

Introduction to Apologetics

APOLOGETICS

Origins of Apologetics

The Greek root words are apo, meaning "from," and logos, meaning "word, logic, or reasoning." The word for apologetics comes from the Greek word apologia, which is used in 1 Peter 3:15, and refers to giving a reason or reply for our faith. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;" (1 Peter 3:15) This word is a legal term that describes what a lawyer would do in defending his client. "Apologetics offers each person evidence and reasons for believing in the truth of Christianity."

Definition and Purpose

Theological studies encompass a wide array of disciplines, each dedicated to exploring and understanding different aspects of faith and spirituality. Among these disciplines, apologetics holds a unique position, serving as the branch of theology primarily concerned with defending and proving the truth of Christian doctrines. In essence, apologetics involves presenting well-reasoned arguments and evidence in support of Christian beliefs. It seeks to establish the validity and credibility of these beliefs, often in response to challenges or objections.

One key aspect of apologetics is the defensive approach, which involves responding to criticisms and doubts raised against the Christian faith. This approach aims to provide reasonable explanations and counterarguments, addressing specific issues or objections that may arise. An example of this approach can be seen in the writings of St. Paul the apostle, who frequently defended his beliefs in the face of persecution and opposition: "just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace." (Philippians 1:7). St. Paul and all the apostles are often seen in defense of the faith. They are beaten, they are rejected, sent to prison, so they are often found needing to defend and justify why they accept such circumstances.

" Apologetics is not merely an intellectual exercise or a debate tactic. It is rooted in a deep desire to share the transformative power of the Christian faith with others. "

In contrast, the offensive approach in apologetics focuses on proactively presenting the Christian faith as a compelling and intellectually satisfying worldview. It involves engaging in discussions and dialogues with others, aiming to demonstrate the coherence and rationality of Christian beliefs. As St. Paul mentions, "casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience

of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5). This approach seeks to initiate conversations and challenge prevailing assumptions, ultimately inviting others to consider the truth of the Christian message. Letting no thought simmer without an answer, rooted in Christ.

It is important to note that apologetics is not merely an intellectual exercise or a debate tactic. Rather, it is rooted in a deep desire to share the transformative power of the Christian faith with others. Apologists recognize that faith is not solely based on blind belief but can be supported by reason and evidence. By engaging in apologetics, they aim to provide a bridge between faith and reason, allowing individuals to explore the depths of their spiritual convictions.

Moreover, apologetics plays a vital role in fostering a deeper understanding of Christian doctrines and beliefs. By examining and defending these doctrines, the study helps to clarify, articulate, and refine them. This process contributes to the ongoing development and enrichment of Christian theology, ensuring its relevance and adaptability in the face of changing cultural and intellectual landscapes.

Biblical Foundation for Apologetics

In the beautiful history of Christianity, apologetics has been an enduring thread, interwoven into the very fabric of our faith. From the words of our Lord Himself to the writings of the apostles and the enduring legacy of early Church fathers, the call to defend and proclaim the truth of the Gospel has resonated through the ages. Our Lord Himself engaged in apologetical argument when He appealed to His miracles as proof that He was sent by the Father; "but the Father who dwells in Me does the works" (John 14:10) Additionally when st. Luke said "it seemed good to me... to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed," (Luke 1:3–4) He was defending the information being spread regarding the miracles, etc.

In the book of Luke, in the Holy Bible, we are told, “now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say.” (Luke 12:11) When Jesus instructed His disciples not to worry about how or what to answer when brought before authorities, He was preparing them for the challenges they would face in defending their faith. The early Church embraced this call with zeal, as evidenced by the bold preaching of apostles like St. Paul, who reasoned and persuaded in synagogues and marketplaces, sharing the message of the Kingdom of God with unwavering conviction, “as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.” (Acts 17:2) and “he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.” (Acts 19:8)

We must remind ourselves through tribulations and afflictions that defending our faith is one of the highest honors that could be appointed to anyone in this life: “some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.” (Philippians 1:15-17) Apologetics is a vital aspect of Christian discipleship. When we engage in apologetics, we are not simply defending abstract theological concepts, but rather the very foundation of our faith.

Famous Christian Apologists

In the early centuries of Christianity, a number of influential apologists emerged, defending the faith against pagan critics and heretics. These apologists played a vital role in shaping the development of Christian thought and doctrine.

One of the most famous apologists was Justin Martyr, who lived in the 2nd century AD. Justin was a convert to Christianity from paganism, and he was known for his willingness to engage in dialogue with pagans and to defend the faith in public debates. Prepared to die for his faith and join our Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven, all to defend his faith, wrote “but since we do not place our hopes on the present [order], we are not troubled by being put to death, since we will have to die somehow in any case.” (The Apologies of Justin Martyr) He additionally spoke on heretical religions, such as that of the Greeks as, “they said that Athena was the daughter of Zeus not from intercourse, but when the god had in mind the making of the world through a word, (logos,) his first thought was Athena.” (Justin Martyr) Here, Justin Martyr uses the thinking of the time to justify the creation, or make an apologetic correlation to the creation.

Another famous apologist was St. Clement of Alexandria, who lived in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. St. Clement was a prolific writer, and his works covered a wide range of topics, including theology, philosophy, and ethics. In his writings, St. Clement emphasized the importance of faith and reason, and he argued that Christianity was the perfect synthesis of the two. “I call him truly learned who brings everything to bear on the truth, so that from geometry, music, grammar, and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the faith against assault.” Clearly, St. Clement here directs us to use anything and everything in our surrounding to defend and present the faith.

St. Augustine of Hippo was another influential apologist who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries AD. St. Augustine was a brilliant theologian and philosopher, and his writings have had a profound impact on Christian thought. In his writings, St. Augustine defended the faith against a variety of heresies. He insisted “if you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself.”

These are just a few of the many famous Christian apologists who have made significant contributions to the defense and development of the faith. Their writings continue to be studied and debated by Christians today, and they provide a valuable resource for understanding the history and theology of Christianity.

Why Study Apologetics?

God generally calls upon His people to use reason, “come now, and let us reason together,” says the Lord” (Isaiah 1:18) to know spirit truth and that of error, “we are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error,” (1 John 4:6) and to discern right from wrong, “but solid food belongs to those who are

“always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” (1 Peter 3:15)

of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:14). God's call for His people to use reason, discern truth from error, and distinguish right from wrong demonstrates the importance of intellectual and moral growth in our spiritual lives. We must also aim to achieve the ability to use reason as part of the image of God in man. (Gen 1:26) Reason, a fundamental aspect of the image of God in man, allows us to critically analyze information, make informed decisions, and engage in meaningful dialogue. By cultivating our reasoning abilities, we can better understand and appreciate the truths of our faith and defend them against opposing arguments.

