

The background is a dark blue gradient with a starry texture. On the left side, there are several overlapping circular elements. One prominent feature is a large circular scale with tick marks and numbers ranging from 160 to 260. Other circles include dashed lines, solid lines, and arrows, suggesting a technical or scientific theme.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

AN INTRODUCTION

CLASS INTRODUCTION

- It is best if this is a discussion, I can anticipate some of your questions but probably not all
- Take pictures of the slides if you want to
- Specific beliefs about creation is not a central tenet of the Christian Faith. A range of beliefs are fine... The How is less important than the Who.
- The purpose of this class to address the myriad of misinformation and disinformation in the public domain
- The purpose **IS** to honor God by showing you there is a way to understand both science and theology as being completely compatible with one another;
 - To address misunderstandings about both science and theology (these terms will be defined shortly)
 - To discuss how science and theology relate
 - To discuss the psychology of belief and how it relates to evidence and judgment
 - To build your faith and reassure you...
- Regardless of the HOW its most important to believe and acknowledge the WHO!

COURSE AGENDA – 8 WEEKS

In this first class, we are going to lay the groundwork for later discussions

- Compatibility between the Christian Theology and Science; Theology
- The scientific method: history, development, implementation
- Evidence and Theory for Creation of the Universe part 1
- Evidence and Theory for Creation of the Universe part 2
- Origins of life, information theory
- Origins of life, addressing macro and chemical evolution issues
- Origins of life, the fossil record, and chronology
- Human cognition and metacognition, mysteries of consciousness

The guiding verse of the Christian Apologist... 1 Peter 3:15

... always being ready to make a defense (apologia) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence...

CLASS AGENDA

In this first class, we are going to lay the groundwork for later discussions

- Compatibility between the Christian Theology and Science
- Why study Apologetics?
- Truth – Where do we get it?
- Belgic Confession of 1561
- Common questions
- Concerns and fears about studying Apologetics (common controversies)
- Discuss common outcomes from a study of Apologetics
- Why Christianity? What makes it different?

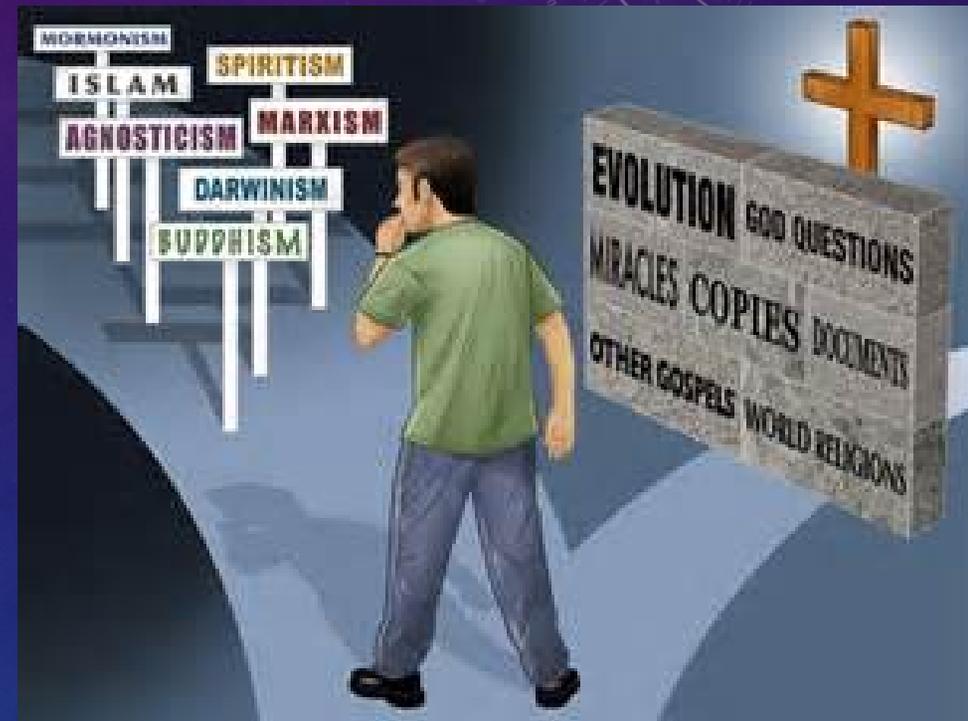
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WHAT IS CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS AND WHY SHOULD WE STUDY IT?

