**Apologetics Study Guide**

John M. Frame

**Lesson 1: Classical Apologetics**

Cowan, ed., *Five Views of Apologetics*, 1-89

**Key Terms**

Note 1:The book *Five Views of Apologetics* contains a Glossary (31-34) mainly of philosophical terms. Look over that list and learn the definitions that you do not know already. Students who have taken the course *History of Philosophy and Christian Thought* have already been exposed to most of these.

Note 2: Page numbers may differ according to which edition of the book is being used.

Methodology (8)

*Apologia* (8)

Classical method (15, 28)

Evidential method (16)

Cumulative case method (17-18)

Presuppositional method (18-19)

Reformed epistemology method (19-20)

Kierkegaardian fideism (27)

Assurance of salvation (Craig) (30-31).

Argument from religious experience (32).

Immediate apprehension (32).

Properly basic belief (32).

*Prima facie* justification (33).

*Ultima facie* justification (33).

Defeaters (33).

Magisterial use of reason (36)

Ministerial use of reason (36f)

General revelation (39)

Natural theology (39)

Good deductive argument (49)

*Kalam* cosmological argument (50-51)

*Ex nihilo nihil fit* (50)

Inference to the best explanation (52)

*Sacrificium intellectus* (54)

Hard and soft apologetics (57)

Negative and positive apologetics (57)

Norms (76-77)

Hyper-classical apologetics (82)

**Questions**

1. What does Craig mean (28) by the distinction between “knowing” and “showing” Christianity to be true? In each of these categories, what is the role of rational arguments? Of the Holy Spirit?
2. What does Craig mean by describing the work of the Spirit as “self-authenticating” (29)?
3. “I think it is evident that Paul and John are not talking about an argument from religious experience for the conclusion that Christianity is true, but about an immediate apprehension of its truth acquired in the context of the Spirit’s witness” (32). Explain, evaluate.
4. Describe Craig’s view of properly basic belief, prima facie justification, and ultima facie justification. Should a Christian under challenges he cannot answer renounce his beliefs? Why or why not? Present Craig’s view, and your own (33-34).
5. How does Craig deal with the claims of non-Christians to have a self-authenticating witness of God’s spirit (35)? Evaluate. Cf. 63-4.
6. Craig: “when we turn to the question of showing our faith to be true, the roles of the Holy Spirit and of rational argumentation and evidence seem to be almost completely reversed” (38, 43ff) Explain, evaluate.
7. Craig: “From the pages of the New Testament it is evident that showing the Christian faith to be true was an enterprise in which both Jesus and the apostles were engaged (40).” Evaluate, using examples, including 1 Cor. 15 (42).
8. Explain and evaluate Craig’s response to “postmodern antirealism” (45).
9. Formulate and evaluate Craig’s *Kalam* cosmological argument (50-51). How does he show that “the universe began to exist?” Are you persuaded by his argument to this effect?
10. Summarize and evaluate Craig’s case for the Resurrection of Jesus (52-3).
11. How does “evidentialist” apologetics differ from Craig’s “classical” apologetics according to Habermas? Evaluate Habermas’ case (58-61).
12. Feinberg says that the witness of the Spirit cannot be self-authenticating, because it appears to mislead some people (70-71). Reply.
13. Frame says that the Word of God is almost entirely missing from Craig’s apologetic epistemology (74). Explain, evaluate. Why does he think it important to have a *norm* to evaluate evidence and argument?
14. How does Frame criticize Craig’s equation of argument with evidence (77-78)? Adjudicate.
15. Discuss Frame’s alternative view of “knowing” and “showing” (78).
16. Formulate Clark’s two alternative ways of dealing with arguments against the existence of God. Evaluate his strategy (84-85).
17. Clark: “I believe that passions, emotions, and the will are involved in demonstration *proper*.” Explain, evaluate. How does he differ from Craig’s understanding of demonstration, and from Craig’s view that we can “present a sound, convincing, positive case for the truth of Christian theism” (85)?

