

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

5 δέησιν⁴⁹ αὐτῶν,
κυρίου ἐπιποιοῦντας κακά.

15 κύριον δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν ἀγιάσατε⁵³ ἐν
πρὸς ἀπολογία⁵⁵ πάντων τῶν ποιοῦντι

16 ἀλλὰ μετὰ πραΰτητος⁵⁷ καὶ
ἐν ᾧ καταλαλεῖσθε⁵⁹ καταισχυνηθῶ

λοιπῶ ἀναστροφῆν.⁶² 17 κρεῖ



RESPONDING TO COMMON OBJECTIONS TO THE FAITH

SELECTED SCRIPTURES

JULY 14TH , 2020

Common Objections

1. The Objection
2. The Implication
3. The Response

OBJECTION I – EMPIRICISM

➤ The Objection

“all genuine knowledge-except that which concerns relations among ideas – is wholly derived from and consists simply in the organization of, data of sense.”

John W. Carlson, *Words of Wisdom: A Philosophical Dictionary For the Perennial Tradition* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2012)

OBJECTION I – EMPIRICISM

➤ The Objection

➤ The Implication

“we cannot see, taste, hear, feel or smell God therefore he does not exist.”

OBJECTION I – EMPIRICISM

➤ The Objection

➤ The Implication

“For to say that “God exists” is to make a metaphysical utterance which cannot either be true or false. And by the same criterion, no sentence which purports to describe the nature of a transcendent god can possess any literal significance”

AJ Ayer, *Language Truth and Logic* (Dover Publications Inc., 1946)

OBJECTION I – EMPIRICISM

- The Objection
- The Implication
- The Response
 - We do live in a physical world (Gen. 1)
 - Senses is one among many sources of knowledge
 - God HAS revealed himself in Creation and thru the Scriptures (Ps. 19)
 - Senses DO NOT point to 'Oughtness'

OBJECTION 2 – SUFFERING AND EVIL

➤ The Objection

- Pain (Evil/Suffering) AND an all powerful and all good God cannot co-exist

“Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?”

David Hume in his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779)

OBJECTION 2 – SUFFERING AND EVIL

➤ The Objection

➤ The Implication

- God cannot exist because Pain and Suffering cannot exist in a world where God exists

OBJECTION 2 – SUFFERING AND EVIL

- The Objection

- The Implication

- The Response

 - Admit that pain/evil/suffering are horrible (Gen.3 & 4; Job)

 - 2 Categories

 - Intellectual

 - Emotional

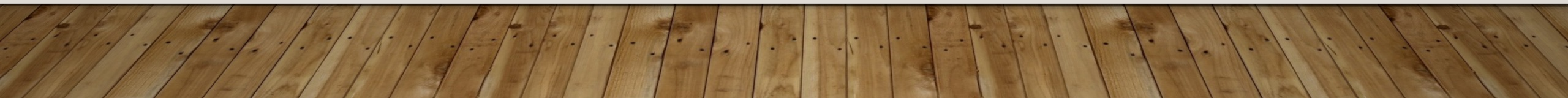
OBJECTION 2 – SUFFERING AND EVIL

➤ The Response

- Admit that pain/evil/suffering are horrible
- 2 Categories
 - Intellectual
 - Logical – “there is no logical contradiction between pain and the existence of God”
 - Probabilistic
 - God is Infinite
 - Purpose of life is knowledge of God

“The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God. People tend naturally to assume that if God exists, then His purpose for human life is happiness in this life. God’s role is to provide a comfortable environment for His human pets. But on the Christian view, this is false. We are not God’s pets, and the goal of human life is not happiness per se, but the knowledge of God—which in the end will bring true and everlasting human fulfilment. Many evils occur in life which may be utterly pointless with respect to the goal of producing human happiness; but they may not be pointless with respect to producing a deeper knowledge of God.”