Regarding God's command, we are told to "always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15) There are numerous examples of God's people using reason to navigate complex situations and make wise choices. St. Paul speaks of his mission as "defending and confirming the gospel." (Phillipians 1:16) He adds in verse 17, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel." As St. Paul emphasizes in his mission, defending and confirming the gospel is a crucial task for church leaders and servants. By engaging in apologetics, we can effectively communicate our beliefs, address misconceptions, and foster a deeper understanding of the Christian faith among ourselves and others: "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." (Titus 1:9). Holding fast to the faithful word, as Titus 1:9 instructs, implies that our apologetic stance is reflected in our daily lives. By living out our faith with integrity, compassion, and love, we provide a compelling witness to the transforming power of the gospel.

Holding fast to the faithful word shows that apologetics extends even to our actions! There are many important qualities needed in a Church, servant or leader, however a gentle and patient approach, is a critical aspect of the service, as "a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth." (2 Tim 2:24-25) Engaging in respectful dialogue, listening attentively, and seeking to understand the perspectives of others creates a conducive environment for meaningful conversations and potential conversions.

Ultimately, the study of apologetics also enables a personal strengthening of the faith in knowing that it is founded on facts and truth. In the Letter to Diognetus, regarding the Word at hand, we are told how our faith separates us from a crowd: "for the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life." (Epistle to Diognetus, Chapter 5)

The Importance of Reason in Our Life of Faith

Our faith is only as valid as the object in which it is placed. St. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:14 that, "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also empty." In other words, what

makes faith have merit is the object of that faith. Why did Christ have to be one to die? Why do we use the sign of the cross? Do we really need communion? Does God really care about the details of our lives? The existence of evidence often precedes and supports faith. Rational individuals typically rely on some form of evidence or reasoning before trusting a situation or system, such as entering an elevator. There are two types of belief: "belief that" and "belief in." "Belief that" provides evidence and a rational basis for confidence, which is necessary for establishing "belief in." Once evidence-based belief is established, one can have faith in it.

The task of apologetics is not to reason someone into the kingdom. Apologetics can never actually force someone to make a decision for Christ. Christ said in John 6:65, "no one can come to me unless it has been granted him from the Father." The Holy Spirit must additionally work in their heart to move them towards faith in Christ. Therefore, faith and reason must work hand in hand to effectively reach others for Christ. Apologetics can help someone to "believe that" Jesus is the Christ, but can never force one to "believe in" Him. We are lowering people's intellectual barriers so that the Holy Spirit can penetrate their heart.

The Apologetic Approach

The call to apologetics is not reserved for a select few; it is a responsibility shared by all believers. Whether we are engaged in formal debates, sharing our faith with friends and family, or simply living out our daily lives with integrity and grace, we are all called to be ambassadors of the Gospel, proclaiming the truth of Christ to a world in desperate need of hope. We must then approach "meekness and fear" (1 Pet 3:15) being mindful of how we point out the inconsistencies of other views. We need to come across as "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread," as well as remain patient and virtuous in our lives, as we strive to be devout Christians.

***"We need to come
across as "one
beggar telling
another beggar
where to find
bread"***

Our lives serve as a powerful apologetic to the truth of Christianity. We have probably heard the expression, "you may be the only Bible that someone ever reads." St. Clement of Alexandria says "Let us haste, let us run, my fellow men—us, who are God-loving and God-like images of the Word—let us haste, let us run, let us take his yoke, let us receive, to conduct us to immortality, the good charioteer of men. Let us love Christ." In the same way, apologetics enhances the testimony of our lives, which is most likely what non-Christians will see first.

Embrace thus the challenge of apologetics with renewed zeal, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us. As we stand firm in our faith, may we always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks us about the hope that is within us.



Review Questions

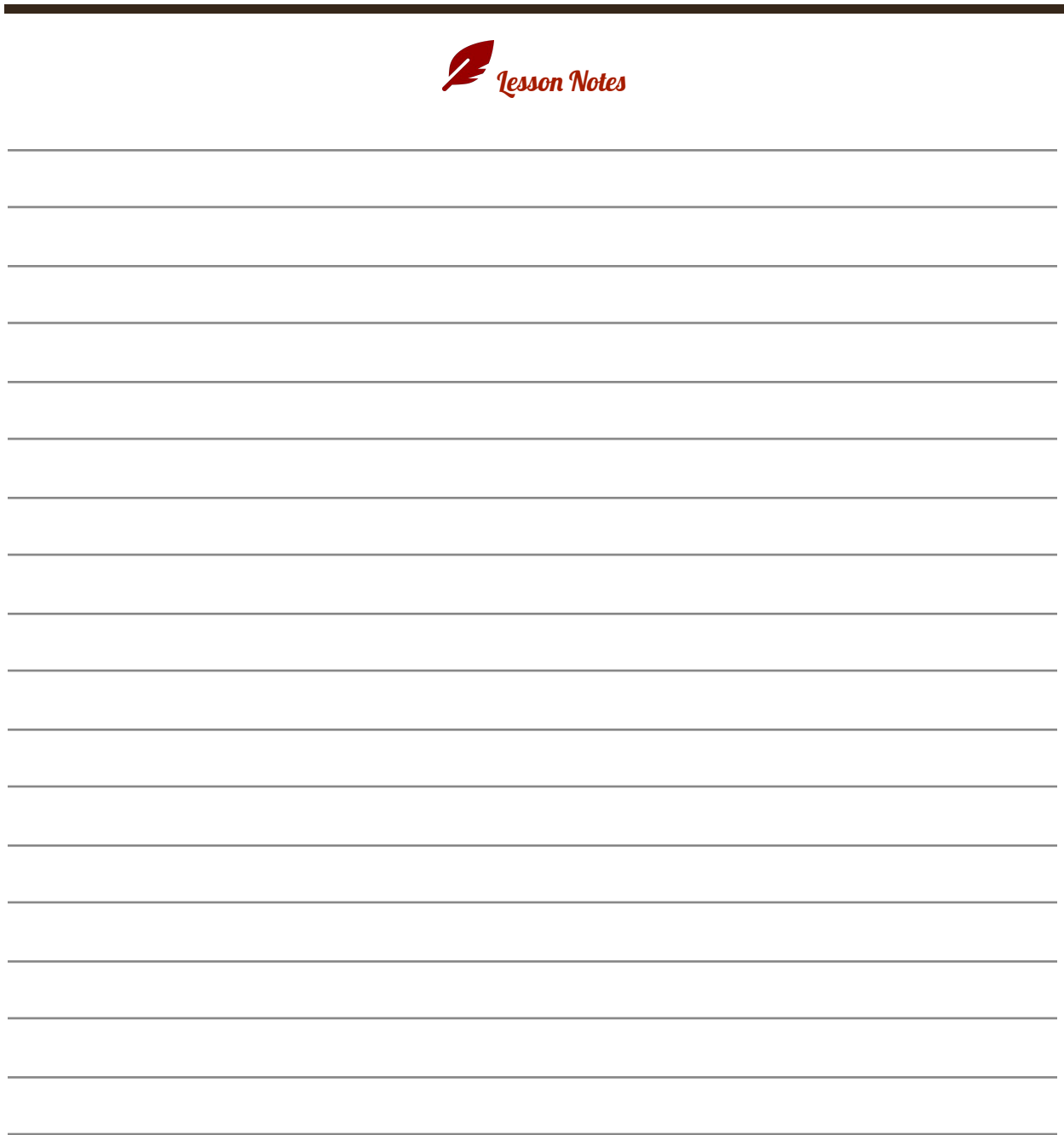
1. What are the two main approaches to apologetics?
 - a. **Defensive and offensive**
 - b. Biblical and theological
 - c. Logical and rhetorical
 - d. Empirical and rational
2. The root words of apologetics are ____, meaning “from,” and ____, meaning “word, logic, or reasoning.”
 - a. **apo and logos**
 - b. logos and theos
 - c. logos and eidos
 - d. theos and logos
3. The purpose of apologetics is to ____ and ____ the truth of Christian doctrines.
 - a. **defend and prove**
 - b. explain and clarify
 - c. justify and substantiate
 - d. all of the above
4. Apologetics is important because it provides a ____ basis for the Christian faith.
 - a. rational
 - b. intellectual
 - c. evidential
 - d. **all of the above**
5. Who are some famous Christian apologists?
 - a. Justin Martyr
 - b. Tertullian
 - c. Origen
 - d. **All of the above**
6. Why is it important for Christians to be able to defend their faith?
 - a. Because it is a requirement of the Bible.
 - b. Because it helps to strengthen their faith.
 - c. Because it helps to witness to others.
 - d. **All of the above**
7. The Bible tells us that we should be prepared to give a defense for our faith. This is because
 - a. **It is a duty of all Christians to be prepared to give a defense for their faith.**
 - b. Apologetics is a waste of time and energy.
 - c. Christians should only focus on their own personal faith and not worry about defending it to others.
 - d. None of the above
8. The word "apologetics" comes from the Greek word "apologia," which means
 - a. **"To give a reason or reply"**
 - b. "To defend"
 - c. "To provide a rational basis"
 - d. All of the above
9. Apologetics is a branch of theology that seeks to
 - a. Defend the Christian faith against objections and challenges
 - b. Provide a rational basis for the Christian faith
 - c. **Both A and B**

