

Title: *“The Biblical Philosophy of Apologetics”*

Sub-Title: *“The Difference Between Athens and Jerusalem”*

Introduction: The study of philosophy, relative to biblical Christianity must go out of its way to clarify of what is the nature and essence of the philosophy which is the subject of discussion. An attempt to connect each point of philosophy to a biblical verse and, or principle as the discussion of biblical philosophy proceeds will be made. The distinction that will be endeavored to illustrate is the wide cavern between humanistic philosophy and biblical philosophy.

As was discussed in volume one of Transformational Truth, the same divide may be seen between Classical Apologetics and Presuppositional Apologetics. The methodology which is advanced in presuppositional apologetics is strictly biblical as the argumentations employed are from biblical content. The biblical precedent one could say are building blocks of one's worldview.

I. The Biblical Basis of philosophy

A. The basis for a biblical philosophy must therefore be marinated in biblical truths. Just like Christian leadership and biblical apologetics philosophy must be biblical in order to be truly Christian philosophy. The Apostle Paul gave a strong warning, relative to the world's philosophy as seen in Colossians 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

B. Matthew Henry dealt with this passage this way. "There is a philosophy which is a noble exercise of our reasonable faculties, and highly serviceable to religion, such a study of works of God leads us to the knowledge of God and confirms our faith in Him. But there is a philosophy which is vain and deceitful, which is prejudicial to religion, and set up the wisdom of man in competition with the

wisdom of God, and while it pleases men's fancies ruins their faith; as nice and curious speculations about things above us, or of no use and concern to us; or a care of winds and terms of art, which have only an empty and often a cheating appearance of knowledge."¹

C. Thus, when discussing philosophy one must clarify the philosophy in which one is referring to, whether it is the philosophy of the world or the philosophy of the wisdom of God.

1.) ACTS 17:18

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbling say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

¹ Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary: Acts to Revelation, (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, 1710, 6:757.

2.) ECCLESIASTES 1:2

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

3.) ISAIAH 29:14

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

4.) ROMANS 1:22

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

5.) I CORINTHIANS 1:19-20

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

6.) I CORINTHIANS 2:6

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7.) I CORINTHIANS 3:19-20

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

8.) I TIMOTHY 6:20

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

9.) JOHN 8:32

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

II. Biblical Philosophy has an ethical element.

- A.** When the term, ‘philosophy’ is employed here it is being used more in a practical way rather than an historic definition of philosophy. One may use the word, philosophy, to describe their ‘philosophy of marriage,’ or their ‘philosophy of work.’ One may also state their ‘philosophy of education,’ or one’s ‘philosophy of ministry.’ In any of these examples the word is not being used in its formal definition, but rather of a more generic application.
- B.** Webster’s defined philosophy like this, “The study of life and what it means, how we should live.”² Notice Webster mentioned “life” and “meaning,” which would indicate a moral element. And of

² Noah Webster, Webster’s Dictionary: A Comprehensive Guide to the English Language for the Home, Office, and School. (New York: Modern Publishing, 1999), 214.

course a moral element then must have a moral Giver.

C. Vinh Lu Akoue stated, “It is taught that philosophy was born in Greece, Asia Minor, With the School of Miletus. This proposal is questionable, for the simple reason that the history of human thought is a long chain which is starting in Egypt. Pythagoras of Samos, Thales of

D. Miletus, Aristotle and others have learned for decades, Philosophy and / or Science in Egyptian Priests. Greece has just had the merit to popularize Philosophy. Philosophie was elitist in the Pharaohs.”³

E. Akoue was helping us to understand the history of philosophy, and that has had a chain of events that has carried thought processes to how we people and societies think, reason, and live. One could argue that

³ Akoue, Vinh Lu. [https://www.researchgate.net/application.ClientValidation.html?origP2019\).ath=%2Fpost%2FThe_origin_of_philosophy_What_is_the_origin_of_philosophy](https://www.researchgate.net/application.ClientValidation.html?origP2019).ath=%2Fpost%2FThe_origin_of_philosophy_What_is_the_origin_of_philosophy) (assessed January 14, 2019).

all people are philosophers, but not all philosophy is biblical. This author would argue that everyone in the world is a theologian (study or knowledge of God), though most theologians are incorrect, relative to the Scriptures. The broader argument being made here is that one could use the term 'philosophy' in a secular application, a historical sense, or a generic application. In our study we will by default be employing the term, philosophy, to a biblical application.

F. Garrett DeWeese discussed philosophy relative to Jesus like this, "Jesus was not a philosopher, at least not in any ordinary sense of the term. He wrote no books (but neither did Socrates), developed no grand metaphysics (but neither have most philosophers through the ages). He did not make his living by lecturing or teaching philosophy (but neither did Hume)."⁴ What DeWeese was stating was that Jesus did not look like the modern day philosopher or

⁴ Garrett DeWeese, *Doing Philosophy as a Christian* (Downers, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 91.

professor, but what is unmistakable is that the philosophy or worldview that Jesus taught has impacted the world to a greater extent than those that taught in the stricter sense of philosophers.

III. The philosophy of Jesus defined.

A. The philosophy of Jesus was framed as truth when challenged, “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” **John 18:37**

B. Weese further discussed the philosophy of Jesus when he stated, “Here, the focus is on the sayings of Jesus that reveal a ‘love of wisdom’ or an intent to teach the ‘skill of living,’ as did the Hebrew sages⁵ as well as other ancient sages as reported,

⁵ The three classes of religious teachers in the Old Testament were categorized into prophets, priests, and sages. Sages were private religious teachers. Their place was not in delivering sermons or writing books of the Old Testament. Their teaching though, highly influenced the ethics of Israel.

for example, by Diogenes Laertius.⁶ So many sayings of Jesus that convey a truth about human nature or commend a particular moral behavior or manner of life can be understood as giving rise to philosophical thought.”⁷ Thus, though the teachings of Jesus and His Words recorded in Scripture are not usually considered philosophy the characteristics of Christian thought do seem to parallel what is most commonly referred in the traditional usage of the word philosophy.

