An Introduction to Apologetics Class Schedule (revised)

Reasons to Believe

July 6 | Lesson 1 – Introduction to Apologetics

Reasons to Believe God is Creator

July 13 | Lesson 2 – The God of the Bible

July 20 | Lesson 3 – Arguments for God

July 27 | Lesson 4 – Objections to God

August 3 | Lesson 5 – God and Evolution

Reasons to Believe Jesus is Lord

August 10 | Lesson 6 – The Historical Jesus

August 17 | Lesson 7 – Can We Trust the Gospels?

August 24 | Lesson 8 - Evidence for the Resurrection, Part 1

August 31 | Lesson 9 – Evidence for the Resurrection, Part 2

Reasons to Believe the Bible is True

September 7 | Lesson 10 – The Inspiration of the Bible

September 14 | Lesson 11 – The Text of the Bible

September 21 | Lesson 12 – The Canon of the Bible

Conclusion

September 28 | Lesson 13 – Summary and Implications

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Apologetics

Class Objectives

- Explain the usefulness of apologetics for ourselves and others.
- Identify our reasons for believing as either objective or subjective.
- Define crucial terms to use throughout the class.

Pre-Class Questions

- 1. Read 1 Peter 3:13-16
 - a. What does it mean to "sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts"?
 - b. What does Peter say we should defend? What are we giving an answer for?
 - c. What attitudes should characterize our defense?
- 2. Evaluate your own faith. If someone were to ask you to give a concise summary why you believe in God, Jesus, and the Bible what would you say?
- 3. Look at your answers above. Are they more objective or subjective? Do you think they would convince a skeptic? Why or why not?
- 4. Are there areas you doubt God, Jesus, and / or the Bible? If so, how do you handle these? Please take the time to think this through carefully and honestly.

- 1. Define these terms as we'll use them in class.
 - a. Faith

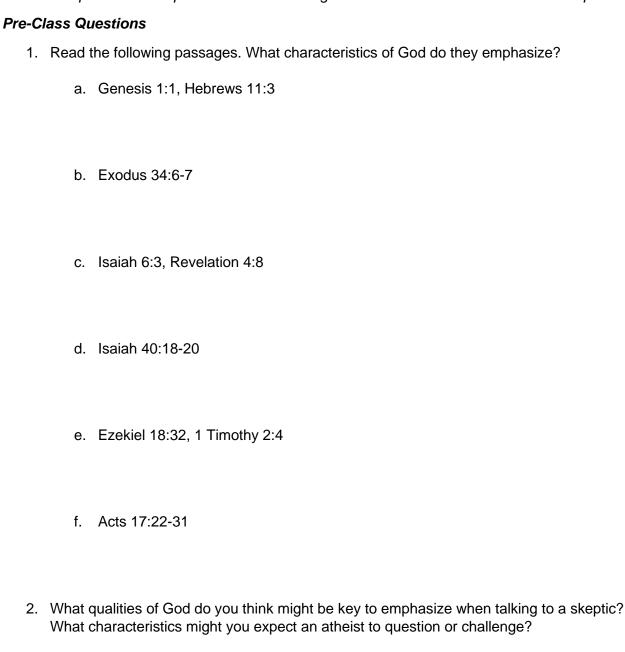
	b.	Doubt
	C.	Presuppositions
	d.	Naturalism
	e.	Supernaturalism
2.	Do the	se passages define "faith" as a blind belief in the absence of evidence?
	a.	Hebrews 11:1
	b.	2 Corinthians 5:7
	C.	John 20:29
3.	What a	are the three steps for developing biblical faith?
	a.	
	b.	
	C.	

Notes / Questions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 2 - The God of the Bible

Class Objectives

- Highlight God's characteristics as described in the Bible.
- Differentiate other views of God.
- Emphasize the importance of establishing who God is in our discussions with skeptics.



