

Defining and Defending the Faith 1: I Believe

I. The 3 parts of saving faith.

A. Knowledge: knowing the facts.

1. General revelation: God's revelation in nature (PS 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.)
2. Special revelation:
 - a. The written Word of God: The Bible
 - i. 2 TIM 3:16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
 - ii. JO 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
 - b. The incarnate Word of God: Jesus
 - i. JO 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... [14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - ii. JO 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
3. The work of evangelism falls under this head.

B. Assent: acknowledging that the facts are true.

1. The exegetical test: does the Bible really say that?
2. The empirical test: has this been or can this be verified by sensory observation?
3. The rational test: does this violate the laws of logic and reason?
4. The work of apologetics falls under this head.

C. Trust: being committed to the truth.

1. This is a gift of God.
 - a. JO 6: 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. [45] It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me."
 - b. MT 16: 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" [16] Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven."
2. This gift is ordinarily given by means of God speaking in His Word and the Spirit working with the Word. RO 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher.... [17] So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
3. The work of the Holy Spirit and thus the work of prayer falls under this head.

II. The evidence of saving faith.

- #### A. Good works: JAS 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

[19] You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble... [26] For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

B. Following Jesus: Mt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

III. Every person begins their thinking, whether consciously or unconsciously with the statement, “I believe.”

A. Worldviews are the lenses of faith by which we seek to make sense of the world around us.

B. Every person has a worldview by means of which they interpret all of reality.

C. This worldview is built upon presuppositions that cannot be proven but are accepted by faith.

Defining and Defending the Faith 2: Introduction To Critical Thinking

- I. What is critical thinking? To think critically is to think Biblically and Logically.
- II. The tools of critical thinking.
 - A. Biblical hermeneutics: The rules for proper interpretation of the Biblical texts.
 1. Basic rule 1: Context is king. (Historical/cultural context, Redemptive/historical context, Logical/literary context)
 2. Basic rule 2: Scripture interprets Scripture; WCF 1.9 The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.
 - B. Formal logic: The rules for valid reasoning.
 1. Two basic concepts: The law on non-contradiction and The fallacy of the non-sequitur (does not follow)
 2. Define terms: Clear or unclear
 3. State premises: True or False, 4 types of statements
 4. Draw conclusions: Valid or invalid, Immediate inference (square of opposition/law of non-contradiction), mediate inference (the syllogism, Aristotle's rules, the non-sequitur)
 5. "So the three questions you should habitually ask ... 1. Are the terms clear and unambiguous? 2. Are the premises all true? 3. Is the reasoning all logically valid? If the answer to all three of these questions is Yes, then the conclusion of the argument must be true.... So in order to disagree with any conclusion, you must show that there is either (1) an ambiguous term, or (2) a false premise, or (3) a logical fallacy in the argument such that the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises." (Socratic Logic by Peter Kreeft pp.26-27)
- III. A strategy for practical critical thinking
 - A. Define terms.
 1. What do you mean by that?
 2. What are we talking about?
 - B. Determine the facts
 1. What are the facts as opposed to assumptions?
 2. What is the source of the fact? How do you know that?
 3. Three basic sources of facts:
 - a. Special Revelation. What does the Bible say about this?
 - b. General Revelation. What has been observed in nature?
 - c. Personal experience.
 4. Logical consequence. What logically follows?
 5. Things that masquerade as facts: Theories, Authoritative Assertions, Projections, Majority Opinions, Assumptions, Falsifications.
 - C. Interpret the facts
 1. What do the facts mean? What is the proper interpretation of the facts?

2. A person's worldview will ultimately determine what conclusions they deem acceptable or not.
 3. Worldviews are the lenses of faith by which a person interprets all of reality and which is based upon certain basic presuppositions/ assumptions.
 4. Questions to ask:
 - a. What is the worldview behind my own interpretation of the facts?
 - b. Is my interpretation of the facts consistent with my worldview?
 - c. What is the worldview behind this interpretation of the facts?
 - d. Is this interpretation of the facts consistent with the worldview that interpreted it? (Is there logical consistency)
 - e. If there is an inconsistency between the worldview and the interpretation of the fact then either the interpretation or the worldview must be modified.
- D. Logical consequences
1. What if I am correct?
 2. What if I am wrong?
- IV. A strategy for challenging a person to think critically:
- A. Definition: What do you mean by that?
 - B. Fact: How do you know that?
 - C. Worldview: What are your basic assumptions?
 - D. Logical consistency: Is your conclusion consistent with your basic assumptions?
 - E. Life consistency: Are you willing to live consistently with the consequences of your conclusion?

Defining and Defending the Faith 3: Introduction To Apologetics

- I. Definition of apologetics
 - A. apologia: to take off a charge
 - B. The charge: Christian theism is untrue and/or irrelevant.
 - C. Definition: The defense of the truthfulness and therefore also the relevancy of the Christian world view as explained in the Bible. (Jude 3)

- II. Nature of Apologetics
 - A. An apologetical argument resembles a legal brief/argument.
 - B. Elements of a legal argument.
 1. Evidence: Derived from both general and special revelation. Ps.19:1; Rom.1:20; Isa. 44:6-8 (Examples: Fulfilled prophecy and historical acts of God)
 2. Witnesses: Both eye-witness accounts (found in Scripture) and personal testimony of the reality of the God of the Bible. (1 Cor 15:3-8)
 3. Logical argumentation: Demonstration that Christianity is both consistent and reasonable. (While God is above and beyond logic, He does not violate the laws of logic that He created.)

- III. Basis of Apologetics
 - A. Biblical mandate. (1 Peter 3:15)
 - B. The examples of Jesus, God, and Paul. (John 10:25; Acts 2:22 & 17:16-34)

- IV. Goals of Apologetics
 - A. Give a reason for the Hope within you. (1 Peter 3:15)
 - B. Tear down the arguments set up against the Christian faith. (2 Cor. 10:3-5)
 - C. Show the foolishness of unbelieving philosophies. (1 Cor. 1:20 & Psalm 14:1)
 - D. Charge the unbeliever with willful suppression of the knowledge of God and sin against His Law. (Rom.1:18-21 & 3:23)
 - E. Repentance and faith on the part of the critic.

- V. Tools of the Apologist
 - A. Scripture: Provides the framework for interpreting the facts and is the final standard for truth.
 - B. Experience: Provides facts and data.
 - C. Reason: Draws conclusions from the relationship between facts using the laws of logic. Biblical reasoning not autonomous reasoning.
 - D. Prayer: No one can be argued into the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3; 1 Cor. 2:12)

- VI. Characteristics of the Apologist
 - A. The apologist should be hard-headed and softhearted not soft-headed and hardhearted. (Peter Kreeft "Yes or No?"p.8)
 - B. Hard-headedness
 1. Confidence in the truthfulness of what you believe.

2. Steadfastness: Unwillingness to compromise the claims of Scripture in order to make Christianity more palatable.
 3. Boldness: being aggressive in attacking opposing belief systems.
- C. Softheartedness
1. Pity: The opponent has been deceived by Satan and himself.
 2. Patience: Some objections are honest questions not attacks.
 3. Humility: An arrogant apologist can win an argument and lose his audience.
 4. Honesty: Willingness to admit you don't have all the answers and willingness to claim mystery in the hidden things of God.
- D. A consistently lived Christian life.
- VII. Our method of apologetics
- A. Defining the Christian Faith
 - B. The Two-Step method. Prov.26:4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. [5] Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.
 - C. Worldview analysis.
- VIII. The Bottom Line of Apologetics
- A. The ultimate question is "What is the truth and what should I do about it?" (Dyrness p.66)
 - B. "The only honest reason why anyone should ever believe Christianity.... is because it is true." (Kreeft p.ix)
 - C. Since Christianity is true we need not fear having people question its truth claims.
- IX. Conclusion: "Let us not spare ourselves as we seek to intelligently defend the faith, but let us not have an exaggerated sense of the importance of argument. We simply must do what we can and wait prayerfully on the Lord to do what he wills." (Dyrness p.22)

Defining and Defending the Faith 4: Introduction To Worldviews

- I. Definitions:
 - A. Nash: "A world-view is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit every thing we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality." P.24
 - B. Sire: "A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world." P.16
 - C. Zozzaro: "Worldviews are the lenses of faith by which we seek to make sense of the world around us."
- II. Foundations
 - A. Theoretical/Presuppositional
 1. Faith commitments, presuppositions, and basic assumptions.
 2. "Basic assumptions or presuppositions are important because of the way they often determine the method and goal of theoretical thought. They can be compared to a train running on tracks that have no switches. Once a person commits himself to a certain set of presuppositions, his direction and destination are determined." (Nash pp.27-28)
 - B. Non-theoretical: A person's heart attitude toward God.
 1. Non-Christian: hatred toward God and a commitment to independence from Him.
 2. Christian: love toward God and a commitment to dependence upon Him.
- III. Major Elements
 - A. Theology: A person's view of God's existence and nature.
 - B. Meta-physics: A person's view of ultimate reality.
 - C. Epistemology: A person's theory of knowledge.
 - D. Ethics: A person's view of moral right and wrong.
 - E. Anthropology: A person's view of the nature of human beings.
- IV. Touch-stone propositions
 - A. "...a proposition that is held to be the fundamental truth about reality and serves as a criterion to determine which other propositions may or may not count as candidates for belief." (Halverson in Nash p.46)
 - B. A proposition that summarizes the fundamental truth claim of a worldview.
- V. Three Ways of understanding worldviews
 - A. Glasses: Am I seeing things as they really are? Why are things so fuzzy?
 - B. Trains: What is allowed on the train, what is not allowed on the train, what is the destination?
 - C. Story: Setting, Characters, Plot, Resolution (Where am I? Who am I? What is the problem? What is the solution?)
- VI. Conclusions
 - A. Every person has a worldview by means of which they interpret all of reality.
 - B. This worldview is built upon presuppositions that cannot be proven but are accepted by faith.
 - C. A person's heart attitude toward God is just as important as the propositional statements that they believe to be true.

