

James White, True Bible Apologist versus William
Lane Craig, PART 1

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By Larry Wessels

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Christian Answers
of Austin, Texas

presents

William Lane Craig
Is A Disgrace To
Christian Apologetics
Biblical Theology
and Biblical Inerrancy

with guest
Rob Zins
Author, Speaker, Apologist
Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary

with host
Larry Wessels
Director – Christian Answers

W. L. Craig. I encourage unbelievers not to think of the Bible as divinely inspired.

Over 50% of evangelical pastors think the world is less than 10,000 years old. Now when you think about that, Kevin, that is just hugely embarrassing.

We're not arguing for Christianity tonight. I don't present an argument, a moral argument for Christianity or even for the God of the Bible.

Over half of our ministers really believe that the universe is only around 10,000 years old. This is just scientifically, it's nonsense.

You have to rejoice in my argument tonight and just say I'm going to be a theist but I'm not going to be a biblical theist.

We're not trying to disprove Allah's existence, we are arguing for generic monotheism that is affirmed by Jews, Christians, Muslims, deists and theists of many sort.

"Are you certain that God exists?" No. "Good." "Are you certain that God exists." No. "Good." "Are you certain that God exists?" No. Good.

"...he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways," James 1:8.

Larry Wessels. Why is William Lane Craig so popular with so-called evangelical Christians and is also considered the number one Christian apologist defending the Christian faith today by them? The reason for this is simple: the vast majority of so-called evangelicals are not true Christians at all but are simply deluded Matthew 7:21-23 fake Christians. Craig is popular among fake Christians because he is, himself, one because he claims Jesus is a liar and was not as knowledgeable as Craig and Charles Darwin are. The problem is if you do not believe what Jesus said, you cannot be saved. Craig is in the same vein as Mike Licona, another wannabe Christian apologist with his 80% faith in Christ, which is good enough for him.

Listen to this.

[video clip.]

James White, Alpha & Omega Ministries. It will be very interesting for many reasons, especially in light of Dr. Licona's book on the gospel differences and his fundamental assertion that the gospels contain errors. You remember we went over the examples he gave and disputed those issues. I do not believe Dr. Licona believes in inerrancy. He says he does, I'm sorry but there's no... I do not know of any meaningful definition of inerrancy that he would be able to affirm in light of the things that he said.

And of course, the big brouhaha about, what was it, 10 years ago now? Maybe not even 10, maybe like eight years ago? I didn't look it up but it was when Dr. Licona's book on the resurrection came out and that section of Matthew and the resurrection narratives concerning the resurrection of the dead who went into Jerusalem, were seen, some of the dead saints were seen alive by many, that he basically said that didn't really happen. No, that didn't really happen. I never really did understand his explanation. It's your standard way of saying that Matthew made this up. I mean, that's what he was basically saying is Matthew made this up. It didn't really happen. There was no historical reality to what took place. And Normal Geisler said, "You don't believe in inerrancy." He talked about the fact that he struggles with doubts and that he has his entire life.

Alright, well, it was fascinating because in this video he talks about the fact that, well, his relationship with his father, his late father, who identifies as a hyper-Calvinist. Now I question honestly anybody in his group when it comes to utilization of language regarding Reformed theology. I'm sorry, I just have not found the William Lane Craig, Michael Licona group to have any real understanding of Reformed theology and the history of Reformed theology and, hence, you know, when William Lane Craig goes,

"Yeah, there's no difference between hyper-Calvinism and Calvinism. It's all the same thing, you know?" I've just heard too many straw-men to go there, but in the context of the conversation with his father, he says something that really caught my attention. Let's go ahead and listen to just a couple of minutes.

Do you have this? [unintelligible] Yes. [unintelligible] No? You forgot to... Oh, man, dude. Hold on a second everybody. We forgot to do what we were supposed to do and make sure that the connection is working. So I may not be able to show this to you so I just may have to... [unintelligible] Okay, I can blow it up here. That's something we're supposed to do before the program starts but I'm not in... You wonder what I have to put up with all the time. Okay.

Okay, here we go.

Mike Licon. You know, my dad never understood that he was a diehard Calvinist, five pointer, if there were a 10 point Calvinist he would've been one. He was a hyper-Calvinist actually and he said, "You know, if you're a believer in the Holy Spirit's work in your heart, you're going to be 100% certain." I was like, "Dad, I'm not 100% certain about anything." In fact, it's hard for me to make decisions at times over stupid things like what cologne to purchase, you know, years ago or what watch to buy or something, you know, things like that, you know? So...

Wife. I don't shop with Mike.

Mike. Yeah, she won't. She doesn't like to shop with me and I can understand why. But I mean, it's just the way we're wired and, but my dad couldn't understand that. In fact, a few years before both my parents died, he canceled a Christmas trip. You know, one time he asked me several years ago, I was telling him about doubts and he said, "Well, how sure are you of Christianity?" And I said, "Well, about 80%." "80%!" You know, and it's like just quit and he got mad at me for that and it just stewed in him for several years. We didn't talk about it for several years but we invited him to visit us in the Atlanta area for Christmas and he originally agreed and then he canceled it because he was so upset that a few years before that I had said I was only 80% certain Christianity was true. And I'm a little more now, of course, but you know, I was struggling with doubts at that point.

James. A little more now. A little more now. So maybe 85% sure. Now I think that there is on a pastoral level a really good reason for apologetics to be done within the church because I would simply say from a pastoral perspective that if you're only 85% sure, you probably shouldn't be involved in apologetics. Just that... I can't see how that's your calling if that's where you are. I don't get that. And you see, if apologetics was done in the church and especially done by elders who are to be gifted to have the ability to do the things they've been called to do, then that's totally different than how we handle these things where, again, most apologists just do whatever they want to do and they go wherever they want to go, they're not really ministers in the church, associated with the church. That's one of the major problems.

So I would say on that level if your struggles with doubts are at that level, maybe this isn't the area you should be working in. But I think that this opens the door and, again, we can spend another hour literally on this and I'm not going to spend another hour, I just want to throw these things out there for your consideration. I think we could spend another hour talking about what it means to have assurance, yes, on the subjective level, the role of the Holy Spirit of God, all of that is a vitally important area, but what I want to focus on is the fact that I think you see here a fundamental difference between the kind of minimal facts apologetics that Michael Licona practices along with many other people, the kind of minimal facts approach and what it results in, and a much fuller biblical form of apologetics, an apostolic form of apologetics.

"Oh, I just can't believe he would say something like that." Look, these two forms of apologetic... I've been criticizing this form of apologetics for a long long long long time. You can go back in the archives and I've played I don't know how many debates between Bart Ehrman and Michael Licona from the first time they started, from the time he did the croaking debate where he had no voice, and I think pretty much everyone since then, we've played them and we've interacted with them, yeah, we focused upon Ehrman but we've also had to focus upon Licona because Licona said a lot of things in those debates and we're like, "No, that's not how you respond to this. There's compromise here. This is not the way to do it." And I will not apologize for contrasting methods of apologetics. This is important stuff.

And so it just seems to me that when your argumentation is based upon the preponderance of the evidence pointing to the greater probability of the existence of a God, that that has an impact upon the individual utilizing that kind of argumentation. In other words, as I've said all along, your theology is supposed to determine your apologetics. If your apologetics ends up determining your theology and your apologetics is primarily based upon get the best percentage you can, what's your theology going to look like? It's going to be get the best percentage you can. So, hey, 85 is pretty good. But that's the difference, that's the difference between the minimalist facts approach and how the apostles approach it, and how they absolutely emphasize the centrality of Jesus Christ and the reality that outside of the existence of the Triune God, you can't explain having a debate on the existence of God or anything else; that the epistemology that puts man in the center and allows man to be the one to then coordinate all the areas of knowledge must collapse upon itself because man can never be there. The epistemology that underlies a meaningful apologetic approach where God is in the center and you start with him, and hence can provide a devastating internal critique of any other worldview and show the consistency of your own, that doesn't leave you with percentages, that actually leaves you with certainties.
[end of video clip]

Larry. For more on Mike Licona, see our biblequery.org website about him and read about his denial of Scripture. Here's an example in his book, "The Resurrection of Jesus," page 538. Mike believes there are real contradictions in Scripture. He says they are mostly in the peripheral details, and then it goes on but our article here on our website,

just freeze frame this screen and you can read it in its entirety and move on with the video.

