**What You Should Know from CM4 - Apologetics**

Lakeside Institute of Theology

1. What is ***apologetics***?
   1. From the Greek *apologia* ("speaking in defense"), apologetics is the discipline of defending a position (often religious) through the systematic use of information.
2. What is ***Christian apologetics***?
   1. A combination of Christian theology, natural theology, and philosophy to present a rational basis for the Christian faith, to defend the faith against objections and misrepresentation, and to expose error within other religions and world views.
3. Who were the original ***Apologists***?
   1. Early Christian writers (c. 120–220 AD) who defended the faith against critics and recommended the faith to outsiders.
4. What are some of the questions addressed by Christian apologetics?
   1. Questions about God
      1. How do we know God exists?
      2. Aren’t all religions the same; don’t all religions believe in the same God?
      3. How can we know what God is like?
   2. Questions about Jesus
      1. Did Jesus really exist?
      2. Did Jesus really claim to be God, and if so was he telling the truth?
      3. Wasn’t Jesus just a great moral teacher & leader?
      4. Did Jesus really perform miracles?
      5. Did Jesus really come back from the dead?
   3. Questions about the Bible
      1. Is the Bible reliable?
      2. Isn’t the Bible full of contradictions and myths?
      3. Isn’t the Bible interpreted in many different ways by different people?
      4. Isn’t the Bible basically like every other old book?
   4. Questions about Creation
      1. What evidence is there that God created the universe?
      2. How can science and Christianity both be true?
      3. Why does God allow evil and suffering in the world?
5. What primary Scripture verse gives us a mandate to do Christian apologetics?
   1. *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.* ***1 Peter 3:15-17***

1. What are some of the types of Christian apologetics?
   1. **Philosophical apologetics** concerns itself primarily with arguments for the existence of God.
   2. **Prophetic fulfillment** argues that the fulfillment of biblical prophesies provide strong evidence for Christianity.
   3. **Biblical apologetics** is concerned with the authorship and date of biblical books, biblical canon and biblical inerrancy.
   4. **Historical and legal evidentialism** involves legal scholars claiming Western legal standards support the historicity of Christ’s resurrection.
   5. **Presuppositional apologetics** claims that presuppositions are essential to any philosophical position, and that non-Christian presuppositions reduce to absurdity.
   6. **Moral apologetics** states that real moral obligation is a fact, and that the existence of a Moral Law is evidence for God.
   7. **Scientific apologetics** seeks to reconcile Christianity and science in regard to questions of origins, cosmology, geology, biology and physics.
   8. **Experiential apologetics** argues primarily that experience is self-verifying evidence for Christian faith.