Defining and defending the Faith 5: Choosing and Challenging Worldviews

I. Choosing A World-View

- A. "When faced with a choice among competing touch-stone propositions of differing world-views, we should choose the one that, when applied to the whole of reality, gives us the most coherent picture of the world." (Nash p.51)
- B. "No philosopher is perfect and no system can give man omniscience. But if one system can provide plausible solutions to many problems while another leaves too many questions unanswered, if one system tends less to skepticism and gives more meaning to life, if one worldview is consistent while others are self-contradictory, who can deny us, since we must choose, the right to choose the more promising first principle?" (Clark "A Christian View of Men and Things" p.34)
- C. When choosing a worldview we should choose the one that is self-consistent and gives us the most coherent (or clear/focused) picture of all of reality. The true worldview will make reality clearer not blurrier.
- D. Tests
 1. The test of self-consistency or reason: A worldview should be non-contradictory both in its parts and as a whole.
 2. The test of coherence/experience: A worldview should explain our experiences easily and naturally. A worldview must be consistent with what we know empirically about our world as well as being able to explain the presence of inner human characteristics such as mind, consciousness, desire for significance and love, etc.
 3. The test of practicality: A worldview theory must be able to be consistently lived out without having to either borrow parts from a competing worldview or act in contradiction to itself. (A worldview must be functional not fashionable).

II. Challenging Non-Christian World-Views

- A. The Two-Step method. Prov.26:4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. [5] Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.
- B. Steps to take.
 1. Get the person to realize that he has a worldview.
 2. Help the person to get a clear understanding of the content of his worldview.
 3. Help the person to evaluate their worldview by means of the worldview tests. Show that his system is ultimately self-contradictory and/or incoherent.
 4. Show how only the Christian worldview can pass all the tests and make sense of all of reality.
- C. Point of contact: Look for areas where, by means of God's common grace, the non-Christian has come upon a valid truth and then demonstrate how this truth clashes with his worldview.

III. Conclusions

- A. The two key criteria in choosing and challenging a worldview are consistency and coherence.
- B. Ultimately only the Christian Worldview can coherently and without self-contradiction make sense of all of life because we live in God's universe.

- C. “The strength of the Christian system — the acid test of it — is that everything fits under the apex of the existent, infinite-personal God, and it is the only system in the world where this is true. No other system has an apex under which everything fits. That is why I am a Christian and no longer an agnostic. In all the other systems, something 'sticks out,' something cannot be included; and it has to be mutilated or ignored. But without losing his own integrity, the Christian can see everything fitting into place beneath the Christian apex of the existence of the infinite-personal God who is there.” (Francis A. Schaeffer *“He Is There and He Is Not Silent”* p.81)

Defining and defending the Faith 6: Summary Of Non-Christian Worldviews

- I. All Non-Christian worldviews are based on a commitment to independence from God.
 - A. Autonomy: GE 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? [2] And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: [3] But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. [4] And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: [5] For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. [6] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.
 - B. No neutrality: COL 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.
- II. All Non-Christian worldviews devolve into one of three alternatives: irrational illusion, impersonal chance, or impersonal determinism.
- III. All Non-Christian worldviews end up in unsolvable dilemmas because they lack a point of transcendence.
 - A. Absolute Certainty/Absolute Uncertainty
 - B. Ultimate Rationalism/Ultimate Irrationalism
 - C. Ultimate Unity/Ultimate Diversity
- IV. All Non-Christian worldviews fail in four major areas.
 - A. No basis for certainty in knowledge.
 - B. No answer to the problem of evil.
 - C. No basis for meaningful action.
 - D. No hope for salvation from guilt.
- V. Points of Contact
 - A. All men live in a universe created by, sustained by, controlled by, described by and revelatory of the Triune God of the Bible.
 - B. All men are created by and in the image of the Triune God of the Bible. Being created by God and in the image of God, man has an inherent sense of individual personhood and human dignity, is inherently a social being, a moral being, a religious being, and a purposeful being.
 - C. All men have fallen in Adam. Since all men are fallen in Adam all men are inherently broken (alienated from God, Self, Man, and Nature), objectively guilty, and hostile to the Triune God.

VI. Every person in their heart of hearts knows that God exists; they need to cease their rebellion from Him, come to Him in repentance and faith, being assured that He will heal their brokenness, pardon all their sins, and give them direction, purpose and peace.

Defining and Defending the Faith 7: I believe in God

- I. Knowing about God.
 - A. We can know God through His self-revelation in nature (Ps 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork), in the Scriptures (2 TIM 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work), and in Jesus (JN 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.)
 - B. We can know God personally and experientially through the new birth by the Spirit of God (John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.)
 - C. Because of His self-revelation and by His grace we can know God truly and personally but not exhaustively.

- II. What is God? (WSC Q.4)
 - A. The doctrine stated by WSC Answer 4: God is a spirit, infinite eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.
 - B. This is a general description not an exhaustive definition. (C. Hodge: "When we say we can define God, all that is meant is, that we can analyze the idea of God as it lies in our mind; or that we can state the class of beings to which He belongs, and the attributes by which He is distinguished from all other beings.")
 - C. The substance of God: pure spirit (John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth) which implies that He is living, personal, and immaterial.
 - D. The incommunicable attributes of God: infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. (Job 11:7-9; Ps 90:2; JAS 1:17)
 - E. The communicable attributes (all of which are infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in God): being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. (Ex 3:14; Ps 147:5; Rev.4:8; Rev.15:4; Exodus 34:6-7)

- III. Are there more Gods than one? (WSC Q.5)
 - A. The doctrine stated by WSC Answer 5: There is But One Only, the Living and True God.
 - B. There is only 1 God, the God of the Bible: De 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! Isa 44:6 Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God."
 - C. The God of the Bible is the living and true God not the product of man's imagination. Jer 10:1 Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. [2] Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. [3] For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. [4] They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple. [5] They are

upright, like a palm tree, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, For they cannot do evil, Nor can they do any good." [6] Inasmuch as there is none like You, O LORD (You are great, and Your name is great in might), [7] Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, There is none like You. [8] But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine. [9] Silver is beaten into plates; It is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of the craftsman And of the hands of the metalsmith; Blue and purple are their clothing; They are all the work of skillful men. [10] But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

- IV. How many persons are there in the godhead? (WSC 6)
- A. The doctrine stated by WSC answer 6: There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
 - B. There are three distinct persons in the Godhead: The Father is God whose personal property is paternity (MT 6:9, Heb 1:5), The Son is God whose personal property is eternal generation (JN 1:1, 14), and The Holy Spirit (Ghost) is God whose personal property is procession (Ac 5:3-4, Joh 15:26).
 - C. These three distinct persons are one God. (1Jo 5:7, Mt 28:19, 2Co 13:14)
 - D. Christianity is Trinitarian not Unitarian, Modalistic or Tritheistic.
- V. The doctrines applied:
- A. Because God has revealed himself to man, you can know Him truly and personally (though not exhaustively) and you must conceive of God as He has revealed Himself to be in the Scriptures.
 - B. The God of the Bible is a living personal being not a philosophical concept or abstraction and thus everyone has a personal relationship with God of either friendship/blessing or animosity/cursing.

Defining and Defending the Faith 8: Does God Really Exist? Pt.1

- I. Universal Point Of Contact: All men live in a created universe.
 - A. GE 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
 - B. JN 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
 - C. PS 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. [2] Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. [3] There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. [4] Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
 - D. ROM 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.
 - E. While unbelieving man will deny this truth in theory; in practice he is confronted with its truthfulness at every moment.