Apologetics (from Greek apologia, "speaking in defense") is the discipline of defending a position (often religious) through the systematic use of information. Early Christian writers (c. 120–220) who defended their faith against critics and recommended their faith to outsiders were called apologists

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologetics>



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WHAT ARE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS AND WHY SHOULD WE STUDY IT?

- “And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some”. (*1 Corinthians 9:20-22*)
- **Personal Motivation:**
 - For me, studying God’s physical Universe and His creation of the human mind is an act of worship. I look at His design for both and I gain insight into His nature and personality that I cannot get anywhere else.
 - It supplements my understand of theology AND it builds my faith, knowing there is order, discipline and meaning in the universe.
 - Sharing my understanding with other Christians and with non-believers who are searching for answers is an act of worship
 - To challenge and correct false narratives about science and theology

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

Is putting Science and the Bible together a bad idea?

Does Big Bang Cosmology contradict the Bible?

Did life evolve from a Primordial soup?

Doesn't the Bible contradict Science?

Does the fossil record prove Evolution?

Did humans evolve from apes?

Why Christianity and not other world religions?

What is the psychology of belief?

Other question you have?





Reason To Believe—

- This series is based in part on the work by a protestant, non-denominational organization, RTB
- RTB is dedicated to the proposition that science and faith converge
www.reasons.org
 - RTB's mission is to spread the Christian Gospel by demonstrating that sound reason and scientific research—including the very latest discoveries—consistently support, rather than erode, confidence in the truth of the Bible and faith in the personal, transcendent God revealed in both Scripture and nature.
- My personal belief is that the RTB model provides a compelling explanation for the convergence of science and theology.

The Discovery Institute—

- This series is also based in part on the work of the Discovery Institute www.discovery.org
- DI is slightly different from RTB in that they hold that living systems are best explained by an intelligent cause and not as undirected, unguided processes like natural selection <https://www.discovery.org/id/faqs/>
- DI describes itself as a secular think tank and not a religious organization; however, many religious traditions and philosophies are represented including agnosticism.
- The primary DI source used in this presentation is a book by Stephen C Meyer, *The Return of the God Hypothesis*

Let's define some terms...

- Science – Is humanity's interpretation and attempts to understand of the metaphorical book of nature (General Revelation)
- Theology – Is humanity's interpretation and attempts to understand the literal book of scripture (Special Revelation)
- Question – If we perceive a conflict between special and general revelation where do you think the problem lies?
 - We always need to remember that our knowledge of both science and theology is inadequate and incomplete.
 - We all have biases that cause our understanding to be imperfect and we lack complete information.
 - These allow for *apparent* conflicts between science and theology to occur.
- I Thessalonians 5:21 – But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.
- Acts 17... be like the Berean's

All Truth is God's Truth—

God is the source of ALL truth...

- Our Heavenly Father is the ONLY source of truth for humanity.
- Numbers 23:19 – **God is not human, that He should lie**, not a human being, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?
- Psalms 12:6 - And **the words of the LORD are flawless**, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times
- Hebrews 6:18 - God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.
- Titus 1:2 - in the hope of eternal life, **which God, who does not lie**, promised before the beginning of time,
- I John 1:5 - This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all**
- John 14:16-17 - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷**the Spirit of truth**...
 - The role of the Holy Spirit is to help us discern truth if we have the right heart to do so... (John 14 and 16)
- Romans 3:4; Psalms 19:7-8; Psalms 119:160; Proverbs 30:5, John 16
- Truth may come to us by any appropriate means, whether from believers or unbelievers

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CLASS AGENDA

Last week we:

- Defined Science and Theology
- Why study Apologetics?
- Truth – Where do we get it?

Today we will start:

- Belgic Confession of 1561
- Concerns and fears about studying Apologetics (common controversies)
- Discuss common outcomes from a study of Apologetics
- Why Christianity? What makes it different?

