

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

Romans - The Gospel of God

Romans 1:18-21

Caleb Falbo

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Transcriber’s Note: Music.

Caleb: Thank you, Don. Let’s start with a word of prayer. Our heavenly Father, we thank You for this day. We thank You for this group of men who come out every Friday. And I thank You for the fellowship that we have, that we’re able to surround ourselves with like-minded men and study Your word. And Lord, I ask that You would open our hearts and our minds this morning.

I pray that You would be with some of the requests that were mentioned today—Lord, for the family of Warren Carr and for Glennie his wife. I just ask that You would surround that family during this time, and give them a sense of peace and calm. Lord, for Bob Busted’s ten-year-old grandson who is dealing with COVID. We thank You that it looks like he’s coming toward the end of this. And we just ask that You’ll help him to come back full strength.

And then also for these couple of friends that Bruce has mentioned—a young man and a young lady who are dealing with depression. We just ask that if they do not know You that they would come to You, and that You would give them peace. And if they do know You, Lord, we pray that You would encourage them with Your presence, and just assure them that You are with them during these times that may be tough for them right now. And we ask all this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Caleb: Well, how many of you remember a couple of weeks ago? Can you hear me? Is this all good?

Brave Men: Yes.

Caleb: Okay. How many of you remember a couple of weeks ago when Jeff was mentioning solipsism? Remember that he mentioned the tree in the woods question and that type of thing. Well, there’s this unusual philosophical idea known as *solipsism*, which states that the only thing that can be known to exist is the self. And everything else is a figment of your imagination.

Well, when Jeff was talking about that it brought to mind a lecture that I listened to from a Notre Dame professor named Alvin Plantinka. Some of you may have heard of him. But he tells a story of Bertrand Russell. And he states that Bertrand Russell for a time adopted this philosophy of solipsism.

Well, Russell tells the story about how a lady wrote him a letter one time. And in the letter she said, “I’ve read all your works on solipsism. I think it’s great stuff. I’m all in; I’m overwhelmingly convinced.”

She then went on to the next sentence to say, “I wonder why there aren’t more of us in the world.” (*Laughter*) So it’s kind of a humorous little paradox. But it does illustrate in a way the depths to which man has gone to suppress the knowledge of God. And that’s kind of where we’re going to be today.

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

When Sig asked me to do this a few weeks ago he said that I don't have to stick to Romans, but to address something kind of closely related. So this is something that came to mind pretty quickly.

And then I talked with Jeff a couple weeks ago, just to make sure that there wasn't too much overlap in what we were going to be talking about. And while he has addressed the passage that I'm going to be reading this morning, this isn't going to be a replica of Jeff's teaching. So I trust that this will hopefully harmonize well. And hopefully we can get something out of this today.

Let's head to romans 1, verses 18-21. Romans 1:18-21.

It says, *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes—namely, His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made, so they are without excuse.”* This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Caleb: Well, today I'm going to be addressing, as you see at the top of your outline there, the topics of “Revelation and Apologetic Approach.” Now when I talk about revelation I'm talking about it as a category. I'm not talking about the book of Revelation. So I want to say that right at the outset. I'll leave the book of Revelation for somebody else. *(Laughter)*

When we talk about revelation we're talking about what God has revealed about Himself. And when I talk about apologetic approach I'm not talking about the way that we owe Sig an apology for constantly giving him a hard time up here. *(Laughter)*

Sig Tragard: Wow! *(Unclear)* I don't see anybody else chiming in.

Caleb: I don't know if they agree. *(Laughter)* Of course we're talking about a defense of the faith. And I assume that most of us in here are familiar with that terminology.

So in talking about revelation I want us to first consider the broad term *theology*. Now when we think of theology, of course we're talking about the study of God. Now when we think of other ologies—for instance, in the sciences—we recognize that in order to study them we have to take the first steps.

For instance, if I wanted to study the geological complexities of the Grand Canyon, could you imagine if I were to sit in my living room? And my wife comes in and says, “You haven't moved for a while. What's going on?”

And I say, “Well, I'm sitting here and I'm waiting for the Grand Canyon to come and teach me about itself.” *(Laughter)* Well, we would recognize the absurdity in this, of course.