- II. Arguments from Creation.
 - A. The argument from causality (The cosmological Argument)
 1. Key question: Why is there something instead of nothing?
 2. Key principles of the argument.
 - a. The law of cause and effect: every effect has a cause.
 - b. The principle of sufficient reason: There must be some reason why a thing exists rather than not.
 - c. The idea of a contingent being: A contingent being is something that has its sufficient reason or explanation in something other than itself. (i.e. cause and effect.)
 - d. The idea of necessary being: A necessary being is one that must exist therefore it is eternal and owes its existence to nothing else.
 3. Formulation of the argument.
 - a. The universe is the sum total of contingent beings. (Effects)
 - b. There must be a sufficient reason why this contingent universe exists rather than not. (What is the cause of this universe of effects)
 - c. The sufficient reason for the existence of the universe must by definition be a necessary being. (An uncaused cause)
 - d. This necessary being is God. (God is a cause but not an effect)
 - e. Conclusion: The existence of a contingent universe can only be explained by postulating the existence of a necessary being who is God.
 4. Objections:
 - a. Why couldn't the universe be its own cause? This would violate the law of non-contradiction; the universe would have to be a cause and an effect at the same time and in the same relationship.
 - b. Who caused God? God has being in himself, he is a cause and not an effect.

5. You can theoretically deny this argument but to do so you must reject the law of cause and effect and thus reject rational thought.
 6. The fact of creation points to the existence of a creator who is God.
- B. The argument from design (The Teleological Argument).
1. Key question: What is the cause for the apparent order and design found in the universe?
 2. Key principle: The law of cause and effect.
 3. Formulation of the argument.
 - a. The universe is appears to be purposefully designed.
 - b. There must be a sufficient reason for this apparent design in the universe.
 - c. The cause of a design is a designer.
 - d. The designer of the universe is God.
 - e. Conclusion: The existence of complex design in the universe can only be explained by the existence of a designer who is God.
 4. Objections:
 - a. Why couldn't the universe be its own designer? This would violate the law of non-contradiction. The universe would be the designer and the designed thing at the same time and in the same relationship.
 - b. Why couldn't the universe be designed by chance?
 - i. Chance is not an intelligent thing or even a thing, it is a measure of statistical probability.
 - ii. If by chance we have an ordered/designed universe than it cannot be relied upon to teach us truth.
 5. You can theoretically deny this argument but to do so you must reject the idea of a designed universe and thus reject the empirical method.
 6. The presence of order and design in the universe warrants belief in a first designer who is God.

III. Conclusions:

- A. Because all men live in a created universe all men know in their heart of hearts that the Lord God exists.
- B. To reject the existence of God you must reject both rationalism and empiricism and embrace irrationality and universal agnosticism.
- C. Every person in his heart of hearts knows that God exists; press them to cease their rebellion from Him, come to Him in repentance and faith, and He will pardon all their sins.

Defining and Defending the Faith 9: Does God Really Exist? Pt. 2

- I. Universal Point Of Contact: All men are created by God and in the image of God.
 - A. GE 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
 - B. GE 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
 - C. GE 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. [19] And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. [20] And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. [21] And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; [22] And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. [23] And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. [24] Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. [25] And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.
 - D. PS 8:1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. [2] Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. [3] When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; [4] What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? [5] For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. [6] Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: [7] All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; [8] The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. [9] O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!
 - E. WLC Answer 17: After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man, endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall.
- II. Arguments from man being created by God and in the image of God.

- A. Being created by God and in the image of God, man has an inherent sense of individual personhood; this cannot be explained by a combination of time + impersonal chance + matter.
- B. Being created by God and in the image of God, man has an inherent sense of human dignity; this cannot be explained by a combination of time + impersonal chance + matter.
- C. Being created by God and in the image of God, man is inherently a social being; this cannot be explained by a combination of time + impersonal chance + matter.
- D. Being created by God and in the image of God, man is inherently a rational being; this cannot be explained by a combination of time + impersonal chance + matter.
- E. Being created by God and in the image of God, man is inherently a moral being; this cannot be explained by a combination of time + impersonal chance + matter.
- F. Being created by God and in the image of God, man is inherently a religious being; this cannot be explained by a combination of time + impersonal chance + matter.
- G. Being created by God and in the image of God, man is inherently a purposeful being; this cannot be explained by a combination of time + impersonal chance + matter.

III. Conclusions

- A. Because all men have been created in the image of God; all men know in their heart of hearts that the Lord God exists.
- B. In order to deny the existence of God, sinful man must deny himself of his humanity, something he is unwilling and unable to do.
 - 1. Although men may claim to believe that they are merely the product of time + impersonal chance + matter, they live, act, and desire to be treated as those who have been created by God and in the image of God.
 - 2. Sinful man is willing to deny others their humanity but refuses practically to deny himself of his humanity.
 - 3. Sinful man cannot escape the witness of God in him or being what he is, a being created by God in the image of God.
- C. Each one of you in your heart of hearts knows that God exists; cease your rebellion from Him, come to Him in repentance and faith, and He will pardon all your sins.
- D. As a Christian you need to recognize that belief in the reality of the God of the Bible is the only rational thing to do in light of God's witness to Himself in man. You are not a fool for believing in God rather it is the fool who has said in his heart "there is no God."

Defining and Defending the Faith 10: Does God Really Exist? Pt.3

- IV. Universal Point Of Contact: All men have fallen in Adam.
- A. RO 5:12,18,19 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: . . . [18] Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. [19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
 - B. 1 CO 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
 - C. RO 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; [10] As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [13] Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: [14] Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: [15] Their feet are swift to shed blood: [16] Destruction and misery are in their ways: [17] And the way of peace have they not known: [18] There is no fear of God before their eyes. [19] Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. [20] Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
 - D. WLC Answer 22: The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.
 - E. WLC Answer 26: Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.
- V. Arguments from the fallen nature of man.
- A. Argument from brokenness. (GE 3)
 - a. All men are aware that man is essentially broken.
 - b. This is ultimately unexplainable on the basis of materialistic atheism (time + chance + matter) as this can only explain what is not what ought to be.
 - c. Materialistic atheism offers no hope for man's brokenness.
 - d. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ offers an answer for brokenness
 - B. Argument from guilt. (GE 3; RO 1-3)
 - a. All men are aware that they are liable to divine judgment.
 - b. All men are afraid of God.
 - c. All men are ashamed before God.

- d. This is ultimately unexplainable on the basis of materialistic atheism (time + chance + matter) because the subjective feeling of guilt is not a material object.).
 - e. Materialistic atheism offers no hope for relief from guilt.
 - f. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ offers an answer for guilt.
- C. Argument from hostility. (PS 2)
- a. All men are at war with God.
 - b. Men are tolerant of any position other than Christianity.
 - c. This is ultimately unexplainable on the basis of materialistic atheism (time + chance + matter); why would all men by chance hate a non-entity? Hate is an emotion not a material substance.
 - d. Materialistic atheism offers no hope for peace with God.
 - e. God has offered man terms of peace in the Gospel.

IV. Conclusions

- A. Because all men have fallen in Adam; all men know in their heart of hearts that the Lord God exists.
- B. No God = no hope for brokenness, guilt, hostility.
- C. Each one of you in your heart of hearts knows that God exists; cease your rebellion from Him, come to Him in repentance and faith, and He will heal your brokenness, pardon all your sins, and give you peace.

Defining and Defending the Faith 11: The Trinity

- I. The doctrine stated by WSC answer 6: There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
 - A. WLC Answer 9: There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.
 - B. WCF II.iii In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

- II. The doctrine proved and explained.
 - A. There are three distinct persons in the Godhead.
 1. The Father is God whose personal property is paternity.
 - a. MT 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
 - b. HE 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
 2. The Son is God whose personal property is eternal generation.
 - a. JN 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - b. JN 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
 3. The Holy Spirit (Ghost) is God whose personal property is procession.
 - a. AC 5:3,4 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? [4] Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.
 - b. JN 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:
 - B. These are three distinct persons: MT 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: [17] And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
 - C. These three distinct persons are one God.
 1. 1 JN 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.
 2. MT 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

3. 2 CO13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.
- D. God is one in regard to substance and three in regard to persons thus this does not violate the law of non-contradiction.
- E. We are Trinitarians not Unitarians, Modalists or Tritheists.
- F. a' Brakel: "First, when God is said to be one in essence, and yet to subsist in three Persons, this is not a contradictory statement. Both elements of this statement are not equivalent in meaning, for God is one in essence subsisting in three Persons; not three in essence and not one Person. Secondly, there are three Persons which are eternal, infinite, and omnipotent, and not three eternal, infinites, and omnipotents. Rather, there is but one eternal, infinite, and omnipotent Being."
- G. The Scriptures clearly teach that there are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

III. The doctrine applied.

- A. To deny the Trinity is a damnable heresy. This doctrine thus condemns deism, Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness, etc.
- B. You must humbly submit your reason to the revelation of God regarding this doctrine.
- C. For salvation, you must come to the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit.
- D. The Father has chosen you, the Son has redeemed you, and the Holy Spirit has applied the redemption of Christ to you thus you must praise the Triune God for your salvation.
- E. You must worship all 3 persons of the Holy Trinity and this will result in worship that is reverent, joyful, and spiritual.

