

Hard questions are on the minds of Christians and non-believers as well. Is the Bible full of myths? How do we know that God is there? Would a loving God really send people to hell? Don't science and archaeology disprove Christianity? Why are there so many hypocrites in the church? Why is there so much evil in the world? Don't all religions point to the same God? Isn't truth relative to our own experience?

This apologetics study will help with answers for these questions from a biblical perspective, and will give tips on how to answer when your hearer doesn't believe the Bible at all!

1 Peter 3:15 tells us to always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have. In this study we will learn to give answers that will satisfy both the heart and the mind.

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THE FAMILIAR ADAGE RINGS TRUE THAT THE MIND IS TOO GREAT AN ASSET TO WASTE, FOR IT IS THE COMMAND CONTROL OF EACH INDIVIDUAL LIFE. IT IS MY DESIRE THAT THROUGH THE UNFOLDING OF THESE IDEAS EACH OF US CAN RECOGNIZE THE GREATEST MIND OF ALL, EVEN GOD HIMSELF, WHOSE EXISTENCE OR NON-EXISTENCE IS ESSENTIAL TO DEFINING EVERYTHING ELSE.

Ravi Zacharias

Can Man Live Without God?

SYLLABUS

Texts: Know Why You Believe
Mere Christianity
A Ready Defense

Paul Little
C. S. Lewis
Josh McDowell with Bill Wilson

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MODULE ONE

This module will introduce our study of apologetics, consider various presuppositions, and consider different apologetic systems. At the end of this module you should be able to do the following things:

- Define what an apologetic is, and why it is an important help in articulating the gospel
- Explain why your personal experience is an insufficient defense of your faith
- Show how facts of history, archaeology, and manuscript evidence can be used to defend your position
- Give arguments defending miraculous elements of Scripture
- Tell how one can combine reason and faith in a way that establishes a biblical apologetic
- Explain the place of presuppositions in argumentation
- Show how a believer can counter non-Christian attacks on biblical presuppositions
- Enumerate some of the tests for truth used by philosophers, existentialists, and the reformers
- Explain why one's view of sin is important in one's presuppositions

This lesson will introduce you to apologetics as a field of study. We will define apologetics, discuss its value, look at areas where apologetics is verified, and examine the methodology of apologetics. After completing this task, we will move on to presuppositions and different apologetic systems. Before beginning this section, read the following:

Paul Little. Know Why You Believe, Chapter 1

DEFINITION AND FUNCTION

The term apologetics come from the legal system of ancient Greece. A person accused of wrong doing was allowed the right to make a response (apologia) to the charges being brought against him. In this way, the defendant was provided an opportunity to answer the charges.

In the biblical sense, apologetics (apologeomai) means "to provide and answer in return," or "to defend one's position." Read the Scriptural basis in 1 Peter 3:15 and record what you learn here: _____

Clearly, every believer is to be able to make a defense to anyone who asks concerning the hope of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in the wider sense, Apologetics is the biblical response of the believer to the attacks on his doctrine and faith. Even when the charges against the Christian seem very serious, the defense should always be guided by the attitude of Jesus when He defended Himself.

Apologetics demonstrates the truthfulness of systematic theology. Systematic theology includes:

- Exegetical theology—the exegesis of Scripture
- Biblical theology—building on exegesis and integrating a systematic arrangement of doctrine
- Integrative theology—combining facts of science, history, psychology and philosophy, evaluating it all in accordance with Scriptures as the revealed norm

The systematic theologian also defends the justification of Christian faith and the revelation of the Scriptures.

ROLE OF EXPERIENCE

More than personal experience is needed to live in today's complex world. We must also have a biblical view that includes a proper use of the mind and intellects. We need factual information that supports biblical claims and the rules for thinking logically. Information from the scientific method that is legitimate must also be included.

Ramm observed that the believer's "Religious convictions commenced with his conversion, they now no longer rest solely on such a narrow base, but are part of a comprehensive world view." (Bernard Ramm, Protestant Christian Evidences, Chicago; Moody Press, 1953, p. 15.)

NEED FOR DEFENSE

Certain philosophies claim that biblical statements cannot be verified by the scientific method and are therefore meaningless:

- Existentialism states that people are free to make of themselves whatever they want without being responsible to God or His wishes. (see Jean Paul Sartre, Existentialism, New York: Philosophical Library 1947, p. 27).
- Marxism defines the universe without God because God cannot be scientifically tested.

These are only two examples! There are so many more that the believer must begin to understand a basic tenet: Conclusions derived from the truth claims of

non-biblical positions do not have the same validity asserted by Christianity; nevertheless, believers must still understand opposing systems to certain extent in order to defend their own position.

APOLOGETICS IS THE METHOD BY WHICH WE SEEK TO TURN AWAY ATTACKS ON OUR FAITH.

Apologetics is the attempt to demonstrate the truthfulness of our theology. We must have some objective information that demonstrates that our beliefs are viable as they pertain to facts in this world. There are three areas where we can begin: EXPERIENCE, VERIFIABLE FACTS, AND THE MIRACULOUS.

EXPERIENCE The one area which involves all believers is the salvation experience and what happens to a believer as a result of faith in Jesus. It is hard for someone to deny what happened to us in a personal sense. Both Old and New Testament believers wrote of how their lifestyles had changed. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Psalm 103:12 _____

1 Timothy 1:12-13 _____

Note: The believer must be careful when sharing experience that he doesn't become challenged by those with experiences of Eastern influence. Eastern religious experience tends toward mysticism which can lead a person to deny even himself. We must be careful not to lose our apologetic to proponents of religions which the Bible cannot support.

VERIFIABLE FACTS God has spoken through selected servants in history in specific locations. Some verifiable facts are:

History. The people of Israel have preserved their history through the documents they have guarded for centuries. God's Word has been guarded from the days of Moses in 1400 BC. We also have materials from historians outside scriptures which substantiate the Word of God. Josephus, an Israeli historian, wrote Antiquities of the Jews and Wars of the Jews, and provided a survey of the history of the Jewish people through Bible times until the first century. The church fathers also provided a valid history from the beginning of the church until 300.

Archaeology. The history and geography of the Bible are substantiated by Archaeology. Tablets from 1500 BC describe the culture of the time—successfully describing the culture of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We will look further into archaeology in future lessons.

Manuscript evidence. Even though in recent years critics have critically attacked the scriptures, the efforts of lower criticism have shown that the New Testament can be traced back to nearly its original writing. Because of the papyri, manuscripts, and other writings of the church Fathers, we can be sure that the New Testament we have today is the same as when given.

Although the Old Testament is more problematical, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (dated from 200 BC to 100 AD) substantiates the Old Testament. Because of the careful tradition of the Jewish scribes, we can learn further about the care taken in preservation of Old Testament manuscripts.

MIRACULOUS EVIDENCE

To many Christians, the supernatural is really what makes the Scriptures viable. However, much of the miraculous is related to fact. How do we substantiate the miraculous?

Israel. The very existence of the nation of Israel may be viewed as miraculous. How does one explain the existence of Israel throughout many centuries of dispersion? Many of the nations that conquered and/or coexisted with Israel have disappeared, but Israel has survived. Even in our times, many Jewish people have been killed, but Israel is still a nation today! How can the presence of Israel across 4,000 years of history be explained? It is truly miraculous!

Prophecy Through the centuries, God has spoken to certain men who have proclaimed a message hundreds of years in the future. Some of the prophecies made 2500 years ago are still unfulfilled from our viewpoint. In the short term, however, the validity of a prophet had to be 100% correct. Therefore, we see many prophecies have both an immediate and a future fulfillment. Through prophecy, we see now the supernatural meets with our world context and we see a way that people can test the miraculous spirit of prophecy.

Miracles There are many miracles mentioned in scripture. The Passover is still celebrated by the Jewish people! The resurrection of Jesus is the basis of the Christian faith. People see the miraculous within the parameters of space and time and can assess the impact. We will study this more in future lessons.

ARE FAITH AND REASON AT ODDS?

What part do reason, faith, or a combination of the two, play for us? Apologetics rests on two basics:

- *Reason.* It is popular to blunt the claims of Christianity through reason. Indeed, Christians do not rule out the use of reason. God created men with a rational mind and expects men to use the faculties given to them. Reason and faith need not be at odds.
- *Faith* Hebrews 11:6 tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith. Unfortunately, many in our times see faith as synonymous with ignorance. Faith is not ignorance. All rational thought begins with assumptions which are taken on "faith." For believers, faith is a life and soul trust that God's Word is true. We consider that God's proclamation of truth in His Word is true because faith tells us that God cannot lie.

The relationship between reason and faith depend on the author's presuppositions. However, we can be sure that the believer begins with an element of faith that is then confirmed by reason. Although the two are interrelated, the most important aspect of their correlation is always the willingness to consider the biblical position. We determine what areas we are willing to consider by faith and then proceed to test them by reason or other means.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESUPPOSITIONS

When a logical argument is started, there will always be presuppositions on both sides. This is not so difficult to understand. In geometry, for example, there are axioms which are accepted without proof. These axioms are used to prove theorems and corollaries. The apologist, also will have some basic "truths" that are assumed. For example, the Bible never attempts to prove that God exists. (read Genesis 1:1). Scripture says that God has revealed Himself in creation, and that the Word is His special revelation. (Psalm 19:1-2 and 2 Timothy 3:16).

People who are relying on scientific methods or human rationalization will be quick to ask question such as, "How do you know there is a God?" or "How do you know the Bible is right?" If the Christian's answer is that God says the Bible is true and that there is a God, it is obvious that the argument has become circular.

ARGUMENTATION IS CIRCULAR All argumentation is circular, and failing to realize this makes one frustrated when trying to find reasonable tests for beliefs. To the question, "How do you know God exists?" the logically reverse question can also be asked: "How do you know He doesn't?" The naturalist

might respond that he has checked the universe using the scientific method and found no trace of Him. The Christian might answer, "How do you know that the scientific method is valid to find God in this universe? What if He is outside this universe?" The argument may become circular in the opposite direction, with the naturalist arguing that nothing exists outside this universe, including God. It is obvious that presuppositions will always eventually lead to circular argumentation of some sort. Christians are no more guilty of this than philosophers or others using other methods and holding other presuppositions.

CAN WE ESCAPE PRESUPPOSITIONS? When we test a world view, we should not presuppose the very world view we are testing. Rationalism and empiricism can be used to test some facts, but they cannot test all that is involved in the biblical position. Certainly, non-Christians use these same tests to establish their positions which are anti-biblical.

IMPORTANT PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR BIBLICAL APOLOGETICS

Test for Truth When presuppositions are adopted to establish an apologetic system, the most plausible test for truth must be adopted. Some apologists use a test for truth accepted by various philosophers. Some use a method that is both empirical and inductive. But these are not always systematically consistent. In other words, truth must take into account all experience. We cannot have complete truth until we have considered the facts of history, what we can learn with the rules or logic, etc.

LAW OF NON-CONTRADICTION This law states that it is impossible for something to be itself and its contradiction. You cannot, for example, be both rich and poor at the same time. There must be systematic consistency:

- *horizontal:* all major assumptions are so related that they placate the rules of formal logic, first of which is the law of non-contradiction
- *vertical:* the interpretation of the real concrete facts of human history
- *logical consistency:* the essence of truth
- *logical contradiction:* the core of falsity

EXISTENTIALISTS' TEST FOR TRUTH Some apologists adopt a more radical test.

Kierkegaard felt that nothing could be tested in the objective world of reason. He preferred individual choice, which emphasizes the subjectiveness of personal commitment and involvement.

Barth followed Kierkegaard in his younger days. Later, he restated his position to be that man can have a knowledge of the Father as revealed by Christ. The Holy Spirit provides the subjective experience, while the Bible is the record of the revelation. In such an existential relationship, we can only know the Bible as God's Word in the sense that God speaks through it.

Brunner suggested two criteria for truth: knowledge of God as He speaks directly to man through His Word and natural revelation. Barth disagreed with this position, arguing that the image of God in man suffered so much at the fall that it is impossible for man to know anything of God through natural theology.

The reformers, such as Calvin and Luther, developed a theology of the Holy Spirit wherein the Spirit imparts biblical knowledge to believers. These men saw the Bible as objective truth regardless of what anyone else said about it. The Scripture is not a record of what God says through the Holy Spirit only; it is the Word which the Spirit of God uses to speak to the people.

View of Sin The second factor involved in presuppositions in apologetic systems is the consideration of what happened to man's nature after the fall.

- **ROMAN CATHOLICISM:** Adam's nature was created complete. God gave to human nature an original righteousness, but when Adam fell, sin entered into the human race. Man still has a complete human nature, but he no longer has original righteousness. Man's rational capacity remains untouched and he can both prove that God exists, and that man's soul is immortal; he can even create a moral system. But man does need the knowledge of salvation which comes through special revelation. He also needs the grace of God so he can trust Jesus as Savior. The doctrine of sin is held in such a way that man largely remains intact as he was prior to the Fall.
- **REFORMATION:** The reformers took a different approach. When man fell, every part of him was affected, including his reason. Man is in desperate need of grace and revelation to make up for his depravity, which even

affects his ability to reason. Man needs God's revelation to be sure of what he can know about God and His purposes.

- POST REFORMATION: Others have taken a more optimistic view of man. The image of God in man is seriously marred, but the fingerprints of God remain upon his soul. Man can construct a system of apologetics and partially understand the existence of God, as well as other biblical truths. There is a feeling that because of this, the believer can dialogue with non-Christians and share areas of truth.
- Many Christians, however, limit this to areas where Christians are relating with non-Christians on specific levels such as sciences, or mathematics, which are the same for the believer and non-believer. They believe that only on the metaphysical level is neutrality impossible. One either believes that God is the creator of the universe, or he does not. God is the logical starting point for the Christian and no-God is the logical starting point for the non-Christian. This theory breaks down with certain positions, such as Judaism or Islam, which clearly believe in a God who created the universe and will one day judge those who have spurned His absolute moral position.

DANGERS: The choice of presuppositions presents an acute problem for those who are not believers because a basic moral is involved in their choice. Read Romans 1:21-23. Do you believe that God will hold men responsible for their basic philosophical presuppositions—that the choice of an epistemology is a moral choice? When a non-Christian believes that God does not exist, is his presupposition a neutral choice? Will God, in the final judgment, point out to each man the moment or era when, years before, he took the crucial step toward choosing an inadequate philosophical base for his moral responsibility? This is something we need to seriously consider when we are sharing with those who choose presuppositions which are contrary to biblical positions with regard to the consequences of wrong choices.

DIFFERENCES IN APOLOGETIC SYSTEMS

It is also important to consider what factors are involved in making a choice for one apologetic system over another. We will consider those systems that emphasize experience and those that emphasize reason.

Experience as its own proof: Pascal, a Roman Catholic (1623-1662) protested the complacency of other believers with regard to religious matters. He was concerned about how an experience with God can change the heart. He did not oppose the use of reason, but he thought that logical arguments do not bring people into the kingdom. Experience does that. As mentioned earlier, Kierkegaard, Barth, and Brunner also placed high value on experience.

Characteristics:

- Biblical truth is "mediated" through the Bible and given by God's grace. This means that the Bible is not God's Word until God speaks to a person as he/she reads the Bible. Truth is thus verified by a subjective experience, and no facts or rationalistic ideas help gain this spiritual knowledge.
- Philosophy and scientific investigation are not highly valued in this system. Existentialism, or a "leap of faith" between God and Man is not easily proven by scientific research, which only accepts what can be tested by the senses. Existentialism is more concerned with people and inward experiences.

The apologetic system of experience can become supra-rationalistic (above everything rational). The danger is becoming irrational.

In some senses, the modern charismatic movement has been accused of being more experientially than rationally oriented. In some instances this may be true. When undue emphasis is placed on experience, there is a trend toward the existential. In many churches today, charismatic experience is combined with existentialism which provides a practical way to emphasize experience.

REASON AS AN EMPHASIS: The extreme opposite uses reason only to attain spiritual truths.

Characteristics:

- There is complete trust in the human rational thought process, which is deemed dependable in reaching theological conclusions. Thomas Aquinas' views agree with this position and have influenced Roman Catholicism to our time.

- There is trust in the scientific method to support truth. It is believed that the data of nature can lead us to many doctrines of theology.
- The image of God in man is still fairly intact, even though the soul is marred. God can lead people to understand the validity of biblical truths.

We cannot dismiss these two systems. Experience is necessary in the initial work of regeneration and in the discovery of spiritual giftings, among other things. Reason is necessary because God has made us as rational beings, expecting that we will use our minds. However, if there is no way to test experience, error of all kinds can creep in. Conversely, undue emphasis on reason can lead one to become skeptic. Reason alone cannot be used to obtain knowledge.

Therefore, the more practical solution may be a combination of the two. This is the system that we will use:

Characteristics:

Man has the ability to engage in thought that is non-contradictory; but reason by itself can fall short of a test for all truth. Further, the consequences of the Fall may be so invasive that reason can, at times, be lead astray.

Many truths can be based on the scientific method and we can learn much about the world through this method. The believer will fit data within a biblical world view, but non-believers will be unwilling to do so. They are likely to provide an entirely different meaning to scientific data.

The relation of faith and reason must be positioned so that faith, upon which God's grace hinges, is the foremost concern. Once we accept by faith that God exists and that He has revealed Himself, we can try to test biblical truth claims with logical consistency in accordance with relevant facts.

For the purpose of this study, we will choose this combined approach. Our position will be to adopt these presuppositions:

- God exists
- He has revealed himself in general revelation through his creation

- He has revealed himself in special revelation through the Word.

We will try to recognize common ground with others who have world systems that are not like our own; but, we will watch for those who take positions regarding God's existence and Scripture that are non-biblical. We will remember that, because of the fall, there may be an unwillingness to acknowledge the claims of God concerning scripture. We will be willing to use reason to consider truth claims for biblical positions in accordance with systematic consistency. If a non-Christian sees tension between his view and the biblical position, we will fall back on our three initial presuppositions. We will never forget that man's sinful nature can pervert the biblical position with regard to reason, scientific research, or experience.

