Apologetics - Answering with Truth

PURPOSE:

This study is designed to help prepare us to respond to the common questions of the skeptic and the seeker. The intent is to provide a forum to learn how we can defend our faith and engage these people in a meaningful conversation that uses truth to point them to Christ.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Recognize that each person is coming from a vantage point of either questioning or seeking truth.
2. Learn to analyze questions and possibly reframe them productively before responding.
3. Recognize that no human being can answer every question.
4. Identify some of the factors that motivate unbelief, agnosticism, and uncertainty.
5. Review some common questions and formulate responses.
6. Learn to weave Scripture into responses.
7. Learn to respond in a way that reflects the character of Christ.

Class 1a Introduction to Biblical Apologetics

A Biblical Perspective on Apologetics from 1 Pet.3:15

Sanctify – a pure heart that fears God (state of heart & conscience)
Ready – prepared and willing (state of heart and mind)
Always – on any occasion (yet cautious of placing pearls before swine Matt.7:6, of avoiding foolish questions and quarrels 2Tim. 2:23,24; and answering a fool's folly Prov.26:4)
Answer – apologia—an apology which is a reasoned defense or statement of truth from evidence (speaking to the mind to reach the heart)
Every man – universal gospel message
Reason – Logos, the wisdom, reason, and Word of God (John 1:1) (from mind to the heart, from evidence to a conviction)
Hope – joyful confidence in the mind and heart
Meekness – mild and gentle response
Fear – reverence/respect, in awe of the truth

- Our first obligation is to tell the truth; it is not to provide an "acceptable or pleasing" answer.
- Tie every line of reasoning to the Biblical record—whether speaking from history, science, or philosophy. The Word of God is powerful, and we have no case without the correlating testimony of Scriptures.

- We should not speculate about what we do not know. **No one has all the answers to questions where God has not revealed information**.
- It is appropriate at times to ask what evidence they are "wiling" to accept.
- We should try to discern the intent of the question/questioner—is it merely a trap or an honest inquiry (Matt.7:6; 1Tim. 2:20-26). He that wins souls is wise (Prov.11:30; Matt.10:16)
- Discern whether the question is based on false assumptions and address those false assumptions in your answer. (Matt.21:23-27). Case study:
  a. Whose authority did they presume that He needed?
  b. The assumption was, unless you have our authority you are not authorized to teach.
  c. Who gave John his authority? He was recognized as an authoritative prophet from God and John pointed men to Jesus.
  d. By pointing out that John had recognized authority and yet it did not come from the Jewish elders, Jesus answered the question by establishing that His authority came from God.

Speaking to the Mind to Reach the Heart

Proverbs speaks much about the fool and their characteristics—and the difference between the fool and the wise man.

What is meant by moral fools? When we speak about fools we are not talking about those with mental limitations, but we are speaking about those who knowingly and willingly disregard wisdom and walk down the path of ruin. It is foolishness which comes from the will of the heart and prevents the mind from engaging in sound reasoning. The heart decides what it *wants* to do, and the head seeks ways to *rationalize* and *justify* what the heart desires to do.

*With the **heart** man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* –it begins in the heart and moves to the mind and comes out the mouth.

As a man thinketh in his heart so is he …

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man

The scripture gives us the following advice:

*2 Tim. 2:24 … the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance **(heart change)** to the acknowledging of the truth **(mind change); 26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

The will of the sinner is in bondage to their sinful nature. Repentance is God's gift to free the will from the bondage and power of sin to freely serve God.

The Power of the Divine Word/Logos, John 1:1-18

1. **Verses 1-3 The beginning –** in reference to man it speaks to the 6 days of creation Matt.19:4,8; With relation to God and eternity it speaks to the age before creation. Verse 3 shows the Word creating all—therefore the Word existed before creation as God because it was God.
   The Word-Logos is the reason wisdom, thought, and spoken Word of God.

2. **Verses 4-9 The Word is life and light –** as the Word proceeds from the Father it is joined with life from the Son so that the Word is life-giving. The Son has life in himself. (Jn 5:26) "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The life that is in the Son flows from His voice (Jn.5:24, 25, 28, 29).

3. **Verses 10-11 The light of truth can be rejected.** No matter how familiar some people are with the truth they may still choose not to believe the manifestation of God's Word even when they have sufficient light to believe.

4. **Verses 12-18 The light of truth may be received.** The power of God regenerates our mind and our heart to understand and embrace it completely.

The Logos of God has given us the ability to see the evidence and believe the Word of God.

CLASS 1b The Existence of God—Scientific Arguments

The premise of Intelligent Design is scientifically required.

The necessity for an Uncaused First Cause--In the beginning God …
According to most evolutionary scientists, the Big Bang is typically said to be the start of the universe as we know it today. The problem with any theory on the start of the universe is that it always requires some pre-existing matter and pre-existing conditions to spontaneously start the process that evolves into a universe.

Irreducible complexity in biology
"If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."
--Charles Darwin, Origin of Species

By irreducibly complex *I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional. An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing, would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution. (-Michael Behe, Darwin's Black Box, pg. 39, 1996).*

There are many attempts to rebut irreducible complexity by showing how things can evolve into more advanced forms of life. However, those life forms are simply development within a species—micro evolution.

The Anthropic Principle *The anthropic principle says that the universe appears "designed" for the sake of human life. More than a century of astronomy and physics research yields this unexpected observation: the emergence of humans and human civilization requires physical constants, laws, and properties that fall within certain narrow ranges—and this truth applies not only to the cosmos as a whole but also to the galaxy, planetary system, and planet humans occupy. To state the principle more dramatically, a preponderance of physical evidence points to humanity as the central theme of the cosmos.*

In 1961, astronomers acknowledged just two characteristics of the universe as ***"fine-tuned"*** *to make physical life possible.[1] The more obvious one was the ratio of the gravitational force constant to the electromagnetic force constant. It cannot differ from its value by any more than one part in 10^{40} (one part in ten thousand trillion trillion trillion) without eliminating the possibility for life. Today, the number of known cosmic characteristics recognized as fine-tuned for life—any conceivable kind of physical life—stands at thirty-eight.[2] Of these, the most sensitive is the space energy density (the self-stretching property of the universe). Its value cannot vary by more than one part in 10^{120} and still allow for the kinds of stars and planets physical life requires.[3]*

http://www.reasons.org/articles/anthropic-principle-a-precise-plan-for-humanity

see also http://www.reasonablefaith.org/the-teleological-argument-and-the-anthropic-principle

Presenting the relationships between the Uncaused First Cause, Irreducible Complexity, and the Anthropic Principle together makes an irrefutable case against evolution based on statistical probability. Furthermore, any attempt to refute this proposition cannot be supported by a scientific or mathematical model.

