

04 Nuclear Strength Apologetics - Part 2

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

Key point: Always remember the *primacy of worldviews*. Worldviews *determine* how all facts are interpreted. Scientific data and observational evidence will not resolve worldview conflicts. Worldviews must be tested by *other means* - not by science - *because your worldview determines what scientific facts are allowed to mean and also what counts as scientific facts, and further what is and is not seen as a "plausible explanation" of the facts.*

Illustration: Years ago I had a debate with a fellow in my Sunday school class about the age of the earth. This fellow was a well-spoken, well educated chemical engineer and he kept saying that scientists look at the facts and many of them believe that billions of years is a "plausible" explanation of those facts.

Application: I tried (in vain I think) to demonstrate that what you take to be "plausible" or "likely" as an explanation of *anything* is determined solely by the worldview you bring to that thing, or to those observations, etc.

The problem: Question: How in the world can we get anywhere then? No matter what evidence we throw at the unbeliever, they will misinterpret it according to their unbelieving *worldview*. We can meet on "neutral" ground since none exists and doing so is, in the eyes of Jesus, *immoral and sinful* anyway (recall: "He who is not against us is on our side.").

Conclusion: Only biblical presuppositions - only the biblical worldview makes knowledge possible. Now, if someone is willing to admit that they know nothing, well, then there can be no debate with them. But everyone knows that knowledge is possible - living in this world would be impossible if it were not.

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

⇒ **We can demonstrate clearly and easily that all unbelieving worldviews result in foolishness.**

⇒ Why do non-Christians know things? Because they do know God although they refuse to acknowledge Him because of their *moral depravity and rebellion against His lordship over them*.

Romans 1:18-19 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.

⇒ *knowing this about unbelievers is our great advantage that we bring to all conversations and evangelistic engagements.*

Sye Ten Bruggencate used this great illustration: If someone came to us and told us they didn't believe in words. 1) we would not believe them, 2) we wouldn't go get a dictionary and try to start convincing them that words exist. We'd think they were a fool, and rightly so. For some strange reason, people tell us they don't believe in God *and we believe them and then start trying to give them evidence that He exists!* Men are not the judges of their Creator's existence! All men *already know God, but are actively engaged in suppressing that knowledge and all we have to do is demonstrate that their own unbelieving perspective is utterly foolish!*

Only the Bible provides the preconditions of intelligibility: laws of logic, uniformity of nature, and absolute morality.

⇒ **Key:** Every human being on earth (unless they are insane) believes in the validity of all three of those things just mentioned. But only the Biblical worldview can give a rational justification for them.

Non believers will cry foul and always say the same thing: *I don't believe the Bible and I believe in and use logic. So did Aristotle, Plato, and many other intelligent people long before there ever was a completed Bible.*

To which we respond: Yes, all of them did because they were created in the image of God and lived in

God's world and were given those gifts. They believed in them, *but could never justify them by their own worldviews - just as you cannot.*

Remember the illustration: When the non-Christian says things like this, it is identical to the person who does not believe in the existence of air saying to us: "Well, I don't even believe in air and I can breathe just fine. I don't need air to be able to breathe! See, I don't believe in air and I can breathe just fine!" Remember, *we are not saying that you need to profess a belief in air in order to be able to breathe. But you do need air to breathe.*

⇒ ***That is the kind of irrational foolishness (and that is what the Bible calls it) people are forced to say when they reject God and His revelation in Scripture. They are reduced to foolishness and the Bible calls them "fools" - i.e. not name-calling, but describing someone who just doesn't get what is so painfully obvious to everyone.***

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

1. Laws of Logic
2. Uniformity in Nature
3. Don't Answer, Answer Strategy

Laws of Logic stem from God's nature. Why can't two contradictory statements be true in the same sense?

2 Tim. 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

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

For example - Allah, the god of Islam, cannot exist. Why? Because the Koran endorses the gospel of Jesus Christ but then contradicts the gospel of Jesus Christ by denying that Jesus was ever even crucified.

What are laws of logic? Can you touch one? Can you chew on up? No, they are *immaterial, universal, invariant, abstract* entities which govern all possible conceptual relationships.

Laws of Logic are contingent upon the biblical God.