**Lesson 2: Evidential Apologetics**

Cowan, ed., *Five Views of Apologetics,* 92-145

**Key Terms**

One-step (92)

Two-step (92)

Evidentialist methodology (94ff)

Negative apologetics (95)

Ontological commonality (97)

Epistemological common ground (97)

Minimal facts approach (100)

Naturalism (118-121)

Methodological naturalism (124)

**Questions**

1. How does Habermas distinguish between the evidentialist apologetic method and evidentialist epistemology? Why does he say that the former does not require the latter? (92-94)
2. Habermas points out that “personal preferences and prejudices can substantively color our interpretations, not to mention the effect of our worldviews on our research.” How does he suggest we deal with this fact? Evaluate. (94-95). Compare with what Feinberg says on 130, and Frame on 134-5.
3. Describe and evaluate Habermas’s response to postmodernism (96), and Frame’s comments on 134-5.
4. What does Habermas say about the possibility of “epistemological common ground” between believer and unbeliever? How does he respond to this situation in his apologetics? Evaluate (97), and Frame’s comments on 135-6.
5. How does Habermas evaluate the validity and usefulness of other apologetic systems? Evaluate (98f).
6. Distinguish the two characteristics of the data on which Habermas focuses. Evaluate this method (100).
7. Summarize and evaluate Habermas’s “evidentialist case” (100-116). What does he add to Craig’s apologetic summary?
8. According to Habermas, how can we know that Jesus’ claims were true (116-120)? Evaluate his argument.
9. How does Habermas refute the naturalistic worldview (118-20)? Evaluate. HbTake into account Frame’s comments on 136-7.
10. Craig: “Pity our poor editor! Ideally he would like to find a wild-eyed fideist on one end of the spectrum and a hard-nosed theological rationalist on the other. Instead, he winds up with a presuppositionalist who argues like an evidentialist and an evidentialist who endorses belief in Christian theism on the basis of the testimony of the Holy Spirit apart from evidence” (122). Reply.
11. Craig: “…some of the arguments of natural theology are the arguments from miracles writ large” (123). Explain, evaluate.
12. Evaluate Bayes’ theorem (125ff). No, just kidding!
13. What point is Craig trying to make with his expedition into mathematics (125ff)? Evaluate it. (Cf. the discussion of “probability calculus” on 23-24.)
14. Describe and evaluate Frame’s response to the question of how many steps are required to establish the truth of Christianity (132-4).
15. Clark: “Sometimes, even when we don’t have a better explanation of the evidence, it is more rational to reject the best explanation on grounds of implausibility” (140). Explain, evaluate.
16. Why does Clark think that Craig’s two-step approach is better than Habermas’s one-step approach (142). Why does he nevertheless believe that Craig has not established the historicity of Jesus’ resurrection (143)? Evaluate.
17. Given his criticisms of Craig and Habermas, how does Clark think that evidence is useful to the case for Christianity (144)? Evaluate.

**Lesson 3: Cumulative Case Apologetics**

Cowan, ed., *Five Views of Apologetics*, 148-207

**Key Terms**

Demonstrably sound arguments (Feinberg) (148)

Coercive (148)

Probable case (150)

Fideism (150)

Cumulative case approach (151)

Inference to the best explanation (151, 179-181)

Informal/formal case (151)

Consistency (153-4)

*Reductio ad absurdum* (154)

Correspondence (154)

Comprehensiveness (154-5)

Simplicity (155)

Livability (155)

Fruitfulness (155)

Conservation (155)

Internal (subjective) witness of the Spirit (Feinberg) (158)

External (objective) witness (158)

Deconstructionism (168)

Eliminative postmodernism (168)

Fine tuning of the universe (176)

Self-referential incoherence (182)

Epistemic normativity (195-7, 199)