To be a true Christian, 80% or 85% faith is not good enough. You must be sold out completely to Christ 100% or damnation awaits, which even Licona's dad believes but not Licona himself.

See the Matthew 13:45-46 pearl of great price cost of what it takes to be a true Christian.

William Lane Craig, Mike Licona, C. S. Lewis and apostate Hank Hanegraaff and other so-called Christian apologists are like the foolish virgins mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 25:1-12. The foolish virgins didn't have the supernatural power of God to believe in God's inerrant word, they didn't have what it took to get into the kingdom with God himself slamming the door in their faces even though they professed to believe. See verses 10 through 12 particularly.

Listening to and trusting phony apologists such as these is akin to what Isaiah 36:6 says, "Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him."

I would like to note for all you real frontline Christian apologists out there who are serious about reaching the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, that since Walter Martin went to be with the Lord in 1989, when I heard of his death I sat down on my living room couch and cried, I would like to mention to you another Christian apologist who in my opinion is the number one living Christian apologist on the planet at this time named James White. Dr. James White has authored over 20 books, understands the original biblical languages of Greek and Hebrew, has been a professor in seminary, has been in over 150 formal debates against false prophets of all kinds including formal debates against Muslims inside their own mosques in South Africa, is a biblical scholar in his own right and is, in my opinion, the best Bible answer man I've seen or heard of since Brother Martin went on to glory. Therefore I would encourage those listening to my voice to improve and strengthen their biblical witness for Christ by going to Dr. White's webstie www.aomin.org, and by tuning into his two YouTube channels, DrOakley1689 and Alpha & Omega Ministries. Particularly note his Alpha & Omega Ministries YouTube channel and catch his podcast called The Dividing Line in Radio Free Geneva. You will find a wealth of biblical information here. You can also hear him on sermonaudio.com where he has over 1,800 messages recorded on all sorts of topics.

Here are some of the books that have been written by Dr. James White. "What every Christian needs to know about the Qur'an." Excellent information on the religion of Islam from a Christian perspective. "The King James Only controversy. Can you trust modern translations?" "The forgotten Trinity." This should be required reading for any Christian wanting to understand the biblical nature of God himself. "Scripture alone. Exploring the Bible's accuracy, authority and authenticity." "Grieving, your path back to peace. Crisis points." Now this book is very good for those that are dealing with grief and grieving.

We also feature James White on many of our CAnswersTV channel videos. To find those videos that we have produced with Dr. James White, just put in the YouTube search box "James White CanswersTV," and once you hit the enter button after putting that in the search box, you should get an array of the many videos that we have done with James White that our own ministry has produced with him besides all the other ones he has from his own ministry work.

"Evidence that Jesus is God and the Jehovah's Witness New World translation Bible is wrong." This has been my favorite video that I have done with James White over the years since we produced it back in 1994. This particular video has helped a lot of people back when it first appeared on Austin's Public Access Television, and then on the internet.

I wanted to add a disclaimer here that Dr. James White did not collaborate with us in any way in the making of this video. Knowing Dr. What as I do and also knowing his position concerning consigning professing Christians to hell because, after all, I haven't missed one of his Dividing Line YouTube shows in years, I am sure he would not agree with our final conclusions concerning William Lane Craig and he has every right to do so. Please let it be known that our conclusions about William Lane Craig are not those of Dr. James White. Thank you.

[video clip]

James White. Obviously, once again we face the reality of attempting to describe what an evangelical is, to even identify what that might mean and it's tough to do, but a new survey conducted by Lifeway Research released by Ligonier Ministries revealed that 52% of Americans and 30% of evangelicals say they believe that Jesus was a good teacher but he was not God. So that means 70% disagreed, so I suppose we could take that as a positive thing in some way, but then again that would mean that that 30% is pretty much agreeing with the Muslims even though the Muslims will say he was more than a good teacher and Jehovah's Witnesses who also would say he was not God, but at least they believe he was Michael the archangel. I mean, is it really possible that there's 30% of people identify as evangelicals who do not have as high a Christology as Jehovah's Witnesses? That's depressing. It's just like...

So one of the quotes is here, statistics like these from the state of theology survey give us quite a shock but they also shed light on the concerns that many American Christians and churches have expressed for decades said Steven Nichols, the Chief Academic Officer of Ligonier Ministries. As the culture around us increasingly abandons its moral compass, professing evangelicals are sadly drifting away from God's absolute standard in Scripture. It's clear that the church does not have the luxury of idling standing by, this is a time for Christians to study Scripture diligently, etc. etc.

How do we make sure that the next generation knows that, yes, Jesus was a good teacher, Jesus was a wonderful prophet, he is our high priest, he is our king, he is Lord, he is the Son of God, he is the Son of man, and he is Yahweh in human flesh? Do we function in such a way to where we are basically saying you'll only come to know that if you go to

the special classes? But if you just sit in the sermons, we'll make sure you never feel uncomfortable. You'll always, you know, least common denominator Christianity all the way across.

Look, there's a lot of people that have taken that viewpoint. I understand that and if this was some type of a secular educational system, okay, fine. Here's the difference, we believe that if they're true Christians, everybody is indwelt by the same Holy Spirit who gave us the New Testament that says we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit can accomplish that. So we can call people to a higher plane. We don't have to do this secular safe space stuff. There is no safe space for the Spirit-indwelt person, okay? No safe space. The Spirit does not drive us to safe spaces, the Spirit drives us out into service and risk.
[end of video clip]

Larry. Okay, here we see Michael O'Fallon, author of Sovereign Nations, a media site dedicated to the preservation of national sovereignty, and this particular email newsletter, you might say, is called "A generation is lost and our faith and nation are in peril." According to the article here it says, "Although 61% of Millennials claim to be Christian, only 2% of that 61% hold to a Biblical Christian worldview. A study at Arizona Christian University begins with the revelation that 98% of millennial Christians do not believe that absolute moral truths exist which is the primary drop-off of the cliff of what constitutes an objective understanding of truth – both Biblical and through correspondence."

[video clip: "Many professing 'Christians' are Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians which affects their evangelistic efforts."]

Dr. Voddie Baucham. Our understanding of evangelism centers on our understanding of this point. If I believe that man's will determines whether or not he'll be born again, then my approach to evangelism is one that seeks to manipulate the will of man and just to do whatever it takes to bring him to a decision. Whereas if I understand that regeneration precedes faith, then my goal is to be faithful and clear with the gospel, trusting in God to do that which only God can do.

It's interesting at this point. Charles Spurgeon I believe said it best when he said that when it comes to praying for people's conversions, everybody prays like a Calvinist. Amen? We don't say, "Lord, would you please..." How would you even pray? How would a Pelagian pray for the salvation of someone? How would Erasmus pray for the salvation of someone? How would an Arminian pray for the salvation of someone? They pray just like a Calvinist, "God, change their heart. God, open their eyes." Everybody prays like a Calvinist when it comes to praying for the salvation of the lost and yet for most people, they hold to the theology of a Pelagian or a semi-Pelagian until it comes time to start praying that God would save lost people. Even if we do evangelism like Arminians and Pelagians, we pray for evangelism like Calvinists, like Augustinians.

You see, here's the difference. One side says this, "I am saved because other," you know, there's two people who come to church and they sit together. They come from the same family, twins, and they sit and listen to the same sermons their whole life, but one day one of them comes to faith and the other one does not. Well, the Pelagian side says that person came to faith because they exercised their will, where the other one did not. They made the right choice, the other person made the wrong choice. They softened their heart, the other one hardened their heart. In other words, there is something praiseworthy in this one that does not exist in that one. That's the danger of the Pelagian heresy. It gives you cause to boast. But the Augustinian side says there is no boasting. The Pauline side says there is no boasting. Man is dead in his sin and he can't save himself. God is merciful toward the sinner who deserves death, and the awakened sinner becomes an obedient adopted son or daughter magnifying God's grace.

Romans 3:27, "Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By the law of works? No, but by the law of faith." Boasting is excluded. I am not a Christian because I was smarter than the people who didn't figure out. I am not a Christian because I was morally superior to the ones who chose otherwise. I am a Christian by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Back in Ephesians 1:3-6, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved." God did this. Praise be to God for his glorious grace in making us alive together with Christ.