3. Have you ever heard any "false versions" of God that don't fairly represent Him as described in the Bible?

1.	Define	these views of God. How do they compare to how the Bible presents God?
	a.	Atheism
	b.	Agnosticism
	C.	Deism
	d.	Pantheism
	e.	Polytheism
2.		s the difference between the essence and existence of God? Why is it important ablish who God is before we can discuss whether or not He exists?
3.		s the "straw man" fallacy, and how does it relate to our discussions we may have eople about God?
Notes	/ Ques	tions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 3 – Arguments for God

Class Objectives

- Define the three classical arguments for God's existence.
- Provide examples of these arguments for use in everyday conversation.
- Prepare for potential objections to these arguments.

Pre-Class Questions

1.	Why do you believe in God? You might want to look back at your answer to Question 2
	in Lesson 1 to get started. If you can, give more detail here.

- 2. Read these passages and answer the following questions.
 - a. Psalm 19:1-6
 - b. Romans 1:18-21
 - c. Do these passages strengthen your belief in God's existence? Why or why not?
 - d. Do you think these passages would convince an unbeliever of God's existence? Why or why not?
- 3. Read Paul's sermon to the Athenians in Acts 17:22-31. What arguments did Paul use to persuade them of God's existence? What do you learn from his approach?

- 1. The Universe Argument
 - a. Definition
 - b. Example
 - c. Potential Objections and Answers

2.	The D	esign Argument
	a.	Definition
	b.	Example
	C.	Potential Objections and Answers
3.	The M	oral Argument
	a.	Definition
	b.	Example
	C.	Potential Objections and Answers
4.		you used any of these arguments before, either in discussions with others or in wn study? Which ones do you think are the most convincing to you personally?
Notes	/ Ques	tions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 4 – Objections to God

Class Objectives

- Explain the importance of listening actively as a tool to meet people where they are.
- Discuss common objections to God and understand their arguments.
- Prepare possible answers to these objections.

Pre-Class Questions

1.	Read	the	following	passages	about	listenina	wiselv.

- a. Proverbs 18:13
- b. James 1:19-20
- c. What do you learn about the importance of listening to the reasons people give for not believing in God?
- d. How might we be tempted to not listen fairly?
- 2. What are some common reasons people do not believe in God?
- 3. Which of these arguments do you think are the easiest to answer? Most difficult?
- 4. Can you identify any assumptions or flaws in these objections?

In-Class Discussion

1. Lack of Verification or Proof

2.	The Existence of Evil
3.	Slaughter of the Innocents
4.	Miracles
5.	Others?
Notes	/ Questions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 5 – God and Evolution (Is Naturalism a Legitimate Alternative?)

Class Objectives

- Understand naturalism as the primary assumption behind Darwinian evolution.
- Distinguish between macroevolution and microevolution.
- Explain the problems with naturalistic evolution as an alternative to God.

Pre-

e-Cl	ass Questions
1.	What is the relationship between science and the Bible? Do they contradict or corroborate one another? Explain.
2.	List some benefits of science. What are some of its limits? In other words, are there things science <i>alone cannot</i> prove or demonstrate?
3.	Respond to the following statement: "If something cannot be proven scientifically it cannot be true."
4.	Look up one or two definitions of "evolution" as it relates to the origin and diversity of life on earth. Now, do your best to explain this concept in your own words.
5.	How would you explain variations and changes within different kinds of species (for example, dog breeds or human skin colors)? Does this Bible address this?
6.	Based on your current understanding, do you see any problems with Darwinian evolution as an explanation of the origin of life? If so, what?

III-Gia	SS DISCUSSION
1.	Naturalism and Evolution
2.	Macroevolution vs. Microevolution
	a. What's the difference?
	b. Examples.
	c. Why does this difference matter?
3.	List some problems with naturalistic evolution as an explanation for the origin of life.
Notes	/ Questions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 6 - The Historical Jesus

Class Objectives

- Explain why the resurrection is the most important argument for Christianity
- Provide historical evidence for Jesus as a historical figure

