

Evangelizing the Western Mindset - Part 2

by Winkie Pratney

Winkie Pratney emphasizes the importance of sufficient evidence in apologetics and the need for a spirit of love and humility in presenting the gospel.

Duration: 1:00:05

Scripture: Romans 1:19

Topics: "Apologetics", "Evangelism"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of apologetics, emphasizing the distinction between providing absolute proof and sufficient evidence. It uses a vivid analogy of a man found hacked to death to illustrate the need for making decisions based on sufficient evidence. The Apostle Paul's power ministry and his approach to presenting the gospel are explored, highlighting the balance of historical facts and personal testimony in apologetics. The sermon also discusses the significance of being ready to give a reason for one's faith with meekness and fear, as commanded in 1 Peter 3:15.

Transcript

We're continuing looking at the presenting of the gospel, and the thing we finished off in our last session together, we concluded that the objective of apologetics is not to provide absolute proof but sufficient evidence. And John Warwick Montgomery talks about the difference between those two things. In a contingent universe, anything could possibly happen.

For instance, he says, say for instance a man is found hacked to death. He's cut up into 15 different pieces in a locked room with no other way inside the room except through the door. The door is locked from the inside.

Inside the room beside the bits of the body of the victim there is a man who is holding an axe in his hand, covered in blood with his fingerprints on it, who confesses that he was the one who chopped the body up, before it was a body, well, it was a person. And this case is brought to trial. The jury is asked to consider the evidence and to give a verdict.

And they come back to the judge and say, now, judge, we have decided that he is not guilty. The judge has apoplexy and he goes, but what do you mean not guilty? And he says, well, we've decided that he's not guilty. And the judge says, well, what about the evidence? And the guy says, well, judge, you'll agree, it is possible, it is possible that something else happened and this guy actually didn't kill.

And the judge says, well, give me your reason. He says, well, what if an invisible Martian that was able to walk through walls and had a special laser, chopped this person up into bits, took the victim, zapped him, recreated his memories, put the ax in his hand, dipped it in the blood of the victim, and then vanished. See, we feel that that's the real thing that went on here.

You see, it is. And the judge goes, what? And the jury says, well, you will agree, it is possible. And the judge goes, well, yeah, it's possible.

But you see, that is not called sufficient evidence. Anything is possible. It is also possible that the judge is a Martian and that the jury are all Martians and that Jesus was a Martian.

I mean, you know, there are a lot of possibilities, but the point is you work on sufficient evidence when there is, all decisions are to be made on that basis. When there's enough evidence on something pointing in one direction, we must not bring in invisible Martians, that ought not to be there. They could be, but who knows, I may be a Martian.

We've met the aliens and they are us. Two more things, two more things on presenting the gospel and again dealing with this thing in apologetics. I want to take you quickly to two more areas, two ways that the Apostle Paul, let me ask you a question.

Do you believe that Paul had a power ministry? Do you think he was familiar with the miraculous? Do you think he had any experience in it? Probably. Now look at Acts 26. We're going to look at the balance of this because this is a key question is when we're looking at the presenting of the gospel.

Acts 26, 1-2, we have Paul standing before Agrippa. Now Agrippa is an interesting man because he's a very well educated man, he's a man who understands a lot about questions of church history and other things. Agrippa said to Paul, and you are permitted to speak for yourself, then Paul stretched forth his hand and answered for himself, I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before you, touching all things wherever I'm accused of the Jews.

What he's doing here is apologetics. He's making a verbal defense of his commitment, especially because I know you to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews, wherefore I beseech you to hear me patiently. And then he begins by giving his testimony.

He says I was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, I was the hottest thing coming down the pike as far as being close to God as we could. And he says now the reason why I'm on trial is because I got so into it that I hit the real thing. And the rest of it is just basically a testimony.

So he uses the facts, he pulls stuff out of history, he demonstrates this is a promise which was made before, which is being fulfilled in this time, and he goes on doing that. Now Acts 24.10, go back a little bit, Paul after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak. See, these are people of great power that Paul is speaking to, they're men, secular men or religious men who know authority, they're men who are used to saying this and getting answers immediately.

Paul after the governor had beckoned him to speak said for as much as I know that you've been in many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself. Because you may understand there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem, they can't prove the things they're accusing me of. See this is apologetics, again it is a defense, he's not preaching yet, he's just simply giving the reason why he's doing what he's doing.

Now the interesting word that I want you to look at is this word cheerfully. How is apologetics presented? The phrase cheerfully, in a good spirit, it's kind of a, listen, it's not a, I want to show you something, you may not believe it, it's not that, as a matter of fact the translation of the thing is an activity to encourage, not to condemn or criticize, with a deep concern for truth and clarifying the issues at hand. That's what the idea of cheerfully is, to an activity of encouragement, not to condemn nor to criticize.

