

Introduction: The apologetics approach of the past is not working in today's culture

Rethinking our world:

Since Christians are viewed in a very negative light, the gospel is not viewed as credible

- Church attendance is down
- Bible engagement is down
- There is a moral decline
- Giving is at an all-time low
- Families are fractured
- Teens are abandoning the faith after high school

Rethinking our communication

- **Yesterday:** Apologetics were about what we believe and why. And it was aimed at answering the skeptic's questions.

Today: We need to aim apologetics first and foremost toward believers, especially young people.

- **Yesterday:** We needed to master facts, data, and history to intellectually prove what we believe is true.

Today: We need to model a concerned and compassionate life-style that proves that what we believe is actually relevant.

- **Yesterday:** We needed to win the debate.

Today: We need to win an audience.

- **Yesterday:** We communicated on a level playing field that presumed TRUTH was an objective reality.

Today: We communicate on the shifting sands of TRUTH as a subjective reality.

- **Yesterday:** The Church and the culture shared a general knowledge of the Bible.

Today: Both the Church and the world are biblically illiterate.

- **Yesterday:** Committed Christian men or women were admired.

Today: Committed Christian men or women have been called “dangerous”.

- **Yesterday:** We could begin with the truth and then express grace.

Today: We must begin with grace in order to share the truth.

- **Yesterday:** The moral climate and the values of major institutions like education, medicine, and the media reinforced our values.

Today: The moral climate of major institutions challenge and ridicule our faith.

What this means for you -

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope... to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you... In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.

1 Peter 1:1-4,6 (NASB)

Why I Believe

(Part 1)

Straight Answers to Honest Questions
about God, the Bible and Christianity

Rethinking Apologetics for the 21st Century

- The early Church had a living **HOPE**. 1 Peter 1:1-3
- They believed they had an **INHERITANCE**. 1 Peter 1:4, 6
- We need to be **SOBER** in our thinking. 1 Peter 1:13
1 Peter 1:14-15
- We need to have a faith that is rooted in **ETERNITY** that leads to living a **HOLY** life, which leads to a **FERVENT** love for others. 1 Peter 1:22-23
- Get rid of all **HYPOCRISY**, get rid of **ANGER**, and stop **BLAMING**. 1 Peter 2:1-2
- Have lips of **PRAISE** and **ENCOURAGEMENT**. 1 Peter 2:20-24
- The number one apologetic is your **LIFE**. It's a holy life, with an eternal perspective, that's radically loving. 1 Peter 3:8-9

We are living in a day where what Christians need to be and become are first and foremost godly, loving, kind, and winsome.

The Question:

Do you have to throw your “brains in the trash” to believe in Christ?

The Journey:

Is there intellectually feasible evidence to support a faith in the Jesus of the Bible with His claims of deity, eternal life, and absolute truth?

The Central Issue:

Christianity rises and falls on the truthfulness and reality of the resurrection.

¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

1 Corinthians 15:16-19 (NASB)

7 Reasons Why I Believe in the Resurrection:

1. Did Jesus really exist?

- Biblical manuscripts: quality and quantity
- 25,000 New Testament documents that authenticate the reality of Jesus Christ
- External verification: Josephus (Jewish historian), Pliny, Tacitus (Roman historians)

2. What was Jesus really like?

- Friend and foe agree: great man, moral teacher
- Claimed sinless life
- Affirmed by history and impact

John 8:46

3. The works of Jesus went unchallenged.

- Fact of miracles, feeding 5000 not disputed
- Eyewitness accounts validated miracles
- Critics never claimed He didn't perform miracles; they questioned His source of power to do them

Matthew 12:24

4. Who did Jesus actually claim to be?

- His own claim
- God's claim
- His followers' claim
- His enemies' claim
- External sources' claim – Pliny, AD 111
- By fulfillment of over 700 Old Testament prophecies

John 14:6
Mark 9:7
Mark 8:27-30
John 10:33

5. Did Jesus really die?

- At the time both friend and foe thought He died
- His flogging, beating, and crucifixion
- Medical evidence: water and blood indicate puncture of pericardium
- By burial preparation: 70 pounds of spices and linen

6. His burial was public and secure.

- Joseph of Arimathea's tomb: a high-profile member of the Sanhedrin
- Roman guards
- Roman seal
- Size of tombstone: would take 20 men to roll away
- Penalty of death for guards sleeping

7. Could Jesus' resurrection possibly be true?

- Predicted by Old Testament prophets hundreds of years earlier
- Jesus predicted it openly and repeatedly
- Appeared to over 500 eyewitnesses in 12 different locations over 40 days
- Transformation of the disciples
- Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
- Transformation of Roman empire and the world
- Best legal minds: the evidence is conclusive!
- My testimony: "He changed my life."