-
- d. None of the above
10. Which of the following is not a characteristic of good apologetics?
- a. It is intellectually honest
 - b. It is respectful of the other person's beliefs
 - c. It is persuasive
 - d. **All of the above**



Books & References

1.  Apologetics_SUS , accessed 25 March 2024,
<<https://suscopts.org/resources/literature/546/apologetics/>>



Existence of God

APOLOGETICS

Overview

The question of God's existence is a profound and enduring one that has preoccupied the minds of philosophers, theologians, and individuals from all walks of life for centuries. While some individuals may profess unwavering belief in the existence of a higher power, others may harbor doubts or outright skepticism. The decision to believe or disbelieve in God profoundly impacts one's worldview, guiding one's moral compass, purpose in life, and approach to living. There is no individual in existence that, at some point in their lives, does not face this life changing question. Does God exist? As such there are different reasons to believe in God's existence while there are many arguments against

The decision to believe or disbelieve in God profoundly impacts one's worldview, guiding one's moral compass, purpose in life, and approach to living.

His existence. Though we will not particularly address the causes of doubt in detail, they are addressed individually in other sections. As such we will briefly cover the different types of unbelief and their causes while focusing more precisely on the reason to believe God's existence from an apologetic sense. The concepts presented will be based on the cosmological argument, the argument of cause and effect, the design argument and finally the pragmatic argument.

These arguments, while not exhaustive, offer a glimpse into the diverse reasons that individuals may believe in God's existence. The decision to believe or disbelieve in God is a deeply personal one, influenced by a multitude of factors including personal experiences, philosophical contemplation, and cultural influences. It is a question that continues to intrigue and challenge individuals throughout history, shaping their lives and perspectives in

profound ways.

Types of Unbelief

The question of God's existence has fascinated and divided humanity for centuries. While some individuals possess brilliant minds and philosophical acumen, their beliefs regarding God's presence vary widely. Some firmly embrace the concept of a divine being, while others vehemently deny its existence.

Throughout history, humanity has enjoyed the freedom to choose and believe as they please. This freedom was emphasized by Joshua when he addressed the Jewish nation, presenting them with a choice between serving the Lord or alternative deities: "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers

served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15) This act highlights the individual's agency and the profound decision they must make regarding their spiritual beliefs.

Over time, various forms of unbelief have emerged. Agnostics assert that knowledge of the divine is unattainable and that individuals must embark on a continuous search without expecting definitive answers. Atheists, on the other hand, boldly proclaim the absence of God's existence. This stance, while devoid of empirical proof, becomes a belief system in itself, much like Christianity.

Another group, known as skeptics, occupy a unique position. Neither do they claim with certainty God's lack of existence, nor do they claim the knowledge is unattainable like the agnostic. The Skeptics remain, well, skeptical of the idea. They doubt the existence, since science does not prove nor disprove, then as there is no proof, there is accordingly an unlikelihood of God's existence. This is an unfortunate position as the skeptic solely bases himself on science, and yet the skeptic believes in the existence of love, hate or even the conscience but there is no empirical proof of their existence as of today. Yet, no one denies or doubts their existence.

Lastly, infidels represent individuals who are intolerant of God's existence and actively oppose those who embrace it. They firmly believe that the concept of God is invalid and must be condemned. Atheists can fall into this category, as they reject the existence of God and view the idea as something to be condemned.

The debate surrounding God's existence has profound implications for humanity. It influences our understanding of the universe, our purpose in life, and our moral compass. While the search for answers may be arduous, the journey itself holds immense value, fostering critical thinking, intellectual growth, and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of human existence.

Causes of Doubt

The presence of evil, pain, and injustice in the world can indeed raise doubts about the existence of God. People often struggle to reconcile the idea of a benevolent and omnipotent deity with the suffering they witness around them. This cognitive dissonance can lead individuals to question whether God is truly good, powerful, or even existent.