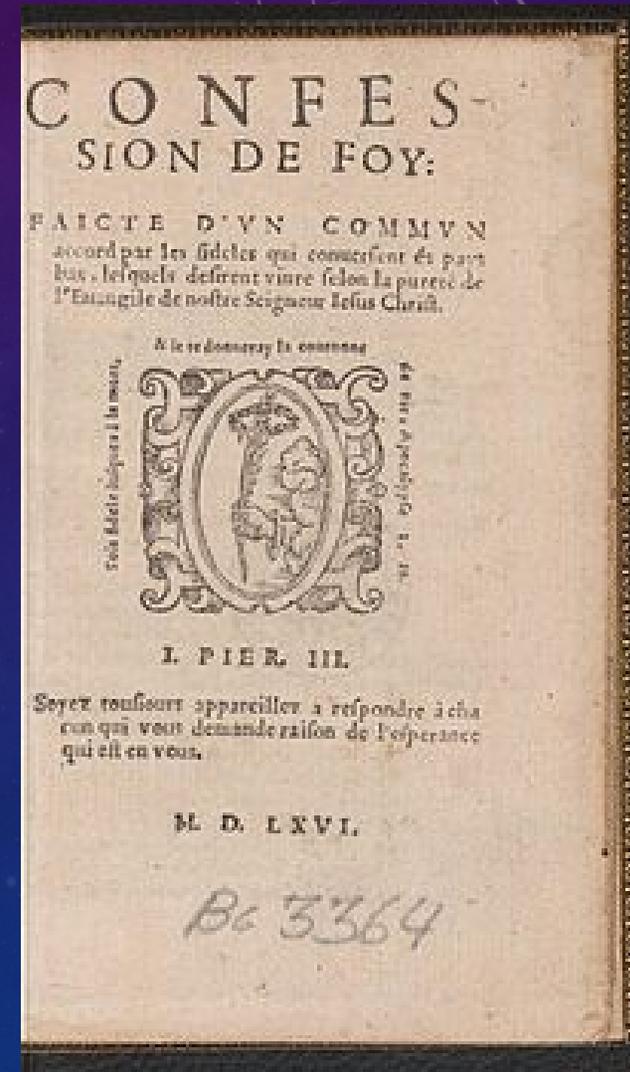
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The Belgic Confession Article II –

The means by which we know God...

- We know Him by two means...
- First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book (emphasis added) in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: His eternal power and His Divinity, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20:
- *All these things are enough to convict men and to leave them without excuse.*
- Second, He makes Himself known to us more openly by His holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for His glory and for the salvation of His own
 - Source: http://www.prca.org/bc_text1.html#a2
 - Written in 1561 by Guido de Bres



What are some fears people have about combined evidences from Bible and Science?

- Concerns that Genesis 1-11 damages the credibility of the Gospel
- Concerns that they may learn something that will cause them to question their faith...
- Not necessary for honorable Christian living and salvation
- Science is confusing
- Not necessary, the message of the Gospel is simple



What are some fears people have about combined evidences from Bible and Science?

- If we cannot take the first book (or chapters) of the Bible literally, then how can we believe any of the Bible?
 - Any biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) requires an understanding of the **context** in which the book was written.
 - Who was the audience?
 - What was the stated, apparent or implied purpose?

What are some fears people have about combined evidences from Bible and Science?

- If we cannot take the first book (or chapters) of the Bible literally, then how can we believe any of the Bible?
 - Do we literally interpret all of the Bible?
 - The Psalms? Parables?
 - Genealogies?
 - Visions written about by the apostle John, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and others?
 - Are parables literal stories?
 - God speaks to His covenant people on a level they can understand.
 - Parables in the NT are realistic stories intended to convey truths about the kingdom of Heaven and Gods nature in way the hearers can understand.

What are some fears people have about combined evidences from Bible and Science?

- Creation controversies result in divisions within the church...
 - They certainly can if we let em...
 - The golden rule of apologetics is:
 - *Treat others opinions and views the way you would want yours treated*
 - As Christians there are tenants central to our faith we must agree on. There are also many things we have not been given to understand yet
 - *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known* I Cor. 13:12
 - Our understanding and interpretations of the book of scripture and the book of nature are incomplete...
 - Perceived contradictions must be attributed to our lack of full understanding or “knowing in part.”
 - We must approach the study of scripture and nature with humility