What does this mean for you?

1. It **VALIDATES** Jesus' claim that He is the way,
the truth, and the life. John 14:6

2. It gives you absolute **HOPE** for the future. John 14:19

3. It offers spiritual life **RIGHT NOW!**

For God so loved _____ that He gave His one and only Son,
your name
that if _____ believes in Him, _____
your name your name
shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn _____,
your name
but to save _____ through Him.
your name

John 3:16-17 (NIV)

4. If you believe Jesus rose from the dead, you have all the **POWER** you need to be a Christian who lives like a Christian by His grace.

Introduction: Is it intellectually feasible to believe the Bible really is God's Word?

Five crucial questions about the Bible:

1. Is the Bible the word of men or the very words of God?
2. Is the Bible full of myths, legends, and fairytales, or is it historically reliable?
3. Is ALL of the Bible true and trustworthy or only portions of it?
4. Can a Bible that has been translated so many times, for so many hundreds of years, really be accurate?
5. What makes the Bible so different from all other religious writings and their claims to truth?

7 Reasons why I believe in the Bible:

1. ARCHEOLOGY – The Bible is a HISTORICALLY ACCURATE document.

- There are over 25,000 specific places in the Old Testament alone that are verified in history.
- Historical people, places, and events can be verified.

2. REVELATION – The Bible claims to INFALLIBLY REVEAL the very words and mind of God.

- “All Scripture is God breathed...” 2 Timothy 3:16
- 3,000 inferences of divine authority: “Thus says the Lord...”

3. ORIGIN – The Bible is unique. Its ORIGIN, STRUCTURE, and UNITY argue for a supernatural authorship.

- 40 authors, 3 languages, 1,500 years
- Central theme is Jesus Christ
- 2 billion publications since AD 1455
- Who would write such an honest (even unfavorable) account of themselves? (i.e. Moses, David, Paul)

4. **JESUS** – believed the Old Testament to be the very **WORDS OF GOD** and predicted the New Testament to be likewise.

- Not just concepts or generalities Matthew 5:17-18
- Jesus' view of the resurrection is based on the tense of a verb Matthew 22:29-32
- Jesus' view of Abraham, Noah, Jonah, Adam & Eve

5. **PROPHECY** – sets the Bible apart from all **OTHER RELIGIONS**.

- *“Remember the former things... I am God, there is no other...”* Isaiah 46:9-10
- Over 300 fulfilled prophecies of Jesus as Messiah:
 - Jesus would be born of a woman Genesis 3:15
 - Jesus would be born of a virgin Isaiah 7:14
 - Crucifixion described Psalm 22

6. **TRANSMISSION** – The Bible's **PURITY** and **PERSEVERANCE** throughout the centuries is nothing short of miraculous.

- Meticulous work of the copyists and scribes
- Proximity of Manuscripts

Author	Time Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	# of Copies
Plato	427-347 BC	AD 900	1,200 years	7
Aristotle	342-322 BC	AD 1100	1,400 years	49
Homer	900 BC	400 BC	500 years	643
New Testament	AD 40-100	AD 125	25 years	24,000+

- Over 24,000 New Testament manuscripts
- Dead Sea Scrolls

7. **IMPACT** – The Bible’s **POWER** to transform lives is overwhelming.

- Chip’s experience of transformation from the Word of God
- Romans 12:2
- Psalm 119:9,11
- Jeremiah 15:16

God’s Word is **RELIABLE**. God’s Word is **CREDIBLE**. What you hold in your hand can stand up to scrutiny anywhere, at any time. The Bible is powerful; as you apply it, the Spirit of God takes the written Word, makes it the Living Word and uses it to transform your life.

7 Evidences of Life after Death:

1. Nature
2. Anthropology
3. Psychology
4. Ethics
5. Philosophy
6. Science: Near-Death Experience
7. Jesus and the Bible

Conclusion:

The cumulative evidence of nature, psychology, anthropology, science, philosophy, the Bible, the testimony of Jesus and personal experience make belief in an afterlife the most rational, plausible, and intellectually defensible conclusion to the question... *“Is there life after death?”*

What happens when a person dies?