MODULE TWO

This module will focus on the existence of God and deity of the Messiah. In the previous module, we noted that one of our presuppositions will be that God exists. Nevertheless, there are many people who will have opposing positions, and who will reject the deity Jesus as Messiah. At the end of this module you should be able to do the following things:

- identify the presuppositions of naturalism and know how it differs from a biblical world view
- explain how naturalists establish values and why they are not biblical
- understand that naturalists can also be in awe of creation
- compare and contrast pragmatism and naturalism
- identify the presuppositions of idealism and explain how they differ from a biblical world view
- explain how idealists establish values and why they are not biblically adequate
- define the bases for theistic arguments
- explain ontological proof for God's existence
- explain cosmological proof for God's existence
- explain teleological proof for God's existence
- explain what it means to prove God's existence on a strictly logical basis
- explain what it means to prove the existence of god on a probable basis
- explain the alternatives to a theistic position
- understand why Jesus did not proclaim Himself to be both human and God at the beginning of His ministry
- explain why the Sanhedrin trial was important in establishing Jesus' claims of deity
- list the positions of the apostles which claimed the deity of Jesus
- outline Jesus' strategy for allowing people to draw conclusions about His deity

This lesson will provide basic alternative truth systems which either affirm or deny the existence of a personal God; it will also examine the argument for the existence of God developed by medieval philosophers; it will consider the logical and probable proofs for God's existence; it will consider the alternatives to a belief in God; it will study the cultural distinctives of the first century to see what the people of Israel believed about the Messiah; it will note the plan Jesus had in his ministry to show people His deity; it will look at special pronouncements by Jesus that made Him a mystery; it will examine the apologetic view of the disciples.

Before beginning this section, read the following:

Paul Little. Know Why You Believe. Chapters 2 and 3.

C. S. Lewis. Mere Christianity; Book II.

More consequences for thought and action follow the affirmation or denial of God than from answering any other basic question. The whole nature of human life is colored by whether one believes people are supreme beings in charge of their universe, or acknowledge a Supreme Being who created the universe.

It is clear from the beginning that it is not possible to prove the existence of God by using the scientific method. Part of the scientific method requires that repeatability of an experiment. God, by His very nature, is nonrepeatable. Further, history, by its nature, is nonrepeatable. Many things that are real are outside the scope of scientific verification.

For example: Can you buy three pounds of self control?
Would you ask for eleven feet of justice?

To insist that God must be proven by this method is like insisting that a television be used to measure wind velocity. Over the years, men have held to three mindsets:

- the worship of no god
- the worship of many gods
- the worship of one god

In reality, archaeologists are finding that the earliest histories and legends of people around the world indicate the concept of one god, the Creator. Some of these societies today are polytheistic. This challenges the evolutionary concept of the development of religion. There are systems of thought today with which believers take exception, even though they contain some element of truth.

NATURALISM: A world view that rejects any idea of a theistic explanation for the universe. Any concept of God or the supernatural is not accepted.

Naturalists depend heavily on the scientific method. They collect data and make observations, analyzing and comparing, and conducting experiments that test their theories. Their test for truth is linked to the material makeup of the

universe. There is no talk about the non-material aspects of creation. The mind, for example, is only a brain consisting of matter and energy. "Thinking" is a chemical and electrical process.

If the universe has only matter and energy, where does the naturalist find a source of values? For most naturalists, purpose is structured into the universe and there is no goal toward which it is moving. Value involves interpersonal relationships between humans and between human and the world in which they live. This sort of position can lead to an extreme pessimism. How can man's hopes and fears, loves and beliefs be only the result of accidental combinations of atoms?

Some naturalists take the position of mysticism. Henry Wieman has written on this perspective, defining God in interpersonal terms. He sees God as "locked" within nature. In this system, God is a "creative activity." Therefore, men can be in awe of the universe. It is more than only atoms and molecules; there is some "mysterious force" within nature.

PRAGMATISM: A world view that believes that truth happens to an idea, becomes true, and is made true by events. In other words, the hypothesis that works is the true one. Truth is a noun applied to the collection of events, actual, foreseen, and desired, that receive confirmation in their consequences.

Some of the better known proponents of pragmatism are William James and John Dewey. These men did not hold to any conception of God as supernatural, and they oppose an apologetic that believes in the supernatural. Their truth is found as people interact with their environment.

John Dewey, went so far as to redefine God as "a person's active relation between the actual and the ideal in experience." God is "the effort to find the ideal in every circumstance."

Pragmatism believes that something works; therefore it is true. The Bible, however, is true and therefore can be expected to work.

IDEALISM: A world view that teaches that ultimate reality is mind, spirit, or idea. Some religious idealists believe in a personal god, but there are many other views in idealism.

Hegel, a German philosopher, saw the universe as a whole thinking process, which is really a sort of pantheism. Some Eastern religions can be idealistic when God is defined as "all that there is, and all that there is, is God," which is another sort of pantheism.

Edgar Brightman, a religious idealist, thought coherence could be the test for truth. However, he defined coherence by the scientific method. The objection, of course, is the use of the scientific method to test the world of the spirit or the mind.

Idealism embraces a number of views, however there is current thinking that God exists as an eternal person who is good. People are considered intrinsically good since God created them. The new liberal idealist version of God has a long way to go before reaching a biblical position of holy, righteous, entirely just God.

MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY AND GOD'S EXISTENCE

The prevailing thought among medieval philosophers of the church was the Judeo-Christian concept of God. They saw God as unique, infinite and personal. They believe He created everything out of nothing. They consider God eternal and uncreated, omnipotent and omniscient. They saw His attitude toward humans to be grace and love.

Before going further, it is helpful to define some terms for our research:

A PRIORI ARGUMENT: Such arguments operate from a point logically prior to and independent of experience. These arguments rest on purely logical considerations and (when successful) achieve the certainty exhibited by mathematical truths.

A POSTERIORI ARGUMENT: Such arguments rely on a premise from, and therefore after, experience. These arguments would, therefore, infer the existence of God from evidence within human experience.

Anselm's A Priori Argument for God's existence would have these points:

- God is the highest being that can be thought of. Is it possible that this Being does not really exist? The concept may exist in intellect only; some presenting the argument may not feel it exists in reality.

- Anselm used the example of a painter who first thinks of a painting—has it in his intellect. Later, he commits the painting to canvas. Then the painting exists in the intellect and in reality.
- The center of the argument is that it is greater to exist in reality than to exist in the intellect alone. Therefore, a Being greater than the thought must always be conceived to exist in reality. To exist in the intellect alone would make God inferior and not the highest being that can be thought of.

So Anselm concluded that God is both in the intellect as well as One who exists and is even greater than can be thought of.

Immanuel Kant argued against this proof for the existence of God. He said that the idea of a being is nothing more than an idea. Anselm had not really established the objective reality of God. We can logically presume the existence that Anselm has in mind—and if he does exist, then he must necessarily need no one or nothing else for his existence. But on what basis can one say that God really exists? Mere thinking does not make it so.

Kant further argued that the statement “God is” is nothing more than a word phrase and does not prove Anselm’s God exists in reality.

Anselm began with the concept that God exists and then developed an argument to demonstrate his conception. Other medieval philosophers also accepted the presupposition that God exists. So, Anselm’s argument was a way of confirming logically what he had already accepted.

Aquinas’ A Posteriori Argument: This cosmological argument was defined as the Five Ways:

- *The First Unmoved Mover.* In a succession of movers, we go back in time to the first one who started motion. This first unmoved mover was defined as God.
- *The First Efficient Cause.* In a succession of causes, we regress to the first cause which was created. There must then be the first efficient cause who is the cause of all causes. This first efficient cause is God.

- *Absolutely Necessary Being.* We are contingent beings because we are dependent upon creation by someone else. As we regress, we come to the first created contingent being. This supposes an absolutely necessary being who created the first contingent being. The absolutely necessary being is defined as God.
- *Most Perfect Noble Being.* This argument concerns the degrees of perfection which are found in created beings. Going back to the first being, we can see that even Adam needed to develop morally. There must be a perfect noble being in whom there is no imperfection. This being is defined as God.
- *Supreme Intelligence.* Natural bodies act toward each other due to intelligence. As we go backward to where intelligence is learned, we come ultimately at the end of the regression, to the most intelligent being, which is defined as God.

These five ways have a different starting point, but are structured the same way. All begin with empirical observation by the senses. The sort of argument is called causality—the “cause and effect” element which can be observed. The crux of the argument is that God is the cause of all things. This argument presupposes the impossibility of an infinite series: i.e. the series regresses to a stopping point. Aquinas was not prepared to accept an infinite series of movers and causes.

OTHER ARGUMENTS

There are other arguments for the existence of God. William Paley (1743-1805) used a “teleological” argument, which is an argument from design. He said that if there is a watch, there must be a watchmaker. Since the universe exists, there must be a universe maker. The argument is based on analogy, so many philosophers feel that it has flaws. For example, we have seen watchmakers making watches; however, have we ever seen God create the universe? David Hume (1711-1776) made this point, thereby disagreeing with Paley. Hume would forfeit the belief in God, but he said that God’s existence cannot be proven by teleological argumentation.

Hume argued that not every event must have a cause. Hume would only admit that there is a constant conjunction, or continuum of relationships, in events. He would not affirm the link between cause and effect.

What does it mean to say that the First Cause really exists? Can the link between the First Cause and the world be logically proven? Some would argue that the world may not have had a beginning.

Hume argued that the cause of the universe was not necessarily God. He proposed four hypotheses concerning the First Cause.

- The First Cause is endowed with perfect goodness.
- The First Cause has perfect malice.
- The First Cause has both goodness and malice.
- The First Cause has neither goodness nor malice.

To require strictly logical proof for God's existence means that we must argue logically from presuppositions. However, we are bound to find those who will not acknowledge our presuppositions and accept them as part of the argument. In this event, we haven't really proven anything to them.

People who presuppose that God exists will enjoy Aquinas' argument. People who are disinclined to acknowledge God's existence will reject it.

SUMMARY: The problem of showing that God exists comes down to which method is most adequate.

C. S. Lewis once wrote, "Belief (in the existence of God) seems to me to assent to a proposition which we think so overwhelmingly probable that there is a psychological exclusion of doubt, though not a logical exclusion of dispute."

Kant, after rejecting rational proofs for God's existence, still saw the need for Him and for religious expression because of a moral presupposition. He said, "I cannot avoid the inference that something exists necessarily."

There are two positions: a self-existent God, or a self-existent universe. If we reject the idea of an intelligent Creator, then we believe in a changing universe that is creative and self-creating. The theist will choose a self-existent God; the non-theist will choose the universe.

IS JESUS GOD?

This logically brings us to the question of Jesus' deity. It is impossible for us to know conclusively if God exists unless He reveals Himself to us. To have a relationship with God, we must know what He is like and how He regards us.

To do this, we will consider the cultural distinctives of the first century regarding Israel's beliefs concerning Messiah. Second, we will note Jesus' ministry plan with regard to His deity. Third, we will look at what Jesus said that made Him mysterious to the people of His time. Fourth, we will look at the apologetic views of the disciples concerning Jesus.

CULTURAL DISTINCTIVES: When the Old Testament canon was closed around 400 BC, the Jewish religious leaders protected the holiness of God to assure that the people would not fall into idolatry. They began to substitute words for God and phrases which avoided talking about God in human terms. We call this "deanthropomorphizing" God. This means that they were not speaking about God in human terms. By the time of Christ, this had God seem distant, far away, and not really relevant to man's difficulties. This may be part of the reason that Jesus did not immediately talk about himself as both human and divine. This was not an attempt to limit his fullness; rather, the apostles and gospel writers stayed with what people knew first and then later considered Jesus full claims. Most people would have viewed Messiah as human, or at best, superhuman.

JESUS' MINISTRY PLAN: In Jesus early teaching, people immediately noticed that he taught with authority, and not like the scribes. (Mark 1:22) The style of teaching of the time would have been for a rabbi or scribe to provide a compendium of what various teachers had said about His messianic claims.

By the end of His earthly life, most people understood that he was claiming to be Messiah and God.

SPECIAL PROCLAMATIONS: One of the strongest claims Jesus made was when he said, "truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." John 8:58. There was no doubt that Jesus claimed deity when He used one of the names for God, "I AM."

Jesus made a number of other interesting statements:

1. Those in graves will hear the voice of the Son of God, resurrected to eternal life with the Father or to be judged (John 5:25, 29)
2. Jesus asked men to pray in His name, and said that their prayers would be effective because of His intervention and power. (John 14:14, 15:7)

At Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin, witnesses were brought to condemn His claims. Scriptures say that even though there were false witnesses, their testimony wasn't accepted. They were so blatant that the Sanhedrin could not receive it. Finally, two came forward who had heard Him say that He was able to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Jesus had said this (see John 2:19) but the interpretation was obviously different than the witnesses were claiming. These witnesses were accepted. When asked for comment, Jesus remained silent.

Finally, the high priest put Jesus under the oath of testimony. Any Jew under such oath had to tell the truth. Two questions were then asked of Jesus:

1. Are you the Messiah?
2. Are you the Son of God (Matthew 26:63)

Jesus answered the first question, "yes." However, the problem wasn't so much being Messiah as being God. If He was supposed to be Messiah, He had already performed miracles sufficient to substantiate His claim. The real problem was with the second question.

Jesus never answered "yes." He went back to the Old Testament and paraphrased Daniel 7:13; "hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64) The implication was obvious and the Sanhedrin understood what Jesus claimed. The implication was that the Son of Man (humanity) would sit at the right hand of God (deity). Jesus had declared that He was the one who could bridge the gulf between God and man.

Consider Jesus' statements further;

He identified himself as more than a teacher or prophet. He clearly said that he was God. (Matthew 16:15-16, John 5:18, John 10:30)

Jesus clearly claimed attributes that only God has. He forgave sins. (Mark 2:5-7)

He claimed to be Messiah. (Mark 14:61-64)

He equated himself so closely to God that he equated men's attitude toward him with men's attitude toward God:

1. To know Him was to know God (John 8:19, 14:7)
2. To see Him was to see God. (John 12:45, 14:9)
3. To believe Him was to believe in God. (John 12:44, 14:1)
4. To receive Him was to receive God. (Mark 9:37)
5. To hate Him was to hate God. (John 15:23)
6. To honor Him was to honor God. (John 5:23)

WE ARE LEFT WITH FOUR POSSIBILITIES REGARDING JESUS:

1. JESUS LIED WHEN HE SAID HE WAS GOD. HE KNEW HE WAS NOT GOD BUT DECEIVED PEOPLE ON PURPOSE.
2. JESUS WAS SINCERE WHEN HE SAID HE WAS GOD, BUT HE WAS CRAZY. WE SEE NO EVIDENCE OF A DERANGED PERSON IN CHRIST; RATHER WE FIND COMPOSURE UNDER PRESSURE.
3. THE INFORMATION ABOUT JESUS IS ONLY A LEGEND. ARCHAEOLOGY HAS SIGNIFICANTLY REFUTED MUCH OF THIS POSITION SINCE EVIDENCE NOW POINTS TO THE GOSPELS BEING WRITTEN VERY NEAR THE TIME OF CHRIST; THERE CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE BEEN HISTORICAL REFUTATION AT THE TIME IF HE HAD NOT EXISTED.

4. JESUS TOLD THE TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF. WHEN WE WANT PROOF, WE ASK FOR CREDENTIALS. JESUS SAID, "IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN ME, BELIEVE IN THE MIRACLES THAT YOU MAY KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THAT THE FATHER IS IN ME, AND I IN THE FATHER." (JOHN 10:38) JESUS' CREDENTIALS SEEM IMPECCABLE. HIS MORAL CHARACTER SEEMS TO COINCIDE WITH HIS CLAIMS.

JESUS WAS EITHER:

A LIAR

A LUNATIC

A LEGEND

...OR GOD

Pilate found no reason to charge Him. (John 18:38)

Jesus had no sin. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

He was tempted, but did not sin.

He could not be proven guilty of sin. (John 8:46)

He committed no sin; no deceit was spoken by Him. (1 Peter 2:22)

In Him is no sin. (1 John 3:5)

DISCIPLES' APOLOGETICS: It is interesting to notice the apologetics that the disciples and apostles used to present Jesus to Israel. The resurrection became the substantiating claim. However, during the end of Jesus' ministry and during the time immediately after his death, burial and resurrection, they seemed most impressed by His deity. An example would be when Jesus appeared to the disciples when Thomas was not present. When Thomas saw the resurrected Christ, a week later, he would not touch the wound marks, but rather fell at His feet and declared, "My Lord and my God!" It was worship of the divine, and Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for doing it. (John 20:28) It would be difficult to understand how a Jewish person could worship another person unless there was strong evidence for such.

On Pentecost, Peter preached to the crowd of Jewish people, and said that God had made Jesus both Lord and Messiah. Later Peter said that Jesus was the author of life. (Acts 2:36 and 3:15) obviously referring to Jesus' power to lay down and take up His life.

Based on Jesus' claims through both words and deeds, and on the reason for which Jesus was tried before the Sanhedrin, Paul could say that Jesus was both human and divine in his letters to various churches. Paul didn't create this scenario, he just took truth that was already proclaimed and evident and shared it in a non-Jewish context.

CONCLUSION

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has "set eternity in the hearts of men." Blaise Pascal called this the "God-shaped vacuum" in every man. Augustine decided, "our hearts are restless until they rest in thee." It is clear that the vast majority of humanity at all times and in all places have believed in some sort of higher power. This is not conclusive proof for the existence of a god, but it is a start.

Further, the universe bears witness to a creator, as discussed in Romans 1:18-22. There are then two choices:

1. The universe began by chance.
2. The universe began by design.

In every human cell, there are 200,000 amino acids. The time required to get all 200,000 amino acids for one human cell to come together by chance would be about 293.5 times the estimated age of the earth. (set by Sir Fred Hoyle, the scientist supposing the theory at 4.6 billion years) Hoyle called the chance theory "junkyard mentality" and compares it to a tornado blowing through a junkyard containing all of the parts of a 747 airplane and accidentally assembling them into a plane ready for takeoff! But ultimately, those who say that we cannot prove that God exists may be correct. Belief is ultimately a matter of informed faith.

