

03 Nuclear Strength Apologetics - part 1

Introduction: I want to preface this section of this sermon series by pointing out that I am standing on the shoulders of giants - Dr. Greg L. Bahnsen, Dr. Jason Lisle, Dr. Cornelius Van Til, Dr. Gordon Clark, Sye Ten Bruggencate, Dr. James R. White, and many others who have addressed themselves to the critical issues related to apologetic and evangelistic methodology. “**Nuclear Strength Apologetics - Part 1**” is the title of this particular sermon, and I am borrowing heavily from the material in Dr. Jason Lisle’s book “The Ultimate Proof of Creation” which is on the rack, as well as Dr. Greg Bahnsen’s lectures with the same title: *Nuclear Strength Apologetics*.

Review:

What is a worldview? A worldview is a network of presuppositions, untested by natural science, and in light of which all experience is interpreted.

⇒ **Notice** - a person’s worldview is *untested by natural science* because it is their worldview which *tells them how to interpret the findings of natural science*.

⇒ **Therefore - and this is absolutely critical for us to understand** - the validity of a person’s worldview *cannot be tested scientifically*. It must be tested in some other way.

Example: The Christian looks at his eye and marvels at what God created. The unbeliever looks at his eye and marvels at what random chance produced accidentally.

Neutrality: It is not only impossible - it is *immoral*. And remember the little slogan Greg Bahsen taught us about the concept of neutrality: *THEY AREN’T AND YOU SHOULDN’T BE*.

The unbeliever believes he is neutral - and he’d really really like you to believe that he is. BUT, we have a whistle-blower - God - who tells us:

Romans 1:18-23 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, [19] because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, [21] because, **although they knew God**, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] Professing to be wise, they became fools, [23] and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

So, how in the world do we get anywhere? We can’t settle it with evidence. And we can’t meet on neutral ground - since it doesn’t exist. So, how do we engage the world of unbelief?

Solution: Biblical presuppositions alone can lead us to knowledge.

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

⇒ **Reject God - and you are reduced to foolishness in your reasoning and beliefs**

Objection: But unbelievers *do know things*. Yes, they do - but only because they *do know God, although they work hard to suppress that knowledge*. Non believers know their Creator and they do rely upon the Biblical worldview *secretly* when it suits them

Col. 2:3 in whom [in Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Col. 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you [of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge] through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

⇒ ***This is a command NEVER to abandon your commitment to Christ and His Word, the Bible.*** As soon as you do that, you have been “robbed.”

Application: Do not let the unbeliever ROB you of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Illustration - From the youtube video: “Bertrand Russell: Taking Atheism Like a Man”

⇒ Russell admits in his little book “The Problems of Philosophy” - p44:

It has been argued that we have reason to know that the future will resemble the past, because what was the future has constantly become the past, and has always been found to resemble the past, so that we really have experience of the future, namely of times which were formerly future, which we may call past futures. But such an argument really begs the very question at issue. WE have experience of past futures, but not of future futures, and the question is: Will future futures resemble past futures? This question is not to be answered by an argument which starts from past futures alone. We have therefore still to seek for some principle which shall enable us to know that the future will follow the same laws as the past.

And atheist bit and responded:

.....and therefore.....goddidit? You ask why do we do science if we can't expect everything to remain the same? We do it so you can make your videos. Do you understand? Continuing to do something, as long as it works, makes sense. When it no longer works, then we'll figure out why and figure out how to make it work again. Could you show how one way that god reveals himself? **Please, do not use the bible.** ...

I responded to him:

Hi 74hodag, thank you kindly for responding. The reason we are able to do science is God upholds the universe's lawlike character by his power and providence. God promised this to us: Genesis 8:22 "while the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night shall not cease." Every fact you know is proof that God exists because you couldn't know it without Him. Once again, Russell admitted that in the final analysis knowledge is not possible. Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction." The beginning of the justification of knowledge is the fear of the Lord. You forbid me from using the Bible? You won't relinquish your worldview to discuss something with me - so why should I relinquish my worldview to discuss anything with you. Without the Biblical worldview and the existence of the Christian God - science cannot be justified, reason cannot be justified, laws of logic are reduced to mere human conventions, human dignity is meaningless, and right and wrong are utterly arbitrary. That's what your worldview gets you.