Pre-

•	Establish who Jesus claimed to be
-C	lass Questions
1.	Why do you believe in Jesus as Lord and Christ? You might want to look back at your answer to Question 2 in Lesson 1 to get started. If you can, give more detail here.
2.	Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 and answer the following questions.
	a. Identify the four "that…" statements which Paul calls "of first importance."
	b. Based on verses 1-2, why are these the most important facts about the gospel?
	c. What individuals are listed as witnesses to Jesus' resurrection?
3.	Based on the following passages, who did Jesus claim to be? What Old Testament texts did He reference in each statement? a. Luke 4:16-21

c. Luke 22:66-71

b. John 8:58, 10:31-39

1	List the Acts verses in which the apostles claimed to be witnesses of Jesus' resurrection.
1.	List the Acts verses in which the aposties claimed to be withesses of Jesus Tesurrection.
	From historical sources outside the Bible, what basic facts can be gathered about Jesus?
	Explain why Jesus must be either a liar, lunatic, or Lord (and not a combination of all three). What 4 th option do skeptics often add today?
Notes /	/ Questions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 7 – Can We Trust the Gospels?

Class Objectives

- Understand reasons why skeptics dismiss the gospels as unreliable history.
- Provide reasons to accept the gospels as reliable history.
- Overview the four gospels' basic presentation of the resurrection of Jesus.

Pre

e-C	lass Questions
1.	Do you believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are an accurate presentation of the facts regarding Jesus? Why?
2.	Read Luke 1:1-4. What was Luke's intent in writing this book? Describe Luke's method of research, organization, and writing.
3.	Why might someone doubt the historical reliability of the gospels?
4.	Answer the following argument: "If you believe Jesus was raised because the gospels say so, you are using the Bible to prove the Bible which is circular reasoning and therefore false."
5.	Scan through the resurrection accounts (Matt. 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20). What differences do you notice? What notable similarities are there?

1.	What criteria do historians use to evaluate the trustworthiness of their sources? How do the gospels stack up?
2.	Why can't the gospels' testimony be easily dismissed? Why can they be viewed as reliable history?
3.	How should we handle the differences in the details of the resurrection accounts?
Notes	/Questions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 8-9 – Evidence for the Resurrection, Parts 1-2

Class Objectives

- Explain the "minimum facts" approach to Jesus' resurrection.
- Identify the minimum facts of Jesus' resurrection and their evidence.
- S.

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•	Demo	instrate the fruitlessness of alternative theories to sufficiently explain these facts
re-C	lass Qu	estions
1.	What d	loes it take for you to believe an event occurred if you did not witness it yourself
2.	Who sa	aw Jesus alive after His death, according to 1 Cor. 15:5-8?
	a.	How large of a group did Jesus appear to at one time? (v. 6)
	h	Who was James, and why is his inclusion in this list significant? (v. 7)
	D.	virio was James, and why is his inclusion in this list significant? (v. 7)
	C.	Why is Paul's inclusion of himself important, given his background? (v. 8)
3.	Read L	Luke 24.
	a.	Who were the very first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection? (v. 1-10)
	b.	What did Jesus do to prove He was risen in body, not just spirit? (v. 36-43)
4.		explanation did the Jewish authorities give for the empty tomb (Matt. 28:11-15)?
	vvriy a	pes it make little sense?

Minimum Facts of Jesus' Resurrection

1. Fact # 1 –

Evidence

2. Fact # 2 -

Evidence

Lesson 8-9 – Evidence for the Resurrection, Parts 1-2

3. Fact #3-

Evidence

4. Fact #4-

Evidence

Alternate Theories for Jesus' Resurrection

1.	Theory	# 1 – myth / legend which grew from disciples' belief Refutation
2.	Theory	# 2 – hallucination / vision / spiritual experience Refutation
3.	Theory	# 3 – mistaken identity Refutation
4.	Theory	# 4 – Refutation
Why is	Jesus'	bodily resurrection the only reasonable explanation for the facts?
If Jesu	s' resuri	rection is a historical fact, what does this mean for us spiritually?

Lesson 10 – The Inspiration of the Bible

Class Objectives

- Compare the Bible's claims for inspiration with those of other religious books.
- Identify the most important argument for the Bible's inspiration.
- Demonstrate Jesus' belief in the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments.