MODULE THREE

This module will discuss evidence for the reliability of the manuscripts for the Bible. At the end of this module, you should be able to do the following things:

- identify New Testament manuscripts which can be dated to the fourth century
- identify papyri which can be dated to the first and second centuries
- understand the value of the writings of the apostolic and ante-Nicene Fathers
- understand why variants between all New Testament manuscripts are not as drastic as they first sound
- know which of the Old Testament manuscripts date only to the tenth century
- know about Cairo Genizah
- understand why some of the early part of the twentieth century considered Greek translations of the Old Testament as more authoritative than the Hebrew manuscripts
- understand why the Dead Sea Scrolls are important in dating the Old Testament
- explain why the Dead Sea Scrolls do not satisfy the critics as to an Old Testament text prior to 100 BC

Before beginning this lesson, read the following:

Paul Little. Know Why You Believe. Chapter 6

The integrity of the Bible has been attacked on numerous fronts:

- a. this historicity and geography claimed by the scriptures
- b. the authority of the Bible
- c. the validity of the text

Believing the Bible is ultimately a matter of informed faith. You either believe what the Word of God says about itself, or you do not. You either believe the testimony of Jesus Christ regarding the Word of God, or you do not. However, there are areas of objective evidence that test and support the veracity of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE No other ancient writings have as much manuscript evidence to support their authenticity as does the Bible. Besides 643 copies of Homer's Iliad (written about 850 BC) the other classical works written between 450 BC and 10 BC have anywhere from three to twenty copies each. A

bibliographical test is an examination of the textual transmission by which documents reach us. Since we don't have the original documents, how reliable are the copies we have in regard to the number of manuscripts (MSS) that exist and what is the time interval between the original and existing copies?

There are 5300 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. There are more than 10,000 Latin Vulgate and 9,300 other early versions or portions of manuscripts. No other document of antiquity even begins to approach such numbers and attestation.

Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, director of the British Museum, has said that besides the sheer number of manuscripts, in no other case is the interval of time between composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant manuscript so short as in that of the New Testament. Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls date to 120 BC and were indicated to have been referring to manuscripts written 50 years earlier when the church was being formed.

By comparison, Caesar's Gallic Wars, written between 58 and 50 BC has several extant MSS, but only nine are good and the oldest is written 900 years after Caesar's death. Of the 142 books of Roman history by Livy (50 BC-17 AD), only 35 survive with only 20 MSS, only one fragment of which is from ca 350 AD.

Take these facts, and consider the following chart, which delineates the sort of information that antiquities' scholars consider when reviewing ancient manuscripts:

Author	written	earliest copy	time span	number of copies
Caesar	100 BC-44 BC	AD 900	1000 years	10
Livy	59 BC-17 AD			20
Plato	427 BC-347 AD	AD 900	1200 years	7
Homer(Iliad)	900 BC	BC 400	500 years	643
New Testament	40 AD-100 AD	AD 120	24 years	24,000
Aristotle	384 BC-322 BC	AD 1100	1400 years	49
Sophocles	498 BC-406 BC	AD 1000	1400 years	193

WRITING AND TRANSLATING The Bible is comprised of 66 separate writings, it was written over a period of about 1400 to 1800 years by more than 40 authors from many walks of life. The Old Testament, containing 39 books, was composed of the Law (Torah), the Prophets (Nebi'im) and the Writings (Kethubim). The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic and translated into Koine (common) Greek around 250-100 BC. This translation is referred to as the Septuagint or LXX. It contains the same books as the Hebrew version but the order breakdown of the books was changed to the order and form now used in our Old Testament. Much of the Old Testament was translated into Aramaic. This translation is called the Targums.

The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, the popular language used throughout the Mediterranean world at the time of Jesus. However, a few Aramaic phrases are found because Aramaic was the vernacular of the people of Israel. Jesus probably spoke Aramaic and Koine Greek.

Since we do not have the original manuscripts, one argument against the validity of the text is apparent. Non-believers express doubt that the Bible we have today is the same as when it first appeared. Critics also question how the Bible can be the same after so many translations. However, manuscript finds in the last 100-150 years have done much to quiet these attacks on the integrity of the Scriptures. Manuscript evidence is based on a concern for its historical trustworthiness, authorship, and integrity.

AUTOGRAPHS Writing was done on stone, clay tablets, leather, and papyrus scrolls. The autographs were probably written on papyrus, made from the inner bark of a reed. Writing was done on one side of the scroll, and it was read by unrolling it with one hand and rerolling with the other as it was read. The scrolls were kept in cylindrical boxes called capsas. Eventually the scrolls were replaced by the Codex, which were made from folded sheets (quires) which were stitched together like a book.

SCRIBES The men who copied the manuscripts were called scribes. If even one error was found, the entire copy was destroyed. The accuracy of the Old Testament is phenomenal. It is confirmed by multiple numbers of copies that are all the same in many translations.

For example, two complete copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave I (Dead Sea Scrolls) were 1000 years older than the previously known oldest manuscript, but they were Word for Word identical with the standard Hebrew Bible in 96% of the text. The other 4% consisted of small pen strokes and spelling variations. In Isaiah 53 alone, there were 17 letters in question out of 166 words. Ten were a matter of spelling, four were stylistic changes (conjunctions) and 3 letters added to verse 11 meaning "light." After 1000 years of hand copying, nothing was significantly changed!

translation rules:

- a synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals
- a synagogue roll must be prepared for use by a Jew
- a synagogue roll must be fastened together with strings from clean animals
- a synagogue roll must contain a certain number of columns through the entire codex
- a synagogue roll must have column length of 48-60 lines and a width of 30 letters
- the copy must be lined, and if 3 words are written without a line, it is worthless
- the roll must be in black ink—red, green, or other color was not acceptable—and prepared according to a specific recipe
- the copy must be taken from an exemplar and the scribe could not deviate
- no word or letter, not even a yod (dot) could be written from memory
- between consonants, the space of a hair must intervene
- between new parashah (sections) the width of 9 consonants must intervene
- between each book, 3 lines must intervene
- the 5th book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; others did not have to
- the copyist must sit in full prescribed Jewish dress
- the copyist must not write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink
- if a king should address the copyist while writing God's name, he must take no notice
- scrolls not made in this way had to be buried in the ground or burned

Later, the Massorettes developed a more advanced system whereby each verse, word, and letter of every book was numbered. The middle word and middle letter of each was determined and the verses enumerated again. This was to prevent a "jot or tittle" from passing away.

THE BIBLE DEFINES ITSELF

Read the following verses and record what you learn:

2 Timothy 3:16

2 Peter 1:21

The Greek word for inspired, "theopneustos," means "God-breathed." This means that the Bible does not only contain the Word of God, but IS the Word of God. The original autographs were infallible—that is, without error. This concept is called the verbal, plenary inspiration of the autographs.

OTHER INTERNAL EVIDENCE

The Bible says that not a letter or stroke will pass away from the Law until all is accomplished. Many of the writers claimed to be eyewitnesses who wrote what they saw, heard, or experienced. Although over 40 authors wrote over a time span of almost 2000 years in 66 books, there are no contradictions in what they wrote! What was written in the Old Testament, sealed and canonized, is often seen fulfilled in the New Testament. Prophecy fulfillment is the single biggest internal evidence for the Bible.

NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS

The most important manuscripts are the Greek capital letters, the uncials, written on velum and parchment, from the fourth to the ninth centuries.

Codex Aleph. This manuscript is sometimes called the Codex Sinaiticus because it was found at a monastery at the base of Mt. Sinai. German Count Tischendorf visited there in 1844 and discovered baskets containing 43 leaves of velum manuscripts, which the monks used to light their fires! Subsequently, he made two more visits, and on the third was able to acquire a treasure of manuscripts and other books and return them to Russia. In 1933, the British government purchased this codex, and it is in the British Museum. Most of the New Testament is intact. Missing is Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:112. This codex dates to the early fourth century.

Codex Beta. This probably is the oldest uncial manuscript on parchment. It dates from the early fourth century possibly about AD 325-350. The only part of the New Testament that is missing is from Hebrews 9:14 to the end of Hebrews; Mark 16:9-20; and John 7:53-8:11. The latter two were added in smaller uncials at a later date. This codex is in the Vatican library in Rome, and is also known as the Codex Vaticanus.

Codex A. This manuscript, Codex Alexandrinus, ranks next in importance and is dated to either the late 4th century or mid-5th century. The only missing parts are Matthew 1:1-25; Matthew 6; John 6:50-8:52; and 2 Corinthians 4:13-12:6. The text is in large square uncial letters.

Papyri. The bulk of papyrus fragments were found in Egypt. The first notable find was in 1778, but it was not until 1890 that systematic exploration began. In 1897-97 in Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, Drs. Grenfell and Hunt from Oxford found tons of papyri texts, ranging from the first century BC to the tenth century AD. Several interesting pieces of New Testament materials date to the second and third centuries were found.

- Literary and non-literary papyri were found, including texts of Homer, Plato, and other Greek authors. There was also non-literary papyri such as contracts, wills, receipts, complaints, petitions, etc. Some show clues about culture, lifestyles, etc. They also show that the language of the New Testament was not classical Greek, but the common Greek that was the international language of the world at the time. These non-literary papyri give us information concerning the vocabulary of the New Testament. It shows how words were used, and this sheds light on the meanings of New Testament words.
- Biblical and doctrinal papyri were found including 76 papyri manuscript of the New Testament, from the beginning of the second century. These materials trace the New Testament back to almost AD 100.

John Rylands' Fragment: This fragment is called P52 and dates to AD 120-140. It is the earliest fragment of the New Testament. It was written on both sides and contains portions of John 18:31-33, 37-38.

Chester Beatty Papyri: these fragments are called P45, P46, and P47 and date to AD 250. They contain most of the New Testament.

Bodmer Papyri: These fragments are called P66, P72 and P75. They date to about AD 175-225. P66 has portions of the gospel of John: P72 has the earliest

known material for Jude and 1 and 2 Peter. Several apocryphal portions are also present.

Other papyri have the Gospels, Acts, most of Paul's epistles and parts of Romans. Some of the papyri finds on John date to within 24-50 years of John's writings, which date to about AD 80-90. Most of the papyri can provide nearly all of the New Testament. Many date to within 24-100 years of the originals.

CHURCH FATHERS

The church Fathers most helpful for our apologetics purposes are called the *Apostolic Fathers* (AD 70-150) and the *ante-Nicene Fathers* (AD 150-300). By the time of the Council of Nicea in AD 325, nearly every verse of the New Testament had been cited by the apostolic and ante-Nicene Fathers over 36,000 times. Not every New Testament book is quoted by every Father, but every book of the New Testament is quoted as canonical by at least one of them.

These men either quoted directly, referred to a variant reading, provided a paraphrase, or perhaps even made an allusion. In spite of how the New Testament passage was handled, their testimony is the best evidence for the New Testament. The apostolic Fathers bring us so close to the New Testament writers that we can feel that we almost know them personally!

- By the end of the first century, 14 books of the New Testament were cited by pseudo-Barnabas (approx. AD 70-130) and Clement of Rome (approx. AD 95-97).
- By AD 110, 19 books were cited by Ignatius (AD 110) and Polycarp (a disciple of John Approx. AD 110-150).
- By AD 150, some 24 New Testament books were used in writings by Hermas (AD 115-140), Didache (AD 120-150), Papias (approx. AD 130-140), Iraneus (approx. AD 130-202). New Testament books were also quoted by Diognetus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian.
- By AD 200, 26 books of the New Testament had been cited. Origen, shortly after this, mentioned the existence of 3 John. These demonstrate a living history and testimony of the New Testament text.

- OTHER WITNESSES TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

- Twenty broken pieces of pottery (called ostraca) provided a copy of the gospels in one instance. Also, early lectionaries, or reading cycles, contained selected readings. The church services used most of the gospels, portions of Acts, and sometimes the epistles. Translations are also important. The *Syriac* (Aramaic) appeared around AD 150-200. Various Egyptian language translations appeared by AD 150.
- Among the various manuscripts existing today, there are about 200,000 known variants. This seems very large, however, if one word is spelled differently in 1000 different manuscripts, it is counted as 1000 variants. When lower textual criticism is completed with making allowance for misspelling, recopying of lines, omission of lines, etc., the actual number of variants are very few. When we defend the integrity of the New Testament text, we have much more evidence for it than for other writings from the ancient world.

OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

Before the discovery of Cairo Geniza, a special room in the synagogue where used and worn out manuscripts were placed, only 731 Hebrew manuscripts were in existence. Some of the early-known manuscripts are:

Codex Cairensis. This contained early and later prophets, and dates to AD 900. It is the oldest known manuscript.

Codex Leningrad of the Prophets (Codex Petersburg). This dates to AD 916 and has the major and minor prophets.

Codex Aleppo dates to AD 930 and is sometimes called the Ben Asher because he edited the text.

Codex Oriental 4445, dating to about AD 950, is an incomplete copy of the Pentateuch, from Genesis 39:20 to Deuteronomy 1:33.

Leningrad Codex, dated AD 1008, is a complete manuscript of the Old Testament.

At the council of Yavne (AD 70-90), the Jewish religious leaders standardized the Masoretic, or official text and removed variant readings from it. During the Masoretic Period (AD 500-900, the Jewish authorities completely and systematically reworked the Hebrew text and standardized its pronunciation. The accuracy of the texts is due to the careful way in which manuscripts were copied with very few variants permitted. Although the manuscripts date into the tenth century, the integrity is well established. Variant copies were destroyed.

Cairo Genizah

In 1864, this room was "discovered" and manuscripts were taken from it and sent to various libraries in Europe. In 1896, Solomon Schechter from Cambridge University was given permission to enter the Genizah and remove what he wanted. He chose the older uncial manuscripts, which meant much to the scholarly world.

Among the treasures he found were "fragments from Ecclesiastes and Hebrews, Aquila's version of the Old Testament, biblical fragments in an early Hebrew script presenting in some instances the supra-linear punctuation (the vowel pointings above the line), liturgical fragments, and portions of the Talmud and of commentaries."

These were some of the oldest manuscripts ever discovered. They established a line of evidence from the days of the Masoretic scholars (AD 500-800), which testifies to the integrity of the Hebrew Masoretic or traditional text of the Bible. Until Israel's independence in 1948, the Septuagint was considered the authoritative text since it was the oldest text. The Masoretic Hebrew text was relegated to second place. Those positions have now been reversed.

Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran scrolls)

Just west of the Dead Sea, near its northern end, was a community at the location of Khirbet Qumran, it is occupied either by Essenes or a group like the Essenes. It appears that when the fall of Jerusalem became certain (AD 70), these people realized that the Romans would soon arrive at their homes. Therefore, the community, which was known for copying Scriptures, hid a

number of the manuscripts in the caves of the western hills surrounding Qumran, and then fled to safety. The story of the discovery of the first manuscript tells of a boy throwing a rock and hearing a jar break. Through lack of understanding, several scrolls were destroyed or lost. However, in the time between 1947 and 1956, eleven caves were explored and many manuscripts, either wrapped in leather or hidden in jars, were discovered.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have been fascinating. The first cave yielded seven scrolls. Some were complete; others less so. Included in this cave was the earliest known complete book of Isaiah. There was also a commentary on Habakkuk, an incomplete text of Isaiah, the War Scroll, and the Manual of Discipline for the community as well as about 30 thanksgiving hymns.

The fourth cave yielded thousands of fragments including a portion of Samuel, which is perhaps the oldest known piece of biblical Hebrew and dates to the fourth century BC.

Cave eleven preserved a copy of the Psalms, including Psalm 151 which appears only in the Septuagint. In addition, there was a scroll of a portion of Leviticus, as well as a Targum of Job.

Altogether, about 600 manuscripts were discovered in the eleven caves. The most important thing about these finds is the great help they have given in dating. Most scholars will agree for about 100 BC, although some are obviously much earlier. Further, the Dead Sea Scrolls established the integrity of the Masoretic text of the Hebrew biblical text already existing from the tenth century AD.

Because of this find, the evidence for the Old Testament was pushed back 1000 years, and its integrity to non-believers is clearly established. This find also served as the basis for accepting the Masoretic text as the most reliable.

Archaeology can do much to substantiate the historicity, culture, and life-style to which the Old Testament refers.

MODULE FOUR

This module will be divided into two sections. First, we will describe functions that legitimately belong within the field and practice of archaeology. Second, we will look at some of the ways archaeology has proven biblical narratives. Nothing in archaeology can make people believe the Bible if they choose not to do so. However, archaeological finds substantiate biblical accounts and make them more credible to non-Christians. In this module, we will also look at some areas where archaeology is not helpful to our apologetic.

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

- explain what is meant when people say “archaeology can prove the Bible”
- explain why an older Old Testament criticism defined the Old Testament text
- explain why archaeology has dispelled the basic presuppositions of critics from the last century
- list contributions of the Nuzu and Mari tablets which can substantiate the culture and lifestyle of the patriarchs
- describe how the dating of archaeological materials can help substantiate part of the Old Testament text
- know about some of the key archaeological finds helpful to our apologetic

Before beginning this lesson, read the following:

Josh McDowell & Bill Wilson. A Ready Defense. P 92-117.

ARCHEOLOGY confirms the historicity of the biblical record. What do we mean when we say that archaeology proves the Bible? Archaeology provides a record of the culture and life-styles of people within a particular historical period. Through written materials, we gain insight into people’s hopes, religion, legal matters, and dreams. However, archaeology cannot prove doctrinal truth or substantiate matters of faith.

For example, archaeologists have excavated Jericho. They concur that "something" happened to the city walls, at a specific date, and in a specific way. But, does this prove to a skeptic that the cause of action was an omnipotent God, who performed a miracle, and overcame the enemies of His people? This simply cannot be tested by the scientific method. Therefore, as we study archaeological finds, we must be very careful. We believe that archaeology "proves" the Bible because we believe the biblical account is true and the archaeological finds support rather than disprove our premise. Non-believers will have a different perspective!

Biblical Criticism. During the 1800's, higher criticism tried to fracture the Old Testament. This created many smaller biblical documents, authored by individuals or groups of people of whom we have no knowledge. In the Documentary Theory, documents were proposed which were characterized by the names of God. For example, using E for various developments of documents where the use of Elohim is predominant; J for Jehovah or Lord, and D for the discovery of a lost copy of the Law (maybe Deuteronomy) in 621 BC (2 Chronicles 34:14)

In addition, other critics have dated documents according to Development theory so that the Pentateuch could not have been completed before 400 BC. Therefore, the J document only appeared around 850 BC and the E document around 750 BC. The JE work was considered to be the "editor" that combined the two documents about 700 BC. In this theory, the D code, dated around 621 BC is followed the JED combination around 600-550 BC. A P code, written by priests appeared about 500 BC and the final Pentateuch was finished around 400 BC.

Those who hold the Development Theory propose that the prophets, in succession, completed their work about 200 BC and the rest of the Old Testament was not finished until the first century. The presupposition for this view is that the religion of Israel went through an evolutionary process. It was not though possible to have such complex ideas of worship developed as early as Moses in 1400 BC, Abraham in 2000 BC, or even earlier. In one factor alone, reflecting this attitude, it was thought impossible that writing could be accomplished art in 2000 BC. Instead, writing was considered to be a very late development.

