, Son of God?" The identification of Jesus Christ as the son of Joseph also does not fit the common view of Jesus in the first century. People knew that Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus and that Jesus was conceived out of wedlock.[30]

Another assumption made by the documentary is that all of the names found in the tomb make a compelling case that it is indeed the tomb of Jesus Christ and His family. The names inscribed on the ossuaries were Matthew, Judas, Mary, Mariamne (Mary Magdalene), and Jesus. The key element in making the theory come together was to associate Mariamne with Mary Magdalene and make her the wife of Jesus. The actual inscription on the ossuary is Mariamne a Mara. There is no objective reason to assume that Mariamne a Mara was Mary Magdalene. Furthermore, that Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife and that they had children together assumes theories well beyond the portrayals of their relationship revealed in the Gospels. The theory that Jesus and Mary were married and had children emanates from fiction books like *Holy Blood/Holy Grail* or *The Da Vinci Code*. *The Da Vinci Code* claims that Jesus and Mary had a daughter rather than a son. But in *The Lost Tomb* documentary, the ossuary of Judas is labeled as that of the son of Jesus and Mary. It is important at this point to emphasize that no historically reliable data affirms that Jesus had a secret sexual relationship with a woman or fathered a child.

The assumption that Jesus and Mariamne a Mara were married is not only based on assumption, but also a flawed DNA test.[31] The DNA test performed on the bodies was a mitochondrial DNA test that only confirmed that Jesus and Mariamne did not share the same mother. It did not demonstrate that they were not related in any other way: half brother and sister through the father, cousins, or any other relative. The fact that the documentary did not disclose a DNA test that made a connection between Mariamne a Mara and any of the other ossuaries is highly suspicious. It certainly is possible that Mariamne a Mara was related to other people in the ossuaries. However, if she was discovered to have been somehow related to the other people in the tomb (other than the way the documentary desired to portray it), the story created for the documentary would have been destroyed from the start.

Most biblical scholars, historians, and archaeologists have determined the conclusions of the documentary to be far-fetched sensationalism, designed solely for television hype. Historian Paul Maier described the episode as "naked hype, baseless sensationalism, and nothing less than a media fraud."[32] In *The Jerusalem Post*, Amos Kloner said, "It makes a great story for T.V. film. But it's completely impossible. It's nonsense. There is no likelihood that Jesus and His relatives had a family tomb. They were a Galilee family with no ties in Jerusalem."

Wild dogs ate Jesus' body

In a January 10, 1994 article in *Time* magazine entitled "*Jesus Christ, Plain and Simple*," a new theory about the lost body of Jesus Christ was put forth by John Dominic Crossan, the cochairman of the Jesus Seminar. The Jesus Seminar was a group of about 150 scholars led by the late Robert Funk and John Dominic Crossan. This group gathered to determine, by vote and the placement of colored beads, the authentic words and works of the historical Jesus. In regards to the resurrection of Jesus, John Dominic Crossan said that after the crucifixion, Jesus' body was probably laid in a shallow grave, traditionally reserved for criminals, and was eventually dug up and eaten by wild dogs. Crossan believes that this is a more believable fate for Jesus' corpse than the traditional story of His entombment and resurrection. Crossan attributes the traditional story of Jesus' resurrection to a result of wishful thinking. In other works written by Crossan, he adamantly rejects the traditional account of the placement of Jesus' body in the well-known tomb of Joseph of Arimathea at the permission of Pontius Pilate. It should be disturbing for an academic scholar to learn that the foundation for Crossan's new conclusion about the lost body of Jesus did not arise upon the finding of any new evidence. Crossan's opinion rests solely on a hunch about what may have happened to the body of Jesus.[33]

Crossan's position is a dangerous example of how postmodernism, particularly deconstructionism, has made its way into our society, the church, and biblical scholarship. It is very disturbing that a man can create a theory concerning the historical Jesus, with no evidence to support it, and pass it off to the public as the best that contemporary scholarship has to offer.

The best response to Crossan's position is to consider all of the reliable evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ that historical and contemporary scholarship does have to offer. It is difficult to account for the horrible deaths of the disciples and the accounts of the many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus without a resurrection. Furthermore, if Crossan's hunch is correct, then how should a New Testament scholar account for the historical tradition of Jesus' body being placed in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb? The fact that this popular tomb was heavily guarded by Roman soldiers to ensure that the disciples would not steal the body is equally problematic.

The ultimate problem with Crossan's position is that it has no regard whatsoever for the overwhelming amount of evidence in favor of the traditional position that the body of Jesus was laid in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. The burial story of Jesus is widely recognized as historically credible. While a case for the historical reliability of the New Testament has already been made, Paul's early testimony of the burial of Jesus gives credibility to its historicity. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, Paul says, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." The personal appearances of the resurrected Jesus to the people mentioned by Paul would have only established more firmly that these facts were indeed true.

In response to the Jesus Seminar's position on the resurrection (more precisely, the rejection of Jesus' burial account), consider the following arguments in favor of the traditional burial account of Jesus.[34]

1. The burial story was part of an oral tradition predating the written Gospel accounts and is therefore very old.

2. The traditional burial story is simplistic and lacks theological reflection or evidence of later development, rendering its accuracy more probable.

3. Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, would not have been a Christian invention or myth.

4. Joseph laying the body in his own tomb is most likely historical.

5. Jesus was buried late on Friday, the Day of Preparation, just before nightfall because of the impending Sabbath.

6. The observation of the burial by women is historical.

7. The graves of Jewish men were heavily preserved. Because Jesus was a holy man, His corpse would not have been treated as an average criminal.

8. No other burial tradition exists.

Taken together, these considerations allow for the historical credibility of Jesus' burial: a fact recognized by most New Testament critics.

The Jesus twin theory

The Jesus twin theory is not widely accepted by scholars today, but it is found in Syriac texts dated during the 2nd and 3rd Centuries as well as in contemporary articles posted on the internet.[35] Briefly, there are two versions of the Jesus twin theory. One version says that Jesus did not die on the cross, but His twin died in His place. Therefore, "post-resurrection appearances" were actual appearances of Jesus, but Jesus had not actually resurrected because He did not die on the cross. Another version of the twin theory says that Jesus did die on the cross, but His twin (perhaps His brother Judas) appeared to the multitudes and deceived them. Variations of these two versions of the Jesus twin theory are also included within some Gnostic traditions that Simon of Cirene or Judas Iscariot died on the cross rather than Jesus.[36]

In response to the different versions of the Jesus twin theory or the idea that someone besides Jesus mistakenly died in His place, the historical evidence affirms that Jesus Christ died on the cross at the hands of Jewish and Roman authorities. The death of Jesus of Nazareth is affirmed by Christian and secular historians. It is acknowledged in all four Gospels and the writings of first century historian Josephus. It is absurd to affirm any version of the Jesus twin theory, given that the Gospel accounts do not mention that Jesus had a twin (apart from some scholarly gymnastics involving the Greek language). The Jesus twin theories do not have any connection to early Christian writings or traditions. The traditions from the Syriac and Gnostic texts come from writings too many years removed from the actual events to warrant any historical credibility.

The so-called appearances of a Jesus twin do not explain the early accounts of the empty tomb: the empty tomb affirms the resurrection story. If Jesus' twin died on the cross or appeared to the multitudes, a dead body that looked like Jesus would have been available to expose the resurrection hoax. Furthermore, Jesus proved His resurrection to doubting Thomas by allowing him to examine the scars in His hands, feet, and side. The scars were proof that the resurrected Jesus was the same Jesus who had died on the cross. The twin theory lacks credibility, given the overwhelming amount of evidence for the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The story of the resurrection of Jesus was taken from pagan mythology

Recent attacks against Christianity accuse the early formation of Christian doctrine of being plagiarized from ancient pagan mythology. These attacks on the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus echo those made by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy in *The Jesus Mysteries*, "Why should we consider the stories of Osiris, Dionysus, Adonis, Attis, Mithras, and other Pagan Mystery saviors as fables, yet come across essentially the same story told in a Jewish context and believe it to be the biography of a carpenter from Bethlehem?"[37] Is it possible that the story of Jesus' resurrection is no more authentic than the stories of false gods in paganism? Is it possible that the similarities between pagan dying and rising gods provide a compelling case that Christianity stole ideas from paganism in order to construct its essential and sacred doctrines? Let us examine the evidence.

The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ previously discussed does not disappear in the face of an allegation that Christianity plagiarized stories from paganism. Michael Licona, author of *The Case For The Resurrection of Jesus*, said, "You cannot dismiss the resurrection of Jesus unless you can refute its solid core of supporting evidence." Those who accuse Christianity of borrowing from pagan mythology have forgotten, or were simply ignorant of, the overwhelming amount of evidence favoring the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those who deny the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ still have to account for the following: 1) the radical change in the disciples to the point of their willingness to die for what they claimed to have experienced, 2) the

reliability of the biblical accounts of the resurrection affirmed by eyewitnesses who were still available for questioning at the time of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, 3) the presence of the Christian church today and its continued celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and 4) the absence of the physical dead body of Jesus.

In regards to the accusation that the story of Jesus Christ parallels the stories of false gods, it is important to recognize that these accusations are not new and were refuted years ago. The connection between Jesus' resurrection and the gods of paganism was popularized in 1906 in *The Golden Bough* by James Frazer. In his book, Frazer discusses the connections between Osiris of Egypt, Adonis of Syria, Attis of Asia Minor and Tammuz of Mesopotamia. He concludes that the concept of dying and rising gods was common in pagan mythology. Richard Reitzenstein's *Hellenistic Mystery Religions*, published in 1910 and translated into English in 1978, argued for a connection between the death of Christ and the killing of a bull by Mithras.[38] Recent accusations on the internet have paralleled Jesus and Mithras concerning the virgin birth, the date of December 25th as their birthdays, being travelling teachers, having twelve disciples, sacrificing themselves for world peace, instituting a Lord's Supper, and eventually dying and rising from the dead three days later. Such apparent parallels between Christianity and paganism warrant a closer examination to see if one really may have borrowed from the other.

Statements about similarities between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of Osiris (Dionysus) are interesting, but they lack credibility under a closer examination of the stories. According to the myth, Osiris was murdered by his brother and buried in the Nile River. The goddess Isis recovered the dead body shortly before losing it again to her brother-in-law who cut the body up into fourteen pieces and scattered them around the world. Isis eventually gathered thirteen of the pieces together and baptized them in the Nile in order to bring Osiris back to life.

In response to this "resurrection" story of Osiris, biblical scholars Gary Habermas and Michael Licona respond, "It is questionable whether Osiris was brought back to life or seen by others as Jesus was. Osiris was given status as a god of the gloomy underworld. So the picture we get of Osiris is that of a guy who does not have all his parts and who maintains a shadowy existence as a god of the mummies. Osiris' return was not a resurrection but a zombification."[39]

A few other points against the similarities between the resurrection of Jesus and the so-called resurrection of Osiris should be considered. First, the late first century biographer, Plutarch recognized that it was the pious desire of a devotee of Osiris to die and be buried in the same ground where Osiris was said to be still lying. Jesus, however, is alive (hence the definition of resurrection) and is not said to be lying in the ground anywhere! Plutarch also warned people during the first century of the influence of stories about the pagan gods. Plutarch said, "Whenever you hear the traditional tales which the Egyptians tell about the gods, their wanderings, dismemberments, and many experiences of this sort, you must not think that any of these tales actually happened in the manner in which they are related."[40]

The fables of dying and rising gods must be understood as an ancient attempt to explain the coming and going of seasons and natural phenomena. The ancients often attributed rain to the activity of the gods. When the rain ceased for a long period, the god was said to be dead or sleeping or in the underworld. When the rain returned, the god was said to have returned, sometimes from the dead. This concept, however, does not parallel the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The false gods leave or die and resurrect and return every year as the season is renewed. Jesus Christ, however, died once and physically appeared to people for a duration of forty days before ascending into heaven. While Jesus will eventually return, it will not be in autumn to bring rain only to die again in the late spring or summer. When Jesus returns, it will be to judge the living and the dead for what they believed about Him.

The myth of Cybele and Attis is used for explaining the seasonal cycles. Early worshippers of Cybele acted out the myth of Attis in order to guarantee a good crop. The concept of resurrection in the myth of Attis, however, is non-existent until later accounts of the myth dated after the middle of the second century.[41] A second century date suggests that the pagans borrowed from Christianity to make the connection, rather than the other way around.

As the myth of Attis does not have a mention of resurrection until documents dated in the middle of the second century A.D., there is also no hint of a resurrection in the early texts or images of Adonis (Tammuz). The four surviving texts that do mention the resurrection of Adonis (Tammuz) are dated from the second to the fourth centuries A.D.[42] The dates of the manuscript evidence that include the resurrection stories of Attis and

Adonis suggest that the pagans would have borrowed from the Christian accounts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (if there was any borrowing between these stories) as the canon of Scripture was closed by the end of the second century A.D.

