

# Apologetics - be ready always to give an answer to every man #apologetics

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[0:00] Tonight we're talking about the subject, Christian apologetics, the defence of the faith, the truth of the faith, the veracity, the reliability of our faith.

And so we demonstrate that the faith is reasonable, it's valid, it's attractive, it's logical, it's rational, and against opposing arguments as well.

Our faith is intelligent, it's rational, it appeals to both the mind and the heart, the mind and the heart. And when you think about apologetics, it's twofold, it's defensive and it's offensive.

We want to win people, of course, to the Lord, it's not about winning an argument but winning a soul. We're against some things though, in that we're defending against false teachings, unbiblical worldviews, incorrect assumptions and unbelief.

And so it's a spiritual work too, so we want the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us and we want to be, as it says in the notes there, win some. So we want to win some.

[1:04] We want to be not offensive but to be able to win them to Christ, to see them saved. And so it's a spiritual work and it's for the good of non-Christians and the glory of God and it's really a real and ongoing spiritual war.

You see here, Philippians 1 verse 17, Paul says that he's set for the defence of the Gospel. And the word for defence is apologia, so that's where we get this theological term apologetics.

It's a defence, it's a putting a case forward. As a lawyer would defend, we're defending the Gospel. Alright, and another key scripture is this one where the same words used there for the word answer. So it says in 1 Peter 3.15, it says, So we want to reach people, giving them an answer, defending the faith, answering their objections, sharing the reason for the hope that is in us and to do it with gentleness, with fear, with reverence.

And our hope is eternal life with God and we want to share that hope. We've got a reason of the hope that we have, that blessed hope. We have that hope of eternal life. We've got that hope that we have, that assurance that Christ is coming, that assurance that we're saved, that hope, that Christian hope.

[2:30] Another thing about apologetics is that it's tied in, linked to evangelism. So you see the two there. Evangelism, we declare what to believe and we warn of the consequences of doubt.

And then on the other side you've got apologetics, we provide reason to believe and we remove the obstacles of doubt. They're tied in to each other. One kind of helps the other.

Because of course when you're witnessing to someone, sometimes they raise objections, they've got reasons why they say they don't believe. So you want to ideally answer those and overcome those objections.

In evangelism we're explaining the truth of the gospel, who the Lord is, what sin is, how to be saved. And apologetics is defending the truthfulness of those claims and providing a critique against the false claims.

So really all of us as believers, we should be able to articulate the gospel and offer that defence of the reliability, the truth of the gospel and critically engage with unbelieving people.

[3:30] There's a couple of things. We face the frontal challenges of people who have got specific questions that they pose. And that could be like they would say, oh, there's no God. Jesus wasn't God.

They disbelieve the resurrection or the Bible. They believe evolution versus creation. They don't believe miracles. They think science can explain everything. And they've got objections like how

could a good God allow the innocent to suffer?

So that's a frontal challenge. And then there's more subtle alternatives like some would say all roads lead to God and every religion is pretty much the same as the other.

Man can build their own heaven on earth like the Marxists would say. So you've got the frontal challenges and then you've got the subtle alternatives. About our faith, we've got a faith that is an objective faith.

Christ is the object of our faith, our Lord. We believe in him. He's the son of God. We believe he died for our sins and he rose from the dead. He's the savior. It's objective. It's historical. It's based upon real people, places, events that took place in history.

[4:33] It's intelligent. It's rational. So we don't say turn off your minds to become a Christian. We use our minds. God says let us reason together. It's a reasonable thing to place your faith in Christ.

And again, it's about winning souls, not winning arguments. So we don't want to be brash about it or demeaning of others. We want to share our faith. We want to see them saved because but for the grace of God, we could be unsaved.

So you see three things there that you could call the apologetics. It's a defense. We've got faith in Christ. We want to defend that saving faith.

There's a proof to it. It talks about the proofs of the resurrection. And then it's also destroying false thinking as we'll read later about tearing down those arguments.

So we want to use our mind and our intellect to the glory of God. Of course, we don't switch off our mind. The Lord wants us to have a sanctified mind. The Lord Jesus says to us, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind.

[5:39] Matthew 22. So we want to use our minds for the glory of God. And a Christian living under the Lordship of Christ must know both what he believes and why he believes. So there's this battle going on in the mind, in that kind of thought life, in the mindsets people have.

And we want to fight back with the good fight of the faith. And so we can give some rational, intelligent, relevant explanations of why the Christian faith is true and to overcome those kind of objections that come up.