But when we move into theology—the study of God—we recognize that it is God who initiates. God is the One who reveals Himself, or else we couldn't know anything about God. So we are relying on Him to reveal Himself. And indeed He does that. By the way, on any of these given points, just as usual if you have any comments, questions, anything, if you have questions I'll defer to the bishop. *(Laughter)* And if you have comments I'll gladly listen. *(Laughter)* But stop me at any point.

In talking of revelation, we just covered the broad term *theology*. And since in order to study theology we need revelation from God, the question is in what ways does God reveal Himself? And we have two means through which God reveals Himself—namely

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

general, sometimes called *natural* revelation, or *special*, sometimes called *supernatural* revelation.

When we talk about special revelation we’re talking about God’s revelation of Himself through His word, whether spoken or written. And I’m not talking about when you’re kneeling down to pray and you say, “I think the Lord spoke to me.” That’s not what I have in mind here. But it’s His actual revealing Himself in His word and through the authors of His word.

But we’re going to be focusing more in this on general revelation, because that’s what’s addressed in the text here. It says, “*What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.*”

So general revelation is general in two ways. First, it’s general in the sense that it is knowledge that’s given to everybody; it’s not given to a specific group of people. We contrast this with special revelation, because with special revelation unfortunately not everybody in our world has access to the word of God. So when we’re talking about this general sense, we’re first referring to it in the sense that it is general in that it is available to everybody.

Secondly, it’s general in the sense that the content of this revelation is general and not specific. For instance I don’t look up at the stars in the heavens and automatically say, “Well, from looking at the sky I can tell that Jesus came, lived a perfect life, died on the cross,” etc., etc. It’s general revelation in terms of its content.

So within the idea of general revelation we have two sub-categories that come up. And those sub-categories are known as *mediate natural revelation* and *immediate revelation*. Mediate revelation is that which God reveals about Himself using means outside of ourselves. So that’s what we have here in Romans 1, when it says, “*For His invisible attributes—namely, His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world, in things that have been made.*” So we perceive this and we look at creation. And we mediately perceive that God is, and that He is powerful.

In his book *Undeniable: How Biology confirms Our Intuition That Life Is Designed*, Douglas Axe speaks of this idea that we each have an intuition to recognize design. And he points out that we each have an intuition to recognize design. And he calls that “*our design intuition*”—that is, that we can look at a building. And we don’t have to do a big analysis about it; we just recognize that it was designed.

So that’s kind of the idea that we have in mind here with mediate natural revelation. We look at creation around us. And we don’t need some big argumentation to derive the fact that God created this and that He is a powerful Being.

Well, on the other hand, immediate revelation refers to that which God has revealed about Himself directly without the use of external means. So this is what God reveals to us internally. This is also found in Romans over in the second chapter. I’ll read verses 14 and 15.

It says, “*For when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.*” So not only does God reveal Himself to all mediately through nature, but also immediately through our consciences.

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

Now I would like to sort of cap off this point of general revelation by just giving you an example of a friend of mine who was a missionary to Vanawatu, which is a small island. In Vanawatu he goes into a tribe. He basically has to learn their tribal language. They didn't even have a written language when he got there. So he's working now on interpreting the Bible and working on a written language.

But I asked him to kind of give me an example of how he saw general revelation manifest itself there before they ever even had access to the Bible. And he mentioned a few things. In terms of immediate revelation he mentioned that the men there knew that it was wrong to cheat on their wives. He mentioned that he knew that it was wrong to murder. And he mentioned thirdly that they knew that it was wrong to steal. Now he said that they violated these things. But they realize that they were doing wrong when they did them.

In terms of mediate revelation he said that they all know that there is a Creator. And in fact they create folklore around this to give a story behind it. So this is all stuff that's known about God without them ever having heard of any special revelation. So I want to actually just stop there. Any comments or questions about anything dealing with natural revelation—mediate revelation or immediate revelation? Yes?

Ron Baling: Quite a number of years ago I saw a show talking about evolution—the evolution of babies, so to speak. And they said they found this prehistoric fossil of some kind of animal, and a head and a nose and a beak, or something. And they said, “We still haven't figured out what the purpose of that was.” And if that is all the result of evolution, why should that have a purpose?