The Age of the earth—biology and geology

Genesis 1:1-3 and the Pangaea,

a. The creation was of an apparent age.
b. The pre-existing condition (before the 6 days) of darkness, earth and water, how long was it in this state before the first day of creation? What age did it represent on a time scale? This was God's creation before the 6 days of special creation.
c. Light was created on the 1st day,
d. The waters divided from above and below the firmament on the 2nd day.
e. The earth as we know it was formed on the 3rd day by calling the waters into one place.
f. We don't know how much geology was created that we can read today from the chaotic water and earth mass at the beginning or creation or when the waters were called into one place.
g. The division of the earth in the days of Peleg was different from the division of languages at Babel. Babel occurs 2 generations beyond Japheth (Gen.10:5). The

division of the earth occurs 5 generations from Shem (Lk.3:35,36). The division of the earth represents tectonic plate shift that divided peoples and animals on different continents. This is more geology and also explains the flood story being carried to all the continents.

Pangaea (one super-continent) and Flood Evidence

1. The burial of great quantities of animals **together**.

2. The evidence for the **rapid** burial of species with excellent **preservation** (little decay) of the fossils.

3. The presence of **"non-native" species in burial grounds** – meaning those same species are now found only on other continents.

4. **The position** of mammals suggest death by drowning. Geological processes as currently seen in the modern world do not produce such conditions. A world-wide catastrophic flood is a logical explanation.

In the Genesis flood account, we are told, ... "on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened" (ESV). This would indicate that a major part of the flood was the opening up of underground water reservoirs creating the potential for tectonic plate shifting.

*Peter says, "the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the **world that then existed** was deluged with water and perished (ESV)."*

With the building of Babel, God separated man by languages and scattered them--*So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of **all the earth** (ESV)*. Man, and animals spread out over **all the earth** and when the ice bridges melted, they were isolated. In the days of Peleg, two generations after the building of Babel, the earth was now divided. This explains the separation of peoples and animals into the current continents. It also explains why there are over 200 ancient accounts of flood stories from all over the world—which have remarkable similarities to the basic flood story, though without the extent of details as Genesis.

The fallacy of uniformitarianism as the basis for radiometric dating. From Smithsonian/NASA sponsored website and Geological Society of America -- James Shea

> *(1) is unique to geology; (2) was originated by Hutton; (3) was named by Lyell, who established its current meaning; (4) should be called "actualism" because it refers to "real" causes; (5) holds that only currently acting processes operated during geologic time; (6) holds that the rates of processes have been constant; (7) holds that only gradual*

processes have acted and that catastrophes have not occurred during Earth's past; (8) holds that conditions on Earth haven't changed much; (9) holds that Earth is very old; (10) is a testable theory; (11) is limited in both time and place; and (12) holds that the laws governing nature have been constant through time. Geologists should abandon the terms "uniformitarianism" and "actualism" because they are fruitless, confusing, and inextricably associated with many fallacious concepts. Instead, the fundamental philosophical approach of science should be recognized as basic to geology.

"How can a naturalist justify the axiom of uniformity of natural law? . . . As noted earlier, the materialist side of naturalism is consistently accompanied by its handmaid, positivism. Unfortunately, the positivist faces a major dilemma. His epistemology requires an empirical test of validity, by which he isolates science as the only path to truth. But scientific principles can only be extrapolated into the past (or future) by the presupposition of uniformity, and that presupposition cannot possibly be justified empirically. The naturalist, still caught in his logical trap, must deny one of his major presuppositions—positivism or uniformity (Reed 1998, pp. 162–163)."

https://answersingenesis.org/geology/catastrophism/untangling-uniformitarianism/

Class 2a The Goodness of God and the Presence of Suffering and Evil

How can God be good if He …

1. **Identifying the presuppositions in the question.**
   a. Where did you get the idea that He is good?
   b. What is the assumed standard of goodness by which we are judging God's goodness?
   c. It assumes that God must meet our standard of goodness.
   d. The standard of goodness also assumes a standard of evil (and/or sub-goodness)—what is the standard of evil or sub-goodness?
   e. We must accept the reality that is in this world and decide how we want to face it.
   f. In the end your rejection of God will not improve the reality of your life—what will happen, will happen.

2. **If God is all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful, why does He allow so many innocent people to suffer?**

   a. Do you believe that He is all three of them? He also needs to be omni-present or He has an out.
   b. God has established predictable laws of nature and given men the ability to make choices, that barring a miracle, have predictable consequences.

c. The question assumes that men should have the freedom only to make right choices or that bad choices would only affect bad people.
d. In reality this question is why didn't God create a world and natural order just the way I want it to be?
e. Suppose you reject God; will this remove pain and suffering from innocent people?
f. Unless you are all-knowing, how do you know that good can never come from pain?
g. The question assumes that good cannot come from bad experiences where innocent people suffer and therefore all suffering should be stopped.
h. The crucifixion of Christ was the greatest tragedy and travesty of justice with relation to an innocent person suffering unjustly.
i. In Christianity suffering innocently can purify us, glorify God, inspire others, and draw us into a closer relationship with Christ. This does not remove the pain, but it gives meaning to suffering. It can also accomplish greater good that goes beyond our lifetime.
j. In times of pain and suffering we can also be sure that God is (omni) present—is all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful.

CLASS 2b The Bible is Reliable and Unique from other Religious Books?

The character of the God of the Bible is perfectly holy, yet gracious and unconditionally loving.

Three prominent themes in the Bible are the holiness, grace, and the unconditional love of God. The uniqueness of the Bible relates to the unique portrayal of Jehovah as the one true God.