Apologetic is not used as a club to beat people over the head with, it's not to say how stupid can you get, why don't you listen to the facts, it is something to clarify, it's a concern for what is true, it is to clarify those issues and make sure that they understand the real facts as they are. And I want you to see the, I'm trying to think of the word, the laid-backness of this thing, it is not a, okay, you want to fight, I'll show you what a fight is, boy, you don't know how well I punch, it's a, I'd like to make some things clear about just what, and it's a very disarming thing. And this is used many, many times, in Jude 3, for instance, the one that we gave earlier, contending earnestly for the faith, you don't have to look this up, but in Jude 32, it speaks about God having mercy on the doubters, having mercy on doubters, in other words, this is an act of mercy, apologetics is an act of mercy, it is not required, but it is made there just in case, it's always giving the extra little, going the extra mile, making plain what the real facts are.

And the key verse I want you to look at with me, we'll throw one more in, Titus 1, 9-11, let's look at that one first, again, all of these are verses that define and describe this kind of apologetic. Somebody want to read this out, Titus 1, these are what bishops ought to be like, or those who are leaders in the church, somebody got it, in a nice, loud, clear, stentorian voice, who's going to go for it, keep going, so that's another function of apologetics, to stop the social destruction that comes when truth, untruth is taught, it is a function of apologetics to do that, a person gets up and says, hey, this is a bunch of baloney, you don't need to listen to God or any of this kind of stuff, it's just a bunch of stuff, see apologetics is to stop that from spreading, it comes out and says, listen, this is an answer for that, and it stops them out.

Now, look at the key verse in apologetics, and that's 1 Peter 3, 15, this is a command, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, set Him apart in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, that is a basic command on apologetics, be ready God says, at any time to give an answer to every man, a reason of the hope that is within you, you've got something inside your life, now you must be ready to tell and share that with people, and notice some things about it, first, the idea of asking, this is ordinary conversation, just somebody asking a question, how come you're so happy, or something like that, in that apologetics comes into advance, to every man, this is comprehensive and general, it doesn't

matter who you run into, it can be the drunk on the street, it can be a high level cult member, it can be whatever, we're talking about every man, general and comprehensive, command of God, be ready to do this, and then, how do you do that, how do you give an answer to every man, how do you give this reason for the hope that is within you, not the content of that thing, but in what attitude is it to be given, meekness and fear, now what does meekness mean, a yielded will, a servant heart, that's basic meaning of meekness, we'd say this, without arrogance and without self-acetation, not an arrogant, I'll show you why I'm right and you're wrong, see that's not the way you do it, servant's heart, bottom line, servant's heart, I am here to serve God and man, I'm not here to prove I'm right,

I'm not here to prove that I'm the hottest thing coming down the road, I'm here simply to serve man and to serve God, that's what we're to be, secondly in fear, what does that mean, due respect and reverence towards man, in other words, to treat people as creations made in the image of God, with due respect to

them, you treat a person like a person, you don't treat them as an enemy or as something to be fought against, now that's a real challenge there because the very nature of apologetics means a defense, but how do you defend, you defend like Jesus did and with fear, proper awe before God and reverence before God, you're watching what is said because you've got a fear of the Lord in your own life, it's the beginning of wisdom, when Josh McDowell debated Ahmed Didak, who was a top

Muslim apologeticist in South Africa a few years ago, he spent a year studying Islamic thought forms before he did it, because he said he never likes to go into a debate unless he knows his opponent's position better than the opponent does, and he spent a solid year after being challenged to that debate before he went, but what I found interesting in his testimony, I have it here if any of you are interested in listening to it, I found most interesting is that the major prayer that he prayed was that one, he would get a chance to simply give his testimony to all those X thousand students that gathered to hear that debate in South Africa, that he would simply get a chance to present the gospel to them and share his testimony and mostly that the man that he was debating would feel that he

was really loved by him and that was exactly the consequences of that thing.

As a matter of fact, Didak's brother mentioned in a radio interview afterwards that that man really loved him, which was a tremendous statement. See, the person that you give these facts to must feel that they are loved and valued and that's the reason why you're giving it to them, it is not a, I am the guru and you are the grasshopper and you will listen to the great erudition with which I am sharing these things. See, the great danger, there's a great danger in truth and you need to know what it is, the danger is that knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

Now I want to give you this thing concerning the way that truth comes because it actually pinpoints one of the major battles we have in the western world when we present the gospel. When, some years ago I was asked to do a tract on counseling cults and most tracts on cults that you pick up will be basically this, there will be tracts that show what the cult believes, content of the thought form, and what the Bible says, in other words, they don't believe the Trinity but the Bible says there is one, they don't believe that Jesus was God but the Bible says he is. And that's fine, that involves actually part of apologetics, scriptures, truth, but the question I was more interested in is why does a person get into deception in the first place? How come the person got into that thing? Now if it is true that intellectual deception follows moral rejection, what we said in the last session we were looking at, then there must be some reasons why they predispose people to deception.

