

WHY BELIEVE?

We need to know the why not just the what.

REVIEW: OIKOS APOLOGETICS (Giving an answer to friends, family, and colleagues.)

- Proclamation (Stating, declaring, speaking the gospel to friends, family, and colleagues)
- Affirmation (Living as biblical Christians among friends, family, and colleagues)

CRITICAL ISSUES TO HAVE ANSWERS FOR

- Who is Jesus?
- Is the Bible inspired and trustworthy?
- How do we know that Christianity is the one true religion?
- What does the Bible say about human sexuality?

WHERE TO BEGIN?

- Who is Jesus?

- Consider His claims
 - Yahweh (John 8:58, “I AM”)
 - Equality with God (John 5:18, “...making Himself equal with God,” Mark 2:5ff, forgives sin)
 - Messiah (Mark 14:61-64, “Are you the Christ? I am.”)
 - Accepts worship (Matt 28:17, “...disciples saw Him ... worshipped Him.)

- Consider His claims (con't)
 - Equal authority with God (Matt 28:18, “All authority...”)
 - Pray in His name (John 14:13-14, “...ask in My name...”)
 - Raise Himself from the dead (John 2:19-21, “Destroy this temple... I will raise it up...”)

WHERE TO BEGIN?

- Who is Jesus?
 - The Gospels describe Him as Savior, Lord, God
 - But are the Gospels a reliable resource?

Internal Evidence

- Luke 1:1-4 - Investigated everything carefully from the beginning
- 2 Peter 1:16 – We were eyewitnesses of His majesty
- 1 John 1:3 – What we have seen and heard...touched...we proclaim

External Evidence

HISTORICAL SOURCES

**FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST**



JULIUS AFRICANUS

- Quoted the historian Thallus.
- Spoke of the darkness which followed the crucifixion of Christ (Extant Writings 18).

HISTORICAL SOURCES

FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST



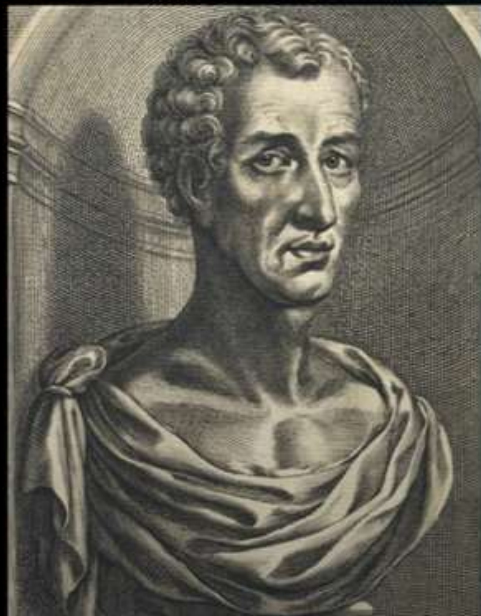
Play (k)

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

- Most famous Jewish historian.
- Refers to James, "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ."

HISTORICAL SOURCES

**FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST**



LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA

- **A 2nd Century Greek writer.**
- **Admits Jesus was worshiped by Christians, introduced new teachings, and was crucified for them.**
- **Said that Jesus' teachings included brotherhood of believers, the importance of conversion, and denial of other gods.**

HISTORICAL SOURCES

**FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST**



MARA BAR-SERAPION

- **Confirms Jesus was thought to be a wise and virtuous man.**
- **Added Jesus was considered by many to be the king of Israel.**
- **Recorded that Jesus was put to death by the Jews and that He lived on in the teachings of His followers.**

HISTORICAL SOURCES

**FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST**



PLINY THE YOUNGER

- Recorded early Christian worship practices including worshiping Jesus as God.
- Noted they were ethical and referred to the love feast and the Lord's Supper.

HISTORICAL SOURCES

FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST



TACITUS

- Considered more accurate.
- Mentioned superstitious "Christians" who suffered under Pilate.

HISTORICAL SOURCES

FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST



THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

- Sanhedrin 43a.
- Confirms Jesus' crucifixion on the eve of Passover.
- Records the accusations against Christ of practicing sorcery and encouraging Jewish apostasy.

SOURCES

FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST



JESUS WAS CALLED THE CHRIST, DID "MAGIC," LED ISRAEL INTO NEW TEACHINGS,



AND WAS HANGED ON PASSEOVER FOR THEM IN JUDEA, BUT CLAIMED TO BE GOD



AND WOULD RETURN, WHICH HIS FOLLOWERS BELIEVED, WORSHIPING HIM AS GOD.

