

# APOLOGETICS



Keep The Faith

## Episode 2 – Proper Basic

Hi guys and welcome back to another companion piece for the podcast!

Last week we reviewed what the point of learning apologetics is, and this week we're taking a bit of a deeper dive into some basics for the philosophy side of things.

To reiterate what I have been saying for months, before I go on, let me remind us all of one thing – **it's all about Jesus**.

Apologetics and arguments for God's existence are all amazing things to have and know, but they're useless in the absence of Jesus Christ. When we look at these arguments, I know I likely won't be using tonnes of Scripture as I have been in previous weeks. This is not because scripture is not important at this juncture! We must weigh everything we say against the Word of God, but scripture will take a supplementary role in these studies as we are dealing primarily with ideas as they relate to *culture, logic and science*. These are usually antithetical to the Bible, so we have to be able to speak in those contexts before we introduce scripture.

This leads me to another valuable subject I did not have time to cover in the podcast itself – ensuring that we are understood.

When we talk about God and our faith, especially if we have been Christians for a while, we might have some jargon and phrases that a non-Christian may not understand. We might not even use a frame of reference they can fathom!

In order to avoid this, it is often best to let the person you are speaking with frame the conversation. In the podcast next week (**SPOILERS**), I will give you an example of speaking with a young lad and you'll see that what's crucial about this is that I let him lead the conversation (or feel like he was leading). I wanted to know what language he wanted to speak in order to find out his point of reference.

When he says that science had proven God does not exist, he was saying 'my language on this subject is scientific'.

I bring up this point a week ahead of time because I don't want you to miss this – if someone frames the conversation as scientific in nature, don't start using the Bible or philosophically-heavy arguments to make your point – that's not their language.

From there, it's simply a point of making sure you *are* speaking their language: "What scientific theory did you have in mind?", "what about this alternative theory?", "have you considered the effects of the theory of [x]?" and so on.

That's how we can be effective in our evangelism and apologetics, making sure we are relating properly and meaningfully.

If you're not sure what this is really all about, then stay tuned for next week's episode and companion where it'll be far clearer.

Anyway, continuing to recap last week, I think we all agreed that we need to take the Biblical commands to be able to defend the faith and to go out and make disciples seriously, and that warrants a look at apologetics.

We also discussed its value to the believer. Having a foundation of logical truth and reason makes remaining strong in the tough seasons that much easier – it's hard to abandon something you know to be true and can logically prove to yourself just because you don't feel great about it.

In this episode, I began showing you how apologetics really works, the philosophy and logic that tends to go into the presentation of the arguments, and I began to introduce you to the arguments we're going to be reviewing.

As I said in the episode, we're looking at 4 arguments only, do to multiple reasons which I won't go through again here.

Let me explain some of the make-up of these arguments then.

Firstly, the way I'll present each of them is a 'premise-then-conclusion' style of presentation. This means I will present you with a premise, a statement that is either true or false, which will then lead to a further premise or premises, and then eventually to a conclusion. Most of these arguments are called arguments from 'deduction', meaning that each premise builds to another and, if they are all plausibly true, then the conclusion will be logically inescapable. This is different to something called an inductive argument, in which premises are given and potentially added in order to make the conclusion less likely to be false. Hopefully you see the distinction there – the deductive argument's conclusion can be taken as logically certain if there is no logical inconsistency in the premises. This doesn't make the conclusion 100% true, however. For example, there are examples of valid but unsound deductive arguments. For example:

P1. If Superman actually exists then at least one superhero is real

P2. Superman exists

C. Therefore, at least one superhero is real

So, whilst this is *valid*, in that if those two premises are true then the conclusion is logically unassailable, it's *unsound* because premise 2 is false. Therefore, the conclusion is 100% false.

This leads to my next point – deductive arguments' conclusions are either 100% true or 100% false, there is no shades of right there, whereas an inductive argument can be weakly valid or strongly valid, or anything in-between!

Let me remind you of the examples I gave in the podcast.

A sound deductive argument could be something like this:

- P1. It is raining in Stourbridge
- P2. Anna will not go outside when it rains.
- C. Therefore, Anna will not be outside in Stourbridge.

The reason this works is that the conclusion is inescapable if those premises are absolutely true. If it is true that Anna will not go out in the rain and that it is raining in Stourbridge, then it is 100% true that Anna will not be out in Stourbridge!

