

Northview University: Worldviews 101

“Learning to Love God with Your Worldview”

Session 5:

“Discerning Deficiencies in Other Worldviews”

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Introduction

- A. The worldview of Christian Theism (“biblical Christianity”)
- B. Alternative worldviews
 1. Theistic worldviews (worldviews that affirm a god or God) [session 3]
 - a. Deism
 - b. Pantheism (and New Age)
 - c. Sects and Cults
 - d. Islam
 2. Non-Theistic worldviews (worldviews that deny God) [session 4]
 - a. Secular Humanism (Modernism)
 - b. Nihilism
 - c. Existentialism
 - d. Postmodernism
- C. Describing vs. Responding.
- D. Worldviews, “Proof,” and “Disproof.”
 1. Session 5 “Discerning Deficiencies in Other Worldviews”
 2. Session 6: “Defending the Truth of the Christian Worldview”
- E. “Apologetics” (Greek word *apologia*)
 1. 2 Pet 3:15 “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to ***make a defense*** to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.” (NASV) (Also see Acts 22:1; 24:10; 26:12.)

New International Version: “Always be prepared to ***give an answer***”
King James Version: “... be ready always to ***give an answer***”
New King James Version: “always be ready to **give a defense**”
The Message: “... Be ready to **speak up and tell**”
 2. The Greek word *apologia* (< *apo*=from; *logia*=reason) basically means to give a reasoned _____ . (cf. The *Apology* of Plato)

I. The Nature of Christian “Apologetics”

A. **Negative Apologetics:** Replying to specific accusations or criticisms of God’s revealed worldview to show that Christianity is NOT _____.

1. E.g. The Egyptians thought that Moses’s staff turning to a snake was mere magic (Ex. 7:9-12).
2. E.g. The disciples of Jesus were accused of stealing Jesus’ body (Matt 28:11-15).
3. E.g. Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul, ruler of demons (Matt 12:22-29).
4. E.g. Festus accuses Paul of being insane (Acts 24:22-32).
5. E.g. The apostles accused of following “cleverly devised tales” or fables (2 Pet 1:16-21).
6. E.g. The implied charge that scripture is just a “matter of one’s own interpretation” (2 Pet 1:20-21).
7. E.g. The claim that Christians “all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar [the state]” (Acts 17:5-8).
8. E.g. The problem of evil: The accusation that the existence of evil is incompatible with the existence of an all good, all powerful, and all knowing God.

B. **Positive Apologetics:** Attempting to show that Christianity is _____.

1. Evidences in nature.

- a. Ps 19:1-6 “The heavens are telling the glory of God ...” (cf. Ps 8:1-9).
- b. Rom 1:18-32 “... Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse....”

2. Miracles.

- a. 1 Kings 18 Elijah vs. prophets of Baal.
- b. Ex 10:1-2 [Egyptian plagues] “... Go tell Pharaoh ... that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you may know that I am the Lord.”
- c. Jn 20:30-31 “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”
- d. Acts 2:22-24 “... Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst ... you nailed to a cross ... But God raised Him up again”
- e. 1 Cor 15:1-20 “Christ died ... was buried and ... was raised on the third day If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless.”

3. Fulfilled prophecy.

- a. Lk 24:25-27 [Resurrected Jesus on the way to Emmaus]: “And He said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’ Then

beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”

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

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

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

5. **Personal experience.**

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

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

- a. Doing what is good and profitable to humanity (Titus 3:8 “This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.”)

- b. Doing good for all (Gal 6:9-10 “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”)
- c. Showing concern for the poor and enslaved (Matt 6:1-3; 19:20-21; Lk 4:17-19; 14:12-14; Gal 2:9-11; Jm 2:1-9).
- d. Providing for one’s own (1 Tim 5:8 “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”)

C. Neutralizing Apologetics: Attempting to show that other worldviews are

_____.

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

II. Biblical Goals and Practical Guidelines

A. Stand _____ with the “full armor of God” (Eph 6:10-20).

1. Against the “schemes of the devil.”
2. Truth
3. Righteousness
4. The gospel of peace
5. Faith
6. Salvation
7. Word of God
8. Prayer

B. Be _____.

1. 1 Pet 3:15 “... always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”
2. Jude 3 “Contend earnestly for the faith.”
3. Titus 1:9 “... Be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”
4. 2 Tim 2:25 “... correcting those who are in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

C. Be _____.

D. Be _____. Often it’s as important how we say something than what we say.

1. 1 Pet. 3:15 “... with gentleness and reverence.”

2. 2 Tim 2:24-25 “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all ... with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition”
3. Jude 22 “Have mercy on some, who are doubting.”

E. Be _____. It may be best to use penetrating questions rather than worry about knowing (or not knowing) all the answers.

III. A General Strategy in Responding to Other Worldviews

- A. Analyze the worldview’s _____ implications.
- B. Compare the worldview’s position and its implications with the _____ of its advocates.
- C. Compare the worldview’s position and its implications with the actual _____ of its advocates.
- D. Ask probing _____ to expose perplexing problems. (See section VI below.)