Conclusion: There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. "To these three Persons we are surrendered in holy baptism, and in their name the covenant of grace is confirmed to us. Baptism obligates everyone to trust in their Names, to acknowledge them, to love and to serve them, and to allow ourselves to be governed, comforted, and wrought upon by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Baptism also obligates us to worship these three Persons and to seek to be blessed by each of them. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all' (2 Cor. 13:14)." (Wilhemus a' Brakel)

Defining and Defending the Faith 12: I Believe in God the Father Almighty

I. God as Father

A. The universal fatherhood of God.

1. In one sense God is the Father of all men: AC 17: 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; [23] for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: [24] God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. [25] Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. [26] And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, [27] so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; [28] for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' [29] Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. [30] Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, [31] because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."
2. As the "Father" of Adam and the one in whose image we are all made God is the Father of all men.
3. Because of Adam's sin and our own sin we are disowned by our Father and stand only under His wrath and curse.

B. The limited Fatherhood of God.

1. In one sense God is the Father of believers in Christ only: JN 8:37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. [38] I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." [39] They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. [40] But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. [41] "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God." [42] Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. [43] Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. [44] You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. [45] But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. [46] Which of you convicts Me of

sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? [47] He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

2. Those who have been redeemed by Christ are adopted by God and thus are restored to their privilege of being children of God having Him as their Father. (GAL 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 1 JN 3:1a Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!)

II. God as Almighty.

- A. Jer.32:17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.
- B. Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.
- C. Rev.19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
- D. Dan.4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: [35] And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?
- E. That God is almighty is also demonstrated by observation of God's works of creation, providence, miracle, and redemption.
- F. Key concepts:
 1. Omnipotence:
 - a. Children's Catechism: "God can do all His holy will."
 - b. Watson: "Though God can do all things, he cannot do that which stains the glory of his Godhead. He cannot sin; he cannot do that which implies a contradiction."
 - c. God's omnipotence is limited by his character and will.
 2. Sovereignty:
 - a. God is in absolute control of all his creatures and all their actions.
 - b. Hodge: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and doeth his pleasure among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, is the tribute of adoration which the Scriptures everywhere render unto God, and the truth which they everywhere present as the ground of confidence to his people."
- G. "Therefore, you who are ungodly should fear, for you have such an omnipotent God against you! You cannot prevail against Him. There is neither a hiding place or refuge, nor is there anyone who will be able to offer you protection against Him and deliver you out of His hand. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Heb. 10:31). 'Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty' (Isa. 13:6). And you, children of God, let the omnipotence of God encourage your hearts. If God is for you, who will be against you? Do you have any corporal needs and know not how to meet them? Even if there are no means available, God has the answer. He requires no means, and if the Lord

desires to avail Himself of means, He will bring them about and make them available to you. Insignificant means are sufficient for Him for He is the Almighty One. He creates light out of darkness in order that the movement of His hand may be observed that much more clearly. In all your perplexities confess with Abraham, 'The LORD shall provide.' Does your soul stand in need of light, comfort, a change of heart, and strength against sin? Even if you see no solution, He is able to give you the desire of your heart with one word. Seek to maintain a lively perception of the omnipotence of God. This will strengthen you in all things, causing you to take refuge with Him and be free from concern, fear, and terror. 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty' (Ps. 91:1)." (a'Brakel)

Defining and Defending the Faith 13: I believe in God the ... maker of heaven and earth.

I. The Biblical doctrine of creation.

A. Key Biblical passages

1. Genesis 1 GE 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2. Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you."
3. Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

B. The doctrine as stated by the Westminster Shorter Catechism answer 9: The Work of Creation is, God's Making All Things of Nothing, by the Word of His Power, in the Space of Six Days, and All Very Good.

II. The foundation of the Biblical doctrine of creation: Faith.

A. Faith in the authoritative interpretation of the fact of the existence/origin of the universe given by God in His Word.

1. The fact is that the universe exists.
2. This fact must be interpreted.
3. Any interpretation of this fact is a matter of faith since no one [other than God] was there at the time in which the universe came into being and the origin of the universe cannot be recreated in a laboratory.
4. Both the doctrine of creation and the theory of materialistic evolution are faith commitments in which trust is placed in the authoritative interpretation of the fact of the existence/origin of the universe by someone whether it is God or a scientist.

B. Faith in the Biblical doctrine of creation is not irrational.

1. The Biblical doctrine of creation violates no known rules of logic.
2. The Biblical doctrine of creation establishes the basis for the rules of logic.
3. The theory of materialistic evolution violates the laws of logic.
 - a. If the universe brought itself into being than it is both a cause and an effect at the same time and in the same relationship and thus violates the law of non-contradiction.
 - b. If the universe came into being by chance than it violates the rule that states that out of nothing nothing comes or every effect must have a sufficient cause.
4. The theory of materialistic evolution, which ultimately posits a universe held together by chance, or a cosmos that is founded on chaos, cannot provide an adequate basis for the rules of logic. In other words, if materialistic evolution is true than logic is absurd.

C. Faith in the Biblical doctrine of creation is not unscientific.

1. The Biblical doctrine of creation violates no observed laws of science.
2. The Biblical doctrine of creation is able to give a reasonable interpretation for all known scientific discoveries including all fossil records.
3. The Biblical doctrine of creation establishes the basis for scientific inquiry because it provides the basic presuppositions needed to support the scientific method.

- a. The universe is an orderly cosmos not a random chaos.
 - b. The validity of the basic principles or laws of logic especially the law of causality (every effect has a cause) and the law of non-contradiction (something cannot be “A” and non “A” at the same time and in the same relationship).
 - c. Man has a mind created with the ability to think rationally.
 - d. Man has a body designed in such a way as to assure the basic reliability of sense perception.
- 4. The Biblical doctrine of creation establishes the basis for the first and second laws of thermodynamics.
 - 5. The theory of materialistic evolution cannot establish the basis for scientific inquiry because it does not provide the basic presuppositions needed to support the scientific method.
 - 6. The theory of materialistic evolution violates the second law of thermodynamics.
- D. The Biblical doctrine of creation provides an explanation for the non-material universe, things such as thought, emotions, personality, etc., which the theory of materialistic evolution cannot explain in any meaningful way.
 - E. The Biblical doctrine of creation provides a comprehensive and coherent explanation for the existence of the material and non-material elements of the universe, which instead of violating any known laws of reason or science provides the philosophical basis for them.
 - F. Conclusion: The Biblical doctrine of creation is based upon a faith commitment to God and His Word but this faith is neither irrational nor unscientific, while the theory of materialistic evolution is based upon a faith commitment that is both irrational and unscientific.

III. Consequences of the Biblical doctrine of creation.

- A. The basis for the validity of rational thought is established.
- B. The basis for scientific investigation is established.
- C. The basis for the reality of non-material phenomena such as thought, emotions, and personality is established.
- D. The basis for meaningful action is established.
- E. The basis for human dignity is established.
- F. The basis for human responsibility and morality is established.
- G. Conclusion: If the Biblical doctrine of creation is true than the universe is rational, knowable, and meaningful; if the theory of materialistic evolution is true the universe is irrational, unknowable, and without meaning.

IV. Applications

- A. Christians must stop being embarrassed by the Biblical doctrine of creation.
- B. Christians must defend the Biblical doctrine of creation.
- C. Christians must not compromise the Biblical doctrine of creation.
- D. As the creator God owns all things.
- E. As your creator God made you to glorify Him.

Defining and defending the Faith 14: I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

I. The titles of Jesus.

A. Jesus

1. MT 1:21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.
2. "God saves" or "Salvation". Jesus is the only Savior.

B. Christ

1. MT 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
2. "Messiah" or "Anointed One".
 - a. Jesus is THE Prophet.
 - b. Jesus is THE Priest.
 - c. Jesus is THE King.

C. Son of God

1. Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
2. John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.
3. "Equal with God" thus Jesus is a divine person.

D. Lord

1. Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
2. Kurios: "YHWH, Jehovah" or "Master". Jesus is God and thus is to be your true King/Master.

E. Jesus' names and titles declare him to be very God and the only savior of God's people.

II. The deity of Christ demonstrated from the Scriptures.

A. Isa 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

B. Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

C. 2Pe 1:1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

D. 1Ti 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

E. Isa 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God.' Compared with Re 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." [9] I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of

- Jesus Christ. [10] I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, [11] saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." [12] Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, [13] and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. [14] His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; [15] His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; [16] He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength. [17] And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. [18] "I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.
- F. Heb 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, [2] has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; [3] who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [4] having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. [5] For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? [6] But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." [7] And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." [8] But to the Son *He* says: "Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your Kingdom. [9] You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." [10] And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. [11] They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; [12] Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail." [13] But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? [14] Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?
- G. Mt 14:33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "In truth Thou art the Son of God."

