

Apologetics and Islam

by James White

James White discusses the challenges of apologetics in addressing Islamic critiques of Christianity, emphasizing the need for a strong theological foundation.

Duration: 41:07

Topics: "Islam"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses gratitude for the iPod shuffle as a helpful tool for studying without distractions. He mentions upcoming debates with opponents of Islam, including Shabir Ali and Dr. Zofiqar Ali Shah. The speaker discusses the challenge of addressing the encroachment of Islam in today's society and the need for a strong apologetical approach. He references the writings and approaches of Dr. Greg Bonson and mentions various resources, such as the Dean Show and answering-islam.org, that provide objections and responses to Islam.

Transcript

This program is released under a Creative Commons license. For more information, visit CreativeCommons.org. This is Christ the Center, episode 44. Today we speak with James White about apologetics and Islam.

Welcome to Christ the Center, Doctrine for Life, a weekly conversation of Reformed Theology. My name is Camden Busey, and I have with me today two special guests. This is not our usual panel, but I have with me a friend of mine, Jason Pickard, who is a student at Westminster Theological Seminary.

Good afternoon, Jason. Good afternoon, Camden. And I also have with us Dr. James White.

You can find him at AOMin.org with Alpha and Omega Ministries. He's the author of several books, including *The Potter's Freedom*, as well as a new one on Islam and Christianity, *A Matter of Denial and Answering Islam*. He's also been a partaker of several debates, and we are pleased to have you on, Dr. White, today to talk about apologetics and Islam.

Good afternoon. Well, it's great to be with you. Excellent.

Well, this is just a wonderful opportunity that we have because this is such a challenge now, today's day and age, trying to address the issue of the encroaching Islam, such a huge and dominant force that's out there. And we have Dr. White with us, who's a very capable and able debater and apologist, in order to

help us to address this major issue. Now, from the outset, what kind of platform or framework, apologetical approach, would you say that you hold to? Dr. White, are there any apologists you would lean on in their writings or approaches? Well, for some people, this opens doors.

For other people, it closes doors. But when I, back in 1992, a little-known fellow by the name of Dr. Greg Bonson contacted me, and he was supposed to be debating Jerry Matitox in Omaha, Nebraska, but he had an opportunity come up to where he could debate two homosexuals. And if you ever listened to Dr. Bonson's material, I've listened to the resultant encounters that he had.

They were very valuable. And he actually had me take his debate on Sola Scriptura up in Omaha with Jerry Matitox. And so I knew Greg, and I play the Bonson-Stein debate for all of my Golden Gate classes and contrast the presuppositional approach with that of someone like William Lane Craig or something like that.

And so on that issue, I would be a very strong presuppositionalist. I do see great value in the internal critique of the theological system of Islam. But at the same time, I'm not fully certain that I've ever been able to completely grasp or fully understand all of Dr. Bonson's commentary on Islam and how he would approach it.

And I'm not sure how much interaction he necessarily had with some of the leading apologists of Islam either. So I believe that in this context, when you're dealing with another theistic system, a monotheistic system, a Unitarian monotheistic system, my natural tendency, of course, would be to critique the monotheism. But as far as a transcendental approach or something like that, I'm not sure how that would actually work with a real well-read Islamic, a Sunni Muslim.

So in that instance, I'm much more focused upon providing a response to Islamic denials of the Christian faith and then demonstrating, and this has been really my bailiwick in the debates I've done, demonstrating that I've yet to encounter a consistent Muslim. Every Muslim I've debated so far, and I've debated quite a number now, and have a whole series of debates coming up in the UK and at Duke University in less than a month, that every Muslim I've debated so far has to, in essence, abandon his own worldview and his own view of his own scriptures to attack mine. And I'm using that as one of my arguments.

I suppose that would be, in some sense, very consistent with Dr. Bonson's approach to demonstrate that, in essence, they have to step out of their own worldview to attack mine and then jump back in to defend their own position. So that might give you some sense of where I'm coming from on that level. No, that's excellent.

We find that. I'm convinced that the Vantillian approach is proper and most biblical and also most effective. The problem with what we find among students of Westminster and other Vantillians is that sometimes it's such a good apologetic that we don't use it Christianly.