— **William Lane Craig**, *Hard Questions, Real Answers*



OBJECTION 2 – SUFFERING AND EVIL

➤ The Response

- Admit that pain/evil/suffering are horrible
- 2 Categories
 - Intellectual
 - Emotional
 - God did do something about Evil. He sent His son (John 3:16)

“As the Christian sees things, God does not stand idly by, coolly observing the suffering of His creatures. He enters into and shares our suffering. He endures the anguish of seeing his son, the second person of the Trinity, consigned to the bitterly cruel and shameful death of the cross. Some theologians claim that God cannot suffer. I believe they are wrong. God’s capacity for suffering, I believe, is proportional to his greatness; it exceeds our capacity for suffering in the same measure as his capacity for knowledge exceeds ours. Christ was prepared to endure the agonies of hell itself; and God, the Lord of the universe, was prepared to endure the suffering consequent upon his son’s humiliation and death. He was prepared to accept this suffering in order to overcome sin, and death, and the evils that afflict our world, and to confer on us a life more glorious than we can imagine.”

Alvin Plantinga (“Self-Profile,” Alvin Plantinga, ed. Jas. Tomberlin (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985), p. 36.)



OBJECTION 3 – THE BIBLE

➤ The Objection

- We cannot trust the Bible, therefore we cannot trust what it has to say about God. Therefore God does not exist

OBJECTION 3 – THE BIBLE

- The Objection
- The Implication
 - Aimed at undermining the Authority of God (Gen. 3)

OBJECTION 3 – THE BIBLE

- The Objection
- The Implication
- The Response
 - What is the Bible? (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
 - Nothing inherently contradictory about the fact that the Bible is an ancient document and its trust worthiness
 - Documentary Evidence

Biblical Manuscripts Compared to Selected Ancient Sources

Author	Ancient Source	Date of Original	Earliest Manuscript	Gap from Original	Manuscript Copies
Plato	<i>Dialogues/Tetralogies</i>	4th cent. BC	3rd cent. BC	c. 150 years	c. 210-240
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	9th cent. BC	c. 400–415 BC	c. 450 years	c. 1800+
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	5th cent. BC	2nd–1st cent. BC	c. 450 years	c. 100+
Thucydides	<i>History of the Peloponnesian Wars</i>	5th cent. BC	3rd cent BC	c. 200 years	c. 185
Demosthenes	<i>Orations/Speeches</i>	4th cent. BC	1st cent. BC	c. 300 years	c. 440+
Aristophanes	Assorted works	448–385 BC	AD 900	c. 1,300 years	10
Sophocles	<i>Plays</i>	5th cent. BC?	3rd cent. BC	c. 200 years	c. 220+
Julius Caesar	<i>The Gallic Wars</i>	58–44 BC	9th cent. AD	c. 900 years	c. 250
Tacitus	<i>Annals of Imperial Rome</i>	AD 58-120	9th–11th cent. AD	c. 800–1000 years	c. 33+
Suetonius	<i>The Twelve Caesars</i>	AD 118–120	9th cent. AD	c. 800 years	c. 8+
Pliny, the Elder	<i>Natural History</i>	1st cent. AD	5th /14th–15th cent. AD	c. 400–1500 years	c. 200
Greek New Testament Manuscripts		AD 45–100	AD 117–325	30–300 years	5,856
Non-Greek New Testament manuscripts (translations)					18,000+
Total New Testament manuscripts					c. 24,000
Old Testament scrolls and codices (in various collections)⁴					c. 42,000
Total biblical manuscripts					c. 66,000+

Source: Adapted and updated from H. Wayne House and Joseph M. Holden, *Charts of Apologetics and Christian Evidences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), Chart 43.

