

## Comparative Religions

### *Session 5: “Just thinking things through” –Buddhism in focus*



“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

-C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

The following notes are taken, edited, and adapted from Rich Lusk’s *Crash Course in Presuppositional Apologetics*.

Full, original text here: <https://www.trinity-pres.net/essays/philosophy-apologeticscrashcourse.pdf>

#### IRRATIONAL NATURE OF ALL NON-CHRISTIAN POSITIONS

“We intend to show him [the unbeliever] that he has no [good] reason for rejecting Christianity - all that holds him back is a culpable and stubborn unwillingness. Because he is in revolt against God while living in God’s universe, we want to (tenderly, gently, humbly) show him that his worldview is self-refuting. We want to show that it is internally inconsistent, that it is “foolish” to use biblical language. We want to show that his worldview, if consistently (and that’s a key word) lived out, cannot provide a basis for sanity. We want to ask: What foundations must the house of human knowledge have? And then we want to show only the Christian worldview provides these foundation pillars; the unbeliever’s worldview cannot provide the preconditions, or prerequisites, for the intelligibility of human experience. We want to show the fool his folly, the folly of rejecting the one true God who gives him life and breath and everything else he has; the God who is the source of all truth; the God who is inescapably revealed everywhere; the God who the unbeliever knows to be true in his heart of hearts, yet continues to suppress against his better knowledge...”

“We want to conclusively demonstrate that meaning, logic, science, ethics, dignity, etc. all find grounding only in the Christian worldview - without him they would disappear. But just as these concepts are inescapable, so is the Christian God. We argue from the impossibility of the contrary, showing anything contrary to Christianity is impossible – it destroys all meaning, knowledge, rationality, morality, etc. The unbeliever functions in this world only because he is inconsistent, only because he steals from the Christian worldview. It is because he does NOT live up to what he professes to believe that he is able to make it in this world. Meanwhile, he is unwittingly depending on the very God he claims to reject.”

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Buddhism is often regarded as an atheistic or at least agnostic religion (see SWTD, pg. 104). If God is the “author of life” and Jesus Christ is the Creator, what problems does the Buddhist create for him or herself as related to the Christian worldview?

2. What scriptures could you take a person to in order to provide an adequate biblical treatment of the themes Paul used with Felix the pagan: “righteousness, temperance [self-control], and the judgment to come”?

[Hint: think of the implications of each theme. Righteousness implies right practice and standing. What is the standard of “rightness”? What is it based on? Self-control seems to have been brought up to explicitly point a finger at Felix’s immoral living. Felix apparently had some special insight about the God of Hebrew scriptures through his Jewish wife Drusilla.<sup>1</sup> If Felix hadn’t known this, Paul may have been recorded speaking of God the Creator, the righteous standard, Felix’s violation of that righteous standard, and the judgment that awaits. Does this progression look familiar?]

<sup>1</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1986), 459.