**Questions**

1. According to Feinberg, what problem keeps the ontological and cosmological arguments from being demonstrably sound? Is he right? Discuss. (148-49, 175-6) Consider Frame’s response (194-5), Clark’s (200-202). Clark asks, “But why should the nonbeliever’s unwillingness to accept a true or reasonably held premise have any effect whatsoever on the believer’s rationality? (201)” Reply.
2. Same with regard to the teleological argument. (150, 176-78)
3. “The model for defending Christianity is not to be found in the domain of philosophy or logic, but law, history, and literature.” (151) Explain, evaluate.
4. “What Christian apologists are defending is the claim that Christian theism is the best explanation of all available evidence on offer. The opponents are required to present a more convincing cumulative case.” (152) Explain, evaluate.
5. Why does Feinberg think that consistency is more important than his other tests of truth? Evaluate. (156) Cf. Clark’s comment (202).
6. How does Feinberg’s use of the cosmological argument differ from the more traditional uses of it? Evaluate Feinberg’s case (160) and Clark’s critique (203).
7. Describe and evaluate Feinberg’s use of the argument from religious experience. How does he respond to the objection that believers’ and unbelievers’ experiences stand on a par? Evaluate. (161-2) Cf. Clark’s response (203-6)
8. Describe and evaluate Feinberg’s argument for and illustration of the objectivity of moral value. (163-4)
9. Describe and evaluate Feinberg’s argument for the authority of Scripture and of Christ (165-6).
10. What is the “ten leaky buckets objection” (167)? Evaluate Feinberg’s response and the replies of Habermas (192) and Frame (198).
11. Evaluate Feinberg’s response to postmodernism (168-72). Can a postmodernist live with his theory? Evaluate Craig’s comment: “The problem with the postmodernist quick fix is not, as Feinberg suggests, that it is unlivable, but rather that it is so obviously self-referentially incoherent” (182). Cf. Habermas, 190-92, Frame, 199.
12. Evaluate Feinberg’s view of the witness of the Holy Spirit. (158-66, 173-4)
13. Habermas: “(Feinberg’s) emphasis on the force of constructing an entire case, rather than stand-alone arguments, is the hallmark of his approach…” (185) Evaluate this emphasis.
14. Habermas: “…even having a book that is generally reliable does not automatically insure everything between its covers” (186). How does he use this principle to criticize Feinberg? What does he propose as a solution to the problem? Evaluate. (186-190).
15. Should “scripturality” be added to Feinberg’s list of the tests of truth? Why or why not? (197)
16. Frame: “So the test of consistency is itself problematic, and the standards for the proper use of logical arguments are religiously problematic.” (197) Explain, evaluate.

**Lesson 4: Presuppositional Apologetics**

Cowan, ed., *Five Views of Apologetics*, 208-263

**Key Terms**

Presupposition (209, 219)

Cause of faith (209)

Rational basis of faith (209)

Noetic effects of sin (210-11)

Rationalistic (212)

Irrationalistic (212)

Proof (213)

Defense (213)

Offense (213)

Argument (216n)

Evidence (216)

Transcendental (220)

*Reductio ad absurdum* (222-223)

Personalism (224)

*Grand récit* (226)

Metanarrative (226)

*Demonstration quia* (233)