And you see the scripture here talks about the weapons of our warfare. They're not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

So that's the kind of context there, answering our critics and undermining those false teachings.

And Ephesians 6.12 talks about our fight is not against flesh and blood.

So we're not fighting the person we're trying to witness to. It's more the entities that are behind their unbelief, really, isn't it? So it's a spiritual war that's going on.

[6:48] And there's two major ways we can deal with opposition. So we want to provide evidence for our faith, for Christ's resurrection, for the Bible, such as fulfilled prophecies and reasons why to believe, evidence.

And then we want to deal with presuppositions of those who oppose Christianity. So people have got these presuppositions, like these false assumptions, these worldviews that are false, how they're perceiving facts and viewing evidence and reason.

So people who believe that there is no God are sometimes not easily convinced that they are wrong. So it can take time to convince people when they've got false assumptions, when they've got these presuppositions.

They've held them for many years. It can take some time for them to realize that they're wrong and to help them change their convictions. So it's all about worldviews.

So that's another term. A worldview, you could define it as here. A comprehensive view of life through which we think, understand and judge and which determines our approach to life and meaning.

[7:53] So every one of us, we've all got different worldviews. Hopefully we've all generally got a biblical worldview, but we can all have different kinds of views on all manner of things. But a worldview is not set in stone.

It can be adjusted and altered. Of course, when you get saved, you repent, change your mind. Change of mind. You get a new mindset, a new mind, a new way of thinking, a new worldview. You get a whole new way of seeing things. The light goes on. You put new lenses on your eyes. You can see things differently. A worldview, as in your notes, it talks about, it's a set of presuppositions or assumptions which may be true, partially true, or could be entirely false, and which we hold consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently, about the basic makeup of our world.

When we're speaking to someone, when we're witnessing, when we're trying to give a defense of our faith and trying to counter false arguments, you've got that sense where their worldview might be contrary to a biblical worldview.

So, for example, we could think of how does an atheist or an agnostic think? What is their worldview? Here's one example of a professor, Peter Singer.

[9:06] He's the professor of bioethics at Princeton University. And here's a part of a quote of him. Human babies are not persons, he says. The life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee.

So that's the worldview of an agnostic, an atheist there. Carl Sagan said, The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be. So they've got this mindset, this worldview, which obviously is quite contrary to a biblical worldview.

Here's another quote on your notes there. It says, this is a fellow, John Dunphy says, He's convinced that the battle for mankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their roles as the proselytizers of a new faith, a religion of humanity.

So there's a wider quote by him. It's quite shocking, really, that they're actually going, and it talks about from kindy through to uni, the education sector, that they're deliberately propagating this religion of humanism.

And so obviously that's the agnostic, atheist worldview, quite contrary to us. And then in contrast to that, you can look at this one. For example, here's a quote from a woman, Cassie Burnell.

[10:22] She was one of the victims at the Columbine High School. And one of the things that she wrote before she died, She said, I tried to stand up for my faith at school. It can be discouraging, but it can also be rewarding.

I will die for my God. I will die for my faith. It's the least I can do for Christ dying for me. So she stood up for her faith in the school.

She was known as a strong Christian, and she was one of the ones targeted by the shooters that slay a number of the children there in that school. So you can see her worldview was very much for Christ.

Here's another Christian who's known by many, Jim Elliott. He was a missionary who also was slain for his faith as a missionary martyr to the South American Ecuador Indians, I believe.

And he said this, he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose. So there's a Christian worldview that really this world is nothing compared to that which I cannot lose, which is my faith in Christ, my heavenly home.

[11:29] And another quote from a Christian is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He was a German pastor who was hanged by the Nazis for attempting to assassinate Hitler. And he says, when Christ calls a man, he bid him come and die.

Cost of discipleship. And of course, the Lord used the apostle Paul. And he said this, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. So you can see the contradiction between the agnostic atheist worldview and what a Christian worldview is.

And really, all of us have got a worldview, but there's not many that have got a really biblical worldview. The survey's been done and they reckon just 4% of American adults have a biblical worldview.

So we could reckon it's probably similar in Australia. Only 9% of those categorized as born again Christians have a biblical worldview. So in other words, they don't really have that way of thinking, that way of looking at life and living like the Bible calls us to.

They don't have that consistent faith. They don't have that coherent biblical worldview. They don't have biblical convictions like they ought to. And people without a biblical worldview, they've got a

vastly different way of looking at life and about moral and ethical behavior.

[12:43] For example, those who don't have a biblical worldview are around 100 times more likely to endorse abortion. And there's a whole lot of other things too that is quite a contrary way of looking at life and issues like that.