Internal Evidence

- Luke, Peter, John

External Evidence

- Early historians

Manuscript Evidence

What test can we use to determine whether or not the Gospels are a reliable source?

- Number of manuscripts
 - Homer's *Iliad* (7th or 8th century)
 - 1800 manuscripts and fragments
 - New Testament (1st century)
 - 5000+ manuscripts and fragments in original language
 - Over 23,000 in all

What test do we use to determine whether or not the Gospels are a reliable source?

- The time between the original and the oldest fragment
 - Homer's *Iliad*
 - 400 years
 - New Testament
 - 50 years
 - 95% of the original can be confirmed with confidence. No essential doctrine is in question.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

- Who is Jesus?
 - Was there a historical Jesus?

Without a doubt!

- Are the Gospel accounts a reliable resource?

Yes! And more reliable than other ancient documents that are considered authoritative.

- The significance of the resurrection
 - After He performed miracles, He told them to tell no one (Luke 9:21; Matt 16:20, 17:9; Mark 8:30)
 - ... until after the crucifixion and resurrection (Luke 9:22; Matt 16:21, 17:9; Mark 8:31)
 - The new disciple had to have witnessed the resurrection (Acts 1:21)
 - His resurrection is the key event in all of human history (1 Cor 15:17-19)

- What evidence is there for the resurrection?
 - Empty tomb
 -discovered by women
 -religious leaders claimed “body was stolen”
 - Immediate proclamation by apostles
 - Jesus appeared in a resurrected body to more than 500 people on twelve different occasions (1 Cor 15:3-5).

- What evidence is there for the resurrection? (con't)
 - Dramatic conversion of Paul
 - Testimony of early church fathers
 - Clement of Rome (AD 95-96), Ignatius (AD 107-115), Polycarp (AD 110-140)

There is overwhelming evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ, both in secular and biblical history. Perhaps the greatest evidence that Jesus did exist is the fact that literally thousands of Christians in the first century AD, including the twelve apostles, were willing to give their lives as martyrs for Jesus Christ. People will die for what they believe is true, but no one will die for what they know to be a lie.

(gotquestions.org;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6uWSoxG_Fs)

What about Old Testament reliability?

- Since the New Testament is reliable
 - Jesus claimed to be God.
 - He affirmed His claim by predicting His own resurrection from the dead and following through.
 - Therefore, as God, He speaks with authority.
 - Often quoted the Old Testament

CRITICAL ISSUES TO HAVE ANSWERS FOR

- The inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible
 - New Testament reliability - established
 - What did Jesus say about the Old Testament
 - Authority (Matt 22:34)
 - Reliability (Matt 26:54)
 - Finality (Matt 4:4, 7, 10)
 - Sufficiency (Luke 16:31)
 - Indestructibility (Matt 5:17-18)

- What did Jesus say about the Old Testament
 - Unity (Luke 24:27, 44)
 - Clarity (Luke 24:27)
 - Historicity (Matt 12:40)
 - Facticity (scientifically) (Matt 19:2-5)
 - Inerrancy (Matt 22:29; John 3:12; 17:17)
 - Infallibility (John 10:35)

- Prophecy: 300+ prophecies regarding Jesus available in Greek in 250 BC
- Archeology
 - Only confirms biblical record
- Precision of scribes
 - Sacred task; letter by letter; double checked
- Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 1947; 11 caves; 1000s scrolls; 300 scrolls of fragments of books of the Bible; Isaiah! (125BC)

- What other New Testament writers wrote
 - All Scripture is inspired by God (Paul, 2 Tim 3:16)
 - Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (Peter, 2 Pet 1:21)
- Unity: 40 writers, 3 languages, 1500 year process, telling one unified story.