**Questions**

1. “Reasoning is not in some realm that is neutral between faith and unbelief” (209). Describe and evaluate Frame’s biblical argument to this effect.
2. “There is a kind of circularity here, but the circularity is not vicious” (210). Explain, evaluate. Cf. 217 and Craig’s critique on 232-3.
3. Frame says that the Christian and the rationalist both make presuppositions, but Habermas challenges the analogy (242-44). What do you think? Does Frame “confuse truth itself with an argument for truth” (243)?
4. Describe and evaluate Frame’s account of the noetic effects of sin (210-14).
5. “When someone recognizes the truth but seeks to repress it, the result is irrationality” (212). Give some examples. Why does Frame say that “the paradigm of irrationality is Satan himself?”
6. Describe and illustrate the “rationalist-irrationalist dialectic” (212-3).
7. “The change (from unbelief to belief) is not a change from sin to sinlessness, but a radical change *in direction*” (214). Explain, evaluate. Illustrate from human intellectual life.
8. Frame says that faith is logically based on evidence, but not necessarily on argument. Explain, evaluate (215-16).
9. How can an argument based on Christian presuppositions be helpful to an unbeliever, who will not accept those presuppositions? Present Frame’s answer and evaluate (217-9).
10. What is a transcendental argument? Does Frame employ it correctly? (220-221, 233)
11. What does Frame mean in saying that apologetics is “person-variable” (222)? Evaluate.
12. “Of all the religions and philosophies in the world, only those influenced by the Bible are personalistic in this sense” (224). Define “personalism” in this context and evaluate Frame’s contention.
13. “Why do you suppose it is that today’s society so universally *assumes* the impersonalist option, even though it cannot be proved?” (225) Answer Frame’s question, or question its premise.
14. Explain and evaluate Frame’s argument from universality and necessity (226).
15. Summarize and evaluate Frame’s argument for the existence of God and the truth of biblical history (228-231). How is it different from those of Craig, Habermas, and Feinberg?
16. Summarize and evaluate Plantinga’s argument for God’s existence as Craig presents it (234-5).
17. Habermas says that “presuppositionalism is only an incomplete apologetic system” (241). Evaluate the grounds for this statement and its importance. Comment also on Frame’s remark, “perhaps presuppositionalism is more of an attitude of the heart, a spiritual condition, than an easily describable empirical phenomenon” (241).
18. Habermas says that Scripture endorses the evidential method (245-46). Explain, evaluate.
19. Clark: “I am dubious, however, of finding any ultimate or coercive support for epistemology in Scripture (256, cf. 274-5)” Evaluate.
20. Clark: “…Frame makes statements that imply that unbelievers *cannot know anything* (even though they *believe* some truths” (257). Explain, evaluate (257-9).
21. Clark: “I often feel like presuppositionalists are trying to gain by theft what should be obtained by honest toil” (260). Explain, evaluate.
22. Clark: “ Is autonomous human reasoning a bad thing? If it’s a bad thing, it is all the worse for us, because it is all we have” (262). Explain, evaluate.

**Lesson 5: Reformed Epistemology Apologetics**

Cowan, ed., *Five Views of Apologetics*, 266-312

**Key Terms**

Reformed epistemology (266-8)

Noncoercive evidence (273)

Internalism (277)

Justification (epistemology) (277)

Warrant (277)

Hermeneutics of suspicion (280)

*Sensus divinitatis* (285)

Defeasability (308-9)

**Questions**

1. Describe and evaluate W. K. Clifford’s view of the relation of evidence to belief (268-9).
2. State and assess Clark’s “three reasons to believe that it is proper or rational for a person to accept belief in God without the need for an argument” (271).
3. Clark: “Part of the redemptive process will require the removal of the effects of sin on our minds. Attention to theistic arguments might do that” (273). Respond, noting his following qualifications.
4. Summarize Clark’s critique of internalism (277-8). Evaluate.
5. Summarize Clark’s account of how the history of modern philosophy leads to postmodernism (276-8). Evaluate.
6. How does Clark suggest that we help people overcome barriers to belief? Evaluate. (279-80).
7. Clark: “What people start with determines what people will end up with” (283). Give some of his examples. What role does this principle play in Clark’s apologetics? Is he a closet presuppositionalist?
8. Consider Craig’s view that the testimony of the Holy Spirit renders the *sensus divinitatis* superfluous (285-6).
9. Craig says that Clark’s externalism robs us of assurance. State his argument and evaluate (286-7).
10. Adjudicate the conflict between Clark and Craig about the relation of apologetics to evangelism (286-7). Do you agree with Craig’s view of the consequences of neglecting apologetics? (289-90)
11. Reply to Habermas’s criticism that Reformed epistemologists, “since they are not fideists, … seem to employ some variety of epistemic evidentialism” (294).
12. Habermas: “Even if it could be determined that belief in God is properly basic, how do we know that this is the God of Christian theism?” Respond.
13. Feinberg distinguishes stronger and weaker forms of the evidentialist challenge according to Reformed epistemology. Distinguish these and assess Feinberg’s argument (302-306).
14. Frame: “Rational believability is about the weakest claim that could be made for Christian theism” (308). What other claims have been made, including Frame’s? Discuss the issues involved in this.
15. Is Christian faith defeasible? Address the relevant issues (308-9).
16. Address the adequacy of Clark’s appeal to Scripture (309-310).
17. Frame says, “I’m not sure that Clark understands all that is involved in accepting God as an epistemic starting point” (310). Explain, evaluate.
18. Why does Frame find fault with Clark’s assertion that the starting point for one’s beliefs comes from our socio-cultural upbringing (311-12)? Evaluate.

