Stoa Apologetics Preparation for Monument Members

Season 22 Monument Release #5



Directions: Work through the source material in this download to help you understand this week’s selection of apologetics prompts. This release addresses approximately 5% of the total number of prompts you will need to be prepared for in your next tournament, so keep up the studying from week to week to ensure your knowledge in Apologetics. This week’s prompts are:

**Category 3: Scripture (Part 1)**

1. Why are the unity and the sufficiency of Scripture important?
2. How can I trust what the Bible says over all the other religious writings?\*
3. What does the inspiration of Scripture mean? Why is this important?
4. Respond to someone claiming the Quran is the true word of God.
5. How does the Book of Mormon compare to the Bible?
6. What is the Gospel, and why is it the core of the Christian faith?\*
7. Is the Bible historically reliable? Why is this important?

\*This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. A worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

For a list of all the prompts for the year and all other downloads for NCFCA apologetics, visit your download page at <https://club.monumentmembers.com/stoa-apologetics/download-category/stoa-apologetics>.

Unity & Sufficiency of Scripture *by Luis Garcia*

Why are the unity and the sufficiency of Scripture important?

Bible Verses

Deuteronomy 4:1-14

2 Samuel 22:31-33

Psalm 12:6; 56:3-4, 10-1; 119:89, 130, 140, 160

Luke 6:46-49

John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

2 Corinthians 3:1-5

Galatians 1:6-10

Colossians 2:1-9

2 Timothy 3:16-17

1 John 2:18-27

Quotations

“[The Sufficiency of Scripture] involves the denial that there is alongside of Scripture an unwritten Word of God of equal or even superior authority.” –Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*

“We have sufficient testimony that God has spoken to us by His Son; why should we not also believe, though many things in the New Testament are above our reason? For, where reason ends, faith begins. And, however infidels may style themselves reasoners, of all men they are the most unreasonable. For, is it not contrary to all reason, to measure an infinite by a finite understanding, or think to find out the mysteries of godliness to perfection?” –George Whitefield

Recommendations

*Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem, Chapter 8

Taking God at His Word by Kevin DeYoung

http://gracequotes.org/topic/bible-sufficiency/

Commentary 1: On Unity

The unity of the Bible is unbelievable, unexplainable apart from divine authorship. It is a crucial doctrine and argument. A great argument and point of this is the unity of the Bible. The unity of Scripture teaches how every one of the above mentioned diverse factors and traits Scripture holds organically unifying into one message, one story. This builds strength to our understanding that the Bible was breathed out by God, is pure from error, and is the life-changing message of love of Jesus. That’s the message, the good news of the kingdom—Jesus.

A great way to address this topic is to break it down into three points: the diversity of Scripture, the unity of Scripture, and the point of Scripture. The first point can discuss all that works against Scripture in its vast differences of factors in the contributions of who, when, what, and where. The second point is to talk about the unifying message built from Genesis to Revelation. Last and most importantly, the point of the Scripture brings in the implications (inspiration, inerrancy, authority, etc.) and application (God authored this story for you, for you to know Him personally and worship and live with Him eternally, etc.) of this doctrine.

Commentary 2: On Sufficiency

The sufficiency of Scripture revolves around the question of whether or not the Bible is complete. Is it enough for us to know the truth, revelation, and will of God? Is there more to be added? Is it enough to know the revelation of God, or is partly true and we need other things to help fill in (other religious texts, man’s reasoning, science, etc.)? Have we left books out that need to be a part of the canon?

Could there be more to what God has already constructed as His revealed Word? Here we are beckoned to consider if the added writing of cults, like Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, Christian Science, etc., are legitimate. Moreover, another element to consider is who is in authority. If God’s Word already says do not add, or listen to a different gospel, should we trust some man’s authority who is teaching a contradictory belief? From Moses to the Apostles, God has solidified His written Word, and it is taught continually to watch out for straying doctrines, false proclaimers of God’s revelation (i.e. Deut. 18:20-22).

This applies to how we deal with all matters of God’s truth. When grappling with a specific passage of Scripture or a proposed doctrine, what are we to believe and live? Let us rest in the beauty God’s Word being sufficient—Sola Scriptura. Let us rest in the gift and illumination of the Holy Spirit. Our authority and conception of truth will fail us, but God’s won’t.

Trustworthiness of Scripture

How can I trust what the Bible says over all the other religious writings?

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Inspiration of Scripture *by Luis Garcia*

What does the inspiration of Scripture mean? Why is this important?