The allegations that the pagan myths of Osiris (Dionysus), Attis, and Adonis (Tammuz) were borrowed to develop the story of Jesus' resurrection have been demonstrated to be false. We must now examine the story of Mithras, in light of the apparent similarities. Franz Cumont published the accusation of Christianity borrowing from Mithraism in 1903 in his work, *Mysteries of Mithras*. Richard Reitzenstein's work also made similar allegations, but focused more precisely on the sacrifice of Christ in connection with Mithras killing a bull. The return of these ideas on website articles, "*Did the Mithraic Mysteries Influence Christianity*" on www.tektonics.org dated January 2007, are influencing young people today who may not have the educational background to discern fact from fiction in matters of the history of religion. It is with this concern that an evaluation of the Mithras myth is considered.

One problem for the theory that Mithraism influenced Christianity is the physical evidence for the presence of Mithraism in Rome. While Mithras was a Persian god who was identified as early as the fourteenth century B.C., there is no evidence of Mithraism as a mystery religion in the West until dates too late to have had an influence on the development of Christian doctrine. In an interview with journalist and Christian apologist Lee Strobel, retired college professor Edwin Yamauchi said, "Mithraism as a mystery religion cannot be attested before about A.D. 90, which is about the time we see a Mithraic motif in a poem by Statius."[43] He continues to make his case that Mithraism as a mystery religion came after the resurrection of Jesus by arguing, "No mithraea or 'Mithraic temples' have been found at Pompeii which was destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The earliest Mithraic inscription in the West is a statue of a prefect under the emperor Trajan in A.D. 101. The evidence is now in a British museum."[44] Yamauchi continues, "The earliest mithraea or 'Mithraic temples' are dated to the early second century and the earliest credible Mithraic texts are dated after 140 A.D."[45] According to Yamauchi, the dating of the evidence does not warrant the belief that Mithraism influenced the resurrection story of Jesus. The late biblical scholar Ronald Nash concurs in *The Gospel of the Greeks*, "The flowering of Mithraism occurred after the close of the New Testament canon, too late for it to have influenced the development of first century Christianity."[46]

If Mithraism did not start to grow until after the close of the canon of Scripture, then how should Christians account for the similarities between Mithras and Jesus? The dating should suggest that if one influenced the other, the stories of Mithras were influenced by the resurrection accounts of Jesus and not visa versa. Furthermore, examination of the so-called similarities between Mithraism and Jesus do not reveal the congruency scholars would expect if one really influenced the other. Let us consider some of the so-called similarities.[47]

Concerning the virgin birth, Mithras was said to have been born of a rock. This does not equate to the virgin birth of Jesus.

The date of December 25 was not the date of Jesus' birthday. Pagans celebrated December 25 because of it's proximity to the winter solstice and the pagan recognition of such gods as Saturn, the god of agriculture, and Sol Invictus: the Unconquerable Sun. Mithras may have gotten his connection to December 25 by his pictorial association with Sol Invictus. As a day of recognition of Jesus' virgin birth, the celebration of Christmas on December 25 began as a Christian rival celebration to the pagan practices that occurred on that day. Long after the world has forgotten the pagan gods, the world still acknowledges the birth of Jesus Christ every December 25.

The claim that Mithras was a teacher who had twelve disciples is not found in any literature on Mithras. Mithras was a Persian god, not a teacher. Jesus Christ, however, was a first century Palestinian teacher with twelve disciples. Jesus demonstrated His divinity by resurrecting from the dead.

The idea that Jesus and Mithras both sacrificed themselves for world peace is also problematic. The fact that people followed Mithras as a god is enough to explain how his followers would think that he could provide them with immortality. The hope for immorality is an expectation for most followers of any religion. The problem is with the belief that Mithras and Jesus were sacrificed for world peace. First, Jesus did not sacrifice Himself for world peace. Jesus' atonement sacrifice was to reconcile men with God. Second, Mithras did not sacrifice himself; Mithras killed a bull. The killing of a bull is hardly the same as dying himself.

The claim that Mithras died, was buried, and rose from the dead three days later is equally as absurd as the previous declarations of congruency, given the historical documentation available for Mithras' death. Yamauchi

argues, "We do not know anything about the death of Mithras. We have a lot of monuments, but we have almost no textual evidence because this was a secret religion. But I know of no references to a supposed death and resurrection." The similarities between Mithras and Jesus fall apart at this point. While there is plenty of evidence in support of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is nothing that suggests that Mithras even died. Where there is no death, there can be no resurrection of the dead.

The common practice of the Lord's Supper between Mithraics and Christians says nothing about the authenticity of the resurrection of Jesus or the validity of the Eucharist as a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are common meals among various religions, but that does not mean that the religions plagiarized one another. While there are documented historical references to the Mithraic meal by Justin Martyr and Tertullian, these references claim that the Mithraic meal was a satanic imitation of the sacred Judeo-Christian meal. Yamauchi points out, "The history of the Lord's Supper is based on the Passover, not on mystery religions."

The argument that Christianity plagiarized or borrowed from pagan stories is not a credible position, given the tangible evidence. Therefore, Christians may rightfully assert that the theory that Christianity was established on the foundation of mythological gods dying and rising from the dead is itself mythological. Oxford University's E. J. Yarnold summarized the issue, "The fervor with which historians used to detect wholesale Christian borrowings from the Mithraic or other mysteries has now died down."[48] Yarnold's quote originated in a scholarly journal called *Mithras*, dated 1974. According to Yarnold, theories of paganism's influence on Christianity were put to rest years ago. This issue has long been settled and should remain buried in the archives along with the gods of paganism.

Jesus never existed

Surprisingly, there are some bold souls in the world willing to argue a case that Jesus Christ never existed. Such an extreme assertion, however, flies in the face of irrefutable evidence to the contrary. If Jesus Christ never existed, then to what should we attribute the overwhelming amount of historically reliable documentation passed down from history? Even if the critics were not willing to accept the evidence for the reliability of the New Testament, surely they would attest to the documentation preserved in the writings of the early church fathers. But even if the critics wanted to throw out all "Christian" references to Jesus Christ, the secular references would suffice to acknowledge His existence. Edwin Yamauchi makes the following case for the historical existence of Jesus Christ from reliable secular sources in an article entitled, *Jesus Outside the New Testament: What is the Evidence?*

> Even if we did not have the New Testament or Christian writings, we would be able to conclude from such non-Christian writings as Josephus, the Talmud, Tacitus, and Pliny the Younger that: (1) Jesus was a Jewish teacher; (2) many people believed that he performed healings and exorcisms; (3) he was rejected by the Jewish leaders; (4) he was crucified under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius; (5) despite this shameful death, his followers, who believed that he was still alive, spread beyond Palestine so that there were multitudes of them in Rome by A.D. 64; (6) all kinds of people from the cities and countryside – men and women, slave and free – worshipped him as God by the beginning of the second century.[49]

Certainly there is enough extra-biblical evidence to support the historicity of the earthly existence of Jesus Christ. The real issue is not merely whether He existed, but whether He is the Son of God who resurrected from the dead and demonstrated Himself to be the Lord. The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, along with the refutation of the best arguments against His resurrection, should help you reach a decision on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Concluding Thoughts

Clearly, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central pillar of the Christian worldview. If Jesus Christ historically resurrected from the dead, then Christianity is objectively true and should be affirmed by all people. However, if Jesus Christ did not historically resurrect from the dead, then Christianity should not be affirmed by anyone. Furthermore, if Jesus Christ did not resurrect from the dead, then Christians are to be pitied more than all people for believing it and teaching lies about God (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).

Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is supported with adequate justification. The following evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ was examined in this chapter: 1) The transformation of the lives of the disciples soon after Christ's death (including a boldness of many of them to die a martyr's death), 2) The reliability of the biblical accounts through eye-witnesses who saw the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-7), 3) The presence of a Christian church today in the midst of great historical persecution, 4) The absence of the physical body of Jesus Christ in any tomb; and 5) The inability of those who oppose Christianity to adequately explain the empty tomb.

Arguments against the resurrection of Jesus Christ lack credibility when compared to the reliable evidence for the resurrection. The following attempts to dispute the resurrection of Jesus Christ were examined and refuted: 1) The resurrection of Jesus Christ is impossible because resurrections do not occur, 2) The Swoon Theory, 3) Joseph of Arimathea stole the body, 4) Christ's disciples stole the body, 5) The Roman or Jewish authorities stole the body, 6) The women went to the wrong tomb, 7) Jesus returned as a spirit, but not physically, 8) Jesus' resurrection appearances were illusions or hallucinations, 9) The family tomb of Jesus was discovered, 10) Wild dogs ate Jesus' body, 11) The Jesus twin theory; 12) The story of the resurrection of Jesus was borrowed from pagan mythology, and 13) Jesus never existed.

In addition to the arguments for the resurrection and the refutations of arguments against the resurrection, there is a final thought to consider regarding two common church practices: The Lord's Supper and baptism. The Lord's Supper was regularly practiced by the early church (sometimes daily) to celebrate the Lord's death. The joy of a service which includes the practice of the Lord's Supper to commemorate the death of Christ only makes sense in light of His resurrection. The Lord's Supper is not a celebration of His life and teachings, but of His death. The only reason His followers would celebrate His death is on the foundational belief that He resurrected from the dead and was continually present with them. Baptism is another sacrament practiced by the Christian church reflecting the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. Although baptism was practiced in Judaism and not associated with Jesus' resurrection at one time in the past, today baptism is an intentional association with Jesus' resurrection. Paul in Romans 6:1-6 and Colossians 2:12, makes the association between Jesus' resurrection and our baptism. The common practices of the Lord's Supper and baptism would not have the same meaning for Christians if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead.

Finally, it is of the utmost importance to consider the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and reach a personal conclusion on the matter. Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some people say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Jesus then turned to them as He is doing to you right now and asked, "But what about you? Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Have you reached the same conclusion?

CHAPTER TEN

A LIFE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

"The righteousness that comes from God is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:9b-14)

Not By Might, Not By Power, Not By Apologetics

The biblical teachings on salvation make it extremely clear that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:5; Titus 3:5-6; Philippians 2:13; 3:9b). God reveals Himself to humanity and works in people's lives to save them by many means. Apologetics is one of them. The lack or absence of Christian apologetics does not minimize the authenticity of anyone's personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A biblical understanding of the process of salvation places apologetics in a subordinate position to the work of the Holy Spirit in people's lives. Christian apologists, evangelists, and missionaries must remember the powerful words of the Lord to Zerubbabel, "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6). Salvation is not accomplished by human might, power, or even the greatest apologetic arguments: the Spirit of the Lord accomplishes salvation.

One of the greatest Christian apologists in history, Apostle Paul, realized that God is the one responsible for people's salvation. However, people must wrestle with the information they receive from God. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul writes, "Continue to work out your salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13). Paul is saying that everyone must determine for themselves who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ actually did. The struggle involved in answering the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" is one that every human being must work out and eventually answer. However, people are not left to their own intellects and human resources for answering the question. While people are wrestling with this question, the Spirit of God is diligently working in their lives to soften their hearts and open them up to a relationship with Him.

The fact that God has been actively involved in your life as you have been wrestling with the arguments in this book is a reflection of the lesson that Paul conveyed to the Philippians. It is evident that people will have different responses to the contents of this book. People have had different responses to Christian apologetics throughout history. There are three basic responses to the contents of this book that I anticipate, in light of my years as an apologetics and theology teacher: 1) Rejection, 2) Questioning, and 3) Acceptance. While I refuse to take the credit for those who accept Christ as a result of studying this book, I also refuse to take the blame for those who flat out reject Him or continue to question the validity of the Christian worldview. The reason I cannot take responsibility for the results of anyone's salvation is that it is ultimately God who is working in people's lives to produce the results that will inevitably bring Him the glory. Do not get me wrong, I have prayed for the readers of this book that they may have a better understanding of the Christian worldview and will come to either embrace Christ or develop a stronger passion for serving Him. However, I have surrendered the results to God as I have long recognized that apologetics is only one avenue for which some people come to Christ: it is certainly not the only avenue for which all people come to Christ. Therefore, if you have read this book and have become convinced that the Christian worldview corresponds to reality, then it is praiseworthy that God has worked in your life in that manner. If you have read this book and are not convinced that the Christian worldview is objectively true, then I want to encourage you to continue pursuing truth: God is not necessarily finished with you. God is at work in people's lives today. May you find hope and encouragement in Paul's prayer for the Philippians as you continue your personal journey, "I am confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

The Strength to Continue Building

Please do not allow the development of your understanding of the Christian worldview to end with the closing of this book. You should continue your work by consulting other sources that will help you discover answers to the tough questions you may face in the future. Perhaps your further study will involve a more thorough and detailed analysis of the arguments and topics introduced in this book. Perhaps you may choose to study other religions and compare the Christian worldview to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Judaism. You may even venture into a critical comparison of orthodox Christianity with historical or contemporary sects and cults. Really, the sky is the limit for further study. May God bless you as you continue your intellectual and spiritual journey!