1. What are some of the reasons we need Christian apologetics?
   1. We are commanded to defend the faith.
   2. Apologetics helps Christians know their own faith.
   3. Apologetics can help lead non-Christian to belief and so to eternal salvation.
   4. Apologetics can help counter the bad image Christianity has in the media and in culture.
   5. Apologetics can help address the threat from false teachings and apostasy in the Church.
   6. Apologetics can help stem the rise of immorality.
   7. Apologetics offers a Christian alternative to the non-Christian thinking and influence that is dominant in our schools and larger society.
2. What are some of the ways in which apologetics helps Christians?
   1. To better know their own Christian faith and how to share it more effectively.
   2. To answer people’s real questions, especially the questions which might hinder them from accepting the gospel.
   3. To have influence in the public square (education, media, etc.).
   4. To prevent doctrinal apostasy within the Church.
   5. To answer the false claims of cults and false religions.
3. What can apologetics NOT do?
   1. *Prove* *absolutely* that God exists.
   2. Prove beyond any *possible* doubtthat Christianity and the Bible witness are true.
   3. Argue people into the Kingdom of God.
   4. Take the place of the testimony of Scripture or the work of the Holy Spirit.
   5. Exclusively replace biblical, relational evangelism and discipleship.
4. What questions can and should we legitimately ask regarding the Bible?
   1. **Is the Bible textually reliable?** Meaning does the Bible we have today accurately reflect the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek documents? Is there any evidence the Bible is inaccurate?
   2. **Is the Bible historically reliable?** Is there evidence that Scripture accurately reflects real events in the past?
   3. **Is the Bible internally consistent?** Or is it full of contradictions, as is often claimed?
   4. **Is the Bible relevant?** Does it have a history of being meaningful in the lives of real people in real situations?
   5. **Ultimately, is there support for the idea that the Bible is more than just a human document, but instead is truly the Word of God**?
5. What is ***textual criticism***?
   1. The branch of textual scholarship, philology, and literary criticism that is concerned with the identification and removal of transcription errors in texts, both manuscripts and printed books, in order to have a document as close as possible to the original.
6. What is the basic problem we face in textual criticism and Bible translation?
   1. We have no autograph manuscripts (original writings) of the Scriptures, and no copies which have been collated with the originals. The manuscripts we possess derive from the originals through an unknown number of intermediate copies, and so great care must be taken to ensure the available copies are accurate and trustworthy.
7. What two reasons do we have for believing the Bible is the most reliable of all ancient documents?
   1. There are 5,686 Greek New Testament manuscripts in existence today – almost NINE TIMES as many as the next closest ancient document (Homer’s Iliad), and hundreds of times more than most ancient documents that are accepted as reliable. In addition, there are thousands more early translations in Latin, Syriac and other ancient languages, and over 86,000 New Testament quotes in the writings of the Early Church Fathers.
   2. The earliest extant manuscript for the New Testament was written less than100 years after it was the original; compared to at least 500 years (and as much as 1400 years) gap between the originals of other ancient documents and the earliest extant copies.
8. What is the ultimate objective for textual critics?
   1. The textual critic's ultimate objective is the production of a “critical edition” – a text most closely approximating the original.
9. Broadly speaking, what are the two types of textual errors found in ancient manuscripts?
   1. Unintentional errors, which constitute 95% of all textual errors.
   2. Intentional errors, which constitute the remaining 5% of textual errors.
10. What are the most common types of unintentional textual errors?
    1. ***Errors of Sight.*** Scribes sometimes copied texts by looking back and forth to the originals. By this method, they inevitably made a number of errors of sight.
    2. ***Errors of Hearing.*** When scribes copied manuscripts through dictation (that is, scribes wrote as a manuscript was being read), errors of hearing were made.
    3. ***Errors of Writing.*** Sometimes scribes introduced errors into texts simply by writing the wrong thing.
    4. ***Errors of Judgment.*** Sometimes scribes exercised poor judgment through incorporating marginal glosses (ancient footnotes) into the body of the text or similar unintentional corrupting influences.
11. What are the most common types of intentional textual errors?
    1. **Revising Grammar and Spelling**.
    2. **Harmonizing Similar Passages**. Scribes tended to harmonize parallel passages and introduce uniformity to stylized expressions.
    3. **Eliminating Apparent Discrepancies and Difficulties**. Scribes sometimes fixed what they perceived as problems in the text.
    4. **Conflating the Text**. Sometimes scribes combined variant readings when copying, conflating them together.
    5. **Adapting Different Liturgical Traditions**. It is possible that church liturgy (i.e., stylized prayers or praises) influenced some textual additions or wording changes.
    6. **Making Theological or Doctrinal Changes**. Sometimes scribes made theological or doctrinal changes – omitting or clarifying something they saw as wrong.
12. What may be said about the impact of archaeology on beliefs about biblical historical reliability?
    1. No archeological discovery has ever overturned or disproven a Biblical reference.
    2. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible.
    3. Proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries.
13. What are some of the previously doubted biblical references that have been proven by archaeology to be accurate?
    1. Existence of the Hittites Empire
    2. Destruction of the walls of the city of Jericho
    3. Existence of many geographical names/locations – such as thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands in the Book of Acts, all confirmed
    4. Existence of King David
    5. Existence of Pontius Pilate
14. How do we respond to people who say the Bible is full of contradictions?
    1. Rather than contradictory, many parts of Scripture (especially in the Gospels) are complementary – they offer a different emphasis or perspective on the same basic events, without either being wrong or untrue.
    2. Critics of the Bible commonly make this mistake of assuming a partial report – in which one author chose to leave out certain details in his account of an event that another author chose to include – is a false and therefore contradictory report. Instead, if the Gospels all said exactly the same thing in the same way, they would have been discredited long ago on grounds that they got together secretly and agreed to harmonize their writings with the intent of deceiving people.
    3. Sometimes apparent contradictions simply reflect a lack of historical or contextual understanding.
15. What do we consider the best evidence that the Bible has been and continues to be relevant to the human experience?
    1. The Bible is by far the most published, most read, most translated, most influential and most cherished book in history.
    2. The Bible has survived many and various efforts to destroy, ban or outlaw it, yet it still flourishes as God’s work to us.
16. What is meant by the term “philosophical apologetics?”
    1. The discipline that concerns itself primarily with logical arguments for the existence of God.
17. What are some of the most prominent arguments of philosophical apologetics for the existence of God?
    1. **Ontological argument**
    2. **Cosmological argument**
    3. **Kalam Cosmological argument**
    4. **Teleological argument**
    5. **Fine-Tuning Teleological Argument**
    6. **Moral argument**
    7. **Transcendental argument**
    8. **Presuppositional arguments**
    9. **Reformed Epistemology's argument that belief in God is properly basic**.
18. What is ***Anselm’s Ontological Argument*** for the existence of God?
    1. A logical argument that the very *idea* of God logically proves His existence. (*“ontological”* means “being” or “existence”)
    2. The Ontological Argument goes like this:

1. I can conceive of a greatest conceivable being (GCB).

2. What is real and concrete (outside my mind) is *greater* than what exists

only in my mind.

3. If the greatest conceivable being exists ONLY in my mind, then it would

*not* be the greatest conceivable being (because I can conceive of the

GCB existing in reality, and *not* just in my mind).

4. Therefore, the greatest conceivable being – by definition – MUST exist in

reality.

1. What is ***Aquinas’ Cosmological Argument*** for the existence of God?
2. The “argument from causation,” suggesting that, since every effect must have a cause, and there cannot logically be an infinite regression of causes, there must be a First Cause (or Prime Mover) which started everything.
3. The Cosmological Argument goes like this:

1. There is an order of causes in the world.

2. Nothing can be the cause of itself.

3. Therefore, everything that is caused must be caused by something else.

4. There cannot be an infinite regression of causes (this leads to logical absurdities and so cannot be the case).

5. Therefore, there MUST be a first, uncaused cause (i.e., God).

1. What is ***Paley’s Teleological Argument*** for the existence of God?
2. The “argument from design,” or “watchmaker argument,” says that the complexity of the world demands belief in a Creator, in the same way that the complexity of a watch demands belief in a watchmaker.
3. The argument goes like this:

1. A watch has many complex parts, works a specific and intentional

function, and is intelligently designed to achieve that function.

2. Similarly, the world has many complex parts, works a specific and intentional function (esp. the sustaining of life), and is intelligently designed to achieve that function.

3. Therefore, there is a very high probability that the world – like the watch – was intelligently designed by a Creator.

1. What is the ***Fine-Tuning Teleological Argument*** for the existence of God?
2. A version of the teleological argument, based on scientific discoveries of “cosmic constants” which have existed since the Big Bang. If the values of the cosmic constants were even *very* slightly different, life on earth would not be possible, such as:

1.  **Rate of Expansion of the Universe**. If this were different by as little as 1/1060 the universe would either have collapsed or would have expanded too rapidly for stars to form.

**2. Strong Nuclear Force**. If the force that binds protons and neutrons together had been even 5% stronger or weaker, life would not have been possible.

**3. Force of Gravity**. If gravity had been stronger or weaker by even 1/1040 then stars which can support life (like our sun) would not have been formed.

1. What is the ***Kalam Cosmological Argument*** for the existence of God?
   1. The argument goes like this:
      1. The universe had a beginning. (To say the universe had no beginning would require an infinite number of past, concrete events – which creates logical absurdities and so is not possible.)
      2. Science now confirms the universe had a beginning.
      3. The beginning of the universe was *caused*. (Something cannot come from nothing. Whatever exists must have some cause for its existence.)
      4. The cause of the beginning of the universe was God. (Given the nature of the universe and the requirements for creation, the cause of the universe would have to have been *transcendent, immutable, immaterial, uncaused, exceedingly powerful, personal/volitional*, and *good/moral.) (Sounds like God…)*
2. What is meant by the term ***Reformed Epistemology***?
   1. ***Reformed epistemology*** proposes that – while we do have strong logical evidence for the existence of God – we also are justified in insisting that belief in God is ***properly basic***to humanity (like visual sight and the other senses, which require no justification), and that those who do not have such belief are broken and blinded (by sin).
3. What is meant by the term ***Presuppositional Arguments*** in apologetics?
   1. Presuppositional arguments insist that the basic beliefs of both theists and nontheists require God as a necessary precondition.
   2. The argument goes like this:
      1. All people have certain presuppositions on which they base their perceptions, understanding and communication.
      2. Persons who insist they do not believe in God still hold - and act upon - presuppositions that demand the existence of God (inherent order, freedom, morality, reason, objective existence, etc.).
      3. This inconsistency is indefensible – unless there really is a God that has established order and underpins all things.
      4. Therefore, there must be a God.
4. What is the ***Argument from Freedom*** for the existence of God?
5. People insist they are free to choose their own destinies. Yet determinate naturalism provides no basis or option for such freedom. Personal freedom is only consistent with belief in an eternally free and sovereign creator God who has made us in his image, including having the freedom to choose.
   1. The argument goes like this:
      1. People insist that we are being who are free to choose our destinies, rather than victims of determination.
      2. Belief in personal freedom is only consistent with theism, never with determinate naturalism.
      3. Therefore, God exists.