It's too easy to destroy people. And Dr. Wern Poitras at Westminster has put it one way. He said, Reformed theology, and I would argue even Vantillian apologetics, is in many ways like karate, where there comes a point where you learn enough where you could kill somebody if you're not careful.

And so it's always important not only to destroy every lofty thing built up and set up against Christ, but we also, of course, need to offer the hope of the gospel after we've done that. Oh, yeah. There is a

tremendous danger in apologetics for pride, arrogance.

I have always said that an apologist must be a person who is deeply involved in ministry in the Church. So many apologists become disconnected from the Church. I'm an elder in my Church, and so I have to preach and teach.

I teach the adult Sunday school class. We've been going through the Synoptic Gospels for almost five years now, using the standard text used in seminaries. We have a very odd Church, and a very patient people who put up with me.

But I've always felt that that balance is really necessary because I've seen many apologists lose their footing, lose their balance. That's why I'm glad I don't deal with just one area. I deal with a wide variety of areas.

That helps as well. But the only other problem with Vantill is that no one can understand him. That's why we need the interpreters.

The man did not write in English overly well, so we need the interpreters. Even in the recent biography of him by John Meather, he explained that it was Vantill. He was very aware of the fact that he didn't write that well, and it was one of his vices or faults that he saw.

But now you mentioned a bunch of different areas in debates and apologetics. What are some of the things that a Muslim would be most critical of in terms of Christianity? I think we can all guess some of the obvious ones. But where do they typically go in a debate with you, and what do they try to attack first? Well, there's absolutely no question that the fundamental issue with Islam today is the reliability of the New Testament.

That's one of the reasons, believe it or not, that in January I'm debating Bart Ehrman on this very issue of whether textual variation precludes the possibility of inspiration is that Bart Ehrman has become one of the Muslims' favorite persons to cite. And almost every single debate comes back to the reliability of the text of Scripture. And so that's one of the things that drew me into this was a combination of coming to recognize my connectedness to the persecuted church, the command of Scripture to remember those who are in chains, that we ourselves are in chains with them, and then recognizing that the majority force persecuting Christians in the world is Islam.

And then in looking at Islam, recognizing that the primary areas they're addressing apologetically are the very areas that I've been focused on for the 25 years that Alpha Omega Ministries has been in existence. I wrote a book back in 1994, just finished the second edition two days ago, that'll be out in a few months, called *The King James Only Controversy*. That has functioned as an introduction to textual criticism, a friendly and understandable introduction to textual criticism for people for a long, long time now.

And so my biblical background in Greek and Hebrew, having taught both of those subjects, the textual critical aspect, church history aspect, another area that I've taught in, these are the key areas where many apologists were struggling against Islam because that's where you need to have that knowledge. And so that was part of what combination that drew me to this. But almost every single debate comes back to whether the New Testament in particular, but the Bible as a whole, is reliable.

The reason for this, of course, is due to the problem that you have with the anachronism that is forced upon modern Islam. What I mean by that is you have a man named Muhammad, and let's just say for the

sake of argument that Muhammad is the singular author of the text of the Quran. There are many people who would question that.

There are reasons for questioning that. There's a lot of reason to see that there is a major emendation and editing of the Quran, not under the third Khalif, Uthman, but around 700 to 705. But even leaving those issues aside for the moment, if we have a singular author, Muslims will tell us that he is in essence illiterate.

We know that the earliest full manuscripts we have of the Bible of the New Testament or Old Testament in Arabic come from the end of the 9th century, long after Muhammad has passed. He did not have access to the text of the Bible for himself. And I could argue that he felt that what he was teaching in the Quran, especially his proclamation of monotheism, was consistent with what is found in the text of Scripture.

But he was wrong. He did not have access to it. There's only two verses of the Bible cited in the Quran, and both are clearly by memory.

One is the Lex Talionis, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. Another is from the Psalms. And he did not know what was found in the text of the Bible.

After that period of Islamic expansion, 632 to 732, and then that next century or so, there's still fluctuating borders, things like that. Then as the Islamic scholarship begins to develop and Islamic culture begins to develop, the borders begin to exist, and now there has to be apologetic interaction. An Islamic scholarship has to start dealing with the text of the Bible, and they start reading it.