One common assumption is that if God were real, He would prevent such suffering from occurring. This line of thinking suggests that either God enjoys the pain and misery of humanity, making Him malevolent, or that He is unable to alleviate suffering, rendering Him not truly omnipotent. Understandably, these assumptions can prompt individuals to doubt the existence of a higher power.

However, it is important to consider alternative explanations for the presence of evil and suffering. One perspective is that suffering is a natural consequence of living in a finite and imperfect world. Just as there is beauty and joy, there is also pain and sorrow. This view does not necessarily imply that God is indifferent to human suffering, but rather that it is an inherent part of the human experience. Another perspective is that suffering can serve a purpose in spiritual growth and development. Challenges and hardships can help individuals learn, evolve, and ultimately find deeper meaning in life. More on this in a dedicated section.

It is also worth noting that one's upbringing and environment can significantly influence religious beliefs. Individuals raised in religious households are more likely to adopt the beliefs and practices of their parents and community. Conversely, those raised in non-religious or secular environments may be less likely to embrace the concept of a higher power. Additionally, societal and cultural factors can play a role in shaping religious beliefs. In some societies, religious adherence is strongly encouraged or even mandated, while in others, it is discouraged or marginalized. The surrounding and environment in a family or the education provided and information given, all plays a role in the direction of belief.

Lastly, the fear of being labeled a fool or ignorant can also deter individuals from exploring religious beliefs. In a world that often values rational and scientific thinking, acknowledging a belief in God can be perceived as irrational or unsophisticated. This social pressure can lead individuals to suppress or even deny their spiritual inclinations. Occam's razor is a significant principle propounded by the medieval philosopher William of Ockham. At its core, it advocates for simplicity and parsimony in constructing explanations, asserting that among competing explanations for a phenomenon, the one with the fewest assumptions should be favored. This principle aligns with the notion that complexity should not be introduced without compelling justification. However, Occam's razor should not be applied blindly, as there are many instances where a more complex explanation is warranted based on empirical evidence.

Overall, the decision to believe or not believe in God is a complex one, influenced by a multitude of factors. While the presence of evil and suffering can raise doubts, it is essential to consider alternative perspectives and recognize that religious beliefs are shaped by various personal, social, and cultural influences.

Philosophy of Religion

An argument, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is a "coherent series of reasons, statements, or facts intended to support or establish a point of view." Deductive arguments are a type of argument that guarantees a conclusion based on certain premises. This is because the conclusion of a deductive argument is necessarily true if the premises are true. For example, if we know that all men are mortal and that Socrates is a man, then we can conclude that Socrates is mortal.

Inductive reasoning, on the other hand, is a method of reasoning in which a general conclusion is drawn from specific statements. Inductive arguments are not as strong as deductive arguments, because the conclusion is not necessarily true even if the premises are true. For example, if we observe that the sun has risen every day for the past 100 years, we might conclude that the sun will rise tomorrow. However, this conclusion is not certain, because it is possible that the sun will not rise tomorrow. Thus, it is distinct from deductive reasoning. If the premises are correct, the conclusion of a deductive argument is certain; in contrast, the truth of the conclusion of an inductive argument is probable, based upon the evidence given.

The difference between deductive and inductive arguments can be seen in the following table:

Feature	Deductive Argument	Inductive Argument
Conclusion	Certain if premises are true	Probable, based on evidence

Example

All men are mortal. Socrates is a man.
Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

The sun has risen every day for the past
100 years. Therefore, the sun will rise
tomorrow.

Deductive arguments are often used in mathematics and science, where it is important to be able to prove statements with certainty. Inductive arguments are often used in everyday life, where we need to make decisions based on incomplete information.

Reasons for His Existence: The Cosmological Argument

The cosmological argument, also known as the argument from first cause, posits that the existence of the universe and all that it contains requires a transcendent cause. It argues that the universe, with its intricate laws and structures, cannot have arisen spontaneously or eternally but must have been created by a being with infinite power and intelligence. This argument suggests that the existence of the universe itself implies the necessity of a creator, or God.

The concept of "The First Cause" seeks to identify an ultimate cause of all events that does not itself have a cause. It is often associated with the existence of God. The exploration of this concept raises fundamental questions related to the nature of the universe and its origins:

1. Is the Universe Eternal?:
 - If the universe is eternal, it implies that it has always existed without a beginning. In this case, the idea of a First Cause becomes irrelevant, as there is no starting point for a chain of causation.
2. Did the Universe Create Itself out of Nothing?:
 - This question challenges the notion of something arising from absolute nothingness. The concept of *creatio ex nihilo*, or creation out of nothing, is often attributed to religious traditions. It suggests that the universe, along with all its matter and energy, came into existence from a state of non-existence.
3. Was the Universe Created?:
 - If the universe had a beginning, it implies that there was a point in time when it did not exist. This raises the question of what existed before the universe came into being and what caused its creation. The First Cause argument posits that there must be an external entity responsible for the universe's creation.

The deductive reasoning of the argument of First Cause begins with two stipulations that set the foundation for its logical framework. These stipulations serve as the starting point from which the argument unfolds, establishing the necessary premises to support its conclusion.

1. Everything that has a beginning has a cause
 - This premise asserts that any event or phenomenon that comes into existence must have a cause that brought it into being.
2. The universe has a beginning
 - Based on scientific observations, the universe appears to have a finite age, with even the Big Bang theory suggesting a specific point of origin.

Together, these two stipulations provide the logical underpinnings for the argument of First Cause. They establish the premises that everything has a cause and that the causal chain cannot regress infinitely, thereby creating the necessity for a first cause. From these premises, the argument concludes that the universe must have a cause, and since this cause cannot have a beginning itself, there must be an eternal and uncaused cause, which is identified as God. Therefore, you may deduce the following arguments and conclusion.

1. Therefore, the universe has a cause.
2. Since there must be a cause that has no beginning, there must be an initial cause that is without beginning, thus eternal and creator: God

This argument is inspired by Thomas Aquinas's Argument from Causation. It presents an argument for the existence of God, which states that everything that exists has a cause, and that this chain of causes cannot go back forever. Therefore, there must be a first cause, which is God. This argument is not based on empirical evidence, but on logical deduction. It is possible to come to the conclusion that God must exist through various other arguments, such as the argument from design or the moral argument.

However, before delving into these arguments, it is essential to consider whether there must be an uncaused cause. Must there be an uncaused cause? Why can't there be an unceasing end of caused events? The Law of Conservation of Energy, a fundamental principle in physics, states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, only transferred from one form to another. This suggests that the total amount of energy in the universe has remained constant since its inception. Entropy, on the other hand, represents the amount of unusable energy within a system. At creation, at the start, the universe had 0 entropy and maximum potential. Based on the laws of thermodynamics, it can be inferred that the maximum potential usable energy must itself have a source. If there were an unceasing end of caused events, this would imply that the universe's energy supply is perpetually replenished, seemingly contradicting the Law of Conservation of Energy. Naturally, it can be inferred that the maximum potential usable energy must itself have a source, according to the laws of thermodynamics.

