

The Most Needed Conversation:

Foundational Beliefs
or
Presuppositions

Wednesday Night, December 13th, 2023

Colossians 2:1-8

The Conversation of Presuppositions:

- What do you think a presupposition is?
- In your understanding of presuppositions, do you think it matters?

Definition of Presupposition:

a. A presupposition is a belief assumed to be true before a line of argumentation or justification for any other set of beliefs.

In other words, presuppositions form the worldview of a person's beliefs about the world, reality, knowledge, morals, and so on!

Example:

1. We have examined and have held to the fact that God's Words are His Words and that God has spoken to us through inspired individuals who wrote down what was ultimately God's Words expressed through their cultural context, personality, and style of writing.

Let's talk a quick look into a short historical summary about the way presuppositions play out regarding skeptical views of Christianity and the Bible or outright atheism!

“Up until the mid-seventeenth century, essentially all persons who claimed the name of Christian accepted that the bible was completely truthful in all matters that it asserted. With the elevation of human reason in the Enlightenment, however, some people began to have a more skeptical view of previously sacrosanct (sacred) texts...

People started to judge revelation (that is, the Bible) on the basis of their own human reason, rejecting and criticizing various portions, based on what seemed reasonable or probable to them. *Many of these critics wanted to maintain some connection with the Christian church while at the same time making themselves the final arbiters of truth.*”

- Robert Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Kregel Academic: Grand Rapids, MI, 2010), 43.

Remember our conversation on Autonomy?

- How does a person's presuppositions play into the conversation of autonomy?

- The presuppositions of a person's worldview (that is, the way they view reality, morals, and things like that) are the foundations of their belief.

“The two systems, that of the non-Christian and that of the Christian, differ because of the fact that their basic assumptions or presuppositions differ. On the non-Christian basis, man is assumed to be the final reference...”

- Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, edited by K. Scott Oliphint (Westminster Seminary Press: Glenside, PA, 2023), 6

- Again, why is this talk on “presuppositions” so important?

1. It affects our witnessing to people.
2. It reveals a lot about our beliefs or struggles.
3. It gets to the actual issues regarding our faith in the gospel (or for the non-Christian, their lack of faith).

Let's see what this looks like in action!

Youtube video:

Peter J Williams & Bart Ehrman The Story of
Jesus: Are the Gospels Historically Reliable?

(51:51 minute mark, specifically)

[https://youtu.be/ZuZPPGvF_2I?
si=bbjJh_2WJE37DgE9](https://youtu.be/ZuZPPGvF_2I?si=bbjJh_2WJE37DgE9)

Do you see the issue?!

- Bart Ehrman wants to say that Christians *cannot* and should not bring their presuppositions into the conversation of history or looking at historical data.

- But here's the issue with that! Bart is doing the same thing!

Do you see the issue?!

- The arrogance to assume that he (Bart) is completely neutral in the conversation is logically, philosophically, and (most importantly!) spiritually absurd and incorrect.
- Thus, when we speak to others about our faith, we must be aware of presuppositions.

The in the Case of Scripture and its Reliability:

- We equally have to be mindful at the claims of others against our view of Holy Scripture.
- What are some critiques against our view of Holy Scripture or against the reliability of the New Testament?

Rebuttals to the Christian Scriptures:

1. Poor verbal transmission
2. Alteration of the Original Wording
3. Questionable authorship
4. Errors
5. Miracles

A Reply to the Rebuttals of the Christian Scriptures:

- Behind each of these rebuttals to Holy Scripture is a set of presuppositions that need to be handled if we are going to either defend the faith or share the gospel. Remember, the non-Christian assumes himself/herself as the final authority. That must be challenged.

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