III. Your response.

- A. Who do you believe that Jesus is; a liar, a lunatic, or the LORD?
- B. Have you put your trust in Jesus as your savior? (John 20:30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.)

- C. Do you worship and obey Jesus as God and Lord? (MT 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. [22] Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ [23] And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”)

Defining and defending the Faith 15: I believe in Jesus ... who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

- I. The doctrines of the incarnation and the virgin birth:
 - A. LK 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, [27] To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. [29] And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. [30] And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. [31] And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. [32] He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: [33] And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. [34] Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? [35] And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. [36] And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. [37] For with God nothing shall be impossible. [38] And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.
 - B. John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made... [14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - C. WSC 22 **Q:** How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man? **A:** Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.
- II. The importance of the incarnation:
 - A. Why God became a *man*.
 - 1. Why not just appear to be a man?
 - 2. Why not just save man by an act of the will?
 - 3. Both of these would violate God's holiness and justice.
 - a. Man sinned against God and thus man must make satisfaction.
 - b. God cannot just write off man's sin debt.
 - 4. God became a man because man alone had to make satisfaction for his sin.
 - B. Why *God* became a man.
 - 1. Why not make an angel become a man?
 - 2. Why not make a perfect man?
 - 3. 2 reasons:

- a. God will not share His glory with another. If an angel or man redeemed mankind then we would be bound to that person and not to God and that person would receive the glory as our redeemer.
 - b. Neither an angel nor a perfect man can give to God something that he does not already owe to God in order to make satisfaction for man's sin.
4. Only God could make satisfaction for sin.

III. The case for the virgin birth of Jesus as a fact of history.

- A. The Bible sets forth the virgin birth as a fact.
 - 1. Matthew and Luke provide 2 independent historical witnesses to the facts written within the lifetime of other witnesses.
 - 2. Luke gives the eye witness testimony of Mary.
- B. There is no contradictory evidence that we know of to cause us to doubt to truthfulness of the Biblical account.
 - 1. Historical evidence.
 - a. No one claiming paternity.
 - b. No other eyewitnesses coming forth to dispute the account.
 - 2. Scientific evidence.
 - a. Science has not proved that a virgin birth cannot happen. In fact science has discovered the phenomenon of parthenogenesis which "is a process in which eggs become embryos without male fertilization". (Maria Cheng: "Another U.K. lizard starts really single-parent family" in The Press of Atlantic City; December 21 2006 p.A5) This has been observed in over 70 species of animals.
 - b. Modern science believes that life came from non-life (spontaneous generation) purely by chance, why then would it be impossible for life to come from life spontaneously as well?
- C. There is no compelling reason or motive for the Bible to lie about the virgin birth.
 - 1. It is an unnecessary lie.
 - a. If fornication Joseph would just marry Mary immediately and fudge on the time line.
 - b. If adultery Matthew and Luke would just leave it out as did Mark and John.
 - c. If rape Mary would be exonerated as the innocent party.
 - d. If done to clean up or enhance Jesus' pedigree why mention the other scandals in his genealogy such as Tamar (Prostitution and Incest), Rahab (prostitute), Ruth (Moabite), Bath-sheba (adultery)?
 - 2. It is an unbelievable lie.
 - a. Unlike Hebrew miraculous births (Isaac, Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist).
 - b. Unlike Pagan miraculous births (human woman with a divine male through intercourse).
 - c. If you are going to tell a lie you should at least make it plausible.
 - 3. It is an unhelpful lie: As a lie it creates more problems than it solves.
 - 4. If the virgin birth is a lie it is a totally unnecessary, unbelievable, and unhelpful lie which creates more problems than it solves.
- D. The virgin birth of Jesus contradicts no known historical or scientific facts and there is no compelling reason or motive for the Bible to lie about the virgin birth thus until some historical or scientific facts are brought forward that contradict the Biblical account or a

compelling reason or motive for the Bible to lie about this is brought forward, we must accept it for what it claims to be: a fact of history.

IV. The importance of the virgin birth.

- A. If Jesus was not born of a virgin then the Bible cannot be trusted to teach you the truth.
- B. If Jesus was not born of a virgin he could not save his people from their sins.
 - 1. If Jesus was not born of a virgin he would be guilty of Adam's first sin and inherit not only his guilt but his fallen nature as well. (Romans 5)
 - 2. If Jesus was guilty of Adam's sin and possessed a sin nature then he could not be a "lamb without spot" and thus could not provide an acceptable sacrifice for sin.
- C. If Jesus was born of a virgin then the Bible can be trusted and Jesus can function as the spotless sacrifice to atone for His peoples' sin.
- D. The virgin birth of Christ is a fact of history which gives you confidence in the credibility of the Bible and hope in a Savior from your sin and the wrath of God.

Conclusion: God became a man because man alone owed God satisfaction for his sin and God alone could make satisfaction for his sin thus salvation could be found in no other but the God-man the Lord Jesus Christ. Why the incarnation? So that you might be saved from the just wrath and curse of God do to you for your sin. In order to save you from your sin Almighty God humbled Himself and became a man, in order for you to be saved you must humble yourself before Him trusting Him as your Savior.

Defining and Defending the Faith 16: I believe in Jesus ... who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell.

I. The historical account:

- A. ISA 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. [7] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. [8] He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. [9] And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. [10] Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. [11] He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. [12] Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.
- B. MK 15:1 And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. [2] And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it. [3] And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing. [4] And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. [5] But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. [6] Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. [7] And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. [8] And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. [9] But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? [10] For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. [11] But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. [12] And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? [13] And they cried out again, Crucify him. [14] Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. [15] And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. [16] And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. [17] And they clothed him with purple, and plaited a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, [18] And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! [19] And they

smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. [20] And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. [21] And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. [22] And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. [23] And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. [24] And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. [25] And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. [26] And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. [27] And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. [28] And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. [29] And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, [30] Save thyself, and come down from the cross. [31] Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. [32] Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him. [33] And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. [34] And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [35] And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. [36] And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. [37] And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. [38] And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. [39] And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. [40] There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; [41] (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem. [42] And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, [43] Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. [44] And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. [45] And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. [46] And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. [47] And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

- II. The meaning of the historical actions.
 - A. The suffering of Jesus: Jesus' suffering under Pontius Pilate roots his work in history and points to his prophesied rejection by mankind.
 - B. The substitutionary atonement of Jesus.
 - 1. Jesus Christ suffered and died as a substitute for his people.
 - 2. Jesus Christ functioned as his people's sin bearer.

3. Jesus Christ died to provide atonement for his people's sin and reconcile them to God.
4. The 2 aspects of Christ's atonement.
 - a. Propitiation: turning aside of wrath.
 - b. Expiation: removal of guilt.
- C. The descent into hell of Jesus: WLC Answer 50: Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell.

III. Applications

- A. Do you like Pilate reject Jesus as the Christ?
- B. Do you trust in the substitutionary atonement of Christ to reconcile you to God?

Defining and Defending the Faith 17: "I believe in Jesus Christ... the third day he rose again from the dead."

- I. The sign of the Resurrection.
 - A. MT 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. [39] But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: [40] For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
 - B. JN 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? [19] Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. [20] Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? [21] But he spake of the temple of his body. [22] When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.
 - C. The Resurrection would be the great sign that would validate the person and work of Jesus.

- II. The historical account of the resurrection. MT 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. [2] And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. [3] His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: [4] And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. [5] And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. [6] He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. [7] And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. [8] And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. [9] And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. [10] Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. [11] Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. [12] And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, [13] Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. [14] And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. [15] So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

- III. The historical reality of the Resurrection.
 - A. 1CO 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; [2] By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in

- vain. [3] For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4] And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: [5] And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: [6] After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. [7] After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. [8] And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.
- B. AC 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, [2] Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: [3] To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God
- C. The historical facts of the resurrection.
1. Jesus was really dead.
 2. The dead body of Jesus was placed in a publicly known tomb.
 3. On the third day the tomb was empty.
 4. Over the course of 40 days Jesus was seen, heard and touched by over 500 eye-witnesses.
- D. There is no historical evidence that contradicts the Biblical account or the eye-witness accounts of the resurrection; the only arguments against it are those based upon philosophical objections to the concept of a resurrection which in turn are based upon unproven assumptions.

IV. The meaning of the resurrection:

- A. RO 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, [2] (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) [3] Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; [4] And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:
- B. The fact of the resurrection is the great vindication of the person and work of Jesus the Christ.