VALUE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Many people think that the archaeology of the 20th century is a work of God to reveal truths in the end times. The higher critics mentioned above, when asked why they proposed their theories, reply only that it seemed logical to make such assumptions. But such higher criticism does not rest on scientific methodology in reality. Archaeology of this century has proven such critics to be wrong. For example:

- writings have been found from the Sumerians, 3500 BC, which reflect a complex system of worship and high ethical standards of wisdom
- writings of the Egyptians can be traced to 2800-2700 BC; Egyptian history is dated without doubt to 3000 BC.
- Writing was obviously in existence well before the critics thought

The ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics consisted of 24 consonants of carefully drawn figures. It was later simplified in the hieratic written form by 1300 BC and further popularized in the demotic writing by 400-100 BC. The Akkadian of 2000 BC consisted of syllabic writing, using 300 characters to form the language. Archaeology has given us many examples which show that men in those times were able to express complex ideas, define historical background, and describe their culture, lifestyle, and religious systems with a written form of communication.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

In Module Three, it was noted that critics raise questions about the validity of the Old Testament because the Hebrew Masoretic text cannot be traced back further than the Qumran literature dating to 200-100 BC. Can archaeology find any evidence of an older text? Sometimes archaeology becomes a tool to verify information contained in the Old Testament. Only a few such examples will be mentioned here. A larger sampling is found in today's reading.

Nuzu Tablets. Many stories were mentioned in these tablets, which were discovered between 1925 and 1941 at Nuzu, southeast of Nineveh. These tablets give us background information of the narratives of the patriarchs.

Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. In the marriage laws, it was permissible for a wife to give her handmaid to her husband as a substitute. Therefore, Sarah was only following the accepted custom when she gave her maidservant, Hagar, to Abraham so that he could have a child. According to this custom, once this was done the child was considered a part of the family and able to share the inheritance. When Sarah later gave birth to Isaac, she insisted that Hagar and Ishmael be sent away and disinherited. Abraham was reluctant to comply. We understand why when we understand the culture of the time.

Jacob and Rachel. The Nuzu tablets indicate that whoever possessed the teraphim or household gods, had the position of leadership in the family, and the inheritance rights. When Rachel took the family teraphim for her father Laban, he came after Jacob with a vengeance. Because of the tablets, we can better understand why he was so upset.

Mari Tablets. In 1933, about 20,000 tablets were discovered in the archives of the royal palace on the middle Euphrates. The Temple of Ishtar was also uncovered in the Mesopotamian valley. Mari was one of the main cities of this area about the time of Abraham. When Abraham and his father, Terah, left Ur, they must have passed through Mari on their way to Haran.

Some of the Mari Tablets reveal correspondence between the last king of Mari with Hammurabi, the king of Babylon, at about 1728-1626 BC. The name of the latter king was also associated with a code of laws, called the Hammurabi Code, which is similar to the Ten Commandments of Moses. Abraham's migration from Ur took place about 400 years earlier than the correspondence of the kings. The Mari Tablets indicate that the people of Mari controlled a significant region in the Mesopotamian valley, including the city of Nahor (Genesis 24:10). This city is mentioned often in the Mari Tablets. These tablets also include the following references:

- the Hebrew name "Ivri," which was also the designation of Abraham (Genesis 14:13)

- a reference to Banu Yamina, or Benjamites, "sons of the right," or "sons of the south." Although archaeology hasn't connected this name to the biblical Benjamin, it is interesting to note the similarities of names in this historical era.
- A description of how sacrifices were made when a treaty was ratified between individuals or leaders. In the tablets there is a recurring phrase, "to kill a donkey," which indicated that no covenant or treaty was made without the shedding of blood. Similar practices were found in Canaan. The people of Shechem were called Bene Hamor, or "sons of the donkey." (Joshua 24:32) and their tribal god was Baal Berith, or "master of the covenant." (Judges 9:4). This suggests that they were sons of a covenant, made effective through the killing of a donkey. Abraham followed roughly the same procedure when God made a covenant with him. In preparation for the occasion, Abraham cut up the pieces of the sacrifices and divided them. God then moved between the sacrifices as He ratified His covenant with the patriarch. (Genesis 15:1-18).
- The names of Abraham and Jacob. While we cannot be sure that the tablets refer to the biblical Abraham, there is enough evidence to indicate that that name Abraham was a common name in use at the time. Also, Jacob, or Ya'que'el, "may El protect," appears on tablets from the 18th century BC on in Northern Mesopotamia.

OLD TESTAMENT OBSERVATIONS

The customs reflected in the Nuzu and Mari tablets have been placed by the archaeologist in the 2000-1500 BC period. What is described in the Scriptures concerning the customs, culture, and lifestyle of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is also similar to that described in these tablets; therefore, the patriarchs can only be placed into the time slot of 2000-1500 BC.

To date the biblical texts describing the patriarchs at any other time would be an anachronism, or an out-of-date sequence. In this way, we can demonstrate that what is described in Genesis is substantiated by archaeological materials. While we do not have biblical manuscripts dating back to this period, the events and culture of Scripture can only be placed within this period.

Similarly, we can substantiate events from the Egyptian period by means of information from the *Amarna letters*. These were found in Egypt and dated somewhere in the late 1400's and early 1300's BC. These materials are references to royal correspondence between rulers of the city-states in the land of Israel and the Egyptian pharaoh. Being dependent on Egypt, they were desperately calling for help because of the invasion of Habiru (or Hebrew) invaders. No help was supplied by the Egyptians. What is significant is that the Amarna letters are dated at about the time when Canaan was being invaded by Joshua.

This causes a great debate between those who want the Exodus to be dated about 1400 BC or those who think it was about 1200 BC. A good case can be made for the earlier date because of the Amarna letters, which contain chronology corresponding to that of 1 Kings 6:1.

The following archaeological discoveries are only the tip of the iceberg. Much more extensive reading can be undertaken by the serious student.

- One of the most exciting discoveries was made in 1997-98 excavations in Jerusalem. A Canaanite water tunnel, predating David's time, was confirmed. Previously, many scholars had claimed that Jerusalem did not even exist in David's time. This find proves that the city not only existed, but it had a water tunnel (which David could have used to capture it!)
- Although the Bible mentions the Hittites many times, until this century no evidence or writings from their civilization had ever been discovered. However, clay tablets found in Assyria and Egypt identify them as ancestors of the Armenian race. An Egyptian tablet records a battle between Ramses II and the Hittites at Kadesh on the Orontes River in 1287 BC.
- Many scholars have believed that the book of Daniel was written more than 400 years after the Babylonian captivity because of the detailed prophecy regarding future conquests that are given in the book. However, as more archaeological studies are made, there are many historically accurate details in Daniel's writings that confirm its date as the Babylonian captivity. For example, Daniel's friends were thrown into a fiery furnace. Daniel was thrown to the lions. By the time of Daniel's ordeal, Nebuchadnezzar had been replaced by Darius the Mede, who was a fire worshiper, as has been archaeologically discovered.
- The Ebla tablets (2400 BC) excavated from 1968 to 1982, confirm that there were elaborate judicial proceedings and case law during the time of Moses.

- The Documentary Hypothesis taught that Genesis 14 was historically unreliable and Abraham's victory over Chedorlaomer and the Mesopotamian kings was fictitious. The "Cities of the Plain" (Sodom, Gomorra, Admah, Zebiiim, and Zoar) were regarded as legendary. The Ebla tablets refer to all five cities and give other information consistent with the biblical narrative.
- Genesis 23:1-20 gives an account of Abraham purchasing a cave in which to bury his wife, Sarah. The proceedings in which the cave, land and arbors associated with it were purchased are in accord with the feudal law recorded in the Hittite documents recovered from the excavations at Mari. These cuneiform tablets were discovered in 1936 and are still being translated.
- 1 Kings 14:25-26 tells of an Egyptian king coming against King Rehoboam and taking away temple treasures, as well as treasures from the king's house. On the walls of the great temple of Karnak in Egypt, this king had carvings made of this conquest and lists the cities affected. There is specific mention of the "Field of Abram" which is a non-biblical source confirming Abram's connection with that locality in Palestine.
- Archaeological finds from Egypt show that other non-Egyptians were elevated to posts similar to Joseph's. This negated the former critical position that non-Egyptians could not serve in this way.
- Joshua 24:32 tells of Joseph's bones being returned to Canaan. A tomb at Shechem, revered as the tomb of Joseph for centuries, was opened by archaeologists and found to contain a mummified body (done according to the Egyptian custom). The tomb also contained an Egyptian sword.
- The Nuzi (Nuzu) tablets supported the custom of a man working for his father-in-law for a bride if he had no dowry (Jacob and Laban); the inability of a father to change a verbally expressed will (Isaac/Jacob & Esau) the theft of cult objects or a god being punishable by death (Jacob consented to the death of the person with whom the images were found), etc.
- Excavations from the burned city of Lachish, from the fall of the northern kingdom, turned up a clay seal reading "the property of Gedalia who is over the house." This person is named in 2 Kings 25:22: "the people that remained in Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah ruler."
- A cylinder was discovered confirming that Cyrus allowed captives to return to rebuild their temples (2 Chronicles 36:23; Ezra 1:2-4).

NEW TESTAMENT OBSERVATIONS

There are interesting geographical parallels that are missed without a careful study of the archaeological finds confirming historicity. Knowing what has happened in a certain location in the past reveals why Jesus might do something at that location when He was on earth. Since it would be difficult for a later writer to have knowledge of historical/geographical contexts surrounding an event in Jesus' life, these events give evidence for the writing of the New Testament books shortly after the time of Christ.

Here are some examples:

- Jesus raised a widow's dead son in the city of Nain, on a hill in southern Galilee. On the other side of the same hill, Elisha resuscitated the dead son of the Shumenite woman. Because the people of this area were all knowledgeable of the first miracle, Jesus gained credibility and authority by performing a similar miracle in the same locale.
- Mary and Joseph's flight to Egypt as the result of Joseph's dream is recorded in the Bible. At that time, 85% of Jews lived outside Israel. Many (if not most) of them have been shown archaeologically to have been living in Egypt.
- Jesus' home town of Nazareth was a very obscure place, not on the "right side of the tracks" and had probably only 20-30 families living there. It is not listed as any of the cities recorded by Josephus, the Old Testament, or the Talmud. When Philip first told Nathanael about Jesus, he replied, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" In fact, the very existence of the town was doubted by many historians until 1962 when excavations at Caesarea discovered what has become known as the "Nazareth inscription" because it was the first archaeological evidence for the city. Excavations of the modern day Nazareth show that it had been inhabited before Roman times, but that it was a small, insignificant village.
- Nazareth sits on the side of a high ridge overlooking the Jezreel Valley. Luke described (Luke 4:29): "They rose up and cast Him out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. The Jezreel valley is also called the Plain of Megiddo or Armageddon. This means that Jesus literally grew up in a village that overlooked the site of the future Armageddon conflict.

A more exhaustive of archaeological evidence, along with a bibliography for further study can be found in the reading assigned for today. We have not even touched on the archaeological find which corroborate events from the periods of the judges, the kings or the Babylonian exile of Judah.

Through archaeology, we are beginning to substantiate historical materials which the Old Testament text claims, and which we have always believed by faith.

Although we do not have original manuscripts for the Old Testament, archaeology helps with biblical historicity and therefore lends credence as to when a portion of the Old Testament text can be dated.

LATER CRITICISM

Even with the archaeological discoveries, scholars still have problems with what the Bible claims. While liberal scholarship is now ready to accept the find of archaeology for dating, and accept that ancient people could think in terms of complex cultures, it still does not mean that these critics accept the faith which the Old Testament proclaims.

Today, many of these scholars declare that the Hebrews borrowed much of their culture from their neighbors, but because of their "monotheistic and moral persuasions" they cleansed the materials of their paganism. Some liberals claim that the Hebrews were very much involved in the Middle Eastern world in which they lived, and that their imagination and intelligence produced the Old Testament.

CONCLUSION

Archaeology is a useful tool. Christians rejoice in the findings that support their faith. Archaeology can prove that certain people existed at certain times, that they had certain writings, laws, and customs. Archaeology provides much support for historical events recorded in the Bible. But for those who do not believe, archaeology can not prove the God of the Bible.

MODULE FIVE

This module will look at the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. We have already looked at the reliability of the Old and New Testaments, tracing available manuscripts that substantiate the biblical text. We have also looked at archaeology as a way to substantiate events, history, and culture which show how parts of the Old Testament can be dated. This lesson will consider the authority of the biblical texts. At the end of this module you should be able to do the following things:

- provide a definition of inspiration
- explain various aspects of inspiration
- state the various formulas Old Testament writers used when declaring their writings to be from God
- explain the difference between what New Testament writers wrote and good Christian literature
- list the ways Jesus claimed authority for the Old Testament
- explain why the New Testament could not have been written before Jesus died and rose from the dead
- explain how Jesus promised the completion of the New Testament
- describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the writing of the New Testament

Before beginning this section, read the following

Paul Little. Know Why You Believe. Chapter 5

This module will be divided into four segments:

1. What is meant by inspiration?
2. What did the Bible writers claim for their writings?
3. What did Jesus claim concerning the Old Testament?
4. What did Jesus claim for the New Testament?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and record what you learn: _____

The Bible translations use different words for "inspiration:"

- "given by inspiration"
- "inspired of God" (American Standard Version)
- "inspired by God" (NASB)
- "God-breathed" (NIV)

The New International Version offers perhaps the best translation. The word "inspiration" doesn't mean that God pried open someone's head and poured in the words. The NIV most captures the Greek word *theopneustos*, which means "God-breathed." Scripture, as "God-breathed," is put into the same category as the creation of man when God breathed into him the breath of life. (Genesis 2:7), as well as creation which God spoke into existence. (Psalm 33:6). We are going to look at some of the factors involved.

DIRECT REVELATION The record that each writer produced could have been given directly by God. He communicated certain sets of information to specially selected men, who then produced the record which has God's approval.

USE OF RECORDS The Scriptures also include materials obtained from many sources. For example, there was a courthouse in Jerusalem from which Matthew and Luke could procure the genealogical records concerning Jesus the Messiah. They could then incorporate this information, which became a part of the divine record. God therefore led these writers to obtain the records. Once the information was recorded, Matthew 1:2-16 and Luke 3:23-38 had God's stamp of approval.

Similarly, when the scribes in the times of the Old Testament Israel's kings wrote their records of the national events, the writers of the Old Testament could collect material from these sources. Their final product became a part of the inspired records. For example, traditional Jewish sources assert that Jeremiah was the author of Kings. He could have gathered a number of court records and produced the books of Kings. Similarly, if Ezra put together 1 and 2 Chronicles the same procedure could have been used. As various Old Testament writers

collected their materials from many sources and wrote as God led, the final record is regarded as from God.

USE OF PAGAN SOURCES A good example of the use of pagan sources happened in Paul's speech at Mars Hill (Acts 17). With regard to the Greek mind, he reveals his knowledge of Greek poetry, "For in Him we live and move and exist...for we also are His offspring." (Acts 17:28)

Paul identified some common ground at certain points in the pagan sources. This common ground was a knowledge of God which men retain, even unbelievers. But, the tragedy is that men, who have some knowledge of God, turn from Him in expression of their self-willed sin nature.

QUOTATIONS AND PARAPHRASES FROM JEWISH

TRADITION These are passages in the New Testament which are direct quotations or paraphrases from the Jewish pseudepigrapha and apocrypha, mostly the pseudepigrapha. For example:

2 Peter 2:4 quotes 1 Enoch 12:4; 20:1; 4:4, 5; 61:10; 7:1-6; 10:10-14. This passage describes fallen angels who are kept under chains until the day of judgment.

Jude 9 quotes The Assumption of Moses describing the archangel Michael disputing with Satan over the body of Moses. The specific text for this quotation has been lost; however, Origen mentions the source and lines in his writings around 200 AD.

Some passages concerning the end times come from the Old Testament descriptions. However, "men's hearts failing from fear" seem to appear only in the Sibylline Oracles (3:83-87; 3:334; 3:5; 3:801-808; 5:201-212, 225).

Why would New Testament writers materials from these "outside books" which are not a part of the Old Testament canon? Israel carried a lot more of the revelation of God than what was actually put in the Scriptures. Hebrews 1:1 indicates that God spoke to the forefathers in Israel at many times and in various ways, but much of what God gave does not appear today in the Old Testament. This means that Israel carried some of this revelation in oral form. In time, it became embedded in traditional materials developed by various writers.

However, only the New Testament writers, led by the Spirit of God, could select what God had revealed while omitting the additions made by men. When the New Testament writers incorporated this revelation into their books, it had God's approval. We cannot pick passages in these "outside books" and say that it is revelation by God in Old Testament times. We can only say this certainly of what is written in the Old Testament and of what is quoted in the New Testament from outside sources.

HOW THE RECORD WAS PRODUCED Not only is the record God-breathed, but also in God's mysterious ways, He knew how to speak to specially selected men and allow the writers' personalities to appear. Inspiration guarded what came through on paper as a record given by God, but He never stifled an author's individuality.

Peter says that men were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). The word "moved" is the same that describes the boat on which Paul was sailing being controlled by the wind on the sea, "we let ourselves be driven along." (Acts 27:15)

Scripture writers were under the direction of the Holy Spirit as they wrote, not through dictation, but their personalities are ever present to reveal their special traits. The final record, however, has God's approval.

AUTHORITY CLAIMED BY OLD TESTAMENT WRITERS

- Isaiah declared some 20 times that his writings were "the word of the Lord" (Isaiah 1:10)
- Jeremiah says almost 100 times that "the word of the Lord came to me" (see Jeremiah 1:4)
- Ezekiel makes the same claim, "the word of the Lord came to me," 60 times (see Ezekiel 3:16)
- Daniel claims that his writings are a record of words and visions from God (Daniel 9:21-23; 10:10-11.)

- Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah begin their writings with the phrase, “the word of the Lord came to me.”
- Malachi, in a very short book, says “says the Lord” 25 times. (see Malachi 1:1-2)

AUTHORITY CLAIMED BY NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

The writers of the New Testament claimed, as we previously saw, that their writing was God-breathed. The Holy Spirit, as the Teacher, guided the disciples in the truth, reminding them of all that had been said to them (John 14:26). This information became the gospels, in which the disciples described what Jesus taught and explained regarding their experiences, relevant, and appropriate to His lessons. The Holy Spirit guided in the selection of the material, and the final record bears His imprint as God-breathed and is therefore authoritative.