Holiness—the gods of Mesopotamia were vengeful, lustful, at war between themselves. The concept of a holy god could not come from their culture.

Love—no other deity was recognized as having unconditional love for all mankind.

Mercy/Grace—The God of the Bible is portrayed as One who delights in showing forgiveness and favor to those who do not merit it.

The Moral Law

The 10 commandments are the only moral code of conduct that has been in existence with the advent of alphabetic writing, and which has remained in continual usage ever since. The Encyclopedia Britannica states:

"The Commandments contain little that was new to the ancient world and reflect a morality common to the ancient Middle East. They are a description of the conditions accepted by the community of Israel in its relationship to Yahweh. The differences found in Exodus and Deuteronomy indicate that the process of transmission from generation to generation brought with it modifications. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ten-Commandments

The Hebrew alphabet is one of the first alphabets developed in the world for precise communication

Wikkipedia - The history of alphabetic writing goes back to the consonantal writing system used for Semitic languages (descendants of Shem) in the Levant (eastern Mediterranean area) in the 2nd millennium BCE. Most or nearly all alphabetic scripts used throughout the world today ultimately go back to this Semitic proto-alphabet. Its first origins can be traced back to a Proto-Sinaitic script developed in Ancient Egypt to represent the language of Semitic-speaking workers in Egypt. This script was partly influenced by the older Egyptian hieratic, a cursive script related to Egyptian hieroglyphs.

Mainly through Phoenician and Aramaic, two closely related members of the Semitic family of scripts that were in use during the early first millennium BCE, the Semitic alphabet became the ancestor of multiple writing systems across the Middle East, Europe, northern Africa and South Asia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_alphabet

Moses was schooled in all the learning of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). He wrote the 10 commandments on tables of stone. Moses brought writing and the Word of God into this world in written form.

It addresses the essential questions of man—the human condition, the way of salvation, the purpose of living, and our final destiny.

The Bible has its own starting point and hinges on no other book to tell a complete story.

The story of humanity and Israel gives accurate insight into the depravity of man and his need for help. I have often asked the question to skeptics—what is the natural state of man—selfish or unselfish?

Additionally, we want to note that man's basic need comes from the image of God in the capacity to love. This was lost in the fall but is restored by grace.

In the sovereignty of God, He gave us His Son as an expression of divine love. What does mankind emotionally crave? To love and to be loved unselfishly. To be in that circle of reciprocating love.

Moral law is a coach to loving behavior, but it cannot change our nature. Christ changes our nature so that we can truly love. With the capacity to love morality becomes the effect and not the cause of salvation. Our destiny is based on our relationship with Christ and not our good works.

The message of salvation offers grace and forgiveness to all and the opportunity for a new beginning.

Most religions emphasize the need for moral living. But they assume this is the essence of their faith—to be morally good by however they define moral goodness. The Bible teaches us that everyone who responds to the gospel can be forgiven of their past, their past indebtedness

(does not discount restitution), and can have a new beginning with a new nature in control of our flesh.

How does a Christian conversion differ from another religious conversion experience?

A works-based conversion to a religion might give a person more purpose and fulfillment in living but it will not change them like a faith-based conversion that cleanses the past, brings them into a loving relationship of close connection. In a works-based religion it is all about performance and being good enough, whereas Jesus meets us where we are, forgives our sins, gives us assurance of salvation, and the power to live a different life out of love for Him.

The Testimony of Archeology

*** Rosetta Stone –** discovered by Napoleon's scholars and intercepted by the British warships. Because it was written in partially in Greek and Egyptian Hieroglyphics with identical messages the scholars interpreted the Greek and then they learned the hieroglyphic language. This allowed them to interpret a lot of sealed history concerning Egypt that was in hieroglyphic language.

***The Egyptian records reveal the Israelites in Egypt** The Ipuwer Papyrus says, *"Plague stalketh through the land and blood is everywhere. Nay, but many dead men are buried in the river. Nay, but the river is blood. Does a man drink thereof? He rejects it … "*
When the Pharaoh (at that time) Amenhotep II died, he was succeeded, not by his firstborn son but by a younger son.

***The Hittites** were an ancient nation for which there was no record for many years. The Bible critics used the mention of this nation as proof of the inaccuracies of Biblical history … until vast amounts of information were unearthed in Turkey. The 1860 Britannica had 8 lines about the Hittites while the 1947 edition had over 10 full pages. **The rocks were bearing witness to the truth of the Bible.**

*** The Behistun Rock** was a massive rock face on the road between Baghdad and Tehran with cuneiform writing. In 1836 Henry Rawlinson worked for a year to translate 200 lines of it. This opened the door for him and others to learn how to read cuneiform writing over the following years. As a result, this opened up the history of Assyria and Babylon.

* Learning the language of these two rocks allowed scholars to understand the history of the ancient nations spoken of in the biblical accounts. They could verify what the Bible recorded. The Bible was only enduring record for many years of many details regarding Assyria and Babylon.

A ziggurat (temple tower) in the Ur of the Chaldees was discovered with inscriptions of the history of the region. On contract tablets were the names of Terah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Milcah, and Laban.

It contains incredible prophetic fulfillments.

Destruction of Tyre by Alexander the Great and the Macedonian/Greek Army Ezekiel 26

In Ezekiel 26, God makes a proclamation concerning Tyre, summed up in the following:

Many nations would come against Tyre (Ezek. 26:3) Babylonians destroyed mainland Tyre (586 for 13 years) and 2.5 centuries later the Greeks the island of Tyre (332)—both using confederate armies. Like waves 26:3 (reoccurring) city was on the mainland was partially rebuilt but was successively destroyed by Arabs in 638 AD and 1291 AD.

The walls of Tyre would be broken down (Ezek. 26:4) Nebuchadnezzar the main city and Alexander the Island fortress.

Tyre would be a place for the spreading of nets (Ezek. 26:5) Today it is home to a small fishing village near mainland Tyre.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, would build a siege wall around Tyre (Ezek. 26:8)

Nebuchadnezzar would plunder the city (Ezek. 26:9-12)

Dust would be scraped from Tyre, and she would be left like a bare rock (Ezek.26:4)

The city would never be rebuilt (Ezek. 26:14) after its final destruction Isa.23:12-18, after the first wave it lay for 70 years and was partially rebuilt when Alexander came and partially again until the Arabs came. The island city which was the main fortress has never been rebuilt after being destroyed by Alexander.