V. Your 2 options in responding to the risen Jesus.

- A. Unbelief.
1. Unbelief that Jesus is risen; that he is the Lord and only savior.
 2. Unbelief is sinful because it accuses God of lying.
 3. Unbelief is unreasonable because it denies the facts.
 4. Unbelief is condemned by God and results in eternal death.
 - a. JN 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [19] And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
 - b. REV 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars,

shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone:
which is the second death.

B. Belief.

1. Belief that Jesus is risen; that he is the Lord and only savior.
2. Belief is pious because it takes God at His Word.
3. Belief is reasonable because it comports with the facts.
4. Belief is commended by God and results in eternal life.
 - a. JN 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed... [31] But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.
 - b. JN 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

C. Stop being an unbeliever and believe that the risen Jesus is both Lord and God.

Defining and Defending the Faith 18: I believe in Jesus Christ...who ... ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I. Key texts:

A. AC 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, [2] Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: [3] To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: [4] And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. [5] For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. [6] When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? [7] And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. [8] But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. [9] And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. [10] And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; [11] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

1. The ascension took place 40 days after the resurrection on the Mt of Olives.
2. The ascension was personal, physical, visible and glorious.
3. The work of the church during the present session of the Lord is Spirit empowered world missions.
4. The return of Christ will be “in like manner,” i.e. personal, physical, visible, and glorious.
5. Christ shall continue to be physically present in heaven till his second coming at the end of the world.

B. EPH 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, [20] Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, [21] Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: [22] And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, [23] Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

1. Right hand in heavenly places = place of highest honor in heaven.
2. Far above all/all things under His feet. This refers to universal authority and rule.
3. This is the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Daniel 7. (Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before

him. [14] And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

- C. HEB 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
1. Jesus ascended into heaven not only as King but as the Great High Priest of His people.
 2. Jesus continually intercedes for His people.
- D. MT 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: [32] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: [33] And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. [34] Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: [35] For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: [36] Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. [37] Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? [38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? [39] Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? [40] And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. [41] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: [42] For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: [43] I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. [44] Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? [45] Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. [46] And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.
1. At His return Christ will judge all nations, all the living, and all the dead.
 2. At this judgment all people will be assigned either to heaven or hell for all eternity.

II. Key concepts:

- A. WLC Answer 53: Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having after his resurrection often appeared unto and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature, and as our

- head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall continue till his second coming at the end of the world.
- B. WLC Answer 54: Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all fullness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies; furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.
 - C. In the ascension Christ is enthroned as the Great Priest-King who in His present session rules as King and intercedes for His people as Priest.
 - D. WLC Answer 56: Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.
- III. Application: Do you live in such a way to reflect that Jesus is now reigning as the great Priest/King and will come to judge the living and the dead?

Defining and Defending the Faith 19: I believe in the Holy Ghost/Spirit.

I. The person of the Holy Spirit.

- A. John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever [17] the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you...[25] These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. [26] But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
- B. The Holy Spirit is God.
- C. The Holy Spirit is a person not a force.

II. The work of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Inspiration: The Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible. 2 Peter 1:19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; [20] knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, [21] for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.
- B. Illumination: Lu 24:45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.
- C. Application of redemption.
 - 1. Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, [5] not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, [6] whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
 - 2. Ez.36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. [26] I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27] I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.
 - 3. WSC Answer 29: We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.
 - 4. The Holy Spirit works in us to bring us from a state of spiritual death to perfect holiness.

III. The gift of the Spirit.

- A. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- B. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God: comforter, pledge of adoption, and empowerer.
- C. 1Corinthians 12:4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. [5] There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. [6] And there are diversities of activities,

but it is the same God who works all in all. [7] But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: [8] for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, [10] to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. [11] But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

- D. 1 Peter 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. [11] If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- E. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to all of God's children.
- F. Every Christian possesses the gift of the Holy Spirit and a gift from the Holy Spirit.
- G. The primary purposes of the gift/gifts of the Holy Spirit are:
 - 1. Missions. AC 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, [2] Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: [3] To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: [4] And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. [5] For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. [6] When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? [7] And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. [8] But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. [9] And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.
 - 2. Edification of the Church. EPH 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; [5] One Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. [7] But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. [8] Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men... [11] And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [13] Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: [14] That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; [15] But speaking the truth in love,

may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: [16] From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

IV. Applications

- A. Trust the Holy Spirit inspired Bible.
- B. Plead with God for the Holy Spirit to enable you to repent and believe.
- C. Repent and believe in Christ and thus receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- D. Use the gift/gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you to build His Kingdom.

Defining and Defending the Faith 20: Defending the Bible as the Word of God

- I. What does the Bible say about itself?
 - A. It is inspired (God breathed)
 1. 2 Tim.3:16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
 2. 2 Peter 1:20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, [21] for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - B. It is true. John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
 - C. It is enduring. 1 Peter 1:24 ... The grass withers, And its flower falls away, [25] But the word of the LORD endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

- II. Upon whom does the burden of proof rest?
 - A. Basic principle: the presumption of innocence.
 - B. The burden of proof rests upon the critic not the believer.

- III. Who is competent to judge whether or not the Bible is God's Word?
 - A. One who has never heard God speak cannot discern His voice.
 - B. Only the one who has heard God knows His voice and thus can judge.
 1. This fact explains the formation of the canon.
 2. This fact provides the basis for criticizing other so called books of divine revelation.
 3. John 8:47 "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."
 4. John 10:1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. [2] But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. [3] To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. [4] And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. [5] Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ... [14] "I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. [15] As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. [16] And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd..." [19] Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. [20] And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" [21] Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

- IV. The proof that the Bible is God's Word.
 - A. The internal testimony of the Holy Spirit

1. WCF I. IV. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.
2. WCF I.V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.
3. Calvin: "Thus, the highest proof of Scripture derives in general from the fact that God in person speaks in it....Since for unbelieving men religion seems to stand by opinion alone, they, in order not to believe anything foolishly or lightly, both wish and demand rational proof that Moses and the prophets spoke divinely. But I reply: the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of Himself in his Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit."I.vii.4

- B. The Bible's truthful description and diagnosis of reality.
- C. Internal coherence.
- D. Fulfilled prophecy.
- E. The impossibility of true knowledge apart from divine revelation.

V. Why unbeliever's will not accept the proofs

- A. They do not have the ability to. Isa 6:10 "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed."
- B. They do not want to.
 1. It would mean the end of their autonomy.
 2. It would mean a confession of their guilt.

VI. Conclusion

- A. The Bible claims to be the Word of God.
- B. The critic must give proof that it is not.
- C. The greatest proof that it is, is the internal testimony of the Spirit.
- D. Only when one is regenerated by the Holy Spirit can he and will he accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

Defining and Defending the Faith 21: Defending the Bible as the Word of God pt.2

- I. Introduction to the classical defense of Scripture by Dr. R.C. Sproul: “If you're familiar with the debate regarding various apologetic methodologies, you'll recognize that I am talking about defending the inerrancy of Scripture using a classical apologetic. Using both inductive and deductive arguments, as well as external and internal evidence, the classical approach proceeds on the basis of a progression from the premise of the basic or general trustworthiness of Scripture to the conclusion of its inerrancy.”

- II. Basic outline of the argument:
 - A. Premise A: The Bible is a basically reliable historical document.
 - B. Premise B: This basically reliable document gives us sufficient evidence to believe with confidence that Jesus Christ is God.
 - C. Premise C: Because Jesus Christ is God, He is infallible.
 - D. Premise D: Jesus Christ teaches that the Bible is more than basically trustworthy; it is the very Word of God.
 - E. Premise E: Because God is utterly trustworthy, the Word that comes from Him is utterly trustworthy.
 - F. Conclusion: Based on the infallible authority of Jesus Christ, who says the Bible is utterly trustworthy, the Bible is inerrant.

(All of the above is taken the article “The Classical Defense of Scripture” by Dr. R.C. Sproul published in Sep/Oct 2014 issue of “Expositor” magazine.)

Defining and Defending the Faith 23: I believe in the forgiveness of sin.

I. The need for forgiveness.

- A. Original and actual sin have separated you from God and placed you under his wrath and curse.
- B. Ro 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ... [18] Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. [19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
- C. Rom 3:22 ... For there is no difference; [23] For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- D. JN 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... [10] If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
- E. WSC Question 84: What Doth Every Sin Deserve? Answer: Every Sin Deserveth God's Wrath and Curse, Both in This Life, and that Which is to Come.

II. The Biblical Gospel: God justifies sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, on the basis of the work of Christ alone, which is evidenced by a life of good works.

