

Presuppositional Apologetics: Why is it Biblical?

Jay Wegter

- 1.) In terms of saving faith, is confidence in the reliability of Scripture gained incrementally? In other words, is there a point of gradual increase in faith at which ‘critical mass’ (saving faith) is reached—i.e. trust that the Scriptures are indeed the very Word of God? What does this question have to do with the nature of man before regeneration?
- 2.) The arguments for scriptural authority which Jesus used turned upon His self-identification and self-attestation for authority. Christ continually referenced that His words must be believed because God the Father sent Him and ‘told Him what to say’. Does God require a faith commitment in His truth claims before men see a set of evidences? If so, why? How ought the approach of Jesus to the subject of biblical authority help form our apologetic methodology? (See John 5:30-47; 8:37-47; 12:44-50).
- 3.) Describe the *epistemology* used by Jesus in the following verse: “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself” (John 7:17). What is the epistemological criterion Jesus applies to his hearers in this passage? What will let them know what is true with certainty? How do Jesus’ words underscore the fact that all truth is an ethical matter?
- 4.) Why does self-attestation as the source of authority honor God, whereas making sinful man the final court of appeal and ultimate arbiter of truth does not? (See passages in John above.)
- 5.) Discuss the following: Does fallen man have the capacity to recognize that Scripture is the very word of God the moment he sees it? Discuss the following: according to Romans 1, that capacity to recognize that the Bible is the Word of God was not lost in the Fall (God made it ‘evident to them’, God made it evident ‘in them’, they have ‘no excuse’). God’s self-revelation, both general (creation) and special (the Scriptures), makes man culpable and guilty. For what man lost in the Fall was not the recognition of the word of God, but the will to believe and obey the word of God.
- 6.) Discuss the following: in Eden, the only barrier around the forbidden fruit was the spoken Word of God. It was to be believed though unproven (there was no visible evidence provided that eating it would cause death). God did not surround the tree with corpses and images of the horror of death. Actually, the tree had fruit which appeared to be a delight to the eyes and good to eat. Satan added to its visual/sensual appeal: ‘it will make you wise’ (Gen 3:6). God’s requirement of obedience in terms of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil required non-empirical faith.
- 7.) Why can’t men reason their way to God? Why is it impossible to get out in front of God in order to evaluate Him? If you answer these correctly you will know why Jesus said you can’t enter the

Kingdom of God unless you become as a little child (Matt 18:3). Does ‘become as a little child’ mean *suspend reason*?

- 8.) Discuss the following: faith is a posture towards God of utter dependence upon Him for knowledge and authority. Our apologetic method must reflect the truth of Psalm 36:9. “In thy light we see light.” When you bring extra-biblical evidences alone to the unbeliever it comes with the assumption that the natural man is neutral towards the truth claims of God. It comes with the assumption that the natural man will be fair when he stands in judgment on the truth claims of God. (See what Jesus says about this in the passages in John above.) Why do all of the Bible’s truth claims come with the biblical criterion for truth?
- 9.) Why is all truth instantly ethical? Jesus puts the final nail in the coffin of empirical faith when He gives the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In that parable, Abraham tells the rich man in Hell that if men do not believe the self-attesting self-sufficient testimony of Scripture, then empirical evidence will not overcome their unbelief (Lu 16:19-31).
- 10.) Discuss the following: The demand for signs before belief involves man wanting to be in the driver’s seat; it is man seeking to be the final arbiter of truth. This is why Jesus said it is a wicked generation that seeks signs (Lu 11:29).
- 11.) If signs are not commended by Jesus as the basis for believing, what is the biblical epistemology that Christ is endorsing? Answer: *we bring the gospel to people unproven* (John Whitcomb). God’s Word requires a faith commitment the moment men hear it (John 3:36, Acts 17:30-31).
- 12.) Discuss the following: The greatest theologian prior to Calvin was Augustine. He understood biblical epistemology—that *faith precedes and enables reasoning*. We cannot reason without accepting a body of authoritative testimony. Faith in an authoritative testimony makes reason possible. Therefore, Augustine said “I believe in order to understand.” What happens when men invert that order? Is certitude possible with an inverted order? Why are men left with mere probability when that order is inverted?
- 13.) Some resist the term ‘presuppositional’ as too philosophical—simply replace it with the term ‘faith commitment’. Carefully examine passages such as Ephesians 2:1-3 and 4:17-19 and you’ll see clearly that unbelievers have faith commitments. By trusting God’s testimony concerning the human condition, you’ll understand that the unbeliever’s faith commitments are a reliable expression of his nature. What does the Bible say about the condition of the unbeliever’s intellect?
- 14.) Discuss the following: Why is the fear of God the only reliable gateway to the knowledge of God whereas mere extra-biblical evidences presented to ‘unbowed’ reason are not? The apostle Paul condemns both the Jewish and Gentile criterion for truth, for in 1st Corinthians 1:21 we are

told that God blocks both sets of criteria for truth (signs and human wisdom). “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor 1:21-25).

- 15.) There is no knowledge of God except by foolishness of the cross and no one finds God by the cross unless they first fear God. Hebrews 11:3 tells us why we believe in fiat creation and not bear empiricism—understanding comes by believing. Naaman the Syrian argued empirically when he first refused to wash in the muddy Jordan (arguing that by observation the purity and clarity of rivers in his home country were far superior to the water quality of the Jordan—2 Kings 5:12). Faith for Naaman involved placing God’s Word above sight.
- 16.) Discuss the following: Jesus targets the nature of unbelief when He says if you don’t see signs you simply won’t believe (Jn 4:48). Does Jesus require a faith commitment in His word before it is proven by man’s empirical investigations? Does Christ suspend wrath, condemnation, and the sentence of damnation while you take the time to investigate and examine proofs? Biblical faith is a presupposing the word of God is true before you thoroughly examine the validity of every truth claim by the external means of archeology, science, history, and textual criticism.
- 17.) Discuss the following: When we put epistemology (knowing) ahead of ontology (believing) man gets to stay in the driver’s seat. Jesus has already told us that man’s problem is not a lack of data; but a prejudice in favor of darkness and folly. Man has a fierce bias against the light, let us not pretend that evidences play a major part in removing that bias (Jn 3:19-21). A faith commitment or presupposition is a hardened position in which the unbeliever clings to his faith commitments and worships his own mind refusing to give God the glory and honor which He is due. Your worldview contains your epistemology and your epistemology contains the attributes of your god.