Pre-Class Questions

- 1. Now that you've evaluated your belief in God as Creator and Jesus as Lord, why do you believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God?
- 2. Are your reasons for believing in the Bible more objective or subjective? How might a skeptic respond to your reasons?
- 3. Read the following passages. What claim does the Bible make regarding its origin?
 - a. Exodus 24:1-4, 34:27-28
 - b. Jeremiah 1:1-10
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:14-17
 - d. 2 Peter 1:19-21
 - e. Ephesians 3:1-5
- 4. Answer this objection "Many other religious books, like the Qur'an or Book of Mormon, also claim to be from God. Why do you believe the Bible's claims, but not others'?"
- 5. What did Jesus believe, say, and teach about the Scriptures' inspiration?

Lesson 10 – The Inspiration of the Bible

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In-Class Discussion	
Jesus' View of the Old Testament Scriptures	;
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
logue! View of the New Testament Comintum	_
Jesus' View of the New Testament Scripture	S
1.	
 2. 	
2.	
2.	
2. 3.	

Notes / Questions / Topics for Exploration

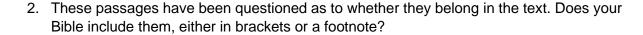
Lesson 11 - The Text of the Bible

Class Objectives

- Explain what textual criticism is and why it is necessary.
- Overview some variant readings in and evidence for the text of the Bible.
- Provide reasons for having confidence in the Bible as faithfully preserved.

Pre-Class Questions

1.	How would you respond - "The Bible has been changed and corrupted over 1000s of
	years that no one knows whether or not is even says what the original said."



- a. Mark 16:9-20
- b. John 7:53-8:11
- c. Acts 8:37
- d. 1 John 5:7-8 (compare KJV or NKJV to another translation)
- e. Read the above verses carefully. Does adding or removing these passages either change or contradict what the Bible teaches?
- 3. What do God and Jesus promise in these verses?
 - a. Isaiah 40:7-8
 - b. Matthew 5:17-18
 - c. Matthew 24:35
 - d. How do you reconcile these verses with mistakes or changes which scribes made while copying the text?

Lesson 11 – The Text of the Bible

In-Class Discussion

Reasons for Confidence in the Preservation of Bible's Text

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Lesson 12 - The Canon of the Bible

Class Objectives

- Understand why the question of the canon is important to our faith in the Bible.
- Identify wrong approaches to how the canon was established.
 Explain how the Old and New Testament books were recognized as authoritative.

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•	Explain now the Old and New Testament books were recognized as authoritative.
e-Cl	ass Questions
1.	Why does it matter which books we view as Scripture? What gives a book authority?
2.	How would you answer this question – "Many books not included in the Bible have been discovered, like the Gospel of Thomas and Gospel of Judas. So, how do you know the Bible is complete and isn't missing something?"
3.	Read Acts 2:40, 16:32, and Colossians 4:16. Based on these passages, does the Bible include every inspired sermon or letter? How do you know what we have is all we need?
4.	Read Matthew 5:17 and Luke 24:25-27, 44-45. How did Jesus refer to the Old Testament Scriptures? What does this show about Jesus' view of the OT canon?
5.	What additional books does the Catholic Church include in the Bible?
6.	Jude references at least two non-biblical books – the Assumption of Moses (Jude 9) and the book of Enoch (Jude 14). Does this imply these writings were inspired?

The Three Steps of Canonization (a simple process)
1.
2.
3.
Γhe Old Testament Canon
1. What was Jesus' view of the Old Testament canon?
2. What books did the Jews view as inspired Scripture? How do we know?
Γhe New Testament Canon
1. How did Jesus and the apostles anticipate and validate the New Testament canon?
2. What criteria did the early Christians use to determine if a book was authoritative?
Notes / Questions / Topics for Exploration

Lesson 13 – Review and Summary

Class Objectives

- Review the major arguments covered in each section God, Jesus, Bible.
- Discuss how to personalize the information for use in our service.
- Recognize the importance of responding in faith to what we know.