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

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

V. Applying the General Strategy to Non-Theistic (Naturalistic) Worldviews

A. The naturalistic worldview and its **logical implications**.

1. Everything is explainable in terms of purely materialistic and impersonal causes without any cosmic intelligence.
2. Implications for meaning, ethics, etc.
3. Examples

B. **Claims** of many Secular Humanists (vs. worldview implications)

1. Humans have freedom, value, and uniqueness.
2. Human reason and science give us truth.

C. **Behavior** of many Secular Humanists (vs. worldview implications)

1. Loving, giving, gracious, etc.
2. Condemn unjust, even immoral, actions (e.g. racism, slavery, rape, child abuse).

D. The Secular Humanist worldview is _____ with the actual claims and behavior of Secular Humanists.

VI. Specific Questions and Responses to Secular Humanism & Skepticism.

A. How do you explain the _____ of the universe?

1. Eternal or non eternal
2. A dilemma for naturalists
 - a. If the universe is eternal, then science should say it's eternal. But ...
 - b. If it's not eternal, then how did it originate? Was it "self-caused"?
3. The universe BEGAN.
 - a. 19th century: universe widely held to be *eternal*.
 - b. The "Big Bang" idea (Edwin Hubble, 1929).
 - c. Initial strong resistance to the Big Bang idea.
 - (1) Arthur Eddington, a British astrophysicist, wrote, "Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of Nature is repugnant to me.... I should like to find a genuine loophole."
 - (2) Fred Hoyle disliked this model because the "big bang theory requires a recent origin of the Universe that openly invites the concept of creation" (*The Intelligent Universe*, p. 237).
 - (3) Einstein introduced a contrived constant into his general theory of relativity in order to avoid a "big bang" that was otherwise implied by his theory. (He later admitted that this was his worst "blunder.")
 - d. Eventual acceptance of Big Bang cosmology
 - (1) 1965: Penzias and Wilson unexpectedly detect a level of "background radiation" that was consistent with Big Bang cosmology.
 - (2) 1990-1993: Various satellites confirm a Big Bang idea.
 - (3) Reactions by scientists.

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

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

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

B. How do you explain the universe’s fine-tuned _____ for human life?

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

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

2. Effect on scientists, including many skeptics and atheists.
 - a. Fred Hoyle (former atheist, now agnostic):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence. I believe that this universe’s intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God” (*There is a God*, p. 88).

3. Biblical connections

- a. **Isa. 45:18** “For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited)”
- b. **Ps. 19:1-2** “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.”
- c. **Rom. 1:20** “... since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made”

C. What about the problems with Darwinian evolution (Macro-Evolution with no God or any guiding intelligence)?

1. The _____ problem (see Phillip Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*).
- a. The fossil problem (acknowledged by Darwin).

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

- b. The classic but problematic evidences for macro-evolution (see Wells, *The Icons of Evolution*).
- (1) E.g. Haeckel’s embryos
 - (2) E.g. Peppered moths
 - (3) E.g. Four-winged fruit flies
 - (4) E.g. Darwin’s finches
2. The _____ problem
- a. 19th century: earth only about 100 million years old.
- b. 20th century: Big Bang gives more age (universe 12-14 billion years; earth 4.5 billion years).
- c. But the “Cambrian explosion” occurs within about 10 million years.

3. The _____ problem
 - a. Darwin: “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down” (*Origin of Species*).
 - b. Michael Behe: “An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing, would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution.... if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on” (Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*, p. 39, emphasis added). This is Behe’s notion of “irreducible complexity.”
 - c. Note Dean Kenyon, *Of Pandas and People*. Kenyon was once a leading evolutionist and co-author of *Biochemical Predestination* (1969), a widely used textbook, but he rejected his own view because of the insurmountable problems with it.

4. The _____ problem: Naturalistic evolution has at least two, and incompatible, theories of evolution.
 - a. Gradualism (Richard Dawkins): evolution had to happen very gradually.
 - b. Punctuatedism (Stephen Gould): evolution had abrupt spurts along with long periods without much change.

5. The _____ problem and the origin of life.¹
 - a. The origin of life requires:
 - (1) The right materials (i.e., 20 amino acids).
 - (2) The right sequencing of the materials to form proteins.
 - (3) Information (and a communication system) to direct the process of sequencing (e.g. DNA).
 - b. Darwinism does not, and cannot, explain the *origin* of life; it must presuppose life for natural selection to work.
 - c. The information dilemma
 - (1) Existing information (in DNA) is necessary for life.
 - (2) But existing life is necessary for DNA.
 - (3) How did the information originate?
 - d. Living organisms possess “complex specified information” (CSI): DNA specifies the order of very complex sequences of amino acids and proteins.
 - e. Purely naturalistic processes cannot generate CSI.

¹ See the following items in the provided list of resources: Dembski and McDowell, *Understanding Intelligent Design*; Lennox, *God’s Undertaker; Has Science Buried God?*; Meyer, *Signature in the Cell*; and Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*.