“Things without intelligence cannot give themselves a purpose but are ordered towards a purpose.”

Reasons for His Existence: Teleological Argument (or argument by design)

Closely related to the cosmological argument is the argument of cause and effect. This argument asserts that every effect must have a cause, and that the intricate design and order observed in nature point to an intelligent designer. The complexity of biological systems, the harmonious functioning of ecosystems, and the delicate balance of forces in the universe suggest the work of a conscious and purposeful creator rather than random chance or natural processes alone.

“Things without intelligence cannot give themselves a purpose but are ordered towards a purpose. There must be an intelligent designer that gives purpose to those without intelligence and move objects to their ends. That is God.”

The design argument, often referred to as the teleological argument, postulates that the evidence of purpose and order observed in nature implies the existence of an intelligent designer. It draws a parallel between the intricate design of a watch and the complexity of the universe, suggesting that just as a watch implies the existence of a watchmaker, the universe exhibits signs of intentional design.

The intricacies of organisms' adaptations to their environments, the interdependent relationships among species in ecosystems, and the remarkable properties of the universe that support life all contribute to the argument for a purposeful creator. These observations suggest that the world was not merely the result of random chance but rather the product of a deliberate design.

Design of the Universe

Consider the design of the universe itself. The precise orbital speeds of the Earth, the Sun, and the Milky Way, along with the vast size of the galaxy and the intense temperatures at the Sun's core, all demonstrate a level of precision that defies explanation by chance alone.

Imagine what would happen if the Earth's orbit were even slightly altered, either closer or farther from the Sun by a mere 2.5 millimeters. Such a seemingly insignificant change would have devastating consequences for life on Earth. The intricate balance of temperature, atmospheric composition, and other factors essential for life would be disrupted, leading to potentially catastrophic outcomes.

The fact that the universe operates with such incredible accuracy, where even the slightest deviations could have disastrous effects, strongly suggests the involvement of an intelligent designer. It is beyond the realm of plausibility that such a complex and finely-tuned system could have arisen solely through random processes.

The design argument finds its foundation in the belief that the intricate order and purpose observed in nature are not simply the result of natural laws or chance occurrences. Rather, they point to the existence of a higher intelligence, a creator who purposefully designed the world and endowed it with the properties necessary for life to flourish.

Design of the Animal Kingdom

The Malleefowl, an extraordinary bird native to the arid regions of Australia, showcases a remarkable behavior related to incubation of its eggs. It engages in a complex process that involves the construction of an elaborate mound, precise temperature control, and attentive care for its offspring.



The male Malleefowl constructs a mound of rotting vegetation, in which the female lays her eggs. After the pit is excavated, the male Malleefowl gathers a large quantity of rotting vegetation, such as leaves, twigs, and bark. This compost is piled into the pit, creating a

substantial mound. The compost provides insulation and helps to regulate the temperature inside the mound. After laying her eggs, the female Malleefowl covers them with a layer of sand. The sand helps to protect the eggs from predators and from the elements. It also helps to distribute heat evenly throughout the mound.

The Malleefowl has a remarkable ability to control the temperature inside the mound. The male Malleefowl regularly pokes a small hole in the top of the mound and inserts his tongue to measure the temperature. If the temperature is too high, he removes some of the sand covering the eggs. If the temperature is too low, he adds more sand. The Malleefowl eggs incubate for a period of about 60 days. During this time, the male Malleefowl continues to care for the eggs, ensuring that the temperature remains optimal. The male Malleefowl also defends the mound from predators, such as foxes and goannas. After hatching, the chicks are fully developed and leave the mound to explore their surroundings.

The Malleefowl's nesting behavior showcases animal intelligence and parental care, demonstrating the amazing adaptations animals have evolved to reproduce and ensure their offspring's survival.

Design of the human Body

Saint Augustine, in his book of The Confessions, says:

“And men go forth to wonder at the heights of mountains, the huge waves of the sea, the broad flow of the rivers, the extent of the ocean, and the courses of the stars, and omit to wonder at themselves.”

The Human Individual, as a whole, is a complete wonder. Far beyond the wonder we’ve just seen in the Design of the universe.

The human individual, as a holistic entity, is a captivating enigma that transcends the awe-inspiring design of the universe itself. Physically, the human body is a masterpiece of intricate complexity. At the cellular level, the smallest units of life, known as cells, perform remarkable functions. They encode, transcribe, and deliver messages, nourish, dispose of waste, repair damage, and reproduce, all powered by their own internal energy source, the mitochondria. The intelligence and efficiency displayed by cells surpass any smart system currently in existence, and the average human body consists of approximately 100 trillion cells, of which there are 250 distinct types.

Beyond the cellular level, the body is organized into tissues, organs, and systems, each with its own specialized functions. Muscle tissue enables movement, nerve tissue facilitates communication, and organs such as the heart, liver, and kidneys work in harmonious unison to maintain homeostasis. Moreover, the various systems in the body, including the reproductive, digestive, excretory, and nervous systems, collaborate seamlessly to ensure the overall well-being of the individual.

Furthermore, the human mind is a realm of boundless wonder. It possesses the capacity for abstract thought, creativity, and self-awareness. It allows us to experience emotions, form relationships, and engage in meaningful pursuits. The human mind is not merely a passive recipient of information but an active interpreter and creator, capable of shaping our perceptions and guiding our actions.

Moreover, the human spirit transcends the physical and mental realms, embodying the essence of who we are. It encompasses our values, beliefs, and sense of purpose. It is the wellspring of our compassion, empathy, and aspirations. The human spirit is resilient, capable of overcoming adversity and finding meaning in life's challenges.

The human individual is truly an astounding creation, a marvel beyond comparison. Physically, mentally, and spiritually, we are beings of extraordinary complexity and potential. Posing this creation to mere chance and not design may seem more foolish than believing in a physically unseen Creator.

Reason for His Existence: The Moral Argument

Objective morality is self-evident – we intuitively know that some things are right and others are wrong. A universe that is random and uncreated and that operates purely on unintentional interactions can only result in subjective inclinations, not absolute morals. The existence of objective morality necessitates a supernatural source.

Choosing to Believe: The Pragmatic Argument

Finally, the pragmatic argument, also known as the existential argument, proposes that belief in God has practical and existential benefits for individuals. It posits that a belief in God can provide meaning, purpose, and moral guidance in life, fostering a sense of connection with something greater than oneself. It argues that religious belief can lead to positive outcomes such as increased well-being, social cohesion, and a sense of transcendence.