Caleb: Right.

Ron: In their minds they realize there's a purpose.

Caleb: Right. Yes; that's a good comment. I like that. Don't?

Don Maurer: I brought this up before. But it's amazing how hostile the general scientific/academic community is to even any kind of intelligent design, let alone the bible. They don't even want intelligent design brought up in academic settings.

Bishop Rodgers: You'd get fired.

Caleb: Yes, it's true. I notice the same thing. Anybody else—comments, questions?

Sig: I've always wondered about your missionary friend and that example you gave.

Caleb: Yeah.

Sig: Was this recent? Had he been to that island knowing that no one had ever gone there before, with the same intentions of creating a written language to share Christ with them?

Caleb: So he wasn't the first in Vanawatu. They met—

Sig: Where is that?

Caleb: It would be off of the coast of Australia; it would be an island off of there. He wasn't the first person there specifically. But he is the one focusing on this specific tribe. So that specific tribe may never have heard. There are tribes all over what they call “The Bush.” And so there are tribes all over the Bush that each individually need reached. He did a lot of training ahead of time at New Tribes Bible Institute in Missouri. And it seems that kind of prepared him pretty well for a lot of the challenges that he would face. Anything else?

All right. Well, moving from natural revelation or general revelation, we often run into this idea of *natural theology*. And this often arises most inevitably because of the

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

similarity in name. But I want to point out that natural revelation is not natural theology; there is a distinction there. Natural revelation is what God has revealed about Himself through nature. Natural theology on the other hand is what man can know of God through what He has revealed in nature.

And this can get a little bit sticky if we try to take natural theology too far. Actually let’s just read verse 20 here, how our text defines natural theology. It says, “*For His invisible attributes—namely, His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly perceived.*”

So this clear perception of God’s power and divine nature is descriptive of natural theology. It’s what man can know about God based on what He has revealed.

Natural theology has its limitations, namely that it renders man without excuse. And I’m going to come back to that phrase in a little bit here. But I just want to add that many have tried to really build on this natural theology. And we could go on all day about different heresies, frankly. And it ends up leading into mysticism and liberal theology because you end up making yourself the source of how things are interpreted around you, and trying to develop a theology beyond what the Bible has clearly stated that natural theology’s use is for. So I don’t know. Is that clear, what I was saying about natural theology? Any questions about that specifically?

Don: Can you elaborate, Caleb, on how it leads to liberalism and the heresies? Can you elaborate on some of the heresies that follow?

Caleb: Yes. Without naming specific heresies I’m going to kind of try to recap this in principle.

Don: Okay.

Caleb: Okay. So natural theology states that we look at nature. We can derive things about God. And what it does, it tries to take it too far. And ultimately it undermines the need for special revelation. I don’t know if somebody wants to name something specific. Do you have something in mind, Don, that you wanted to highlight?

Don: No. I think that clarifies it a little bit better to me, because deists would believe that. There is a God and He loves all of us, and there’s no need for Christ or atonement, or whatever. Would that be what you’re saying?

Caleb: Yes. Well, kind of, yes. It’s that you kind of develop this theology based on your wisdom, experience, observations, without necessarily consulting the word of God. You’re using the word of God as a source, but not the source—not the primary source.

Ron: It reminds me of the Deists from an earlier time. Some people thought that God set the wheels in motion and stepped back and let it run itself.

Caleb: Yeah.

Ron: That would be natural theology misguided.

Caleb: Yeah; good comment. Does anybody else have anything to add to that?

Sig: Other than that we’re all a bunch of heretics here? *(Laughter)*

Caleb: Hey!

Sig: I’m just speaking for myself.

Caleb: My goal coming into today was not to teach any heresy. *(Laughter)* So I set the bar low for myself. *(Laughter)* I just hope that we can keep that going. If I do teach any, stop me. *(Laughter)*

I want us to focus on the phrase in Romans 1:21 which says, “*Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God.*” And then I want us to look at 1 Corinthians 2:14.

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

You won't have to turn there, but I'm going to read this. It says, *“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him. And he is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

Sig: What was that reference?

Caleb: 1 Corinthians 2:14.

Sig: Thank you.