Notice, I did what the Bible tells me to do here. I refused to allow this guy to take the Bible from me - and he explicitly asked me to leave it out. *We must not ever do that.* Without the Bible, we have nothing - we've conceded defeat before we even begin to talk. I stayed committed to Christ - in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge - and then tried to force him to be consistent with *his own atheistic worldview - I pointed out the consequences of his own presuppositions.*

That is the key to apologetic engagement. When people want to attack the faith, we know at the outset of our conversations with them that they cannot justify *any* knowledge claims. And yet, they will stand there and make them over and over again. All we need to do is stay committed to the Bible and then point out that their own worldview destroys the very foundation of the claims they are making.

Greg Bahnsen often put it this way: The proof of Christianity is that without it you can't prove

anything.

For human beings to know anything, there are certain things which must be true. There are *pre-conditions* of intelligibility. What I mean by that is, for our experience as human beings to be understandable and meaningful so that we can function and move about in this world, there are certain things which must be true and which must be *taken for granted* as true.

For example: Think about the innumerable things which must be true in order for each of us to leave this building, get in our cars, start them, drive home, brush our teeth, read Scripture to our children, pray, and teach them the doctrines of the Bible. There must be uniformity to nature and natural laws, laws of logic, and absolute morality.

Three vitally important things which no unbelieving worldview can account for:

1. **Laws of logic** - the correct way of thinking in order to make sense out of the universe.
2. **The Uniformity of Nature** - the consistent law-like fashion in which the world around us behaves. Laws of nature do not *arbitrarily* change.
3. **Absolute Morality** - there are things that are always right and always wrong in all places for everyone.

Unbelievers believe in all three of these things - even though all three of them make no sense given their own worldview.

Illustration: Dr. Lisle used a helpful illustration - he described the biblical worldview and the secular worldview like two very nice-looking sports-cars. On the outside they both look awesome - they've both got fire detailed onto them, spoilers, chrome tires, the whole nine-yards... but you open the hood to see the engine of the biblical worldview and there is a perfectly tuned, 12 cylinder engine just purring away ready to peel rubber. You open the hood on the secular worldview and its filled with rotten banana peels, candy wrappers, chewed gum, and cobwebs. What does the illustration show? That those who reject the Biblical God and His revelation in Scripture *can never really get anywhere*. And if they want to get anywhere, they have to get into the biblical worldview sports-car and *borrow our presuppositions* for awhile.

Example: When Gordon Stein asked Greg Bahnsen about the problem of evil, Bahnsen's response was short and to the point. He said: "My answer to the problem of evil, Dr. Stein, is that in your worldview there is no problem of evil because there is no standard that exists by which to call anything evil." And at the end of that debate in his closing statement, Dr. Bahnsen said: "If there are no laws that are absolute, then I can just pull out a gun and say, 'Ok, Dr. Stein, make my day, is there a God or not?' And if he says, 'Oh no, you can't murder me because there are laws,' well then he's made my day because he's shown that the atheist worldview is not correct. But if he says, 'Oh, well, morality is all by convention and personal stipulation,' then I'll just pull the trigger, it's all over, and I win the debate anyway. You all would not expect me to win the debate in that fashion would you? No, absolutely not. You came here expecting rational interchange. I don't think we've heard much from Dr. Stein."

Point: Unbelievers have *nothing*. They have to *borrow* from our worldview, get into *our sports-car* to even get an argument against the existence of our sports-car off the ground! As Van Til said, "Anti-theism presupposes theism."

Sometimes people are "relativists" - have you ever heard the statement: That's your truth, but not my truth. Or, "that's true for you and not for me." Such claims can easily be shut down by simply asking: "Are you absolutely certain?"

Illustration: working on the big computer programming project - in the final phases, getting all

the bugs out. My coworkers and I would talk a lot during lunch and after hours about spiritual things. They knew I was a seminary student doing distance work and so they'd pound me with questions. These were typically good conversations, but all my coworkers were relativists. And one time, prior to a conference call, at lunch a couple of them kept using that line: "you have the Bible and Jesus and that's what you believe and that's *true for you, but not for us.*" And I was trying to point out to them that *truth* doesn't work like that. What's true is true for everyone, etc. But they just kept hammering at it.