And I found a neat thing and I pass it on to you now, which has nothing really to do with the content of what is believed but the way that truth is accepted. In the biblical order of receiving truth is like this, revelation, practical obedience, and then illumination. That's a biblical order.

I won't go into the details on this except to say that even the scriptures are written like this. The Old Testament is written in Hebrew, which is a language that is very easy to declare and it's a very practical language. Hebrew is not a philosophical language, it is a language of speaking and action, it's a power language.

It expresses, you can of course do philosophy in any language, but this is a language of action, of speaking and action, it's a revelation service thing. Greek is a tremendous language for describing things and defining things. It's a very rich language, it has all kinds of words that can do subtle little definitions and I think it's divine order again that the scriptures came in this order.

For instance, it is easy to say in Hebrew, go and get a donkey. You know what a donkey is? Get one, that's it. If you want to describe donkeys and really get into the philosophy of donkeys then you go to Greek.

But this order I believe is a fundamental order, it goes like this. We could simplify it and say revelation means God speaks. In the biblical world view, this comes out of the infinite to the finite, in other words we'll never know what is ultimately true unless it is revealed to us.

In Christianity we can test that which is revealed, we'll never be exhausted of what we have, but it is testable, testable by everything else we know. These are facts which can be tested, but they'll all be shown to us. We'll never be able to comprehend the infinite.

That's why it's stupid to call yourself an atheist. I mean if you say an atheist, there is no God, that is a very omniscient statement. You'd have to be very, very smart to say that, in fact you'd have to be God to say it.

The dumb Mickey Mouse way of doing that is just draw a big circle and say this circle represents all you know and then put a little dot in the circle and you ask him, do you know everything? Most of them will say no, though a few will say yes I do, I am, in which case you put them in a rubber walled room. But you put that little dot there and the smaller the dot, the more pride pricking it becomes. You say this dot represents all you know.

Is it possible that God could exist in this part of the circle you know nothing at all about? In which case the person is not an atheist but an agnostic, which means I don't know, the literal translation is stupid. See most people are not really atheists, the really cool atheists will say well you know is it possible that God does not exist in this? Yes it is. That's why we said there is no 100% proof, what we are dealing with is sufficient evidence that within the dot of our understanding we can gather enough evidence, though you'll never be able to get the whole thing.

Christian truth is not exhaustive. Francis Schofield uses the illustration of kids with a bunch of strings from a bunch of balloons. The balloons go up way, way up and you can get your fat little hand around the strings.

You won't get all of the balloons but you will get your hand around the strings you see and if you follow those strings up you'll hit the balloons. It's just that we're hitting something here that you can grow in forever. You can never say now I have arrived.

Here's the apostle Paul, he gets saved by Jesus. Just before they cut his head off here's one of his final statements, that I might know him. Now that's the nature of this.

We have an infinite God revealing himself down to the finite like this. Now revelation, that's God speaks, practical service, this means you do it. That's really the way God works.

He speaks, you obey. The third one, illumination, just simply goes like this. He explains it.

We always add this one, maybe. Why maybe? Because he is not under obligation to explain everything that he does, does he? Basically because our one pinhead brain cell may not be able to handle all of the things that are going on in God's mind. Why does he have to explain everything to us? And genuine faith means this.

God speaks, we do it. Just because we do have a right to ask, is it really God? Is he really speaking to me? But once that is established, it is God, he is really speaking, we'll have to ask questions there. It's not blind.

Then our next thing is not what does he mean by it or why is he saying it? But when am I supposed to do this? And how? That's a Christian reply. The why may come later, but God loves doing this. The reason why he loves doing it is simply this.

He loves for you to trust him on the basis of the declaration of his own testimony. The whole of scripture works like that. God declares, this is what I'm like, trust me, follow me.

When you do it, later on he may explain some of the reasons why he said it. Now this develops and confirms faith. It leads you to believe that God is to be trusted, that later on, and really the task of apologetics is down here.

You see, we are defining and clarifying, we're explaining things. It doesn't go this way. In the Western world, if we do it this way, here's what Charles Finney said 150 years ago.

I've been led more to consider the importance of holding forth facts as such till they are believed as facts, and then from time to time explaining their philosophy. I've called this divine order and truth. This develops and strengthens faith.

It leads him to believe that God is to be trusted and that whatever he says is to be received barely on the authority of his own testimony. Indeed, it is easy to see the gospel should be presented and received in this way. This is the manner in which the Bible everywhere presents it.