## Bible Verses

Deuteronomy 8:3

2 Samuel 22:31-32; 23:2

Psalm 119:89

Proverbs 30:5-6

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Hebrews 4:12

2 Peter 1:16-21

## Quotations

“…all the words in the Bible are God’s words, and that therefore to disbelieve or disobey any word in Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.” –Wayne Grudem*, Systematic Theology*

“The Bible is and will continue to be the Word of God for all successive generations of man only in virtue of its divine inspiration. The whole of Scripture is given by inspiration of God. This makes it the infallible rule of faith and practice for mankind. Since this inspiration is often denied and even more frequently misrepresented, it calls for particular attention.” –Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*

“This book had to be written by one of three entities: good men, bad men or God. It couldn’t have been written by good men because they said it was inspired by the revelation of God. Good men don’t lie and deceive. It couldn’t have been written by bad men because bad men would not write something that would condemn themselves. It leaves only one conclusion. It was given by divine inspiration of God.” –John Wesley

## Recommendations

<http://carm.org/dictionary-inspiration>

<http://www.thegracetabernacle.org/quotes/Bible-Inspiration.htm>

## Commentary

There are two key aspects to the concept of Scripture being divinely inspired. One, by Scripture being inspired we know what is Scripture. It is the characteristic that defines God’s word. Consider John 10:27. The sheep are familiar with Jesus’ voice, as we are called to be familiar with His truth. By knowing His truth through divine inspiration, we can know what is not His truth; we know what is not His voice. Two, recognize the words of 2 Timothy. Paul writes how the purpose of the Word of God being inspired is not only to know the truth but to live out that truth. When we say we are to live by His Word, we are saying that we are called to live out divinely inspired lives. Truly, as we read, dwell, and seek God’s word, our souls are being filled with His breath, so that all who see our lives sees God.

Quran *by Luis Garcia*

Respond to someone claiming the Quran is the true word of God.

Bible Verses

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Peter 1:20-21

John 17:17; 20:30-31; 21:24-25

1 John 1:1-5

Quotations

“Neither individuals nor councils created the canon; instead they came to recognize and acknowledge the self-authenticating quality of these writings, which imposed themselves as canonical upon the church” (Bruce Metzger, *The New Testament***)**

Recommendations

*Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter Martin, Chapter 16

Always Be Ready (ABR) Apologetic Ministries by Charlie Campbell (Look under the left tab titled, “Islam”)

Christian Apologetics Research Ministry (CARM), <http://carm.org/religious-movements/islam/quran>

Answering Islam, <http://www.answering-islam.org/Quran/index.html> (See especially, “The Alleged Divine Origin of the Qur’an,” Pt. 1 and Pt. 2)

Islamic websites speaking of the origins of the Qur’an:

[http://www.whyislam.org/the-origin-of-the-quran/#](http://www.whyislam.org/the-origin-of-the-quran/)

<http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/3277/>

<http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/2652/>

<http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/2665/>

*For content concerning the origin of Scripture*, see the Silver articles “Define and defend the significance of verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture,” “Define and defend the significance of the divine inspiration of Scripture,” and “If the Bible was written by men, how could it be written by God?”

Commentary

Islam holds their core, the Qur’an, with such fear and reverence. They truly believe it is the Word of God. Christians, true disciples of Jesus, also hold the Scriptures with fear and reverence. They truly believe it is the Word of God. How do these two statements relate? Islam believes there were multiple revelations in history (the Torah from Moses and the Gospels of Jesus being two). The revelations culminate to the Qur’an. Yet, the Bible would argue that itself (Genesis to Revelation) is the final revelation and all that contradict it would be false. How is this tension answered? As I read the articles above from Islamic websites, that was one of the first questions that came to mind. If the Gospels and Torah were earlier revelations of Allah, why would Allah contradict what is spoken in these revelations later in the Qur’an? Now given, Muslims would argue that these earlier revelations were corrupted. However, what proof do they have to show? The textual accuracy and inerrancy holds great robustness in light of the evidence. It is questionable concerning the origin of the Qur’an, as there were multiple revelations that were not fully compiled until after Muhammad died. Muslims would then argue the practice and use of recitation that would have held the correct text of the Qur’an. If this argument is given, we still come down to the fundamentals of what is being taught.

It is clear that Jesus is much more than a prophet in the New Testament, but He was truly God in flesh. Moreover, He made it clear that only in Him and His gracious sacrifice will man find forgiveness. Both of these critical points are contradicted in the Qur’an, written over a thousand years after the events and recording of the life and teachings of Jesus.