Critical Objections and responses: Nebuchadnezzar did not destroy it. He did or Alexander could not have used its rubble to build a causeway.

Mainland Tyre was originally walled also In ancient times, the island-city of Tyre was heavily fortified and the mainland settlement, originally called Ushu (later called Palaetyrus, meaning "Old Tyre," by the ancient Greeks) was actually more like a line of suburbs than any one city and was used primarily as a source of water and timber for the main island city. *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyre,_Lebanon*

Joshua 19:29 refers to Asher's borders with Tyre—referring to the mainland city and called it **fortified**. See also 2Sam.24:7

*For not destroying it God gave Nebuchadnezzar the spoils of Egypt (Eze.29:18-20). Critics say this was backdated because the first prophecy failed.

This invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar was for a long time strenuously denied (e.g. as late as 1889 by Kuenen, Historisch-critisch Onderzoek, 265-318); but since the discovery and publication (1878) of fragments of Nebuchadnezzar's annals in which he affirms his invasion of Egypt in his 37th year (568-567 BC), most scholars have agreed that the predictions of Jeremiah (43:9-13; 44:30) uttered shortly after 586 BC and of Ezekiel (29:19) uttered in 570 BC were fulfilled, "at least in their general sense"
http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/T/tahpanhes.html

The Biblical doctrine of the Inspiration and Preservation of Scripture

a. **The two inseparable pillars –**Inspiration and preservation 1Pet. 1:23-25
b. **Manuscript evidence for preservation**

Bible - 5700 manuscripts 24,000 early translations

Homer - 643 manuscripts, earliest is 400 BC with original being 900 BC

Plato – 7

Tacitus – 20

Aristotle- 49

c. Preservation in spite of persecution
Recount the history of the English Bible through Tyndale

d. The Jews and the Church preserved as guardians of the Book
Romans 3:2; 1Tim.3;15

Class 3 How did we receive the Canon of Scripture?

Canon—rule of measure or measuring stick, definition of extent of the Holy Scriptures

Rationalistic skeptics promote the idea that the Church first created its own religion and then later decided on a canon of Scripture which would support their beliefs. They declare that the canon was not known until it was defined in the councils of Nicaea (AD 325), Hippo (AD 393) and Carthage (AD 397). Therefore, skeptics conclude that the canon was defined by the Church's doctrine—and was designed to support miraculous tenets such as the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, and the bodily resurrection.

Did the Church Councils choose the Books of the Bible?

There are several false assumptions in the Skeptic's premise that the canon was derived from the church councils. First, we want to point out that the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 does not have a record that the canon was even discussed. The canon discussions at Church Councils comes in Hippo (AD 393). Before there were any recorded church councils discussing the canon, there were a number of notable events that indicate the Scriptures were already defined. Diocletian gave an edict in AD 303 to destroy the scriptures—giving evidence that they were already a known entity. In AD 331 the emperor Constantine asked for 50 Bibles to be printed—showing the divine preservation of the Scriptures from Diocletian. According to Eusebius, Constantine wrote to him in a letter:

I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church, to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art.[4]
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fifty_Bibles_of_Constantine

There was the Vetus Latina (old Latin—quoted extensively by Latin writers of the early church starting in the mid-200s A.D. with Cyprian), Gothic (AD 350 eastern Germanic), Peshitta (Syriac the OT from a proto-Masoretic Hebrew text, most of the NT by the end of the 200s AD), and the Latin Vulgate (AD 383 NT text, and the OT text by AD 405). Additionally, we can reconstruct most of the NT from the writings of the early Church leaders who were quoting NT passages as scripture before the councils of Hippo or Carthage.

We affirm and will give evidence to show that the Church Councils did not originally choose the books of the Bible, but rather the church as a whole from its infancy was guided by the Holy Spirit to recognize those writings that were: (a. chosen and inspired by God to be the Holy Scriptures, (b. given further identification by Jesus, and then (c. completed by His apostles.

1. The New Testament Canon

Historical Overview

The historical data shows that the entire New Testament was written and in full use before any significant church council confirmed a list of NT books. The books of the NT were quoted as Scripture by the early church writers. Only about 5-7 NT books (depending on your sources), had their canonicity questioned by a smaller body of churches for a period of time (Hebrews, James, II Peter, II John, III John, Jude and Revelation). But even these 7 books were still being used in other churches throughout the world from 100 AD on and were being recognized as Scripture.

Origen provides our earliest NT list of books, identifying 26 books around AD 250, and then by referencing Revelation later in his writings, he indicated the complete canon. In AD 367, Athanasius also gave the same list of 27 books. These lists are not the start of canonization, but rather reveal that leaders were writing that these were books were recognized as canonical by the churches. In AD 383 a revised NT Latin text was completed by Jerome and became the NT that we know today as the Latin Vulgate. Following this the local councils of Hippo (AD 393) and Carthage (AD 397) confirmed the same list of NT books.

Ultimately, the church universally accepted the complete canon of the NT before any significant church council would affirm the 27 books of the NT as the canon of Scripture. This is strong evidence that the church was not looking to council decisions for canonicity but was looking for the apostolic marks of inspiration.

The New Testament Apostolic Witness

A. The apostles were given all the truth in the apostolic age

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 16:12-15 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

1. The coming of the Spirit would signal the beginning of **receiving all the truth**.

2. The apostles were promised that all Jesus' teachings would be **brought to their remembrance.**

3. They had a promise of perfect memory recall and additionally a promise of guidance into all truth **that was not yet received**.

4. We also have the promise of **prophecies concerning the future** being given to the apostles.

   In summary, the apostles were promised a perfect recall of the past, the full deposit of truth within their lifetime, and the ability to see into the future and declare the things to come.

   Because the Church received the full and completed deposit of truth within the apostolic age the church could then be considered the pillar (column) and ground (base support) of the truth (1Tim.3:14,15). There is a clear connection in these verses between what was written and the church being the pillar and ground of the truth. It rests on the foundation of truth and elevates the truth—holds it up.

