

Apologetics- Why it makes sense to believe.

I. A REASONABLE EXPLANATION-Christ and the Bible offer answers to the key questions of life: where we came from; why there is evil in the world; why people search for God; and our purpose for living.

A. Intelligent Design Evidence

B. Philosophical Support

Causality- the general category of philosophical arguments that only God is an adequate cause for the world as we know it.

There are numerous philosophical arguments under the category of Causality:

Teleology- the study of goals or ends. The evidence of order and design in nature indicates purpose and a designer.

Cosmology- the study of the cosmos and its processes. The existence of motion implies a prime mover.

Morality- An awareness of the "rightness" or "wrongness" of our actions can be explained only if there exists an absolute standard and arbiter of moral actions.

II. A RELIABLE BOOK-The Bible is historically reliable, accurately preserved, prophetically true, internally consistent and its message is powerful.

A. Manuscript evidence

Since we don't have the original biblical manuscripts, the question is, "How good are the copies?" The answer is that the Bible has stronger manuscript support than any other work of classical literature – including Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Caesar, and Tacitus.

2Tim.3:16- All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

God who miraculously gave us His Word has miraculously preserved His Word.

B. Archaeological evidence

1. It was once claimed there was no Assyrian king named **Sargon** as recorded in Isaiah 20:1, because this name was not known in any other record. Then, Sargon's palace was discovered in Khorsabad, Iraq. The very event mentioned in Isaiah 20, his capture of Ashdod, was recorded on the palace walls. What is more, fragments of a stela memorializing the victory were found at Ashdod itself.

2. Another king who was in doubt was **Belshazzar**, king of Babylon, named in Daniel 5. The last king of Babylon was Nabonidus according to recorded history. Tablets were found showing that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son who served as coregent in Babylon. Thus, Belshazzar could offer to make Daniel "third highest ruler in the kingdom" (Dan. 5:16) for reading the handwriting on the wall, the highest available position.

III. A CREDIBLE LEADER-Jesus' life was sinless. His deeds were miraculous. His teachings are profound. His death and resurrection are historical facts.

Consider His impact on others. Judas, having betrayed Christ, was so overcome w/ remorse that he killed himself. The Roman prefect, Pilate, said he found no fault in Him. A Roman Centurion at His crucifixion said, "Surely, this was the Son of God."

More than just a good teacher, Jesus claimed to be "one with God." As Josh McDowell has put it, He is *Lord, liar or lunatic*- but He cannot be all three. His miracles attest to His divinity.

The major fact supporting the resurrection of Christ is the empty tomb. Even the enemies of Christ admitted that the tomb was empty. The record shows that they even attempted to bribe the guards to say the body had been stolen (Matthew 28:11-15). If the Jewish leaders had stolen the body, they could have later openly displayed it to prove that Jesus had not risen from the dead. Although many flawed theories have been concocted over the years, the fact of the empty tomb has never been refuted.

1Cor. 1:23- we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

IV. A POWERFUL MOVEMENT- Christ's disciples would not have risked their lives for what they knew to be a lie. The church's continued existence and impact on society demonstrate God's power.

Christianity spread throughout the world following Christ's resurrection- despite severe persecution. Today, more Christians die for their faith daily than at any time in history. Never-the-less, the Church continues to thrive- and impact society:

*Education for the masses has its roots in the Protestant Reformation.

100 of the first 110 universities in America were founded for the express purpose of propagating the Christian religion.

*Advancement of human rights (all people are created in the image of God).

*Medicine- so many hospitals were started as a result of Christians caring for sick.

V. A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE-Those who have put their trust in Christ as Savior have found the experience to be life-changing and richly fulfilling.

Jn.9:25- One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!

CONCLUSION

"No matter what evidence is presented for the existence of God, it is always possible for the unbeliever to counter with some objection or with another question. No argument can ever convince someone who does not want to submit to God. Even if he is completely overpowered and silenced by the arguments, he will still be of an unbelieving heart, and that's what really counts."

-Henry Morris, Many Infallible Proofs, p.108

1Pet.3:15- 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.

In debating the unbeliever over the evidence for Christian Theism, there are two primary approaches. Turek takes the first approach, the most traditional approach in his first presentation. He presents proofs for God's existence. These are the **classical arguments**: the cosmological (the argument from a first cause), the teleological (the argument from design) and the moral argument (the causal argument that morality needs an objective source). In using these arguments Turek is attempting to persuade the opponent of God's existence. These are not arguments for the truth of Christianity but for the existence of a Deity or God behind the world. Many who use this line of reasoning believe that once one can establish the existence of God that the next step should be to use evidence to establish the primacy of Christianity or going from a god to Thee God. Often this will include use of historical or archeological evidence for the validity or authority of the Bible. It could also include the fulfillment of prophecies or the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. This whole method of argument is linear attempting to prove to the atheist that God exists, then that it can be argued that this God is the God of Christianity.

However, in Turek's response to Hitchens, he is more successful by arguing from a **presuppositional** framework. This "SYSTEMS" approach believes that all reasoning about God is circular. The person who begins with the nonexistence of God will find reasons to support the belief and the one who begins with God will find reasons to support that belief. The issue is whether the lack of knowledge is the reason people do not believe in God. Romans 1 puts forward the idea that all humans know God but that they suppress the knowledge in unrighteousness and remain ignorant intentionally. Scripture puts forward that humans reject this knowledge as a moral issue. Jesus said in John 3:19, "Light has come into the world but men preferred darkness because their deeds WERE EVIL." This is moral and is because they do not want to be morally responsible or accountable before God they run from Him, suppress knowledge of Him and feign ignorance.

This approach looks at the whole world view, system or set of beliefs of the atheist compared to the whole belief system of Christianity and asks which world view best or most accurately explains the world of our experience. It often spends much of its time asking challenging questions of the atheistic world view. These would be like the following: *How do you explain how something has come from nothing? What is the best explanation of life from nonlife? How do you explain the personal (self-consciousness and self-willing) evolving from the impersonal? How has mind come from non-mind? Can you accept that all human feelings and emotions are biochemically caused, even love? C.S. Lewis often said that all human desires have a means of satisfaction, for example food satisfies the hunger desire. What then is the explanation for our longing for meaning and for eternal life if there is no means of satisfying this sense of longing? What is evil and how can we hope for its eventual demise?* The Christian looks at the world and unabashedly says, we have an explanation for origins. God is the best explanation for the universe, for the appearance of design, for explaining our moral intuitions. God is the personal that has caused the personal in humans. Since God is a mind, it should not be unusual that mind exists in the world and that it does not have a material cause. Love is the result of being in God's image and having the capacity to express the emotions found in our Creator. Our desire for meaning and eternity is placed in us by God and can be satisfied in eternal life. Good and evil are real and evil exists as a real perversion of good and there can be confidence of the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Which source, matter plus chance plus time plus evolution or a personal infinite God, best explains these aspects of human experience? Matter and biochemistry provide no true explanation.