And really, our behavior stems from what we think, doesn't it? That's pretty clear. Now, some foundations of our Christian worldview.

You can look at a whole range of things here. Like in your notes, it talks about the kind of things that are foundational beliefs for us as Christians. Our worldview. Of course, we believe in one God, all-powerful, all-knowing, righteous, holy, redemptive, triune.

We believe in revelation. God's revealed himself. We believe in creation, that there is a creator. He's made this world and the universe. We've got a worldview about human beings that we made in the likeness and image of God.

But now we're born sinners after the fall and we're sinners by nature and by choice. We see Christ. He's the eternal Son of God, perfect in deity and humanity.

[13:52] Lived the perfect life. Died on the cross for our sins. was buried, rose again bodily, ascended and is coming again in glory. Another foundational belief, of course, is salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ alone.

That salvation is by God's work. And through the work of the cross, the finished work. We've got a biblical worldview about the family. That God's designed it and made it in that covenant of marriage. That godly home that he wants for us to have. We see God's got a worldview that's Christian about how the world should operate in government, in society, in social action.

So all of those things you can see listed there. That we've got foundational beliefs that really set our worldview biblically. Now, one of the big questions that you tackle when you're faced with witnessing to people and having to be an apologist for the faith is the question, why believe?

Why believe in God? And so the existence of God, that's a really critical question. And of course, we know, like in your notes, you can refer that God cannot be proven absolutely, but neither can he be disproven absolutely.

[15:08] Yet there is sufficient evidence to justify believing in a supreme being. It's reasonable. It's rational. Yet many don't believe that he exists.

Either they consciously reject or they practically reject him. So they live as though the here and now is all there is. But yet, believing in God is a reasonable thing. It's consistent with reason.

And it's more rational than the alternative of believing in his non-existence. So God's revealed himself. And here's some basic arguments. You could follow up further notes on this, but some main points you could contemplate to answer that question.

Why believe in God? So the first one is probability. So this is the notion that really, every day we do things without absolute proof. We trust that the chair that we're sitting on is going to hold us.

And we jump in a car and expect it to start. We board a plane with the expectation we'll get to the other end safely. So there's the probability, when you think about the world around us, that there's design all around us.

[16:12] So there's a probability. It follows really, logically, that there has to be a higher power, a designer behind it. So there's a probability. Next one, creation and design.

Again, the sense of design. There must be an intelligent designer behind it. It's really, it follows its logical cause and effect. A design necessitates a designer.

The watch that you look at, you know, obviously, had a designer. Likewise, you look at the universe and all the complexity of the macro and the micro, even our body, the intricate detail of a human cell.

That there's obvious design that shouts out as a designer. The anthropic argument. So in other words, thinking about ourselves, our conscience, our capacity for good and evil.

That sense of eternity. Basically every, there's a sense of worship in man. It's that sense that it's best explained by the existence of God. Our universal sense of right and wrong, of morals.

[17:12] If we've got some sense of morals, of law, then there must be a law giver. So that's another argument. The next one, immaterialism. The fact that not everything is tangible.

Things like love, beauty. It's not all material. There's a sense where God could factor in that which is immaterial. We can't tangibly touch it and feel it and taste it.

But yet he is. And then there's a transcendental argument. So that knowledge, logic and science are only possible because God's existence is really behind that.

It's a precondition for all thinking and knowledge. That there is the truth of God. And then this word ontological argument. So it's got that concept that there's a greater being.

There's some greater being. And really God is that greatest being that we could conceive of. That such a being could exist. When you think there's always something greater, but there must be something that is the greatest.

[18:10] And that really is, effectively that's God. That's ultimately that there must be such a being that is the greatest. So it lends itself to that view that there is a God. Many folk talking about matters of faith, they decide that the only observable, knowable scientific information can be used.

But yet they exercise faith every day. As we talked about, there's things that you just do routinely every day because that's going to be the reasonable thing.

Like boarding a plane, knowing that you'll get to the other end. It's a reasonable thing. We exercise faith every day. So why not have faith that there is a God that's made you?

Next section, talking about origins and really thinking about really, how did everything begin? And this is one of the areas that you need to be an apologist to. When someone denies they believe in evolution rather than creation.

And some would say the universe is self-created. Or the alternative is it was created by something else. It's really one of those two things, isn't it? Whether you believe the universe is self-created or whether you believe it was created by something else, it's a matter of what you put your faith in.