CRITICAL ISSUES TO HAVE ANSWERS FOR

- Who is Jesus?
- The inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible
- World religions

INTRODUCTION: WORLD RELIGIONS

Tail = rope

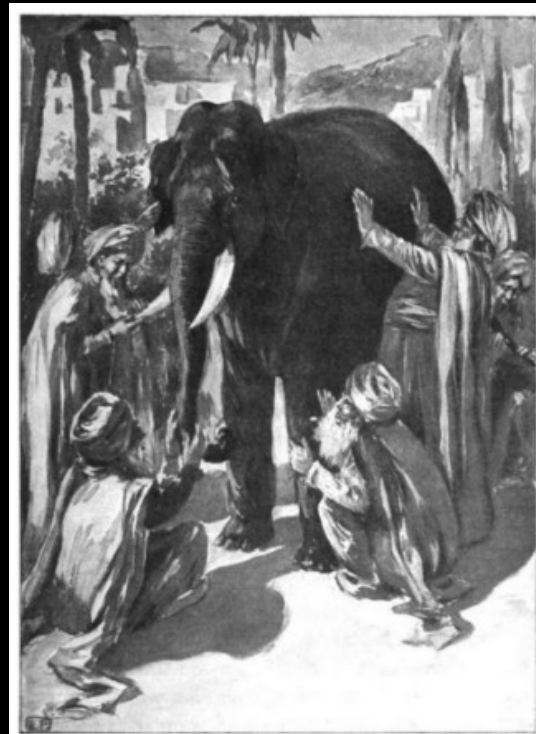
Tusk = spear

Leg = pillar

Trunk = water spout

Ear = fan

Back = throne



Do all religions lead to God?

- Hinduism teaches we are god (not gods)
- Buddhism teaches we work off karma and become extinct
- Judaism teaches that Christ died but didn't rise.
- Islam teaches we never move beyond master/slave relationship. Allah prepares paradise for followers but he will not be there.

- Christianity teaches we were created to have a relationship with God and Christ-followers will see Jesus face to face in heaven.

BUDDHISM

HINDUISM

JUDAISM

ISLAM

CHRISTIANITY

GOD	SALVATION	VIEW OTHER
No God	Enlightenment	True way
33 Million	Reincarnation	All true
Yahweh	Law	Just Judaism
Allah	Five pillars	Just Islam
Trinity	Grace	Just Christianity

WHICH IS THE TRUE RELIGION?

- All can be equally false but not equally true.
- How do we know which is true?
 - It can be shown that God exists.
 - Jesus claimed to be God.
 - Backed it up by His own resurrection. (John 2:18)
 - There is evidence that the resurrection happened.

Conclusion: Christianity is distinct and true.

CRITICAL ISSUES TO HAVE ANSWERS FOR

- Who is Jesus?
- The inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible
- World religions
- Human sexuality

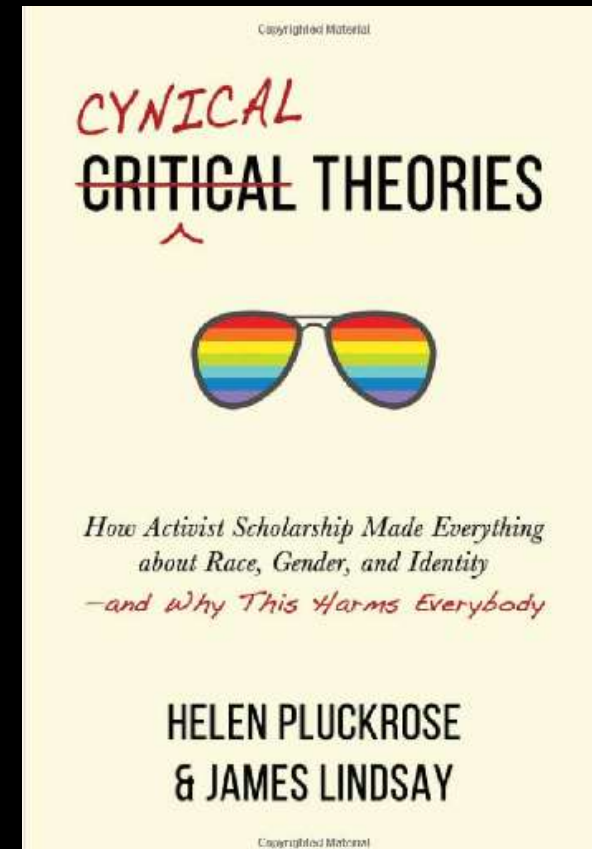
INTRODUCTION: GENDER

Why gender issues matter:

- Individual (From conception or assigned at birth?)
- Marriage (What defines a marriage? Role?)
- Family (What constitutes a family? Role?)
 - God's plan: male+female → families → communities
- The LGBTQ movement has changed everything
 - Redefinition of gender, marriage, and family

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- Postmodernism
 - The denial of objective knowledge or truth
 - Commitment to cultural constructionism
 - Belief that whatever it is we call truth is nothing more than a construct of the culture calling it that...