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

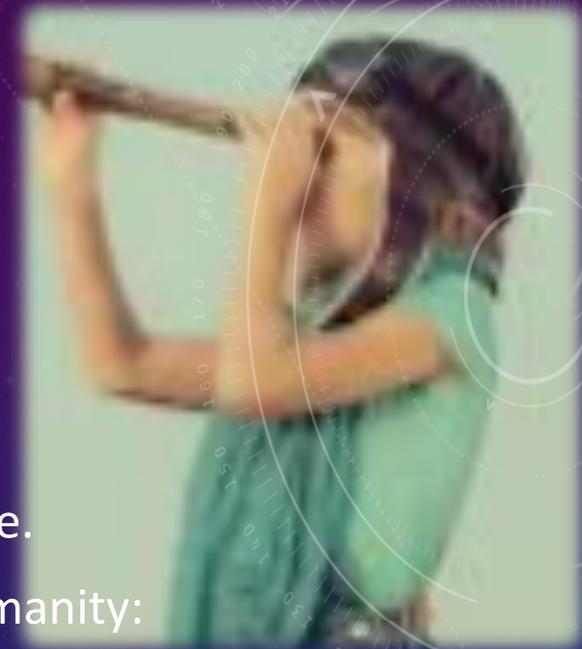
- First, there is no “smoking gun” evidence that we can point to that explicitly proves the existence of God... using the scientific method.
 - This is by design...
 - God wants to give us to freely choose to follow Him, this is why
 - We were created for the purpose of serving and dwelling with God Eph. 1:4&5; Jeremiah 29:11
 - God gave us sufficient evidence in His creation to find Him Romans 1:19,20
 - Only a fool (Hebrew: nabal) saith in his heart there is no God (Psalms 14:1, 53:1)

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- Second, God gives us evidence for what He asks us to believe.
 - This is also by design...
 - What is Christian faith?
 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. Hebrews 11:1,2 (NKJV)
 - The very definition of Christian faith requires evidence be presented and evaluated by all of us.
 - Atheists often say that Christian faith is based on blind belief, this is a false narrative and couldn't be further from the truth.

WHAT OUTCOMES CAN WE EXPECT IN A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS?

- Second, God gives us evidence for what He asks us to believe.
 - Does it seem reasonable to you that God would give humanity:
 - The intellectual ability to comprehend and understand much of His creation (including ourselves)
 - Give us the motivation to pursue that knowledge and understanding,
 - Give us the means to explore by positioning our planet in a quiet part of the galaxy
 - Give us the means to extend our senses through technology built on a foundation of inexpensive energy
 - And then just expect us to accept His word without evidence? This seems absurd.
 - We have abundant evidence for God's existence because He has made Himself known in His creation Romans 1:18-20



Theological Apologetics

Did Jesus actually live on the earth? What is the evidence?

- Jewish Talmud – may be regarded as a secular writing, is a record of 2nd through 5th century teachings and debates about the Torah (first five books of OT).
- Two versions of the Talmud, the Palestinian and the Babylonian of which the Babylonian version is considered the most complete ²
- There are many references to Jesus from this source ¹, although none of them are flattering to any degree. He is often referred to as the “blasphemer and idolater”
- 1 Source: <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691143187/jesus-in-the-talmud>
- 2 Source: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/babylonian-talmund#:~:text=The%20Talmud%20developed%20in%20two,edited%20for%20another%20two%20centuries.>

Theological Apologetics

Did Jesus actually live on the earth? What is the evidence?

- Changed lives of the apostles; the empty tomb recorded by both in the Bible and in secular sources of literature.
- Roman Guards AWOL – especially interesting considering harsh discipline they would have faced
- Jesus appeared to both friendly and hostile witnesses; over 500 whom at the time of Paul's writing, most of whom were still alive 1 Corinthians 15:3-6
- All of the apostles (save John) died martyr's deaths along with hundreds of disciples, thousands more since
- Source:
<http://christianity.about.com/od/biblestorysummaries/p/theresurrection.htm>

Theological Apologetics

Numerous and diverse sources are available listing OT prophecies and NT Fulfillment in Jesus

This website alone has 351 OT prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ

<https://www.newtestamentchristians.com/bible-study-resources/351-old-testament-prophecies-fulfilled-in-jesus-christ/>

These prophecies occurred hundreds and sometimes thousands of years before the fulfillment. They were written by many individuals over spans of thousands of years...

Yet remain entirely consistent with one another

Theological Apologetics

Did Jesus actually live on the earth? What is the evidence?

(Most compelling for me)

- Jesus Half-Brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (Matthew 13:55)
- James – Clearly not a believer early in Jesus ministry (John 7:5)
- James was one of the people Jesus appeared to after His resurrection (1 Cor 15:7)
- He became one of the first leaders of the Church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9), wrote the powerful book of James and was martyred by the Jews

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

Did Jesus actually live on the earth? What is the evidence?