According to some, this is a damnable heresy. For example, the Roman Catholic Church and the Council of Trent, Council of Trent is a response to the Reformation, and the Council of Trent, they make themselves very clear. Session VI, Canon IX read, "If anyone says that by faith alone the sinner is justified so as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, let him be anathema," literally "let him be damned to hell," if he holds to the doctrine that I am explaining here this morning. This is no slight difference. This is another gospel.

Trent, Session VI, Canon XI, "If anyone says that men are justified either by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ alone or by the remission of sins alone to the exclusion of the grace and love that is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and is inherent in them or even that the grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God, let him be anathema." In other words, if you hold to the doctrine of justification by grace alone, if you hold to the Augustinian side versus the Pelagian side, it is a damnable heresy.

Why do I share these things with you? Two reasons. 1. I want to show you that the debate continues. But secondly, I want to show you that many people hold to this Roman Catholic idea. Listen to the first one, look at Canon XI, " If anyone says that by faith

alone the sinner is justified so as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification." What do the semi-Pelagians argue? No, no, no, you have to cooperate. The life preserver is thrown out there but you have to reach up and grab it. Folks, that's a semi-Pelagian view. Do you see this? This is going back to an ancient heresy.

Matthew 7, beginning in 17, "So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." Verse 22, "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" You see, these people were doing good works but they hear, "I never knew you," which means those works were actually lawlessness. Why? Because we got the order wrong. We believed that it was our obedience that made us right with God but there was a list of things that we could do that made us right with God. Jesus says, "Get away from me. I don't know you."

There is one door and it is the door of faith, not the door of works. That which is not of faith is sin. You can be the hardest working person in the church and die and go to hell. Here every time the doors are open and die and go to hell because you're holding to a Pelagian works righteousness, believing that you are earning God's favor as opposed to trusting in Christ alone for your salvation.

The Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 24, "If anyone says that the righteousness received is not preserved and also not increased before God by good works but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained but not a cause of its increase, let him be anathema." Again, this Roman Catholic idea is rooted in semi-Pelagianism. Many Christians hold to semi-Pelagianism. So we actually believe this, that our moralism and our legalism is actually what keeps us in right standing with God. We believe that we're saved by grace but we're kept by works. Justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but sanctified through the law. You believe that because we're semi-Pelagian and don't understand that the grace that saves you, the grace that justifies you is the same grace that sanctifies you. The grace that saves you is the grace that keeps you.

It is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Period.
[end of video clip]

[video clip: John Knox: Exposition of the Sixth Psalm]

Narrator. What trouble Pelagius made by his heresy affirming that man by natural power and free will might fulfill the law of God, and deserve for himself remission and grace. And to come a little nearer to our own age, has it not been openly preached and affirmed in schools, and set out by writings, that only faith does justify, but that works do also justify? Has it not been taught that good works may go before faith, and may provoke God to give his graces? What has been taught of men's merits, and of the works of

supererogation? Some openly affirming, that some men have wrought more good works than were necessary to their own salvation. I pray you, consider if these men said not, "Our hand and our strength have given these things unto us" (Deut. 8:17). What were these devilish heresies aforesaid, and others that have infected the whole Papistry? Assuredly they were cruel and ravenous beasts, able to devour the souls of all those upon whom they get the upper hand. But the merciful providence of our God, willing our salvation, will not suffer us to come to that unthankfulness and oblivion."
[end of video clip]

Larry. Speaking of the heresy of Pelagianism, here's another arch-heretic Pelagian named Leighton Flowers. Here's a clip from the video called, "Welcome to Sovereign Choice Meats," where the "meat" chooses you. The choice of election. Is it God's or is it the person's?

[video clip]

Announcer. You're not always talking about necessarily God choosing something for no apparent reason but you're choosing that meat because it's a favorable meat, that there's a reason to have the choice of that meat.

James White. Is the decision of Father, Son and Spirit to glorify themselves and redemption of a particular people through the Incarnation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God? We have a Trinitarian gospel. We have a human gospel. It's very much human gospel all focused on man, not upon God's purposes. He continues, "Therefore can you say with certainty there is no reason based upon our," what's the next word, folks? "Choices, our choices." You see, I had people running around yesterday, "Well, Jesus is the chosen person and we're choice in him, and you see, you're misrepresenting him." This is what he said, folks. Every single one of you running around on twitter yesterday with your hair on fire, "You're misrepresenting Leighton Flowers." Look at his words. I kept saying to all of you, "Would you just read the transcript? I took the time to type it out, would you read it?" Not a one would. "Nope. Nope. No, you're just a mean, terrible, horrible, arrogant, nasty person."

"Therefore can you say with certainty there is no reason based upon our choices or our decisions," and please note the next phrase, "independently of God?" Independently of God. This is the Flowers, we are autonomous creatures, we can create realities and decisions unknown to God. Again, how does God know the future? How does God know the future in this system? This is the very essence of open theism, that the free creature can independently of God act in such a way and that's why God can't know. He would make the perfect open theist and I think the only reason he is not, I would love to see, where has Leighton Flowers put out a video on the errors of open theism? Is that out there, anybody? Can someone look at the soteriology 101 thing, is there? I'd love to see the video on the errors of open theism from Leighton Flowers' perspective because foundationally he is right there with them. He's right there with them, independently of God.

So our choices, our decisions independently of God, listen, "that would cause him to show favor to one person over another." Those are his words. They are not my words. They are not my interpretation of his words. They are his words. That is the context of the "choice meats" analogy and he created it, and he did so in response to R. C. Sproul who specifically was saying it is God's choice, not man's choice. It's unconditional election. It's God's freedom and he's saying it's man's freedom, it's our choices independently of God that cause God to show favor to one person over another. Those are his words. That's the context.

This debate is done. Every accusation he made has just been proven to be an absolute boldfaced lie. All you've got to do is stop the tape long enough to type the words out and put them on the screen. Stunning. It's right there. How can you....? Pure documentation. Any of you can sit there and say, "Oh, you're misrepresenting him." You aren't living in this world. What color is the sky in your world? You are not dealing with things honestly or truthfully or rationally. There's no way to have a conversation with someone who faced with this evidence goes, "Nope, nope...."

So one more time, "our choices, our decisions independently of God that would cause him to show favor to one person over another? You know, when we ask about election," so he's unconditional election, choices, he's conflating them, "when we ask about election, we are talking about, mainly, God having favor on somebody, him choosing somebody over someone else." So he's putting choice, election, favor, he's conflating all of them.

"Matter of fact, whenever we use the word 'choice,' a lot of times we are thinking of kind of the verb form of it." Well, let's stop right there. Yeah, this is why we challenge Flowers exegetically and he answers with analogies because he doesn't do exegesis. He didn't do exegesis in the debate on Romans 9. He doesn't do exegesis at all. When he was on "Unbelievable" with Chris Date, Date would present Scriptures, he'd present stories. He'd give a Scripture and then tell a story. He doesn't do exegesis. It ain't his thing.

So here's the problem: the only meaningful way to talk about terms like election, choice and favor is from the inspired words of Scripture, not from your analogies in English 2,000 years later. But that's what he's doing. That's what he does right here. Do we hear anything about kaleo, do we hear anything about the substantival forms, do we go into Ephesians 1 or Romans 8 and 9 when Paul says, "I endure all things for the sake of the elect, the chosen"? Do we go in there and look at those terms in the original languages so as to have some idea? No.

No, instead, "Well, you know, a lot of times we are thinking kind of the verb form of it, like I made a choice between these options. If you go into the grocery store later today," now, folks, I didn't force Leighton Flowers to come up with the "choice meats" analogy. I had nothing to do with it. He's going to have to live with it. He's stuck with it. The memes themselves are so good and I am going to Arby's after I get done here because they've got the meats. I mean, I'm going to take a picture. I'm going to take a picture of my double roast beef sandwich. I'm going to do it for two reasons: because they've got the meats,

and because yesterday Jeff Derbin said Arby's is of Satan. There is now division in the leadership of Apologia Church over this very issue of Arby's. Jeff, you're just wrong. I have challenged Jeff to a public debate on the issue of the godliness or a satanic origin of Arby's and I'm going to prove my point today by going to Arby's.