[19:25] Do you put your faith in it was self-created or do you put your faith in that something, someone else created it? It's not a matter of science versus faith, but faith versus faith. Because to believe that the universe is self-created, you've got to have faith that that is how it began.

Again, it's like this, faith is not contrary to science and yet this idea that the universe is self-created doesn't stack up when you really look at it.

So just a quote there, either God is eternal and made everything or matter is eternal and organized itself. So neither position can be proved, but they're both essentially faith positions.

Either God is eternal, made everything or matter is eternal and organized itself. When you actually scrutinize the evolution position, it really has got a lot of holes in it.

For one, you've got the fossil record that's got all of this missing content and this idea of these different ape men that they've come up with through the years that have been shown to be false or just manufactured out of just a small component and they're making a whole lot of assumptions.

[20:39] But there's really been no missing links found. As in, rather there's millions of these as in the apes and millions of the humans, but nothing in between. There's not anything in the fossil record.

So the fossil record doesn't prove evolution by any means. And then you've got all these other issues like this concept of irreducible complexity.

So that's the sense where if you think, like they use an example of a mousetrap, that a mousetrap's got the base and the spring and the part that the bait sits on and the mechanism that makes it trigger.

You've got to have all of those things for the mousetrap to actually function. And you've got to have all of those different components at the same time present for it to work. And when you think about it, the body, of all the different complexity in your body, all the different neurological, the skeletal, all of the, your nervous system, the whole body, all of those different components.

You can't have one working without the other. They've all got to be present at the one time. And that's obvious that man had to be made as a functioning, fully functioning creature from the

beginning.

[21:52] There wasn't any way it could have slowly built up and made itself. So that's this sense of that you can't, irreducible complexity, like you can't take one bit out because the whole thing won't work.

It's got to be all present at the one time. So when you think about creation, intelligent design is everywhere in creation, isn't it? It's just so clear that there's such complexity within creation. And so it makes sense that God made it and he made it out of nothing. He made it in an instant. He made it through the days of creation and that there's not some evolution between species. There is some adaption within species where people might have different skin colours or birds might have different beaks depending what they're eating and such things like that. But it's more of a, that's an adaption that goes on. But it's not the evolution, the macro evolution that evolutionists would teach. Next section talks about naturalism.

[22:57] So that's the idea that things just somehow came about by natural processes. As you see here, like they use this, what you could put as a simple equation, that there's an impersonal force, whether it's energy, matter or atoms or space, plus time, plus chance equals creation.

In other words, give things enough time, anything could happen. But we know in reality, lots of time doesn't mean that you're suddenly going to get something created. It's a laughable idea really. And then you've got the idea of the DNA itself. A single strand of DNA contains 200 molecules. And they must be in precise order. It's a whole language that's in this DNA structure. And it's just really impossible to think that could manufacture itself. And then that's just the minute part of cells of all of the other parts of your body, of your eyes, ears, nose, nose, that all of those things could just suddenly manufacture of themselves.

There's really a very low probability that matter was created through random chance. It's just really quite inconceivable. And if you can believe in creation through random chance or naturalistic evolution, then there should be sufficient evidence to believe there could actually be an actual creator, an intelligent designer, which is actually makes much more sense in the sense of it because you've only got one assumption to assume that someone created the world rather than thousands, millions of steps, the smallest steps of faith to think that every little thing created itself over millions of years.

[24:39] You've got to take loads and loads of steps of faith to believe that idea versus actually if God created that, if I can believe that, then that is all I need to believe because as he tells us he made it, we can trust him that he is the creator and how he made it is as he's recorded it for us.

And we think about human nature. That's also another good reason why we can believe the Bible record about the fact that we're made in God's image. That really it shows us how we're made, that man is made in the image of God.

And so that fits really with what the Bible tells us is what really makes sense about the issue of sin, of conscience and such things. So if we can come to that view that there is a God, what kind of God are we talking about?

And so for that, we've got to go to the Bible. And which leads us to another question that you face as an apologist is when someone says, why should I believe the Bible? Why should I trust the Bible?

And really the Bible is the foundation for everything we believe. It's our final authority. Now, when you're talking to people, they might say things like the Bible is full of contradictions.

[25:54] You could counter that with like what? How do you know? Have you read it? And when you look at those that are apparent contradictions, they all can be explained. It's not contradictory. It's actually complimentary.

And so really the Bible for us as we're witnessing to people, as we're being an apologist, as we're defending the faith, we can stand for the Bible and know that is the basis for the truth that we can present.

So what's so unique about the Bible? Really, the Bible is an amazing compilation of 66 books over 1500 years and by 40 different inspired writers.