Lo and behold, they're faced with a real problem. Their holy text is inconsistent with what their holy text says was the predecessor to them, and that their prophet actually used to say, Hey, go to the people of the Injil. Go to the Al-Kitab, the people of the book, and look at what God gave them, and it will show you that I am a prophet.

Well, when you do that, it doesn't. That's the problem. There is this inherent anachronism that has been built into Islamic apologetics and Islamic theology.

They really can't differentiate between the two. You've got to understand, Islam cannot define itself outside of a denial of Christian truth. Christians need to understand that.

The world doesn't seem to understand that, but Christians need to understand. Even in the Quran itself, you have Surah 112, which is as close to a creedal statement as you can find. Ali-Khlas is what it's called, and it's only four ayah long, four verses long.

And the third ayah says, Lem yeled wa lem yuled, he neither begets nor is he begotten. Now, that is clearly in reference to our faith and to our proclamation. You can find reference after reference after reference in the Quran, saying that we are guilty of going to excess in our religion, and that Jesus is not the Son of God, and that Surah 5, 116-117 seems to indicate that the author of the Quran even believed that the trinity for us was Allah, Mary, and their son, Jesus.

And if that's the case, that truly indicates that the Quran is not from God, because even if the trinity is wrong, God knew what it was by the 7th century, one way or the other. So all these things come together to force the modern Muslim to have to deny the reliability and usability of the New Testament. Well, how did they do that? Well, the early Muslims did not do that by attacking it textually.

They had a fundamental belief that since it had been Natsal, it had been sent down by God. The Quran says to believe in the books, plural, that he has sent down. He says to the Al-Kitab, the people of the book, look at what your books say, go to your books and judge by what is therein.

Now, you gentlemen know, we know what the state of both the Old and New Testament texts was without a question in 632. Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus are all 250-270 years prior to this period of time. We know what the state of the text was.

And so the early approaches were not to attack the text whatsoever, but to attack our reading, our interpretation. Well, that didn't get you very far, because any consistent reading or interpretation of the New Testament as a whole is not going to lead you to a Unitarian viewpoint with Jesus as a mere resual of Allah. And so the modern perspective has been to attack it as having been corrupted over time.

Almost any of the wildest liberal perspectives that you can see out there in liberal Christianity will be borrowed directly, lock, stock, and barrel by modern Islamic apologists. They love to go after Paul. The wildest theories about Paul you've ever imagined will gain venue.

They'll gain currency amongst Islamic apologists. And so it is the area that really the Jesus seminar folks, you know, John Dominic Crossing, Bart Ehrman, all these people, you're studying the same area. You need to know the same material, the same information.

I mean, I've struggled greatly to get especially Reformed Christians interested in this subject. Let's face it, for most of us, the Muslims have towels on their heads and an AK-47 in their hands. I mean, that's all we know about them.

There's only about 2.5 to 3 million in the United States grand total. And so for most people, it's just like, well, they're over there. I'm over here.

I'm not really interested in that kind of stuff. And I have had to keep telling people, look, you need to realize the things that you need to be studying about your own faith to give a real solid response to the Muslim are the very things that you need to be studying if your children are going to be going into the local Bible college or community college because the professor or the philosophy religion professor is going to be going after them. And he's going to be wielding, you know, John Dominic Crossing and Bart Ehrman and John Shelby Spong.

And these are the same things that you need to be dealing with when you're dealing with Islam itself. So that has helped me to get a few people to realize that, hey, you know, this isn't actually something that would be bad to study. But that's the fundamental issue is the reliability of the text in the New Testament.

And then right above that, of course, as you probably know, Islam denies the crucifixion of Christ. Based on one ayah, only one ayah in all of the Koran, most Christians should know, Surah 4, 157 that says that the Jews boasted that they had killed the Messiah, which I've always found interesting that Jews would call him the Messiah, but they killed the Messiah, the Rasul, the apostle of Allah, Jesus, the son of Mary. But they killed him not, nor did they crucify him, but it was made to appear to them.

Shubiha Aleihem, it was made to appear to them. That has produced so many interpretations, even amongst the Muslims, that you can't even find two Muslims that are necessarily united as to what that means. Other than Jesus did not die upon a cross, therefore there was no resurrection, etc., etc.

