

## What is Apologetics?

- **Apologetics** – the **intellectual defense** of one's beliefs
- **Christian Apologetics** - the **intellectual defense** of Christian belief
- **The word Apologetics** comes from the **Greek word** – **απολογία**
  - **1 Peter 3:15:** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always **being prepared** to make **a defense** (απολογία) to anyone who asks you **for a reason** for the hope that is in you; yet do it with **gentleness and respect**.

## How do we **make a defense**?

- **2 main ways in the history of Christianity**
  1. Classical/Evidential Apologetics
    - a. Historicity – Scripture
    - b. Archaeological evidence
    - c. Evidence – Jesus' resurrection
    - d. Teleological Argument
    - e. Cosmological Argument
  2. Presuppositional Apologetics
- **Evidential Apologetics**
  - **Make arguments** from the **evidence we see in the world**.
  - **Example**
    - **Person A** – (Theist) Biblical Worldview
    - **Person B** – (Atheist) Materialistic Worldview
      - **Grand Canyon**

## Problems – Evidential apologetics

1. You have to be **an expert** on **the subject** to be able to argue it.
  
2. The strongest evidential arguments for the proof of God have only been **evidentially strong** within **the last 80 years**.
  
3. You are judging the **"Bible's authority"** by some **"other authority."**
  
4. **Evidence will not change a person's most fundamental presuppositions** (or his worldview) because **he interprets the evidence by his worldview** not the **other way around**.

## Presuppositional Apologetics

Here is the claim of the **Presuppositional Apologist**:

- **The biblical worldview** is the only worldview that **makes sense of reality**.
- **Pg. 218** – Presuppositionalism argues indirectly by asking which worldview contains the necessary ontological presuppositions (assumptions about reality) that can make **sense of human intelligibility**. Another way of coming at the question is to ask which worldview has the best theory of reality that will provide a rational foundation for everything we take for granted; especially those things we presuppose in order to debate, persuade, and educate.
  - **The proof of God** is that without God **you cannot prove anything at all**.

### What is a worldview?

- A worldview serves as an **interpretive grid** through which we make determinations about **what is real** (metaphysics), what **counts as knowledge** (epistemology), and what is **morally good** (ethics).

### Why is it called Presuppositional Apologetics?

- Because there are things you **pre-suppose to be true** (**strongly held beliefs that you take for granted**) that if **they weren't true** would **destroy the possibility of knowing anything at all**.

### Claim of this class

- **The biblical worldview** is the **only worldview** that make sense of the presuppositions we take for granted that are necessary for knowledge.

**Romans 1:8** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth.**

- Goal of apologetics =
  - **Romans 1:16** – Gospel ... power of God for salvation

**What is a presupposition?** = *Strongly held belief*

Suppose one of your beliefs is challenged. You believe, for example, that the 24-hour convenience store down on the corner is open. But a friend tells you that he just passed the store and saw that it is closed for remodeling. Having no reason to doubt your friend's testimony, you relinquish your belief that the store is open.

Notice that it didn't take much for you to give up your conviction that the store on the corner was open. A passing remark by a friend is all that was needed for you to give up what you had believed to be true. Because you were so willing to give up this belief, we may call it *weakly held belief*.

You embrace other beliefs that you would not so willingly relinquish. If you have studied British history, you surely believe that Queen Elizabeth I was the daughter of King Henry VIII. It would take much more than a friend's say-so for you to relinquish this belief, for all of the sources with which you are familiar clearly state that this is the case. Now suppose your friend challenges this belief, suggesting that Elizabeth was in fact not in the Tudor royal line at all. Before you will believe him you would undoubtedly require him to produce a great deal of historical evidence.

We see that you hold to this belief about the British monarchs much more *strongly* than you held to the previous one about the store being open. You relinquish this belief reluctantly, and only after strong evidence have compelled you to do so. This kind of belief we might call a *firmly held belief*. Your belief about the Tudor family line is stronger than your belief about the corner store's business hours.

There are other beliefs to which you hold even more *strongly*. Imagine now that your friend asserts that Queen Elizabeth I had no biological father at all!! This would be impossible, you would say, and you would dismiss at the outset any of the historical evidence he might try to produce. You know as a biological fact that everyone has a natural father, an idea to which you hold so strongly that no amount of historical data about Elizabeth will convince you that she had no father. Why are you unwilling to subject your belief to your friend's historical test? Are you closed-minded on this matter?

Your belief that everyone has an earthly father is one to which you hold very firmly—even more so than the belief that Elizabeth I was Henry VIII's daughter. One of these beliefs you are willing to subject to a careful historical test, and the other you are not. Why is this? Perhaps one reason is that giving up your belief that everyone has an earthly father would force you to make numerous, radical adjustments to other things you believe. These adjustments would be far more significant than those you would make after denying that Elizabeth was Henry's daughter.

Your belief that everyone has a biological father is one that you carry with you when you consider most scientific questions, and other sorts of questions as well. **Notice that you will not test this belief historically; rather, it is a belief that conditions how historical data is tested.** Any data you see which testifies that Elizabeth I had no biological

father would be automatically discredited because of your commitment to a certain belief about human reproductions. In this example, your belief that every human has a biological father functions as a presupposition. **A presupposition is a belief that places conditions or limitations upon other, less essential beliefs.** When making an assumption before approaching an investigation that limits the possible outcomes of the investigation, that assumption is a presupposition- **its truth is supposed prior to engaging in the investigation at hand.**<sup>1</sup>

To argue this - examine what a worldview is

What is a worldview?

- A worldview serves as an **interpretive grid** through which we make determinations about what is real (metaphysics), what counts as knowledge (epistemology), and what is morally good (ethics).
  - These are the three most fundamental aspects of a worldview.

Today = Start the Survey of Metaphysics

- **What is Metaphysics?**
  - It is the study of reality.
    - **Pg. 78** - Metaphysics is the discipline in philosophy which answers such questions as: what is real? Is reality one or many? Is reality material or immaterial? Is reality natural or supernatural?
    - **Pg. 79** - Metaphysics is the attempt to say what reality is.
- **Two major ways of approaching metaphysics (history of Philosophy)**
  - **Materialism** = All reality is physical
  - **Immaterialism** = All reality is non-physical

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<sup>1</sup> Chris Schlect, *The Christian Worldview and Apologetics*

## Immaterialism (pg. 86)

- All reality is non-physical
  
- Idealism - (all reality is immaterial)
  - Since we only experience our own ideas or perceptions of things, we can only truly know our own perceptions.
  - All reality is just ideas in my head

- **3 - Problems – Idealism or Immaterialism**

1. We don't live as if all is immaterial or an illusion
2. There has to be something we perceive because it doesn't seem like we have control over our perceptions - There seems to be something else outside of the mind that causes the sensations we are experiencing.
3. **This one takes a little more thought - Pg. 90** Idealism also suffers from the result that it would entail metaphysical relativism. In other words, reality would be dependent upon individual perception, thus there would be no objective reality. If there is not objective reality there would be no progress in understanding between persons. Everything would be person-relative. If such were the case, idealists could not have communicated their ideas to others.