The above resources will bring multiple points to the table. How do we know which origin is truly from God will be studying the texts and contexts to see where truth will lead. As we hear and share the listed points, always do your best to give our Muslim friends the benefit of the doubt and to be as objective as possible when hearing what they believe. However, we must compare it to the Bible. The divine inspiration of the Bible is truth. The Words of God are found in the Scriptures. God would not contradict Himself. If the Bible is truly an “earlier” revelation, then “Allah” has warned us against the Qur’an (John 8:31-32; 10:27-30; 18:37; Matthew 24:4-5; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4). Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to God apart from Jesus. Islam claims to be another road, but in truth, it is only one segment of the broad way (Matthew 7:13-14). May Muslims around the world find the true Messiah and be set on the narrow path of righteousness provided only in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Book of Mormon *by Luis Garcia*

How does the Book of Mormon compare to the Bible?

Bible Verses

Psalm 12:6

Proverbs 30:4-6

Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 40:18, 25; 43:10-11; 44:6-8; 45:22; 46:5, 9-10

Daniel 7:13-14

Micah 5:2

Galatians 1:6-9

Matthew 16:13-17; 26:64-65

Mark 14:60-62

Luke 1:35

John 1:1-5; 8:57-58; 10:30

2 Corinthians 11:2-4

Ephesians 2:1-10

Philippians 2:5-11

Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9

Hebrews 1:1-4; 13:8

1 John 2:21-23; 4:1-6

Revelation 1:17-18; 22:18-19

Quotations

“That Jesus is Himself God is the heart of the gospel, because apart from His deity He could not save a single soul. No heresy so corrupts the gospel and robs it of its power as the teaching that Jesus is not God. Apart from His deity, there is no gospel and no salvation.” (John MacArthur,*Matthew 8-15*)

Recommendations

The Official Site of the Latter Day Saints, http://mormon.org/faq/belief-in-jesus-christ

*Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter Martin, Chapter 6

*Always Be Ready* (ABR) Apologetic Ministries by Charlie Campbell, http://www.alwaysbeready.com/mormonism

Christian Apologetics Research Ministry (CARM), http://carm.org/mormonism

*Behold I Stand at the Door* by Michael Licona (Can be accessed for free online)

Commentary

The Mormon view of Jesus is interesting to analyze from a Christian Worldview. When reading their website, it would seem that there is no difference compared to what we believe is the identity and work of Jesus. However, there are key differences that must be understood. Biblical apologetic websites delineate all those differences with references, as you will find from the above websites (see especially <http://carm.org/teachings-of-mormonism>). Without having to get extensive into all the different nuances and doctrines, we have to get to the core of why Mormonism is a cult and not a part of the true body of Christ. The first point to dive into, and what most apologists on the above resources seem to go to, is that Mormonism is built on false and faulty revelation. The evidences of origin, archeology, textual errors, biblical inconsistencies, etc. all prove this contention. Without the foundation that Mormon’s propose, there is no place for their claimed doctrine to stand and gain the credibility of seriously being considered as added revelation from God. Moreover, Scripture teaches to watch out for those who might add or take away from the Word (Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelations 22:18-19; see also Galatians 1:6-9).

The focus of this topic is Christological. After showing the sandy foundation of Mormonism, we can move to arguing how they have corrupted and misrepresented the Messiah. Some keys point to impact:

*The non-uniqueness of Jesus as Savior*

If Jesus is one of many spirits that the Father birthed, why should I worship and dedicate my life Him? Why is He significant? Jesus is made merely a messenger, an example of sacrifice, one of many spirits.

*The over-emphasis on Jesus’ humanity*

According to their theology, the Trinity is three separate gods birthed at different times by other gods. Mormonism is polytheistic. They believe God is in the form of a man and came to exist through birth like any man. If this be true, this challenges the very definition of what it means to be God, especially His transcendence. This then overflows into how we see Christ as merely a man that was a spirit, rather than the living, only Almighty God who took on flesh.

*The insufficiency of Jesus’ atonement*

Mormonism also upholds the need for works, that one must cast off all ungodliness before the benefits of salvation can be inherited. Jesus’ work is therefore insufficient. And this would make sense if Jesus nothing more than a spirit that became a man, rather than the Lord God who offers unthinkable grace that saves us fully from our sins and the judgment of our sins.

*Etc.*

The conclusion is to let Jesus speak for Himself. Jesus was prophesied to be God; He proclaimed to be God; He proved to be God. There is only one God, none beside Him. The Trinity has three persons but is one being. Therefore, no person of the Trinity loses Deity and compromises our call to worship and obey Him. This conclusion is clear when we let Jesus speak for Himself and not let the faulty “revelation” of Mormon writings speak for Him and distort His true identity. If Mormonism was truly further revelation of God, it would not compromise and corrupt all that God has previously revealed to us.