Caleb: And that was cross-referenced with Romans 1:21. And what I'm going to point out there is that the same Greek root word used in Romans 1:21 for *knew*—*“they knew God”*—is the same root word used in 1 Corinthians 2:14 when it says that *“he is not able to understand.”*

So we have a little bit of a tension that seems to arise here. On the one hand Romans 1 is telling us emphatically that those who reject God know Him. And on the other hand 1 Corinthians 2:14 says that this same man is not able to understand, *“because they are spiritually discerned.”* So how do we sort of harmonize these two things?

Well, actually it's fairly simple. It's not a foreign concept to our language, but it can be explained through the semantic range of that word *know*. And what I'm saying by semantic range is that it can have a more nuanced definition, depending on context. You know, you guys could all name a million—well, maybe not a million—but a hundred people that you know of, but who I don't know like I know my wife, my family, my friends. So the same thing is true of these two uses of that word.

To know in Romans is more like the mental assent. Okay, I know this about that person. I might even know a few facts. But I don't know them personally. And when we come to 1 Corinthians 2:14 the context there bears out that it is a personal knowledge, a personal knowledge of knowing somebody like a friend, a family member, more like that type of knowledge.

So again, that's a fairly simple explanation to harmonize those two. But I just point that out because people have brought that charge that this is an inconsistency. So I just wanted to briefly mention that.

This phrase *“without excuse”* is an interesting word. In Romans 1 we have *“without excuse.”* It's an interesting word in the Greek, which is going to lead us into the second half of this study. And that word is *anapologetus*. Actually I'm going to write that one up here. And I'm no Greek scholar. *Anapologetus*. Does anything stand out about that word to anybody?

Brave Man: Apologetics or apology?

Caleb: Yes, exactly. So *anapologetus* is *“without an apologetic,”* that is, that man is without excuse. That's the word that's used here in Romans 1.

Think of 1 Peter 3:15. It's typically used as a classic text for apologetics. It says, *“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being ready to make a defense.”* The phrase *“to make a defense”* in the Greek is *apologia*. I'm sorry; what's your name again?

Brave Man: Chuck.

Caleb: As Chuck pointed out, it's the same word for apologetics. So we derive our English word *apologetics* from this, which is the defense of the faith.

Now the unbeliever is described as without an apologetic. And the believer is told to be prepared with an apologetic. So over this next section I'm going to be kind of brief here. But I want us to ask ourselves the question. How can I honor the Lord in my apologetic approach? I'm not going to give some extensive talk on apologetics. But I

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

want us just to think about that question. How can I honor the Lord in my apologetic approach?

Now probably immediately when I ask that question a lot of your minds may have gone back to the 1 Peter 3 text, where it talks about “*gentleness and respect.*” We are to talk to others with gentleness and respect. And that’s definitely a part of it.

But that’s not even so much what I have in mind. What I have more in mind is that in the context itself so what we say to an unbeliever, how can we honor the Lord? And so I’m going to ask this in a little more of a pointed way. When you make use of apologetics in conversations with others, do you treat them as if they have an excuse? Or do you submit your apologetic approach to the teaching we have in Romans 1—that man is indeed without excuse—*anapologetus*?

I want to say a couple things. I already said one of them. This isn’t intended to be some long, drawn-out teaching on apologetics. But secondly I just want to say that we have two areas of apologetics, two approaches to apologetics that I’m going to address. One is the classical approach to apologetics, and the other is the pre-suppositional approach to apologetics.

And I want to say that I have a bias toward pre-suppositional apologetics. But I’m not going to make too much of that. I just kind of want to present these. And again, I want your thoughts to be, do I honor the Lord in my apologetic approach? Whichever route you end up going, however you end up taking this, ask yourself that question.

Sig: May I ask a question before you go on?

Caleb: Yes; I’m sorry.

Sig: I was curious about your “without excuse” theme in the earlier part of your discussion. Let’s go back to the island where your friend is a missionary. And I can assume that if he’s a friend of yours that he’s doing this now, or he did this recently. It’s not a thousand years ago or a hundred years ago; it’s current, right?

Caleb: Yes.