1. If you believe in God and God does exist then your payoff is immeasurable. You will enter heaven and know eternal happiness
2. If you believe in God and God does not exist then you have lost some pleasure but you have led a decent life. You have forfeited a given amount of 'pleasure' but your existence was not miserable.

If you do not believe in God and God does exist then your penalty is immeasurable. You will suffer eternal displeasure. Though the argument does not provide a deductive or inductive argument for the existence of God, it does supplement the notion of the value of believing in the existence of God providing all other arguments.

Reason for His Existence: Biblical Evidence

While there are many arguments to prove God's existence, let's look at two verses that prove scientific evidence of the Earth's shape before the Greek philosophers had even proposed the idea. In the Holy Book of Job, we read, "He stretches out the north over empty space. He hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it. He covers the face of His throne and spreads His cloud over it. He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, at the boundary of light and darkness." (Job 26:7-10) These verses clearly explain the shape of the Earth as well as how it sits in space. Furthermore, in the Holy Book of Isaiah, we read the following, "It is He who sits above the circle of the earth." This verse also plainly describes the Earth's shape.

The first person to propose that the Earth was round is the Greek Philosopher Pythagoras, around 500 BC. It wasn't until two centuries later that Aristotle validated this theory. However, we know that the Holy Book of Isaiah was written between 740 and 686 BC, and the Holy Book of Job was written between 1900 and 1700 BC. Both of these Books were written before Pythagoras' proposed theory. Thus, we have historical evidence of the accuracy of the Holy Bible.

An entire section is dedicated to the Authenticity of Scripture, but from a scientific point of view, scripture does not negate, but only supports scientific realizations. Its validity also presupposes that its content likewise is true.



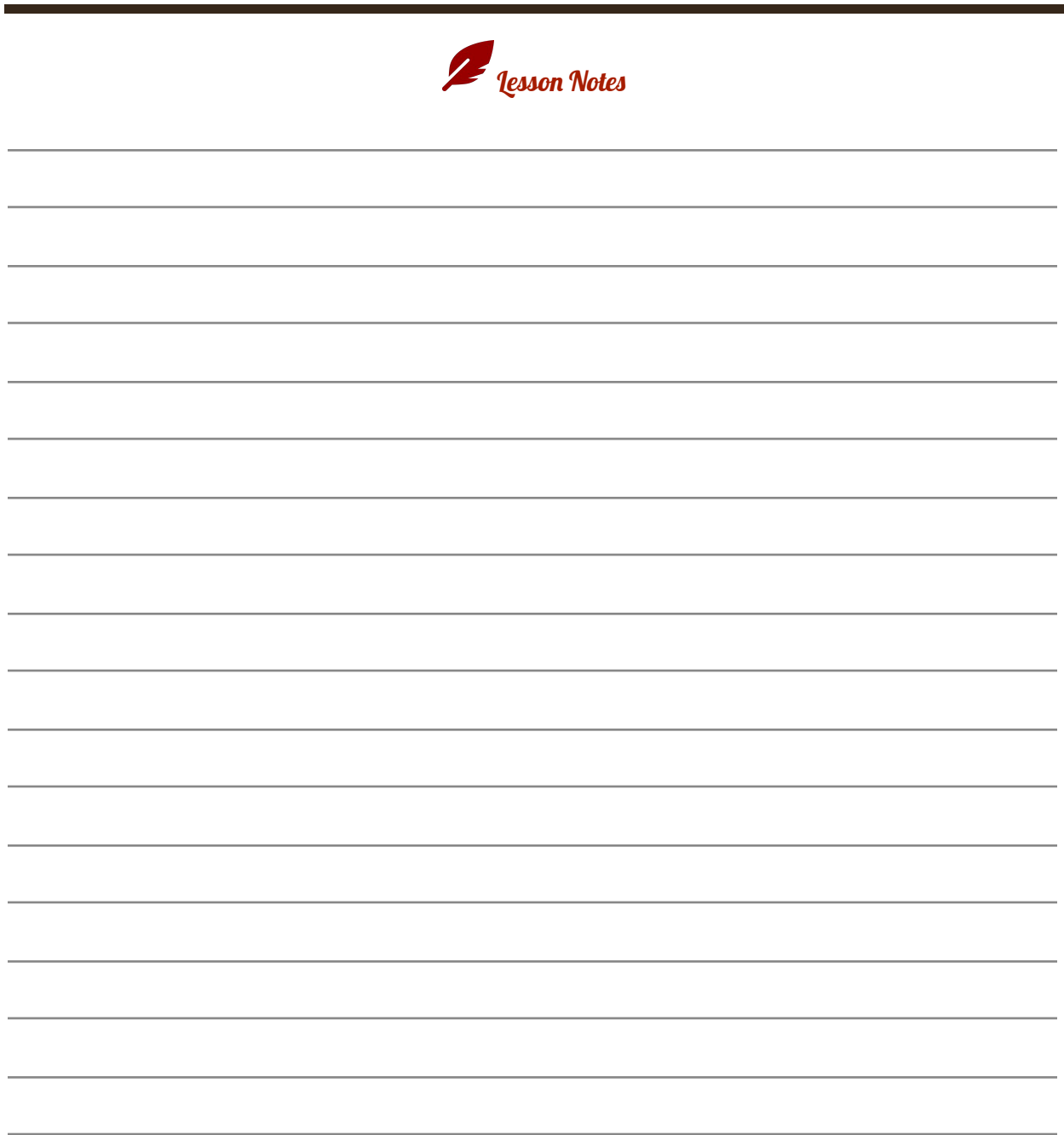
Review Questions

1. Agnosticism is the view that
 - a. God exists.
 - b. God does not exist.
 - c. It is impossible to know whether God exists.
 - d. None of the above choices.
2. A person who holds the position that God does not exist is called a(n)
 - a. Theist.
 - b. **Atheist.**
 - c. Agnostic.
 - d. None of the above choices.
3. Which of the following is not a cause of doubt about the existence of God?
 - a. **The problem of evil.**
 - b. The argument from design.
 - c. The lack of evidence for God's existence.
 - d. All of the above choices.
4. The problem of evil states that the existence of evil in the world is a problem for the belief in God because
 - a. God is all-powerful.
 - b. God is all-good.
 - c. God is all-knowing
 - d. **All of the above choices.**
5. Theists use the Teleological Argument to support their belief in God because:
 - a. The universe shows evidence of design.
 - b. The universe shows evidence of intelligent design.
 - c. The universe shows evidence of a designer.
 - d. **All of the above**
6. Everything that has a beginning has a cause. True or false? (A: True)
7. Things without intelligence can give themselves a purpose. (A: False)
8. Objective morality is self-evident. True or false (A: False)



Books & References

1.  Existence of God - Cause and Effect , Apologetics Press , accessed 25 March 2024,
<<https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/hsc0102.pdf>>
2.  Existence of God -Design , Apologetics Press , accessed 25 March 2024,
<<https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/hsc0103.pdf>>
3.  Existence of God -Morality , Apologetics Press , accessed 25 March 2024,
<<https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/hsc0104.pdf>>



Science and Faith

APOLOGETICS

A Balanced Outlook

How should a Christian approach science? Is science something a Christian should be uncomfortable with? Is it a threat against his or her faith? What are the boundaries of science and religion? Do I use my Bible to prove science? Do I use science to prove the Bible? Do Orthodox Christians agree with the concept of blind faith? Did the Early Church live a blind Christianity?