Qu

<i>le</i>	uestions				
1	Take a few minutes to look over each previous lesson. What do you think are the most important points we've discussed?				
2	How has this class helped you, if at all? Specifically, how has this study provided a foundation for your own faith? How important do you think this material is in evangelism?				
3	What are the limitations of this study? In other words, while this information is essential to our faith, what can it <i>not</i> do for us?				

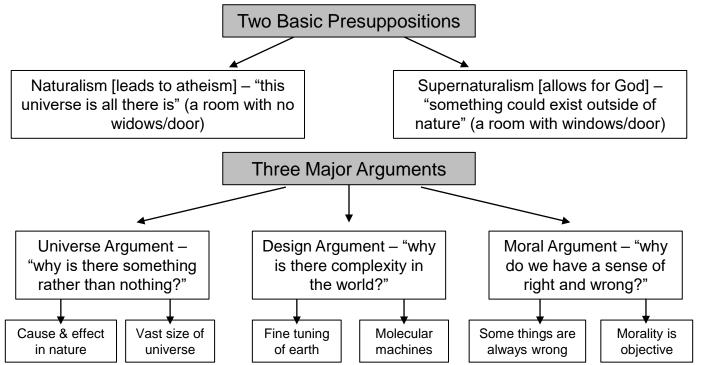
God Is Creator

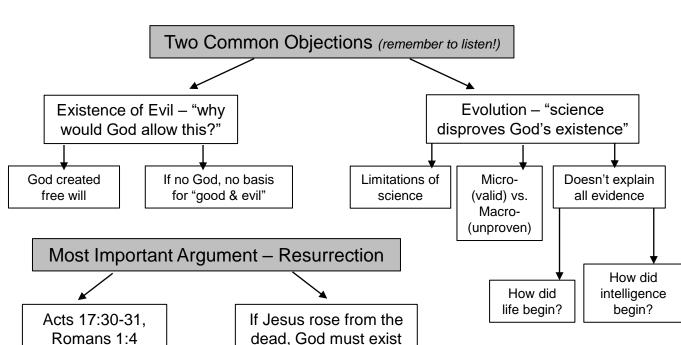
Definitions

- Faith a conclusion based on observable evidence, leading to a belief in something unseen
- Presupposition a belief assumed true from the beginning
- Three steps of Biblical faith look at evidence, reason through evidence, choose the right path

The God of the Bible

Creator – Gen. 1:1, Heb. 11:3 Merciful & Just – Ex. 34:6-7 Holy – Isaiah 6:3 Singular – Ex. 40:18-20 Loving & Good – 1 Tim. 2:4 summarized in Acts 17:22-31





Jesus Is Lord Key Issue: Jesus' Resurrection "Of first importance" - 1 Cor. 15:1-5,17-19 Apostles' preaching - Acts 2:31-32, 3:15, 4:10... Jesus' Existence Jesus' Claims Outside sources - Tacitus, Messiah, Son of God - Luke 4:16-21, Josephus, Pliny Younger, etc. 22:66-71, John 8:58-59, 10:31-39, Historical facts - when Jesus live, Liar? Lunatic? Legend? Lord? how he died, what happened after, how followers lived The Gospels as Reliable History Resurrection stories developed as legend? Criteria for good history Contemporary, Independent, Not enough Oral history Contains Writers Consistent, Unbiased time for fiction passed down embarrassing intended to to erase facts reliably & damaging preserve material history (Luke 1:1-4) Minimal Facts of the Resurrection Disciples claimed Jesus Two martyrs were Jesus' tomb was Martyrs died believing this claim previously skeptics appeared to them empty Saul of James, Jesus' 1 Cor. 15 -Liars make Gospels Gospels Tarsus brother earliest testimony poor martyrs (1 Cor. 15:7) (Acts 9) Enemy attestation (Matt. 28:11-15) **Alternate Theories** Implications – Jesus Is... Legends Visions, Mistaken Resurrection spiritual identity doesn't happen experiences Son of God - Rom. 1:4 Judge - Acts 17:31 Not naturally, but

supernaturally

Savior – Luke 24, 1 Cor. 15,

Do not explain all the evidence

Bible Is God's Word