But I didn't force him to do this. I didn't. I had nothing to do about him deciding, "You know, if you go into the grocery store later today and you go to the choice meats section, the word 'choice' there is used more as an adjective, it's describing the type of meat, it's the type of meat that is favorable over the other less favorable meat." Now would you stop laughing in there? I'm trying to be serious. Well, not really. I was earlier but I just had to let the blood pressure drop a little bit.

A. It is stunning that someone with a doctorate who teaches in a Christian school would make an analogy like this and not recognize the utter impropriety of not only switching verbs and nouns to adjectives, but pretending that doing this in English is a valid way of handling the Bible, okay? There is no defense of this. There's none. It's just... It's absurd. If you're taking a basic level, graduate level, under-graduate level hermeneutics class [buzzer sound] red mark right through that one. But this is Professor Flowers who is making that kind of error and it is an error plain and simple.

But I'm not the one, I didn't put anything, I didn't put a gun to his head and say, "You need to say that the type of meat that is favorable over the other less favorable meat." I didn't make him say those words and now he wants it, "Well, that doesn't mean really, though, that God shows favor based upon us being better meat." Okay. Well, let's see what he went on... "And so when you talk about something that is choice," notice now the description rather than verb. It's moved away, you see, God doesn't do anything. God is controlled by man. Man makes choices. Man becomes choice by his choice, and that, then, means that God responds to man's actions.

"So when you talk about something that is choice, you are not always talking about necessarily God," you see, he's still thinking God here, he's still thinking election, the context has not changed. "Not always talking about necessarily God choosing something for no apparent reason," that is, God would never do anything based upon his own will, his own perfect desire to accomplish his own glorification. His God doesn't have that. "But your choosing that meat because it's a favorable meat." So we're in the context of the choice of people here. "There's a reason to have the choice of that meat," because it's better than the other meat. "So the question becomes really in this debate," I think there's only one really, I think I may have typed that wrong, sorry. "The question becomes in this debate, really in this debate does God really favor some people over others?" Are they choice meat?

Now he might want to say, "Oh no, no, no, no, I didn't mean that." Well, why didn't you just come straight out and say, "Wow, that entire analogy stunk. I stunk it up and you caught me. I withdraw it." That would have been the easy thing to do but, no, you had to double down. "Oh, I'm the one misrepresenting. You took it out of context." Didn't take anything out of context, Leighton, and just proved it to any semi-unbiased person.

Now I know there are people out there, they're watching this and, "I don't like how he's talking and he's saying mean things," and anybody who is controlled by their emotions and that's a large portion of people today, I get it, and if they're the people you're going for, they're all yours because they're not going to like anything I have to say anyways. But any honest-hearted person who is rational in their thought that looks at the facts and goes, "You said this. You said this. You said this. Yup, that's what you said." There was no misrepresentation. Period. End of discussion. It's done. Done.
[end of clip]

[video clip: John MacArthur, "On the state of so-called 'Evangelicalism.'"]
John MacArthur. Characterize evangelicalism this way: egocentric, zany, simplistic, degenerate, half magic spell nonsense, which is all the world sees when it watches religious TV or looks directly at the professed evangelical community. This is also alluding to a couple of passages in Isaiah, "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

Take all the supposed wise counselors of Israel and they were fools. All the wise counselors of Judaism, they were fools. All the wise counselors of any nation, any people at any level, and they are fools. Which is to say that as smart and wise as they may think they are, like Romans 1, professing to be wise they are foolish, they cannot attain to the truth. That is what verse 21 then sums up, "in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God." You can't get to God through human wisdom. So I say again we understand, we understand the word of the cross, the gospel is unattainable, it is unreasonable and unattainable. You can't get there on your own.

On the other hand, the Greeks searched for wisdom. That's a simple phrase but if you go back and look at Greek philosophy, you find that it is rather intricate, complicated, profound. Oratory was a big part of it, putting people through sort of mental mazes with your erudition, esoteric kind of concepts were what appealed to the Greeks and they laughed at a God who was crucified by the Romans. The whole thing was utterly ridiculous to the Jews and the Greeks.

So there are some barriers here. The gospel, the word of the cross is unreasonable, it is unattainable, it is beyond their ability to process. That is because they don't get what they want. It doesn't give them what they want. The Jews wanted a sign. The Greeks wanted wisdom. Jesus offered a sign, his resurrection, and he offered wisdom about sin and repentance and salvation, not a message they cared to hear.

This is all compounded further because the people are also unremarkable. If you had a message like this so hard to sell, it might help to put it in the hands of famous people. I think sometimes Christians assume that, that if we could just have famous people affirming Christ, this would get past the resistance but that's not what God designed. Verse 23, "we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness." Verse 25, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." So how do we overcome this? Look at verse 26 to 28, "For

consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are." "Not many" three times. Not many, not many, not many. Here's the problem: the people who are proclaiming the gospel are unremarkable. The majority of believers are unimpressive.

I remember being on Larry King one night with Deepak Chopra and he was denouncing what I was saying and he said, "Of course, you wouldn't understand that, that depth of insight which I have," he said to me. And I said, "Well, actually I wrote a book dealing with that and," I said, "I would be happy to give it to you." This is a quote, "I would never read anything you wrote." Just sheer disdain. "I would never read anything you wrote." Why? Because I'm not part of the intellectual elite or the noble.

Look at how Paul piles up these statements of insignificance. Not many wise. Not many mighty, that is, powerful, influential. Not many noble, that means high-born literally, high social rank. And then he goes on to say in verse 27, "but God has chosen the foolish," the uneducated, the morons, "to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak," the uninfluential. And then he goes even deeper, verse 28, "and the base things," agenes, low-born, insignificant. And then he goes even lower, "the despised," that is the verb that means to be considered as next to nothing.

So we're not wise, we're not powerful, we are foolish, we are weak, we are low-born, insignificant people who are to be considered as next to nothing. Then he ends it up by saying, "things that are not," that's the present participle for the verb "to be, eimi," non-existent. We don't exist. This is the most contemptible expression in the Greek language, those who don't even exist. In the secular world, in the unconverted world we don't even exist. Lowlifes.

So God gave us an impossible message, to preach to an incapable people, and we ourselves are nobody. Well, you say, there's some pretty effective preachers, aren't there? There are. Some of the nobody's are effective in their preaching, but look at chapter 2, verse 1, "when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God." So here's the fifth problem: the preachers are unfashionable. The preachers are unfashionable and therefore they are essentially unacceptable. "I didn't come with superiority of speech. I didn't come with wisdom. Rather I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

They were used to those sophists who had mastered labyrinths of language and Paul to them was a lowlife. 2 Corinthians 10:10 they acknowledge that they said his speech was contemptible. He lacked the mental sophistication, the philosophical complexity, the esoteric cleverness and persuasive words of wisdom.

I told our people some months ago that there's an anthology on preaching written by a scholar, it's seven volumes and he has a section on me in there, and I think this is so interesting what he said. Quote, "MacArthur's rhetoric is terribly out-of-date but maybe he knows something the rest of us don't." He goes on to say, "Why do so many people listen to MacArthur, this product of all the wrong schools? How can he pack out a church on Sunday morning in an age in which church attendance has seriously lagged? Here is a preacher who has nothing in the way of a winning personality, good looks, or charm." [Laughter. Applause.] He's not finished. "Here is a preacher who offers us nothing in the way of sophisticated homiletical packaging. No one would suggest that he's a master of the art of oratory. What he seems to have is a witness to true authority. He recognizes in Scripture the word of God and when he preaches it is Scripture that one hears. It's not that the words of John MacArthur are so interesting as it is that the word of God is of surpassing interest. That's why one listens." [Applause.] I like the part about no winning personality, good looks, or charm, actually. But he is saying what Paul is saying, isn't he? The message is offensive and the preacher is utterly insignificant.

The fallen mind can't get past all this. Man's wisdom, admittedly, can do some amazing things, science, technology, genetics, medicine, industry, arts, culture, all kinds of things. Man's wisdom will not get him to God. The gospel is not available. It's not available. This wisdom is too high. It's in another sphere. It's in another dimension.

Well, you say, "How does someone come to know this?" Go back to the end of chapter 1. How do we know what we know? Verse 30, "by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God." What? How did you come to know that? How did all of us nobody's come to know this? By his doing. Let me take you back to verse 18, "the word of the cross," the end of the verse, "to those who are being saved it is the power of God." Verse 24, "to those who are the called...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." To those who are being saved, and who are those who are being saved? Those who are called. Did you hear that? This is an effectual call. This is when God calls the dead sinner to life. This is a sovereign act.

