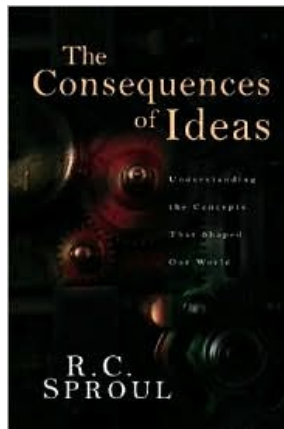


APOLOGETICS - DEFENDING OUR FAITH AGAINST ALL OPPOSITION

LESSON 8 : A CLASSICAL ILLUSTRATION

REVIEW

- +We have to “always be prepared” to defend our faith (1 Pet 3:14b-16 Acts 22:1 etc.)
- + The unbeliever is not neutral and (Rom 1:18) we must not be (Prov.26:4).
- +Everybody has a worldview = elementary presuppositions **NO NEUTRALITY!**
- +Our worldview must be Christian in all we say, think and do!! (Mk 12:30 etc.)
- +Our standard for all this is Scripture and **NOTHING** else! **SOLA SCRIPTURA!**
- +First key issue of a worldview: Metaphysics-what accounts for the physical world?
- +Second key issue: Epistemology - how and what do we know?
- +Third key issue: Ethics - what is right and wrong (*moral philosophy*)?
- +4 popular worldview-schemes impact our society today:
 1. Hinduism / 2. Behaviorism / 3. Marxism / 4. Existentialism
- +Most basic building blocks for unbelievers’ worldviews:
 1. Monism 2. Dualism 3. Atomism 4. Pragmatism 5. Scepticism



Excellent philosophy primer - the history of philosophical ideas easy to understand
(from a reformed scholar!)

Acts 17:16-34 (ESV)

- (16) Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.
- (17) So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.
- (18) Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"--because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.
- (19) And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?"
- (20) For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean."

- (21) Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.
- (22) So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.
- (23) For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.
- (24) The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,
- (25) nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.
- (26) And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,
- (27) that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,
- (28) for "'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.'
- (29) Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.
- (30) The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,
- (31) because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."
- (32) Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this."
- (33) So Paul went out from their midst.
- (34) But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

- A classic illustration of the presuppositional method of apologetics
- Paul faced a crowd with varying philosophical positions (V18: Epicurean, Stoics etc.)
- Paul was burdened by the city's idolatry (V16) - an unchristian worldview: =*totally* at odds with Christianity (as is any other non-Christian worldview)
- Paul philosophically engages their **whole** worldviews:"So he was *reasoning*...in the marketplace..."
 - "*reasoning*": Plato uses same word to present Socrates' philosophy
 - Paul openly declares his viewpoint and provides a reasoned defense.

Bahnsen: "The currently popular tendency of distinguishing **witness** from **defense**, or **theology** from **apologetics**, would have been preposterous to the apostles. The two require each other and have a common principle and source: Christ's authority."

DeMar: "...apologetics is not a separate, philosophical meeting of the minds in a neutral, theology-free zone. It is the rational pressing of the *theological outlook of Scripture*, the biblical worldview, in opposition to antagonistic worldviews."

- Paul **includes theology** in his philosophical argumentation because his is a *worldview critique* and challenge.

- You CANNOT separate theology and worldview.
- You CANNOT argue from a *neutral* position (eg. Dinesh D’Souza . C. Hitchens)
- The Athenians do not “agree up to a point” with an attempted neutrality
 - decry him as a “*babbler*” (V18)
 - complain that Paul was proclaiming “*strange deities*” (V18)
 - “*new teaching*” (V19)
 - “*strange things*”, demanding “*we wish to know therefore what this things mean*” (V20)
 - They *took hold of him* and dragged him to the Areopagus before the judicial council (this is the language of arrest!)
 - All of this due to his “*preaching Jesus and the resurrection*” (V18)-a most definite declaration of the Christian system and its truth claims.
 - Paul doesn’t present an *argument* for the resurrection and counter them by various evidences - he is **declaring** the resurrection.
 - The Greeks as the Romans believed in an afterlife and the immortality of the soul. Why didn’t Paul pick up there?
 - Greeks were only opposed to the resurrection. Aeschylus: “When the dust drinks up a man’s blood, once he has dies, there is *no resurrection.*”
- Paul is counterposing to complete worldviews
 - He didn’t believe Athenians needed just a little bit more evidence to correct their thinking a little bit and to nudge them over the line into the Christian faith.
 - Instead he presents the Christian truth claim and calls them to wholesale repentance on that basis (V30 cf. Acts 26:30-31)
 - **Authoritative declaration** rather than not a bare philosophical possibility of God’s existence (evidentialists)

To be continued...