Appendix A

The Trinity

Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is One (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name (Matthew 6:9)

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent (John 17:3)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1)

Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit … You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3-4)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (Philippians 2:5-6)

Trinity

The Christian view of God is monotheistic. Like Muslims and Jews, Christians maintain that only one God exists: one Almighty, necessary being. However, unlike any other monotheistic religion, Christians affirm Trinitarianism: one God is composed of three persons. More precisely, there is one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: each person is eternally distinct.

While it is true that the word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible, the concept of three persons in one godhead is expressed throughout Scripture. The word "Trinity" is derived from the Greek word, *trias* and the Latin, *Trinitas*.[1] Theophilus of Antioch is officially the first to use the Greek word *trias* in 170 A.D. However, he did not use it as a reference to the Trinity of God; he used it to describe a triad of God, His Word and wisdom.[2] Tertullian is credited with the first use of the Latin, *Trinitas* to describe God as one in essence and three in person (220 A.D.).[3] The modern English version, Trinity, is an abbreviation for Tri-unity: three in one.

Those who oppose Trinitarianism (i.e. Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Muslims, etc.) point out the late date of the word's origin to make the case that the Trinity is unbiblical. In a quick response, the word "theocracy" is not found in the Bible, but the concept applies to Israel's form of government where God was the head (see Ethics: Capital Punishment). Just because the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible does not mean that the concept is not taught in the Bible. Also, the origin of the word "Trinity" at such a late date (A.D. 220) does not mean that the concept of the Trinity began at that late date. The late date for the term "Trinity" only shows when the Christian church began using the term to describe God as triune. The late date does not account for when the Christian church began affirming that God was triune. To make the case that the apostles understood that God was triune, Colossians 2:9 uses the Greek word *theotetos* which is translated as "Godhead." The Greek word *theotetos* in Colossians expresses the plurality of persons within one monotheistic God, providing an apostolic understanding of tri-unity.

The argument that the concept of the Trinity evolved over time is also dismissible in light of biblical teachings about God as a whole. The Bible teaches that God is one: monotheism (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; Romans 3:29-30; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 1 Timothy 2:5; and James 2:19). The Bible also teaches that the Father is God (Isaiah 63:16; Matthew 6:9). The Bible establishes the divinity of Jesus: Jesus is God (Matthew 11:27, 26:39; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:1, 17:5-26; 1 Corinthians 8:6, 12:3; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8-11; 1 John 5:20). The Bible also expresses the divinity of the Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit is God (Matthew 12:28; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 6:11). While these passages are certainly not exhaustive of the biblical teachings on the Trinity, they are enough to establish a strong case that Jesus and the apostles believed in one God who is three persons.

The concept of the Trinity may appear to be contradictory at first glance. How is it logically possible for God to be both three and one at the same time? At least two attempts to resolve this problem have led to heresy. Heresy is a deliberate denial of revealed truth coupled with the acceptance of error.[4] The Bible presents God as triune. Therefore, it would be heretical to deny the doctrine of the Trinity.

The two heresies that have come about in attempts to solve the apparent logical problem of God's three in one-ness are modalism and tri-theism. Modalism teaches that God is one person who is given three different names (i.e. God is … Father in the Old Testament, Jesus in the Gospels, and Holy Spirit in the epistles).[5] Modalism is the belief that God is one being who changes His name, appearance, or modes. Modalism conflicts with Trinitarianism. Trinitarianism teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are simultaneously "one" and interact together as three. Tritheism is the other heresy that attempts to resolve the apparent logical conflict between God's three-ness and one-ness. Tri-theism is the view that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct gods.[6] The two attempts (Modalism and Tritheism) to solve the apparent logical contradiction of God's three-in-oneness result in heresies. When the one-ness of God is overemphasized, the result is modalism. When the three-ness of God is overemphasized, the result is tri-theism.

Can the conflict of God's three-in-oneness be resolved without resulting in a logical contradiction?

YES!

A contradictory belief is both true and false at the same time and in the same way. For example, the belief that the Indianapolis Colts won Super Bowl XLIV and did not win Super Bowl XLIV is a contradictory belief. It is logically impossible (based on the law of non-contradiction) for the Colts to have both won and not won Super Bowl XLIV. Therefore, such a belief is contradictory.

Likewise, if Trinitarians believe that God is monotheistic (one god) and polytheistic (more than one god) at the same time, then they would hold a contradictory belief. However, under closer examination, Trinitarians do not believe in one god and three gods at the same time. Neither do they affirm that God is one person and three persons at the same time. Trinitarians believe that God is one God who is three persons. This is not a contradictory belief because a contradiction requires that a statement be both true and false (or three-in-one) at the same time and in the same way.[7] Trinitarians, however, affirm that God is one in one way (substance) and three in another way (persons). In practical terms, God is one what and three who's![8] Therefore, Trinitarianism avoids a logical contradiction.

Plurality of personhood is essential for God's relational attributes to exist eternally

"Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love" (1 John 4:8)

1 John 4:8 says that one of God's eternal relational attributes is love. The eternal attribute of love can be used to establish the plurality of personhood within the triune Godhead. Love is a "subject-object" attribute. Therefore, God must have something or someone to be the object of His love. But, in chapter four, we have already established that God is the uncaused cause of creation and that time, space, and matter came into being at some point in the finite past. The ultimate question is "What or who did God love before He created?" The answer: Himself![9] God is eternal and each person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is an eternal person of the Godhead. God directed love towards Himself for eternity before there existed any created thing to be the object of His affection. In other words, the subject-object relationship necessary for love to be possible occurred within the triune Godhead as the Father loved the Son, the Son loved the Father, the Father loved the Spirit, the Spirit loved the Father, the Son loved the Spirit, and the Spirit loved the Son. While the love argument requires a plurality within the Godhead in order for love to eternally exist, it does not necessarily establish that the plurality within the Godhead must be triune. However, the argument demonstrates that belief in a tri-unity is not illogical. In fact, a plurality of personhood within an eternal godhead is essential for the relational attribute of love to eternally exist prior to God creating anything to be the objects of His affection.

Understanding the triune God through analogy

Many attempts have been made to explain the concept of the Trinity by way of analogy (i.e. three strands of string together to make one rope; H^2O as water, ice, and steam; an egg consists of a yoke, a white, and a shell). However, those who use analogies must be careful to avoid reducing the analogies to examples of modalism or tri-theism. For example, the analogy of the various forms of H^2O has a modalistic overtone, as water, ice, and steam are modes of existence. On the other hand, the analogies involving the rope and the egg seem to suggest that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three distinct and separate parts of the divine whole (tri-theism). Theologians are aware that there does not have to be any adequate analogy from the material world to explain the Trinity. A triune God exists even if analogies from the material world do not.

St. Augustine was among some early Christians who thought that analogies could play a powerful role in describing the Trinity. Augustine called Cerberus (the three-headed dog in Greco-Roman mythology who guards the gates of Hades) an image of the Trinity among creatures. The analogy is developed by granting three distinct minds (and names) to each one of Cerberus' heads while simultaneously maintaining the oneness of the animal itself. Cerberus is defined as a three-headed dog with three distinct minds. J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig

develop Augustine's analogy by giving names to each one of the heads: Rover, Bowser, and Spike respectively.[11] The analogy works as far as demonstrating that if one of the heads (Bowser) bit me, it would be correct to say that Cerberus bit me. Likewise, God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity are eternally distinct like the three minds of Cerberus. However, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God like the three-headed dog is one Cerberus. The "Cerberus analogy" breaks down when we realize that what makes Cerberus one being is a physical body. If Cerberus died and the three separate consciousnesses survived death, it would be difficult (maybe impossible) to demonstrate how the three are also one. The Trinity of God transcends the analogy of Cerberus because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit existed eternally and unembodied prior to the incarnation. The shortcomings of the Cerberus analogy explain why most early church fathers rejected such analogies for the Trinity. Furthermore, it would not be correct to label God as "three-headed," as some opponents of Trinitarianism have accused Trinitarians of doing. The analogy of Cerberus can only be taken so far or it will eventually fall apart as an inadequate analogy. Analogies should not be pushed beyond their intended limitations. Analogies applied to the tri-unity of God should only serve to demonstrate that Trinitarian monotheism is not illogical or incoherent. Christians can affirm Trinitarianism and maintain that God is one "what" and three "who's" without holding a contradictory belief.[12]

Concluding Thoughts

The doctrine of the Trinity is not illogical: it does not violate one or more of the laws of logic. However, the doctrine of the Trinity is supra-logical: God's nature goes beyond man's ability to completely comprehend Him. Tertullian believed that the difficult nature of the Trinity further demonstrated that it must be a product of divine revelation. Man could not have constructed such a doctrine on his own because the Trinity goes beyond anything man could draw from experience to try to construct. The doctrine of the Trinity, though difficult to comprehend, is essential to orthodox Christian faith.

Appendix B

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ

"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel -- which means 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:23)

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14)

"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8)

"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9)

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:15)

Incarnation

The doctrine of the incarnation is essential to orthodox Christian faith. The atonement for sin on the cross demands that Jesus is both human and divine. If Jesus was only human, He would not have been an adequate atoning sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10). The book of Hebrews establishes how earthly priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins before they could offer sacrifices for the sins of others. Also, sacrifices made by human priests were temporary, but Jesus' sacrificial offering was permanent (Hebrews 7). If Jesus was only divine and not human, it would be difficult to grasp how we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses and who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Taken as a whole, the Bible affirms both the deity of Jesus (John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:9) and His humanity (Philippians 2:8). The Bible affirms Jesus' human attributes in describing His birth (Luke 2:6-7), development (Luke 2:52), amazement (Matthew 8:10), anger (Mark 11:15-16), hunger and fatigue (Luke 4:2), and sorrow (John 11:33-36).

As the Trinity is misunderstood as being illogical (three-in-one), the doctrine of the incarnation is also misunderstood as an illogical concept uniting two opposing forces (divine and human) into one person. However, like the Trinity, a closer examination of the doctrine of the incarnation will reveal that its affirmation does not violate the laws of logic.

The beginning point for a discussion on the plausibility of the incarnation is found in God's creation of man (Genesis 1:27). Because God created man in His own image, the nature of man does not stand in such contrast to God as say the nature of an animal or a plant.[1] The image of God in humankind is reflected in humanity's ability to reason, exercise volition, socialize, etc. Therefore, the reality of God taking on humanity and dwelling among us is not illogical or implausible at all.

Once it has been established that the image of God in man creates a platform for God to become incarnate and dwell among us (Matthew 1:23), we must then differentiate between the essential qualities and the non-essential qualities of humanity.[2] As the God-man, Jesus possessed all of the divine qualities (Colossians 2:9) and all of the essential human qualities. Jesus could be completely divine and completely human without possessing the non-essential human attributes that many humans possess today. One non-essential human quality, for example, is a sinful nature. Adam did not possess a sinful nature before he sinned in the garden. The second Adam (Jesus) did not possess a sinful nature either. It is best to understand the human aspect of Jesus as humanity perfected (i.e. the way God intended it to be before it was tainted with sin). The human part of Jesus may not be something we can completely understand by experience, in light of our present situation of being engulfed in a sinful nature.

Another factor in comprehending the reality of the incarnation is to recognize that Jesus claimed to be God. Jesus affirmed Peter's answer to the question, "Who do you say that I am?" when Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus also affirmed His unity with the Father when He said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The Pharisees recognized Jesus' statement to be a claim of deity. The Pharisees responded, "We are stoning you for blasphemy because you, a mere man, claim to be God" (John 10:33). Jesus' response was not one of correction and denial, but of correction and affirmation. Jesus responded, "What about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son?' Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:36-38).

Jesus' claims of deity have strong references to the Old Testament terminology for the Messiah. In Mark 14:61-62, Jesus is taken before the chief priests and Sanhedrin and asked by Caiaphas, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus boldly responded, "I am and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Jesus' reference to the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven was directly related to the prophecy about the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14. The prophecy in Daniel clearly describes an eternal ruler exercising dominion over all people for eternity. In His reference to being the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, Jesus claimed to be the eternal ruler described in Daniel's prophecy. Jesus' reference caused Him to face torrential persecution by the religious authorities of His day, eventually leading to His crucifixion.

> In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all people's nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).