First, receive the facts as facts simply because God affirms them. Afterwards, explain such as can be explained and comprehended for the edification and growth and knowledge of God's dear children. But reverse the process and you will find that professed converts really have no faith and will wholly reject or hold very loosely and doubtfully every declared fact or doctrine of the Bible which does not admit a clear philosophical analysis and explanation.

Their growth is not truly Christian growth, it is rather philosophical growth and often pride and egotism are its most prominent characteristics. Now, what Finney is saying here, and if anybody was a thinking preacher, Finney was, he took 300 lawyers in the New York State Bar and for a week presented the gospel to them as a case, an apologetic in other words. He laid out the case for the gospel like a ... and when you've got 300 lawyers, we're not talking about your average ditch digging guy who has never thought about anything.

We're talking about people who are expert at harrying and saying, ah, that's a false premise and, you know, tracking it down and giving you 400 reasons why they shouldn't be saved. 150 of them, half of them committed their lives to Jesus, including the state judge who was the first one to get saved. So we're talking about a man who understood the power of a clear, logical, passionate presentation of the gospel.

It was Charles Finney who gave this tremendous insight. He said, if you explain too much before you bring a person up to truth, what you'll do is create a cynicism and a rationalism and a philosophical thing and not a genuinely Christian thing. Now we are looking then at some of the reasons why the gospel is the way it is.

But you have to understand, it is not the same as the proclamation of the gospel. It is a definition, it is a clarification. Sometimes facts can be part of this.

We are showing, for instance, in apologetics, revelation. We are dealing with revelation from nature, we are dealing with supernatural revelation. For instance, when you talk to a person, let's just step right out of the realm of arguments and just go like this.

If you're talking to a person and God gives you a word of knowledge about that person and you say, you know what your problem is? You had this girlfriend, her name was Jane, and she dropped you five years ago and that's the reason why you're hurt today. What is that? That is not down here. That is up here.

All true preaching or apologetics is revelation. Whether you understand that revelation or not is the point of apologetics. You may understand why the heavens declare the glory of God.

You may understand something about those gifts in operation. That's fine. That's because you say, the person that you're giving to, the real speaking of God comes by revelation.

So in apologetics, we study revelation. We study what kinds of revelation are available to us. In this particular branch, we're looking at just what nature testifies in the supernatural fact of the scriptures of Christ and history.

The spiritual gifts are likewise an own kind of an apologetic. The miracles are an apologetic. You see something that does not fit at all into your secular, rationalistic, materialistic world view.

Reverse the process and you'll come up with a generation that is cynical, rationalistic, fault finding, critical, that holds very loosely to anything they can't rationally explain. Charles Finney said that, and he said that at the end of a life that had seen some amazing spiritual awakenings, having led to the Lord over half a million people himself personally and seen another three million come to the Lord as an indirect result of his ministry and lived in spiritual awakening, genuine revival. This guy was no theoretical theologian sitting on an armchair in a university speaking great words of profundity and never saw anything.

He was a guy who actually lived in miracle. Matter of fact, the original version of his autobiography was heavily edited of many of the supernatural things that happened because it was hard enough for people to even believe what he preached, let alone what he experienced. Matter of fact, what's interesting is I have a friend whose grandmother heard Charles Finney preach when she was a little girl and she said when he was a pastor, she said sometimes Brother Finney would be so overwhelmed speaking of the glories of Jesus that he would go talking in some other language nobody understood what it was for about five minutes and then he would catch himself and apologize and then go on and nobody knew what it was.

There were people who had Hebrew and Greek and it wasn't any of those and I don't know what it was either but he saw some incredible things happen in his life. This is a very important thing because in the western world our entire way of presenting things is always the reverse of this. We illuminate, we inform, then we ask people to commit themselves if they've got enough information and data on it and then we hope they become spiritual.

But the biblical order is the actual reverse. I believe when young people with a Christian background go into a secular university, the thing they have to watch out for is not the content of what they get, half so much. You know people say, well they get blown away, they learned evolutionist, that's baloney, I went to a secular university, I wasn't blown away by the junk they told me about.

What does blow you away is this reversal. You pick up the opposite of the way God teaches. You believe after a while that he's going to explain everything to you before you'll do it and he just doesn't work like that.

Matter of fact if we graph this, and this is uniquely true of the western world, sorry about that, if we made a graph of this and we put up here no and we put down here obey, and we took as a scripture, go in grace and in knowledge, see, then a perfect Christian life would be a 45 degree angle up from there. In other words for every increment in revelation, everything God shows you, there'd be a corresponding increment in obedience. God speaks, we obey.

God speaks, we obey. Line on line, precept on precept, see, so it'd be a 45 degree up. Now in actual practice, here's what it looks like in the west.

