

Christianity on Trial
TRYING THE CHRISTIAN CASE IN A COURT OF LAW.

Class 1: Introduction and the need for this series

The End Result: The end result of my case is that Christian theism provides the best explanation for the world as we know it: for the fine-tuning of the universe, for the existence of human life, for creation, for the existence of truth and morality, for the existence of the Gospels, for the spread of a fringe religion called Christianity, for the resurrection, and for the problem of evil. Christianity provides comprehensive and complete answers to all of these issues. No other worldview comes close.

I.
OUTLINE

Class 1: Questions of faith and the need for this series

Class 2: Opening statement- What the evidence will show

Class 3: Reasonable belief- Evidence for a beginning, and a beginner

Class 4: Reasonable belief- The fine tuning of the universe

Class 5: The moral law 1- There is a moral law, and every law has a lawgiver

Class 6: The moral law 2- There is a moral law, and every law has a lawgiver

Class 7: Evidence for the Reliability of the Gospels- The Gospels as historical documents.

Class 8: Evidence for the Reliability of the Gospels- preservation and corroboration

Class 9: The Resurrection as historical fact

Class 10: Objection! What about all the evil in the world?

Class 11: Objection! Did God commit genocide and slavery in the OT?

Class 12: Closing- Tactics on discussing, sharing, and presenting evidence.

II.
WHY DEFEND?

A. It is commanded of us: 1 Pet. 3:15

But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

“Made a defense” = Apologia = legal defense.

B. It can be helpful in sharing

Look at Paul in Acts 17:16-33. A roadmap of how to defend your faith in a secular world

- He is “reasoning” with Jews, Greeks, and anyone who happened to be there
- He unflinchingly takes on Epicurean and Stoic philosophers
- He even quotes a secular poet!
- Do you see mention of Abraham, line of King David, Isaiah’s prophecies? Why not?

C. The cultural milieu

“milieu” = social environment, backdrop, setting, context

The gospel is always heard against the cultural backdrop.

Internet. Social Media. Easy to lob stuff out there. If we get enough attacks we can go into our shell without even realizing it. Timidity abounds.

Apologetics can shape this backdrop. That answers the objection “no one comes to Christ through arguments.”

For the value of apologetics extends far beyond one’s immediate evangelistic contact. It is the broader task to help create and sustain a cultural backdrop in which the gospel can be heard as an intellectually viable option. *William Lane Craig*.

Our children face an ever-more-hostile cultural backdrop. How can we equip them?

D. Building up the church

- Each time this church has gone through a class like this, people have come away encouraged.
- Boldness for Christ: put ourselves in situations for Christ that may have been intimidating in the past.
- Nothing inspires confidence and boldness more than knowing that one has good reasons for what one believes and good answers to the typical questions and objections that an unbeliever may raise.
- Paul: For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. 2 Cor 10:4 - 5.

E. Balance

"I confess that I do not believe that one human brain is capable of answering every objection that another human brain could raise against the most obvious truth in the world." – *Charles Spurgeon*

Apologetics is the seasoning, the Gospel is the main course. You do not want too much of the seasoning or it will make the main course insipid. Apologetics does not dominate our message; it undergirds our message. Argument doesn't save people, but it certainly clears the obstacles so they can take a direct look at the Cross. Support the argument justifiably, but recognize it is Jesus Christ who you need to lift up, and it is the Holy Spirit who brings about change within the human heart. An argument may remove doubt, but only the Holy Spirit can convict of truth.
-- *Ravi Zacharias*

We are free of all having to become experts. God calls, he justifies, he saves.

The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of. –*Blaise Pascal*