**Lesson 6: Closing Remarks**

Cowan, ed., *Five Views of Apologetics*, 314-384

**Questions**

1. Craig says that Frame identifies the witness of the Spirit with the Scriptures (315). Adjudicate.
2. Craig imagines Habermas asking, “…if arguments from miracles can constitute evidence for theism, why employ arguments of natural theology? (316)” Answer for Craig, and carry on the dialogue.
3. Craig: “The knowing/showing distinction is an attempt to prove that the presuppositionalists were right about knowing and the evidentialists about showing” (317). Respond.
4. Do Frame and Van Til believe that non-Christians know nothing? Discuss (351-2).
5. Evaluate Frame’s responses to critics on circularity and autonomy (354-57).
6. Same on the question of whether we may “test Scripture” (357).
7. Is Frame’s argument really transcendental? Discuss the issues (359-60).
8. Frame: “If all apologists come to take (*sola Scriptura*) seriously, however the other methodological questions come out, I will believe that the presuppositional movement has accomplished its purpose.” Explain, evaluate.
9. Clark says about Frame, “There are few apologetic approaches that are so long on assured proclamation and so short on argument” (371). Explain and evaluate.
10. Is there anything in this concluding section that you think deserves further consideration? Discuss it.

**Lesson 7: The Existence of God**

Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, 89-118.

Frame, “Ontological Argument”

 --, “Infinite Series”

 --, “Do We Need God to be Moral?”

 --, “Self-Refuting Statements”

 --, “Transcendental Argument”

Bahnsen and Stein, *The Great Debate*, <http://www.bellevuechristian.org/faculty/dribera/htdocs/PDFs/Apol_Bahnsen_Stein_Debate_Transcript.pdf>.

Keller, *The Reason for God*, 127-158.

Poythress, V., *Redeeming Science*, Chapter 1 (13-31).

**Key Terms**

Person variable

Moral values

Transcendental argument

Blockhouse methodology

Agnostic

Behavior test

Norm

Moral argument

Epistemological argument

Metaphysical arguments

Teleological argument

Cosmological argument (*Kalam*

form)

Cosmological argument (Aquinas)

Ontological argument

Absolute personality

Ultimate impersonality

Fine tuning argument

Anthropic principle

Regularity of nature

The clue of beauty

Blessed longing

**Questions**

 1. Does Frame consider his argument “absolutely certain?” If not, how does he seek to avoid compromising the clarity of God’s revelation?

 2. Does a moral argument for God assume that moral values can be understood apart from God? Why or why not?

 3. Are there any agnostics? Why or why not?

 4. Is the unbeliever a theist or an atheist? Or both? Why? How is the “behavior test” relevant?

 5. “Moral values are rather strange.” How?

 6. Can we derive moral obligations from the consequences of human actions? Why or why not? Discuss Keller’s observations in his “Knowledge of God” chapter about evolutionary accounts of morality.

 7. Are moral values subjective feelings? Discuss Frame’s reply, and Keller’s critique of various views of the basis of human rights.

 8. Is truth itself an ethical value? Why or why not?

 9. “The assertion that ethical values are subjective is self-contradictory.” Explain, evaluate.

 10. “Ethical values are hierarchically structured.” Explain, evaluate. Do our ethical values ever change? Describe the Christian hierarchy of values.

 11. Is it possible for an impersonal structure in the universe to warrant moral obligation? Discuss.

 12. “What is there that is capable of imposing an absolute obligation upon human beings?” Answer the question and defend your answer.

 13. “If obligations arise from personal relationships, then absolute obligation must arise from our relationship with an absolute person.” Explain, evaluate.

 14. How does Frame show that the God of his moral argument is in fact the God of the Bible? What do you think? Compare Keller’s chapter on “The Knowledge of God.”

 15. “The argument, of course, does not prevent anyone from choosing unbelief.” Why not?

 16. “The choice is between God and chaos, God and nothing, God and insanity.” Explain, evaluate.