The Holy Spirit was to take the things of the Father and Jesus, and disclose them to the disciples (John 16:14-15). This relates teaching of Christ, which would then form the bases for the New Testament doctrine. Paul became the instrument who provided much of this in his letters, as he applied its truth to believers’ lives. Although Paul was not a member of the original apostolic band, the Holy Spirit was capable of revealing pertinent information to this special apostle who was called by Christ. This could then be mingled with what he learned from the original disciples, and his letters reflect the authoritative stamp of God’s approval.

The Holy Spirit was also to disclose the things yet to come (John 16:13) referring primarily to the prophecies of Jesus (Matthew 24; Luke 2:20; Paul and Peter; 1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 3; 2 Peter 3 and John’s book of Revelation.)

The Holy Spirit was to guide them into all truth (John 16:13) and He then put His stamp of approval on the completed product of the New Testament. In time, through the determination of the canon, it was decided that the New Testament writers could only be those who had been eyewitnesses of what Jesus said and did in the pre and post resurrection experiences. The implication of the completed New Testament canon under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is that its

words bear the same authority as the words of Jesus. Therefore, the New Testament is God-breathed.

WHAT JESUS CLAIMED ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT

Jesus, along with other Jews who lived in his time, regarded the Old Testament as the written law, or divine instruction from God. Jesus constantly referred to the Old Testament, covering the entire period of Old Testament history.

- Creation (Matthew 19:4)
- Noah (Matthew 24:37)
- Abraham (John 8:56)
- manna (John 6:49)
- Zechariah (Matthew 23:35)

Jesus clearly made references to many other Old Testament writings, including those that He fulfilled. He showed no doubt about the historical integrity of the Old Testament and trusted the authority of the Old Testament implicitly.

Jesus regarded the Old Testament as instruction from God.

- Jesus made many indirect allusions to the Old Testament:
- being born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:5; Ezekiel 36:25-27)
- the "finger of God" when Moses was so designated by Egyptians (Exodus 8:10) and Jesus likewise in His ministry (Luke 11:20)
- instruction not to take chief places of honor in the presence of kings and great men until asked (Proverbs 25:6, 7) and applied this to those looking for seats of honor at a wedding feast (Luke 14:7-11)

In His use of the Old Testament with religious leaders and people of Israel, Jesus frequently used the authoritative formula, "It is written," and "Have you not heard?" It was meant to convey that here is no greater authority than the Word God gave to Israel for their instruction and guidance. Furthermore, Jesus' heart was so saturated with the Old Testament that He freely expressed His own feelings in Old Testament language:

- Dying on the cross, He spoke Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
- In time of crises, Jesus trusted the authorship of the Old Testament. When tempted by Satan, He replied on each occasion, "it is written," using the authority of Scripture to make Satan flee. (Deut. 8:3, 6:16, 13; Matthew 4)

Jesus attested to the Old Testament miracles:

- Noah and the Flood (Luke 17:26, 27)
- Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt (Luke 17:31, 32)
- the manna in the wilderness (John 6:49)
- Moses and the serpent (John 3:14)
- Jonah being swallowed by a great fish (Matthew 12:40)

Jesus spoke of fulfilling Old Testament prophecy:

The test of a prophet was his short term messages, fulfilled within days, months, and up to a year or two. (Deuteronomy 18:21, 22). If these short term prophecies came true, the people knew that a genuine prophet was in their midst. Such was the case in the contest between Jeremiah and Hananiah. When Hananiah issued false prophecies in a try to stop God's purpose for Israel, Jeremiah predicted his death. Hananiah died within two months. (Jeremiah 28) Based on the validity of their short term messages, prophets could be considered credible with their long range prophecies.

Similarly, Jesus established His credentials as a genuine prophet through His short term prophecies, predicting His death and resurrection. Jesus referred to a number of the long-range predictions made by the prophets of Israel regarding Himself as Messiah as He was fulfilling them. For example:

- He alluded to the start of a new order, the kingdom (Isaiah 9:6, 7) when He said that He did not come to abolish the law or the prophets, but rather to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17)
- He also predicted His own betrayal, establishing the direct will of God for His life to die as an atonement for sin, exactly as Isaiah had proclaimed (Isaiah 53:10, Matthew 26:24).
- Before the creation of the earth, God had decided that a Redeemer would come (Isaiah 53; Acts 2:23) but Jesus could not die until He received the vinegar (Psalm 69:21; John 19:28-30)

Because of the Old Testament prophecies Jesus fulfilled, including those regarding His death and resurrection, He ensured credibility and authority to both the Old Testament and Himself.

WHAT JESUS CLAIMED ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus never wrote a word about the New Testament during His entire ministry. For at least ten or fifteen years after His death, His teachings were carried orally by His disciples. Most of the New Testament was written around 45-65 AD with the exception of the writing of John, written after the temple was destroyed in 70 AD (probably about 85-90 AD). The New Testament was completed almost sixty years after Jesus had died and was resurrected. How can we be sure, then, of the authority of the New Testament?

People throughout the church age have questioned why the New Testament was not started before the death of Jesus. A good reason is that the disciples were not ready to accept the facts of His impending death, much less believe that He could arise from the dead. The disciples were told that there were truths that they could not yet understand or believe. (John 16:12). The disciples had to go through the experience of Jesus' death and be confronted with the credibility of His resurrection. The acts and teachings of Jesus could only be properly interpreted in the light of the resurrection and post-resurrection experiences.

The completion of the New Testament is related to the unique ministry of the Holy Spirit, who, when He was to come, would guide the disciples into all truth. (John 16:13)

Only after Jesus death, resurrection, ascension, and the Day of Pentecost, could a clearer picture emerge of the credibility of the claims to be Messiah. When these events occurred, the Holy Spirit could provide the necessary information to the apostles and disciples, who could then complete the New Testament.

The question of authority of Scripture divides Christian people. It is the most far-reaching and fundamental division that there is or can be between believers. The deepest rifts in Christendom are doctrinal; the deepest doctrinal rifts are those which come from disagreement about the authority of the Word. Such doctrinal divisions in the Church fall into two classes:

1. Common View of Authority. For example, Calvinists and Arminians agree that Scripture is the final authority, but differ as to what it teaches.
2. No Common View of Authority. For example, the divisions between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism over the Pope and the priesthood do not have a common authority.

Those who differ on the principle of authority and consequently, the right methods of theology, can reach no significant agreement on anything else.

There are three distinct areas with regard to inspiration and interpretation:

1. Evangelical View: Appeal to the Scripture, church tradition and Christian reason: this means, Scripture interprets itself.
2. Traditional View: Appeal to Scripture as interpreted (and in some measure amplified) by official ecclesiastical sources.
3. Subjectivist View: Appeal to Scripture as interpreted in terms of extra-biblical principles by individual Christian men.

Ultimately, the question of authority will be answered depending on which of the three views is held. Protestants generally hold to the first. Roman Catholics, some Anglo-Catholics, and Orthodox hold the second. Liberal Protestants hold the third. The resulting threefold division of Christianity on the subject of

authority cuts across many denominational barriers, and is in fact the deepest rift in all Christendom.

MODULE SIX

This module will address issues concerning the validity of experience in a biblical apologetic. Two main areas will be discussed: the data and meaning of biblical experience, and how biblical experience can be verified in a logical sense.

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

- explain why the data of experience can vary as much as it does
- provide a definition of biblical experience
- explain some of the ways that people know they have been saved
- state how a believer can be aware of a change after salvation
- explain how the logical principle of contrast can demonstrate the truthfulness of the salvation experience
- know how a believer can reflect on the many ways he knows he is a new creation in Christ
- explain why a believer's experience with salvation is different from experiences with Eastern religions

Before beginning this section, read the following:

Paul Little. Know Why You Believe. Chapter 12

MEANING OF BIBLICAL EXPERIENCE

The data of a person's experience with the Lord is as numerous as there are believers. Each person is an individual. People have different backgrounds, cultures, and families; however, in this mix of human traits, the Holy Spirit can touch the human heart. Anyone can enter into the experience of salvation, and the Body of Christ does not belong exclusively to any country or culture. The church of Jesus Christ spans the globe and a multitude of nations and cultures.

BIBLICAL EXPERIENCE According to E. Y. Mullins, biblical experience is "the state of condition produced in the mental, moral, and spiritual nature of man when he conforms to the conditions which Christianity declares to be necessary to have union and fellowship with God." It is the state or condition under which a person is "born again." (John 3:3-5)

John 1:13 reminds us that no one is born again simply because his parents are believers. A father and mother cannot confer their spiritual relationship with the

Lord upon their offspring. Neither do people become a part of the Body of Christ through their own efforts. Wishful thinking, good deeds or good thoughts do not contribute to personal salvation. No culture, society, or church denomination can make a person a child of God. People are never changed, or born again, apart from God. Only God can regenerate a person and make him a new creature.

Is the believer conscious of a change?

- In the consciousness of the believer, he senses the surrender of his will. Although preaching may appeal to the emotions and intellect. The call for a decision by an unbeliever must always be directed to the will. The will puts up the greatest fight when considering the appeal of the gospel message. Once a person has become a believer, he realizes that he has surrendered his will to Jesus, and has come to trust in another person.
- The consciousness also realizes the imprints of another, Jesus, made known to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Every believer, regardless of background, culture, or ethnic origin, realizes the presence of Christ. Some come to this awareness more slowly than others. The consciousness is aware of the results of a readjustment because of the presence of Christ, covering every aspect of the believer's experience.

- There is a spiritual adjustment. When we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)
- There is moral adjustment. A person's values change when he becomes a believer. The new ideal is not a goal that the person can attain on his own. Things which he once hated he now loves, and things which he once loved, he now dislikes. The change in moral ideals is important because religions offer moral codes to live by and people who adhere to various religions do have some semblance of morality. The difference between religions and the biblical experience is that the Holy Spirit provides the dynamic to live this moral life which reflects God's righteousness.
- There is an intellectual change. There are many unbelievers who are geniuses intellectually, but the kind of intellectual grasp which a believer receives is the wisdom that comes from God. Proverbs 1:7 describes this when it says, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

There are basically two sorts of wisdom:

1. The rationalistic knowledge which man deduces, depending on the philosophy that he embraces.
2. A wisdom of God, based on His Word

God expects a person to use his mind, but the former wisdom is man-centered, while the latter is God-centered. Man's wisdom by itself tends to cater to man's pride, puffing him up and feeding his self-will. (Isaiah 47:10) God's wisdom begins when a believer humbles himself (Proverbs 16:19) He is then in a position where God can use him.

The two kinds of knowledge are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but a believer who engages in rationalistic knowledge must always subordinate it to God's wisdom. (Jeremiah 9:23, 24)

When a person becomes a believer, he needs to learn to keep the knowledge and wisdom of God uppermost in every activity of life. The unbeliever who has led a wasted life will find, upon conversion, a quickening by God to better use his rational skills. These need to be placed at God's disposal as a sign of what the wisdom of God will accomplish.

Logical principle of contrast:

One of the logical tests for truth, as we have already seen, is the principle of contrast. In order to prove a point, we can better see its validity by putting it into the negative. For example, when Descartes started to demonstrate his proof of the existence of God, he began by doubting everything he had learned. Finally, he arrived at a basic statement: "I think; therefore I am." To test this statement, he put it in a negative form: "I cannot think," but then declared that it requires some sort of mental effort to "not think" by the very same person. The logical contrast only proves the original statement.

In the same way, we find through the principle of contrast that believers were in a certain kind of consciousness prior to salvation, but there was a radical change afterwards to another state of consciousness in the same person.

Experience and Reflection

The test for change, reflecting upon our biblical experience, is really a spiritual self-check, as the believer begins to realize that something drastic has happened in the conversion process.

Sometimes contrast becomes a good apologetic. A person involved in the New Age movement might see a beautiful sunset and claim to feel his spirit merge with the spirit of the universe. The biblical experience is a contrast. The Christian can reflect on what happened in us at salvation. We can describe the sorts of changes the Holy Spirit has produced. We can describe our spiritual, moral, and intellectual readjustments. We can see how we are different from our previous level of experience. We don't lose ourselves in some mystical experience and then afterwards find that we are the same old person.

A Christian can be caught up in the presence of God, but we know what is taking place and it is defined by the Word.

Reflection on Salvation

After salvation, a Christian can reflect on:

1. Forgiveness of sin
2. Higher moral plane on which we live, made possible by the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us.

With the dynamic we have been given, we can realize that we do not have the same frame of mind and heart as we had prior to our salvation. As we reflect, we are led by the Holy Spirit and have the assurance that we are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14) Our salvation is only the beginning of the tremendous witness. Intellectually, the Holy Spirit teaches us the truths of the scriptures so that we can have a better understanding of them and relate them to our lives and to the world. During our lifetimes, the Holy Spirit will be continually creating the image of Christ in us, enabling us to realize that we need to die to ourselves and let Him live in us. The victorious life is to walk in newness of life, after the risen Christ. It is a glorious experience of which we can be constantly aware.

The role of emotions

Conversion to Christianity requires an act of will. Within every human being, there is tension between the emotions and the intellect. Read Romans 12:2, and record what you learn: _____

Why do you think this verse says the “renewing of the mind” instead of “the renewing of emotions?” We must have an accurate biblical understanding of what we are to be about. This is to say, we have to have an understanding of what the Christian experience is supposed to be about. A life of study and thought is important to a flourishing Christian life.

The development of the human mind is not opposed to faith or revelation. In the biblical sense, “reason” means using all of our faculties relevant to gaining knowledge and justifying our beliefs about different things. We all have a number of different human faculties.

- Through the senses, I can know that I am seated at a desk, and it is made of wood.
- Through my memory, I know that I have two children.
- Through my logical abilities, I know that if a building is taller than a care, and a car is taller than my cat, then the building is taller than my cat.
- Through my moral faculty, I know kindness is a virtue and killing people is wrong.

To know these things I part of my human experience. Careful cultivation of reason and the mind should a high value for the Christian community.

Contrast God with the god of Islam, who is considered so transcendent that his ways are inscrutable (beyond understanding-thereby beyond experience). Contrast God with the irrational, fickle, finite deities of the Greeks, or other polytheistic religions. Their mythological gods exhibited the same folly of human emotion exhibited by the humans themselves.

But, God, the Creator of everything, requires teachers who diligently study His Word and handle it accurately. They do this by virtue of experiencing time with

God, and in His Word. They study—they renew their minds. Read 2 Timothy 2:15 and 1 Timothy 4:15-16. Record what you learn: _____

Our God invites His creatures to come and reason together with Him by bringing a legally reasoned case against His actions to which He will respond. Read Isaiah 1:18; Ecclesiastes 6:10; Jeremiah 12:1, 20:12. Record what you learn:

God chose to reveal Himself to us. God has revealed understandable, objectively true propositions. We can understand them and interact with them. This is our experience as believers. God's instructions to us are not just theoretically true; they are also practically useful. We can put them to work as part of our Christian experience.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-15:

But natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man.

The context of the passage is a discussion of the disunity in the Corinthian church, the way in which Paul came to them, and the spiritual state in which they were found. There are three keys for interpretation:

- "Accept" is dechomai. The Greek word we might expect is lambano, which means "to receive." However, dechomai means "to receive willingly." It is used in 2 Corinthians 8:17 to refer to Titus's acceptance of Paul's request to visit Corinth. The term has nothing to do with Titus grasping Paul's request intellectually. It shows his willingness and openness to accept it. So, in the passage we are studying, the natural man (the unbeliever) does not receive willingly the things of God.

What sorts of things of the Spirit of God that the unbeliever does not receive willingly? The context implies that Paul has in mind the words and meanings of the Scripture. It is the inspired words of Scripture that the unbeliever resists.

- “Understand” is *ginosko*. In the Greek, it means “discerning as true and good” or “to know experientially by entering into.” It does not mean simply to grasp something cognitively. It is in this experiential sense that the Bible says that a man “knows” his wife in sexual intercourse.
- The term for “appraised” is *anakrino*, which means to “spiritually appraise or sift something.” It is used in Acts 17:11 of the Bereans, who tried to assess whether or not Paul’s understanding of the Old Testament was good and acceptable. Notice that the Bereans had to possess and intellectual grasp of Paul’s teachings before they could assess them.

When we combine these three insights, we see that the verses are telling us that the Spirit aids the believer in being open to Scripture, in entering into it experientially, and in finding it good and acceptable. The believer is able to experience understanding that was not previously available.

As a disciple grows, he or she learns to see, feel, think, desire, believe, and behave the way Jesus does in a manner fitting to the kingdom of God and the disciple’s own position in life. With God’s help, disciples seek to live as Jesus would if He were the other person.

Christianity is a way of life—it is an experience! To live Christianity is to allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of every aspect of our lives. There is no room for secular/sacred separation in our lives. Discipleship is a vocation. If a disciple goes to college, he goes to become excellent in his vocation, not simply to find a job. A job is a means for supporting oneself and one’s family; a vocation (from the Latin *vocare*, “to call”) is a calling from God.

The vocation of all Christians is the same. We are called to live as children of God, obeying His will in all things. But, our experience will inevitably take many different forms. The wife’s mode of obedience to the call is not the same as the farmer’s, whose is not the same as the priest’s... A vocation includes a job, but it is much, much more. It is a specific role that the believer is to play in life, and it includes the total of natural talents, spiritual gifts, and historical circumstances

providentially given to the believer by God. All of these things fit within the realm of our Christian experience.

“One evidence that Christianity is true is the reality of the experience of those who embrace Jesus Christ. One of the challenges a Christian throws out to skeptics is, ‘taste and see that the Lord is good’ (Psalm 34:8) Verify for yourself, in the laboratory of life, the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is the living Son of God. The reality of Christian experience is evidence of the validity of Christianity.” Paul Little

Every Christian should be prepared to share his Christian experience with other, in season and out. When we share our personal experience, we call this out “testimony.” It is important for every believer to be able to summarize his or her testimony in a few short sentences that will take only a few minutes to share with a non-believer. It is helpful to have several such testimonies, all of which include the conversion experience, but describe different experiences with God after that. In this way, the believer can be prepared to draw on well thought out presentations that best suit the listener.