And when you think about the Bible itself is really quite an amazing, miraculous book in its continuity, its circulation, its translation and its survival, just to actually have a Bible. And there's more manuscript copies of the Bible than all of the other historical documents combined. When you compare it with other documents from history, the Bible stands far and above with the amount of support of manuscript evidence.

[27:06] And just the message of the Bible is so precious in the unity of it, the message, the one message that's, it's undeniable that really it's got one author.

It's just got 40 different human writers penning his word. And so we can trust it entirely. Of course, it tells us the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever. So we can have an assurance about the Bible. And the New Testament is really the most well authenticated document from the ancient world. So again, loads of manuscripts from very early ages and they all fit together.

A scholar said this, There's no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament. All of the texts that support the veracity of the Bible. And it's been vindicated again and again through research from findings of archaeology. There's not been anything found to discount the Bible, but rather to support it.

[28:16] And so we know it's God's word. It's the word of truth. The truth is it's infallible. It's inerrant. So it's entirely inspired and it contains no error.

And it's the word of truth. It's God's word. Think of fulfilled prophecy. There's lots of arguments you could go into to show how it's fulfilled. Hundreds of years ago, prophecy was uttered. That was fulfilled. And archaeology confirms it as we say too. And so the message of the Bible really all points to one man. Of course, our Lord. And right from day dot, right from the Garden of Eden, we see that Christ was spoken about as we've seen before through all the types and symbols and the pictures of him coming, the prophecies of him coming, that he's fulfilled that.

So it's all about Christ. He's the central one. So that leads us to another question that will get posed. Why should I believe that Jesus is the only way to God?

And there's some people that have put this idea that they even deny that he exists, which is quite a ridiculous idea because it's undeniable that he was a historical figure.

[29:30] So you see there in the notes, various people from the very early days were confirming that he did exist. They provide testimony to the conviction that he did live.

He died and some that he rose again also. So even the Talmud, which is antichrist, it frequently speaks of Jesus of Nazareth.

And another man, Josephus, was a Jewish general who became a Roman historian. So he was from the very early days too. So he also authenticated that Jesus existed.

Just as an aside, you could actually really doubt that Muhammad existed. That's another question entirely. But when you actually compare the historical documents about the man Muhammad, there's a lot of questions that Muhammad actually never existed.

It was an invention. But that's another story. But we see that the Lord Jesus is universally respected as a great prophet and a great moral teacher, even by other world's religions.

[30:34] And he's undeniably a good teacher of that which is moral truth. Even the opponents of Christianity will accept that.

So it's very logical to believe that he did exist. But then it also raises the point, if we believe he exists, then who do you say that I am?

And it's more than he just exists as some great moral teacher. We see the next one here. As in your notes, there's a way that someone's represented this about why we should believe that Jesus is God.

And of course, the reality is that he did claim to be God. We see various references to that in the notes that talks about. He did tell us that he is God.

And it's called a trilemma. So you've got a dilemma, which is two choices. This is like a three choices, a trilemma. So if you work through from left to right.

[31:34] So if Christ claiming to be God was a false claim, he either knew his claims were false or he did not know that his claims were false. If

he knew that his claims were false, he was a liar.

And if he did not know his claims were false, he was a lunatic. He was deluded. Then on the other side, if his claims were true, then he is Lord.

And then that leads us to the question, well, what are we going to do about it? You can accept it or you can reject it. As in the notes there, if he was a liar, he was not who he said he was and he knew so.

Why would he die for his claim if he was a liar? If he was a lunatic, he was not who he thought he was and he did not know it.

Then how could he engage in intelligent debates with opponents and handle the stress of his betrayal and crucifixion while showing love for those that were killing him?

[32:35] If he was just a legend, he was not who others later imagined him to be. Really, there's so much historical and archaeological evidence to support that he existed, that's not a possibility.

Every reputable historian agrees that he did exist, so he's not a legend. So that really leaves only the one last alternative, that he is Lord. He is Lord.

He was who he said he was and the resurrection proves it to be so. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and God. We see in the Bible, there's many references, 300 prophecies that he fulfilled in his coming.

And so he's more than just a great teacher. We have to believe that he is Lord and that he is Saviour. We can't discount him. He is God.

He says, before Abraham was, I am. He claims to be God. And that was referring back to cross-referencing Exodus 3.14. It was the very name of God. I am. And numbers of times, seven times in John's Gospel, he said, I am.