III. What is justification? WSC Answer 33: Justification is an Act of God's Free Grace, Wherein He Pardoneth All Our Sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

A. Key texts:

- 1. RO 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; [22] Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: [23] For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [24] Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: [25] Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; [26] To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.
- 2. Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, [5] Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) [6] And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: [7] That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

B. The act of justification: Legal declaration of standing.

1. RO 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. [34] Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.
 2. Biblically, to justify is the opposite of to condemn. To condemn is not to make guilty but rather to declare guilty. Therefore to justify is not to make just but rather to declare just.
 3. Pardon for sin.
 4. Acceptance as righteous.
- C. The basis of justification: The imputed righteousness and satisfaction of Christ.
1. 2 CO 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. [20] Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. [21] For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
 2. WCF XI.I Those whom God effectually calls, He also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.
 3. The Lord Jesus in his active and passive obedience purchased your redemption and turned aside the wrath of God enabling you to be forgiven by God.
 - a. Jesus' active obedience = His perfect keeping of the Law in your place.
 - b. Jesus' passive obedience = His suffering death as the penalty of the Law in your place.
- D. The instrument of justification: faith.
1. Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.
 2. WCF XI.II Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.
- E. The evidence of justification: good works.
1. JAS 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? [22] Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? [23] And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. [24] Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. [25] Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works,

when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? [26]
For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

2. Watson: "*But does not the apostle James say that Abraham was justified by works?* The answer is easy. Works declare us to be righteous before men, but they do not make us righteous before God. Works are evidences of our justification, not causes."

IV. The doctrine applied.

- A. Be reconciled to God in Christ. Repent of your sin, renounce your own good works and trust in the work of Christ alone.
- B. Hold fast to the Biblical gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. (GAL 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. [9] As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.)
- C. Proclaim the Biblical gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Conclusion: "Now consider all this simultaneously: A justified person is eternally delivered from all sin, all wrath, all curse, and all punishment without any retraction. A justified person, due to the imputed righteousness of Christ, is perfect in his beauty before God, before the angels, before believers, and to himself. A justified person is a child of God and an heir of eternal life; he has an inheritance which he cannot lose, but which is kept in heaven for him. There is sweet quietude, peace, joy, and delight in God to be found in the soul of a justified person, more than a natural man can understand, and more than a justified person can express." (a'Brakel)

Defining and Defending the Faith 24: I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

- I. Key Text: John 5²⁸Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

- II. The resurrection of the body.
 - A. 1 Cor.15²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming.
 - B. The resurrection is the reuniting of body and soul.
 - C. The resurrection will occur when Christ returns in judgment.

- III. The life everlasting.
 - A. Rev 21¹Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ²Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." ⁵Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." ⁶And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
 - B. Eternal life is life without end in fellowship with God and under his blessing.
 - C. Eternal death is life without end outside of fellowship with God and under His curse.

- IV. The benefits which believers receive from Christ at their death and resurrection.
 - A. WSC Question 37: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? Answer 37: The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.
 - B. WSC Question 38: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? Answer 38: At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgement, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

- V. WLC Question 89: What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment? Answer: At the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, and, upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.

Defining and Defending the Faith 25: The Deductive Problem of Evil

Key Text: Romans 9

- I. Deductive Problem of Evil Thesis: The existence of evil is in contradiction to the Biblical view of God.
 - A. The Law of non-contradiction: a thing cannot be both "a" and "non-a" at the same time and in the same relationship.
 - B. The premises of the argument:
 1. God is all powerful.
 2. God is all good.
 3. Evil exists
 - C. The supposed conclusions:
 1. God is not able to remove evil although he wants to. Thus God is not all powerful.
 2. God is able to remove evil but does not want to. Thus God is not all good.
 - D. The implied premise to the argument: A good and all powerful God could not allow the existence of evil.

- II. Preliminary Considerations
 - A. The Law of non-contradiction is not violated on the face of the matter: Biblical Christianity says none of the following God is all good and not all good, God is all powerful and not all powerful, evil exists and does not exist at the same time and in the same relationship.
 - B. The terms "all powerful", "all good", and "evil" must be allowed to be defined as the Bible defines them.
 - C. The God of the Christian religion has more attributes than the two mentioned in the premises, thus it is allowable to add them to the argument.
 - D. The critic is really pitting the moral attributes of God (goodness, holiness, justice) against His volitional attributes (will and power) thus our response needs to include all of these attributes.
 - E. The critic assumes that goodness, justice, and the like are abstract absolute standards that God must measure up to; this assumption must be denied as it is in violation of the Biblical teaching about God.

- III. Premises of The Response Argument:
 - A. God is a spirit; infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. (WSC Q.4).
 - B. God has infinite power.
 1. Rev.4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.
 2. Nothing is too difficult for God to do (Jer.32:17).
 3. God exercises His power in accordance with His will.
 4. God's will determines every action and is based upon His infinite and eternal wisdom. (Eph.1:11)
 - C. God is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably good.

1. EX 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, [7] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.
 2. God is good in Himself: i.e. lacking nothing Mk.10:18.
 3. God is good in His relationship with His creation.
 4. This goodness is expressed in His kindness, compassion, longsuffering, grace, and love.
 5. In order to show forth His kindness, compassion, longsuffering, grace, and love in their fullness, God willed the fall of creation from which evil came into being.
- D. God is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably holy.
1. ISA 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.
 2. God's holiness consists in both His separateness from creation and in His moral purity.
 3. In order to show forth His holiness in greater relief God willed the fall of creation from which evil came into being.
- E. God is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably just.
- 1 EX 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, [7] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.
 - 2 God's justice is seen in both His wrath and His mercy.
 - 3 In order to demonstrate His wrath and mercy and therefore His justice, God willed both the fall of creation from which evil came into being and the redemption of creation (Rom.9:22-23).
- F. Evil exists.
1. Moral evil (sin) is the want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God (WSC Q.14).
 2. Natural evil is the consequence of moral evil.

IV. Conclusions of the Response Argument

- A. God has willed to show forth His moral attributes in their fullness through the entrance, manipulation and conquest of evil.
- B. Since God is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably wise this course of action which He willed is likewise wise.
- C. Since God has infinite power He is able to bring to pass all that He willed without compromising His moral attributes.
- D. Therefore there is no contradiction between God's moral attributes, His volitional attributes and the existence of evil.
- E. Instead of detracting from the goodness and power of God, the existence of evil, for a time, is used by God to show them off in all their glory.

Defining and Defending the Faith 26: The Inductive Problem Of Evil

- I. Statement of Inductive problem: The vast amount and variety of evil found in the world as well as the existence of gratuitous evil renders belief in the God of the Bible improbable and contradicts a Biblical worldview.
 - A. Premise 1: The amount of evil in the world renders belief in the God of the Bible improbable and contradicts a Biblical worldview.
 - B. Premise 2: The vast variety of evil found in the world renders belief in the God of the Bible improbable and contradicts a Biblical worldview.
 - C. Premise 3: The existence of gratuitous evil renders belief in the God of the Bible improbable and contradicts a Biblical worldview.

- II. The Biblical defense against the inductive problem of evil.
 - A. Debunking the first premise.
 1. The 2 assumptions.
 - a. A consistently held Biblical worldview implies or demands a world in which the presence of evil is the exception not the rule.
 - b. There is some objective standard by which one can measure the amount of evil found in the world and see if it is beyond that level which God would possibly allow if He existed and goes beyond that which is expected in a Biblical worldview.
 2. Showing the first assumption to be false.
 - a. GE 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6] And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
 - b. RO 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [13] Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: [14] Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: [15] Their feet are swift to shed blood: [16] Destruction and misery are in their ways: [17] And the way of peace have they not known: [18] There is no fear of God before their eyes.
 - c. The Bible gives a picture of the spread and increase of evil that is in perfect accord with the one found in the world.
 3. Showing the second assumption to be false.
 - a. Man cannot come up with an objective standard.
 - i. To man the amount of evil is always fluctuating and relative.
 - ii. Man is not in a position of authority over God thus man cannot prescribe certain limits upon Him.
 - b. God has not stated any limit for us to use as a standard for comparison.
 4. Since the first premise is built upon 2 false assumptions it carries no objective weight and throws no doubt upon the rationality of belief in the God of the Bible or the coherence of a Biblical worldview.

- B. Answering premise 2
1. Genesis 3 and The Biblical concept of alienation.
 - a. Man's alienation from God: Spiritual evil. (Hatred of God, fear of God, Cosmic loneliness, emptiness of soul, etc.)
 - b. Man's alienation from himself: Psychological evil. (guilt, shame, depression, etc.)
 - c. Man's alienation from man: Interpersonal evil. (Man's inhumanity to man, strife, war, etc)
 - d. Man's alienation from nature: Physical/Natural evil. (Disease/Natural disaster/Animal attacks, famine, etc.)
 2. The war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.
 - a. Man lives in a war zone not a garden paradise.
 - b. This explains religious/philosophical wars as well as demonic possession, oppression, etc.
 3. An exposition of Genesis 3 explains and predicts the vast variety of evil found in the world thus demonstrating that it is in perfect accord with the Biblical worldview and throws no doubt upon the existence of God.
- C. Answering premise 3.
1. The Bible flatly rejects the existence of gratuitous evil. (Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. Ro 5:3 And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; [4] and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Ge 50:20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people that
 - a. WLC Answer 18: God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.
 - b. WCF V.iv The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.
 2. The critic assumes that because he does not see a good reason for an evil action that it must be gratuitous but does not logically follow.
 3. The Bible rejects the truthfulness of premise 3 and the critic cannot verify the truthfulness of premise.
- III. Conclusion: The vast amount and variety of evil found in the world is in perfect accord with the biblical picture and therefore does not shed any doubt upon the existence of God or the coherence of the Biblical worldview. In fact, the vast amount and variety of evil found in the world is exactly what the Biblical worldview expects and thus is an evidence

of the truthfulness of the Biblical worldview. Since the Biblical worldview rejects the concept of gratuitous evil and the critic cannot demonstrate the existence of such it cannot be used as a reason to render belief in the God of the Bible improbable or claim that its existence contradicts a Biblical worldview.