In order to gain a better understanding of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, it is important to identify the specific passages where Jesus demonstrates His divine attributes. One divine attribute of Jesus was His ability to raise the dead. Jesus demonstrated His deity by raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43). Jesus ultimately demonstrated His deity by raising from the dead Himself (John 2:19). Jesus demonstrated His omniscience through His ability to foretell future events as in the case of Judas' betrayal (Matthew 26:21-25) and Peter's three-fold denial (Matthew 26:34). Jesus demonstrated His omnipresence by telling a Royal official that his son had been healed, when his son was twenty miles away (John 4:45-50). Jesus also demonstrated His omnipresence in His promise to the disciples at the Great Commission, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Sure signs of deity that even got His critics' attention were His bold claims to have the authority to forgive sins. On one occasion, He told a paralyzed man, "Friend, your sins are forgiven" (Luke 5:20). This was only a statement that God could make because only God has the ability to forgive sins. When questioned about the authority to forgive sins, Jesus rebuked His critics and healed the paralyzed man right before their eyes. His ability to physically heal paralysis demonstrated His power and spiritual authority to forgive sins. These passages are enough to affirm Jesus' deity and provide further evidence for the coherence of the doctrine of the incarnation.

One problem with our ability to comprehend the union between Jesus' divinity and humanity may be with the question we are asking. The question, "How does a man become God?" may be the wrong question. Man can never become God. Because God is infinite and man is finite, the finitude of man prohibits him from attaining to the infinite status of God. We recognize the reality of man's limitations in comparison to God's infinite qualities and we quickly face the fact that man can never become God. However, if we reverse the question by asking, "How does God become man?" we may be dealing with a concept that is certainly difficult to grasp, but not impossible, illogical or implausible to believe.[3] Because God is infinite and man is finite, God could take on the attributes of humanity. God's infinitude would establish His ability to take on the lesser aspect of humanity. While the lesser could never attain to the greater (man becoming God), the greater could condescend to the lesser (God becoming man). If we accept this reasoning as an orthodox Christian understanding of the incarnation, we must also remember that Jesus did not come into being at the point of His conception in the Virgin Mary. Jesus simply took on humanity at the point of His conception in the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, it is essential to affirm the eternality of Jesus, as the second person of the Trinity, when making the case that He lowered Himself to the point of taking on a human nature and becoming the God-man.

The Kenotic View

One popular attempt to resolve the apparent conflict between Christ's divinity and humanity is the kenotic view. The term derives its meaning from the Greek word *kenosis* used in Philippians 2:7 -- "*but made himself nothing*, taking on the very nature of a servant." Another rendering of *kenosis* in Philippians 2:7 states, "*He emptied Himself*" (NASB). According to the kenotic view, Jesus emptied Himself of some of His divine attributes and traded them for human attributes. The attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence literally were absent from the God-man Jesus as He dwelt upon the earth in human flesh. Proof texts for this position are Luke 2:52 and Matthew 24:36. In Luke 2:52, Jesus grows in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man. In Matthew 24:36, Jesus (the Son) says that only the Father knows the day and hour that heaven and earth will pass away. This is something that the Son (Jesus Christ) does not know. Essentially, proponents of the kenotic view argue that to become human, Jesus had to become less divine.

Response to the Kenotic View

In response to the kenotic view, we must analyze the "emptying" concept expressed in Philippians 2:7 in comparison to other passages like Colossians 2:9. Colossians 2:9 explicitly states that all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. How can the incarnate Christ express the fullness of deity in bodily form and simultaneously lack divine attributes that He voluntarily gave up? The burden of proof is on the proponent of the kenotic view to demonstrate a satisfactory answer to this question.

One way to reconcile the tension between Philippians 2:7 and Colossians 2:9 is to define the phrase "*made himself nothing*" in light of the surrounding context of Philippians 2. Philippians 2:1-11 uses Christ as an example of humility for Christians to follow. While the text does not explicitly say what Jesus emptied Himself of, the "*making himself nothing*" phrase stands in direct contrast to His equality with God. Jesus did not cease to be one with the Father or lose divine attributes when He took on humanity. Jesus simply became subordinate to the will of the Father during His incarnation so that He could reveal the will of God and redeem humanity. Jesus did not lose divine attributes in order to become human (as the kenotic view argues), but Jesus added the essential human attributes to His divinity so that He could become flesh and make His dwelling among us (John 1:14).[4]

Concerning the proof texts for the kenotic view, if Jesus is God and God is all-knowing, then how could Jesus grow in wisdom (Luke 2:52)? Jesus' growth in wisdom and stature, and favor with God and man is further evidence of His humanity. As a human baby in a manger, Jesus most likely did not know the Hebrew alphabet, how to read the book of Isaiah, or even that He was the Messiah who had come to deliver humanity from the bondage of sin. In His humanity, Jesus most likely grew into His ability to read and become aware of His divinity and mission. It is evident, as a twelve-year-old boy in the Temple, that Jesus had realized who He was by His statement, "Didn't you know I had been in my Father's house?" I postulate that Jesus' humanity did not abolish His divine attributes nor cause Him to lose them as the kenotic view suggests. Rather, Jesus' humanity subjected the use of His divine attributes to the will of the Father. Therefore, Jesus possessed divine omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, but only used them at the appointed will of the Father. Jesus exercised divine attributes such as omnipresence and divine foreknowledge in healing the Royal Official's son twenty miles away (John 4:45-50) and foretelling the betrayals of Judas (Matthew 26:21-25) and Peter (Matthew 26:34).[5] Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. In His divinity, He possessed omnipotence, omniscience, foreknowledge, etc. However, these divine attributes were only accessible to Jesus during the incarnation at the appointment of the will of the Father.

Similarly, if Jesus is omniscient, as reflected in His ability to foretell the future (Matthew 26:21-25, 34 and John 2:19), then how does He not know the day and the hour of the end of the age (Matthew 24:36)? Furthermore, if the Son and the Father are one, as expressed in John 10:30, then how could the Father know something that the Son does not know (Matthew 24:36)? Again, Jesus' human attributes and divine attributes must be distinguished. As God, Jesus possessed omniscience. However, in His humanity, Jesus' knowledge was limited. In His humanity, Jesus did not know the future, apart from the discretionary will of the Father. At the appointed will of the Father, Jesus accessed His divine attributes. This is not to say that He lost them and gained them again at the will of the Father (kenotic view). Rather, Jesus possessed the divine attributes while in the flesh, but was limited by the flesh to access them apart from the appointed will of the Father. As an advocate of the orthodox view of the incarnation (Jesus was both completely human and completely divine), W.G.T. Shedd summarized a solution to the Matthew 24:36 problem as follows, "As the prophet Isaiah could know no more of the secret things of God than it pleased the Holy Spirit to disclose to him, so the human mind of Christ could know no more of these same divine secrets than the illumination of the Logos made known."[6] In other words, Jesus Christ (God incarnate) was subject to the illumination of the Father for exercising certain divine attributes while in His earthly state of humiliation.

The Temptation Problem

There is an apparent contradiction between James 1:13 and Matthew 4:1-11. James 1:13 says, "For God cannot be tempted by evil." Matthew 4:1-11 records Satan tempting Jesus in the wilderness. Theologians have debated the legitimacy of the wilderness temptations in light of Jesus' ability or inability to succumb to the

temptations by sinning. Those who believe that Jesus could have sinned believe that Jesus was peccable. Those who believe that the divinity of Jesus did not allow Him to sin believe that Jesus was impeccable. The atonement on the cross required Jesus to be sinless in order to be an adequate sacrifice for sin. If Jesus had sinned, then His atonement would have been void. Furthermore, as God, Jesus was holy. It is impossible for a holy God to sin. Therefore, if Jesus had sinned, then He would not have possessed the necessary divine attribute of holiness.

If Jesus could not have sinned, then were the temptations in the wilderness real? Yes, the temptations in the wilderness were real, even if Jesus was unable to sin. The temptations were real appeals to His human desires (hunger and power). However, Jesus had a perfect human nature along with a perfect divine nature. As appeals to His humanity, the temptations were real. Therefore, we do have a High Priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, who has been tempted in every way, yet was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). However, as the self-sufficient creator and sustainer of the universe, Jesus was not lacking anything. The temptations could not urge Him to meet a need that He could not have met Himself.[7] Some people see James 1:13 and Matthew 4:1-11 as contradictory, others see them as two complimentary biblical truths.

Concluding Thoughts

The doctrine of the incarnation has implications on our view of salvation. Jesus, the God-man, is the only person capable of offering a final and adequate atonement for sin. While it may be difficult to grasp, it is not illogical to understand that the divine could take on the essential attributes of humanity and make His dwelling among us. Like the unity within the Trinity and within body/soul dualism, an explanation of how the two realities (human and divine) within the incarnation intersect is not necessary in order to logically affirm that they do intersect. Jesus demonstrated divine attributes and human attributes throughout His earthly life and ministry. The disciples and early church fathers understood Jesus to be both divine and human at the same time. While we may continue to have difficulty comprehending the divine/human union of the God-man Jesus Christ, Scripture affirms the doctrine of the incarnation. Therefore, we have a solid foundation, firmly rooted in Scripture, for affirming the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In conclusion, Paul's exhortation in his first letter to Timothy encourages us to better understand the mystery behind the incarnation.

> Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among nations, was believed on in the world, and was taken up in glory (1Timothy 3:16).

Appendix C

The Virgin Birth

"The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14)

"This is how the birth of Jesus came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18)

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:
'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' – which means 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:22-23)

"When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus" (Matthew 1:24-25)

"In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendent of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:26-28)

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "Since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High God will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:34-35)

The Virgin Birth

A Charlie Brown Christmas is one of my favorite Christmas specials. The special aired on CBS from its debut in 1965 through 2000, and has aired on ABC since 2001. ABC continues to telecast the special every Christmas season. Watching the show has been a family Christmas tradition since I was a child. At his wits end, Charlie Brown turns to Linus and says,

> I guess you were right, Linus. I shouldn't have picked this little tree. Everything I do turns into a disaster. I guess I really don't know what Christmas is all about. Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?

Then, Linus gently responds,

> Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about; lights, please. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were so afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for behold, I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.[1]

Appropriate use of Scripture (Luke 2:8-14) is a rare commodity on national, prime-time television these days. Prime-time media tends to reflect the worldview of the culture as a whole. Therefore, it is no surprise to discover a decline of traditional Christian values and beliefs in our society, especially in our media. One Christian doctrine particularly under the attack of our secular, naturalistic society is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Given our age of scientific enlightenment, is it plausible for a Christian to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ today?

Belief in the virgin birth is ultimately a worldview test. Those who accept the miracle of the virgin birth most likely accept the other miracles in the Bible. Those who reject the virgin birth most likely reject other miracles. Once someone accepts the plausibility of miracles, the virgin birth is not a giant leap of faith. However, if someone is convinced by a worldview that denies miracles and/or the supernatural, then rejection of the virgin birth naturally follows. The virgin birth apologetic has become a battleground between super-naturalists and naturalists in regards to how they view God's relationship to the world.[2]

Belief in the virgin birth is also related to people's view of Scripture. The doctrine of the virgin birth is built from two primary biblical references: Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38. The prophecy of Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14), mentioned in Matthew 1:23, acknowledges the Old Testament's expectation of a virgin birth for the Messiah. One's view of Scripture will clearly influence his or her position on the virgin birth: those who believe that the Bible is historically reliable are more likely to accept the doctrine of the virgin birth than those who reject the Bible's historical reliability. For many, the fact that the Bible prophesies the virgin birth in the Old Testament (Isaiah) and provides two separate accounts of it in the New Testament (Matthew and Luke) is sufficient proof for the doctrine.[3]

Some critics have sought to destroy the credibility of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ by asserting that the doctrine was stolen from pagan religions. Did the early Christians steal stories from pagan religions and construct the doctrine of the virgin birth to make Jesus Christ more divine? Parallels with the pagan religions are very superficial and when examined under scrutiny demonstrate more differences than similarities (see chapter nine). For example, Plutarch suggests that a woman can be impregnated when approached by a divine spirit. This remark occurs in his reading of the legend of Numa, who after the death of his wife, withdrew into solitude to have intercourse with the divine being Egeria.[4] Another myth tells that the sun god Apollo became a snake and impregnated the mother of Augustus Caesar. However, examples of pagan gods having sex with women and

impregnating them does not provide any evidence of a virgin birth among the gods of paganism.[5] Orthodox Christianity does not affirm that God had sex with Mary before she conceived Jesus. Such an assertion would be heresy and certainly incompatible with a virgin birth. Orthodox Christianity affirms that the Holy Spirit miraculously conceived Jesus inside the womb of Mary without any means of sexual intercourse whatsoever. The Christian doctrine of the virgin conception of Jesus is unique from all pagan myths because Jesus was conceived miraculously without intercourse. Pagan myths, however, portray gods impregnating women by way of intercourse.

What do Christians mean when they affirm that Jesus was born of a virgin? The virgin birth has been debated among scholars who hold conflicting views about the meaning of the term virgin birth.[6] Some scholars have interpreted the virgin birth to mean that Jesus was not born in a normal fashion. In their view, Jesus simply passed through the wall of Mary's uterus instead of being delivered through the normal birth canal. In response to this position, other scholars have pointed out that Luke records a normal birth process for Jesus. Luke also records that Mary's natural delivery required a ritual cleansing in fulfillment of Jewish Old Testament ceremonial purification laws (Leviticus 12:8). If Jesus' birth was abnormal, as the perpetual virginity view suggests, why does Luke not make mention of an abnormal birth? Why would an abnormal birth require the same postnatal purification ceremony as a normal birth? Certainly, the biblical evidence supports that Jesus' birth was normal, but His conception was miraculously unique.