Because of the rapid advances in science and technology during the last few centuries, some people have become convinced that science is the answer to everything. There are also other individuals that hold the belief that people of faith have no need for science. God is the only resource needed and the Bible the only knowledge one needs to study. Most people would fall somewhere in the middle of these two opinions. Science and religion are two distinct things. They are not at odds with one another, they can only complement and clarify one another. It is crucial for Christians to approach science with a balanced perspective, acknowledging both its strengths and limitations. While science has made significant contributions to our understanding of the natural world, it is essential to recognize that it operates within specific boundaries. Science deals with the realm of the physical and observable, utilizing empirical evidence and logical reasoning to formulate theories and explanations. However, there are aspects of existence that transcend the scope of scientific inquiry. The boundaries between science and religion become evident when we consider questions that extend beyond the realm of empirical evidence. For example, science cannot answer questions related to the existence of God, the nature of the soul, or the ultimate meaning of life. These questions fall within the realm of faith and religious belief.

“Science cannot answer questions related to the existence of God, the nature of the soul, or the ultimate meaning of life.”

According to the Bible, human beings are created in God’s image, which includes a capacity for curiosity, reasoning, and learning, among other things. When King Solomon asked God for wisdom, God was pleased and granted him understanding of trees and animals—the natural world—among other things. The Bible places great value in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding: “Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold.” (Proverbs 3:13-14). The early church fathers are well known for their intellectual pursuits, engaging in philosophical discussions and apologetics to defend and explain their faith. They sought to integrate their religious beliefs with the intellectual and cultural currents of their time.

Science and its limitations

Science is supposed to be concerned with objective facts and observations. In science, we measure things, we observe things, and we speculate about things. We speculate about matter, its properties, and its behaviors. We are concerned with how things work in science. More specifically, we are focused on physical things that are observable in the natural world – either by the naked eye, or through tools that we develop to measure those things.

Science answers what is the universe, what is a human being made of, how did the universe come to be, etc. So science answers the what and how but has no authority on the who and why.

Science is a powerful tool for understanding and explaining the mechanisms and dynamics of the physical universe. But science cannot examine or explain the purpose of the universe. That is a question that falls under theology. The scientific method applies ONLY to the physical universe that we can observe with our senses.

Science is one of God's greatest gifts to humanity. He gave us the tools and the mechanisms to create and repair. He has given us a mind to comprehend the order of the universe that He designed, and it testifies of His own characteristics and Person. This can help us enormously in our spiritual lives and in our Theology.

Science, however, has its limitations. Scientists can only study phenomena that can be observed, measured, and tested. This means that science cannot investigate matters that are beyond the reach of our senses or that cannot be quantified. For example, science cannot tell us whether there is life after death or whether God exists. It cannot answer the question "Does God exist?" Science studies the natural world, not the supernatural. No amount of scientific testing or theorizing could prove or disprove the existence of a supernatural creator. The claim that "God exists" is a metaphysical one, not a claim about nature or physical laws.

Another limitation of science is that it is always evolving. Our understanding of the natural world is constantly changing as new discoveries are made. This means that scientific theories are always subject to revision. For example, the theory of evolution has been modified over time as new evidence has emerged.

***"Science can help us
to understand the
natural world and
appreciate the
wonders of God's
creation."***

As Orthodox Christians, we should not be afraid of science. Science can help us to understand the natural world and appreciate the wonders of God's creation. However, we should also be aware of its limitations. We should not expect science to answer all questions or to provide us with a complete understanding of reality. Instead, we should see science as a tool that can help us to explore the natural world and to learn more about God's creation while being open to the possibility that there are some things that science cannot explain. These things may belong to the realm of faith and God. By understanding the limitations of science, we can avoid being misled

by its claims and can appreciate the value of other means of knowledge, such as faith and revelation of God.

How Religion relates to Science

Religion is supposed to be concerned with belief about why things are, why they came to be, what kind of meaning does a thing have. In other words, in religion we might look at the same material that a scientist looks at, but instead of trying to answer what it is, we use religion to ask why it is. It is a different set of questions than what the scientists ask.

The Bible is not intended to explain science. It is the word of God spoken by His Holy Spirit to His servants. Not only that, but it is the truth; Jesus said: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17). Additionally, the word of God is revealed to all people, from all ages and until eternity; Jesus again says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

***"Heaven and
earth shall pass
away, but my
words shall not
pass away."***

The Bible is not intended to be a scientific or historical text. It does not aim to provide comprehensive explanations of the creation of the world or specific historical events. Instead, the Bible serves as a narrative that focuses on the relationship between God and humanity throughout history. This aspect is of great significance, as it presents a unique perspective that differs from purely scientific or historical accounts. Rather than attempting to provide detailed explanations, the Bible offers a simple and profound statement: "In the beginning, He made it."

Scripture tells us that there is a reality beyond this universe. This reality has not been observed by science but that does not mean it is any less real. It takes faith to interact with it. While the Bible is not a science book, whenever it makes a statement relating to a scientific principle or fact, it is completely accurate. Many archaeologists have explored the land of Palestine. Has any one of those scientists ever discovered anything which disproves the Bible? No. Many archaeological discoveries have confirmed the Biblical record. However, none has ever contradicted the Word of God. The Bible never claims to be a science textbook. Nevertheless, the Bible claims to be "true from the beginning" (Psalm 119:160), so every specific reference about science must be accurate.

Atheist Scientists Who Believed Because of Science

Alister McGrath was a professor of science and religion at Oxford University. He was a biophysicist and theologian. He became an atheist in his mid-teens and was drawn toward Marxism. But encounters with what he calls 'articulate Christians' at university began to weaken his stance. Reflecting on his time as an undergraduate at Wadham, McGrath has written, "I was discovering that Christianity was far more intellectually robust than I had ever imagined. I had some major rethinking to do, and by the end of November [1971], my decision was made: I turned my back on one faith and embraced another."