- Postmodernism (con't)
 - The belief that society is formed of systems of power and hierarchies, which decide what can be known and how.
 - These systems must be “deconstructed” in the name of social justice.

- Postmodernism applied
 - The oppressed must band together to overthrow the oppressors in the name of social justice.
 - Identity politics
 - Standpoint “epistemology” (what & how we know)
 - Experience, feelings outweigh math or science
 - “Your truth,” “My truth.”
 - “Listens with their eyes and thinks with their emotions.”

How did we get here? (con't)

- 2004: Eleven states passed legislation to ban same-sex marriage
- 2012: Four states tried but failed.
- 2015: Supreme Court legalized it.
- Organized strategy to overcome stigma of begin crazy, sinful, criminal, subversive



- Assisted by liberal religious leaders, theologians, and church officials who say they “evolved.”
- Lack of serious intellectual content needed to offer any meaningful defense against the moral revolution.
- Many held a *so called* biblical position while lacking a biblical worldview.
- Younger generations are more receptive.

Postmodernisms influences:

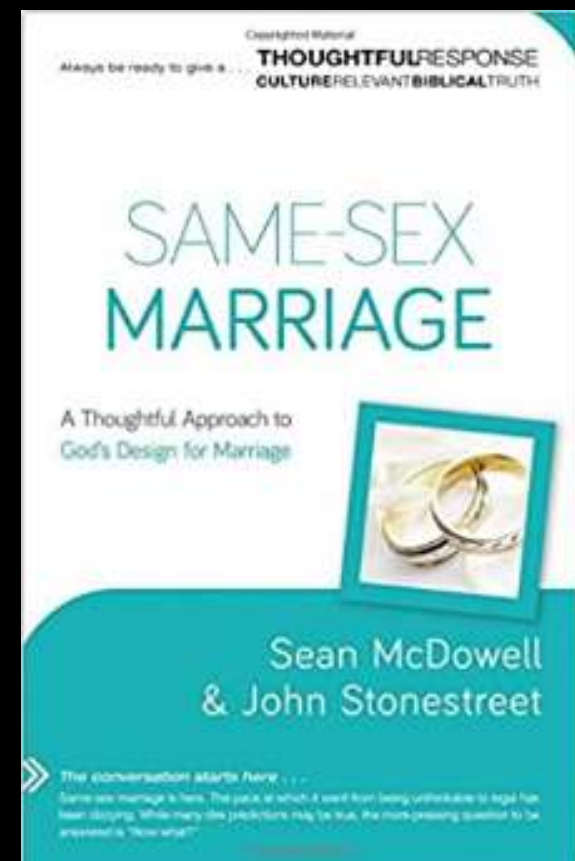
- Belief that “all definitions have been constructed by those in power to keep them in power.”
- Traditional definitions of gender, marriage, and family have been deconstructed and redefined.

Principle to remember: If there is no God, there can be no objective knowledge and truth, only opinions. The ones with the most persuasive stories (narratives) win.

- The way language is used is critical.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF GENDER, MARRIAGE, AND FAMILY

From the beginning, marriage has been between one man and one woman for a lifetime. (Matt19:3-6)



The marriage union was part of the creation story
(Gen 1:26-27; 2:24)

- The earth was formless and void (Gen 1:1-2a).
- God goes on to fill and form His creation (Gen 1:3-31).
- God created Adam & Eve in His image
- To be fruitful, multiply and to FILL the earth and to RULE (in God's place) over His creation
- They were to begin in the Garden and then throughout the earth.

- Fill implies families and communities
- Begin in the Garden and then throughout the earth.
 - Adam couldn't do it alone (Gen 2:18)
 - God gave him a helper.... a helper capable of helping to FILL the earth.

“Marriage” was initiated.

Biblical definition of marriage:

The institution through which God would equip humanity to populate and cultivate the earth.

(Companionship? Yes. Primary? No.)

- It's not just about "us." It's about the following generations (family, communities).
- It's about perpetuating civilizations.

Matt 19:4-6

Two become one flesh
Let no man separate

The Rest of the Story

1. The marriage institution is for all, not just Christians
2. Original sin doesn't change anything.
3. The mandate to fill and rule remains.
4. Marriage has a redemptive side. (...as Christ loved the church and gave Himself...)
(Matt 5:25-32)

What makes a marriage?