The irony is, and this is, I think, something I like to point out to folks, if Surah 4, 157 was not in the Koran, the Koran would speak about the death of Jesus. In both Surah 3, 55 and 19, 33, the natural reading of the Arabic language in those places would refer to his death. In fact, the very same language, word for word, is used of John the Baptist, and nobody thinks John the Baptist was physically taken up into heaven.

In fact, he was obviously beheaded, so that would normally lead to physical death. But because Surah 4 is there, they read those in very odd and strange ways to try to get around the fact that there's a contradiction within the Koran at that point. And there is absolutely no Hadith literature.

For 200 years, Muslims could not think of anything that Muhammad had said about that one particular ayah. That introduces all sorts of issues, for me anyways, especially given how the Koran was collected and put together, that are very important. But that leads then to the issues of the Gospel, the fact that Muslims do not believe that there needs to be any sacrifice or there does not need to be any fulfillment of God's wrath.

And let's face it, guys, most Christians are so weak on the cross. They are so weak on atonement. Their theology of the cross is primarily tradition and feeling and emotion that I've seen more than once a Muslim go, Well, why can't God just forgive me? You can without killing somebody else.

Why can't God? And all of a sudden there's silence. Now you all, of course, being students at Westminster Seminary, are well aware of the fact that there was even controversy over that subject at the time of the Westminster Assembly. And John Owen wrote on the necessity of the demonstration of God's justice and the atonement and so on and so forth.

But let's face it, the vast majority of evangelicals just go, Well, that's just how I was taught. And they really don't know how to respond to those kinds of issues. Now, let's speak for a moment just on, you mentioned the doctrine of God, the fact that the Muslim is a Unitarian.

Do they not have the problem of having a transcendent God even communicate or reveal himself to his creation? What are some of the issues involved in doctrine of God in terms of Islam? Yeah, there are a lot of questions that were addressed. There was a period of time where Islam produced an incredible culture. There's no question about that.

You go back in history and the West, for example, inherited Aristotle from the Islamic world. And it was the Crusades and the interactions there and eventually the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the things that took place in that time period. They produced quite a culture.

The interesting thing about that is it was the kind of Islam that we fear most today that destroyed the Islamic culture in the first place. In other words, the Quran itself produces an anti-intellectualism that eventually destroyed the intellectual aspects of Islamic culture. And that's what we are fighting today.

Even though people like Osama bin Laden are actually very intelligent individuals, their intelligence has driven them to the point of a consistency that requires, in essence, the establishment of an Islamic culture all around the world. That is the only way that Sharia can actually truly be established from their perspective. That's a whole other area that we could go into at some point.

But anyway, during that renaissance, shall we say, of Islamic culture, there was much discussion of exactly what you raise. And that is there is such a tremendous transcendence enunciated in the description of Allah in the Quran and then in the Hadith that the concept of any type of personal relevance

of Allah to our lives, any type of relationship issue, caused all sorts of questions and came up with all sorts of answers. And even to this day, I used to be a long-distance bicyclist, now I guess I'm a medium-distance bicyclist.

I mean, I did 150 miles last week, so I suppose that's... That's not too shabby. That's not too bad, I suppose, but not like what I used to do. But that's my time for study.

That's when I listen. I thank the Lord so much for the iPod Shuffle. It is such a wonderful ministry tool because that's when I get literally hours of studying without the phone going off or anything else, email coming in or anything else.

And when I study Islam, I don't just... I do listen to the debates of the opponents I have coming up. I'll be debating, Lord willing, Shabir Ali again in London. Actually, it might be in Birmingham.

We're trying to set it up right now. I may have three debates within four days in London and a radio debate as well, and then coming right back to Duke, flying back to Duke University and debating Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah right afterwards. It's going to be the craziest 10 or 12 days of my entire adult life, but hopefully the Lord will bless during that time.

But I don't just listen to their debates. I do. I listen to them very, very carefully.

But I try to find when they are simply talking to fellow Muslims about what they believe. I want to hear what they're saying internally. I want to try to get inside their minds and understand their perspectives so I can communicate and use their language.

And as I listen to especially the Salafi, the Salafi are basically the fundamentalists, the very conservative, almost Wahhabi-type Muslims. There is so clearly for me evidence of this strong desire on their part for a mediator. They want and need a mediator.