OBJECTION 3 – THE BIBLE

- The Objection
- The Implication
- The Response
 - What is the Bible?
 - Nothing inherently contradictory about the fact that the Bible is an ancient document and its trust worthiness
 - Documentary Evidence

OBJECTION 4 – SCIENCE

- The Objection
 - Science proves the non-existence of God

"Although atheism might have been logically tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist"

Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*

OBJECTION 4 – SCIENCE

- The Objection
- The Implication
 - Science makes God's existence unnecessary

OBJECTION 4 – SCIENCE

- The Objection

- The Implication

- The Response

 - Defining Science

 - “Science is that branch of knowledge, which states a hypothesis, conducts experiments, analyses data, reports conclusions and shares observations.”

OBJECTION 4 – SCIENCE

- The Response
 - Defining Science
 - 5 Things Science Fails to Prove
 - Logic and Mathematics
 - Metaphysical Truths
 - Ethical Beliefs
 - Aesthetic Beliefs
 - Science Itself

OBJECTION 5 - RATIONALISM

➤ The Objection

- Reasonable people don't believe in the existence of God
- Reason vs. Faith

OBJECTION 5 - RATIONALISM

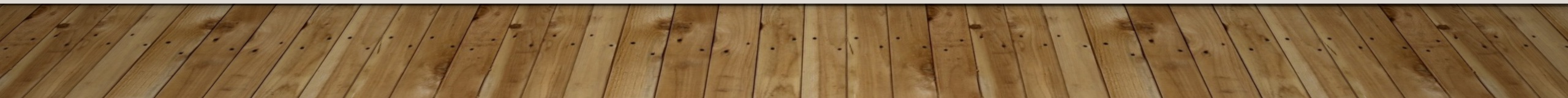
- The Objection

- The Implication

- “if you are a reasonable person, if you love logic and order, you are not one who is going to be a person of faith.

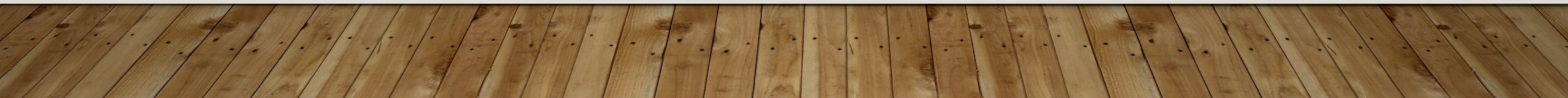
"Religious faith is the belief in historical and metaphysical propositions without sufficient evidence."

Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 232.



"Faith is the mortar that fills the cracks in the evidence and the gaps in the logic, and thus it is faith that keeps the whole terrible edifice of religious certainty still looming dangerously over our world."

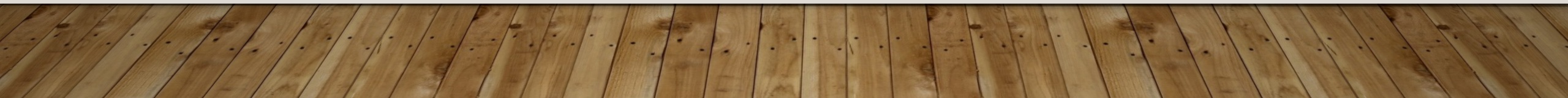
Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 233.





"Reason and faith are opposite, two mutually exclusive terms: there is no reconciliation or common ground. Faith is belief without, or in spite of reason."

George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1979), 98.



OBJECTION 5 - RATIONALISM

- The Objection
- The Implication
- The Response
 - Gospels and the Book of Acts
 - Reason – To believe on the basis of demonstration
 - Faith – To believe on the basis of divine authority

CONCLUSION

- The Bible assumes God's Existence (Gen. 1:1)
- God has revealed himself to us
 - General Revelation (Gen 1; Psalm 19)
 - Special Revelation (Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
 - Individual Testimony (Rom. 1 and 2:15)
- All of us will one day give an account of himself/herself to God (Rom. 14:10-12)

GROUP DISCUSSION

- A. What are some of the objections that you have encountered?
- B. What are some key biblical texts that you can ground your responses in and why?
- C. Spend time praying for those you have shared or planning to share the gospel with this week