An inductive argument could look more like this:

- P1. Every time I walk by the neighbour's house, they yell at me
- C. Therefore, the next time I walk past the neighbour's house, they will yell at me

That's not as strong an argument as before – even if that premise is true, it doesn't necessarily follow that the conclusion is 100% true.

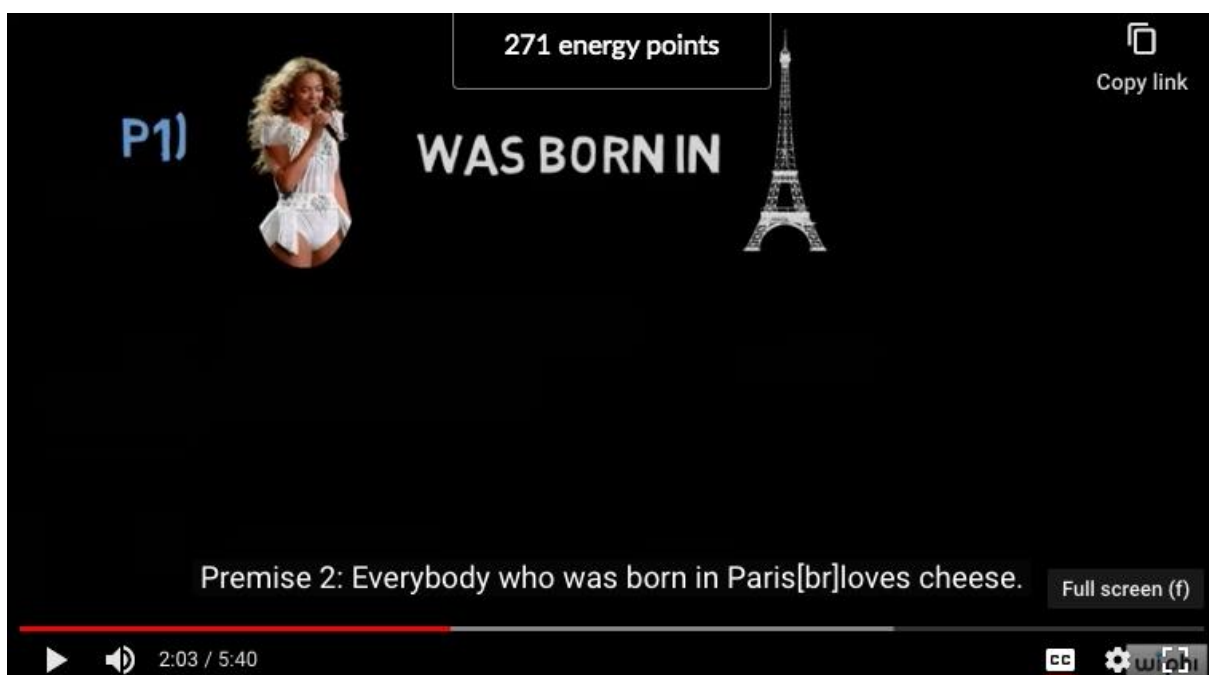
It could be strengthened, however, with extra premises:

- P1. My neighbour's house has a 'keep off the lawn' sign
- P2. Every time I see the sign, I walk on the grass
- P3. Every time I walk by the neighbour's house and walk on the grass, they yell at me
- P4. My neighbours always see me because they cannot leave the house due to illness and age
- C. Therefore, the next time I walk by my neighbour's house and walk on the lawn, they will yell at me

That's considerably stronger, though still not a guarantee like with a deductive argument. So, now you see the different types of argument that are most often used.

We will be dealing with deductive arguments, but in order to see their strength I just wanted to juxtapose them with the inductive arguments.

Here is a short video which, due to it being visual, might help if you're still not 100% on this:



Because you've been diligent and come to the companion for the podcast, I want to reward you with a sneak-peek at one of the arguments we'll be reviewing!  
Here are the premises and conclusion of the Kalam Cosmological Argument:

- P1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause
- P2. The universe began to exist'
- C. Therefore, the universe has a cause

Can you see how that works? That the conclusion is logically inescapable if the premises are true? This is a great example of a valid and sound deductive argument.

In a conversation in which this argument is being utilised, your job will be to defend the validity of the premises, because if you can do so the conclusion has to be accepted as true (sort of, people can deny things that are true if they want to – the conclusion doesn't *compel* a belief in the existence of God).