First you, you know, God speaks to you in the middle of a message or something and you do it, yay, you get saved, you make it, alright, here you are, alright. Now you go to a bible study. This is on the second coming and you learn this much, haven't had a chance to do anything about it yet but you're going to get to it.

Then Sunday morning there's a study on angelology. And then you have Sunday night, the meaning of the color of the third thread in the tabernacle curtain and its relationship to the millennium. And at the end, at the end of three years, this graph goes completely through the ceiling and up 14 stories.

The obedience has moved about two inches this way, do you see? Our problem in the western world is we're very into knowledge and facts and categorizing, I mean that's it. The whole western tradition, and that includes India with its long and distinguished history of philosophy, Greece with its same kind of distinguished philosophy, that is the western tradition, the philosophical categorization, the understanding thing, that's what we're really into. The great danger of it is found in the book of James.

Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only. And if you are hearers and not doers, what does the scripture say will happen to you? Deceiving your own selves. Now if you're self-deceived, you believe that you're right when you're actually wrong.

And if you deceived yourself, then it's only a short step for you to deceive other people. So that blindness in the darkness in a person's life, philosophical darkness, comes from a lack of obedience to what is already known. And that's why we said earlier that people aren't saved just by knowing something.

They must commit themselves to what they know. It's not enough to know what is true. It's not enough to understand what is true.

One must commit oneself to what is true, for conversion does not take place. Now why have we said that the servant of the Lord must not strive, as the scripture says, but meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves. That meekness again, what is meekness? A servant's heart.

What's our order? Revelation, practical service, God speaks, you do it, you become His servant, and then illumination. I give you that because I think one of the hindrances to revival in the Western world is knowledge that is not obeyed. As a matter of fact, the Welsh revival really came to a group of people who had tons and tons of teaching but no experiences.

And there was very little teaching in the Welsh revival at all. It was mostly testimony and worship. Now what is the danger of no teaching? Is there a danger in it? I say this to you because as Western people, when we suddenly discover that there's another whole way of preaching the gospel, and that's power and supernatural gifts, we freak out and we go the other direction.

Glory! We don't have to think anymore and we buzz over to there. And we forget who Jesus was. He was the Word.

He was the mind. He was the one who said you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind. That isn't in the Old Testament.

He put it in. And strength. And your neighbour is yourself.

He's called the wisdom of God. We forget that the one who had the power was the one who put the worlds together. What is the danger of experience without facts? The Welsh revival is a classic example.

You know what wiped out the Welsh revival? Deception. Spiritual deception. People were not prepared for the subtlety of the enemy when he came in presenting counterfeit experiences, counterfeit miracles.

They didn't have the groundwork to handle it. John Wimber talks about and analyzes various healing ministries. The thing that destroyed the effectiveness of some of the most powerful healing ministries in modern times was that the people did not have the grounding.

They didn't have the theological underpinnings or the biblical grounding to be able to handle deception. And that those ministries which had the greatest and most lasting impact were ones where the people had both the training in the scriptures and they knew what truth looked like objectively so that when the power came, and I think John Wimber is a classic example of that. John Wimber is not a stupid man.

The reason why he's listened to so much is because he knows what he's talking about and not just by experience. He has a theology, a dominion theology, a kingdom theology, and as a matter of fact the way he came to this was up through that. He wanted theological reasons for what he did and wouldn't work out of those.

And though he's got a Quaker roots, you know, a fourth generation Quaker roots, he didn't inherit much from his Quaker tradition because he became basically pagan into the kingdom. See that? It's not an either or. It is not a miracles or apologetics.

This is part of apologetics. Miraculous is another way God reveals. And the whole thing, you get the whole thing, as a matter of fact it may be interesting for you to study church history and see how many young people from Pentecostal backgrounds dropped out of the Christian church who lived in an atmosphere of miracles but never had any answers for what some of their questions were.

Do you see that? And I can point you in the other way to young people from other traditions in the church who had all kinds of answers but never saw any miracles and dropped out too. So what do we do? You know, we get the facts thing and we get the experience thing. And what happens in the first generation has both of these in unity.

That's a generation experiences awakening. They've got reasons for what they do and they see reality in what they do. The second generation starts drawing a line, you know, and then some glorify this and start

poking fun at those, and there's a bunch of intellectual smart alecks, what do they know? They haven't seen the power, brother.

And then these guys go, well, they may be into experience but they don't have the facts and one could get into dangerous ground, you see, and then by the end of this they're calling each other mystery babble and the harlot and, you know, third generation and what happens is the kids come from this, you see them, they get into it. The kids who came from Pentecostal backgrounds with that fact reject miracles and go on to academic research. Kids who come from this thing drop right out of the whole thinking thing, go out into mysticism and find them meditating on their navels and consuming generous amounts of acid and do you see that? It is love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself, servant, God and man.