- What about Jude?
- He wrote the NT book of Jude (Jude 1:1) and (by tradition) was likely a church leader also and was martyred.
- Although not mentioned in the NT, tradition holds that Simon, the half-brother of Jesus, was martyred.
- No known references to Jesus's half-brother Joseph
- Mother Mary had some idea of who Jesus was – Gabriel's Announcement (Lk 1); Water into Wine story (John 2:1-11)

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- Types of reasoning deductive, inductive and abductive
 - Deductive – general information to specific (detective solving a case)
 - Inductive – from specific to general (a psychologist experimenting on a sample of a population then generalizing the results to that population)
 - Abductive – Reasoning in such a way as to construct a story to fit the available facts. This reasoning seems to be more natural for us.

Example of Abductive Reasoning

- Any thoughts about how these mysterious markings came to be on this wall?



Why the Christian Faith? Abductive Reasoning

- A thought experiment
 - If you could sit down and invent your own religion, what would it look like? You cannot use Christian morality to define the parameters of the religion... Would your religion include...
 - A God who gives us free will to accept Him or not?
 - A God who knew before time we needed a plan of redemption for reconciliation to Him? 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 1:2-3
 - Part of that plan was to willingly suffer humiliation and death at the hands of His creation? John 3:16; Romans 5:8
 - Create a most powerful angelic majesty who would rebel against Him? And become enemy to all creation? Ezekiel 28
 - Give His “image” to any part of His creation? Genesis 1:26-27

Why the Christian Faith?

- A thought experiment
 - If you could sit down and invent your own religion, what would it look like?
 - Use natural processes to miraculously lovingly and painstakingly create a perfect home for those with His image? Psalms 104; Job 38-40
 - Send His very Spirit to dwell with His creation to help and to discern truth? John 14 & 16
 - Write a book Himself explaining our place in the universe, our role and expectations of us? John 15; Matthew 5-7; Micah 6:6-8

Why the Christian Faith?

- A thought experiment
 - If you could sit down and invent your own religion, what would it look like?
 - What about a God who greatly desires to have a loving relationship with His creation? See God's reaction at the apostasy of Ephraim (Israel)
 - God taught them to walk, raised them as a parent raises a child and when that child becomes an adult it rebels against its parent... Hosea 11; God describes His heart as being turned over within Him vs. 8 (KJV).
 - He is grief stricken at the rejection of Him by His covenant people

Why the Christian Faith?

- A thought experiment
 - If you could sit down and invent your own religion, what would it look like?
 - A God who greatly desires everyone to willingly choose Him but does not require it of us II Peter 3:9
 - According to Lewis, *“Reality, in fact, is usually something you could not have guessed. That is one of the reasons I believe Christianity. **It is a religion you could not have guessed.** If it offered us just the kind of universe we had always expected, I should feel we were making it up. But, in fact, it is not the sort of thing anyone would have made up. It has just that queer twist about it that real things have”.*
 - Source:
<https://www.dacc.edu/assets/pdfs/PCM/merechristianitylewis.pdf>
page 26

Final Thoughts on this section?

Summary

- Two books – metaphorical book of nature and actual book of scripture
- All truth is God's truth – Discernment is a gift from the Holy Spirit
- Integrating Genesis/Creation with Science will enhance the credibility of both by providing a more complete picture.
- Apologetic creed 1 Peter 3:15 ...always being ready to make a defense (apologia) to everyone who ask you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence...
- Christianity, there is nothing else like it, this is evidence. All other religions are explainable and predictable to some extent, however Christianity is “so unexpected” as Lewis puts it.

Discussion? / Questions?

If you wish to email questions later my email address is:

thowell2books@gmail.com

End of section



What are some fears people have about combined evidences from Bible and Science?

- Genealogies controversy
 - Hebrew yalad, (3205) is translated by NIV as begat.
 - Like the word for father (ab) and son (ben), in context, yalad has much broader meaning
 - Deut. 32:18 God “begat” then (Israel)
 - Numbers 11:12, Moses declares he had not “begotten” Israel himself
 - Daniel 5:22 Belshazzar is described as “son” of Nebuchadnezzar and likewise Neb... is called his “father” but they were not biologically related. Belshazzar was the literal son of Nabonidus.
 - Ruth 4:13-17 uses the same word “son” to describe Obed as the son of Naomi. Obed was the biological son of Ruth and Boaz, Naomi was the mother of Boaz.
 - Genesis 48 Manasseh and Ephraim were described as sons of Jacob (Israel), when in fact they were the biological sons of Joseph and grandsons of Jacob. Jacob adopted his grandsons so that they might have a full inheritance in the land of Israel.
 - Source: <http://www.reasons.org/articles/the-genesis-genealogies>

What are some fears people have about combined evidences from Bible and Science?