And you can hear them struggling with things that have developed about people praying to Muhammad. Muhammad, by his nature, becomes a substitute for Jesus. They have to fight against.

There are many, many Muslims who feel that you can pray to Muhammad, that your prayers will be taken by angels to Muhammad, and that Muhammad can then take them to Allah. Well, what is that? That's a mediator. That's the very connectedness in humanity that they don't have theologically.

And another is saying, no, no, no, you can't do this. This is shirk. This is association of a created being with Allah.

You can't do this. But it just keeps coming up, and it keeps coming up because that's what is missing. And I don't know if you remember.

It was about two years ago. Do you remember seeing the pictures of the bombing at the Glasgow airport where they drove this, it looked like a Jeep, as I recall, and it didn't work right. It didn't blow up the way they thought it was going to blow up.

They both eventually died of their burns, as I recall. Those men were not poor, down-and-out individuals. They were medical students with promising futures.

And one of the reasons that stuck so clearly with me is I've walked through that very door multiple times. I have friends in Glasgow. I've ministered in Annie's Land, which is a suburb of Glasgow.

And it just amazed me to sit there and see that fire at the very spot where I have stood waiting for a ride. It was incredible. But why do men like that who have bright and promising futures blow themselves up in a gas-filled vehicle at an airport in Glasgow? It's because they don't have the type of assurance.

We know the Quran only gives one means of having any kind of assurance of entering into paradise, and that is to die in jihad. There is no other way of knowing. And there is such an arbitrariness in the forgiveness of Allah that there is this insatiable desire for certainty of knowledge of your relationship, which is what you get from jihad, or then the creation for those who aren't quite up to that kind of activity, the creation of these less-than-orthodox mechanisms of prayers to Muhammad and things like that, where Muhammad really becomes a semi-deity for many of these people.

It really does. Dr. Whyte, I thought it might be helpful if you could just briefly kind of explain some of the divisions within Islam and some of the differences. Yeah, a lot of folks over here--in fact, the really sad thing is a lot of folks in our government did not have a clue when we went into Iraq what the issues in Islam were, and that has resulted in a lot of problems.

But the primary things that we hear, of course, are the two major groups, and that is the Sunni and the Shia. And this, of course, goes back to the very foundations of Islam. The Sunni are about 85% to 90% of the population of Islam in the world.

By the way, let me just mention in passing, I like asking groups when I'm speaking to them on this subject, what percentage do you think of the world's Muslims are Arabic? And for most Christians, they'd go, 80, something like that. About 19% of the world's Muslims are Arabic, less than 20%. The heartbeat of Islam is Indonesia.

Really? It is Asian and South Asian, and that's where the vast majority of the world's Muslims are. Most people just don't understand that, and that's why seeing this as primarily an Arab issue just completely misses the boat. But the Sunnis make up the vast majority of the world's Muslims.

In Iran especially, you have Shiism. And it's difficult to describe the differences that have developed over time between the two in a brief period of time. But in essence, you can see the Shia as having more of a dynamic view of God and inspiration.

The Sunnis would be a little bit more, to use our terminology, solo scriptura, or solo scriptura plus tradition, hadith. So I guess I would make them a little bit more on the Tiber side of that particular issue. With this division, I think when I was reading a book a couple years ago, it almost sounded vaguely similar to Protestant-Catholic divisions within Christianity, at least on ideas.

There are parallels. Yeah, there are parallels. There weren't so much historically, but there have been parallels that have developed.

Because when one group, in essence, says the Quran and interpreted in light of the Sunnah of the prophet, the hadith, and then the other side, which is the minority side, tends to develop charismatic leaders, ayatollahs, imams, who have a special inspired interpretation. That's why Khomeini's decisions back in the 70s were viewed as having, in essence, divine authority, is that he has this divine ability to interpret it. It's not so much replacing the Quran as it is still a living voice of interpretation, shall we say.

An ex-cathedra, so to speak, almost. In essence, yeah. Shiism has spawned even more what they would almost refer to as cultic groups because of that, because you're allowing for almost a Joseph Smith-type person to come along and to claim this special interpretation, break off his own group, and so on and so forth.