Another argument that Mary was not a perpetual virgin comes from Matthew 12:46-50 and Matthew 13:55 which affirm that Jesus had brothers: James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.[7] Scholars in favor of Mary's perpetual virginity argue that the Greek words for brothers and sisters can be translated as "close relatives." This rendering allows perpetual virginity proponents to argue that James, Joseph, Simon and Judas were Jesus' cousins or "close relatives," but not His brothers. This understanding keeps Mary a virgin throughout the duration of her life: a perpetual virgin.

There are problems with the "close relative" interpretation. First, there is no clear passage in the Bible that affirms Mary's perpetual virginity. Matthew 1:25 states that Joseph kept Mary a virgin until Jesus was born and implies that he had sexual relations with her after Jesus was born. This would have been natural for a Jewish husband and wife. In Judaism, women do not marry with a vow to celibacy. In Christianity, biblical teaching prohibits celibacy among married couples and calls sex a marital duty or responsibility that is only to be withheld upon mutual agreement and for a limited period of time so that sexual temptation outside of the marriage bond would be avoided (1 Corinthians 7:5). Second, there are two distinct Greek words for brother and cousin and Matthew uses the Greek word *adelphoi*, meaning brothers. In Colossians 4:10, Mark is described as the cousin of Barnabas and the Greek word for cousin is *anepsios*. Third, when brothers and sisters are connected with parents, the Greek rendering is always blood brothers and sisters. Therefore, in Matthew 12:46-50 and Matthew 13:55, the reference to the father Joseph and the mother Mary would make James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas the half-brothers of Jesus through the common blood of Mary. Fourth, New Testament writers refer to Jesus' brothers. Mark refers to Jesus' brothers and mother (Mark 3:31). Luke says that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was with His brothers in the Upper Room (Acts 1:14). John says, "For even his own brothers did not believe in him" (John 7:5). Paul calls James "the Lord's brother" (Galatians 1:19). There is certainly enough biblical support to affirm the virgin conception and virgin birth of Jesus Christ without affirming Mary's perpetual virginity. In fact, Mary's perpetual virginity is irrelevant to the affirmation of the virgin birth of Jesus and is only upheld by scholars who wish to place Mary upon a higher pedestal than she deserves. There is no doubt that Mary should be respected for her faith and obedience to God, but such a respect should not exceed the fact that she was a human being who was used by God for a very special assignment.

There are other arguments among scholars on the necessity of the virgin birth for affirming the deity and incarnation of Jesus Christ. Some scholars argue that if Jesus had two human parents, then He could not have been divine.[8] Such an argument may be at the heart of criticism towards the doctrine of the virgin birth which tries to make a case that Jesus was only human.

A similar argument says that if Jesus had two human parents, then there is reason to believe that He would have inherited a sin nature.[9] If Jesus had a sin nature, it is difficult to postulate how He would have been a qualified candidate to atone for the sin of the human race. While debate continues among scholars about whether Jesus could have been divine with two earthly parents, a virgin birth is certainly evidence of His divinity. In other

words, Jesus may not have needed a virgin birth in order to be divine, but He certainly would have needed a virgin birth, or some miraculous sign, to provide epistemic warrant for people to believe in His divinity.

Concluding Thoughts

The evidence for the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is rooted in two reliable New Testament sources (Matthew and Luke) providing similar accounts of the same event. The reliability of the New Testament provides a strong case that the virgin birth occurred in the manner described by Matthew and Luke (see chapter nine). The prophecy of Isaiah provides an Old Testament expectation for the virgin birth of the Messiah. One's affirmation of miracles, however, depends upon a person's worldview. Theists are more likely to accept the virgin birth account than naturalists because theists are open to the possibility of miracles. While critics have sought to discredit the virgin birth of Jesus because of the apparent similarities found in pagan myths, the apparent similarities are discredited upon closer examination. There is also debate between scholars on the definition of the virgin birth as well as the ramifications of a virgin birth upon Christology.

In closing, the early church fathers provide evidence that the Christian community very early in its historical development affirmed the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. While early church affirmation of the virgin birth is not proof that it is factual, it is a tradition that one would expect to find if the virgin birth account is true. The virgin birth is affirmed in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch who was martyred no later than 117 A.D. The fact that Ignatius affirmed the virgin birth as early as the 60's A.D. is evidence that belief in the virgin birth was affirmed among Christians before the close of the first century.[10] Also, the early and late additions of the Apostles' Creed affirm the virgin birth account. Ignatius and Tertullian would have been familiar with the early addition of the Apostles' Creed.[11] Their writings only affirm the doctrine of the virgin birth. The fact that the later addition of the Apostle's Creed agrees with the earlier addition demonstrates that belief in the virgin birth was not a late addition to Christian doctrine.[12] The earliest addition of the Apostles' Creed (The Old Roman Creed) is as follows:

> I believe in God the Father Almighty. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary; crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit; the holy Church; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the flesh.[13]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter One
Why Study Philosophy & Apologetics?

1. Explain how philosophy is integrated into first order disciplines?
2. What is apologetics?
3. What is a worldview? Why is it important to understand one's own worldview? Why is it important to understand the worldviews of others?
4. What problem was revealed by the Barna Group regarding people in their twenties? How should the Church respond?
5. Why is it important for Christians to study apologetics?
6. What does the Bible say about the value of apologetics?
7. Why should Christians not be discouraged if their arguments are rejected?
8. What are the implications of the fall of man on theology and apologetics?
9. How should a Christian prepare for apologetic encounters?
10. Prepare and share a short testimony. If you are not a Christian, keep a journal and be open to the work of God in your life.

Chapter Two
Epistemology: The Pillar of Knowledge

1. Why should Christians study epistemology?
2. What is the fatal philosophical flaw of skepticism?
3. What is a belief and how are beliefs justified?
4. What is the correspondence theory of truth?
5. Why should Christians use justification when trying to convince someone to affirm a belief?
6. How did Edmund Gettier affect the field of epistemology in 1963?
7. How should a Christian respond to Gettier's counter examples?
8. What role does faith have in establishing the truth of the Gospel?
9. What is the difference between orthodoxy and orthopraxy and why are both important?
10. What does Paul mean when he says, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection?"

Chapter Three
Responding to Postmodernism: Establishing the Pillar of Truth

1. Trace the historical development that contributed to the postmodern movement of today.
2. How does deconstructionism affect education?
3. How would you respond to someone who denies the correspondence theory of truth?
4. Why is rational objectivity to be preferred over psychological objectivity?
5. Create some original responses to postmodernism.
6. How does the Bible promote the concept of objective truth?
7. Why is it important for Christians to be informed about postmodern philosophy?
8. How is postmodern philosophy reflected in the media, television, movies, the internet, etc.?

Chapter Four
Arguments for God's Existence: The Pillar of God

1. How is a philosophical proof different from a scientific proof?
2. Why is a "majority vote" not an adequate criterion for determining truth?
3. How is the ontological argument used to defend theism?

4. What objections did Guanilo present to Anselm in an effort to refute the ontological argument? How did Anselm respond?
5. How is the cosmological argument helpful for defending theism?
6. How have recent scientific discoveries strengthened the teleological argument as a proof for God's existence?
7. What is the "many worlds hypothesis?" How should Christians respond to it?
8. Do you think Pascal's wager is an effective argument for Christians to use on skeptics and/or agnostics? Explain.
9. Do you think arguments for God's existence are irrelevant for people of faith? Explain.
10. How might you respond to someone who asks, "What caused God?"
11. Which argument for God's existence do you find to be most effective and why?

Chapter Five
The Soul: The Pillar of Consciousness

1. How does one demonstrate body/soul interactionism?
2. Why are substance dualists not required to explain how or where the body and the soul intersect?
3. What is epiphenomenalism? How should a Christian respond to it?
4. What is the fundamental difference between reductive and eliminative materialism?
5. Why is behaviorism a philosophy rather than a science?
6. Why is functionalism more frequently associated with naturalism than supernaturalism or substance dualism?
7. What is the fundamental difference between the two versions of the emergent property view?
8. Does consciousness provide evidence for God?
9. How does personal identity through physical change establish an argument for the soul?
10. What are the ramifications of substance dualism on libertarian free will? What are the ramifications of physicalism on libertarian free will?
11. Discuss the evidence for life after death.
12. How could Near Death Experiences provide scientific evidence for souls?

Chapter Six
Free Will: The Pillar of Freedom

1. Summarize and discuss the importance of the three laws of logic in Christian philosophy.
2. Discuss the philosophical and theological implications of fatalism and determinism.
3. What is "fake fatalism" and how is it impractical?
4. What was Spinoza's definition of God?
5. Why are physicalists/materialists also determinists?
6. How do libertarians justify their belief in free will?
7. What is free will theism? What are the theological issues that must be addressed in discussions on free will theism?
8. What is the fundamental difference between hard and soft compatibilism?
9. How does Molinism seek to resolve the tension between determinism and libertarian free will?
10. How does Middle Knowledge address the tension between Calvinism and Arminianism in discussions on salvation?
11. What is agnostic autonomism? Should it be encouraged or discouraged among philosophers? … among Christians?
12. What is an antinomy? Should antinomies be encouraged or discouraged among philosophers? … among Christians?
13. List some experiences in your life when determinism seemed true.
14. List some experiences in your life when libertarianism seemed true.
15. Which view in the spectrum of the free will debate do you affirm? Explain.

Chapter Seven
The Problem of Evil: The Pillar of Explaining the Presence of Evil

1. What is the logical problem of evil?
2. Do you think the logical problem of evil is a legitimate argument against the existence of an all powerful and all loving God? Explain.
3. Why is eternal good and evil dualism incompatible with traditional, orthodox Christian theism?
4. How does Free Will Theism seek to resolve the logical problem of evil?
5. How does denying God's omni-benevolence resolve the logical problem of evil?
6. How does denying God's omnipotence and foreknowledge resolve the logical problem of evil?
7. How did Benedict Spinoza and Mary Baker Eddy seek to resolve the logical problem of evil?
8. Who was St. Augustine and what was his contribution to solving the logical problem of evil?
9. Who was St. Thomas Aquinas and what was his contribution to solving the logical problem of evil?
10. Who was Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz and what was his contribution to solving the logical problem of evil?
11. Who was C.S. Lewis and what was his contribution to solving the logical problem of evil?
12. Who is Stephen Davis and what was his contribution to solving the logical problem of evil?
13. What is the emotive problem of evil?
14. Compare and contrast John Hick's solution to the logical problem of evil with the Augustinian tradition.
15. How do the stories of Job, the death of Lazarus, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ offer a fresh look at the presence of evil in the world?

Chapter Eight
Ethics: The Pillar of Applied Morality

1. What is the myth of Gyges about?
2. What was Plato's main concern in his writings on morality?
3. What is the difference between morality and ethics?
4. Which explanation for the origin of morality do you think is the most plausible and why?
5. Discuss the reasons why people should be moral.
6. Discuss the theories of ethics and the biblical support for each one. Which theory or theories do you think are the most biblical? … least biblical? Explain.
7. Identify the fundamental worldview issues at the heart of the abortion debate.
8. Is abortion in the case of pregnancy due to rape or incest morally and/or biblically justified? Explain.
9. What are the pros and cons of alcohol consumption? Do you see the value of abstinence in relation to Romans 14:21?
10. Is the death penalty morally and biblically just? Is the death penalty a just means of punishment for criminals who have been convicted of heinous crimes in the United States?
11. Do you think it is ever morally justifiable to lie by withholding the truth? Provide examples of situations where lying is morally just.
12. Euthanasia means "good death" but do you think there is such a reality as "dying well?"
13. Should doctors be able to legally assist patients who request euthanasia? … under what circumstances?
14. Identify the fundamental worldview issues at the heart of the euthanasia debate.
15. What does the Bible teach about homosexuality?
16. How reliable is the evidence that suggests that people are born gay?
17. Are those who oppose homosexuality homophobic?
18. How is the Bible's definition of marriage different from the world's definition?
19. How are Paul's teachings on marriage different between 1 Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5? How should Christians who believe in the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture account for the difference?
20. What is the surface understanding of Ephesians 5:22-33? What is the deeper meaning?
21. Respond to the statistics on divorce. Given the statistics alone, do you believe it is wise for couples to live together before they get married?