Gospel

What is the Gospel, and why is it the core of the Christian faith?

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Historical Reliability of Scripture *by Luis Garcia & Olivia Bowers*

Is the Bible historically reliable? Why is this important?

Bible Verses

2 Samuel 22:31-32

Psalm 12:6; 56:3-4, 10-1; 119:89, 130, 140, 160

Proverbs 30:5-6

Matthew 5:17-18

John 5:39-47

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Hebrews 1:1-3

1 Peter 1:10-12

2 Peter 1:16-21

Luke 21:33

John 19:35

Luke 1:1-3

2 Peter 1:16, 21

1 John 1:1-3

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Galatians 1:11-12

Quotations

“Even though (the Bible) is an ancient document, every person in every situation in every society that’s ever existed can find in this book things that endure forever. Here’s a book that never needs another edition. It never needs to be edited, never has to be updated, is never out of date or obsolete. It speaks to us as pointedly and directly as it ever has to anyone in any century since it was written. It’s so pure that it lasts forever.” – John MacArthur

“The Bible is the Word of God given in the words of people in history.” – George Eldon Ladd

“The Old Testament has been shown to be reliable in at least three major ways: (1) textual transmission (accuracy of the copying process down through history), (2) the confirmation of the Old Testament by hard evidence uncovered through archaeology, and (3) documentary evidence also uncovered through archeology.” - Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*

“It is my deep conviction, after examining the evidence, that I can hold in my hand the Bible (both Old and New Testaments together) and conclude I have the reliable Word of God.” - Ibid.

“Only the person who understands that the cross is the center of all human history can understand the Old Testament. Through the lens of the gospel, the Bible truly becomes one book telling one story: the story of sinful man, a holy God, and His plan of salvation through the substitution of Himself for His people.” - C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*

Recommendations

*The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

Commentary on the Old Testament

Old Testament’s reliability is absolutely trustworthy. Your goal is to confirm it. This will take sources outside of Scripture, but please do use Scripture in accompanying your points. As described by McDowell, there are three main ways to prove its reliability: the text, discoveries in archeology, and the documentary evidence. Research into these areas and see what the Lord wishes for you to dive in.

One of the greatest areas of significance for the Old Testament is that it is the foundation and platform for the hope of humanity’s salvation. It provides the historical background to life, our nature, and God’s response. It provides the prophecies and promises of a new beginning. And it sums it all up in the Messiah we awaited. Now, He has come, but without foundation, we could not understand the Gospels. Our foundation would be unsure. Psalm 11:3 states, “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

Commentary on the New Testament

1989, the famous talk show host Larry King interviewed guest Shirley MacLaine, a modern critic of biblical Christianity. MacLaine proposed that in the last 2000 years, the Bible has been retranslated and changed so many times that is completely impossible to have any confidence in the accuracy of the text. King quickly endorsed her statement, adding, “Everyone knows that.” (Larry King with Shirley MacLaine, spring 1989) What happens if MacLaine and King are right? If the New Testament is not historically reliable, how can we, as believers, be certain of the hope we have? Did Jesus really walk the earth, being crucified on a cross? Were there actually men and woman who left everything to follow this man? Did the Church in Acts really exist? Can we trust the Gospel? Scripture is the very foundation of our faith. If Scripture fails, the Gospel itself, in essence, does as well.

Theologian, Charles Spurgeon noted, “The Word of God is like a lion. You don’t have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose, and the lion will defend itself.” The Bible stands on its own as an incredible historical reference. There are multiple facts and accounts you can use to address the historicity of the New Testament. Begin by developing an understanding of what establishes reliability in a historic text by academic and secular standards. The preservation, copying, number and dates of manuscripts carries significant weight in determining accuracy.

Let the lion loose. You can compare the ancient works of widely cited authors, such as Aristotle and Homer, to the New Testament and how when contrasted, Biblical text not only meets, but far exceeds other texts deemed as historically reliable. You could discuss the numerous eyewitness accounts of New Testament individuals and events, recorded by both Jewish and secular historians of the time. You can include the vast archaeological and geographical findings that confirm the New Testament’s historical accuracy.

In truth, if we discard the Bible under the assumption that is it historically unreliable, then we must discard all literature of antiquity. The main concept you should leave with your judges and audience, is that our New Testament truly is the standard for reliability and this fundamental truth should give us utmost confidence in the Gospel and life-giving message found wherein. John Newton described best the incredible gift we have received in Scripture when he penned, “Precious Bible! What a treasure, does the Word of God afford! All I want for life or pleasure, Food and Medicine, shield and sword; Let the world account me poor—Christ and this, I need no more.”