1. Two human beings becoming one in every way possible
2. Oriented towards procreation
3. Comes with an expectation of permanence

Original intent

- Enable male and female to reflect God's image
- Enable God's image bearers to spread His rule all over the earth
- Reflect Christ's love for the Church
- Disciple current and future generations to spread the gospel all over the earth

Original intent (con't)

- Strengthen the character of future generations
- Commits us to restrain our passions for the good of others.

Three facts about the world that makes
marriage necessary:

1. Sex makes babies.
2. Society needs babies.
3. Babies deserve mothers and fathers.

Marriage, sex, and having babies is a package deal.

The marriage ceremony is (was) intended:

1. ...to unite two people publicly
2. ...to mark two people as sexual partners and make them publicly responsible for their behavior
3. ...to imply permanence

The old view of marriage:
A comprehensive union in every way possible.

Enter postmodernism: “Truth is culturally constructed.”

The new view of marriage:
Marriage is whatever societies make (or remake) it
to be. No longer fixed, it adjusts to ever-evolving
moral and sexual norms.

Enter science:

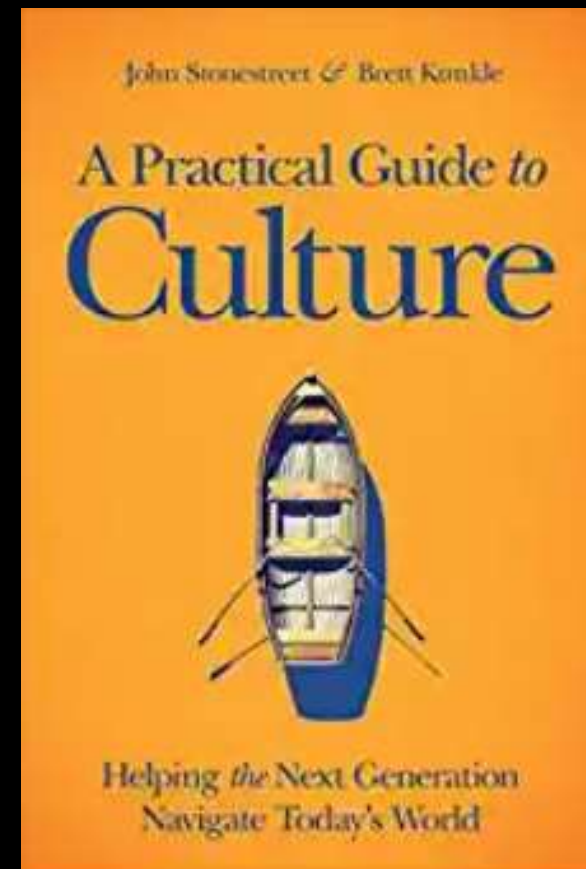
- Sex without babies
- Babies without sex
- Marriage, sex, having babies no longer connected

Enter cultural chaos and God's wrath (Rom 1:18-32)

- Same sex “marriage” partners with children
 - Two moms w/o a dad, two dads w/o a mom
 - Children who grow up with neither biological parent.
- A woman who claims to be a “man” having a baby

How should we respond?

- Recapture the wonder of God's story (Matt 19:4-6) that shows....
 - LGBTQ movement violates God's creational norms.
 - Homosexual behavior is sin. (Rom 1:24-28)



Action Steps:

1. Acknowledge that sexual brokenness is not confined to LGBTQ behavior.
2. Maintain an open dialogue on this subject with your kids (grandkids).
3. Resist the culture's false view of love.
4. Spend time with gay/trans family members and friends.
 - Love them
 - Listen: Be quick to hear and slow to speak
 - Speak truth compassionately

Action Steps (con't)

5. Counter the culture's narrative regarding sexual orientation.
6. Make Jesus, not LGBTQ topics, the main issue.
7. Prepare your family for the social costs of affirming biblical views.

Resource: Living Hope Ministry (videos)

www.livinghope.org

Quotes from Al Mohler:

- “We must realize that the more enduring contest is not between rival candidates but between rival worldviews.”
- “One central challenge for Christians is to maintain hope and joy and full faith when the culture appears to be hardening against us.”
(1 Cor 13:13)

Faith:

- Faith in God's Design, God's Word, the power of the Gospel

Hope:

- That in Christ and for His glory we are able to make a difference. God put us here and now for a purpose.

Love

- God, neighbor, one another
- Love is a commitment

Reminder:

God did not call us to be successful.

But He did call us to be faithful.

WHY BELIEVE?

We need to know the why not just the what.