22. How did Shammai and Hillel differ on divorce? How was Jesus' teaching on divorce different from the teachings of Shammai and Hillel?
23. What are the biblical exceptions for divorce? What does the Bible say about abuse as a condition for divorce?
24. What are the biblical conditions for remarriage? What should someone do if he or she has divorced and remarried in violation of the biblical mandates?
25. Why are God's standards for sex reserved for the confines of marriage?
26. How is sexual sin different from any other type of sin?
27. How did Joseph respond to sexual temptation in Genesis 39?
28. What should someone do if he or she has already engaged in sexual immorality?
29. How can people avoid sexual temptation in a society that is saturated with sexually explicit material?
30. Does the Bible really promote slavery? What was the underpinning philosophy that led to the abolition of slavery?
31. Compare and contrast the arguments for and against Pacifism, Activism, and Just War theory. Which position best represents biblical teaching as a whole? Defend your answer.

Chapter Nine
The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: The Pillar of Miracle

1. What is the difference between the disciples dying for their faith and a cultist or an Islamic terrorist dying for his faith?
2. How is manuscript evidence used to establish the historical reliability of the New Testament?
3. Does the evidence for the reliability of the New Testament support the Christian affirmation of Jesus' resurrection? Explain.
4. Discuss the importance of establishing an early date for the original authorship of the Synoptic Gospels. Why do most scholars believe that the Synoptic Gospels were completed before 70 A.D.?
5. What dilemma do Christian apologists face in regards to the differences between Gospel accounts? What would critics say if every detail in each Gospel was identical?
6. What did Irenaeus say about the heretics' response to the Gospels?
7. How does archaeological evidence support the historical reliability of the Bible?
8. Where do you place the authority of the Word of God in your own life? How does one's worldview influence his or her position on the authority of Scripture?
9. What persecution has the church faced since its inception?
10. Why is the presence of the Christian church today evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
11. Why is the empty tomb a tangible, objective piece of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Does the empty tomb prove that Jesus Christ rose from the dead?
12. What are the two versions of David Hume's argument against the resurrection?
13. How is the conversion of Anthony Flew problematic for atheists who continue to maintain that evidence for theism is lacking?
14. What is the swoon theory? Present an argument against the swoon theory.
15. Why is *The Passover Plot* an unlikely alternative to the resurrection hypothesis?
16. What did Dr. Simon Greenleaf, Royal Professor of Law at Harvard, say about the theory that Jesus' disciples stole his body?
17. Why is it absurd to postulate that the Roman or Jewish authorities stole the body?
18. Why is it highly unlikely that the resurrection story is a result of the women going to the wrong tomb?
19. Why is the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ significant? What evidence suggests that Jesus did not merely appear as a ghost, phantom, or spirit?
20. What is the likelihood that the resurrection appearances of Jesus were hallucinations? Identify some problems with the hallucination theory?
21. Why is the Talpiot Tomb not the family tomb of Jesus Christ?
22. What did the Jesus Seminar seek to accomplish? How did John Dominic Crossan attempt to refute the resurrection hypothesis? How would you respond to Crossan's argument in a debate?

23. Describe the different versions of the Jesus twin theory. What issues does the twin theory fail to adequately address?
24. Identify the key differences between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and pagan myths about dying and rising gods. Why is it a false accusation to say that Christianity plagiarized from pagan mythology to establish the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
25. How would you respond to someone who believes that Jesus Christ never existed?
26. Do you believe Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead? Explain

Chapter Ten
A Life under Construction

1. What arguments presented in this book were the most convincing to you?
2. What issues would you like to research further?

CHAPTER ONE:
WHY STUDY PHILOSOPHY & APOLOGETICS?

[1] Sarah Palin made this statement in a 2006 gubernatorial debate. Palin's quote is restated and criticized by Michael Lang in *The Lang Report*; August 23, 2008. www.thelangreport.com

[2] www.thelangreport.com

[3] J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 13.

[4] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), p. 14.

[5] The Barna Group. *Most Twenty Somethings Put Christianity On The Shelf Following Spiritually Active Teen Years.* (Ventura, California: September 2006) www.barna.org

[6] William Barclay. *The Letters of John and Jude.* (Revised Edition). (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), pp. 169-173.

[7] William Barclay. *The Letters of John and Jude.* (Revised Edition). (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), p. 179.

[8] J. P. Moreland. *Love Your God With All Your Mind.* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1997), p. 27.

[9] Ted Cabal. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* "*Notable Christian Apologist: C.S. Lewis.*" (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), p. 1827.

[10] Josh McDowell. *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), pp. xxiii-xxvii.

[11] Lee Strobel. *The Case For Christ.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), pp. 14-15.

[12] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 18.

CHAPTER TWO:
EPISTEMOLOGY
The Pillar of Knowledge

[1] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 71. Moreland and Craig introduce the problem of skepticism in Chapter Three: Knowledge and Rationality. They explain and critique more thoroughly the philosophy of Skepticism in Chapter 4: The Problem of Skepticism.

[2] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 131-152. Moreland and Craig provide a thorough analysis of the arguments for and against the correspondence theory of truth. They also critique the coherence theory, pragmatic theory, redundancy theory, and postmodern theory.

[3] Garrett DeWeese. "*How Can We Know Anything At All?*" Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), p. 1766. Propositional Knowledge, Knowledge by Acquaintance and Know How Knowledge are three standard types of knowledge discussed in introductory epistemology courses. Dr. DeWeese was my professor at Talbot School of Theology for Epistemology I and II.

[4] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 73.

[5] Edmund L. Gettier, *"Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" Analysis 23* (1963), pp. 121-123.

[6] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 73-74.

[7] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 75. Moreland and Craig discuss possible solutions to the Gettier problem. They offer a much more detailed account of the Gettier problem and how it may possibly be resolved. Regardless of the solution one chooses, the point is that skepticism is self-refuting and at least three possible solutions to the Gettier problem are offered for consideration.

[8] J. P. Moreland. *Love Your God With All Your Mind.* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1997), p. 37.

[9] William Barclay. *The Gospel of Matthew: Volume 2.* (Revised Edition). (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), p. 105.

[10] William Barclay. *The Gospel of John: Volume 2.* (Revised Edition). (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), pp. 207-209.

[11] William Barclay. *The Letter to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians.* (Revised Edition). (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), p. 63.

CHAPTER THREE:
RESPONDING TO POSTMODERNISM
Establishing the Pillar of Truth

[1] Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olsen. *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 15-23. Grenz and Olsen present a detailed analysis of the impact the Age of Reason had upon contemporary theology and philosophy.

[2] Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olsen. *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), pp. 15-23. Grenz and Olsen explain in detail the progression towards autonomy in the Age of Reason. The value of autonomy in the Age of Reason has certainly impacted our society which has taken the giant leap of individualizing truth and morality in the form of postmodernism.

[3] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 149. Moreland and Craig present a clear distinction between rational and psychological objectivity. They argue for a modernist view of objectivity: rational objectivity. They also present practical problems with psychological objectivity.

[4] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 146.

[5] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 150.

[6] Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Planted Firmly In Midair.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), pp.143-146; 151-152.

[7] C.S. Lewis. *Mere Christianity.* (New York, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1943), p. 14.

[8] Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Planted Firmly In Midair.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), pp.149-150.

[9] John Piper. *Desiring God: Meditations of A Christian Hedonist.* (20-Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 2003), p. 31.

[10] William Barclay. *The Gospel of John: Volume 2.* (Revised Edition). (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), pp. 21-22.

CHAPTER FOUR:
ARGUMENTS FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE
The Pillar of God

[1] Austin J. Freely. *Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking For Reasoned Decision Making.* (Eighth Edition). (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993), p. 2.

[2] Ben Stein. *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed.* (Premise Media Corporation, 2008).

[3] William Lane Craig. *Reasonable Faith. (Third Edition).* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2008), p. 24. "The goal of offensive apologetics is to show that there is some good reason to think that Christianity is true, while the goal of defensive apologetics is to show that no good reason has been given to think that Christianity is false."

[4] John F. Wippel and Allen B. Wolder, O.F.M. (editors). *Medieval Philosophy from St. Augustine to Nicholas of Cusa.* (Tampa, Florida: The Free Press, 1969).

[5] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 555.

[6] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 555.

[7] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 468.

[8] William Lane Craig. *"Philosophical and Scientific Pointers to Creatio ex Nihilo," Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 32 (March 1980), p. 5.

[9] Carl Sagan. *Cosmos.* (New York: Random, 1979), p. 4.

[10] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 28-30.

[11] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 723-725.

[12] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 723-725.

[13] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 723-725.

[14] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 34-35. J.P. Moreland illustrates the law of entropy with "the cup of coffee" analogy. The second law of thermodynamics implies that a hot cup of coffee will cool off and the temperature will move toward a state of uniform energy distribution.

[15] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 120-122.

[16] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 366. See Geisler's presentation on an infinite series of causes.

[17] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 42.

[18] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 42.

[19] William Paley. *"The Argument From Design." Natural Theology.* (1802).

[20] Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 20.

[21] www.nps.gove/archive/mory/park_history/carving_hist/carving_history.htm

[22] Lee Strobel, *The Case For A Creator.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan), p. 229. "Consider what you would need for a protein molecule to form by chance. First, you need the right bonds between the amino acids. Second, amino acids come in right-handed and left-handed versions, and you've got to get the left-handed ones. Third, the amino acids must link up in a specified sequence, like letters in a sentence. Run the odds of these falling into place on their own and you'd find the probabilities of forming a rather short functional protein at random would be one chance in a hundred thousand trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion. That's ten with 125 zeros after it." "And this would only be one protein molecule – a minimal complex cell would need between

three hundred and five hundred protein molecules. Plus, all of this would have to be accomplished in a mere 100 million years." "To suggest chance against those odds is really to invoke a naturalistic miracle … since the 1960's, scientists have been reluctant to say that chance played any significant role in the origin of DNA or proteins."

[23] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 574. "The human eyeball alone would suffice to demonstrate intelligent design in nature. Paley ransacked Kiell's *Anatomy* for illustrations of adaptations of means to end in nature, including the bones and muscles of human beings and their equivalents in the animal world."

[24] www.lasik-tec.com (7/18/06)

[25] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), p. 75.

[26] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), p. 75.

[27] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), p. 62.

[28] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 482-483.

[29] Paul C. Davies. *The Accidental Universe.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 90.

[30] Michael J. Behe. Darwin's Black Box. (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 39, 40-48.

[31] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), p. 88.

[32] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), pp.88-89.

[33] Charles Darwin. *On The Origin of Species.* (New York: New American Library, 1958, reprinted from 1859), p. 80.

[34] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 61-63, 66-67, 261, 314, 325, 483, 500.

[35] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 548.

[36] William B. Provine. *Darwinism: Science or Naturalistic Philosophy.* Debate with Phillip E. Johnson. (Stanford University: April 30, 1994).

[37] David Hume. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merril, 1962).

[38] Lee Strobel. *The Case For A Creator.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan), pp. 138-140
J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 487-490.

[39] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 487-490. Moreland and Craig critique the many worlds hypothesis and apply Ockham's razor to the theory.

[40] Charles Darwin. *On The Origin of Species.* (New York: New American Library, 1958, reprinted from 1859), p. 241.

[41] Charles Darwin. *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex.* (New York: New York; D. Appleton, 1896).

[42] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 181-186. See Geisler's presentation of Charles Darwin's theological beliefs and scientific discoveries. Geisler says that Darwin was an agnostic and clearly denies ever being an atheist. He also shows that Darwin was a proponent of studying creation and evolution together and balancing the facts and arguments for both sides equally. Darwin's plea to teach both in pursuit of truth is not the same position held by natural evolutionists today.

[43] William G. Lycan and George N. Schlesinger, *"You Bet Your Life: Pascal's Wager Defended,"* in *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*, (eds. R. Douglas Geivett and Brendan Sweetman) (Oxford University Press, 1992). The following assessment of Pascal's wager is an adaptation of Lycan and Schlesinger's article.

[44] Stephen M. Cahn. *"The Irrelevance to Religion of Philosophic Proofs for the Existence of God,"* in *Philosophy of Religion*, (ed. Stephen M. Cahn) (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 239-245.

[45] Bertrand Russell. *Why I Am Not A Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects.* (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE SOUL
The Pillar of Consciousness

[1] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 243.

[2] Rene Descartes. *The Distinction Between the Mind and the Body of Man. The Philosophical Works of Descartes.* Translated by Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T Ross (London, England: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

[3] J. P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae. *Body and Soul.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), pp. 20-21; 200-201.

[4] J. P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae. *Body and Soul.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), pp. 28-35. Moreland and Rae discuss the different Hebrew and Greek renderings for soul and spirit.

[5] J. P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae. *Body and Soul.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), pp. 202-203.

[6] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 243-244.

[7] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 79. J.P. Moreland presents a clear distinction between substance dualism and property dualism.

[8] Thomas Huxley. *Methods and Results, Essays by Thomas Huxley.* (New York, New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1968), pp. 216-245.

[9] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 79-80.