[33:41] I am the bread of life, the light of the world, etc. Seven times. Now, if you put these words in the mouth of any other person, that'd sound absurd, crazy. But put them in the mouth of Jesus and they make perfect sense, because he is God.

And then you see four great Christological texts. John 1, in the beginning was the word. The word was with God. The word was God. The word was made flesh, etc.

Philippians 2, that he humbled himself to the death of the cross. Colossians 1, all things were made by him. He created all things. And so we see all of these things.

And Hebrews 1 talks about he's referred to as God there as well. So numbers of times, there's lots of references. You can check them all later. Because you do get those that you talk to and they deny that Jesus is God.

They downgrade him. But it's very clear that he is God. It's very much a theme in the Bible that he is God. And the Jews knew that he was claiming to be God, because the numbers of times they tried to kill him for claiming to be God.

[34:49] It follows on then, the next thing to think about, and it's another thing as an apologist you're going to face with, not just defending your Lord, but the fact that he was risen from the dead.

And really, it is the fundamental question of Christianity that he's risen from the dead. The options we're faced with as far as the resurrection, was it a hoax?

It was false. Was it just mythology? It's fiction. Or was it the supreme event in history? It's fact. And when you try to deny the resurrection, it's because you've got an anti-supernatural world view.

The resurrection of Christ really is central to our hope of eternal life. And here's a quote here from a philosopher. The central question of humanity is whether or not Jesus rose on Easter morning.

How we understand that question determines how we will answer every other question. It's really quite a central thing. The resurrection of the saints is one of the key pillars of our Christian faith.

Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost was about the resurrection of Christ.

[36:01] And so it's a very central theme through preaching, through Paul's writings. And of course, our Lord predicted his death and resurrection. And Old Testament prophecies point to the resurrection as a sign of the Messiah in Psalm 16:10.

Various external sources too verify the resurrection. So you've got there in your notes, this fellow Ignatius, he attests to the crucifixion and resurrection.

And he relies on accounts of eyewitnesses that he personally spoke to. Even Josephus, this Jewish historian, he records many eyewitnesses to the resurrection.

Tertullian, another non-Christian bears witness. And Plinius talks about how many Christians were willing to die for their testimony. So a lot of early church martyrs, they died for their faith.

They suffered imprisonment, torment, even death. And why would they do that if it was all a lie or falsehood? And these are the disciples themselves too.

[37:09] We know history tells us it seems that most of the disciples suffered the martyr's death. So why would they die for something that wasn't true? And then of course we see the church exploded because of, not because of the death of a martyr, but because of the resurrection of the Saviour.

That's what empowered the disciples in the early church. And that's what changes lives still throughout history. The empty tomb. Amen. Next section, the problem of evil.

This is one that we often can face with, and people counter the witnessing to them with the gospel. How do you explain why bad things happen?

Why do bad things happen? It's a tricky question. There's no easy answer to it. We see that the problem of evil, they call it, or the problem of pain. So if there is a good God, why is there so much evil in the world?

So why was there a Hitler, a Holocaust? Why was there Stalin and Mao? Why was there a September 11? Why did it happen? I can't possibly believe in God who would allow such and such to happen, whatever it be that's happened.

[38:20] If God can really do anything, why doesn't he get rid of evil? So we all can have those times when we question what might happen, why things don't seem to be fair.

And they use the question, why do bad things happen to good people? But you could say, really, what good people are you talking about? Because there's that sense where, well, there's not actually any good people.

But that sense, why do bad things happen? So you think, well, if God is all-loving, so he's opposed to evil. God is all-powerful, he's omnipotent, so he can prevent evil.

But then there's still this pain and suffering, disasters, disease and death. Why? And this philosopher points this question here. He poses this question, is he willing to prevent evil but not able?

Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. So evil. Is he both able and willing? Where then is evil? So it's one of the most difficult questions we face about God, who is perfect goodness and is all-powerful.

[39:30] Now, if you could ask God one question, what would it be? It probably would be something like this question. According to this poll, most people would ask this question, why is there pain and suffering in the world?

And right back in early church days, Augustine asked the same question, if there is a God, why is there so much evil? And unbelievers can struggle with this one.

And we get it when we witness things, don't we? That kind of idea. Why is there evil if God is so powerful and that he is good? Now, some things are clear. Obviously, evil is real.

God is all-good. He is all-powerful. God will end suffering and pain. And we've got the promise of heaven as well. So we know that it's assured for us that he will deal with that.

And when you think about it, God himself is the great sufferer and has fully met the problem of evil in the gift of his son, at infinite cost and suffering to himself.