Take some time now to write out six key sentences of your testimony:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

MODULE SEVEN

This module will discuss biblical philosophy as it integrates with the natural sciences. We will consider God as the creator of natural law, discuss how He sometimes works above the natural law that He created, and discuss some of the intricacies of the scientific method and where they lead Christians. At the end of this module, you should be able to do the following things:

- discuss a brief history of science in the context of the church
- explain how science moved out of the church and became mechanistic
- discuss three presuppositions of mechanistic science
- explain why experience is important as a tool of investigation
- point out two areas of tension for scientists today
- explain why science can have a detached way of looking at the creation
- discuss the value of science as a discipline
- point out why scientists may try to explain everything
- describe the double revelation theory
- understand why mechanistic science may hinder a believer
- show the relationship of plan and purpose for scientific concerns

Before beginning this section, read the following:

Paul Little. Know Why You Believe. Chapter 8.

This rise of modern science started with Copernicus, who lived between 1475 and 1543 AD. Vesalius, a Belgian anatomist was also key in the rise of modern science. The Chinese, Arabs, and Greeks had a lot of knowledge of the universe in practice in their science, but it was Roger Bacon (1214-1294) and others of Oxford University who developed the precise use of empirical observation, which characterizes modern science.

Astronomers Copernicus and Galileo (1465-1642) observed the universe and denied the church's teaching that the universe revolved around the earth. They had observed, through their simple telescopes, that the earth revolved around the sun. While Galileo was forced by the church to recant his beliefs, his observations were already in writing all over Europe for everyone to test for themselves the truth of his new theories.

In spite of the stress scientists experienced because of the church, modern science from 1200-1600 held to a biblical view. Galileo, Copernicus, Francis Bacon (the English writer who summarized the experimental method), Tycho Brahe (the Danish astronomer) and others recognized order in the universe, because an intelligent God planned its precise interlocking elements.

However, after the 1600s, much of science gave up on the concept of an intelligent God. Why could this happen? It could have been because the church drove out a number of good scientists. It was a time when the church insisted on defining what was or was not correct scientifically. Eventually, the church was shown to be wrong. But the reformation came too late to reverse the tragic drain of scientists.

Throughout the 1700s and 1800s, god was pushed to the outer edges of thought by modern science. Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) developed a freer approach. He declared in his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* that one must not look for exactitude in scientific language in Scripture. But the position was not enough to stem the development of a new modern science. This science revolved around a closed universe where God has no existence. Science became mechanistic, meaning it explained everything on the basis of matter and motion, or "materialistic-energy, chance concept of final reality." (Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1981, p. 44)

Mechanism is defined as follows: The view of nature which maintains that natural phenomena can and should be studied, described, and explained by reference to matter in motion and their physical laws. This philosophy of science is in complete disagreement with biblical positions on many points.

THE PATTERN OF THE UNIVERSE

Although many scientists describe the universe as impersonal matter and energy, and believe it took its present form due to impersonal chance, most modern scientists do not accept the precise operation of the universe based on chance. Instead, their belief is in an orderly plan of the universe. This is a concept which arises out of a biblical world view! But the scientist still presumes this plan on his own, and he is more than 90 percent sure, based on probability, that such a plan exists.

The pattern and its parts: The second presupposition, as a scientist examines the universe, is his confidence that he can discover how the parts interrelate. With the ever-increasing technological possibilities available to scientists, they feel confident in their attempt to observe, discover, and understand the operation of the universe.

The necessity of integrity: A curious presupposition is the necessity of integrity assumed on the part of science. The scientist must be completely open to the data he observes, and not fit it into some preconceived notion of what he would like.

Example: The Piltdown Man. In 1911, a skull was discovered in England. Since the jaw was thought to be ape-like, this find was heralded as the key to demonstrate the evolutionary hypotheses. In 1953, the British government admitted that the so-called Piltdown Man was a hoax. With only a few bones, a scientist had reconstructed a human link between man and some higher form of primate, in an attempt to "prove" evolution. The result of this lack of integrity reminds scientists to be careful of the date with which they work.

THE METHODOLOGY OF MODERN SCIENCE

Many people are enamored with the scientific method and confident that its endeavors are the source of knowledge. Roger Bacon felt that empirical science must be the central place in learning, and stated that there is no certainty without experience. Therefore, in the scientific method, we obtain scientific laws through the process of observation, experiment, hypothesis, testing the hypothesis, and refining this hypothesis enough so that a uniform pattern emerges.

Reason and experience: Scientists are not completely tied to empiricism. There are two ways of acquiring knowledge: reasoning and experience. In reasoning, conclusions are drawn from basic presuppositions, but the contribution of the scientific method is that the conclusions of reason need to be tested by experience.

Example: Fire You may reason that fire burns, but you will not have a full knowledge of how and why it burns until you put combustible material on a fire. This experience is the convincing step in believing that fire burns.

Tensions for the scientific method: There are two tensions that exist for scientists:

- establishing a purpose or reason why the universe is here
- the end result of this universe's destination

Many scientists do not deny that these two areas exist, but the problem is that there is no way to scientifically test purpose and final cause in a lab. What cannot be empirically verified, scientists are reluctant to consider.

DETACHED WAY OF VIEWING THE UNIVERSE

The scientific method can be accused of being completely detached from anything human or emotional. Scientists tend to become abstract in studying the bits and pieces which make up this universe.

Example: Diamond When a scientist studies a diamond, he observes the diamond's color, how many facets are on its face, and its weight in carats. The scientific methodology has a procedure to observe, test, and come to conclusions about the bits and pieces of information that precisely describe a diamond.

BROADER SCIENCE

Science has contributed greatly to the progress of man. By the use of the empirical method, and by being inquisitive about every area of knowledge, scientists have made great discoveries which have been put to use. We have a better standard of living, and a number of superstitions and false information about the universe has been dispelled.

There can be an integration of biblical philosophy and the natural sciences that can be beneficial for Christians. But it is incumbent upon believers to carefully test scientific data against the Word of God.

The physical sciences: The field of physics deals with the forces and energies exerted by and upon various matter and the resulting behavior of these material

objects in response—so called “hard data.” In terms of hard data, the physical sciences have fewer variables than some of the life sciences. However, there are two physical laws, almost universally accepted by scientists, which have great revelation within the scriptures. These are called the first and second laws of thermodynamics.

A look at them will aid us in our understanding of scientific approaches to the creation.

FIRST LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS

This law is also called the “law of conservation of mass and energy.” The law says that matter and energy can be neither created nor destroyed. Matter and energy may each be converted to the other, as shown by Einstein’s famous equivalence of mass and energy ($E=mc^2$). In this equation, E is energy, m is mass and c is the speed of light. This law would say that mass and energy cannot appear from nothing. Yet, we cannot deny that the universe is here. From the law of physics that we see operating today, creation is an impossible ongoing event. This is to say that the conditions that we know hold true in our present universe prevent any possibility of matter springing out of nothing today.

Concerning this first law of thermodynamics, Isaac Asimov wrote: “This law is considered the most powerful and most fundamental generalization about the universe that scientists have even been able to make.” To say that no new matter is being created is to agree with the Bible’s statement that “the heavens and the Earth were finished.” God rested from His work of Creation> (Genesis 2:1, 2)

SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS

The Second Law tells us that the contents of our universe are becoming less ordered and more random. Left to themselves, things become disorganized. Things wear out. Even though the first law says that energy cannot be destroyed, the second law says that it does degrade, so that as energy radiates, less of it is available for mechanical work. Entropy (the amount of disorder in a system) never decreases in any physical interaction. So, the universe is wearing down.

Arthur Eddington showed that the energy of the universe must irreversibly flow from hot to cold bodies. Our sun is burning up billions of tons of hydrogen fuel every second. The Earth's magnetic field is decaying; its rotation is slowing down. Stars, and whole galaxies, are going to burn themselves out, never to light up again, (the burning of hydrogen in stars is an irreversible process, resulting in heavier elements which can never be converted to hydrogen again—the supply of hydrogen in the universe is growing smaller) and matter will become more and more dispersed, less and less structured.

Therefore, we know that the universe cannot be eternal—it could not have been dissipating forever. If it had been eternally dissipating, it would have run down long ago beyond the point where we'd have stars shining. Working backwards, the law clearly points to a beginning. In fact, it points not only to a beginning, but to a highly ordered beginning. This raises the obvious question: If the universe is becoming less ordered, where did the initial order come from? Physicists have long been asking this question and have had no success in finding a natural solution. We can note that even 2500 years ago, before the birth of modern science, when the brightest minds known believed that the universe was unchangeable according to all that they could observe, the Bible still said that the universe is "wearing out...the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded." (Psalm 102:25, 26) Also see Isaiah 34:4 and 51:6.

The ancients took their solemn oaths by heaven and Earth, the most permanent and unshakable things they knew; the Bible warned its readers not to do so, for heaven and Earth would be shaken, human intentions are frail, and only God is unshakable and eternal. (Matthew 5:34-37, Isaiah 13:13, 54:10).

THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY POINTS TO A CREATION EVENT

To follow the theory of relativity requires mathematical knowledge that few possess. A story from the 1920s has it that a reporter asked physicist Arthur Eddington, a relativity expert, if it was true that only three people in the world understood Einstein's theory. After a long pause, Eddington finally replied, "I was just trying to think who the third person is!"

For our purposes, there are two main points to consider about general relativity:

1. all the testable predictions that it makes have been proven correct
2. the equations of general relativity imply that the universe cannot be static, but must be expanding or contracting

Even Isaac Newton, with his preliminary laws of gravity, knew that every star in the universe should attract every other star until the entire universe converged. Even Newton had worked with four dimensions: three with spatial coordinates and one with a time coordinate. Einstein recognized the dependent relationship between the time coordinate and the other three. Einstein showed that when an object was put in motion, the time it took to travel was also relative to the movement of any observers—as a result of the odd fact that light always travels at the same speed relative to observers, no matter what their speed or direction.

The relativity of time becomes particularly noticeable at speeds near the speed of light—an astronaut traveling near the speed of light might age one day while folks at home age one year. Further, because of the relationship between mass and energy, to an observer on Earth, an astronaut traveling at such a velocity would appear to gain weight and shrink in size the nearer he approached the speed of light. The description of such an unusual phenomena is called the special theory of relativity which Einstein published in 1905. The theory introduced the concept of space-time. Gravity was shown to be a consequence of mass on space-time. Great masses should noticeably “curve” the space around them and “slow down” the time for any observer near them. Therefore, we can picture the gravitational force of the sun not as an attractive force that tugs on the planets, but as the mass of the sun curving the space around it and so forcing each planet to follow a path that is as straight as it can go in curved space.

All of these discoveries led to a most perplexing end: the universe is expanding. As early as 1914, American astronomer Vesto Slipher, announced that almost all of the nebulae he had measured were receding from us at high velocities. The measurements were a result of spectroscopy, the technique of using a prism to separate light into its component colors. He was surprised to find how much the nebulae were shifted to the red side of the spectrum compared with the stars. The characteristic bands of hydrogen, helium, etc. were identifiable, but were

moved from their normal position far to the red side. By this time, red and blue shifting were understood by astronomers to be an expected effect of stars moving relative to us. (the Doppler Effect demands a shift in frequency with light waves as well as sound waves as when a train horn rises in pitch as it approaches us and falls again when it travels away.) When a light source is traveling away from us, the light waves are stretched, causing longer wavelengths and making the light appear redder. Light waves from a source moving toward us bunch up into shorter waves and appear bluer.

HUBBLE DISCOVERS GALAXIES

One of the most important discoveries was made by Edwin Hubble when he discovered that Nebulae were not just gas clouds, but themselves galaxies of stars like our own Milky Way. Hubble abandoned his law practice to pursue the "most exciting pursuit ever: astronomy." Hubble made use of his knowledge of the brightness of nearby novas to measure the distance of others. The result, no the consensus of modern science, is that the universe is rapidly expanding. This 1929 discovery, now known as the Hubble Law, tells us that distant galaxies are retreating from us with a velocity that is directly proportional to their distances from us. In other words, if a galaxy is twice as far from our Milky Way as another, we will find that galaxy is moving away twice as fast. It becomes very obvious that putting this law into reverse, we find that all had a common point of beginning.

Science clearly points to a creation event at a specific point in time.

For some time, a group known as SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) has been sending radio signals into the universe, trying to make contact with other intelligent life out there. They use radio waves because they are the same everywhere in the universe. Radio waves suffer less interference over distance than other wavelengths. Although the idea of picking up radio signals from space aliens sounds like wild science fiction, the way it all started is wilder yet!

The reasoning went that we should not only have heard from space aliens, but should also have been visited by them. The fact that we haven't been has come to describe Fermi's Paradox. The reasoning goes like this:

1. The reasonable premise that there are billions of stars in our galaxy older than our sun
2. If life routinely develops, there should be many civilizations in our galaxy that have had billions of years to advance in their space travel abilities
3. Exhausted planet resources and dying stars would provide motive for exploration
4. Even if their travel speeds never exceed those of our own age by much
5. Then any civilization with a desire to colonize should be able to settle the entire galaxy within about 5 million years.
6. Assuming 10 billion years for the age of our galaxy, there would have been 2000 chances for such a cycle to occur

“So,” Fermi asks, “where are they?”

Every day that passes without finding a signal of extraterrestrial intelligence should increase the uneasiness of those who continue to reject the notion of a transcendent Creator. The argument made by SETI appears flawless logically. So, the question is this: why after 37 years of concerted searching with the world’s largest radio telescopes, has nothing been found?

There are some shocking summaries from science that we must consider:

1. The standard argument for extraterrestrial intelligence is that there is nothing unique about conditions on Earth. One reason scientists believe this is that the alternative—a unique situation on Earth—would simply not permit them to study the origin of life scientifically. The application of the scientific method requires a large sampling.
2. Since most scientists are unwilling to believe that the origin of life lies outside the realm of science, they are forced to assume that life is common in the universe. But this means that the first premise of their argument for extraterrestrials already assumes the truth of the conclusion they are trying to prove.

3. The premise that life developed quickly on Earth is being rejected by paleontologists and biologists who say that the Earth offered no time for life to develop from inorganic matter. The early appearance of sophisticated forms of life in the geologic record is no longer routinely taken as evidence that life developed quickly, but that it probably developed elsewhere.
4. The indirect observation of exoplanets by their Doppler shifts has resulted in the overthrow of the long-held view that our solar system is typical. Science News admitted: "Recent discoveries of giant planets orbiting within spitting distance of their stars have upset a central tenet of astronomers—that Earth's solar system, where large planets orbit far from the sun, provides the model for planetary development everywhere."
5. Celebration over the discovery of other solar systems was short-lived, since so far none of them are anything like ours, and in fact, what we're learning of them makes them sound downright hostile to life. So far, there's no place like home—a small, rocky, inner planet protected by the comet-sweeping action of outer gas giants with circular orbits.
6. Space scientists figure that, even if their travel speeds never exceed those of our own age by much, any early civilization with a desire to colonize the galaxy should have had the chance to do so 2,000 times over—and that's just one civilization. The mystery is known as Fermi's Paradox.
7. According to the Drake Equation, if even one percent of civilizations avoid destroying themselves, then there should be one million civilizations in our galaxy. Frank Drake himself assumed a higher percentage of surviving populations and a higher number of civilizations in our galaxy.
8. Because of a combination of new factors (the apparent rarity of our solar system's type, biologists' changing beliefs about the rarity of intelligence, SETI's 37 years of negative results), most space scientists are now backing off from earlier claims that intelligent life is ubiquitous in the universe.
9. The following 12 requirements are among those that narrow the possibilities for the development of intelligent life:

- A. Host star must be of right size and type
- B. Planets must start from a small, short-lived type of protoplanetary disk
- C. System must be devoid of large planets with elliptical orbits
- D. Large planets with circular orbits are required at the right distance
- E. Planet must maintain a circular orbit within narrow limits within the "Goldilocks zone"
- F. Planets size must fit within narrow limits to hold the right kind of atmosphere and maintain moderate temperatures
- G. Planet must be a member of a double-planet system to avoid tilting too far on its spin axis
- H. The time when the parent star heats up must coincide with the time in which the planet's atmosphere changes to a cooler mixture
- I. Continuous tectonic plate activity is required to keep planet from freezing and cause precipitation
- J. Planet must have two kinds of crust of right thickness
- K. Planet must overcome the odds against the formation of life
- L. Planet must overcome the odds against the development of intelligence (which Stephen Jay Gould calls "an ultimate in oddball rarity.")
- M. Writing of the "bottlenecks on the road to intelligence," Astronomy's Robert Naeye concludes: "On earth, a long sequence of improbably events transpired in just the right way to bring forth our existence, as if we had won a million-dollar

lottery a million times in a row. Contrary to the prevailing belief, maybe we are special.”

- N. The reason for the search for extraterrestrial intelligence is scientific; but the reason to strongly expect positive results is strictly philosophical.
- O. Naturalists and pantheists must believe in extraterrestrial intelligence. Believers in God can approach the question in an unbiased way since they are free to believe that God expresses His extravagance either through creating many populations or by creating a huge universe for the sake of a single population.
- P. The ultimate superstition is to believe that the universe itself is imbued with the mystical power to bring itself into existence and to fine-tune itself.
- Q. A coded message has been received containing the specified complexity that qualifies it, according to SETI's requirements, as a message from extraterrestrial intelligence! No natural means can explain the clear make of intelligence we find in the genetic code residing in each of our own cells.
- R. The discoveries of fine tuning in nature's constants point not just to a designer that shaped an already existing universe, but to a Creator who created the laws of the universe before there was a universe.
- S. George Ellis, one of the world's foremost cosmologists, says, "To make sense of this view (design as opposed to accident), one must accept the idea of transcendence: that the Designer exists in a totally different order of reality of being, not restrained within the bound the Universe itself."
- T. The big issues for modern cosmologists today are actually much bigger than the question about extraterrestrial life. The truly big question is: Why is our universe so finely tuned for life in the first place?

- U. Many do not realize that the SETI program is not motivated merely by a search for intelligence—it is looking for superintelligence. The desire to make contact with superior civilizations that have learned to live with technology (without blowing themselves up) implies a recognition of our own moral insufficiency, our need for outside help.

- V. The phenomenon of “alien abduction” is emerging as a new psychological disorder, a symptom of humanity’s disillusionment with the human handling of the world’s problems—and perhaps a symptom of humanity’s alienation from the source of its deliverance.

- W. The materialistic position cannot explain our need for purpose and meaning in our lives. Reasonable people must consider the possibility that the Creator having made us with this need, would not leave us clueless as to how to find it—and how to find HIM.