[10] D.M. Armstrong. *A Materialist Theory of the Mind.* (London, England: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 73-90.

[11] Paul M. Churchland. *Matter and Consciousness.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1984), pp. 26-34; 43-49.

[12] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), p. 177.

[13] Ben Stein. *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed.* (Premise Media Corporation, 2008).

[14] Interview of Michael Ruse by Paul Comstock. (April 3, 2007). www.calitreview.com

[15] Ben Stein. *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed.* (Premise Media Corporation, 2008).

[16] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 100-101.

[17] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 101.

[18] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 101.

[19] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 101.

[20] J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 102.

[21] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 238-240. Moreland and Craig present first person perspective, personal identity, and libertarian free will as arguments supporting the substance dualist position. An argument for the soul based on origins is found in *Scaling The Secular City*, pp. 96-103.

[22] Daniel Dennett. *Quining Qualia.* (A. Goldman, ed.) *Readings in Philosophy and Cognitive Science*, (MIT Press, 1993).

[23] John Searle. *Minds, Brains and Science* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 32-33.

CHAPTER SIX:
FREE WILL
The Pillar of Freedom

[1] Aristotle. *"De Interpretatione (On Interpretation)."* Translated by E.M. Edghill. *The Basic Works of Aristotle.* Edited by Richard McKeon. (New York, New York: Random House, 1941), pp. 38-61.

[2] Dr. David Ciocchi, philosophy professor at Biola University, inspired me to reconcile the tension between determinism and libertarianism with the teachings of the Bible.

[3] Richard Taylor. *Metaphysics,* (Second Edition). (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974), pp. 58-68.

[4] Jastrow, Robert. *God and the Astronomers.* (New York, New York: Warner Books, 1980), p. 17.

[5] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), pp. 203-208.

[6] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 270.

[7] Gregory A. Boyd and Edward K. Boyd. *Letters From A Skeptic.* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Chariot Victor, 1994), p. 30.

[8] David Bassinger. *The Case For Free Will Theism.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), pp. 32-37. Bassinger claims that Freewill theists differ from Process theists. Process Theology (Alfred Whitehead) says that God is at every moment taking a risk and is subject to surprise. God cannot unilaterally guarantee to any extent that what He has determined should occur in our world will in fact come about. Freewill theists, however, disagree with Process theists on this important point. Freewill theists believe that God can, at least to some extent, unilaterally guarantee that what occurs in this world is what He has determined. Bassinger also accounts for different views among Freewill theists about God's foreknowledge, providence, the after life, and ethical decision making utilized by God.

[9] Gregory A. Boyd and Edward K. Boyd. *Letters From A Skeptic.* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Chariot Victor, 1994), p. 30.

[10] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 269-270. Moreland and Craig present a clear distinction between hard compatibilism and soft compatibilism.

[11] Millard J. Erickson. Christian Theology (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 927-934. Erickson highlights the key differences between Calvinism and Arminianism.

[12] Thomas P. Flint. *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account.* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998). Flint presents a very thorough account of Molinism. He discusses God's three types of knowledge: natural, middle, and free in much more detail.

[13] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 282.

[14] Alfred Mele. *Autonomous Agents: From Control to Autonomy.* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[15] As Christians, we must acknowledge that the Bible affirms both the sovereignty of God and the libertarian freewill of man. Some theologians are content with accepting the antinomy position. J.I. Packer. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1961).

CHAPTER SEVEN:
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL
The Pillar of Explaining the Presence of Evil

[1] David Hume. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.* (Edited with an introduction by Norman Kemp Smith). (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill, 1980), part 10, p. 190.

[2] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 206.

[3] C.S Lewis. *God in the Dock.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 22.

[4] David Bassinger. *The Case For Free Will Theism.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

[5] Gregory A. Boyd and Edward K. Boyd. *Letters From A Skeptic.* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Chariot Victor, 1994), p. 30.

[6] Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 221. As quoted in Millard J. Erickson's *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 442.

[7] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 442-444.

[8] Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 222. As quoted in Millard J. Erickson's *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 442.

[9] Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 237-238. As quoted in Millard J. Erickson's *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 443.

[10] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 443.

[11] Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 239-240. As presented by Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 442-443.

[12] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 442-444.

[13] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 445.

[14] George L. Abernathy and Thomas L. Langford. *Philosophy of Religion: A Book of Readings.* (New York, New York: The McMillen Co., 1968), p. 432.

[15] Walter Martin. *The Kingdom of the Cults.* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1997), p. 275.

[16] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 60.

[17] R. Douglas Geivett. *Evil And The Evidence For God.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993). Doug Geivett analyzes the Augustinian tradition and compares it to John Hick's theodicy. Geivett concludes that the Augustinian tradition is the best approach to resolving the problem of evil from an orthodox Christian perspective.

[18] Augustine. *Confessions and Enchiridion*, translated by Albert C. Outler. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, MCMLV).

[19] Augustine. *Confessions and Enchiridion*, translated by Albert C. Outler. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, MCMLV).

[20] Augustine. *Confessions and Enchiridion*, translated by Albert C. Outler. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, MCMLV).

[21] C.S. Lewis. *Mere Christianity.* (New York, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1943).

[22] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 725.

[23] Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae.* (Edited by Anton C. Pegas). Introduction to Thomas Aquinas (New York, New York: Modern Library, 1948), p. 1a.2.3.

[24] Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae.* (Edited by Anton C. Pegas). Introduction to Thomas Aquinas (New York, New York: Modern Library, 1948), p. 1a.2.3.

[25] Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), p. 220. Geisler distinguishes between a mere absence and a privation by using the analogy of the absence of sight. The absence of sight in a rock is a mere absence because rocks are not meant to see. The absence of sight in a human being is a privation because humans are meant to see.

[26] R. Douglas Geivett. *Evil And The Evidence For God.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 20.

[27] R. Douglas Geivett. *Evil And The Evidence For God.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 20.

[28] R. Douglas Geivett. *Evil And The Evidence For God.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 22.

[29] R. Douglas Geivett. *Evil And The Evidence For God.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 22.

[30] Pierre Bayle. *Historical and Critical Dictionary: Selections.* (Translated by Richard H. Popkin). (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merril, 1965), p. 298.

[31] Benson Mates. *The Philosophy of Leibniz: Metaphysics and Language* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 33.

[32] Gottfried W. Leibniz. *Theodicee*, in *Philosophy of Religion*, (Edited by George L. Abernathy and Thomas A. Langford). (New York, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), p. 437.

[33] Gottfried W. Leibniz. *Theodicee*, in *Philosophy of Religion*, (Edited by George L. Abernathy and Thomas A. Langford). (New York, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), pp. 436-437.

[34] Gottfried W. Leibniz. *Theodicee*, in *Philosophy of Religion*, (Edited by George L. Abernathy and Thomas A. Langford). (New York, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), pp. 436-437.

[35] R. Douglas Geivett. *Evil And The Evidence For God.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 22-28. Geivett presents a thorough explanation of Leibniz's solution to the problem of evil.

[36] C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain.* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins Publishers; 1996), p. XII.

[37] C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain.* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins Publishers; 1996), p. 48.

[38] C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain.* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins Publishers; 1996), p. 70.

[39] C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain.* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins Publishers; 1996), p. 50.

[40] C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain.* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins Publishers; 1996), p. 28.

[41] C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain.* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins Publishers; 1996), p. 3.

[42] John Hick. *An Irenaean Theodicy.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 41.

[43] R. Douglas Geivett. *Evil And The Evidence For God.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 226-227.

[44] John Hick. *An Irenaean Theodicy.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 41.

[45] John Hick. *An Irenaean Theodicy.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 43.

[46] John Hick. *An Irenaean Theodicy.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 43.

[47] John Hick. *An Irenaean Theodicy.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 46.

[48] John Hick. *An Irenaean Theodicy.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 48.

[49] John Hick. *Death and Eternal Life.* (San Francisco, California: Harper & Row, 1976).

[50] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 69.

[51] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 69-70.

[52] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 70.

[53] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 75.

[54] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 70.

[55] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 70-71.

[56] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 70.

[57] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 71.

[58] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 71.

[59] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 72.

[60] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 72.

[61] Stephen Davis. *Encountering Evil.* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 72-80.
Stephen Davis answers three objections to his solution to the problem of evil.

[62] Alvin C. Plantinga. *God, Freedom, and Evil.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 2001), p. 84.

[63] Alvin C. Plantinga. *God, Freedom, and Evil.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 2001), p. 84.

[64] Gregory E. Ganssle. "*How Can God Be All Powerful and Be Loving and Yet There Be Evil?*" Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), p. 736-737. Gregory Ganssle uses the example of Lazarus' death to demonstrate how evil is sometimes better understood in retrospect.

[65] Tony Campolo. *It's Friday, But Sunday's Comin'* (W. Publishing Group, 1984).

CHAPTER EIGHT:
ETHICS
The Pillar of Applied Morality

[1] Plato. *The Republic of Plato. "The Myth of Gyges."* Translated by F.M. Cornford. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

[2] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), p. 52.

[3] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), p. 15.
Scott Rae acknowledges that some people use the terms "morality" and "ethics" interchangeably. However, he points out a technical difference: morality refers to the actual content of right and wrong and ethics refers to the process of determining right and wrong.

[4] Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Planted Firmly In Midair.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), pp.156-164. Beckwith and Koukl identify the problems of naturalism's explanations for moral behavior. "Recent studies have attempted to show that animals exhibit rudimentary moral behavior. In one case, a group of chimpanzees 'punished' Bongo, a 'selfish' member of their band, by withholding food from him. Apparently the moral rule was this: Chimps shouldn't be selfish" (p. 160).

[5] Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), pp. 256-259.

[6] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), pp. 50-51. Sean McDowell addresses the problems with morality from a naturalistic evolutionary perspective. He demonstrates how the naturalistic evolutionary theory fails to account for morality.

[7] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), pp. 50-51. Sean McDowell addresses the problems with morality being determined by social contracts. He demonstrates how the social contract theory fails to account for morality.

[8] C.S. Lewis. *Mere Christianity.* (New York, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1943), p.18.

[9] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), pp. 50-51. McDowell argues, "It is impossible to arrive at an objective, universal, and constant standard of truth and morality without bringing God onto the stage. The existence of morality points to the absolute of God's existence and character." This is a common argument among Christian philosophers. C.S. Lewis, J.P. Moreland, William Lane Craig, Charles Colson, Scott Rae, Francis Beckwith, and Greg Koukl would all agree with McDowell that God is the best explanation for objective morality.

[10] C.S. Lewis. *Mere Christianity.* (New York, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1943), p.21.

[11] S.I. McMillen, M.D. and David Stern, M.D. *None of These Diseases.* (Revised Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000).

[12] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 77-102.

[13] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 105-111.

[14] While abortion is the termination of a pregnancy involving the expulsion of an embryo or fetus, partial birth abortions have also occurred. A partial birth abortion is the termination of the life of a baby as it is being born. The slippery slope leads to infanticide: the termination of the life of an unwanted infant.

[15] Nigel Cameron. *"What Does The Bible Say About Abortion"* Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), pp. 908-909.

[16] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 129-130.

[17] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 129-131.

[18] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), pp. 79-80.

[19] Umberto Cassuto. *Commentary on the Book of Exodus.* (Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, 1967).

[20] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 131-132.

[21] Hank Hanegraaff. *"Annihilating Abortion Arguments"* (www.equip.org).

[22] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), p. 104. McDowell suggests that women who are contemplating having an abortion should consider adoption as a double blessing. "Not only will the life of a precious unborn human being be saved, but a family will be eternally blessed as well, as my family has been with the adoption of my sister Heather."

[23] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), p. 252.

[24] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), p. 252.

[25] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), p. 500.

[26] William Barclay: *The Gospel of John: Volume 1* (Revised Edition). (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1975), p. 97.

[27] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), p. 78. Geisler and Howe make a distinction between the Hebrew words (*ratsach*) murder and (*harag*) kill. They also point differences in the phrasing of the KJV and NIV. They appeal to the distinction between murder and kill to answer the question, "How could God command people not to kill, and then, in Exodus 21:12, command that murderers be put to death?"

[28] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), p. 187.

[29] G.N. Stanton. *"Sermon on the Mount/Plain." Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels.* (Edited by Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight). (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 742.

[30] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), pp. 395-396.

[31] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), pp. 395-396.

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[35] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), pp. 400.

[36] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), p. 183.

[37] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 184-185. Scott Rae identifies the different categories of euthanasia: active, passive, and physician assisted suicide.

[38] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), p. 184.

[39] Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl. *Relativism: Feet Planted Firmly In Midair.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), pp.122-125.

[40] Scott B. Rae. *What Does The Bible Say About Homosexuality?* Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), pp. 1716-1717.

[41] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), pp. 112-116. Sean McDowell analyzes the experiments that claim to have proved that homosexuality is biological. Every experiment that has ever been conducted that has made such a claim has not been duplicated with the same results.