B. The Early Church testifies to the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

Justin Martyr 100-165 AD raised in Samaria, moved to Rome, a pagan philosopher, became a Christian apologist, knew the Jews and the Romans and speaks to both after his conversion. Was beheaded in Rome.

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, Justin Martyr 1st Apology Chap 67

For in the memoirs which I say were drawn up by His apostles and those who followed them, [it is recorded] that His sweat fell down like drops of blood while He was praying, and saying, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass:' Justin Martyr Dialogue with Trypho the Jew chapter 103

Irenaeus 130-202 born in Smyrna, taught by Polycarp who was taught by the apostle John, moved to France, apologist for truth against the Gnostic heresies.

Against Heresies

The deposit of Truth:

"Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life. Revelation 22:17

Tertullian—Prescription against Heretics-155-240 AD

Now this heresy of yours does not receive certain Scriptures; and whichever of them it does receive, it perverts by means of additions and diminutions, for the accomplishment of its own purpose; and such as it does receive, it receives not in their entirety; but even when it does receive any up to a certain point as entire, it nevertheless perverts even these by the contrivance of diverse interpretations. Truth is just as much opposed by an adulteration of its meaning as it is by a corruption of its text. Their vain presumptions must needs refuse to acknowledge the (writings) whereby they are refuted. Chap 17

No doubt He had once said, I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot hear them now; but even then He added, When He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, He will lead you into all truth. John 16:12-13 He (thus) shows that there was nothing of which they were ignorant, to whom He had promised the future attainment of all truth by help of the Spirit of truth. Chap 22

Skeptics will often argue that some books with equal claim to canonicity were removed from the canon; but this cannot be proven from history. Books identified as lacking apostolic inspiration credentials never made it into the NT canon! The church's criteria for the canon were the same as given by Jesus—that all truth was given to the apostles, therefore all inspired writings came either from an apostle or were written under the supervision of the apostles within the apostolic age.

2. The Old Testament Canon

A. The Jewish Prophets gave us the OT

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much in every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. Rom.3:1,2

Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. 2Sam.23:1,2

Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption (Acts 2:30-31).

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: Luke 1:70

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: Romans 16:26

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb.1:1

B. External Jewish Witnesses

We have but twenty-two [books] containing the history of all time, books that are justly believed in; and of these, five are the books of Moses, which comprise the law and earliest traditions from the creation of mankind down to his death. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, the successor of Xerxes, the prophets who succeeded Moses wrote the history of the events that occurred in their own time, in thirteen books. The remaining four documents comprise hymns to God and practical precepts to men (William Whiston, trans., Flavius Josephus against Apion, Vol. 1, in Josephus, Complete Works, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1960, p. 8).

39 OT books in our Protestant Bibles

Tanakh—"The Tanakh consists of twenty-four books: it counts as one book each Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah and counts the Twelve Minor Prophets as a single book." It has the same amount of OT books as our current Bibles.

Josephus identifies 22 because he limits the number of canonical books in these three divisions to twenty-two. This would be the same as the current twenty-four in the Jewish Tanakh – as is believed by many scholars -- Ruth was attached to Judges, and Lamentations attached to Jeremiah.

And how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or take anything from them, or to make any change in them-, but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willing to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in numbers, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theatres, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws, and the records that contain them (Josephus, Ibid., p. 609).

Josephus also references the non-canonical books of Jewish History that we call the Apocrypha:

From Artaxerxes to our times a complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit, with the earlier records, because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets (Against Apion 1:41)

The Tanakh divides the OT scriptures in 3 sections between the Law/Torah (Gen.-Deut.) the Prophets/Nevi'im (Josh-Mal.), the Psalms/Writings/Ketuvim (Psalms-2Chron.). So, we may think the prophets belong only in the 1 division of the OT Tanakh. The NT speaks about the divisions of the Tanakh which forms the Hebrew canon.

Jesus affirms the canon of the Tanakh on the road to Emmaus Jesus discusses how He has fulfilled prophecies. In Luke 24:44 He references the things which are written in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is a reference to the 3-fold division of the Tanakh. Earlier in verse 24 it indicates that Jesus went through all the scriptures and all the prophets. All the scriptures and all the prophets are then summed up as the law, the prophets, and the Psalms (writings).

The OT canon was referred to as the written scriptures.

*Mat 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never **read** in **the scriptures**, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes*?

*John 5:39 Search **the scriptures**; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

*Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of **the scriptures**,*

*Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched **the scriptures** daily, whether those things were so.*

*2 Tim 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures**, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

The use of the **term "the scriptures"** in the above verses from the New Testament indicates that the full canon of scripture was known and understood by both the speaker and audience. And the following verse demonstrates this further:

*2 Cor 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading **of the old testament**; which veil is done away in Christ.*

3. **The power, proliferation, and preservation of the Canon**

Acts 6:7 it increases, and disciples are multiplied
Acts 12:24 opposition is removed, and the Word grew and multiplied
Acts 19:20 paganism is overthrown, and the Word of God grows and prevails.

Class 4 Was Jesus an historical man?

Historical evidence that a man Jesus lived and was crucified

1. **Thallus (52AD)**

Thallus is perhaps the earliest secular writer to mention Jesus and he is so ancient his writings don't even exist anymore. But Julius Africanus, writing around 221AD does quote Thallus who previously tried to explain away the darkness occurring at Jesus' crucifixion:

"On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me ***without reason****, an eclipse of the sun."* (Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18:1) the crucifixion occurred on the Passover which the middle of the month or full moon. *A solar eclipse can only occur when the moon is close enough to the ecliptic plane during a* ***new moon****.*

2. **Tacitus (56-120AD)**

Cornelius Tacitus was known for his analysis and examination of historical documents and is among the most trusted of ancient historians. He was a senator under Emperor Vespasian and was also proconsul of Asia. In his "Annals' of 116 AD, he describes Emperor Nero's response to the great fire in Rome and Nero's claim that the Christians were to blame:

"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, ***suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus,*** *and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular."*