That then is the basis, the heart of what we're doing here in apologetics, that's what we're looking at. Okay, now, can I give you that rejection of truth thing that Garfunkel gives? We'll add that into our little collection of goodies here and the reason we're giving this again is because sometimes the people you meet a lot of times are not going to need the stuff that you're getting now. Matter of fact, I had a lot of fun.

The last meeting I had in high school in New Zealand was in a, was the top grammar school in New Zealand, it's, you know, the Crème de la Crème, it is the high school equivalent of Cambridge and, you know, and we, they, some Christians on this campus set up a series of meetings and the guy before me had come in and had done two weeks of classical apologetics which is some of the things we're going to look at and then they asked me to come in and add to the mess at the end. So I thought, ah, phooey, I, you know, these kids have got enough stuff, they, they'd bring, the local rationalist society in the school came out and sat all in the front rows and all the kids are, well I'm not into, you know, that, they were there, that whole bunch and I thought, ah, phooey on this man, I'm just going to, forget, I'm not going to stand up there and give them 40 more reasons why the Bible's the word of God and they're not going to listen anyway, I'm just going to simply declare to them. So I played a track of, I played a clip from Star Trek is what I did, I played, I played this clip from Bread and Circuses which is a, one of the Trek episodes in which the Enterprise crew beams down on a planet that is parallel to Earth's development and except that the Roman Empire never died, it survives on to the 20th century and people are fighting to the death in gladiator contests on nationwide television and, and then Spock and Kirk finally have to fight to the death on this thing and problem is they can't, you know, can't whip out their phasers and blow everybody away because there's a prime directive to the Star Trek people and that is you will not interfere with the evolution of a culture and they'd lay their lives down rather than violate that prime directive.

So they're in a real mess. There is, however, a group of people called the Sun Worshippers and one of them, Flavius, actually lays his life down to spare one of their lives and finally Scotty intervenes by overloading the city's generators so everything goes out dark in the middle of the fight and undercover in the darkness they beam him out, so that's how they get away and have not violated the prime directive. However, as Spock walks in, he, he says, I'm puzzled, Captain, he says that a civilization that would have been so much like Earth should have worshipped, had Sun Worshippers in it.

He said Sun Worship is a primitive superstition religion and Uhura, the one with the shell in her ear that's on communications and monitoring, she goes, no, you don't understand, Mr. Spock. He said, I have been monitoring the radio broadcasts and the Emperor has been trying to ridicule their beliefs and stamp them out by ridicule and he said, but he couldn't. She said, don't you understand, it's not the sun up in the sky, it's the Son of God.

And there's a siren and it was so funny to play that because I saw all these rationalists in the front row who were trying to take notes on what to argue against and it just wasn't fair to attack Mr. Spock and Captain Cook, Jesus was all right, but not this, you see, and they didn't know what to do, they, you know, it's awful when your own media turns against you and, and then I, I didn't explain it, I didn't say and now if you would only listen to the, you know, I just said, there are two destinies, you can be dust or you can belong to a race that's going to rule under him the stars.

Now you get a choice, this is how you become a Christian, I just laid out, boom, and, and we had the wildest time, I mean, kids came out of the woodwork and then first up came the rationalists, you know, one of them came up and he was mad, he said, I don't understand, are you trying to say that Spock is a Christian, I don't understand, I said, no, you probably never will either, and then another guy came up, he said, well, I have a philosophical problem with this, I said, you don't have a philosophical problem, your problem is you're immoral, and he went like that, and that was it, we had no more philosophical questions or discussions that day, for two and a half hours afterwards they asked questions about how to become a Christian, and I got a letter from the guy who had set it up and he

said, that's the best time we've had all year, now that's declaration, that is answering the reality of the situation, sometimes just by a plain confrontation, I didn't try and answer the guy's crazy questions because they weren't questions, they were excuses, I confronted him, I did it, it's a bit of an embarrassing thing, but he was trying to embarrass God, so why not, I just wanted him to, and he hung around afterwards, which was great, I didn't make him look like a jerk, I just told him the truth, and afterwards he said, no, I want to find out some more things about this, so I'm going back there for three days next time, I hope that Gene Roddenberry will put out some more issues, as a matter of fact, the reason I'm giving you that is to say this, our real battle today is not

fundamentally in the area of content, in the western world, that isn't where the battle is, and you need to know the difference between these two things now, one is called credibility, credibility has to do with truth content, the task of apologetics is to define clearly what that is, what is the truth that we're preaching, also in the gospel we just present that truth, but there is another thing, and that is plausibility, we could put under credibility, which could actually encompass both of these, more particularly for truth content, we could put verifiability, it means can you verify, can you show to be true that which you're speaking, but this one here doesn't have to do with the truth content, it has to do with the social dimensions of truth, which means are you believed when you say