And consider your calling. I love this, verse 27, "God has chosen." God has chosen. Verse 28, "God has chosen." Why do you believe? Because you were chosen and you were called with an efficacious call out of death into life, and that's why verse 29 says you cannot boast because it's by God's doing that you're in Christ Jesus. Verse 31, you boast only in the Lord.

We're not smarter than anybody else. We're not more spiritual. We're not better people. We're as wretched as any and all sinners are, but we've been chosen, and then we've been called, and then we are being saved, sovereignly, supernaturally. If you're in the kingdom it's not because you had more wisdom than people who aren't, it's because you were chosen, you were called, and you were saved.

So Paul says, "I don't need to come with superiority of speech or wisdom, I just come preaching Christ and him crucified, and based upon the hearing of the gospel, God saves

those who he has chosen. So my message and my preaching are in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Verse 5, our faith doesn't rest on the wisdom of men but on, what? The power of God. What happened? God came to us in power and gave us life out of death. So verse 6, we do speak wisdom among those who are mature or complete, a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. God's wisdom in a mystery, hidden from everybody else. Hidden wisdom which God, what's the next word? Predestined before the ages to our glory. You were predestined. You were chosen. You were called. You were saved. And that's why you believe the Bible and the gospel.

[end of video clip]

Larry. William Lane Craig is considered to be the so-called number one Christian apologist on the planet but there are good reasons for his status since he mainly does not preach the Christian gospel but approaches Christianity more with the false gospel of mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis. See our video concerning C. S. Lewis called, "Mere Christianity, by C. S. Lewis is a false gospel." And C. S. Lewis is a false prophet loved by all. The following is a clip from that video.

[video clip]

Larry. Okay, here's an example from C. S. Lewis' book "Mere Christianity." As the viewer at home can see, "Do all roads lead to heaven?" Lewis wrote in "Mere Christianity." "There are other people who are slowly becoming Christians though they do not yet call themselves so. There are people who do not accept the full Christian doctrine about Christ but who are so strongly attracted by Him that they are His in a much deeper sense than they themselves understand. There are people in other religions who are being led by God's secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it. For example, a Buddhist of good will may be led to concentrate more and more on the Buddhist teaching about mercy and to leave in the background (though he might still say he believed) the Buddhist teaching on certain other points. Many of the good pagans long before Christ's birth may have been in this position." That's coming from C. S. Lewis' "Mere Christianity," pages 176 through 177.

[end of video clip]

[video clip: John MacArthur, "50% of 'Evangelicals' believe any religion will do, like C. S. Lewis."]

John MacArthur. This is another survey, they do them every year and one of the questions on the survey, this is a survey of evangelicals was, true or false: God accepts the worship of all religions including Christianity, Judaism and Islam. That was the question. 50% of the evangelicals said: true. True. Is that true? Then whatever evangelicalism means, it doesn't mean what....

In the Second Vatican Council back in 1960, there was a statement made and affirmed since then by the Roman Catholic Church, I'll give you words from the pope who came out of the Second Vatican Council. This is the statement, "The gospel teaches that those

who live in accordance with the Beatitudes and who bear lovingly the sufferings of life will enter God's kingdom." So it's good people.

Peter Kreeft, Roman Catholic apologist said this, "The heathen are saved if they live good lives and are sincere."

I remember reading these words, "I think everybody who loves Christ or knows Christ whether they are conscious of it or not," whatever that means, "whether they come from the Muslim world or the Buddhist world or the Christian world or the non-believing world, they are members of the body of Christ because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus but they know they need something. I think they're saved and they're going to be with us in heaven." They need something.
[end of video clip]

Larry. But the problem is for Lewis, what does the Bible say? 1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Jesus Christ is both God and man and he is the one mediator between God and men. Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

[audio clip: Laurence Justice, "C. S. Lewis – False Teacher."]

Laurence Justice. Lewis bent over backwards to find common ground with all denominations, excluding from his books any doctrine that might be offensive to anyone, and this to the point that even Mormons enjoy reading his writings. In his book "Mere Christianity," Lewis' stated purpose is to provide a non-controversial theology. Of all things, I never, I could never dream of a non-controversial theology. What doctrine in God's word has not been battle ground for a great controversy through the ages? His theology is a generic kind of Christianity that suits everybody who can in any way relate to God.

In the forward to "Mere Christianity," Lewis says that he submitted this book to four clergymen, an Anglican, a Methodist, a Roman Catholic and a Presbyterian for criticism before its publication. He wanted to make sure he didn't offend anybody. In his books, Lewis also, and this is probably where our children come in mostly today, he sought to blend paganism with Christianity. He had a certain respect and awe for pagan religion.

In his book, "C. S. Lewis, a biography," Roger L. Green quotes Lewis on page 276 in referring to Lewis' travels in the Mediterranean. Quote, "At Bethany, it was hard not to pray to Apollo the healer, but somehow one didn't feel it would have been wrong. It would have only been addressing Christ subspecies, Apollonus."

[end of audio clip]

Speaker. Today, C. S. Lewis is recognized as one of the 20th century's greatest writers of Christian literature, popular with both Christian and secular worlds. Working through his own battle with atheism and the Christian faith, he formed a rational and intellectual

groundwork for his own faith. His ability through his literary genius to express basic Christian symbolism led to his authorship of the book "Mere Christianity." It is widely sold throughout the world today. Though Lewis lacked theological training, he was able to craft apparent Christian principles at their most basic level throughout "Mere Christianity." But is this book worthy to be used as a textbook for Christian apologetics?

In the book "Mere Christianity," Lewis includes topics such as moral law, right and wrong, Christianity, the gospels, the Christian view, and Christianity asserts. C. S. Lewis never mentions chapter and verse of any Scripture from the word of God. He merely mentions the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke on page 118 of this recent edition. He includes the term "book of Genesis" on page 49, and the title "The Old Testament" on page 51, and he mentions the two words "New Testament" on page 82. But Lewis never quotes a single entire verse of Scripture anywhere in the book. About a dozen times he quotes small partial phrases from the Scriptures in the latter half of the book while crafting what he thinks are doctrinal truths in his own words. Partial phrases from Scripture such as "one flesh, being born again, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, sons of God, God is love, be ye perfect, and who touched me." It should be clear to any serious Bible student that the C. S. Lewis book "Mere Christianity" falls far short of being any kind of a useful tool for Christian apologetics, and the book "Mere Christianity" should never be used as a sincere replacement for or even a guide to understanding the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

[video clip: John MacArthur]

John MacArthur. Christianity is not compatible with any other religion and all other gospels are false and damning. If 50% of evangelicals think God accepts worship from Judaism and Islam, that will tell you whatever evangelicalism is, it doesn't even know the truth of the gospel.

[end of video clip]

Larry. Craig spends his time mainly philosophizing rather than telling people any kind of theological biblical truth, in this way by minimizing as much biblical theological truth as possible he can appeal to a much greater audience of ignorant and unbelieving people, even if they claim to be Christians as well. This methodology works for Craig as it did for C. S. Lewis, therefore, Craig cannot but help to be popular among this type of crowd. A prime example of this is the fact that most of what is called Christianity in the world today is either apostate or cultic. Even 87% of what is called evangelical Christianity doesn't even know what the true gospel is or what justification by faith is. Here's a clip from our video on that very subject with Dr. Michael Horton."

[video clip]

Dr. Michael Horton. But there's such an emphasis in our preaching on getting better, on improving, on moralism that the preaching of justification as God's legal verdict in a courtroom really is considered quite impractical by some and so you look at statistics such as the ones that Barna and Gallup and Hunter and others have done, 87% of America's evangelicals say that in salvation God helps those who help themselves, and 77% of the evangelicals said that man was basically good by nature.

Lee Meckley. Now wait a minute, 80 some odd percent of confessing evangelicals are saying that God helps those that help themselves and 77% of confessing evangelicals are saying that mankind is basically good?

Michael. Absolutely. Aren't those staggering figures?

Lee. That sure is. That's hard to believe.

Michael. Now I, you know, you look at the medieval slogan and the sort of saying that they had in the Middle Ages was "God will not deny his grace to those who do what lies within their power." Well, you know, I ask people what would be a modern equivalent and immediately they say, "Well, God helps those who help themselves." Well, does that mean that 87% of today's professing evangelicals are medieval Roman Catholics in their doctrine of salvation?