[40:33] The consequences of evil for eternity is forever removed. So God has experienced the worst kind of human evil on the cross. He knows human pain and sorrow. And the cross teaches us that God has defeated evil decisively for eternity, in eternity.

And as to the origin of sin, we know when God created everything, it was perfectly good. But he gave humans and angels free will. So sin came, rebellion against God.

God did not create evil, but he allows evil. And so for the meantime, we can't make perfect sense of evil, suffering and pain. The complete full answer has not been revealed to us.

But we can trust that God will make it clear. We can know that ultimately all the wrongs will be righted. Here's what someone put as some imperfect example, where a father tells his son playing in the yard to drop down on all fours and crawl through the mud towards him.

The son wonders why and asks. The father demands obedience. The son obeys and does so. Crawls through this mud to the father's feet. And then his father shows him the deadly snake that was hanging in the tree above where the child had been standing.

[41:53] You know, one day when in God's presence, we'll see things from his perspective. And some of these questions and these mysteries of life, we'll understand more fully.

We read in Isaiah 55, it talks about that my ways are higher than your ways. My thoughts are higher than your thoughts. Still, we think, where is God in our world of pain?

The answer is the incarnation. Our answer is found in Christ's death on the cross, isn't it? Where is God in all this pain and evil? He was on the cross.

The word made flesh and dwelt amongst us. The Lord Jesus in you fatigue, hunger, sorrow, pain. His friends aged, grew sick and died.

He was betrayed by a friend. He entered into all human agony and bore all the pain of our sin on his very self. And when we cry out, God, where are you?

[42:49] We need to look with eyes of faith to the cross. One day God will vindicate himself. We can see for the time being, people getting away with evil.

But justice delayed is not necessarily justice denied. We know that in God's good time, that he will settle accounts. And we're all accountable.

Another quote here, I thought this was a good one. Criticizing God for not doing it now is like reading half a novel and criticizing the author for not resolving the plot. We're still halfway through the book, through life, the mysteries of life.

There will be some unanswered questions for the meantime. But we know that God is just and that one day he will fully resolve this question of evil. For the meantime, we should just trust God.

As we read in Revelation 21, it tells us that the tabernacle of God is with man. He will dwell with them. They shall be his people. And God himself shall be with them and be their God.

[43:49] And here's the promise. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things are passed away.

We know that one day God will put an end to evil, pain, suffering. God promises he's going to make everything right and bring perfect justice. So God's ways are above ours.

He's outside of time. This problem of evil, it only exists in our time, in this time span, from our perspective. But when you think about it from God's perspective, human evil was born in the garden, was conquered at the cross, and it is going to be finally dealt with when Christ comes.

Again, it's one of those questions, we're still going to grapple with it through life, but we can trust that God is superintending everything.

And we'll understand one day. Just one other thought, one other question that comes up when you're witnessing to people. Or they might say, well, what of those who've never heard?

[44:51] What of those who've never heard the gospel? Now, the reality is that all mankind's under God's judgment. We've all sinned. We're all morally accountable to God. We all must give an account, an answer to him.

And we know that God's power and deity is evident through creation. In Romans 1, it talks about that. And it talks about in Romans 2, that the requirements of the law are written on men's hearts.

So it talks about their consciences bearing witness. So you can see that humankind is under condemnation of God's judgment. Really that everyone has these common threads that we see. Humanity has these common signposts, you could say, to the reality of God. You've got the witness of creation. Again, just look out at the stars tonight and the complexity of the world around us.

The witness of creation. You've got the witness of conscience within them. We've all got that witness of conscience, the sense of morality of right and wrong. It's in all of us. And then we've all got a culpability in the sense that we're all guilty in consequence of Adam and Eve's fall.

[46:07] That we're all under Adam's curse of sin and guilt. And then there's the sense of we're all committing sin. There's a commission of sin personally. So we're all subject to and due to have God's judgment.

But thank God that we've got the cross, haven't we? We've got the payment of Christ for our part. We've got the prospect of redemption if we trust him. And so we can know his salvation.

Anyone who does not know Jesus as Savior is under God's judgment. Now, just in the notes, it tells us here, God saves those who call out to him in faith.

If you think this is not fair, that some will perish under God's judgment, you need to rethink your definition of fair. We do not need a holy God to be fair with us. We need him to be merciful.

We need God's mercy and grace, don't we? We all deserve judgment. But he's been so kind to us in Christ to offer that salvation gift. What matters is to you or to the one you're talking to that they've heard the gospel.