1. What is the ***Moral Argument*** for the existence of God?
2. Argues that if there are any real objectively valid moral values, then there must be an absolute from which they are derived.
3. The argument goes like this:
4. A human experience of morality is observed and is common to all people (or, *moral obligation is a fact of human existence*).
5. God is the best or only explanation for this universal moral experience.
6. Therefore, God exists.
7. Alternately, the Moral Argument may be presented as:
   * + - 1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
         2. Objective moral values do exist.
         3. God exists.
8. Alternately, the Moral Argument may be presented as:
   * + - 1. If the moral code and/or actions of any individual or society can properly be subjects of criticism (as to real moral wrong), then there must be some objective standard (some “higher law which transcends the provincial and transient”) which is other than the particular moral code and which has an obligatory character which can be recognized.
         2. The moral code and/or actions of any individual or society can properly be subjects of criticism (as to real moral wrong).
         3. Therefore, there must be some objective standard (some “higher law which transcends the provincial and transient”) which is other than the particular moral code and which has an obligatory character which can be recognized.
9. Why do we say that atheism does not provide a legitimate objective standard for morality?
   1. Atheism evolution cannot logically explain the existence of morality.
   2. Real, objective moral right or wrong cannot exist if humans are the nothing more than animals, like all others animals.
   3. So if atheism is correct, and we have no basis for considering people anything more than animals, then we logically have no basis for moral determinations – and cannot reasonably condemn rape, or genocide, or child abuse, or predatory sexual exploitation of children, or any other morally reprehensible behavior.
10. What is the ***Transcendental*** ***Argument*** for the existence of God?
    1. Argues that all our abilities to think and reason require the existence of God.
    2. The argument goes like this:
       1. If there is no god (most often the entity God, defined as the God of the Bible, Yahweh), the knowledge (especially as related to absolute statements of logic) is not possible.
       2. Knowledge is possible (or some other statement pertaining to logic or morality).
       3. Therefore a god exists.
11. What is the ***Argument from Religious Experience*** for the existence of God?
12. Suggests that the existence of God is effectively demonstrated by the almost universe fact of religious experience.
13. The argument goes like this:
14. Many people of different eras and of widely different cultures claim to have had an experience of the "divine."
15. It is inconceivable that so many people could have been so utterly wrong about the nature and content of their own experience.
16. Therefore, there exists a "divine" reality which many people of different eras and of widely different cultures have experienced.
17. How is the Problem of Evil and Suffering presented as a logical argument against the existence of God?
    1. God is omniscient; He knows all things that are logically possible to know.
    2. God is omnipotent; He is able to do anything that it is logically possible to do.
    3. God is omnibenevolent; He desires to do every good thing that can possibly be done.
    4. If God is omniscient, He is fully aware of all the pain and suffering that occurs.
    5. If God is omnipotent, He is able to prevent all pain and suffering.
    6. If God is omnibenevolent, He would want to prevent all pain and suffering.
    7. **Yet pain and suffering continue**; *therefore* – a nontheist would insist – God is either NOT all knowing, or NOT all-powerful; or NOT all-good; or He doesn’t exist.
18. How does the Christian faith respond to the argument from the Problem of Evil and Suffering?
    1. By challenging premises 4, 5, and 6 of the argument, as follows:
       1. Premise 4: If God is omniscient, He is fully aware of all the pain and suffering that occurs.
          1. Yes, and God has shown His awareness and His compassion – most especially by sharing in our humanity and suffering through Jesus; and also by limiting the suffering He allows (i.e., Job); and in lessening the suffering by providing healing and comfort, especially by the presence of His Holy Spirit.
    2. Premise 5: If God is omnipotent, He is able to prevent all pain and suffering.
       * 1. Evil and suffering exist as a direct result of the misuse of human free will. For God to remove all suffering would irrevocably compromise human will and freedom – the consequences of which we cannot even imagine.
    3. Premise 6: If God is omnibenevolent, He would want to prevent all pain and suffering.
       * 1. God’s benevolence means He desires the greatest good – which *may not* be the immediate relief of suffering. Pain often directs people back to God; people often grow best through suffering; and – again – much of what it means to be freely human seems almost to require the existence of suffering. We simply may not see far enough or clearly enough to understand.
         2. This assumes physical suffering is the greatest evil, and stopping it is the greatest good – both of which are wrong. The greatest evil is human rejection of God and His love; and the greatest good is in our returning to Him, to love and serve Him.