3. **Pliny the Younger (61-113AD)**

Early Christians were also described in early, non-Christian history. Pliny the Younger, in a letter to the Roman emperor Trajan, describes the lifestyles of early Christians:

"They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a ***certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god,*** *and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind."*

4. Celsus (175AD)

This is a hostile, non-Christian account that provides significant evidence. Celsus was quite antagonistic to the claims of the Gospels, but in his criticism, he unknowingly affirmed and reinforced the Biblical authors and their content. His writing is extensive, and he alludes to 80 different Biblical quotes, confirming their early appearance in history. In addition, he admits the miracles of Jesus were generally believed in the early 2nd century:

"Jesus had come from a village in Judea and was the ***son of a poor Jewess*** *who gained her living by the work of her own hands. His mother had been turned out of doors by her husband, who was a carpenter by trade, on being convicted of adultery [with a soldier named Panthéra (i.32)]. Being thus driven away by her husband, and wandering about in disgrace, she gave birth to Jesus, a bastard. Jesus, on account of his poverty, was hired out to go to Egypt.* ***While there he acquired certain (magical) powers which Egyptians pride themselves on possessing.*** *He returned home highly elated at possessing these powers, and on the strength of them gave himself out to be a god."*

5. Josephus (37-101AD)

"Now around this time lived Jesus, a wise man. For he was a worker of amazing deeds and was a teacher of people who gladly accept the truth. He won over both many Jews and many Greeks. Pilate, when he heard him accused by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, (but) those who had first loved him did not cease (doing so). To this day the tribe of Christians named after him has not disappeared" (This neutral reconstruction follows closely the one proposed by John Meier)

Even with the reconstruction of this passage the testimony is sufficient for Josephus to be a clear witness to the historicity of Christ. Here is the original wording you find in the writings of Josephus:

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, <u>if it be lawful to call him a man,</u> for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. <u>He was the Christ;</u> and when

Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day."

6. And this, perhaps the most famous of Talmudic passages about Jesus:

It was taught: On the day before the **Passover** they hanged Jesus. A herald went before him for forty days (proclaiming), *"He will be stoned, because he **practiced magic** and enticed Israel to go astray. Let **anyone who knows anything in his favor** come forward and plead for him. But nothing was found in his favor, and they hanged him on the day before the Passover.* "(b. Sanhedrin 43a)

Summarizing Arguments for the death and resurrection of Christ

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the infallible proof of our doctrine (Acts 1:3).

a. It was prophesied in OT Scripture (Isa.26:19; Psa 16:10; 68:18; Hosea 6:2)
b. Jesus prophesied in the gospels in advance of His death that He would rise again
c. His enemies knew His prediction
d. After the resurrection and ascension, the eye-witnesses of it began to preach about it to the same people who crucified Him (beginning at Jerusalem)
e. The Jews and Romans were antagonistic to this new sect—they only needed to show evidence of a body to dispel the resurrection myth
f. If they guarded it—they admitted they had it. If they were sleeping, they could not say it was stolen. Nor could they ever find it.
g. The apostles gave their lives for their belief in the resurrection. Men will give their lives for a deception of truth, but not for what they know to be a myth.
h. Rome moved from paganism to embracing the death and resurrection of Jesus. Julian could not convince the empire to go back to paganism.

Julian The Apostate (emperor 361-363) Against the Galileans

Even Jesus, who was proclaimed among you, was one of Caesar's subjects. And if you do not believe me I will prove it a little later, or rather let me simply assert it now. However, you admit that with his father and mother he registered his name in the governorship of Cyrenius. {census, Cyrenius/Quirinius} 72 |381

*But you have gone so far in iniquity that you think you need not listen even to the words **of Jesus of Nazareth** {Galilee in addition to Nazareth} on this matter. Listen then to what he says about sepulchres : "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres;*

http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/julian_apostate_galileans_1_text.htm

i. **Changed lives** today are a witness of the resurrection power at work in new birth. That resurrection power is based on the life that was manifested after death.

How does presenting a subjective conversion experience convince an atheist that is looking for objective evidence? Is there scientific evidence that a "real change occurs" when a person has an experience that moves them from guilt to pardon, from feeling unloved to being assured of love, from enslaving habits to victory over them, from feeling trapped by a painful past to a hopeful future blessing, from feeling isolated to feeling connected etc.

Significant healthcare studies have shown that people heal much faster in an environment where they are at peace with their surroundings, experience the love of family or friends, and have compassionate care givers. The environment, the loving family, or the caregivers cannot remove the pain or injury from the patient, but they can promote faster and more holistic healing.

The Science of touch

Affection that is wanted causes the release of oxytocin. It helps to nurture feelings of trust and connectedness and it also reduces cortisol (the stress hormone). Twenty seconds of affectionate touching (hugging, back rubs, gentle stroking) is enough to trigger the release of oxytocin.Mar 9, 2016
The Remarkable Power of Touch - - Hey Sigmund
www.heysigmund.com/the-remarkable-power-of-touch/

Class 5 Frequently Asked Questions—Jesus is the answer.

Why does the Bible allow Slavery?

a. (Deut.5:15; 24:18,22) Israel served as slaves before they were slave masters—they were to remember their cruel bondage and treat their slaves with respect and give them a weekly day of rest.
b. (Exodus 21:2–6) A person could make themselves a slave to pay off debts they otherwise could not pay. This promoted fiscal responsibility and the opportunity to become debt free.
c. (Exodus 21:16) Arbitrary/forced slavery was opposed.
d. (Leviticus 25:38–46) Slaves could only be bought. Those who were made slaves by other nations were permitted to serve as slaves to the Israelites. Once they were bought, the master had to care for them forever and pass them on to the next generation for care. They could not be bought and sold. In keeping them and treating them with respect they preserved them from harsh slavery.
e. (Ex.21:26-27) The slave could be freed for abuse.
f. (Ex. 21:20-21) They could not kill a slave without punishment. In light of the foregoing information indicating that abuse would set a slave free, the only justifiable reason for beating a slave would have been open defiance against authority. Even in this case the slave was not to be beaten to death or the master would also be punished. While this

still sounds harsh, remember that a son could be stoned to death for open defiance against their parents. In this case the regulation of slavery is essentially no harsher than it was for other forms of rebellion.

g. Slavery in the Bible, within the context of Israel, was not regulated on the basis of race or used to oppress another race. It was used to resolve lawful debts and provide a means of living for a poor person who had no other financial options. There were no social programs in that time. Therefore, a person could be used as a slave for free labor providing they were well treated.