Lee. Well, it would seem so. Well, you know, there's another aspect that fits into this and it's become so popular and prevalent today and that's the denial of the sovereignty of God and what God has planned for your life, and what God is going to do, and submitting to his Lordship.

Michael. Yeah, there's a... I think it would all fall under a general human-centeredness. We are, we think that we are competent. "Give me a road map, you know give me the timeline series on how to fix everything in your house. Give me the religious equivalent of that." And so you walk into a lot of Christian bookstores and you see, you know, a self-help section that is the bookstore and maybe a few theology books tossed over to the side. You look at the Bibles, study Bibles that are coming out, what are they called? Life Application, Women's Application, Men's Application, Bible for Truckers, Bible for Dentists. I mean, it's becoming increasingly ridiculous how everybody's clamoring for application but there's nothing to apply anymore. There's no doctrine.
[end of video clip]

Larry. Next is a clip from Acts 17 apologetics, a video called "Discussing Koran desecration, Mohammad cartoons, and free speech with a Muslim." That's a Muslim convert from Christianity who is big into Christian apologetics with people like William Lane Craig, and we're going to listen to some of his comments about what led him out of Christianity and into Islam. But I find it interesting on the last clip in this little collage of clips from this particular video, that he mentions that he watched a debate between Muslim apologist Shabir Ally and William Lane Craig on the Trinity.

[video clip]

Speaker. I knew the New Testament and I felt like my reasoning was very circular, maybe, but then later I was like refuting atheists. I would go to the skate park with my friends, this was around maybe 15, I turned atheists Christian. I was turning a lot of people Christian at this park so I was doing my apologetics work and I really looked up to people like William Lane Craig and Frank T. Those were the people I knew at the

time. So I was destined to be, like I was like, "Oh, I want to be the next William Lane Craig and I want to be a devout Christian. I want to go out and preach and bring people to the truth."

So I would question these things over time and I would check out other religions occasionally just to test myself. 17 is when it all started. I'm currently 19, about to turn 20. 17 I started by I saw on my explorer feed, I'm don't know if you know Instagram has an explorer search bar and underneath it recommends random posts. So I saw this selfie and this was when I feel out of apologetics. From 16 to 17 I didn't really, like I was kind of, I thought I had religion. I still wore a cross neck piece, I believed myself to be a Christian but I didn't really follow much. I still tried to live as a good Christian but I never read Scripture or anything like that.

So from 17, I was like, I saw a picture that popped up on my timeline of a girl and I was like, I'm about to slide in them dm's. So I slid in the dm's and since it was one of my hobbies, that's like a natural even just in terms of a values perspective of what I looked for in a girl, I was like this is something I want. I was concerned of like say purity laws for example, modesty, and a belief in a god, so you have a moral law-giver so you believe in a moral law. So I was like that's one of the first things that's going to come up naturally if I'm talking to a girl. So said, "Do you believe in God?" And she said, "Yes." And I said, "What religion are you?" And she said, "Muslim." That was like a shatter for my viewpoint. I was like, "What, this innocent face and this view that I had of Islam? These do not mix in any way."

So I go to my New Testament and I read the four gospels, took a few, maybe a month even but I was reading through but just reading the red letters which I don't even believe in that viewpoint now, just read the red letters. That's foolish. But so I went on to see he never claims divinity, at least not in that sense of, "I'm God. Worship me." And then I went down a rabbit hole [unintelligible] specifically Mohammad, Ally Dawa and Shabir Ally debates with people like William Lane Craig, and then eventually I was like, okay, well, the Trinity's gone. That's far out the window.

Host. Interesting, so as a teenager you were checking out William Lane Craig and Frank T.?

Speaker. Yeah, that began at like maybe 13 to 14.

Host. Well, that's a, those are good places to go. Yup, many of us, many of us are convinced that William Lane Craig is the baddest who ever did it on the issues that he deals with and I know of both William Lane Craig and Frank T.
[end of video clip]

Larry. Okay, so here we have this former young Christian apologist who supposedly is converting all these atheists to Christianity, which is very doubtful but in his mind he thought that was what was going on, and then he finds this foxy Muslim chick and he starts investigating Islam by watching Muslim apologists. And he watches Ally, one of

the leading Muslim apologists, debate William Lane Craig on the Trinity and his conclusion from that is that the Trinity is gone. So now apparently my deduction from his comment is that William Lane Craig didn't do a very good job in defending the biblical concept that the Trinity in this debate with Shabir Ally, and that kind of segues into the fact that William Lane Craig doesn't major on biblical theology anyway. He's more into philosophy which the Bible itself frowns upon, and we'll get into that later in this video. I'm not really blaming William Lane Craig totally for this guy going into Islam and things like that, I'm simply saying his type of false gospel presentation with modalism and everything, we'll get into that, lack of biblical theology, more philosophy and things of that nature, leads to a lot of false confessions and false Christianity, and then it's easy for these type of people to fall away quickly like the book of Hebrews says. But I wouldn't blame William Lane Craig so much for this guy falling into Islam as I would that this guy simply threw away Christianity for a good looking Muslim. That seems to be the bottom line here so I'm not going to blame William Lane Craig for this guy going into Islam but it does show that William Lane Craig in this kid's mind didn't do very well in his debate trying to defend the Trinity. But wait, perhaps William Lane Craig really is weak on the Trinity which, of course, helps the cause of the Muslims.

Alright, with that said, let's go see what we find out here.

[video clip: Is the Doctrine of the Trinity essential?]

William Lane Craig. The doctrine of the Trinity is that God is not just one person, that's called Unitarianism. Trinitarianism says that God is three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Now I think that this doctrine is right at the core of the Christian faith. It serves to distinguish Christianity from Judaism and Islam which are both forms of Unitarianism. We believe that God is tri-personal rather than uni-personal.

I don't think that it's necessarily essential to salvation, however. For example, I think that Abraham and Moses will be in heaven. They were saved but they didn't believe the doctrine of the Trinity. They'd never heard of it, and similarly I imagine there are people today, people on the mission field who hear the gospel preached over the shortwave radio who place their faith in Christ and they're saved who don't understand or have an appreciation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and sadly there may be people in our churches, frankly, who do not understand and believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. But nevertheless, they are believing in Christ as Savior and believing that he is divine, that he's the Lord, and so I don't think that belief in the Trinity is essential to salvation.

[end of clip]

[video clip]

James White. When I first saw this, Phil Johnson had tweeted it, and he had the best commentary. He said, "This is just muddled." And it is. It's muddled on every level. First of all, the doctrine of the Trinity given was rather inadequate. It assumed a number of things. It did not emphasize monotheism. It assumed anyone asking the question already understood the necessity of monotheism, which as a philosopher I'm sure that's the primary thing he's dealing with, but those of us who are out here in the trenches are dealing with a lot of other things other than that, and so we do have polytheists and other

perspectives to work with. So when he talks about God being tri-personal, he does not differentiate between being in person, a person who needs that information to understand the difference between the fact there's one being of God, three divine persons being in person are not the same thing, all of that is passed over in the giving of the definition, and then it's said that this serves to differentiate. Well, yeah, that's an understatement. It is the essential self-revelation of God that is seen primarily in the Incarnation of Christ, his ministry, death, burial and resurrection, to the right hand of the Father in heaven, and then he and the Father sending the Holy Spirit. And so this becomes the center point of history and everything before looks forward to it, everything afterwards looks back to it, so it doesn't just serve to do that, it is God's self-revelation in an amazing reality of the Incarnation of the second person of the Trinity.

So the definition certainly was minimal but you would think that if you're asking the question is the Trinity essential, that you would not only define the Trinity very carefully, you would define the word "essential" very clearly and it was not defined. What you hear is, "Well, it's not essential for salvation," but then as he continues on, you come to understand that what he's saying is that you do not have to have perfect knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity for salvation. That's what he's saying. He talks about people in the church, he talks about the person listening to the shortwave radio on the mission field, you know, that might not fully understand this, that or the other thing, and then he does get into some of the denials but even then does not get to the important element of what the denials would actually involve.