         3. Our human lives are only a breath in God’s eternity, and God will eventually make all things right in a heaven free from suffering – perhaps even (as C.S. Lewis suggests) to the point of God working retroactively to turn all past suffering into glory.
19. What are the TWELVE PROPOSITIONS in defense of the Christian faith?
20. Truth about reality is knowable.
21. Opposites cannot both be true.
22. The theistic God exists.
23. Miracles are possible.
24. Miracles performed in connection with truth claim are acts of God to confirm the truth of God through messengers of God.
25. The New Testament documents are reliable.
26. As witnessed in the New Testament, Jesus claimed to be God.
27. Jesus’s claim to divinity was proven by a unique convergence of miracles.
28. Therefore, Jesus was God in human flesh.
29. Whatever Jesus (who is God) affirmed as true is true.
30. Jesus affirmed that the Bible is the Word of God.
31. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God and whatever is opposed to any biblical truth is false.
32. What is a “miracle?”
33. *“An event or occurrence in which God acts, or allows his servants to act, with intentionality in a way not limited by the usual boundaries of natural law which He has put in place.”*
34. In what way do we believe miracles demonstrate the existence of God and the rightness of the Christian faith?
35. Christianity is a supernatural religion. Miracles are essential to its very nature. Without them, there is no orthodox Christianity.
36. If the New Testament document are true and reliable (as we have argued that they are) then their reports of miracles must be true and reliable.
37. It can be argued that miracles are not only *possible*, but in fact are *probable*, given the existence and nature of God.
38. In what way do we believe predictive prophesy demonstrates the existence of an omniscient God?
39. There are an estimated 1,817 predictive prophesies in the Bible, many made hundreds of years prior to being fulfilled. *(Encyclopedia of Bible Prophesy)*
40. If the New Testament document are true and reliable (as we have argued that they are) then their reports of fulfilled predictive prophesy must be true and reliable.
41. Fulfilled predictive prophesy is a strong argument for the existence of an omniscient God.
42. Even one real case of fulfilled prophecy would establish Scripture’s supernatural. To make the case *against* prophecy, all instances must be naturally explainable.
43. What are the two broad categories of predictive prophesy in the Bible?
44. Messianic
45. Nonmessianic.
46. What is meant by the term “New Atheism?”
    1. **New Atheism** is a late 20th-early 21st century social and political movement in favor of atheism and secularism. It is marked by an aggressive attitude, advocating the view that *"*[*religion*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) *should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized, and exposed by rational argument wherever its influence arises.”*
47. Who have been called the *“Four Horsemen of the Non-Apocalypse”* – the four most vocal advocates for the anew Atheism?
    1. Richard Dawkins: English [ethologist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethology), [evolutionary biologist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolutionary_biology), known for his gene- centered view of evolution.
    2. Christopher Hitchens: [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) author, journalist, [polemicist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polemic), [debater](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debate) (died 12/11)
    3. Daniel Dennett: American [philosopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher), [cognitive scientist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_scientist); evolutionary biologist
    4. Sam Harris: American author, philosopher, [neuroscientist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuroscientist).
48. What are some of the primary atheistic points of arguments from the New Atheists?
    1. They frequently write from a scientific perspective, claiming that the “God hypothesis” can be scientifically tested, and that it fails any such tests.
    2. They believe science is now capable of investigating at least some, if not all, supernatural claims.
    3. They claim that [naturalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalism_%28philosophy%29) is sufficient to explain everything we observe in the universe, from the most distant galaxies to the [origin of life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiogenesis), species, and the inner workings of the brain and [consciousness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consciousness).
    4. Therefore, they argue, is it unnecessary to introduce God or the [supernatural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supernatural) to understand or explain reality.
    5. Following the example of [Stephen Jay Gould](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Jay_Gould), the New Atheists propose that science and religion should be confined to distinct non-overlapping domains.
    6. They have accused religious beliefs and believers of being irrational, and some claim that religion has been responsible for much of the suffering and evil in the world, and so they claim “God is Not Great” or even good.
    7. New Atheists are politically engaged in campaigns to reduce the influence of religion in the public sphere, attempts to promote cultural change (centering, in the United States, on the mainstream acceptance of atheism), and efforts to promote the idea of an ‘atheist identity.’