There's all sorts of small little Druze groups and things like that over there in the Mideast that most of us never heard of. And when the armed forces went in there, all of a sudden they find themselves in the middle of stuff that no one had any idea how to deal with almost any of it. But then even within those, of course, you have the Salafis, the Wahhabis.

These are the very, very conservative individuals, and many of them are the ones that are willing to engage in debate because they actually believe that what they say is true, and it's true for everybody. And so they're the ones most willing to engage in debate. The same thing's true on the Christian side of things.

I mean, liberals are not generally the ones who are interested in debate because from their perspective, what really is there to debate about anyways? I mean, when I debated John Shelby Spong on homosexuality in Florida a couple years ago, I cannot begin to tell you how he oozed the feeling that that was the last place on the planet he wanted to be that night. From their perspective, it's just, you know, why are we doing this? Can't we all just sort of get along? That's sort of the essence of liberalism. But the Salafis, the Wahhabis, this very, very conservative, strict, go with just the interpretations of the first number of generations of those who knew the prophet and the companions of the prophet.

That's really the breeding ground of al Qaeda and the radicalized Islam that is spoken of most often today. And then, of course, you've got Sufism, and Sufis can cross the line between these various groups, just a very spiritualized form of Islam that's willing to bring in a whole lot more in its sources than non-Sufi Islam would. And really, they have created quite a variety of groups within the mix there.

It can be very, very bewildering. And what we find on television when the news anchor calls up the Muslim informant or whatever, it's not necessarily an orthodox version of Islam. We always find that on the news sometimes when we see somebody speaking for Christianity, they might be the most outrageous liberal.

And we can't expect that every single Muslim that we find speaking on television, speaking about Muslim being a peaceful religion, etc., is necessarily speaking from an orthodox position, either. Most definitely, and in fact, the Muslims themselves complain about that. I have a number of RSS feeds of various Islamic organizations, and that is a common complaint that they have.

Where did these people in the media come up with this person to call him an expert on Islam, etc., etc.? So they have the same complaints, and I think valid complaints at that point, because we do tend to want to put them all in one group. Obviously, the fact that they're fighting with each other rather voraciously in other countries demonstrates they're not all in one group. But we want to try to sort of even stuff out along those lines.

You know, I didn't want to skip over something you had asked about the doctrine of God. I'm sort of assuming that everyone is aware of the fact that one of the key areas of debate and conflict has to do with Jesus Christ, the deity of Christ, the doctrine of the Trinity, things like that. Obviously, if Jesus is just a mirazul, the Holy Spirit's Gabriel, that that is a key fundamental area.

And, again, I have found it's been interesting to come at this from my background. I have found the Muslims to be extremely willing to ransack Jehovah's Witness websites for every kind of bad Jehovah's Witness argument known and throw it out there, knowing that, let's face it, again, it's another tremendously weak area for evangelicals is to be able to give a meaningful, biblical, consistent defense. The doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the person of the Holy Spirit, things along those lines.

And so a number of debates I've done have been on the deity of Christ. One of those I'll be doing in London will be a defense of the deity of Christ. And I know the man I'll be debating actually moderated a debate he did with another Christian apologist.

So I know what he's going to be throwing out there. And, like I said, it's just bad Jehovah's Witness argumentation. But, sadly, most Muslims have never heard of a real strong, passionate, and yet accurate defense of the Trinity and the deity of Christ.

And so that's another major area of conflict as well. Just as a point of interest to our listeners, I know many of you are out there are Vantilian. That's an interesting place for research, how the Trinity and Vantilian apologetics impacts Muslim apologetics.

Since we have the doctrine of the Trinity that solves some issues that you find in philosophy, it doesn't necessarily mean that a Muslim we're speaking to is going to be interested in these philosophical problems. But Vantil oftentimes speaks of the problem of the one and the many. And just as an encouragement to people, if they want to go read, you can find Vantil writing about the doctrine of the Trinity and how that actually holds together the transcendental approach, something that the Muslim can't do.

Just before we leave you, before we let you go, how would you encourage us to actually engage with Muslims in apologetics? It seems like many of us don't even have any Muslim friends, don't know where to go. If we want to, or have a heart's desire to go and to bring the gospel to Muslims, where would you go? Or how would you suggest that we go about doing that? Well, it wouldn't be overly difficult to locate there in the Philadelphia area the Islamic propagation centers, the local mosques. They are building them very quickly, primarily with the money that we have given to Saudi Arabia in the form of oil.