what you say, in other words, do I believe you, not what you're saying, do I believe you, and that's where the battle is, in the western world, I minister to young people all the time, now I'm putting two thirds of my time into this one, and only one third into that, in other words, I want to establish a plausibility, where's the real battle, for instance, those of you who watch television, most of you probably heard of a guy called Archie Bunker, there is a man who is the most effective evangelist in the United States today on television, and it's not Billy Graham, it's not Jane Frobson, it's not Shula, it is not etc, etc, not Rex Humbard, not you name it, it's none of those, can you claim it, the most effective television evangelist today in the United States is a man called Norman

Lear, Norman Lear is not a Christian, as a matter of fact, he is quite anti-Christian, Norman Lear is the one who designs and puts together most of the situation comedies, he is a humanist, he is a dedicated anti-Judeo-Christian humanist, he formed an organization called People for the American Way, to present an alternative to a Judeo-Christian ethic, a way to get up the people without having to bring in Christian

value systems, but Norman Lear did not go on television with a one hour special on challenging the resurrection of Jesus and the inspiration of scriptures, all he did was create an Archie Bunker, who is a Christian of course, so what you do is when you see an Archie Bunker with his bigotry and his, you know, his idiocy, you know, he is just a stupid bigoted man, that is what he

is, but he is a Christian, you can tell by the way he calls people who are homosexual gay faggots, you can tell when he calls them fairies that he is a real Christian, and what that does is it destroys this area, not this area, it does not attack this one, it attacks this one, so whenever the church speaks prophetically and tells the truth which confronts darkness, the real attack is here, they are not listened to, I have very rarely found an attack on truth content, very few people challenge that, in the last year or two in New Zealand we had a program done here in England, it was called Jesus the Evidence, and it was a five part series that was supposed to question and challenge the authenticity of scripture and Jesus, and it was just so micky-micky, it was so badly done I could not

believe it, I was going to do my own one called Jesus, what happens, and they had these German liberals, you know, these ancient German liberals going, I think actually this, you know, and I was going to get a Colonel Schultz from the Hogan's Heroes Guide, with a hat on to go, I actually think myself that most of this, you know, it was so dumb I couldn't believe it, you know, an average graduate from a Bible college would have been able to rip it up one side and the other, but that was the only serious challenge I've seen in the media thing on the content thing, most of it doesn't work there, and even the major attack on that wasn't facts, it was on plausibility, it was like, it has been suggested that, many people think, and it was no facts, it was innuendo, Von Daniken's chariots of the

gods thing, isn't it possible that an invisible Martian really killed this person, you know, we must take into account all of the possibilities, that kind of fubar stuff, anyway, that's where you battle it, you've got to be believable people, and that content is, hey, most Christians don't realize how powerful the content of the gospel is, because they never put it out there, under attack, it's one thing to say Jesus is the answer, it's something else, to have had a couple of decades out there presenting him, and let everybody shoot the bullets they might, and at the end of that time, just to see he really is, I want you to hear McDowell's debate with Didier, that will interest you no end, because it's just a simple, I mean, Josh wasn't healing the sick, or anything, that was just a

simple presentation of the truth claims of Christianity, and each one had 25 minutes to present their reason, and basically the thing was, did Jesus really rise from the dead, was he crucified, did he really die, and did he really rise again, that was the debated issue, you know, it was scary how powerful the gospel is, because Ahmed Didier is not a dumb guy, he's a very smart, very charismatic, very convincing man, but the facts are the same.

So, summing all this up, in apologetics we're dealing then with evidence that throws light that enables the mind to see truth.

Proof is the degree of evidence that warrants or demands belief, that does or ought to produce conviction, and we're looking for enough evidence that requires a verdict. John Warwick Montgomery talks about a man who was convinced he was dead, and his wife told him he wasn't dead, and he couldn't possibly be dead, but he was sure he was dead, and so they took him down to a doctor, who told him, you're not dead, I've checked you out, and you're definitely alive, and the guy said, well, no, I've got to be dead, so the doctor gave him a whole bunch of books to show him what a dead person looks like, and one of the key

things he said, now look, dead people don't bleed, so the guy read all these books, and the doctor said, now, are you convinced that dead people don't bleed? He said, yes, I am, I've studied all these facts, and the doctor pulled out a pen and stuck him in the arm, and all this blood came out, and the guy went, oh, dead people do bleed! So, it doesn't, you know, if you're crazy already, it's not going to change you getting facts, but it's just nice to have them there. Let's go on.