[42] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), pp. 114.

[43] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), p. 114.

[44] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), p. 114.

[45] Sean McDowell. *Ethix: Being Bold In A Whatever World.* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing, 2006), pp. 115-116.

[46] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), p.416.

[47] William Barclay. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians.* (Revised Edition). (Louisville, Kentucky: The John Knox Press, 1976), p. 172. William Barclay provides a comparative analysis between Paul's teachings on marriage in 1 Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 5.

[48] *Dateline NBC.* (January, 2001).

[49] William Barclay. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians.* (Revised Edition). (Louisville, Kentucky: The John Knox Press, 1976), p. 172.

[50] "Divorce statistics collection: Summary of findings so far," Americans for Divorce Reform. www.divorcereform.org.

[51] www.divorcerate.org.

[52] B. A. Robinson. *"U.S. Divorce Rates For Various Faiths Groups, Age Groups, and Geographic Areas."* (July 20, 2009). www.religioustollerance.org.

[53] Michael McManus. *Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends and family Avoid Divorce.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995). Also see Charles Colson. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale Publishing House, 1999), p. 327.

[54] John Rossomando, "*Born-Again Christians No More Immune to Divorce Than Others, Says Author,*" CNS News, (January 21, 2002).

[55] R.H. Stein. *"Divorce." Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels.* (Edited by Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight). (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 194.

[56] J.W. Shepard. *The Christ of the Gospels.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1946), p. 452.

[57] Barack Obama. *"Call To Renewal."* (Washington D.C.: June 28, 2006).
"And even if we did have only Christians in our midst, if we expelled every non-Christian from the United States of America, whose Christianity would we teach in the schools? Would we go with James Dobson's or Al Sharpton's? Which passages of Scripture should guide our public policy? Should we go with Leviticus, which suggests slavery is ok and that eating shellfish is an abomination? How

about Deuteronomy, which suggests stoning your child if he strays from the faith? Or should we just stick to the Sermon on the Mount - a passage that is so radical that it's doubtful that our own Defense Department would survive its application? So before we get carried away, let's read our Bibles. Folks haven't been reading their Bibles."

[58] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), pp. 509-510.

[59] Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), pp. 509-510.

[60] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), pp. 148-149.

[61] Scott B. Rae. *Moral Choices.* (Second Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 253-255.

CHAPTER NINE:
THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST
Pillar of Miracle

[1] W. Grinton Berry. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 2000).

[2] Lee Strobel. *The Case For Christ.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), pp. 248-249.
Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), pp. 136-138

[3] Josh McDowell. *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), pp. 33-68. The three tests for biblical reliability were presented by Josh McDowell in his original edition of *Evidence That Demands A Verdict.*

[4] Josh McDowell. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict, revised edition.* (San Bernardino, California: Here's Life, 1979), pp. 38 and 43.
J.P. Moreland. *Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 135.

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[6] Norman E. Geisler. "*Has the Bible Been Accurately Copied Down Through the Centuries?*" Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), pp. 468-469.

[7] Frederick Kenyon. *The Bible and Archaeology.* (New York, New York: Harper and Row, 1940).

[8] Recent challenges to the original authorship of the Gospels have resurfaced in the writings of Bart Ehrman. Serious scholars should compare the conclusions of Bart Ehrman in *Lost Scriptures*, *Lost Christianities* and *Jesus Interrupted* with Josh McDowell's *New Evidence That Demands A Verdict.*

[9] *The Open Bible Commentary, Expanded Edition.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publisher; 1985), pp. 959, 996, 1021.

[10] Josh McDowell. *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), p. 52. McDowell compares the early conservative dates for the authorship of the Gospels with the late liberal dates for authorship of the Gospels. McDowell demonstrates why it is reasonable to affirm the early dates of Gospel authorship.

[11] *The Open Bible Commentary, Expanded Edition.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publisher; 1985), p. 1060.

[12] The conclusions of William Foxwell Albright are explained in more detail by Josh McDowell in *New Evidence That Demands A Verdict.* Josh McDowell has been the leading Christian apologist on the issue of the reliability and trustworthiness of the biblical manuscripts. His personal journey through skepticism to Christianity via an unbiased analysis of the data is quite commendable.

[13] Josh McDowell acknowledges Dr. John A.T. Robinson's book, *Redating The New Testament*, as evidence of liberal scholars concluding that the New Testament was completed before 70 A.D. *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, p. 53.

[14] Irenaeus. *"Against Heresies," St. Irenaeus of Lyons*, translated by Dominic J. Unger. (New York, New York: Paulist Press, 1992). Against Heresies was originally written in A.D. 170. The quote is taken from Book 3, Chapter 11, Part 8.

[15] J. Ed Komoszewski, M James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2006), pp. 72, 115, 160, 210, 276. *Reinventing Jesus* presents arguments for the historical reliability of the New Testament, Church History, and Jesus Christ in light of contemporary objections made by *The Da Vinci Code,* The Jesus Seminar, and Bart Ehrman.

[16] Not all scholars agree that the manuscripts agree with one another in history and theology. Some scholars have gone to great lengths to demonstrate manuscript disagreements regarding the historicity and theology of the New Testament. See Bart Ehrman, *Jesus Interrupted.* (New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009).

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[18] Richard L. Purtill. *Defining Miracles.* Douglas Geivett and Gary Habermas, editors. *In Defense of Miracles.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997), p. 65.

[19] H.E.G. Paulus. *The Life of Jesus.* (Heidelberg, Germany: C.F. Winter, 1828).

[20] William D. Edwards, M.D. *"On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." Journal of the American Medical Association,* 255:11, March 21, 1986, p. 1463. Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 123.

[21] Hugh Schonfield. *The Passover Plot.* (New York, New York: The Disinformation Co., originally 1965, republished 2005). Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 124.

[22] Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 124.

[23] Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 124.

[24] Kirsopp Lake. *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (London, England: Williams and Norgate, 1907), pp. 247-79. Also see: Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 126. Lee Strobel. *The Case For Christ.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), p. 221.

[25] Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 125.

[26] Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 123.

[27] Richard C. Carrier. *"The Spiritual Body of Christ," Empty Tomb.* Edited by Robert M. Price and Jeffery Jay Lowder. (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2005), p. 156.
Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), p. 141.

[28] Simcha Jacobovici and Charles Peligrino. *The Jesus Family Tomb.* (San Francisco, California: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007).

[29] *Biola Professors Respond to the "Lost Tomb of Jesus."* www.biola.edu/news/articles/070305_tombresponse.cfm

[30] *Biola Professors Respond to the "Lost Tomb of Jesus."* www.biola.edu/news/articles/070305_tombresponse.cfm

[31] Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), pp. 148-151.

[32] www. answers.org/news/article.php?story=20070307145346542 (April 17, 2007).

[33] William Lane Craig. *"Did Jesus Rise From The Dead?" Jesus Under Fire,* edited by Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), p. 142.

[34] William Lane Craig. *"Did Jesus Rise From The Dead?" Jesus Under Fire,* edited by Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), pp. 147-152.

[35] www.gospel-mysteries.net/resurrection-theories.html.

[36] Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy. *The Jesus Mysteries* (New York, New York: Three Rivers, 1999), p. 9.
Also see Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), p. 157.

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J. Ed Komoszewski, M James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2006), p. 250.

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[40] Plutarch. *Moralia*, translated by Frank Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1936), 5:32. J. Ed Komoszewski, M James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2006), p. 252.

[41] Edwin Yamauchi. *"Easter Myth, Hallucination, or History?"* part 1, p. 5. See P. Lambrechts, "Les Fetes 'phrygiennes' de Cybele et d' Attis," Bulletin de "Institut Historique Belge de Rome 2.17 (1952), pp. 141-170. Also see: J. Ed Komoszewski, M James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2006), p. 254.

[42] Edwin Yamauchi. *"Easter Myth, Hallucination, or History?"* part 1, p. 5. J. Ed Komoszewski, M James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2006), p. 254.

[43] Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), pp. 167-176.
Yamauchi argues that the evidence for the authenticity of the biblical account of Jesus Christ is too strong to suggest that it developed over time or was plagiarized from Mithraism. Piece by piece, Yamauchi destroys the recent popular theory that Christianity stole from Mithraism.

[44] Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), p. 169.

[45] Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), p. 169.

[46] Ronald Nash. *The Gospel and the Greeks* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R, 2003), pp. 10-11. as stated in Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), p. 169. J. Ed Komoszewski, M James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2006), p. 257.

[47] Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), pp. 171-173. The following arguments against the connection between Mithraism and Jesus come from the interview between Lee Strobel and Edwin Yamauchi.

[48] E.J. Yarnold. *"Two Notes on Mithraic Liturgy," Mithras: Bullitin of the Society for Mithraic Studies* (1974), p. 1. as quoted in Lee Strobel. *The Case For the Real Jesus.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), p. 169.

[49] Edwin Yamauchi. *"Jesus Outside the New Testament: What is the Evidence?," Jesus Under Fire,* edited by Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), pp. 221-222.

CHAPTER TEN:
A LIFE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

No Notes or Citations

APPENDIX A:
THE TRINITY

[1] James Montgomery Boice. *Foundations of the Christian Faith.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 109.

[2] Theandros, vol. 3, Fall 2005. www.theandros.com/htrinity.html
"The term Trinity is not mentioned in the Bible itself. The use of this term appears for the first time in the writings of Theophilus of Antioch (170 AD), who writes: 'In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries, are types of the Trinity [*Τριάδος*], of God, and His Word, and His wisdom. And the fourth is the type of man, who needs light, that so there may be God, the Word, wisdom, man' (Theophilus 101, bk. II). Although the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are used in earlier writings and liturgies, the shorthand term Trinity is coined from Greek to describe the triune God at a later time."

[3] Tertullian. *Against Praxeas.* Chapters 2 and 3.

[4] Everett F. Harrison, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Carl F.H. Henry. *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1996), p. 268

[5] Douglas K. Blount *"The Trinity: Is It Possible That God Be Both One and Three"* Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), pp. 1459-1460.

[6] Douglas K. Blount *"The Trinity: Is It Possible That God Be Both One and Three"* Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), pp. 1459-1460.

[7] Douglas K. Blount *"The Trinity: Is It Possible That God Be Both One and Three"* Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), pp. 1459-1460.

[8] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), p. 90.

[9] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 594. Moreland and Craig argue for the eternality of God's plurality in order for God to possess the eternal attribute of love because love is only possible in a subject-object relationship.

[10] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 593-594.

[11] J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), p. 594.

[12] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), p. 90.

APPENDIX B:
THE INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST

[1] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), p. 228.

[2] James A. Parker III. *"Could God Become A Man Without Ceasing To Be God?"* Ted Cabal, ed. *The Apologetics Study Bible.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), pp. 1776-1777.
Thomas Morris. *The Logic of God Incarnate.* (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986).

[3] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 753-754.

[4] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 751-752.

[5] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), p. 229.

[6] W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, (Second Edition). (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1980).
[7] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), pp. 230-231.

APPENDIX C:
THE VIRGIN BIRTH

[1] Charles M. Shulz. *A Charlie Brown Christmas.* Produced by Lee Mendelson and directed by Bill Melendez, 1965.

[2] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 758-759.

[3] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 760.

[4] Plutarch, *Numa.* As stated in Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 769.

[5] Hank Hanegraaff. *The Complete Bible Answer Book.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2008), p. 216.

[6] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 759. See Millard Erickson's complete summary of the Catholic versus Protestant debate on the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

[7] Norman Geisler and Ralph E. Mackenzie. *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995), pp. 300-308. See Geisler and Mackenzie's complete argument on the theory that Jesus had brothers.

[8] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 772.

[9] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 772.

[10] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 764.

[11] Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology (Second Edition).* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 765.

[12] A.C. McGiffert. *The Apostles' Creed: It's Origin, Its Purpose, and Its Historical Interpretation* (New York, New York: Scribner, 1902), pp. 122-128.

[13] A.C. McGiffert. *The Apostles' Creed: It's Origin, Its Purpose, and Its Historical Interpretation* (New York, New York: Scribner, 1902), pp. 122-128.





The Christian worldview is under a great philosophical attack today. Unfortunately, many Christians are unprepared for challenges aimed at causing their personal faith to crumble. *Constructing A Christian Worldview* is designed to help Christians understand the philosophical pillars of the Christian worldview in a way that will help them withstand the scrutiny of philosophical persecution and defend the Christian faith.

Patrick A. Mesisca III is a pastor, high school theology and debate teacher, and guest speaker. A graduate of Biola University and Talbot School of Theology, Mesisca explains the deepest philosophical arguments in practical terms for everyone to comprehend and discuss. If you are a Christian young person preparing for college, a new convert to the Christian faith or someone who desires to strengthen his or her understanding of the philosophical issues of the Christian worldview, *Constructing A Christian Worldview* introduces readers to Christian philosophy and apologetics with a biblical foundation.

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