And they literally get millions and millions of dollars to build these centers and to staff them and to have Qurans that they can give to people and so on and so forth. You might take a tour of your local mosque, get to know who the imam is. These are human beings.

They are made in the image of God. And hopefully we're not going to have, as so often happens, unfortunately, Christians jump on our white horses and head off and we're going to stave off the horde or something like that. We want to adorn the gospel of Christ.

We want to demonstrate a true desire to share the truth with these individuals and to listen to where they're coming from. Very often what they say will give us a good indication of the direction we want to go in sharing with them and speaking with them. And so that would be very, very useful as well.

So sometimes they'll have conferences. They'll have things where they're out and about. And so obviously there are opportunities of street witnessing and encounters in that context.

And be ready because most of them who live here in the United States and have lived here for any period of time at all are going to have certain apologetic knowledge. They're going to have some pretty

interesting questions to throw your direction. And sometimes the objections are not the type that we are really accustomed to answering.

When I give presentations on this, I like to play some of the audience questions that have come up in debates that I've had. And it's truly fascinating to hear someone say, well, for example, when Jesus cursed the fig tree, if he was God, first of all, we don't know why he'd be hungry because he's God and God doesn't have to eat. But he cursed the fig tree because it didn't have fruit, but it wasn't in season.

If he's God, he'd know what the season for figs is. And even beyond that, then if he was God, he could just have the tree give figs. And I like to watch audiences as I play these audience questions because they're left sitting there going, I can't believe they think that's an objection.

But then I go, OK, how do you respond to it? Because it's so far outside of our normative area of thinking that we need to be careful how we give a response to someone saying, well, Jesus can't be God because he ate food. That's not the kind of thing we're used to dealing with. So if you could go out there, be ready for that kind of a thing, a question about why there has to be the death of someone to bring about salvation, to bring about forgiveness, the whole issue of the Atonement.

And the fact that from the Muslim perspective, prophets don't die the way Jesus died. Jesus could not possibly have died upon a cross because he was a great prophet, and that would show disdain for a prophet, and therefore he couldn't have died that way. That's not the kind of stuff we're used to.

Yeah, go ahead, Jason. I was just kind of along those lines. I was going to ask you about where you would point people as far as resources.

Obviously, from what you've been saying, just some of the basic Christian doctrines, like the defense of the Atonement and the Trinity and the deity of Christ. It sounds like we could all brush up on those, but maybe some more specific type resources. I know your website has some, but some other ones that you might recommend.

Yeah, I'm trying to sort of model this. Starting back in January, I got this idea from Jay Smith, who ministers to Muslims in London. We were at a conference together, and he mentioned the tremendous success he was having with YouTube.

Really? I now have nearly 300 videos up on my YouTube site, and as a result, our website is getting hits from this place called Indonesia. Oh, excellent. Yeah, we have tremendous opportunities for doing that kind of stuff now.

So I really am trying to address all of the issues, the texts, the things that they bring up, and I like to use them to do it. I like to let them make the objection. I've found a lot of resources, like the Dean Show and things like that, where they're providing the objections, and then I provide the responses.

And so AOMin.org is very helpful. AnsweringIslam.org is a huge website, an international website. Answering-Islam.org, just a huge number of resources there.

Almost any issue that you would ever run into in regards to the subject of Islam has been addressed by someone, by the whole team of folks that are active on that website as well. So between the two of us, hopefully we're providing a fair amount of good information along those lines. Excellent.

We want to point everyone to Alpha and Omega Ministries, of course. As I already mentioned, you can visit AOMin.org. You can catch the dividing line. You can even get in the chat room, which always has some interesting discussions.

So you can catch there. You can also see a schedule of events, as Dr. White will be debating many people in the coming month and also into January with his debate against Bart Ehrman. I'd also like to point you back to our website at reformedforum.org. There you can get the bibliography of today's episode.

You can also find out other information about our other programs and subscribe to our podcast feeds in order to get this and others automatically downloaded to your computer. I want to thank everybody for listening, and we look forward to having you back next time on Christ the Center.

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