Why does the Bible support Genocide of the Canaanite nations? Gen. 15:16; Deut.20:16,17.

a. Their moral pollution had reached its fullness and had become generational affecting even the small children.
b. (Ex. 20:5) The pagan women would have led Israel's children into idolatry.
c. God intended to preserve Israel in order to bless the whole world. Other nations practiced genocide only in self-interest.
d. The children in death were saved, while in life they would have been depraved and lost. It shows us the depravity of idolatry, which is demon worship (Deut.32:16,17).
e. God also set borders on Israel so that they could not expand beyond them in the practice of "genocide" to claim their inheritance. The border limits set them apart as a far "kinder nation" than the typical expansionist/raiding mentality of their neighbors.
f. They also were to be kind to the strangers and remember their hardship in Egypt Ex.23:9
g. (Deut.2:25) God placed his fear on the nations ahead of driving them out. They were forewarned and given the opportunity to leave if they chose to do so. Israel was driving out nations mightier than they by the help of God and were not overwhelming them with superior numbers. (Deut.11:23)
h. People who wished to voluntarily join with Israel were recognized—Rahab, Ruth, Uriah the Hittite,

Witnessing to the LGBTQ+.

Doctrinal Definition of Sodomy – Jude identifies these people as those who go after strange flesh. The LGBT is a revival of the sin of Sodomy. Romans 1 tells us that sexual perverts:

"exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
26 For this reason God gave them up to <u>vile passions</u>. For even their women <u>exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.</u>
27 Likewise also the men<u>, leaving the natural use of the woman</u>, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due." (NKJV)

These verses describe the essence of same sex relationships. The pride and arrogance of man assumes that society and their personal desires can define acceptable

morality and sexuality by their own standards and the creature is not subject to the natural laws of the Creator. Because Sodomy defies the laws of creation, *it is a crime against the natural law and order of God with regards to morality and sexuality*.

Blackstone's legal commentaries on English law are still considered to be a legal standard and define Sodomy as a *crime against nature*. Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary does also. Therefore, we have standard legal and grammatical definitions of Sodomy agreeing with how the Bible defines the sin. Today Sodomy is being re-defined, and the Scriptures are being re-interpreted to justify the sins of the age.

In some scriptures as noted above, Sodomy is more narrowly defined as a male and female homosexuality; but in a general sense it also encompasses all sexual perversions of the natural law and order (Deut. 23:17 <u>whore</u>-ked-ay-shaw' <u>sodomite (whore monger)</u>-kaw-dashe'*).*

"There shall be no <u>whore</u> of the daughters of Israel, nor a <u>sodomite</u> of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a <u>whore</u>, or the price of a <u>dog</u> (sodomite), into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God."

The thought here references male or female prostitution in connection with religious worship. The terms here are quite broad in rejecting any type of sexual promiscuity. Sodomy can sometimes have a broad or a narrow definition—sometimes any form of sexual perversion and other times very specifically the sin of homosexuality. It is the same for the word fornication—it is used sometimes to describe pre-marital sex in distinction from adultery (Jn 8:41; 1Cor.7:2) but in other cases it is used in a broad sense to describe all forms of sexual immorality (Acts 15:20; 1Cor.5:1; Rev.2:21).

The male and female form are from the same root word and so it encompasses both genders. The concept of the word includes a combination of prostitution and religious affiliation. This is why some translations use male temple prostitute as a translation for Sodomite. "Dog" is used as a descriptive term for Sodomite in the second verse— wild dogs were known for being promiscuous in their breeding, unclean scavengers in their appetites, wild in their habits, and having a predatory and unpredictable nature in their temperament*. Give not that which is holy to the dogs …*

Sodomy (kaw-dashe) is not limited to male or female <u>temple prostitutes</u> but rather speaks against all forms of sexual sins that are used in connection with the house of the Lord. Sexual immorality in was rampant in pagan worship practices. To say that sodomy is only wrong because it infers same sex sin in connection with money or idolatry would be the same as saying that female harlotry is only wrong when connected to money and idolatry. Likewise, the female harlotry could be heterosexual or homosexual. When we understand that the body is designed to be the temple of the

Holy Ghost, we better understand that all forms of sexual immorality defiles; especially those same sex sins which not only defile the body, but also pervert the natural order of creation. The meaning of *kaw-dashe* has a relationship to that which is holy. The rejection of any form of same sex sins as part of worship tells us that this practice profanes that which is holy.

In the heathen temples both male and female prostitutes were used for the whole gamut of sins … and when the whole gamut is in view "sodomy" is the most appropriate and comprehensive term. Same sex sins were common in the worship of the pagan gods. Artemis of the Greeks/Diana of the Ephesians was a lesbian goddess. Apollo was a gay god. Dionysius was a cross-dresser. Zeus and other Greek gods were bi-sexual.

Furthermore, the sin of Sodomy is specifically identified in Jude with going after "strange" flesh (of a different kind than normal i.e. unnatural). The story of Lot was only one example of Sodomy. Jude clarifies that the judgment was generally against the same sex perversion. God intended to destroy the city before the angels ever went to Sodom—God was not just judging the sin against the angels. The judgement against Sodom is intended to stand as a memorial for all times as God's judgment against **all unnatural sexual perversions**.

Sodomy is a general term for same sex immorality and all perversions of nature and covers everything in the LGBT agenda. This sin profanes what is holy and defiles worship. In the pagan world, it was also coupled with the worship of false gods.