[47:12] We're the ones that we know the truth. If you're not a Christian, you need to know that you stand under God's judgment. But the good news is that we've got salvation through Christ. And the question really should be, what will you do with the good news?

What will you do with Jesus? Trust him, believe, be saved, and call on his name. And if you are one who does know him, then you should be the ones telling others about this Saviour.

Because how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him of whom they've not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? So really, we're all that one that can be the messenger and tell others about the Saviour.

Again, this complexity of this question, it'll all be made clear one day. But we can all know that wonderful grace of God that if we can trust him, if we can call on his name, we can be saved.

And everyone's got the same situation that we're all without excuse. There's no excusing, disbelief. And then another question that comes up is, what about all the other religions?

[48:21] Is Jesus the only way? Some would have the view, many paths lead to God and they're all much the same. But really, they are contradictory. You can't have a blending of different beliefs.

You can't have a belief in this and that. You've got to have one or the other. And not every religion can be true. Either one is true and the others are false or they're all false.

So either Christ is who he said he is or he is not. And when you think about really the main tenets of different religions, they contradict. Someone has to be wrong.

And the Christian faith is unique in these aspects here. For example, that the Christian God is personal. He's father. Not like these other gods where it's an impersonal kind of God.

We've got Christ the saviour. We've actually got a saviour in our faith. Whereas other religions just have great teachers and teachings as they think. But they don't have a saviour.

[49:22] Christianity puts a great value on humanity in the sense that we're image bearers of God. We're made in the image of God. So there's a special value to human life.

Christian salvation is unique too. It's by grace through faith. Virtually all other religions are by works. And then you've got the view of the bodily resurrection.

That we've got a hope that's beyond this life. That we have that hope that we'll be raised from the dead. And salvation, it's not found in these other religions like Buddhism, Islam, relativism, believing in humanism, in yourself.

Salvation is only found in Christ. It's quite distinct. I like this little comparison of what you could say is the math of false religions.

The math of false religions or cults. So they add extra biblical source of authority. So instead of, as we believe, the Bible is the final authority.

[50:26] It's the absolute authority. They want to add something else. Some other book or teachings or their own particular literature. Extra biblical things or extra biblical revelations and such.

They add. Secondly, they subtract. They subtract. They take away from the work of Christ. The person of Christ. So they deny his deity. They deny his sufficiency to save.

They take away from Christ. Third thing, they multiply the requirements for salvation. So they make salvation something that you've got to have plus, plus, plus.

You've got to add, add, add, multiply these different requirements to be saved. And then the last one, they divide. They divide our allegiance from God to another.

So it's an interesting way of looking at how these false religions and false philosophies can have these things. And then just lastly, it's interesting to think when you're engaged in apologetics and you're faced with these ones who've got contradictions or opposition, why are they rejecting Christ?

[51:32] It could be ignorance. It could be pride. Or it could be a moral problem. So it's not so much a problem of the mind, but the will. It's not so much, I can't, but I won't.

When you think about it, there's so much evidence to convince the honest and sincere seeker, but there is not enough evidence to force a man against his will when he's determined to reject it.

So when people are minded to reject the gospel, minded to reject the saviour, they've just got that opposition of their will, that defiance of their will. But hopefully these notes might give us some kind of different tools we can use with some of these situations, because these are all common objections, common presuppositions or obstacles to people believing.

And we can all hopefully prayerfully, we can tackle these things. And I think really the fundamental scripture is that one, one of the ones we started with, that we should sanctify the Lord God in our hearts.

So have that separation, that consecration unto him. Be ready always. Have that readiness, that preparedness to give an answer, that defense, to show them the reason of the hope that is in you.

[52:48] You've got a resurrection hope, you've got the living hope, that hope of eternity, that assured hope, that confidence that you're saved. And do it with meekness and with fear. So meekness in the sense that you're gentle, you're helping them, you're supporting them, you're kind and not forceful, you're gentle and meek.

And you're also doing it with fear because there's a sense where this is a very serious matter, isn't it? Someone's soul. And you want to do that reverently and with that sense of that honoring God and do it prayerfully and scripturally.

As we defend the gospel, hopefully we can have that strong defense of the truth. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that we can know your word and put it into action in our lives.

Lord, we pray help us when we do face these situations. We know as we might try to witness to someone as we're evangelizing, there's often this need to counter some of these objections and these questions that people have.

Lord, we pray for us, Lord, with the wisdom and grace that we can do so prayerfully and spiritually. And Lord, with reverence and fear, Lord, we can have it with meekness and fear to be able to reach people for you.

[54:01] We praise you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.