Sig: He goes to this island and there are lots of tribes, and he’s dealing with one tribe. Now I assume that before he got there that people didn’t know about Christ, and lived their lives and died. So will they go before the throne of God and the throne of Christ and say, “Yes, I know there is a Creator. I wouldn’t have called Him Jesus. We didn’t have a name for Him.” So what happens? And maybe that’s not a good question for this discussion. But the thing that always troubles me is that I know we’ve got to get around the world with the Great Commission. But what happens? They don’t have an excuse, do they? Or do they? I would think that they might, in terms of knowing Christ and the Scriptures that we know.

Caleb: Right, yes. And this is the classic question. According to Romans 1 “*they are without excuse,*” because the wrath of God has been revealed to men. He has made Himself known; He has made His divine power known. He’s made Himself abundantly clear.

And the other thing is, you know, I think that a lot of times we have assumptions in our questions. And one of the assumptions in that question—and not necessarily the way you phrased it,—but the way it’s often phrased is that we are condemned solely for our unbelief. And while we are condemned because of our unbelief, we’re also condemned because of our sin. We’re condemned because we violate the law that is written on our consciences, as addressed in Romans 2.

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

So it’s a tough question for us as humans to think about. I mean, let’s just be honest about it. I think that’s a really tough question to think about. It comes up often, especially when we’re going over this text. But the Bible’s teaching is that *“they are without excuse.”* Does anybody have anything to add to that—maybe some wisdom in that way?

Brave Man: I’m not trying to start an insurrection. But when King David’s son died, he was eating and celebrating afterward. And he said, *“He cannot come to me, but I will go to him.”* Unless you think that King David is in hell, where is his son?

Caleb: Hmm.

Brave Man: Are you saying he’s not in hell?

Caleb: Yes; I’d say so.

Sig: Moving right along. *(Laughter)*

Caleb: I have nothing to add to that; I’m just processing.

Bishop: There’s nothing that should lead you to think that David is in hell.

Caleb: Right.

Sig: But wouldn’t that be true of the inhabitants of the island that Caleb’s friend didn’t meet yet?

Bishop: There’s a distinction between resisting what is known to everybody in general revelation. Everybody has a conscience. Everybody has an intuition that things have design, and what weather can do to a rock. We have this awareness. We don’t have to have an argument about it; it just comes to us. And we resist that. If God is speaking to us through that, then we have no excuse for that resistance, that failure to honor Him or to give thanks to Him. Here we are with all of the benefits that we live by—existence itself—and we’re not honoring God for that. No wonder we’re guilty! But that’s different from being ignorant about Jesus Christ because that’s special revelation. And that has to come through the gospel itself. So we have an excuse in that sense, like these people on the island. So God takes all that into consideration when He makes a final judgment about a person’s destiny.

Sig: Amen. Thank you, Bishop. Don, do you have a question?

Don: No, just a comment. I don’t want to open a can of worms,--

Sig: But you’re going to anyway. *(Laughter)*

Don: But there are some who believe that since he was a covenant child,. Or potentially a covenant child,--

Brave Man: Who?

Don: David’s son.

Brave Man: Okay.

Don: And he said that the Lord’s faithfulness and mercy are unto a thousand generations. So that might be a distinction. The baby hasn’t committed any actual sins—that kind of thing.

Bishop: Charles Hodge teaches that since all have sinned in Adam and that all are atoned in Christ, then all the kids who haven’t actually sinned are saved. So he makes quite an argument about that. But as you say, that’s a can of worms. *(Laughter)*

Caleb: Well, thank you guys for those comments. Sometimes I take a minute to process things. So I apologize if I don’t have anything to say right away. But thank you for your additional comments.

Bishop: May I say something?

Caleb: Yes.

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

Bishop: I think that your phrase that we have intuition for design is rather important, because someone would look and say to you that we look and see whether something has a shape or a form. And you say that mountain looks like a man lying down with his arms extended, or something. And then you go and see the chiseled figures of four Presidents. And you don't think that the wind did that.

Caleb: Right.

Bishop: Immediately you understand that's a design.

Caleb: Yes.

Bishop: And that's essentially what's being said here in this text. We know this. To take the universe with all its fine calculations, and each cell itself is a mystery, and so complex, and then to say that it all just happened, is just bizarre.

Caleb: Yeah.