- Genealogies controversy
 - 1650 Bishop Usser, Catholic Archbishop of Ireland calculated a timeline based on a genealogies from Genesis 5 and 11. The result was that Adam and Eve were thought to have been created around 4004 BC.
 - His assumption was that the genealogies were complete and without gaps.
- Purposes of Genealogies in the Bible
 - Familial – used to establish inheritances
 - Legal / Political – used to establish tribe, land allocations for tribe and service
 - Religious – establishment of the priesthood (Levites); Establish lineage for Jesus Christ
 - Genesis 5 – Adam to Noah
 - Genesis 11 – Noah to Abraham
 - Matthew 1 – Abraham to Jesus Christ in order to fulfill OT prophesy (e.g. provide evidence of fulfillment)
 - Genesis 12:3; 17:19; 49:10; Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 11:10; Jeremiah 23:5&6
 - See other references <http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/prophchr.html>

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- First, there is no “smoking gun” evidence that we can point to that explicitly proves the existence of God... using the scientific method.
- I believe I can show through both theological and scientific lines of evidence and abductive reasoning, that God is the best explanation...
- Why doesn't God just show Himself?
 - This is by design... Several passages in the Bible describe visions of God and encounters with both Him and created beings (Angels)
 - Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish Exodus 19:21
 - In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple... “Woe to me”, I cried “I am ruined”... my eyes have seen the King the Lord Almighty... Isaiah 6:1-5

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- First, there is no “smoking gun” evidence that we can point to that explicitly proves the existence of God... using the scientific method.
 - This is by design... Several passages in the Bible describe visions of God and encounters with both Him and created beings (Angels)
 - As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from **the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him.** As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD And when I saw it, I **fell on my face** and heard a voice speaking. Ezekiel 1:1-28; 10:1 ff

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- First, there is no “smoking gun” evidence that we can point to that explicitly proves the existence of God... using the scientific method.
 - This is by design... Several passages in the Bible describe visions of God and encounters with both Him and created beings (Angels)
 - And I heard a man’s voice from the Ulai calling, “Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision.” As he came near the place where I was standing, **I was terrified and fell prostrate**. “Son of man”, he said to me, “understand that the vision concerns the time of the end.” Daniel 8:16,17

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- First, there is no “smoking gun” evidence that we can point to that explicitly proves the existence of God... using the scientific method.
 - This is by design... Several passages in the Bible describe visions of God and encounters with both Him and created beings (Angels)
 - I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, **his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.** I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. 8 So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. Daniel 10:5-9
 - Consider Daniel’s reaction to Angels who had just been in the presence of the Lord... And the reactions of the Roman guards who guarded the empty tomb... they shook and became like dead men Matthew 28:4

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- First, there is no “smoking gun” evidence that we can point to that explicitly proves the existence of God... using the scientific method.
 - This is by design...
 - God wants to give us a fair chance and freely choose to follow Him, this is why
 - He does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear 1 Cor. 10:13
 - He desires all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of truth 1 Tim 2:4
 - We have the sermon on the mount Matthew 5-7, we are given the values that please our Heavenly Father , e.g. rules of living a successful life
 - God incarnate paid the ransom Himself for our sins John 10:18, Eph. 2:8&9 and Romans 5:8
 - He loves us John 3:16
 - He wants us to choose to serve Him of our own free will Revelations 22:17; Ezekiel 3:27; Luke 13:34

What outcomes can we expect in a study of Christian Apologetics?

- Finally, there is great assurance in Understanding there is agreement between evidence from Theology and Science
 - Much has been made by atheists and Christian skeptics that faith and science are mutually exclusive
 - We will look at this closely in the next segment on the scientific method.
 - Part of why we may avoid the study of science is that we might uncover something that will challenge our faith
 - Challenge our expectations – challenging our beliefs, causing us to doubt our faith
 - This is exactly how our adversary has makes effective use of this perceived lack of concurrence between Science and Faith
 - We are afraid of having our beliefs challenged...
 - In Reality, a study of Science and Theology has the effect of BUILDING UP our faith.
 - As people dedicated to truth, we must courageously and humbly follow the evidence, wherever it may lead
 - If God is whom He claims to be, can He not write a book and create a universe that are compatible?