Conclusion: Christians need to change their attitudes with regard to the many disciplines of science. In every generation, when science has opened up new areas of research, believers have been slow to realize the value of these contributions, and how to make the best possible use of them. Christians need to be open to the new discoveries

Believers need to examine carefully what are legitimate claims by scientists. There are examples, from the past, of believers who were very reluctant to use scientific research and who castigated scientists of even putting the fruits of their research into the hands of men. In one instance, when the possibilities of radio first became apparent, there were believers who were confident that radio must not be used. Since Satan is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2) and therefore controls the air waves, wall-meaning believers felt that radio was a tool of Satan.

At the same time, we must realize that many scientists have an anti-theistic bias. When the day of glory arrives, we will have the best possible perspective on knowledge of science and Bible interpretation. For now, we can look at scientific

results in light of the Bible as our final authority. We can rejoice as scientific discoveries being to point toward what we have believed to be true all along.

MODULE EIGHT

Is it narrow minded to say that Jesus is the only way to God? Do all major world religions point to the same God? In this study, we will see that other religions do not point to God, and that their premises are very different. At the end of this module, you should be able to do the following things:

- articulate a biblically oriented humanitarianism, that not only changes the individual, but also society
- explore the importance of the Reformation and a legitimate influence on biblical humanitarianism
- define and state the objectives of optimistic humanism
- describe some men's optimistic ideas in seeking a cure for the world's ills
- define what happened with negative and destructive humanism, and it results today
- list and define the values of a biblical humanitarianism
- list the disvalues of modern humanism
- provide scriptural basis for showing that God took the initiative to reach man
- define the difference between "general revelation" and "special revelation"
- discuss areas of moral decision making

Before beginning this section, read the following:

Paul Little. Know Why You Believe. Chapters 11 and 12.

Christianity differs significantly from other religions. Often, a Christian is considered to be narrow-minded if he says that Jesus is the only way to God.

"In an age of relativism, people are quite uncomfortable when you say you have the absolute truth. In an era when people want to think that their view of what is right and what is wrong is as good as anyone else's, you will get a lot of disagreement if you say Jesus' view is ultimately true." Cliff Knechtle

In this lesson, we want to investigate the various claims of those who are seeking God through other channels than Jesus Christ. Their question to you might be, "Aren't there many ways to God?"

Just as we saw that there are inherent physical laws in module seven, we also know that there are inherent spiritual laws. "One of them is God's revelation of himself in Christ. Another is Christ's death as the only atonement for sin. In proclaiming the exclusiveness of Christ, a Christian does not assume a superior posture. He speaks as a sinner saved by grace." (Paul Little)

BIBLICAL HUMANITARIANISM

With today's attack upon humanism by evangelicals, believers forget that there once was a positive, optimistic humanism which contributed greatly to Western culture, art, music and political theory. In the latter sense, the American Constitution owes much to the political ideas of the humanists of the 1600s and 1700s. The humanists of that period still reflected a lot of what the Bible teaches. We only make these observations to balance the reaction of some believers, who see nothing redeemable in the world and speak only in terms of the next world. Such believers tend only to criticize the culture (there is much to criticize), disparaging any attempt to use the culture in sharing the gospel which, in turn, can change our society.

When we go to the Scriptures and note its positive effect on society across the centuries, we realize it was because believers were humanitarians with a biblical orientation. While many defects existed in professing Christendom, which often solicited power for its own use, we do see the positive effects due to this kind of humanitarianism. Through the preaching of the gospel, the call was made for man to be regenerated. Redeemed man, in turn, was able to make his influence felt on society.

The Renaissance, during the 1200s to the 1500s, with the influence of the Greek classics, provided believers with the opportunity to express their hope and beliefs through architecture, art, music, and all other disciplines of study, in the attempt to redeem society.

NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF THE RENAISSANCE

While it is possible to have a biblical sense of humanitarianism through the contributions of the Renaissance, there is also a danger. In the attempt to combine a biblical point of view with the Greek classics, particularly Plato and Aristotle, a problem soon became apparent. As people engaged heavily in its content, they borrowed too freely from the cultural contributions of the classics.

For example, Aristotle's emphasis was that man is completely capable of ascertaining knowledge of this world through general revelation. He placed a heavy emphasis on what the human mind can ascertain, suggesting that man can, by reason, find the answers to the great questions of life, starting with what

can be observed. The danger is that too much emphasis can be placed on reason, and man considered in too optimistic a light, minimizing the effects of the sin nature.

Other examples occurred when care was not taken to guard what aspects of culture can or cannot be used. Culture became defined as an expression of man's interests. Once this Renaissance trend began, it ended with a unifying meaning in God and His will no longer present. The trend did not arrive at its worst expression in one generation. It went through many stages, starting with the optimistic humanism and finally ended in a deconstructive humanism.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE REFORMATION

The reformation took biblical humanitarianism along a different path. Although the reformers made their mistakes, they were chiefly characterized by their return to a strong biblical position, not compromising it with the Greek classics. Western Christianity does have a Greco-Roman cultural expression in its world view, and in its theology, which was hammered out in the general councils of the 300-400s. But, while the reformers and their followers used culture in its expressions, music, art, architecture, and so on, they always kept it under the guidance of the Word of God. Redeemed man owed to God his freedom through which he could relate to culture, but the message was that only God in Jesus Christ could provide redemption and its consequent freedom.

Christian humanitarianism can make its impact on this world. With God in the center of his life, a believer can relate a biblical world view to many disciplines of study and involvement. Redeemed mankind can evaluate this world's needs, especially those who are underprivileged, deprived, and disenfranchised. Believers should lend their energies to help their fellow human beings. As Christians serve their generation in a physical sense, there will be opportunities, at the same time, to share the gospel message, which can change people and restructure society.

This represents a dramatic departure from other religions. In Christianity, works follow faith. In Christianity, salvation is a free gift, provided by the finished work of Christ to those who believe. Good works come as the outflow of the believer's love for God. As Little says, "other religions are do, Christianity is done."

Christianity reflects what god has done for human beings in seeking them. Other faiths focus on human beings struggling to reach God.

The religions of the Eastern Mystics teach that God is one. Everything is god. You are god. I am god. The tree is god. The building is god. They teach that God is impersonal and the god is an "it."

In Buddhism, the ultimate goal for believers is nirvana, or the destruction of desire. In this state, all pain and suffering end since they are seated in desire. Total nothingness, the result of following the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment, can lead to nirvana. Buddha never claimed to be god. In fact, if anything he was agnostic. Buddha argued that even if god existed, he could not help anyone reach enlightenment. Nirvana must be reached by each person, who worked out the details for himself or herself. Buddhism teaches that the material world is an illusion.

In Hinduism, the ultimate goal is also nirvana, but the term is defined differently. Hindu adherents believe that nirvana is a reunion with Brahma, the all-pervading force of the universe. Hindus are pantheistic. They do not distinguish between God and God's creation. They consider the concept of maya to be central, which means that the material world is an illusion and reality is spiritual and invisible. Hindus believe that nirvana is reached through a continuous cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth. Whether one moves up or down the scale of life depend on the quality of moral life one has lived. If good, one moves up the scale with more comfort. If bad, one moves down into suffering and poverty. If bad enough, one is reborn as an animal or insect.

The Islamic faith sees heaven as "wine, women, and song." It is achieved by living a life in which one abstains from the things he or she receives as a reward in heaven. The Pillars of Islam, which include repeating the creed, making a pilgrimage to Mecca, giving to the poor, praying five times daily, and keeping the fast of Ramadan all involve a works orientation.

In none of these religions is there the possibility of assurance. There is no assurance in their religious systems because there is no atonement. Salvation depends on the individual's work and merit.

As other faiths are looked at seriously, we see that in all other major world religions, you must get yourself together and do something. You must pray a

specified number of times each day, spin a Tibetan prayer wheel, abstain from certain foods, live a good life, and a myriad number of other rules.

Christianity is different. God tells us that we will never earn heaven or deserve a right relationship with him. We simply cannot live up to God's standards. Rather, God took the initiative. Because of His love for us, He came to earth as a man to rescue us from the death that our sin deserves. Jesus, the son of God, died on the cross to take the punishment that we deserved.

Jesus did for us something that we could not do ourselves: He lived a perfect life! He did not deserve to die, he died as a sacrifice for you and me. He rose from the dead, is alive today, and offers us the gift of forgiveness and eternal life.

No other religion can say, "This is what God did for you!"

OPTIMISTIC, POSITIVE HUMANISM

Humanism began within the church context during the Renaissance. Theologians, artists, and others engaged heavily in the Greek classics, but the real danger is that many failed to safeguard what can be used from them. Humanism resulted, but for the time, it took an optimistic stance:

GOD CREATED MAN AND ENDOWED HIM WITH DIGNITY.

Optimistic humanism can be defined as a system which finds humanity so absorbing and satisfying, and the human scene so exciting, that man sees himself as the center and reason for his existence on this planet. Man is regarded as possessing dignity and nobility which potentially justifies him in his own sight. When man is conceived in this way, he does not need an excuse for his own existence; he himself is his own excuse.

With this mindset, the humanists began to move away from a biblical base, but still possessed many side dimensions of biblical ethics and clung to the affirmation that man has great dignity.

The question for humanists to ask is, "Where does this dignity come from?" It can only come from the fact that God created man and endowed him with

dignity. Man by himself cannot assign to himself such a noble estate. We therefore have a curious twist:

Optimistic humanism presupposes that man must have dignity, but will not assent that God endowed man with great intrinsic worth.

In his book, *How Should We Then Live?*, Francis Schaeffer points out three areas which this sort of humanism adopted to find answers for man's problems:

- Reason was taken seriously as a means for testing truth, and whether we can know right from wrong.
- Rationalism saw man beginning with himself as the basis for knowledge to find the answers to his problems.
- Optimism in which man can succeed in establishing by reason alone a "unified and true knowledge" of this universe.

The thinkers of the Enlightenment period, the optimistic humanists of the 1700s-1800s, were confident that they could realize their dreams: "Reason, nature, happiness, progress, and liberty."

OPTIMISTIC HUMANISM

In this line of thinking, man sees himself as the center and reason for his own existence. Two men, in particular, epitomized optimistic humanism: Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Karl Marx (1818-1883). As optimistic humanism became more popular, one thing became certain; there was a full-force effort to divorce this perspective from a biblical position. In fact, the humanists were obsessed with religion as the "great conspiracy" which pulled mankind down. Yet, they were still close enough to the by-products of a biblical position—a moral—a dignity—a redemption of society—to include them in the methodology for perfecting their world. Some of them even maintained this view during the reign of terror, when France went through a bloody revolution at the end of the 1700s.

Immanuel Kant was a German philosopher who established a world view in which nothing can be known of this world except by the empirical method. He

maintained a world of the mind, wherein the concepts of value and meaning had value. In his book, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Kant sought to demonstrate that God does exist, and tried to make room for religious values on the basis of practical reason. He argued further that man has intrinsic worth, and that the existence of God is necessary to guarantee man's immortal future.

Kant taught that a human being had a moral of which he was aware, so that in the formulation of the categorical imperative, a person is advised to "act only on that maxim whereby if he could at the same time will that it should become a universal law." In other words, a man and woman should always act as if their every action can be universal. A man should not steal because if he did, and if everyone else stole as well, it would go against an intuitive concept that stealing was as wrong, and moral relations would then become impossible. The same applies to other dimensions of the moral: lying, immorality, and so on.

Another formulation of the categorical imperative is that everyone is to "treat humanity in every case as an end and never as a means." It is, in a sense, another way of stating the golden rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Karl Marx had a powerful appeal to the poor and disadvantaged. He was greatly disturbed with the economic deprivation of the working man and the assault on human dignity as a result of the industrial revolution in the 1800s. He thought that through his ideas, he could help people and thereby help society as well.

Kant, Marx, and other thinkers felt that they could set out to change their world. The eighteenth century was rich in theories of human nature and destiny, and by the use of reason and empiricism, it was thought that a better world could come in to existence. There was an optimism among these humanists that through their ideas the world could be made into a better place to live. It seems, however, that these humanists want their cake intact while eating it. They wanted a biblical ethic of redeeming their world, but at the same time denying any place for God in it.

NEGATIVE, DESTRUCTIVE HUMANISM

What seemed so plausible to the optimistic humanist only turned sour. These men had new and different theories for social utopianism, but the basis for being optimistic in redeeming humanity was not to be found in man himself.

One wonders how optimistic Voltaire could have been when thousands of French people died in the bloody revolution beginning in 1792. When there is no basis for human redemption except what man can provide himself, then mankind will sooner or later suffer from both ends of the political spectrum: anarchy, or a dictatorship where each justifies its actions based on its humanist judgments.

August Comte saw no way to accept truth except what can be demonstrated through the scientific method. Any theological knowledge, or any metaphysics (the nature of the world around us) which cannot be demonstrated empirically, must be set aside. A humanism, along with an idealism, seemed so optimistic to Kant. With Comte's presuppositions, humanism became negative. How much was there left to know? Very little! The optimistic endeavor turned negative, and as far as science was concerned, it became mechanistic. Many others, like Comte, also adopted a materialistic concept of the universe.

Charles Darwin in particular, with his *Origin of the Species*, shook optimistic humanism to its foundations. Man no longer maintains his supremacy by his rational processes; rather, he has become nothing more than the mechanical process of selection of plants and animals, based on chance variations. It is a problem with which we are still wrestling today. What happens now to man's dignity, accepted as an earlier humanist option? If man comes from below, and not from God, then man's dignity is shattered.

In negative humanism, man has destroyed any optimism, as well as the biblical base which alone can provide for the possibility of freedom without chaos. A humanism which has turned sour can be seen in every strata of our society today. Our modern art, music, literature, and films only represent an emptiness, with no attempt to find a moral. Why do we wrestle with such basic sociological issues as abortion, homosexuality, or lack of prayer in schools? It is only because so many have lost the biblical base by which to make moral decisions, which will reflect value and worth of the dignity of redeemed man.

Francis Schaeffer saw two effects when a society loses its meaning (*How Should We Then Live?*, p. 226):

- degeneracy, decadence, depravity, a love for violence
- some powerful elite group which will be present as society breaks down

Once this happens, the elite group will rise up and impose their arbitrary absolute of power, and who will then dare to say, "This is wrong!"

An obvious exception is the possibility when believers refuse to give up on what the power of God can do, even when an immoral elite group is at the helm of a government. The people of God in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other places in Eastern Europe continued in vigilant prayer that one day the Lord would topple their deplorable regimes. Because of the changes which took place so quickly in 1989-1990 in Eastern Europe, we can recognize that God answered prayer in a remarkable way. Evil men in power were toppled and ordinary people could be involved in change. Believers, however, must remain vigilant before God in prayer, and continue to exercise a biblical humanitarianism to redeem their societies. If there is no follow-up on the spiritual level, then once again, a country will lose what was gained at such cost.

In addition to the above considerations, it is important, when considering the way that men seek God, that we also look at the various things that are substituted for God and used as arguments against the exclusivity of Christianity. In this section, we will look at moral considerations that have been obstacles for Christianity. At the end of this section, you should be able to:

- explain Fletcher's three approaches for decision making
- list Fletcher's four basic presuppositions in situation ethics
- list six propositions on which are basic difficulties in Fletcher's system of ethics
- discuss four areas which are basic difficulties in Fletcher's system of ethics
- define three moral norms mentioned in the pre-Floor context
- explain reason for moral norms in the Mosaic law
- list the basic moral norms of the New Covenant
- provide examples of when moral norms seem to conflict and what solutions might be

Is it narrow minded to say that Jesus is the only way to God? Do all major world religions support the same ethical system and point to the same God? Many people in the world today struggle with these issues. The tension of ethical positions becomes more evident as we begin to look at the various lifestyles that people choose. There is a biblical basis for the ethic which a believer can adopt.

As we live a biblical moral, unbeliever should be attracted to appropriate such a lifestyle for themselves when they come to faith.

One major logical consequence of humanism and a mechanistic science is the breakdown of a moral position. Once we move away from the Creator God and His morals to where man becomes the center of his own world, it will not take long to succumb to evil choices and practices which are then rationalized.

NATURALISM AND EMOTIVISM

We will consider two areas that fall into this category:

1. **EMOTIVE THEORY OF ETHICS** In this theory, moral judgments are considered neither true nor false. They are merely the expression of how one feels about moral behavior. Some modern language philosophers (those who are trying to find meaning in the choice of language used) conjecture that when moral judgments cannot be verified or falsified (proven wrong) by the scientific method, then they really only reflect personal feeling.
2. **FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY** A naturalistic theory of ethics promotes the possibility that moral judgments can be either true or false, but explained on the basis of some scientific concept. One example of such an ethic is Freudian psychology, when man has:
 - An Id, which is the sum of all forces of the individual out of its conflict with and chastening by reality
 - An Ego, which is developed as a person grows and relates to other people and things
 - A Super-Ego, which is a refinement of the Ego

The Super-Ego is said to help one develop a moral conscience which can prevent the Ego from accepting "unworthy" impulses from the Id. Freud thought that emotional problems that originated in the Id could overflow into the Ego or Super-Ego, causing a person to fail to fit into society. Stated another way, Freud

had a sensitivity to morality and what was morally and socially acceptable to society. However, his moral basis was not biblical. He believed that man could adjust socially through proper psychological balance between the three parts of himself, thereby becoming a "good person."

SITUATION ETHICS this course is not sufficiently long to allow a full scale look at the work by Joseph Fletcher (see Fletcher. Situation Ethics—New Morality. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966.) Here we will only outline the system and note that many psychologists and philosophers today embrace its theories.

Three approaches to decision making:

- Legalism: Fletcher felt this to be contrary to scripture and charged Protestants with legalistically holding the Law and the Prophets, and other teachings of the Bible, in a legalistic fashion. Even though many have genuinely tried to love all people and assist in the redemption process for entire communities and people groups, Fletcher saw all Protestant Christians as having a legalistic lifestyle.
- Antinomianism: This system, which holds no moral norms, was also repudiated by Fletcher.
- Situationism: This system holds that ethical decisions can only be made in the context of a decision. Fletcher held that there must be no moral rules beforehand because it must be recognized that "circumstances alter rules and principles." Only when we come to a very specific context is the moral decision to be made, and the only valid decision is where God's love can be best realized. Fletcher does insist on one basic moral norm, God's love. But he does not feel it is to be applied until we are at the point where we have to make the moral choice.