Four basic truths

1. At death, every person's soul enters **IMMEDIATELY** and **CONSCIOUSLY** into relational aspects of eternal existence.
 - Jesus' paradigm of the Afterlife Luke 16:19-31
 - Paul's paradigm of the Afterlife 2 Corinthians 5:1-8
Philippians 1:22-24
2. One day, everyone will be **RESURRECTED** and live **FOREVER**. Acts 24:14-15
3. Every person will be **JUDGED** and granted the "extended capacity" to fulfill in eternity the deepest yearnings and desires of their heart while on earth. Hebrews 9:27
John 5:25-28
4. Every person will spend **ETERNITY** in heaven with Christ and fellow believers, or in hell **SEPARATED** from God forever. Matthew 25:46
John 5:24

A Preview of Heaven – The Great Adventure:

- God is There Revelation 21:1-3
- Warmth, Beauty, and Light, Revelation 4:1-4; 22:1-5
- Wonderful Relationships Hebrews 12:22-24
- Incredible Accommodations John 14:1-3
- A Fresh Start
 - A New Nature 1 John 3:2
 - A New Body 2 Corinthians 5:1-5
 - A New Vocation Revelation 22:5; 1 Corinthians 6:3
- Rewards 2 Corinthians 5:10
- Purpose, Complete Rest, Protection, Commitment, and Peace Revelation 21-22
- Unbridled Joy, Celebration, Worship, and Laughter Matthew 26:29
Revelation 21-22
- Learning, Growing, Friendship, Discovering the Infinite Majesty of God and His Universe (yet unrevealed to us) Revelation 5:8-9
Revelation 21-22
- Forever and ever Revelation 22:5

A Preview of Hell – The Horrible Choice:

- God is Not There 2 Thessalonians 1:9
- Punishment and Torment Revelation 14:10-11
- Varying Punishment Matthew 11:21-24
- Outer Darkness Matthew 8:12
- Weeping Matthew 8:12
- Wailing Matthew 13:40-42
- Gnashing of Teeth Luke 13:28
- Forever Hebrews 6:2, Revelation 14:11

Why there must be a Hell:

- Man's dignity and **FREEDOM** demands a Hell.
- God's holiness and **JUSTICE** demand a Hell.
- Sin's **SERIOUSNESS** demands a Hell.
- Evil's **DEFEAT** demands a Hell.

Conclusion:

Will your eternal future be a blissful **ADVENTURE** or a horrible **CHOICE**?

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the various arguments for life after death. Which are the strongest in your opinion? Why?
2. Discuss the four basic truths concerning the Bible's teaching on life after death. What was "new" to you? What was helpful? What raised questions?
3. How did this message specifically broaden your view of Heaven? Of Hell? How? Why?
4. What action step of faith do you sense God would have you take in response to this message?

Introduction:

Is it intellectually feasible to believe that the God of the Bible created the world, the universe, and all living things?

OR

Is the atheistic evolution taught in public schools the empirical, logical, proven scientific fact of how life came into existence?

Defining our terms:

Microevolution: The small changes that only happen within a species. Some examples of microevolution are the mosquito’s ability to resist DDT after years of exposure, and the ability of different bacterial strains to resist penicillin.

Macroevolution: The vertical transition between species (from one kind of species to another kind) evolving to account for all animal and human life.

Creation: The belief that God created all things out of nothing, as described in the Bible in the book of Genesis. All of life in its rich complexity happened as the result of the all-powerful, all-knowing, sovereign God of the universe who is Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

Today’s four major positions:

The origin and development of life			
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Classic Creationism	Classic Evolution	Theistic Evolution	Intelligent Design
The literal biblical account	Random chance and natural selection	God-supervised evolution	A designer of some kind

Examining the evidence for yourself:

1. How did life begin?

Evolution: Life's beginning was unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable, a natural process. The beginning of life was random, undirected without either plan or purpose.

~Association of Biology Teachers

"A random, undirected working without either plan or purpose."

~Prentice Hall Text Book

Creation: Defined by the Bible. God spoke.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Genesis 1:1

"You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens..."

Nehemiah 9:6

2. Why did life begin?

Evolution: Life began as a pure accident. It was random chance. There was no design, no plan, no meaning, no emotions, no purpose, and no value.

Creation: You are the special creation of a good and all-powerful God. You are the climax of His creation. Not only is your kind unique, but you are unique among your kind.

*"He has made everything beautiful in its time.
He also set eternity in the human heart..."*

Ecclesiastes 3:11

3. How did various plants and animals develop?

Evolution: A simple cell evolved to more complex plants and animals through the process of time, chance, natural selection, mutations, and survival of the fittest over a period of billions of years.

Creation: God created various plants, animals, kinds, and species in a harmonic balance to reflect His attributes and character.

Romans 1:20; Psalm 19

Complexity of Life

Cells

Thanks to today's more powerful microscopes, we know that a single-cell organism, the most basic unit of any living thing, is incredibly complex.

