

JANUARY BIBLE STUDY – 2024
Lesson 2: Pre-Modern Apologetics (Truth Is Revealed)

What Does the Bible Say?

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:14–17).

If the Bible is sufficient “to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus,” then why do we need apologetics?

In which areas of biblical teaching do you feel the least equipped to defend? Why?

God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. He is all powerful and all knowing. God reveals Himself to us as a Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Jesus

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a perfect life as man without sin. In his substitutionary death on the cross, Jesus made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body, ascended into heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, between God and man.

Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by his own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer from sin. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Those who trust in Christ alone as their only hope of salvation spend eternity in heaven; those who reject Christ spend eternity in hell.

DISCUSSION: How do you know that your faith is true?

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY – HERETICAL POSITIONS

Modalism

- Modalism teaches that God is *successively* Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not *simultaneously* Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- It does not view the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three particular persons in relation to one another, but merely as three modes or manifestations of the one divine person of God.
- God revealed himself *successively* through biblical history, first as Father in the Old Testament (creator and lawgiver), then as Son (redeemer), and finally as the Holy Spirit (sustainer and advocate).
- **Proponents: Oneness Pentecostalism.** Oneness churches, such as the United Pentecostal Church, reject any form of Trinitarianism. The UPCI believes that the Trinitarian view of God is “inadequate and a departure from the consistent and emphatic biblical revelation of God being one.”
- **Bad Analogies:** God is like a man’s role as a father, a husband, and a brother or like water manifesting as ice, liquid, or vapor.

Arianism

- Arianism teaches that because God is one, Jesus could not have been truly God. Instead, Jesus is the first and highest created being of God.
- Christ and the Holy Spirit are creations of the Father and not one in nature with him.
- **Proponent: Jehovah’s Witnesses.** As official teaching, Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that Jesus is not God, but the archangel Michael, and that the Holy Spirit is more of a cosmic force of Jehovah.
- This view was first espoused by Arius (hence the name) in the fourth century, and was officially condemned as heretical by the Council of Nicaea in 325.
- **Bad Analogy:** God is like the sun, in that you have the star itself, then light and heat.

Tri-Theism

- Tri-Theism teaches that the Trinity consists of three equal, independent, and autonomous beings, each of whom is divine.
- This view stresses the plurality of the Godhead and in no way can it be considered monotheistic.
- **Proponent: Mormonism.** The Mormon church teaches that the Father is an exalted man who became a god, Jesus is the first spirit-child between God and his wife, and the Holy Spirit is another spirit-child.
- Mormons believe that none of the three persons of the Trinity are eternal or almighty God. Moreover, the Father is greater than the Son and the Holy Spirit since they are his spirit-children.
- **Bad Analogy:** God is like an egg with the three parts of yolk, egg white, and shell.

APPLIED APOLOGETICS—Lesson 2

Pre-modern Apologetics (Truth is Revealed)

A. JUDAISM (0.2%)

1. Written word—Torah/Tanakh—Ex. 20 (10 Commandments)—613 Halakah—Talmud (Commentary)
2. Oral Tradition (Mt 5:9)—Mishnah (Commentary) included with Talmud
3. Sacrifice/Atonement—30 AD Temple destruction (Lev. 17:11)—Is. 53

B. ISLAM (Sunni/Shia) (23.2%)

1. Koran—5 schools of interpretation
2. 5 Pillars—Profession, Alms, Hajj, Prayer (x5), Ramadan (Eid/Sacrifice)
3. The Place of Jesus and Bible—Torah/Psalms/Gospels

C. HINDUISM (15%)

1. Death/Rebirth—Caste System/suffering
2. Dharma/Karma—Liberation (Bhagavad Gita/Upanishads)

D. BUDDHISM (7,1%)

1. Sacred Texts—various tradition
2. Four Noble Truth
3. Eight-fold Path
4. Death/Rebirth Cycle—suffering from desire

God/Unlimited—unknowable

Humanity/Limited—Jesus (knowable)—Jn. 1:14

TRINITY—INCARNATION—ATONEMENT

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