Bishop: It's as crazy as our political situation. *(Laughter)* You can't even tell if you're a boy or a girl. *(Laughter)* A lot of people think this way.

Caleb: We're reducing everything to absurdity.

Don: It's all inter-related. It's denying reality; it's denying God.

Bishop: It's part of the denial; that's right, absolutely—right down to the end. It's a world view.

Caleb: It ends up reducing one's world view to absurdity when they deny the existence of God. And what the pre-suppositional apologetic approach is really driving at is that it's trying to highlight and show that without God you can't make sense of anything.

But I'm going to give that a rest there because if I get into the classical and the pre-suppositional there's a lot more to talk about—more than five minutes. But I appreciate all of you guys allowing me to speak with you today. I've learned a lot from listening to a lot of your comments and questions—processing things, going back and thinking about things that you guys have said. So I thank you for your input today. And Don, go ahead.

Don: You're talking about in apologetics, whether you treat people as without excuse or otherwise.

Caleb: Yeah.

Don: And I'm just wondering how that works practically.

Caleb: Yeah.

Don: I have a neighbor with whom I've been trying to share the gospel, and he's very hostile to it. Well, do I say, “You're without excuse. You'd better straighten up or you're going to go to hell.”

Caleb: No,--

Don: Do I approach it that way, or do I do it with compassion?

Caleb: Yeah. And of course the gentleness and the respect is the prerequisite. But what I had in mind before is that my concern is that many on the classical or evidential side build an argument of probability. If this, then this; therefore, probably God. And I think we can run the risk in our apologetic approach when we say “probably God.” And sometimes that's not explicitly stated, but it's kind of implied. I think that when we do that we run the risk of rendering that man has an excuse at that point.

What are some of the excuses that a man can have? “Well, God, there wasn't quite enough evidence for me. You didn't quite make Yourself known.” And the Bible makes it clear that “*what can be known about God is clearly perceived.*”

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

So that’s the concern that I more or less have in mind. It’s not so much the specific approach that’s used. It’s whether or not you’re approaching this person as if that verse in Romans is actually true. Does that make sense?

Don: Yes.

Caleb: Yes?

Bishop: I think another difference is that if you assume that they’re suppressing the truth in unrighteousness—which you must assume, as we all do,—

Caleb: Right.

Bishop: What’s central is to help them. So ask questions of them, so that they get to the point where they are forced to acknowledge their own pre-suppositions, because that’s when it will become evident that they are building a lot of their world view on nothing except resistance to God.

Caleb: Yeah.

Bishop: I mean, you see that in the whole scientific field, as Don pointed out. Here are these brilliant scientists who come up saying that the evolutionary model simply can’t deal with the data that they deal with. And they express hostility to where we live. And they don’t know they’re being hostile. We have to lead them to see that their pre-suppositions are themselves unfounded and based in hostility.

Caleb: Yes. And I’ll just kind of mention this quickly. What that leads to is, a lot of times when we talk to somebody there is this desire to be neutral. We can step onto the same ground as they, and we share logic and all that. In the pre-suppositional approach they would call this “the myth of neutrality.” And that is to say that the unbeliever is not neutral.

You can think of this word *epistemology*, which is the study of how we know what we know, the theory of knowledge. So within epistemology—and I’ll write that on here as well—you have this idea of infinite *regress*. In other words, if you give me any given fact (I say that Chris’s shirt is yellow), and you ask, “How do you know?”, and then I can give you an explanation. And you can say, “Then how do you know that?” The idea is that you could do that an infinite number of times until you get down to the ultimate starting point.

And that’s what the pre-suppositionalist is trying to do. He’s trying to expose that everybody has an ultimate starting point. There is no neutrality. So that’s kind of the idea that you’re driving at as well. There is no neutrality.

For the Christian, we openly admit that our starting point is the word of God. And we unashamedly admit that. And without the word of God you can’t make sense of anything.

Where this comes up is, a lot of times when a pre-suppositionalist is presenting his arguments, he is charged with circular reasoning. And the point is that all reasoning ultimately becomes circular. And circularity does not necessarily make it fallacious. Everybody has to have a starting point. And it’s going to inevitably have to circle back to that starting point.