⇒ **So**, we get on this conference call and there were a lot of people on this conference call. They were telling us all of the bugs and problems that were still outstanding and needed to be fixed... so, we were busily writing all of it down and trying to figure out solutions.

⇒ **When** that call ended.... an epiphany, I said to my boss and fellow programmers: "We should have just told them: "Hey, the system works and that's true for us but not for you!" And they all laughed.

Empiricism - the idea that all truth is known via the senses. Philosophers have pointed out for centuries that this is self-refuting. The statement: "all truth claims are proved by observation" cannot be proved by observation, and therefore the statement is self-refuting. In the same way, the person who says: "I only believe in science" cannot prove the validity of that statement *scientifically*. And thus, it too is self-refuting. And this is what unbelievers are great at - creating worlds that no one can live in consistently - and sawing off the proverbial branch they are sitting on.

Secular worldviews always blow themselves up.

The Biblical worldview is the only worldview that doesn't do that. It is self-consistent with itself - it does not destroy itself. All forms of unbelief destroy themselves.

Are all non-Christian worldviews irrational at their foundation? Yes. Ultimately, they cannot justify knowledge. And here is another key point: Because the unbeliever has no foundation to stand on to support himself trying to live in his world of unbelief, *he will borrow Christian presuppositions when it suits him.* And this is what we must point out to them!

Van Til said: Atheists count, but they cannot account for counting.

* Atheists use and live by laws of logic, but their worldview destroys their validity.

* Atheists use absolute laws of morality, but their worldview destroys their validity.

* Atheists proceed on the expectation that the future will resemble the past and that nature is generally uniform and consistent, but their worldview cannot explain why.

Greg Bahnsen said that a debate over the existence of God is as absurd as a debate over the existence of air. Just imagine it, profound and articulate reasoning, cross examination on the part of the debater *denying* the existence of air. And yet, to make his argument against the existence of air, *air must exist.* For the debate itself to even take place, both participants must be huffing and puffing air in and out of their lungs. And thus, for the opponent of air's existence, his arguments can only be valid if they are wrong. Thus, they are wrong.

And when secularists tell us: I don't need the Bible or the Christian God in order to use laws of logic, to believe in the uniformity of nature, and to have morals. It is identical to a man breathing air in and out of his lungs saying, "I don't even believe in air and I can breathe just fine."

What we all take for granted:

1. Absolute Morality - God makes the rules of what is right and wrong. If we are nothing but

evolved pond-sludge, we can make our own rules.

⇒ Ask the secularist: How do you decide right from wrong?

Potential responses:

⇒ Morality is what brings the most happiness to the most people. But in an evolutionary worldview, why do we have an obligation to promote happiness. Why isn't that which is good that which brings the most pain? How is *happiness* even quantifiable? Do we have happiness meters on our foreheads? Point: This is completely arbitrary. It would also lead to us having to condone the moral correctness of anything perpetrated by larger numbers of people against fewer - as long as more people are made happy by it.

⇒ Morality is just electrical impulses in the brain. Question: Why should anyone follow it then. We all have different electrical impulses in our brains.

⇒ Laws of morality are conventions adopted for the benefit of society. "But without these laws we'd have disorder. And without these laws we'd all act like.... " "Animals? But that's what your worldview says we are anyway, right?"

⇒ **Illustration:** Consider a secularist who expresses outrage at a violent crime he sees a story about on the news. And he says, "I can't believe someone could do that to a little child. That person should be put in jail." You can easily just point out: "What are you complaining about? In your worldview, that's just natural selection. The strong kill the weak and that's how the strong survive - survival of the fittest."

Another application of this illustration about murder: Why aren't people outraged when a hawk kills a mouse, or a snake kills a chipmunk, etc but they do get outraged when a big man kills a little child? If humans are just animals, then murder is just animals killing animals. And if we ought to go to jail for doing that, why not throw hawks and snakes in jail too? They are just animals killing animals too.

One last point: Why did the secularist react with outrage over the murder of a little child? *Because he is created in the image of God and he knows that the murder of a little child is absolutely wrong.* And yet, his worldview, when taken consistently, *cannot explain why.*

New Benediction: Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, [21] make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.