Fletcher had four working principles where love can be applied:

Pragmatism, where one does not make any ethical decision until he comes to the actual situation to assess what should be the ideal that would work. But how do we assess whether the action we do take will be right or wrong? Only as love is served will the pragmatic action be considered good.

Relativism, where no moral absolutes exist except that of God's love. And yet, this love must be served in each and every context in different ways.

Positivism, which underscores the scientific method as the only means by which we can verify any knowledge. In Fletcher's system, his so-called Christian ethics expressed a faith in God, but provided the reasons for the kind of obedience required to fulfill the commandment to love in a particular situation. In a manner of thinking, he made love into a god.

Personalism, by which Fletcher meant that ethical decisions are made in terms of people. To do so in any other way becomes legalistic.

Fletcher also developed six other propositions which were foundational for his system of ethics:

- Only love is always good
- Love and justice are the same thing
- Love is not the same as liking
- Love is the only norm
- Love makes decisions during the situation
- Love justifies its means

Fletcher was trying to respond to a position of main line denominations of the 1960's. Young people coming out of these churches had not been exposed to a genuine salvation message in many instances. They were, however, exposed to the Ten Commandments as a law for moral behavior. Fletcher saw this as legalistic, and in this respect, he was right. However, there are many problems with Fletcher's concerns from a biblical apologetic view point.

1. The biblical position does not in any way present moral norms as relative, pragmatic, or from a positivist point of view. Rather, the outworking of moral norms are a guide to behavior that is godly. They guide the desire to reach out with love and compassion to those who are not saved. Yet, in the true biblical sense, God's commandments are absolute. There is a guide by which we can apply them in love and with concern, even before we come to the decision making situation. We do not have to wait until we are actually in a particular situation to think about how we would respond.

2. Fletcher did not adequately consider the biblical teachings concerning the sin nature of fallen man. The effects of the Fall are such that people have difficulty relating to the norm of God's love, His righteousness, and His holiness. People may understand something about God's high level of love and loving-kindness, but may struggle with demonstrating it by his own efforts. Mankind needs a new life and a new dynamic, the Holy Spirit, to make the best possible decisions for a godly life and to love as God loves.
3. Fletcher's system represents, in one manner of thinking, a destructive humanism. Fletcher would not regard his position in this way; however, as we assess his ethic, he expected a person to make moral decision of which he/she is not capable. There are many occasions when people are so blinded by the sin nature that they cannot make ethical choices appropriately. Thereby, Fletcher's system can contribute to a negative humanism.
4. Fletcher did not call for a person to respond to Jesus Christ, accepting Him as savior and Lord. Fletcher seems confident that people can make their own decisions and solve their own problems.

In short, Fletcher left out the most vital aspect of Christianity in his system of situational; ethics: the fact that God has reached out to people to do for them what they could not do for themselves.

BIBLICAL POSITION ON ETHICS

The moral norms repeated in the New Testament reflect the intent of the Old Testament. Jesus and Paul certainly recognize and make use of moral norms from the Old Testament law. An important part of Christianity is the use of the law to show man where he has fallen short of God's standards. In no other religion do we see the god reaching out to man to save him from his moral dilemma. Read Mark 10:19 and record what you learn about the rich young ruler: _____

Jesus used the commandments to demonstrate where the young man had fallen short, and if he would listen, he could then turn to the sacrificial system and find salvation for his soul. He would then have understood why Jesus was the "good" teacher and realize the reason for which He came to this world.

Many competing views and theories vie for the attention of people who live on this earth. Above all, the Bible teaches us that God is going to judge the world fairly and righteously, and according to His time frame. People may make claims about not being able to embrace the exclusivity of God; they claim that they cannot believe that God would actually send some people to an eternal fate in Hell; they prefer religions and systems where they are more "comfortable." But one thing is certain: no person who is our friend or neighbor should fall into the category of someone who has never heard the real truths concerning these issues. We should be certain that all we come into contact with understand the exclusive, saving nature of the gospel. When all the facts are in, there will be a time when God's name will be vindicated and no one will be able to accuse Him of unfairness.

MODULE NINE

In apologetics, it is important to discuss the way that false teachings are being presented, and the ways that we can defend Christianity against them. Inevitably, when the gospel is preached, there will be those who arise in opposition. Therefore, understanding the nature of false teachers and cults is essential to the Christian mindset.

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

- define a cult
- understand some of the tools used by false teachers
- identify the authority that the Christian has over false teachers and false teaching
- understand the biblical perspective on cults
- define the psychological structure of cultism

Before beginning the work of this module, read the following:

Josh McDowell. A Ready Defense. Section 3.

It is a sad fact that wherever the gospel is presented with clarity, there will be challenges from the enemy. How can we recognize the truth from the lies? What do we say when a false teacher shows up on the scene? Do false prophets and teachers ever say anything that is true?

FALSE TEACHERS A false prophet or teacher is one who does not:

- appropriately exalt Jesus
- teach the truth about Him

It is important to realize that some false teachers are teaching incorrectly out of misunderstanding of the truth. For them, gentle reproof and point to appropriate scripture for correction may be all of the action that is required. However, there are others who teach falsely because of spiritual blindness. In most instances, their sincerity is not in question. Their spiritual position and theological base is.

CULT Walter Martin, in his excellent book, The Kingdom of the Cults, defines a cults as follows:

A group of people gathered about a specific person or person's mis-interpretation of the Bible.

In other words, by Martin's definition, a cult is a group of people gathered around a false teacher or false teachers.

From a theological viewpoint, the cults contain many major deviations from historic Christianity. Yet paradoxically, they continue to insist that they are entitled to be classified as Christians. It is their insistence upon identification with Christianity that makes them especially dangerous to the faith.

FALSE PROPHECY was defined in the Old Testament for us:

"And you may say in your heart, 'how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

As you study more about the occult and New Age movements, you will find that many of the false prophets who claim some affinity with Jesus, are really supernaturally empowered. But they are not empowered by God. These people can be very detrimental to Christianity:

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8

When we begin to think about cults, we need to carefully remember where our authority comes from and where the authority for false teachers comes from. Read Matthew 18:18-20 and reflect on what you learn:

Compare your responses to the words of Ephesians 1:19-23. In this passage, Paul uses four different words for power:

- power (dunamis) from which we get dynamite
- working (energios) from which we get energy

- strength (kratos) meaning strength being used
- might (esquai) meaning the total power

These words show that the events being described in Ephesians show a great unleashing of God's power in the resurrection, ascension, and seating of Christ at the right hand of the Father. Colossians 2:15 says:

"When He has disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

All of this was for us—so that we could gain victory right now over Satan and his false prophets and teachers—not in our own strength, but by the authority given to us by Jesus. Authority is delegated power. Our authority over Satan is only through God and His power, and there are guidelines for exercising the authority that is given to us:

- **KNOWLEDGE OF OUR POSITION** in Christ and Satan's defeat. We must understand the "big picture" and understand what Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and seating means to us as believers. We must understand what it means when scripture says that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, far above all rule and power, authority and dominion, and above every other name that is named.
- **BELIEF IN JESUS**, which means to "live in accordance with." This is more than intellectual acknowledgement. It implies actions as well. Do we really believe our position in Christ and believe that He has given us the authority that the Word says He has given us?
- **HUMILITY**, which is understanding our position in Christ. It is knowing who you are, and who God is, and giving Him glory.
- **BOLDNESS**. "True boldness is faith in full manifestation." When god has spoken to you and you hold back, that is not faith; it is sin. We need men and women who have set their minds at the right hand of the Father and who fear no one but God. True boldness comes from realizing your position in Jesus Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- **AWARENESS**. We must realize that our position of authority and our desire to proclaim the gospel puts us in the place of the most intense

spiritual conflict. Satan wants to wipe you out, discourage you, and make you quit. Satan will start working in your life to cause you to not study or to do the things that are necessary to defeat him.

In light of this discussion, there are some things we need to know about the psychology of cults. Any soldier engaged in combat needs to do a bit of reconnaissance of the enemy. Walter Martin, in his timely book, The Kingdom of the Cults, observes that cult members, through different as individuals, do share certain psychological traits in common with other members of their cult. Study of these similarities has revealed some interesting information.

Psychologists generally recognize in any belief/disbelief system three regions or levels.

1. Region one encompasses the individual's basic outlook on the world, and asks the question, "Is the world a place that threatens me or accepts me?"
2. Region two deals with whose authority a person is willing to accept in matters pertaining to the functions of life.
3. Region three is a peripheral region that penetrates into details of daily life. These details may vary according to the nature of accepted authority.

Martin asserts that the belief systems of cults share much in common, and the common factors, the "psychology of cults," is worth study.

- **CLOSED-MINDEDNESS.** Cults are not interested in rational cognitive evaluation of facts. The organizational structure interprets the facts to the cultist, generally invoking the Bible, (or the false teacher upon whose doctrine the cult is based) as the ultimate source. Cultic belief systems are thus in isolation. They never shift to logical consistency. They exist in separate compartments in a cultist's mind and are rarely able to be penetrated by anything that conflicts with the authority pattern of the cult.

- **PERSONAL ANTAGONISM.** Cults promote antagonism on a personal level since the cultist almost always identifies his dislike of the Christian message with the messenger who holds these opposing beliefs.

The identification of opposing beliefs with the individual in an antagonistic mode leads the cultist to reject the individual as well as the belief—a problem closely linked to closed-mindedness and one that is extremely difficult to overcome in general dialogue. Cult members rarely understand the difference between a person and the person's belief/action system. The concept of “love the sinner, hate the sin” is foreign to their thinking. Consequently, they cannot understand how a Christian can genuinely care for them if the Christian does not embrace their belief system.

Often, persistence on the part of a Christian in loving a cult member, can be the breakthrough needed. Since almost all systems of authority in cult organizations indoctrinate their disciples to believe that anyone who believes differently from them is either motivated by demonic forces, blind prejudice, or ignorance, a cultist who encounters a genuinely loving Christian who does not fit this pattern can be shaken to the core of his/her belief system.

“A discerning Christian who gives every indication of being unprejudiced, reasonably learned and possessed of a genuine love for the welfare of the cultist himself (which is easily detectable in the Christian's concern for his soul and spiritual well being generally) can have a devastating effect upon the conditioning apparatus of any cult system.” Walter Martin

Therefore, a Christian who really desires to give an effective apologetic in a cult setting must be free from all appearances of guile and ulterior motives. The main task must be to communicate to those who are, by their cult involvement, in virtual isolation from the Christian message.

- **INSTITUTIONAL DOGMATISM AND INTOLERANCE.** Within cults, there is a stated intolerance for any position but the cult's position. In the case where a cult wants to be identified with Christianity, but clearly is not biblically based, the ground for their claims is almost always supernatural.

This does not mean that there is never any such thing as authoritative dogmatism that is true and right. (certainly the teachings of Jesus fall into this

category). But cult systems tend to use whatever supernatural authorities are needed to condition and control the minds of their followers. Therefore, when Joseph Smith or Brigham Young (Mormons) wanted to implement or change doctrine in the Mormon Church, they began by saying that God had revealed to them the necessity for such doctrine among the people. C. T. Russell (Jehovah's Witness) said that his writings were indispensable for Bible study and that reading his works—even if it meant forgoing Bible study—would lead to spiritual illumination within two years.

The problem of intolerance is closely associated with institutional dogmatism. Systems that embrace these thinking lines are resistant to change or penetration from the outside. Cults thrive on ambiguity, conformity, and extreme doctrinal positions.

- ISOLATION. Within the cult structure, there is a peaceful coexistence of beliefs that are logically contradictory, and in psychological terms would be termed "compartmentalization." George Orwell, in his book 1984, called this "double think."

"In everyday life, we note many examples of double "think;" expressing an abhorrence of violence and at the same time believing it is justifiable under certain conditions; affirming a faith in the common man and at the same time believing that the masses are stupid; being for democracy but also advocating a government run by an intellectual elite; believing in freedom for all but also believing that certain groups should be restricted; believing that science makes no value judgments but also knowing a good theory from a bad theory and good experiment from a bad experiment. Such expressions of clearly contradictory beliefs will be taken as one indication of isolation in the belief system...a final indicator of isolation is the outright denial of contradiction. Contradictory facts can be denied in several ways: on grounds of face absurdity ("It is absurd on the fact of it") "chance," "the exception that proves the rule," "the true facts are not accessible, and the only available sources of information are biased." Milton Rokeach.

Here are some examples:

The Jehovah's Witnesses are well aware of the fact that the Watchtower organization, led by Judge Rutherford, said that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would return to earth before the end of the 1920's. They even bought a house

for them to live in in San Diego, California. Even though the patriarchs obviously did not come on schedule, still the Witnesses maintain the same principles of prophetic interpretation on which the faulty interpretations were based. They also predicted the battle of Armageddon would occur in 1975.

Mormon theologians are aware that the first Book of Mormon is very different from the current edition. There are almost 4,000 separate instances where Joseph Smith and his successors have corrected errors and made additions and revisions. This is a good example of the peaceful coexistence of logical contradiction within the belief system.

The Christian Science Church knows that their founder, Mary Baker Eddy, spoke against doctors and drugs, and affirmed the unreality of pain, suffering, and disease. Yet, in her later years, she was attended by doctors, received morphine for pain, wore glasses, and had dental work done on diseased teeth. Despite this, the Christian Science Church affirms the validity of Mrs. Eddy's teaching, even though she did not practice them.

Most non-Christian cults owe their existence to the fact that they use the terminology of Christianity, quote the Bible (often out of context) and use Christian clichés and terms when advantageous. Consequently the cults can represent their systems of thought as "Christian." How to reach inside the jargon of cults is a difficult matter. The deception of cults is inextricably connected with the language usage and definition of terms. These are key to understanding the psychology of cults. Therefore, the following are helpful in dealing with cults:

1. Remember that you are dealing with a person familiar with Christian terminology
2. Remember the person has redefined Christianity to fit the system of thought that he/she embraces

Cult adherents can speak at length about God, Jesus, and religious subjects. They are especially good at discussing tolerance, forgiveness, love, the Sermon on the Mount, and the book of James regarding works.

Cult adherents are rarely good at discussing the existence of personal sin, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the problem of evil (and sin), or the

necessity of grace. There are exceptions to the rule, but rarely does the doctrine of the Trinity arise without careful redefinition.

Cult adherents are good at quoting the Bible, and give the appearance of agreeing with almost every statement the Christian makes as an apologetic response. They use phrases like, "Yes, I agree with you," or "we believe that way, also." Christians are often left unable to put their finger on exactly what is wrong, even though they know that something is wrong. Christians must also realize that for every truly biblical term he mentions, the cultist's mind replies quickly with a redefinition. Thus, a cultist apparently agrees with the Christian, but disagrees in reality. This operation of terminological redefinition works much like a word-association exercise in psychology.

Cultists are destined, as Walter Martin says, to "find out that the power of Christianity is not in its terminology, but in the relationship of the individual to the historic Christ of revelation." The basic conflict of terminology will be one that plagues the Christian's attempt at apologetics in a cult system. The following can be helpful:

1. Move the conversation to the point where a cultist must define his terms
2. Compare the cultists definitions with actual biblical interpretation
3. Clearly define Christian terms
4. Lead the cultist to review the importance of clearly defining terms—especially the doctrine of personal redemption from sin, which most cult systems define unbiblically
5. Present a clear testimony of your own regenerative experience in Jesus Christ with the terminology that you have carefully defined
6. Remember that cultists are experts at taking text out of context. Read 2 Peter 3:16 and apply to your experience.

Martin summarizes with the following facts:

- A. The average cultist knows his terminology very well. He has a historic knowledge of Christian usage and is prepared to discuss Christian theology intelligently.
- B. A well-trained cultist avoids definition of terms, especially such doctrines as the Trinity, Deity of Christ, Bodily Resurrection of Christ, Atonement, and the salvation process of salvation by grace and justification by faith.
- C. The Christian must look for a point of departure, preferably the authority of scripture, which can be powerful when properly used.
- D. The Christian must become familiar, to some extent, with the terminology of the cult he is addressing so that he can understand the cultist's mind when giving a Christian apologetic.

We should not be discouraged by the presence of cults that claim affiliation with Christianity because Christ predicted them:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You will know them by their fruit. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and in your name have cast out demons? And in your name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess to the, I never knew you: depart from me, you who work iniquity." Matthew 7:15-23

MODULE 10

From the first century AD to the present, Jesus Christ has been radically changing the lives of millions of individuals from all walks of life. We have seen the way sin has hurt us, our families, and our world. We know that Jesus provides a way to be forgiven. We want to be patient with people who fail, because Christ has been patient with us. Our deepest desire is to see his name glorified and lifted up in more and more situations. And, we know that Peter told the early Christians,

“Be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15)

This course has been based on helping formulate answers for those who ask the reason for your hope. Every believer should be able to make such a defense of the faith. Your personal apologetic is your personal response to attacks on your Christian doctrine and faith.

In this module, you will have the opportunity to formulate answers to some difficult questions. Your answers compose the final exam for the course.

In eight sentences or less, give your personal testimony. _____

Why do you say Jesus is the only way to God? _____

Why isn't living a good life good enough? _____

Respond to this position: It doesn't matter so much what you believe as long as you are sincere. _____

Is there really a hell? Could a loving God really send people to hell? Should I accept Jesus so I won't go to hell? _____

How do you know God exists? _____

The Bible is really old. How do you know that it has been passed along to us accurately? _____

Aren't the Bible's solutions to world problems outdated? _____

Doesn't science disprove Christianity? _____

Do real Christians have doubts? _____

If following Christ is so great, why are there so many hypocrites in the church?

Isn't there more than one way to God? _____

Isn't your belief in the Trinity really a belief in three Gods? _____

Why does a good God allow evil to exist? _____

Give your response to someone who asks you this question: "Why would God love someone like me?" _____

Hasn't archaeology disproved the Bible? _____

You are witnessing to someone in a cult. Define these terms for that person:

Salvation _____

Atonement _____

Justification _____

Sin _____

Define existentialism _____

State the law of non-contradiction _____

Define naturalism _____

Define idealism _____

Define pragmatism _____

Give two examples of instances where archaeology has confirmed Old Testament accounts: _____

Give two examples of instances where archaeology has confirmed New Testament accounts: _____

Define mechanistic science and discuss how it disagrees with biblical position.

Discuss why the first and second laws of thermodynamics support the biblical position on creation. _____

Define humanism _____

Define situation ethics. _____

Define the word "cult." _____

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