A lot there; I hope it kind of made sense a little bit. Does that make sense? Okay?

Sig: The question that always comes up though, Caleb, is what about the Hindu or the Muslim or even the Jew who may not say, “Christ is my means of salvation.” But they would say, “Yes, God created the earth; He created everything. He created me and I worship Him and I obey Him and I follow Him.” But they wouldn’t necessarily acknowledge Christ. I mean, a lot of other religions do. They give Him homage, but not that He’s necessarily the Savior of the world or the Savior of me.

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

Caleb: Yeah. I think that each one of these religions or ideas has to be dealt with individually. And how apologetics ends up working out is going to depend a lot upon that relationship that you build with that person, and a lot upon what that particular person’s presuppositions are.

Sig: Yeah.

Caleb: And they can vary. You know, they can be a wide range of things.

Sig: I’ve always liked Jesus’ response to His disciples. And it may be in a different context when He said it. But what I hear in light of what you just said, Jesus would say to them, “*Who do you say that I am?*” You know, someone else can throw an argument at us that would derail our approach to them, or our apologetic. And we could really come back and say, “Who do you say that Jesus is? Here we are in the 21st century or wherever. Now that we’ve talked about Jesus, who do you say that He is?”

Caleb: Yes.

Sig: As opposed to “What do you have as excuses?”

Caleb: Yeah. I like that; I like that. And between what you and the bishop said, it brings to mind a book that I read, and then I’ll finish up here. It’s a book that I read by Greg Koukl called *Tactics*.

Sig: Yes; a very good book.

Caleb: But there are two things that I remember from that book that I try to use often. One is “*what do you mean by that?*” There are two questions that you ask people. And you can get a lot of information just from these two questions. “*What did you mean by that?*”, and “*How did you come to that conclusion?*”

Sig: Amen, amen. It’s Greg Koukl.

Caleb: Is it Koukl? Is that how it’s pronounced? Okay; all right. I’ve been saying it wrong all this time.

Sig: It’s an excellent book. It’s *Tactics*.

Caleb: It’s *Tactics*. And the last name is spelled K-O-U-K-L. Is that right?

Sig: Yes. I have that book. It’s on my phone. I can show it to you when we’re done.

Caleb: Good takeaway. It’s just a good—

Sig: And the point too though is that we shouldn’t just give the answers all the time. We should ask questions.

Caleb: Yes.

Sig: Where did you come up with those conclusions? And that can point them to their own responsibility.

Bishop: What do you think of the classical arguments for the existence of God?

Caleb: I think that a lot of the arguments are good and they’re sound. There are quite a few of them. But for me the issue becomes what I mentioned before: making sure that I’m submitted to the Lordship of Christ in the way that I present those classic arguments. So I think that they can have a good use, as long as I’m not saying, “Well, this, this, this; therefore probably God. And since probably God, now let’s move to the Bible.” You know, I’m not particularly fond of that approach.

Bishop: I think the argument for the existence of God is something honoring what’s coming to us in general revelation.

Caleb: Yeah. And I agree that they can work—

Bishop: They’re evidential within the context of general revelation and the gospel ultimately. You have to be converted. Now once you’re converted they show that you’re

“Revelation and Apologetic Approach”

able to say, “Give me a reason for the hope that is within you.” Well, the revelation in Christ helps these other things to come out in your world view.

Caleb: Yeah.

Bishop: And I think they’re very helpful.

Caleb: I think that’s an excellent point. Actually, in my early 20s, when I was kind of wayward, one of the things that brought me back around—and it wasn’t because I doubted God’s existence. But one of the things that kind of made me enthusiastic to come back around were a lot of those classical examples that you mentioned.

Well, let’s close in a word of prayer. We’re over on time here. So thank you guys for your attention.

Our heavenly Father, I thank You for this day. I thank You that we have so many men who are able to contribute to this conversation. I thank You for Your word, for the truth of it, and the fact that we can depend upon it. We thank You for revealing Yourself to us so that we may come to You. And Lord, we ask now as we go our way that You would help us to honor You in the way that we live our lives, in the way that we interact with others, both believers and non-believers. We pray that You will help us to use that gentleness and respect that we talked about, but also to submit ourselves to Your word, for we pray this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)