

Introductory Comments on Scientific Apologetics

1. What is scientific apologetics?
 - 1.1. Arguments toward God based on *natural* knowledge, rather than on *revealed* knowledge.
2. Where does scientific apologetics fit in?
 - 2.1. Not arguments based on Scripture, but endorsed by Scripture (e.g. Psalm 19, Romans 1, etc.)
 - 2.2. Scientific apologetics is comparatively weak form of apologetics—can lead to Deism, Islam, Judaism, Zeus, or Mazda rather than to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Paul
3. Do not lead off with scientific apologetics
 - 3.1. Do not instigate problems where there are none (e.g. how did freshwater fish survive the flood?)
 - 3.2. Lead with Christ: innocent life, death, resurrection, forgiveness of sins.
 - 3.3. *Assume* reliability of historical testimony provided by eyewitnesses.
 - 3.4. What must I do to be saved? Believe and be baptized; you and your family.
 - 3.5. If there are problems (e.g. radiocarbon dating or reliability of manuscripts) then be prepared to defend.
 - 3.6. Apologetics is defense of faith, so you must *first* present the faith, *then* you can defend it, if necessary.
4. Take people's concerns seriously. Take them at their word. Listen carefully.
 - 4.1. If they say they do not believe in a God who would punish man for sins, do not *assume* that they are smoking weed and don't want to get caught.
 - 4.2. There are people who act *more morally* than either you or me who have serious concerns with Christianity. You just might be able to clear up their misconceptions!
5. Assemble an apologetics library
 - 5.1. Read widely—not just tracts put out by your own church or denomination. Read what your opponents think. Read the best writings.
 - 5.2. To evangelize the Jews, Paul became like a Jew; to evangelize a baseball team, you will need to practice and join a baseball team; to

evangelize academics, you will need to study academic works and join the academy.

6. Relax and have fun!

6.1. You will never know everything. Be honest with yourself and others about what you don't understand; then seek answers.

6.2. Apologetics is not systematic theology; it is messy and unexpected; you cannot anticipate what someone's concerns may be.

6.3. Doing apologetics isn't just practical, it is natural for us as Christians. We do it because of who we are.

7. Where does scientific apologetics fit in with other types of apologetics?

7.1. There are four types of evidences/arguments/defenses presented in Scripture

7.1.1. *Signs and Miracles*—the most important and fundamental means of defending the Word (e.g. the resurrection, John 20: these things are recorded so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ)

7.1.2. *Prophecy*—Old Testament passages that demonstrate the truth of the Christian faith (e.g. the prophecy of the virgin birth, Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch reading Isaiah in Acts, etc.)

7.1.3. *Inner experience*—descriptions of how a person's life has changed since experiencing Christianity (e.g. Paul's conversion experience in Acts 9)

7.1.4. *Natural knowledge*—evidence for the existence of God based on the nature of the world; general revelation.

7.2. The least common of these evidences in Scripture is the last

7.2.1. it does not readily lend itself to the Gospel, but

7.2.2. it *can* lead to the Gospel because natural science and historical science have similar methodologies, and the New Testament is (at the very least) a historical document.

8. Why focus on scientific apologetics?

8.1. People care about the natural sciences.

8.2. Modern societies have unique and serious misconceptions about

8.2.1. the nature of the world—many believe that some modern scientific theories have provided a completely self consistent understanding of the world based on philosophical naturalism

8.2.2. the nature of man—many believe there is no principled distinction between man, animal, plant, and inanimate matter

8.3. These misconceptions lead many into unique and serious misconceptions about God. We will explore and discuss some of these in our readings.