 17. Does evolution explain adequately the correlation between the human mind and the world? Discuss.

 18. “Truth is an ethical value.” Explain, evaluate. How does this affect the force of the epistemological argument?

 19. “Even logic itself is value based.” Explain, evaluate.

 20. “Intuitively, we feel the power of [the teleological argument].” Give some examples.

 21. “A perfect analogy between the world and objects of human design would actually be counterproductive to Christian apologetics.” Why? Evaluate.

 22. “In the teleological argument as well, it makes a difference when we are able to see truth and rationality as moral virtues.” Why, or why not?

 23. “The essential antithesis… between the two worldviews, absolute personality versus ultimate impersonality, eliminate consideration of Hume’s alternative explanations.” Give some examples of Hume’s suggestions, and show why this antithesis defeats them, or why it does not.

 24. Discuss the relation between causes and reasons.

 25. “The irrationalism that denies causation at some point in the world process is not so much a reasoned position as a failure of nerve.” Explain, evaluate.

 26. “The non-Christian rationalist is here in a quandary, for his motivations press him in two directions simultaneously.” What are those directions? Why is this important?

 27. “…if it is possible for God to be self-existent and self-explanatory, causeless, and an ultimate reason, why can’t the world be too? If we may end our causal inquiry with God, why not stop with the world and be done with it?” Give Frame’s answer and discuss.

 28. “The ontological argument makes a logical jump from concept to reality.” Explain and reply.

 29. “…the ontological argument proves the biblical God only if it presupposes distinctively Christian values and a Christian view of existence.” Explain, evaluate.

 30. Summarize and evaluate Bahnsen’s “transcendental argument for the existence of God.”

 31. How, precisely, was Bahnsen’s argument different from the arguments Stein was prepared to refute?

 32. Enumerate and discuss some of Keller’s “Clues of God.” What objections can be raised against these, and how does Keller reply? Evaluate.

 33. Some have used evolution to prove that the “clues” have no force. But Keller argues “not only that the clue-killer argument has a fatal contradiction in it, but that it actually points to another clue for God.” What is that clue? Evaluate his argument.

 34. Why *must* scientists believe in God, according to Poythress? Evaluate.

**Lesson 8: Proving the Gospel**

Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, 119-147.

Keller, *The Reason for God*, 97-108, 159-242.

**Key Terms**

Biblical criticism

Psychological realism

Thematic consilience

Archetypal quality

Diagnostic discernment

Historical centeredness

Johannine asides

**Questions**

 1. Frame: “So our main task is to isolate the Bible’s own argument for the truth of the gospel message.” Wouldn’t it be better to argue for the truth of Scripture using extra-biblical evidence? Evaluate.

 2. Frame says that absolute-personality theism “creates an immense presumption in favor of the biblical tradition.” Why? Explain and evaluate.

 3. “One does not need to study every world religion and philosophy thoroughly. Only two are of any importance.” Why? Discuss.

 4. “Since there is no other logical candidate for a source of God’s words, we must hear and obey that message.” Explain, evaluate.

 5. Summarize Scripture’s own doctrine of Scripture. Why is this important to an apologetic argument?

 6. Describe the general views of liberal biblical critics, and their arguments for holding such positions.

 7. Describe and evaluate C. S. Lewis’s complaints against liberal Bible critics.

 8. “Since the mainstream Bible scholars reject biblical inerrancy, why shouldn’t I do the same.” Reply.

 9. Is Scripture’s teaching about its own authority credible? Why or why not? Is it likely that the gospels are legends? Discuss Keller’s argument on that.

 10. What is the “argument from prophecy?” How should we make use of it?

 11. How did people trained from their youth in Jewish monotheism come to believe that Jesus was God?

 12. “Miracles do have an epistemological function, even though they themselves will not convert an unbeliever.” Explain.

 13. Hume: “one should never accept testimony concerning a miracle, because it will always be outweighed by the evidence for a natural explanation.” Reply.

 14. Describe and evaluate the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Frame, Keller)

 15. Describe and evaluate attempts to refute the evidence for the Resurrection. (Frame, Keller)

 16. “One cannot deny (the Resurrection), save by a radical skepticism which calls all knowledge into question.” Explain, evaluate. (Frame; Keller’s “Challenge of the Resurrection”).