And so to ask the question is to beg that you define, "Well, what do you mean by essential? Is it essential to the defining of the Christian faith itself?" Well, of course. You know, he says it's at the core. I would say it is the core. God is the core, everything else radiates out from that. So what could be more essential than the Trinity because the Trinity includes within it the assertions of monotheism, hence all the attributes of God, immutability, everything else is...the doctrine of God is the central core that defines everything else and so there's no question about that. And so if you're talking about essential as in defining, of course, of course. This is why we can't have fellowship with Unitarians.

So of course, it's essential in defining the Christian faith but that's not really what he was addressing. What he was saying in essence was, "Is it essential to know the Trinity?" Well, I would say on a certain level, yes. Since this is the highest of God's revelation, it's his personal revelation, it tells us who God is. To reject how God has revealed himself to exist is going to obviously put you in the position of not being able to worship the one true God and it's important for everybody to understand this.

If you believe in things such as the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, the existence of a day of judgment, the punishment of the wicked, the presence of the righteous in God's heaven, you're in a very small minority and the problem is people get converted, they only know the one church they were converted in and therefore they don't realize the spectrum, the range of stuff that's out there, and when they find out about it, they feel deceived. Well, I'm not going to be the one deceiving you, okay? I'm just letting you

know right now that, and this is one of the reasons I don't use the majority scholars' stuff that you hear evidentialists or classic apologists however they want to describe themselves, using all the time, you know, "Well, the majority of scholars believe blah, blah, blah." But the majority of scholars don't believe in the virgin birth and the majority of scholars don't believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and the majority of scholars do not believe in the existence of heaven and hell and these are people teaching in Bible colleges and seminaries.

So you need to be aware of that. That means you have to have a reason for the hope that's within you. And so it is very common for you to be told that heaven and hell as concepts do not appear in the Old Testament or Jesus' teachings, and notice how that was framed, first of all, because they plainly exist in the rest of the New Testament and the problem is you're dealing with someone like Bart Ehrman and Bart Ehrman just represents the rest of unbelieving biblical scholarship. I don't know why you'd want to be a Bible scholar if you don't believe it. I don't get it either but they're out there.

So what you'll be told and this is why you've heard me say this before, what do I say the most dangerous place for a Christian is? Christian bookstore. And I call it a dangerous place because as you walk down especially the commentary aisle or the theology aisle, what you need to be thinking is that there are coiled snakes on every shelf because I've just seen it happen so many times. A believer just wanting to know the Bible better goes to some Christian bookstore, buys a commentary, gets home, starts reading it and is just flooded with unbelief. This never really happened and this is contradictory to that, and this author is contradicting that author, and da, da, da. And that's the normative. That's the norm. Finding good, solid commentaries that are actually based upon taking the Scriptures as a whole... Oh, all Catholic bookstores. Well, well, you've got to get your, all your saints and candles and stuff like that someplace. [unintelligible] Yeah, Google doesn't know. So yeah.

So anyway, what you would find is exactly what you have on the screen right now because you have as the background a viewpoint of, for example, the Old Testament that does not see the Old Testament as a divine revelation. In other words, it doesn't view the Old Testament the way Jesus viewed it or the apostles did and so what you have are all these distinct books separated from one another and so you can't connect what's said in one to what's said in another. And so there really isn't almost, there isn't almost anything that is a coherent concept in the Old Testament according to much of modern thinking because it's just a mish-mash of badly edited human documents that has absolutely no coherent message on anything at all.

And then when it says Jesus' teachings and you've got to be real careful here. This wouldn't include John, for example. Because most of you are sitting there going, "In my Father's house are many rooms," or mansions as the King James, rooms. "In my Father's house are many rooms. I'm going to go to prepare a place for you. I mean, even Jesus didn't talk about heaven and what do you mean he didn't talk about hell? What?" And whenever you have people doing the historical Jesus versus the Jesus of faith distinction thing and this is central, central to understanding liberalism, to understanding the vast, the

majority of people who call themselves Christians in the United States believe there is a vast difference between the Jesus of faith and the Jesus of history. The Jesus of history was just this moral teacher that we know next to nothing about. The Jesus of faith is built up by later generations and this is what you're going to get taught. Anywhere you go, secular university, secular college, and sadly in a lot of seminaries and Bible colleges too, that all that builds up over time. And so there is no Jesus of faith, or if there is a Jesus of faith, it's just the Jesus of faith that you create in your own mind that has no connection to the historical Jesus. So whether Jesus actually rose from the dead or not, whether there was an empty tomb or not doesn't really necessarily impact the Jesus of faith because that Jesus of faith only exists in your mind anyways, you see?

So all you've got to do here is say, well, no, I can't look at a text in Job where he professes faith that he is going to see that mediator, and I can't connect that with something over here to start coming up with a picture of heaven and hell that will only be filled out especially after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. No, I can't do... You can't connect any of this stuff together. There can be no Christian theology, Christian theology is, remember Tinker Toys? I had Tinker Toys when I was a kid. I'm obviously getting old because I'm posting pictures of the first typewriter which was, it was, I think it probably was from the 1930s or '40s that my parents had, and now I'm talking about Tinker Toys. "Oh, man, He's obviously heading straight down into the funny farm." But I loved Tinker Toys and it would be this round thing, you'd pour them out, and you could do so many things with them. You know, you could put stuff together this way, then that way. That's what the Bible is for liberals, theological Tinker toys, and so you just pour it all out and you can make whatever you want. If you want to do Legos, fine. I never got into Legos but same thing, same principle. You get to make whatever you want to make out of this stuff because there isn't anything that it's supposed to be. There is no objective revelation. There is no objective truth.

That's why I have sat in this chair over and over again and said if you don't have the highest view of the Scripture, there's no reason for you to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is based upon the idea that Scripture is a harmonious whole. Not the simplistic type of thing you get in fundamentalist circles, but that there is an objective truth that is revealed in numerous different beautiful ways. Remember I've talked about the woven fabric of divine truth, the threads that come together. That's what Scripture is. Without that view, there's no reason to believe in the Trinity. I mean, you can go, "Well, yeah, I've got a traditional reason." Yeah, well, okay, fine. I don't think that's enough but if you want to say so. But you can't say it's a divine revelation from God unless you've got some foundation to it. These folks don't believe that.

Speaker. And says, "Hi, Dr. Craig, I've been studying the perseverance of the saints and I found your paper on the subject very thought provoking." Let me stop right there, the perseverance of the saints means that once a person comes to Christ, that the Holy Spirit preserves them, that God keeps them and that they don't apostatize or lose their salvation. It deals with that whole issue.

Speaker. Yes, that's right.

Speaker. Okay, so he said...

James. I said I was going to tell you the whole thing but let me just point out there is no reason to believe in the perseverance of the saints if you don't believe in the sovereignty of God that results in their salvation in the first place. There's none. There's absolutely no reason to. I'm sorry. It is almost sad for me to observe those who do believe in what they call once saved, always saved or eternal security or whatever else it might be, but they then deny the sovereignty of God in election and unconditional election. They deny that man's inability to save himself, they deny the particular redeeming act of Christ on the cross, they deny the irresistible grace of God, but then they hold onto that last point. It doesn't work and you're going to see how disastrous it is right here.

Speaker. I've been wrestling with the subject as of late and there appear to be certain difficulties with a traditional understanding of perseverance, some of which you have highlighted in your paper, however, I would like to ask about a difficulty I see on the other side. My question pertains to reconciling God's loving nature with the teaching that Christians can become lost or lose their salvation. If God loves his children enough to send Christ to die for them, why wouldn't he simply take the life of the believer before they apostatize given his foreknowledge, that if they're kept alive, they will apostatize? After all, God is in control of when we die and Scripture repeatedly affirms that God loves his sheep deeply and desires none of them to be lost.

James. You notice, what's the basis of that? The shepherd chooses the sheep. Unconditional election which is denied by William Lane Craig in favor of the autonomous actions of man, even though, I mean, I almost can say, well, yes, there is election because God chooses everyone who's going to be saved but he only does so based upon knowing that putting them in certain situations will cause them to be saved. That's why there are certain people God can't save because there is no given set of circumstances wherein they could be saved. I suppose there might be some other people that could not help but be saved because in any set of circumstances they will accept Jesus, well, except they've never heard of him, I suppose. Hm, I don't know.

Anyway, but you have to differentiate. If you're functioning on middle knowledge, you can say God elected someone but that's only because that someone fit into the scenario, the possible world that fits the parameters that God's attempting to accomplish, okay? That's totally different than God freely choosing a people in Christ Jesus. They're very different things.