DNA

DNA is like the software of the cell, the computer program that makes it work. In fact, if you took a tablespoon and filled it to the top with this DNA, your tablespoon could contain the precise instructions to build every single species of organism that has ever existed on the planet.

Astronomy

“Astronomers now find they have painted themselves into a corner because they have proven, by their own methods, that the world began abruptly in an act of creation to which you can trace the seeds of every star, every planet, every living thing in this cosmos and on the earth. And they have found that all this happened as a product of forces they cannot hope to discover. That there are what I or anyone would call supernatural forces at work is now, I think, a scientifically proven fact.”

- Robert Jastrow

Discussion Questions:

1. What is one takeaway from this study that gives you confidence in your faith in Jesus Christ?
2. What were you taught about the origins of life growing up? At home? At school? At church? What were your thoughts about it?
3. Chip shares that both the theory of creation and the theory of Darwinian evolution are “faith propositions.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
4. Have you felt “anti-intellectual” for believing in creation? Has your perspective changed? Why or why not?
5. Could evolution be a mask we have collectively hid behind in order to avoid the accountability and implications of answering to our Creator? Does your belief about the origins of life affect your worldview? Explain.
6. Do you honestly believe, with your life and not just your head, that God created all that there is? Will you dialogue with your family and friends about creation and evolution? What will you tell them?

Introduction:

There are 320,000,000 gods in the world today, with 22 major religions, each with half a million followers or more.

The Question:

Why do you think the God of the Bible is the one true God? Is it intellectually feasible that there is only one true God and that God is the God of the Bible?

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me. Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it..."

Isaiah 44:6-8 (NASB)

Presuppositions:

Presupposition #1: Aren't all religions essentially the same?

- Answer: No, not all religions lead to the living God.

There are distinctions between all religions in these areas:

- Who God is
- What it means to have a relationship with Him
- What it requires to have a relationship with Him
- What each of the different religions teach

Presupposition #2: Does it really matter what a person believes as long as he or she is sincere and practices those beliefs?

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Matthew 7:13-14 (NASB)

7 Reasons I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God

1. The **HISTORICAL** evidence

Christianity is subject to objective verification.

- Historical events
- Trustworthiness of biblical records
- Manuscript evidence
- Extra-biblical sources
- Eyewitness accounts of the resurrection

2. The **PROPHETIC** evidence

Predictions of specific future events with 100% accuracy confirm authenticity.

- The Isaiah principle Isaiah 44:24-28
- The test of a prophet Deuteronomy 18:21-22
- The fulfillment of hundreds of specific prophecies

3. The **PHILOSOPHICAL** evidence

The triune nature of God and testimony of Scripture best answer life's most timeless questions.

- The problem of unity and diversity
- The problem of evil and justice
- The enigma of man

4. The evidence of **IMPACT**

The long-term fruitfulness and greatness of Israel and the Church argues for its truthfulness.

- The great nation of Israel
- The great laws of Israel
- The mustard-seed conspiracy of Jesus
- The liberation of women, slaves, caste systems, basis of jurisprudence, economic impact, care for the poor, orphans, widows, and the disenfranchised of every age

5. The **PRAGMATIC** evidence

The teachings of Jesus and the New Testament work in real life!

- They promote healthy relationships, strong marriages, honest business, positive parenting, racial reconciliation, and cultural kindness and champion the value and dignity of all humans regardless of creed, race, sex, nationality, or orientation.

6. The evidence of **UNIQUENESS**

God's chief messenger (Jesus) and message (grace) stand in contrast to all religions and religious teaching.

- The Messenger: Jesus – Deity (John 1:1-18), Sinless (John 12), Creator (Colossians 1:15), Savior (John 3:16), His outrageous claim (John 14:6)
- The Message: Grace – the unconditional, unmerited love of God toward every human being that compels Him to forgive and reconcile them to Himself (all who are willing) based solely on the work of Christ on the cross, not on any religious performance or righteous works of their own – i.e., “a gift” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

7. The **EXISTENTIAL** evidence

The millions of “changed lives” in the last 2,000 years argue existentially that Jesus is alive and is who He said He is.

- “I was blind, but now I see.”
- “I was lost, but now I’m found.”

Summary: So why don’t people believe?

1. **IGNORANCE**

Romans 10:14-15

2. **PRIDE**

John 12:42-43

3. **MORAL PROBLEM**

John 3:18-20

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it so important for us as believers to know “why we believe?”
2. Which of the six messages in this series helped you the most? Why?
3. Which aspect of today’s message strengthened your faith the most? Why?
4. What keeps you from believing fully in the God of the Bible...Ignorance? Pride? Moral Problem? What are you going to do about it?