 17. “So, biblical religion alone, of all the religions and philosophies of the world, provides an authoritative answer to the question we most need to ask of God: How can my sins be forgiven?” Explain evaluate.

 18. How does Keller define sin? What two kinds of sin does he distinguish in chapter 11? What would you say to someone who says he doesn’t believe in sin?

 19. How does Keller distinguish between “religion” and the Gospel? What is the difference between a life motivated by grace and one motivated by ambition for moral excellence? Why does he say that grace makes a higher demand on our lives?

 20. According to Keller, why must forgiveness be costly? Discuss.

 21. Keller: “Real love is a personal exchange.” Explain, evaluate.

 22. According to Keller, why did Jesus die?

 23. How does Keller relate the Trinity to the Christian life? Evaluate.

 24. How does Keller motivate his readers to make a commitment to Christ? Discuss.

**Lesson 9: The Problem of Evil and Other Objections**

Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, 149-190.

Keller, *The Reason for God*, 22-34, 51-83.

**Key Terms**

Problem of evil

Unreality of evil defense

Divine weakness defense

Best possible world defense

Free will defense

Character building defense

Stable environment defense

Indirect cause defense

Ex-lex defense

Greater good defense

**Questions**

1. Formulate the problem of evil as a series of logical syllogisms.

 2. Distinguish the logical from the emotional problems of evil.

 3. “Indeed, the Bible is preoccupied with the problem of evil.” Where? How?

 4. Should we solve the problem of evil by revising the traditional doctrine of God? Why or why not?

 5. Respond to one of the traditional defenses against the problem of evil.

 6. “The unbeliever has no right to raise the issue of the problem of evil, for he has no means to distinguish good from evil.” Why? Explain, evaluate. Compare Keller’s argument, 25-28.

 7. “God is the standard for his actions.” How is this principle relevant to the problem of evil? Mention some Scripture references.

 8. Explain “the wait and the dialectic.” How is this relevant to the problem of evil? Compare Keller on “Resurrection and Suffering.”

 9. Describe and evaluate the greater good defense.

 10. Explain the bearing of Rev. 15:3-4 on the problem of evil.

 11. “Scripture gives us a new heart.” How is this relevant to the problem of evil?

 12. How does Keller show that evil and suffering are not evidence against God?

 13. How is the cross of Jesus relevant to the problem of evil, according to Keller?

 14. “The church has a history of supporting injustice and violence.” Give Keller’s reply, and your own.

 15. “So many Christians are fanatics.” Reply.

 16. Discuss and evaluate the difference between Christianity and “religion” according to Keller.

 17. How can a loving God send people to Hell? Answer with the help of Keller’s discussion.

 18. “In short, hell is simply one’s freely chosen identity apart from God on a trajectory into infinity.” Explain and evaluate.

 19. “Belief in hell is evidence of narrowmindedness.” Reply.

 20. “I believe in a God of love, not judgment.” Evaluate Keller’s reply.

**Lesson 10: Philosophy and Religion**

Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, 191-217.

 --, “Greeks Bearing Gifts”

 --, Problems of Apologetics Lecture Outline, 10-14.

**Key Terms**

Atheism

Idolatry

Idolatrous atheism

Rationalism

Irrationalism

Fate (in Greek thought)

**Questions**

 1. Are there instances of offensive apologetics in Scripture? Give examples.

 2. “Unbelieving thought is always a mixture of atheism and idolatry.” Explain, evaluate.

 3. Describe the relation between atheism and relativism.

 4. “Like atheism, idolatry can be either theoretical or practical.” Give examples of each.

 5. “The concept of evolution did not begin with Darwin.” Explain, evaluate.

 6. Describe and evaluate Frame’s view of the relation between Schaeffer and Dooyeweerd.

 7. Give some examples of how philosophers combine atheism-irrationalism with idolatry-rationalism.

 8. Present a general response to atheistic relativism.

 9. Present a general response to idolatrous rationalism.

 10. Present a general response to atheistic idolatry.

 11. Distinguish the “older Greek religion” from the “religion of the Olympic gods.” Show how each involves a rationalist and an irrationalist principle.