Defining and Defending the Faith 27: The Problem Of Sovereignty, Evil, And Responsibility

- I. The Problem: How can God be sovereign and man still be responsible for evil actions?
 - A. If God is absolutely sovereign then He and not man is responsible for evil.
 - B. If man is responsible for evil then God must not be sovereign.
 - C. It is alleged that both cannot be true at the same time.

- II. God Is Sovereign
 - A. His sovereignty is based on His position as the creator/king of the universe.
 - B. His sovereignty is exercised actively through the outworking of His eternal decree in the works of creation and providence. (WSC Q.7,8,9,11; EPH 1: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:)
 - C. His sovereignty is exercised judicially through His law. (WSC Q.39,40; EX 20:1-17)
 - D. The purpose behind the exercise of His sovereignty is to bring glory to Himself. (Rom.11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.)

- III. Man Is Responsible
 - A. His responsibility is based on his position as creature. (WSC Q.1)
 - B. His responsibility is set forth in the Law of God not the Decree of God. (Dt.29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.)

- IV. The Dynamic Of The Relationship
 - A. The decree of God is the basis of every action.
 - B. "Responsibility attaches mainly to the motive and intent of the one committing the act." (Pink: The Sovereignty of God, p.155)
 - C. An action decreed by God can be good in relationship to God's motive and intent while being evil in relationship to man's motive and intent.
 1. Genesis 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.
 2. Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: [23] Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
 - D. WCF V.iv The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

- V. The Righteous Judgements Of God

- A. "God is called righteous because He rewards every man according to his work."
(Bavinck: The Doctrine of God, p.215)
- B. Man's work is judged by 2 criteria, action and motive, in accordance with their conformity to God's Law.
 - 1. A work is judged to be righteous when the motive is love for God and the action is prescribed by God's law.
 - 2. A work is judged to be unrighteous when either the motive is not love for God or the action is proscribed by God's Law or both.
- C. God rewards righteous work even though the ultimate cause for them is His decree. (Phil.2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.)
- D. God punishes unrighteous works even though the ultimate cause for them is His decree. (Luke 22:22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!)

VI. Things To Keep In Mind

- A. God's ways are wise and beyond our comprehension ultimately. (Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! [34] For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? [35] Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?)
- B. God neither sins nor tempts to sin. (James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:)
- C. Man is in no position to question God. (ISA 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: [6] That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. [7] I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. [8] Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. [9] Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? [10] Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?)

Conclusion: The Bible teaches that God's sovereignty establishes man's responsibility in regard to both evil and good instead of relieving it, and thus it is not impossible for God to be sovereign and still hold man responsible for his evil actions. Though the Lord is sovereign over all of your actions, you are responsible for obeying God from the heart.

Defining and Defending the Faith 28: Turning the tables in regards to the Problem Of Evil
Key Texts: Ps 14:1; Romans 1

- I. The Claims of The Critic
 - A. Objective evil exists in the world.
 - B. The presence of evil in the world renders belief in the God of the Bible irrational.
 - C. The world view of the critic provides a superior answer to the problem of evil.

- II. The Key Question: does the critic's worldview offer a superior answer to the problem of evil?
 - A. Deism's answer: There is no such thing as evil.
 - B. Pantheism's answer: Evil is merely an illusion.
 - C. Dualism's answer: Evil exists but it is impossible to define.
 - D. Atheism's answer: There is no such thing as evil.
 - E. Agnosticism's answer: It is impossible to know if evil exists.

- III. The Impossible Answer
 - A. All non-Christian worldviews are based upon 1 of 3 ultimate presuppositions.
 1. Chance
 2. Impersonal Determinism/Fate
 3. Illusion
 - B. None of these three ultimate presuppositions can provide an answer to the problem of evil.
 1. If everything happens by chance all action is amoral.
 2. If everything happens because it is predetermined to then all action is amoral.
 3. If everything that happens is just an illusion all evil is an illusion.
 - C. Non-Christian worldviews cannot answer the problem of evil because they ultimately have no standards by which to define good and evil.

- IV. The Ultimate Dilemma: The Critic's Problem With Evil
 - A. The critic claims that evil exists when he confronts the Christian.
 - B. The critic's worldview will not allow him to speak about evil in any definable way.
 - C. When the critic presents the Christian with the problem of evil he is committing intellectual suicide.

- V. Conclusions
 - A. The Christian Worldview can give a rational answer to the problem of evil.
 - B. The Critic's worldview cannot give a rational answer to the problem of evil.
 - C. The Christian must point out to the critic that in order for him to formulate the problem of evil he must contradict his own worldview and presuppose that the Christian worldview is true.
 - D. Ultimately the problem of evil is an insurmountable problem for every worldview except the Christian worldview.

Defining and defending the Faith 29: Our Heavenly Father's Answer to the Problem of Evil

Intro: The real problem of evil is not so much philosophical as it is personal. When evil enters our lives we ask our heavenly Father through our tears, why did you abandon me? Why didn't you do anything?

- I. Does our Heavenly Father ever abandon His children?
 - A. ISA 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness... [13] For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. [14] Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel...[17] When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. [18] I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. [19] I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:
 - B. ISA 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. [2] When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
 - C. MT 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. [19] Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
 - D. Ro 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [36] As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." [37] Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. [38] For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, [39] nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - E. Does our Heavenly Father ever abandon His children? His answer is Emmanuel.
- II. Is our Heavenly Father going to do anything about evil?
 - A. In Christ our Heavenly Father has already done something about evil.
 1. ISA 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? [2] For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. [3] He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he hath borne

our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. [7] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. [8] He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. [9] And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. [10] Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. [11] He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. [12] Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

2. JN 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
- B. In Christ our Heavenly Father is doing something about evil.
1. 1 CO 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.
 2. Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.
- C. In Christ our Heavenly Father is going to do something about evil.
1. 1 CO 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. [55] O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? [56] The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. [57] But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. REV 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. [2] And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. [4] And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
- D. Is our Heavenly Father going to do anything about evil? His answer is Emmanuel.

Conclusion: Our Heavenly Father's answer to the problem of evil is not a logical explanation rather it is a person: Emmanuel, the Lord Jesus who is both God with us and God for us. In Christ, our Heavenly Father is near to us in our suffering and in Christ He has done, is doing, and will do all that is necessary to deliver us from evil. In your times of suffering cling to Him who alone is the living breathing answer to the problem of evil; Emmanuel, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Defining and Defending the Faith 30: Overcoming Evil

- I. Key questions: What is your response to the problem of evil? How do you respond to evil done to you by others? How ought you to respond to evil as a child of God?
- II. Key Text: Romans 12:14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. [15] Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. [16] Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. [17] Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. [18] If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. [19] Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. [20] Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. [21] Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
- III. The 2 options: Conquer or be conquered. V.21
 - A. Be overcome by evil.
 - B. Overcome evil.
 1. You must overcome evil.
 2. You can overcome evil.
 - C. There is no third alternative you will either overcome evil or be overcome by it.
- IV. The principle: Overcome evil with good. V.19, 21
 - A. When we fight evil with evil we have already lost.
 1. Returning evil for evil dishonors God.
 2. Seeking personal vengeance displaces God.
 - B. We must battle evil in a principled not a pragmatic way.
- V. The practice: Overcoming evil with good.
 - A. Good words. V.14
 1. Return good words for bad.
 2. Watch your words!
 - B. Good actions. Vv.17, 19, 20
 1. Act in such a way as to avoid reproach.
 2. Leave it to God to avenge you.
 3. Provide for your enemies needs.
 4. Good deeds disarm your enemy so return good deeds for bad.
 5. Watch your actions!
 - C. Good attitude. V.18
 1. Have an attitude of peace not war.
 2. Take responsibility for your attitude towards others.
 3. Watch your attitude!

Conclusion: You will either overcome evil or be overcome by it; as a child of God you are called to overcome evil with good, specifically with good words, good deeds, and a good attitude. You can and you must overcome evil with good to the glory of your heavenly Father.