LGTB Deception: "We cannot draw distinct boundaries or conclusions from the Scripture because it is open to different interpretations and has too many variables."
"The attempted homosexual assault by a mob of men is mentioned in the story about the decadence and subsequent destruction of the city of Sodom. Such offensive behavior was not the only sin of this wicked city. Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jesus point to Sodom's <u>self-indulgence</u>, <u>arrogance, inhospitality, and indifference to the poor</u>. Thus, in its own later interpretations of the episode at Sodom, the Bible does not dwell on homosexual sins of the city in the way that more recent interpreters do. Nevertheless, sexual misconduct, <u>particularly assault</u>, is an important element in the story about Sodom's sin and destruction (2 Pet. 2:4-l4, Jude 7)."
LGBT Conclusion from that statement could be—that Sodom was destroyed for a variety of sins but homosexual conduct between two loving and consenting adults is not mentioned—it was the attempted gang rape of the angels which was wrong.

Counter points
*Sodom was being destroyed for the sins committed before the angels came to Sodom.

*We agree that homosexuality is seldom a stand-alone sin nor is it the beginning of the moral decline. According to Romans 1 which outlines the progressive steps of human depravity, it begins with:
a. dishonoring God as Creator
b. creating forms of worship that are creature based (idolatry through humanism)
c. embracing the morality of the creature's choice.

This is pride and arrogance of the creature over the Creator. It is further strengthened when a society is wealthy, and it appears that it is not being judged. This society will tax and oppress the honest hard-working man to finance special privileges for their lazy and perverted elements.

49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.
50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

The iniquity (deviation from an established right order) led to the open abomination (extreme loathing, defilement, perversion).

*In Romans 1 God in turn "gives these people over" 3 times to their further depravity:
a. vs 24 gave them over to uncleanness (impure lusts)
b. vs 26 gave them over to vile affections (perverted passions and perspectives)
c. vs 28 God gave them over to a reprobate mind, word play in Greek "because they cast God out of their mind God gave them over to an outcast mind." Reprobate means "rejected for not passing the test."

LGTB Deception: "The Sodomites in Scripture are only those who are male temple prostitutes." We have seen how the Hebrew word translated as Sodomites/temple prostitutes/prostitutes in the Bible has both a male and a female form. It is not limited to males. We also can see in scripture that all the men of Sodom had gathered around Lot's house old and young from every quarter of the city. All these men certainly were not male temple prostitutes. The men of Sodom were not all ignorant pagans because Lot called them brethren.

Four recently developed arguments from Christian LGTBs

1. **Apples and Oranges argument:** When the Bible was written science had not yet progressed to the point where the human author could know that sexual attraction is biologically prewired. This biological inclination can be expressed in desiring an intimate relationship with someone of the same gender. This would be biologically natural and therefore could not be considered an unnatural sin. Therefore, the Bible

does not condemn monogamous loving same sex relationships as unnatural, but rather all "promiscuous" sexual relationships.

Response:

a. How does a person objectively determine whether they are biologically or naturally prewired for same sex attraction or whether that desire is simply a lust to explore new boundaries, or a reaction to hurt from a heterosexual relationship?
b. What if someone claims they are a *biologically prewired natural* for pedophilia, incest, bestiality, or promiscuity?
c. We have examples in Scripture of scientific knowledge that exceeds the scientific understanding of the author (He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness Job 26:10 ESV-terminator line is circular but not visible to Job).
d. If the Biblical author was scientifically ignorant, and gave the wrong moral judgment against same sex attraction how do we know they gave the right moral judgment against promiscuity?
e. If both homosexual and heterosexual promiscuity existed in those times why does God only give reference and acceptance to heterosexual monogamy?

2. **Marriage as Grace argument:** There are marriages in the Bible which are not biologically based between one man and one woman but rather are marriage covenants of grace (God and Israel, Christ and the Church). Therefore, legitimate marriages do not all need to be biological relationships between one man and one woman.

   Response:

   a. Even in the covenant of grace, there are biologically assigned genders--with Deity being male (leadership) and humanity being female (submissive). There are no same sex comparative marriage analogies used in the Bible to illustrate a covenant of grace.
   b. This argument is an admission that there are no biological precedents for same sex marriages in the Bible and yet a justification for biological relationship is being made.

3. **The Holy Spirit is Changing a Literal and Traditional Reading of the Bible argument:** A traditional and literal view of Genesis 17:13 would indicate that circumcision would be a sign of the covenant forever. Yet the Holy Spirit led the church to decide that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised because of the evidence of God's work in their lives without circumcision. The traditional and literal interpretation of Scripture was changed based upon the moving of the Holy Spirit among the Gentiles and this allowed the Scriptures to be re-interpreted in different ways.

Response:

a. This sign was given to Abraham's physical seed as an everlasting sign of the covenant for the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. But God also said in the OT that in Abraham all nations of the earth would be blessed. In Galatians 3:8 Paul says that this indicates that God would justify the heathen Gentiles through faith outside the covenant of circumcision because Abraham himself was justified by faith before He was circumcised. Therefore, the spiritual seed of the Gentiles would follow Abraham's example of justification by faith (Rom.4:3, 9-12). This was predicted by the OT Scriptures.
b. Circumcision never saved anyone—for Abraham was saved before he was circumcised—therefore the Acts 15 council did not change anything in God's plan of salvation and did not change anything regarding the sign of the covenant for the Jews.
c. In summary, a literal reading of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures affirms the decision made by the Acts 15 council. It was both a literal and spiritual understanding of the Scriptures which the Holy Ghost used to correct the error of those who departed from the understanding that God had originally intended. God used the witness of the Gentile testimonies to affirm that a literal and coinciding spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures was the correct one.

4. Love and Liberation argument:

We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Love does no ill to their neighbor. Love lifts up those who are oppressed by hate and suffering. Therefore, homosexuals should experience love and inclusion rather than separation from the family of God.

Response:

a. "*Love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength* because this is the <u>first</u> and <u>greatest</u> of all commandments. This must come <u>first</u> to give proper <u>perspective</u> to the second and it must be the <u>greatest</u> in order to give proper <u>ranking</u> to the second. It is only when we love God supremely that we can truly love our neighbor as ourselves.
b. *Only the truth can set us free.* God gives the wisdom to share a truth perspective that might significantly differ from our neighbors, and they might choose to take offense to God's message of love and hope.

Summary thoughts: In order to effectively evangelize the homosexuals, we need to be firmly rooted and completely assured of sound doctrine, because same sex relationships pervert God's natural order, and profane what is holy.