Other worldviews cannot account for laws of logic. They attempt to use logic and reason to support their position, but the problem is: *Logic is not part of nature.* Thus, the naturalist is wanting to use what his own worldview, if true, would destroy. The very fact that he uses logic to make his argument demonstrates he is wrong. Their response: "Hey, wait, I don't believe in God or the Bible, and I don't believe in Jesus as my savior and I use logic all the time, therefore logic can't depend upon the biblical God." **Problem:** Remember, this is just like the critic of the existence of air saying, "Hey, I don't even believe in air and I can breathe just fine!"

Application: We are not saying you have to profess a belief in air to breathe. But you do need air in order to breathe. In the same way, we are not saying you personally have to *profess to believe in God in order to use logic.* But to justify logic and use it consistently, the biblical God must exist and His Word must be true.

Response: "Laws of logic are material - they are chemical reactions in the brain." But then they wouldn't be laws at all. They would simply be what happens in someone's brain. And what happens in one person's brain might be different than what happens in my brain or your brain.

Response: "Laws of logic are descriptions of how the brain thinks." But then why do we need laws of logic to correct how the brain thinks. They obviously *are not* a description of how brains think because very often our use of logic is in error. The laws of logic exist *outside of our brains* and correct the

mistakes that we make in our use of logic.

Response: “Laws of logic are conventions.” If so, then they are not law-like at all. Different places and people could have a different convention regarding logic.

Response: “They are a property of the universe.” Again, this would result in their being non law-like.

Response: “We use them because they work.” This really avoids the question before us. Yes, they work, but *why*? That is what we are really asking.

2. Uniformity of nature

Operational science requires this presupposition - testable repeatable science cannot be done without uniformity of nature. Science studies predictability.

⇒ experiments done today with the same circumstances should have the same result 3 days from now.

⇒ In general, physical laws remain the same over time and space. In other words, I doubt seriously if anyone in this room is going to very slowly step out of the church building tonight because it just might be possible that gravity will suddenly send you hurdling off the parking lot into the sky and out of our atmosphere.

⇒ The future “reflects” the past - and everyone knows this!

⇒ Dr. Bahnsen uses a couple of illustrations. When a child first sees a lit candle. After he burns himself once, he does not reach the conclusion that this one particular instance of flame burned me. What he will conclude is that fire *in general* is not something to be touched. BUT, it is only because the Biblical God exists and has a governing providence over the universe that the child reaches that conclusion.

WSC 11 What are the works of providence? A. God's works of providence are his most holy,1 wise,2 and powerful **preserving**3 and **governing** all his creatures, and all their actions.4

⇒ Another illustration - stubbing your toe. I've done this one. Stubbing toe = bad.

All technology is dependent upon this as well - all of the machines we rely upon assume that the natural and physical laws governing the present and past will *remain the same into the future*. Dr. Lisle asked, “Can you imagine how weird it would be if you went to start your car and all of a sudden *poof* it turned into a mushroom?”

Genesis 8:22 “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.”

Apart from the Biblical God, we'd have no grounds to believe in the uniformity of nature.

Application: The unbeliever has no basis to believe in it, but he must assume it to be able to function in the world. Remember Bertrand Russell - the atheist philosopher?

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.

Application: And yet, without question, this man lived every single second of his entire life *believing what he admits he had no reason to believe*.

Why do we know that the future will be like the past? Because God told us. That is the only reason. Russell said he had no reason. But we do. God exists and He has revealed some of His thoughts to us - everything we need to know in order to justify knowledge, to be saved, and to live in this world as rational creatures who love and worship Him.

Possible response:

1. “Everyone knows that.” This is, of course, not an answer. When I've used this method of defending

the faith with friends, this is often where they will go. Well, everyone knows you are supposed to be kind to people. Everyone knows the future will be like the past. And our response is: *Yes, as a Christian I not only know that, but I have a reason why. You know it because you are created in the image of God, but you can't give me a reason why you know it.*

2. "The inherent character of matter behaves in this way." This is not an answer either. All we know is what our experiences of matter have been *in the past*. And they may not be that way in the future.

3. "Well, it always has." Again, this is irrelevant to the future. Bertrand Russell identified this as "begging the question" - i.e. assuming what you are supposed to be proving. What is "begging the question?" It is putting your conclusion into the premise of the argument. Best example: "I think, therefore I exist."