Speaker. To me, that it is well within God's capabilities and that it is more consistent with his character to take one's life while they are still in a state of grace. My mind jumps to 1 Corinthians 11:32 which appears to repeat this sentiment. If he is able to, well, then why doesn't he? I would love to know your thoughts on this as I have a hard time reconciling God's love with his allowing apostasy to occur, especially when it appears it could be prevented.

James. The answers to all of this are found in Reformed theology and have been for a long long time. There are no answers to this with the molinistic system. That's, I just feel sorry for some of these people writing in. I hope they find those answers somewhere else.

Speaker. Well, I'll invite you to read your answer to him.

Speaker. Alright, here's what I wrote in reply. This is a really thought-provoking question about which I've never really thought. So let me offer just a couple random thoughts here that may stimulate further thinking about the subject.

One way to respond to the question is to affirm that this is exactly what God does, he ends the life of would-be apostates before they fall permanently away. The obvious challenge to this response is that we seem to have good examples of people who do apostatize but here we have to differentiate between such alleged cases and people who temporarily fall away and then eventually repent and come back to faith like the Apostle Peter. How do we know the persons in Scripture who seemingly apostatize like Demas do so irrevocably and do not come back to Christ even on their deathbeds?

James. Okay, so there have been a few biblical examples but no texts examined yet. Where would you go at this point? You've got to go to 1 John 2, "They went out from us so that it might be evidence they were not truly of us. If they had been of us, they would have not gone out from us," and etc. etc. That's where you'd go but that doesn't really fit this scenario so he doesn't end up going there.

Speaker. Moreover, we must differentiate from permanent apostates, people who never had genuine saving faith in the first place but merely a counterfeit.

James. What's genuine saving faith? Again, the Reformed person has, can deal with this, regeneration, the gift of faith and so on and so forth. But if you are really affirming autonomy, then what is genuine saving faith, what marks that and where does it come from? That would be one of the questions.

Speaker. Like Judas. In cases of counterfeit faith, apostasy does not truly enter the picture. So on this view although it is possible to apostatize and forfeit salvation, no one ever actually does so. As you explain, this is a molinist viewpoint rather like the views I describe in my article. I suggested that God might provide gifts of grace that he knew would be effective in winning the free perseverance of the saints.

James. So he knows what free gifts of grace will be effective in creating perseverance and on what basis? Middle knowledge. So he knows that for certain people, if you give them certain gifts of grace they will persevere. So that now has to be factored into the creation of this perfect world, and so really part of the question now is, well, if that's the case, then is apostasy a part of the equation for determining the best possible world. Not only how many people get saved but how many people endure to the end. It starts getting really really difficult.

Speaker. You would suggest that if that's not feasible, then he just kills off the would-be apostate. The implication of both views is perseverance of the saints along with libertarian freedom. An alternative view would be to say that God has morally sufficient reasons for allowing someone to freely apostatize despite God's every effort to save him for God's concern is not just with an isolated individual but with a whole world of free preachers whom he seeks to draw freely to salvation. It may be that if, for example, he kills off Joe before he can fall away....

James. Listen to this.

Speaker. ...then his little daughter Sherry embittered by God's taking her daddy prematurely refuses to come to faith in God and maybe even falls away from faith herself, in which case God has to kill off Sherry too before she can do so. I think you can see how quickly this can get out of hand. Maybe Sherry or her child or grandchild, etc., had God not killed off Sherry's father and Sherry herself, would have become a great hymnwriter or Christian doctor who would help to bring thousands to Christ rather than a single apostate in hell, one might wind up with multitudes in hell instead. When we remember that God's goal is to bring an optimal number of people freely to salvation, it's not at all implausible that such a world would include some apostates.

James. Now, okay. I feel honestly for people who get stuck in situations like this where you missed the turn three turns ago and now you're trying to deal with the map and ends up, it's messy. But when you start trying to force God's actions to be determined by his middle knowledge which does not originate in him and is not a part of his decree, you are trying to defend the autonomous free will of creatures at the cost of the autonomous free will of the Creator. That's what all these systems are. Instead of an autonomous free Creator who weaves the fabric of time to his own glory, that's the focus, not the free will of man, God's own glory changes everything.

So the Calvinist isn't sitting around going, "Um, well, uh, if such-and-such a person dies off early, then this could result in this, and that means down the road this great Christian doctor that was supposed to bring thousands of people to Christ, he's not going to be born or he's not going to be a Christian." No, that's not a part of...no prophet of Yahweh thought that's how God did things. None. That's obvious, isn't it? Can we say that that's obvious? It is. And so this kind of tremendous confusion comes from starting on the wrong foot.

Speaker. What a compelling question and answer there. And you know, back when I was in junior high, I used to just fret over things like this. In junior high and high school, you know, shouldn't we kill our babies before they reach the age of accountability to ensure that they go to heaven? Or the minute somebody gets saved, you ought to take him out behind the church and shoot him, you know, and things like that. You know, we used to fret over that. So you're giving...

Speaker. I think the molinist perspective really really helps here.

James. The molinist perspective really really helps here. [Laughter.] Okay, I never thought about taking people out back and shooting them once they got saved personally, but you know, I get it if you don't understand that God is working his purpose, it's his purpose, it's not man-centered, it's God-centered, those are all thoughts that come from a very man-centered theology and once you're delivered from that....

Speaker. Yeah, now Jonathan sent this to a theologian friend of his who is kind of a Universalist, or leaning that way right now.

Speaker. Yeah, that's key, that's key.

Speaker. He says this is awful that God is a clumsy half-wit on this view who breaks many lives in the making of a salvation omelet.

Speaker. Now just, I can't resist interrupting at this point. This is where you see the emotional undertone and rejection of a view here that I think deserves serious consideration. Molinism does not postulate a clumsy half-wit demiurge as its deity but rather one who is endowed with middle knowledge, and therefore able to providentially order the world. So right off the bat here we're seeing a very angry, emotional response by this Universalist to this molinist perspective.

James. Sometimes the clearest expressions come when you're responding to an attack, and so here is an attack upon Dr. Craig's position and that's where he says describing God, says he is endowed with middle knowledge. Now I was told by someone that Craig either no longer uses or has repudiated the example that he used a number of years ago that God has to deal with the cards he's been dealt, so there is a cosmic card dealer who is the, that's the origin source of middle knowledge as he said, "This person is going to be this way and this person is going to be that way." Who is that card dealer? We don't know. If he has actually repudiated that, if he's actually come out and said, "You know what? That is a bad example. I shouldn't have ever said that. God is not dealing with the cards he's been dealt." I don't see how that, I don't see how he can say it because that's what his position is. That's what this is all about. That's what middle knowledge is. I mean, that's just a colloquial expression that accurately expresses it, that's all.

But this being endowed with this knowledge which does not have its origin in him is what limits his capacity and ability to do things, which then gives the ground for all this speculation going on. You have yet, you had a couple people in the Bible mentioned, you've not had a single verse exegeted, not a single verse even cited.

Speaker. Well, as you probably noticed in talking with me, Ben, I don't lead with the Bible. I lead with philosophical arguments.

James. I'll just play this a second time just in case you missed it.

Speaker. In talking with me, Ben, I don't lead with the bible. I lead with philosophical arguments, beginning very generally. There's a Creator of the cosmos. There's a designer of the universe. There is an absolute moral good which furnishes a basis...

James. So why can't I demonstrate the consistency of biblical revelation with things outside of it? Why do you have to start with those things? You see, there's just an embarrassment amongst the people who hold this perspective. There's an embarrassment about the primacy of Scripture. There's an embarrassment of the fact that Jesus never did this, that Jesus never led through philosophical arguments. Paul never led with philosophical arguments. Peter never led with philosophical arguments. And they'll dismiss all of that and say, "Well, they weren't dealing with the situation we're dealing with today." So they'll admit, "Yeah, we don't have any apostolic example of doing this but this is why we do it." And when you really boil it all down, it's because we're embarrassed and that's 1 Corinthians 1 all over again, the preaching of the message of the cross, the Logos of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness and it will always be, and as long as we want the world to pat us on the back for being really smart scholars, then we'll be embarrassed by that stuff. Gotta stop wanting the world to pat you on the back.