 12. How did Greek philosophy differ from earlier Greek religion?

 13. “Though the philosophers disagreed on much, they all agreed that­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Discuss the significance of this fact.

 14. Describe rationalist and irrationalist aspects of the thought of some Greek philosophers such as the Milesians, Heraclitus, Parmenides, the Atomists, Pythagoras, the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism, Plotinus.

 15. What would you say are the philosophical and theological weak points of Islam?

**Lesson 11: Science**

Keller, *The Reason for God*, 84-96.

Poythress, *Redeeming Science*, Chapter 19, 259-83.

Frame, “Is Intelligent Design Science?”

**Key Terms**

Intelligent design

Irreducible complexity

Methodological naturalism

Ontological or metaphysical naturalism

Closed regularity

Open regularity

Anomaly

Redundant complexity

**Questions**

1. “Science is religious.” Explain, evaluate.

 2. “Intelligent design is not scientific, because it is not based on observation and experiment.” Evaluate.

 3. Should Intelligent Design be taught in schools? Why or why not?

 4. Does supernatural explanation bring an end to scientific exploration? Respond to Poythress’ comments. Does the distinction between primary and secondary causality help us here?

 5. “In sum, when confronting the challenge of the intelligent design movement, methodological naturalism decomposes into various alternatives, none of which offers a sound basis for excluding the hypothesis of design” (Poythress, 272). What are those alternatives? Why do they fail to exclude design? Evaluate Poythress’s argument.

 6. “Methodological naturalists might complain that when we invoke God, we mix causal levels, and so evade ‘scientific’ explanation” (Poythress, 280). Describe and evaluate Poythress’ reply.

 7. “…in my opinion, the predominant methodological naturalism in science needs to change…” (Poythress, 283). Why? Evaluate.

 8. Are miracles scientifically impossible? Discuss Keller’s reply.

 9. Why do so many scientists disbelieve in God? Should that trouble us? Why or why not?

**Lesson 12: Modern Culture**

Frame, *Doctrine of the Christian Life*, Chapters 45-49.

Keller, *The Reason for God*, 109-114.

Edgar, “No News is Good News”

**Key Terms**

Culture

Cultural mandate

Religion

Common grace

Special grace

Christ against culture

The Christ of culture

Christ above culture

Christ and culture in paradox

Two kingdoms

Christ the transformer of culture

World (two senses)

Nature and grace (Roman Catholic)

Natural reason

Earthly happiness

Supernatural end

Premodern

Modern

Postmodern

Paganism

Monism

**Questions**

 1. Distinguish between creation and culture.

 2. Distinguish between dominion over the earth and exploitation of it.

 3. “Cultures always involve values.” Why? Give examples.

 4. Henry Van Til: “Culture is simply the service of God in our lives; it is religion externalized.” Explain, evaluate.

 5. Does Scripture teach that there are good elements in fallen culture? Give examples? If it does, what is the source of that goodness?

 6. Does God’s special grace make an impact on culture? If not, why not? If so, give examples.

 7. How does *sola Scriptura* impact Christian analysis of culture?

 8. “Christ against the world, yes; Christ against culture, no.” Explain, evaluate.

 9. Describe and evaluate “the Christ of culture.” Give some examples of people who have held this view.

 10. Same for “Christ above culture.”

 11. Same for “Christ and culture in paradox.”

 12. Same for “Christ, the transformer of culture.”

 13. Describe “God’s critique of culture.”

 14. Describe and evaluate the critiques of culture by Francis Schaeffer, Os Guinness, David Wells, Ken Myers, Cornelius Van Til.

 15. What guidelines do you follow in deciding whether to see a particular film?

 16. What themes in films typically express non-Christian relativism? Dogmatism?

 17. What is postmodernism? Describe and evaluate. How is it a snare? How is it an opportunity for Christian witness? (Edgar; Pratt’s schema in C&C 3)

 18. Reply to someone who thinks biblical teaching is culturally unacceptable, on account of its view of slavery or gender roles. Evaluate Keller’s response.