C. One could say, however, that the Lord gives wisdom through His Word, and His Word instructs His people how to walk in this world, as seen in

Proverbs 2:6-7 “For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.”

⁶ Diogenes Laertius was a 3rd Century biographer of the Greek philosophers.

⁷ Ibid., DeWeese, 106-107.

D. Thus, a careful student of the Bible would conclude that indeed the Bible narratives, principles, and statues function as doses philosophy. The Bible however, comes to more conclusive answers to life's most pondered by questions of life, death, and the purpose of life.

E. John Frame gave a historical context of philosophy when he stated, "The method of the wisdom teachers was to gather the sayings of the wise, from many generations and locations, for the guidance of their own communities. What distinguishes wisdom in Israel from that of other cultures is the conviction that 'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:'"
"Psalm 111:10).

F. Frame further explained, “Philosophy, however, should not be understood as an extension of the tradition of wisdom literature. In many ways, as we will see, philosophy is historically a revolt against traditional wisdom.”⁸ As Frame stated earlier that philosophy is not an extension of wisdom literature. The Christian ought to always keep in mind the supremacy of Scripture.

1.) “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” **Hebrews 4:12**

G. The strength of the argument for a biblical philosophy and worldview lead to the question of why the study of philosophy is important to the Christian thinker. Frame answered this way,

⁸ John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2015), 1.

EXCELLENT WAY MINISTRIES

Knight's Notes # 20: - Dr. Andrew Knight

“Now, since the business of philosophy is to think clearly, cogently, and profoundly about the world, the hardest challenges to Christian thought have come from the disciple of philosophy. So when Christians study philosophy, they become acquainted with the most formidable adversaries of the gospel: non-Christian thought in its most cogent form. Acquaintance with these is very beneficial for gospel witness.”⁹ This logic would seem to coincide with the Great Commission,

- 1.) **“Mark 16:15** “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
- 2.) And Paul certainly confronted the philosophers of his day.
- 3.) **Acts 17:22-23** “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld

⁹ Ibid., Frame, 4.

your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”

H. Apostle Paul had confronted skeptics and unbiblical philosophers at Mars Hill in the First Century so must every believer in the present day. Paul knew the Greek philosophy, thus he was able to speak to the Athenians from their worldview. Paul also was trained in theology,

1.) **Acts 22:3** “I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.”

I. Paul was than able to frame his argument from a biblical worldview. Paul is very likely the clearest example in Scripture of a presuppositionist as seen in...Acts 17:2

1.) **Acts 17:2** “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.” One might say that Paul was a biblical philosopher.”

J. As one assembles their theological foundation, they then will develop one's biblical philosophy. Once those two foundations are constructed ones biblical worldview begins to take shape. Frame explained it like this,

1.) “The Word of God is, among other things, the authoritative statement of the Christian's worldview. And because it describes a historical sequence, it may be called a metanarrative as well. Application in my

definition of theology includes the ‘formation’ and ‘defense’ in my definition of philosophy. So we may say that Christian theology is Christian philosophy, or philosophy with a Christian worldview.”¹⁰

K. This author might use stronger adjectives to describe the use of the Bible in developing one’s worldview. The two thoughts that come to mind are that the Bible is declarative. This is to say, for example in Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God...” God declares Himself to the world. The second thought would be to state that the Bible has supremacy in building one’s biblical worldview, and biblical philosophy.

L. Further context of philosophies and order of philosophy Frame explained, “Until the twentieth century, when Eastern religion and philosophy began to make a major impact, Western thought had two roots: the Greek and the biblical. Some

¹⁰ Ibid., Frame, 4.

thinkers tried to synthesize these traditions in various ways. Others saw an antithesis between them and sought to be consistent with one or the other.” The analysis of the two different schools of thought brings clarity to this study.

Conclusion: Apologetics is biblical philosophy. One’s doctrinal beliefs make up their worldview. One’s worldview makes up their philosophy. And one’s philosophy will determine one’s apologetic argumentation of their faith in Jesus Christ.

The biblical basis of philosophy was documented with Scriptural reverences. Numerous sources documented the understanding that biblical philosophy has an ethical and moral elements which lead to the Moral Giver. Finally, Jesus defined biblical philosophy in the biblical references. Other sources helped to point out the biblical philosophy that Jesus taught and practiced.

Applications:

1. Trust Jesus Christ today, if you have not done so. Tell someone that you have become a Christian today!
2. Download Knight's Notes on: Excellent Way.tv.
3. Read Isaiah chapter thirteen before we get together again.
4. Discuss the biblical philosophy of apologetics this week with family and friends.
5. Share www.ExcellentWay.tv on you social media.
6. Subscribe to our YouTube channel, Dr. Andrew Knight, and share the videos with everyone.

Where we began:

- We began with the biblical philosophy of apologetics.
- We explained the biblical basis of philosophy.
- We discussed the fact that biblical philosophy has an ethical element.
- We also talked about that philosophy was defined by Jesus.
- We looked at in particular the biblical example of Paul's apologetics at Mars Hill.

Next time:

- We will look at the burden of Babylon in Isaiah chapter thirteen.
- We will continue to see the theme of the Day of the Lord.
- We will look at some of the horrors of the great tribulation.
- We will discuss several tribulation themes.
- We will make application of Isaiah chapter thirteen to apologetics.