Let's give you this reaction to truth thing that Garth had, and we'll close this up, sorry for all the dust. Here's Garth Hudson on the development of rejection of truth. The light of Christ, John 1.9, very interesting scripture.

John 1.9, you know what that says? Speaking of Christ, this is the true light, which lights every man that comes into the world. Every man, not western man, not those exposed to Judeo-Christian thought forms, this is the true light lighting every man that comes into the world. That's the light that speaks to the heart, the universal moral law, that whole thing.

Now, if you obey that light, you discover more truth. So, we actually did this as an equation, I think this last series I did here, we did an equation, we put truth obeyed equals more light. Truth rejected equals darkness and loss of existing light.

So, it is not a static thing. If you reject light, you not only cut the flame out, you start losing what you've already got. In other words, if you were a pretty sharp person when you were obeying truth and you rejected truth, you would find that after a while you were getting stupider than you were before.

Discovery of more truth, it's Romans 1.19 and 20. If you reject truth, here's where the departure takes place. Rejection of truth, a basic truth, and the reason why it comes is because that truth requires a change in your value system.

In other words, this is a moral reason, not an intellectual reason. If I accept this, I'm going to have to change the way I live. John 3.20 and 21.

About the light and the darkness, he that obeys the truth comes to the light, that he might have more, and that his deeds may be seen. But he that rejects truth loves the darkness because his deeds are evil. And then what happens if you reject truth? You see, there's something exciting about truth.

Do you know why people get philosophically puffed up? Because there's something intrinsically exciting about the structure of truth. We're so made to enjoy things when they fit. They used to say like this, the heart cannot rejoice in what the mind rejects.

We're designed to see a fitness in things. That's why people get into mathematics and spend the rest of their lives just playing with equations. Well, isn't this so cool, you see? That's why people become, there is a fitness and a rightness when things actually fit together that carries with it a motivation for further study.

I believe God designed it like that because you never get bored in heaven. I had a 15-year-old feel right to me. She said, I don't want to go to heaven with them angles playing harps.

She said, all those angles sitting around playing harps. I said, sweetheart, don't worry. I wrote back to her, I said, if you don't want to go to heaven, you surely will not.

But let me tell you what you're going to miss out on. Heaven is not boring. Unlike talking heads that say heaven is a boring place and nothing ever happens.

Heaven is an excitement because you are in the presence of the source of all truth. And the more you learn, the more excited you get. So you're going to have to have new bodies because these ones aren't going to be able to handle the excitement that you will have.

The excitement we have is just way down the lower reaches of the stream. What is it like to be in the fountain head? See? If you were a thousand years old, how much fun could you have? See, I'm not very good at music. I see Phil Kage hasn't even got all his fingers and he plays incredible.

But Phil Kage's played since he was little. What if I had 200 years on a guitar? I could be pretty good too. I haven't got 200 years, but I will have.

See, if I took 100 years out for guitar, another 50 or so for woodwinds and brass and took 10, 20 years on drums, I'd be a pretty good musician at the end of 500 years. And if I took a century for physics and a century for chemistry and a century for painting and a century for sculpting, hey, I'd be pretty good at the end of a thousand years, but that's just the beginning. We're talking about eternal life here.

We're talking about living forever. What would you be like at the end of 3,000 years? What kind of person would you be? Some of us think you're going to bop up into heaven and say, hey, I'm going to go talk to Moses. Hi, Moses.

How's tricks, you know? Share something. I think you'll need a university for the first thousand years to even understand what in the hell is going on there. They're learning.

See that? Heaven is a constant learning experience. And when Jesus says, remember he's infinite, he'd be like me. And you're finite.

There's no end to that. It just keeps going. Why do people when they quit a job and they retire them, drop out? You know, they just drop out and they die.

Some people, they're retired, six months later they die. Why? Because they lost their goals, they lost their challenge, they lost their vision. That'll never happen.

You will never retire from this thing. You'll be retarded in it, rethreaded often, but never retired. You will go on and go on.

Now, if you reject that, there will be that sense of loss. The loss is the motivation for inquiry. When that sense of loss comes, it forms a vacuum and that gap is where philosophical structures are brought in to excuse the rejection of truth.

Okay? So we put Colossians 2.8 beside it. An inner motivation to replace rejected truth. Then you start developing your own philosophy.

This is where all the philosophical fubar comes. Fubar fell utterly beyond all recognition. 1 Corinthians 15, 33-34.

And when you take your self-centered philosophy, build around you as God, and apply it to life, what will happen? It won't work. It'll break down because life is cruel and life is real. And your own little philosophy

isn't.

So what happens then is that the breakdown creates desire to find something else to take the place. 2 Timothy 3.7, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth. Once you reject this base, you'll become a professional student, but you will never be able to come to knowledge of truth.

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