He passionately believes science and Christianity complement rather than conflict with each other. He was a leading scientist and a strong believer that Christianity and science are compatible.

He says, “If you believe that God made the world, you can get additional insights into God by studying nature. Science can’t answer the big questions such as “Why are we here?” or “What’s life all about?” Science is neutral. It does not presuppose or imply atheism. Darwin’s theory of evolution is not by definition atheistic. Some people just interpret it that way. Science does not in principle exclude God. Science simply says we are not going to bring God into things.’ He also says, “‘There is more to life than the physical world and God urges us to find it,’ he says.

John Lennox is professor of mathematics at Oxford University. He has written many books on religion, ethics, the relationship between science and faith like *Has Science Buried God* and *Can Science Explain Everything*, and has had public debates with atheists including Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens.

Professor Lennox argues that all science is deeply dependent on an act of faith, that is, a firm belief in the fundamental intelligibility of the universe. From an atheistic perspective, there is little reason to say why human reason, derived from brains that are the end-product of mindless evolutionary forces, should be a trustworthy tool for understanding reality.

Lennox addresses the conjecture that science depends on reason, but Christianity doesn’t. As he puts it: “God is not anti-reason. He gives us the highest-level encouragement possible to use our minds; and not only to use them to think about him but to think about the natural world we live in.”

Lennox believes that the Bible repeatedly upholds the importance of rational thinking, not least when Jesus states that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Reasonable Faith vs. Blind Faith

Our Christian faith is not blind. When Christ told St. Thomas “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed,” He meant that it is fitting to have faith. And those that have faith will be blessed. But faith is not the same as blind faith.

***“Hope that is
seen is not
hope.”***

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” St. Paul says. And “hope that is seen is not hope.” In other words, you cannot have faith or hope in something you see. So faith and hope imply not seeing what you hope for. But since you are born in the image of God, He gave you a mind to think. Faith therefore uses this mind to hope for the spiritual things that are not seen; however, blind faith cancels the mind God has given you. Blind faith means believing although what you perceive doesn’t make sense. Blind faith abandons the pursuit of truth—ultimately the pursuit of God Himself.”

When we look at how the early Church Fathers lived Christianity, we can clearly see that they did not adopt the concept of blind faith. On the contrary, they were extraordinary systematic theologians, and they didn’t shy away from embracing philosophy and science and they were able to fit all the pieces of the puzzle together when they perceived philosophy and science from a Christian lens. For example, did you know that St. Justin

Martyr, who was born a pagan in the year 100 AD, did not remove his philosopher's cloak after baptism. Actually, he believed that it was only after his baptism that he was worthy to wear it, now that he has found the Truth in Christ.

Similarly, St. Clement of Alexandria, born to a pagan family around the year 150 AD, esteemed philosophy very much, although he understood its limits. Being the disciple of his great master St. Pantaenus, who was a convert to Christianity from the Stoic school of philosophy, St. Clement essentially believed that philosophy guided people to the truth of God. In his work *Stromata*, Book 1, chapter 5, he says: "Accordingly, before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety; being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration...For God is the cause of all good things; but of some primarily, as of the Old and the New Testament; and of others by consequence, as philosophy. Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a schoolmaster to bring 'the Hellenic mind,' as the law, the Hebrews, 'to Christ.' Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ."

St. Basil also, in his *hexameron*, a detailed work on the six days of creation, uses the science of his time as a means to demonstrate the truth and beauty of God and how a Christian ought to live. He was a master rhetorician and his sermons led many to repentance.

"As for the question of precisely how any single thing came into existence, we must banish it altogether from our discussion. Even in the case of things which are quite within the grasp of our understanding and of which we have sensible perception, it would be impossible for the speculative reason to grasp the "how" of the production of the phenomenon, so much so that even inspired and saintly men have deemed such questions insoluble. For instance, the apostle says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen are not made of things which do appear."⁷ ... Let us, following the example of the apostle, leave the question of the "how" in each created thing without meddling with it at all but merely observing incidentally that the movement of God's will becomes at any moment that he pleases a fact, and the intention becomes at once realized in nature." – St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*.



Review Questions

1. True or false? The Bible is a scientific book. (A: False)
2. True or false? Our Christian faith is not blind. (A: True)
3. True or false? Christian should be uncomfortable with science. (A: False)
4. True or false? Science is supposed to be concerned with objective facts and observations. (A: True)
5. Name a scientist who was atheist and became a believer. (A: Alister McGrath.)

6. A balanced outlook on science and faith might include:
 - a. **acknowledging that there are things that science cannot explain.**
 - b. accepting that science is the only way to understand the world.
 - c. believing that science and religion are incompatible.
 - d. All of the above
7. Which of the following is not a limitation of science?
 - a. Science cannot answer questions about the meaning of life.
 - b. Science cannot tell us what we ought to do.
 - c. **Science cannot be used to predict the future with certainty.**
 - d. Science cannot be used to prove or disprove the existence of God.
8. A balanced view of science acknowledges that:
 - a. Science is the only way to understand the world.
 - b. **Science has limitations, but it is still a great way to understand the world.**
 - c. Science and religion are incompatible.
 - d. Science is not as important as religion.
9. Which of the following is a good definition of blind faith?
 - a. A belief that is held without evidence or proof
 - b. A belief that is based on emotion rather than reason
 - c. A belief that is accepted as true without question
 - d. All of the above
10. Faith is the ____ of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
 - a. Belief
 - b. **Substance**
 - c. Evidence
 - d. D. All of the above



Books & References

1. <INSERT DOCUMENT HERE>, accessed 25 March 2024, <https://www.lacopts.org/story/qa-why-am-i-not-allowed-to-believe-in-science/>
2. <INSERT DOCUMENT HERE>, accessed 25 March 2024, <https://copticorthodoxanswers.org/apologetics/how-should-a-christian-approach-science/>
3. , accessed 25 March 2024, <https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/alister-mcgrath>
4. <INSERT DOCUMENT HERE>, accessed 25 March 2024, <https://www.john15.rocks/list-intellectual-atheists-scientists-became-christians-believed-god-bible/>
5. <INSERT DOCUMENT HERE>, accessed 25 March 2024, <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources-category/csli-resources/series-can-science-explain-everything/>
6. <INSERT DOCUMENT HERE>, accessed 25 March 2024,

<http://www.coptic.net/lessons/ReligionAndScience.txt>

7. Peter Kreeft,  *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, Chapter 2, Intervarsity Press; 1994,
https://www.google.com/books/edition/Handbook_of_Christian_Apologetics/1DH1ZPyTkiC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