For bonus points, as a really big reward for coming to this extra avenue of learning and betterment, here's a video introducing the argument as a whole!



Now, let me recap a couple of things I had to say in the podcast itself, in terms of caution when approaching apologetics!

Firstly, don't assume that each of these arguments will be an absolute guarantee that God exists! A lot of people make that mistake – they hear me say things like 'the conclusion necessarily or inescapably follows' and assume that means 'is guaranteed to be true'. One thing to keep in mind when dealing with deductive arguments is that the conclusion may logically, necessarily follow... but it's only true if the premises are true. And, whilst I think the premises supplied in the arguments are ridiculously difficult to even suggest are possibly false, we still may one day find them to be. Instead, think of each argument as the leg on a table – as you add more and more arguments, the table gets more and more completed and stable, until it can become a rock steady foundation. Like a good lawyer, we will be taking

several pieces of evidence and compounding their likelihood of being true by adding them one to the other. It's called a cumulative case for God's existence.

Secondly, don't do what others I've taught in the past have done and hear your first argument, assume you've got it down, then head over to YouTube to listen to atheists right away. Hearing objections from people who have spent far more time looking at this stuff than you have can confuse you if you don't have the argument properly down yet!

Take the problem of suffering & evil for example – if you hadn't listened to the whole series we did, you may not realise that someone isn't necessarily correct when they say an all-powerful God can create any world he pleases! In that instance, that objection may confuse you as you have no way to cognitively deal with it. So, be careful how quickly you try to engage with opposing viewpoints – wait until your depth of knowledge and understanding is sufficient and then go and test yourself.

One final thing to say before we briefly look at which arguments we're covering – if you want to *really* learn these arguments, you need to do more than just listen to this podcast! You need to be *active* in your learning. Just like Ryan said when he co-hosted a few weeks ago, you can passively listen and remember just a little bit, or you can do something active to learn actively and retain loads more. For Ryan, that was writing notes as he listened! This may not work for you, so you might want to grab the companion and highlight it, or draw out any diagrams I put on there, or whatever works. You might even want to do something practical and have a go at putting what you learn in practice! We'll come back to that later. But my point here is this – if you're going to take the time to listen, take the extra time to properly learn! Trust me, you will not regret it.

Let's have a look at the four arguments we're going to look at:

1. The Kalam Cosmological Argument – this is an argument that, based on the universe having a beginning, you can logically infer a first cause for the universe
2. The Fine-Tuning Argument – this is an argument that states, due to the apparent fine-tuning that has taken place to make the universe viable, we can logically infer a designer
3. The Moral Argument – this is an argument that, by reviewing the type and origin of our morality, proclaims we can logically infer a transcendent moral law-giver
4. The Ontological Argument – this is a more complicated argument that shows, by exploring possible worlds and what makes a being maximally great, we can infer that a being like God must exist

Here's a reminder of our plans for Thursdays – we are going to begin adding in a small slot to the studies in which we will be doing 'debate club'.

Every week, we will spend a small amount of time practising what we learned in the podcast episode. In this week's debate club slot, we will be looking at nothing more than an overview of the deductive arguments and tackling the question 'does God exist?' Really basic.

So, what's our scripture of the week?

This week we have 2Corinthians 10:5 –

*"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God".*

Why is that this week's scripture?

Because it deals with exactly what apologetics helps us to do – demolish every argument that sets itself up as counter to and anathema to the knowledge of God!

The world is not friendly to the Christian worldview these days, in fact in certain places, particularly university campuses, it's openly hostile. People will raise objections at some point in your life, and rather than shrinking away or just brushing it off, wouldn't it be great if you could do as Paul says in 2Corinthians and demolish that objection (with respect and gentleness, of course)?

Here's our question of the week then, and it's pretty simple – which of the arguments that I described are you most excited to learn?! My personal favourite, I think, is the ontological. It's so out there I find it fun to think about things like possible worlds and what not. Have an answer ready for debate club!

That's all then, folks!

Next week, we will pick up the start of the Kalam Cosmological Argument!

As always, don't be afraid to get into the youth whatsapp chat and let us know how you are, what you're up to and what you're thinking. Get your prayer requests ready for Thursday and get involved in our Bible study! And you can grab us on Instagram @chawnyouth.

Speak to you next week!