⇒ I could argue: "I am immortal." The unbeliever might say: "How do you know that?" And we could say, "Well, I've never died before." Some things change with time. *Why would an unbeliever assume that physical and natural laws would not change over time just because they've never changed in the past?*

Conclusion: We can't know anything with certainty apart from "the fear of YHWH." And if unbelievers want to argue with us, they have to assume what only our worldview can account for in order to do so!

3. Don't Answer, Answer Strategy

Proverbs 26:4-5 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. [5] Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Strategy: Present the Christian worldview. Do an internal critique of their worldview, demonstrating that it is absurd on its own terms.

Don't be nervous - this may seem like a lot to take in. But the main thing you need to remember is: how to present the gospel of Christ clearly (and we will do at least one whole message on how to do that) and then just sit back and listen. *Let them talk and listen carefully to them and you will hear the folly of unbelief.* And all you have to do is ask a few key questions and watch their worldview blow itself up. It's really quite easy to do once you've learned to think like a Christian. And do so with gentleness and meekness and humility.

2 Tim. 2:25 in **humility** correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with **meekness and fear**;

A person's conversion requires the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. We can't convert anyone or reason anyone into heaven.

⇒ **"Don't Answer" a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.** Classic example: "Let's leave the Bible out of the discussion." If you allow this, then you are a fool too. And you will be just as much of a fool as your opponent is.

⇒ **"Answer" a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.** Show the fool what his presuppositions, what his *worldview* will lead to. Reflect back to him the absurdity of his own unbelieving philosophy. In other words, you *temporarily* adopt his presuppositions to show him his folly. Think of it like this: *You are going to hold up a mirror to the non-Christian and show him what his beliefs result in when they are consistently held.*

Dr. Lisle and Dr. Bahnsen - when doing an internal critique:

1. Arbitrariness
2. Inconsistency
3. Preconditions of intelligibility

1. **Arbitrariness** - we can't just claim something without giving reasons. Children often do this. The little

child claims there is a monster in the closet - and they act on it - by pulling the covers over their head, etc. But that is an entirely empty claim. Adults are not supposed to be arbitrary. Schools were originally formed to help adults be rational.

2. Inconsistency - a worldview cannot have contradictions. From one contradiction you can prove anything no matter how absurd. Unbelieving worldviews *always do*.

3. Preconditions of intelligibility - laws of logic, uniformity of nature, and moral absolutes

So, we stand in the Biblical worldview and call people to repent and believe in Jesus. Then, we demonstrate that the unbeliever's worldview is arbitrary, inconsistent, and fails to provide the preconditions of intelligibility.

Dr. Lisle's emails to Answers in Genesis:

1. "When are you going to accept science and stop trying to create a new dark age for humanity? Your position is so stiff that if everyone were like you, we'd still be without cars, computers, mathematics, chemistry, geology, archaeology, and any other science. ... Hope you re-think your position and some day humanity can walk together towards progress and prosperity and knowledge."

2. "Your denial of basic science will in the long run discredit you and your cause. The empirical evidence is available for all to consider. Your message is asking us to believe the world is flat or that the sun revolved about the earth despite overwhelming empirical evidence to the contrary."

3. "How can you honestly deny science and be so ignorant to the obvious truth about our beginnings? **[This, of course, is an arbitrary claim which is easily reversible. You could just as easily say, "funny, I was just thinking the same thing about you!"]** I pray **[I'd have to ask, "pray to whom?"]** that you'll have an epiphany and stop misleading people to believe in nonsense and lies. **[moral absolutes?]** You're ultimately going to turn people off to God. If anyone has half a brain they're going to look to science for truth, not 4000 year old stories written by goat herders." **[of course, science cannot yield "truth," only probabilities.]**

4. "Get over your self-pacifying beliefs and just realize that the world is senseless! If perchance there is a god and a reason behind this madness, they certainly will not be found in a book as flawed and disgusting as the bible (unless you promote slavery, misogyny and the condemnation of billions of people to eternal torment)."

In closing, Dr. Lisle uses the very funny illustration: Richard Dawkins has made it the very purpose of his existence to write books and travel around the entire world trying to convince people that life has no purpose.

You see, we just can't escape from what we are. Every time the unbeliever opens his mouth, he demonstrates clearly that in his heart of hearts, he does know God, but suppresses the truth about Him.

[NSA, d1, 31:50]

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.