

Apologetics Session 2  
ETC chapters 1-4

### I. The Bible as our foundation

The Bible is both the foundation of our apologetics (because it is true) and one of the most important beliefs to be defended (because it is attacked).

In recognizing the Lordship of Christ in our apologetics we must avoid the tendency to build our defense of the Bible upon the foundation of human reason - attempting to appeal to that reason as the proof of the Bible's authority.

The Bible is the self authenticating word of God (**2 Tim. 3:16-17, Psalm 119:105, John 7:17; Romans 10:17; Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 19:9; John 17:17**)

### II. The Creator / Creature distinction

**Genesis 1:1** declares that there is a clear distinction in the universe, with God on one side and everything else on the other. God is completely independent of all, while creation is totally dependent upon God. This "twoist" understanding of reality is indispensable for the development of a clear biblical apologetic. This distinction between an independent God and a dependent creation is one of the defining differences between Christians and non-Christians.

***For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.***

**Romans 11:36**

- **from Him** - creation *ex nihilo* - Latin "out of nothing" (**Heb. 11:3; 2 Peter 3:5; Cf. Rom. 4:17**).
- **to Him** - creation is for God's ultimate glory and pleasure (**Psalm 19:1; Isaiah 46:9-10**)
- **through Him** - creation is sustained and upheld by God every moment (**Acts 17:25; Col. 1:16-17**)

**Because man is dependent, God must reveal Himself to him.** He has done this in two ways (General & Special revelation). In General revelation God has so created the universe that every portion of it without exception discloses God and His will to man (**Psalm 19:1-2; Rom. 1:20, 32**). See illustration of cows - ETC, pg. 14.

In Special revelation God discloses the true and proper understanding of General revelation (**Ps. 36:9b; Ps. 100:3; John 14:6; Col. 2:3**). In addition to this man is dependent upon God for a true knowledge of morality - when God declares something "good" or "evil" He is making a moral declaration as the Supreme Judge to which there is no human court of appeal.

### III. The character of man before sin

In the beginning man was created in the image of God (**Gen. 1:27**). This places humanity in a place of distinction from all the rest of creation. Man resembles God in both his physical characteristics and abilities, as well as inwardly in his ability to think, reason, communicate etc., and ultimately in the sense that man is a never perishing soul. As God's highest creation man acts as God's representative in ruling over the creation as a steward.

*"Although man was the perfect image of God before sin, he was nevertheless the finite creaturely image of God."* (ETC, pg. 20). As such man was dependent upon God for knowledge, which was necessarily incomplete (*the finite can not encompass the infinite*). So, although Adam knew things truly, he only knew them partially - *"mystery is the limitation of the creature, not the Creator."* (ETC, pg. 23).

#### Implications for logic and man:

- Adam no doubt used logic and reason to fulfill his responsibilities to name the animals and tend the garden - however his reason would have always been subject to the revelation of

God (Gen. 2:18). Therefore, reason and logic are inherently a good gift from God and should be used - IN A DEPENDENT MANNER.

- Logic is not above the Creator / creature distinction. Logic is at best a mere reflection of the wisdom and knowledge of God, therefore logic is not above or equal to God, nor a part of God's being. Because logic is part of creation it has limitations.

#### IV. The character of man in sin

***But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 1 Cor. 2:14***

After the Fall, man continues to reflect the image of God (this is an unavoidable reality of being born into this world), but he now does so in a bent and twisted character of his former glory. Unlike Adam and Eve did before the Fall, man now has been so affected by sin that he actually denied his total dependence upon God - which is the essence of sin.

- Faced with the serpent's words which clearly contradicted God's (**Gen. 3:4-5**) Eve decided that dependence on God was optional and looked at the tree itself to determine its character by committing herself to independence from God. In actuality she was still dependent upon God for everything - that didn't change - she simply refused to admit it. She was like a toddler sitting on her father's lap and slapping him in the face.
- *"Thinking themselves to be wise, they became fools, for God's word was true after all; they died."* (ETC, pg. 30). With Adam's fall all of humanity was brought under bondage to sin (**Rom. 5:12**). And are born into a darkened condition (**Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 1:18-32**). "Instead of bowing to the revelation of God men follow the example of Adam and Eve supposing that all things must be measured *"by the yardstick of their own carnal stupidity."*" (ETC, pg. 31).
- One of the places where sin is often underestimated is in its effect upon the human mind. Theologians call this the *noetic* effects of sin (*nous* - mind). Al Mohler lists 14 ways the fall affected our thinking: *Ignorance, Distractedness, Forgetfulness, Prejudice, Faulty Perspective, Intellectual fatigue, Inconsistency, Failure to draw right conclusions, Intellectual apathy, Dogmatism and closed mindedness, Intellectual prides, Vain imagination, Miscommunication, Partial knowledge* (Albert Mohler, 2012 Ligonier Conference)

#### Inconsistencies and surface truth

- Although fallen man rejects God's revelation of Himself, he is not consistent in that rejection.
- While the image of God in fallen man is severely damaged it is not obliterated. Therefore, fallen man retains many of man's original abilities. He still thinks and reasons; he still perceives the world. That perception is at best merely a surface perception in which they appear to rightly understand truth but what they mean by what they understand and say reveals their deep rebellion (i.e. Jehovah's Witness saying "Jesus is Lord" - ETC, pg. 34).
- Unbelievers can say that the world is round, but the important question is *"what do they mean by that statement?"*
- *"The unbeliever can count - but he can not account for his counting."* He can not answer the question of *"Why it is that brown cows eating green grass produce white milk."*
- Common grace restrains the principle of sin and depravity which enables fallen man to still be able to think and act in accordance with the remaining effects of their *imago dei* (image of God) without acknowledging God as their Creator (**Rom. 2:14-15**).