

# Answers for Chris Lesson 1

Lane Cohee  
Fall 2022

# Answers for Chris

## Course Overview

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- ▶ Lesson 1 - Chris' World – Values, Meaning and Truth in Our Culture
- ▶ Lesson 2 - Questions About God, Suffering and Pain
- ▶ Lesson 3 - Questions About Christian Exclusivity, Judgment and Hell
- ▶ Lesson 4 - Questions About Genocide and Slavery in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 5 - Questions About Sexism and Sexuality in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 6 - Questions About the Bible and Science
- ▶ Lesson 7 - Questions About the Bible, Superstition, and Mythology

# Chris' World Assumes Societal Evolution Across This Value Set

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## ▶ **Individualism and Pluralism**

- ▶ Personalization and privatization
- ▶ Distrust of authority and hierarchy
- ▶ Preeminence of individual choice and opinion
- ▶ Desire to dismantle inequity

## ▶ **Happiness**

- ▶ Love, success, purpose, relationships, personal fulfillment

## ▶ **Universal Human Rights and Freedom**

- ▶ Gender (including gender identity/expression), national origin, color, religion, language, sexual orientation and

## ▶ **Science and Technology**

- ▶ To resolve societal obstacles and improve our quality of life

## ▶ **Empiricism**

- ▶ Knowledge from material data and empirical evidence

# Chris' World is Processed Through the Lens of his Core Values

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- ▶ Everything Chris believes is processed and grounded through the lens of his core values
  - ▶ Any transformation in Chris' life will require a re-alignment of his belief system
- ▶ A “point of entry” is that Chris' World is also full of increased violence, suspicion, anxiety, and fear – Something is Wrong

# Chris' World is Full of Words With Implied Definitions and Meanings

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- ▶ Key words often mean different things to her than they do to you and me
  - ▶ Examples: Faith, Love, Hate, Tolerance, Acceptance, Bigotry, Fear, and Truth
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- ▶ If we want to have a meaningful conversation with her, we need to clearly explain our message

# Chris' World Tends Toward a Relative View of Truth and Empirical View of Knowledge

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## ▶ Truth

- ▶ The historic Christian view of truth is that which conforms with fact or reality in terms of God whose very nature is truth
- ▶ Chris' world defines truth as objectively unknowable or uncertain due to the varying content of knowledge

## ▶ Knowledge and Proof

- ▶ While philosophers have advanced many theories of knowledge over the ages, Chris' world tends to view knowledge and proof as only that which can be demonstrated empirically in the physical universe

# Our Mission to Chris...

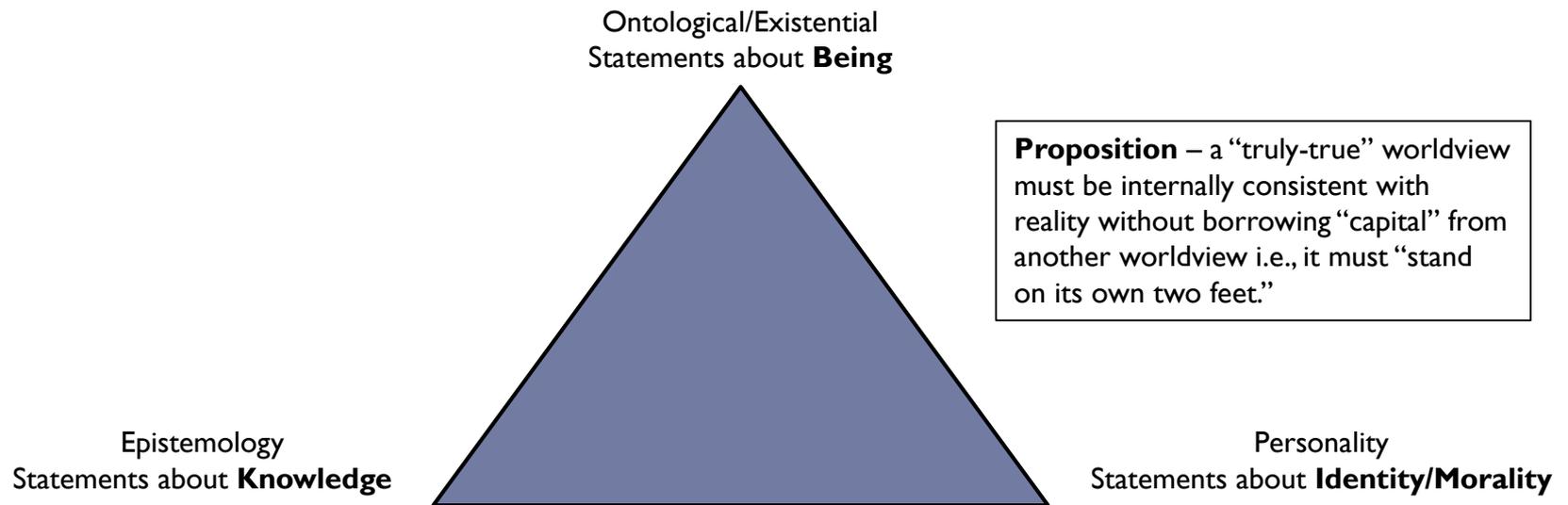
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- ▶ Our mission to Chris is to show that the truth of the Christian gospel is necessary for his view of life to make sense.
- ▶ This includes showing Chris that apart from the Christian gospel, her views don't hold together.
- ▶ Our mission to Chris is to provide answers not win debates. In the words of John, “we bear witness to the light so that through [us] everyone might believe.”

# But First—Some Foundation-Laying

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- ▶ “...all men are philosophers, for all men have a worldview. This is true of the man digging a ditch as it is of the philosopher at the university.”
  - Francis Schaeffer
- ▶ What are the key dimensions of a “worldview”?



# And Some Truth About Our Limitations

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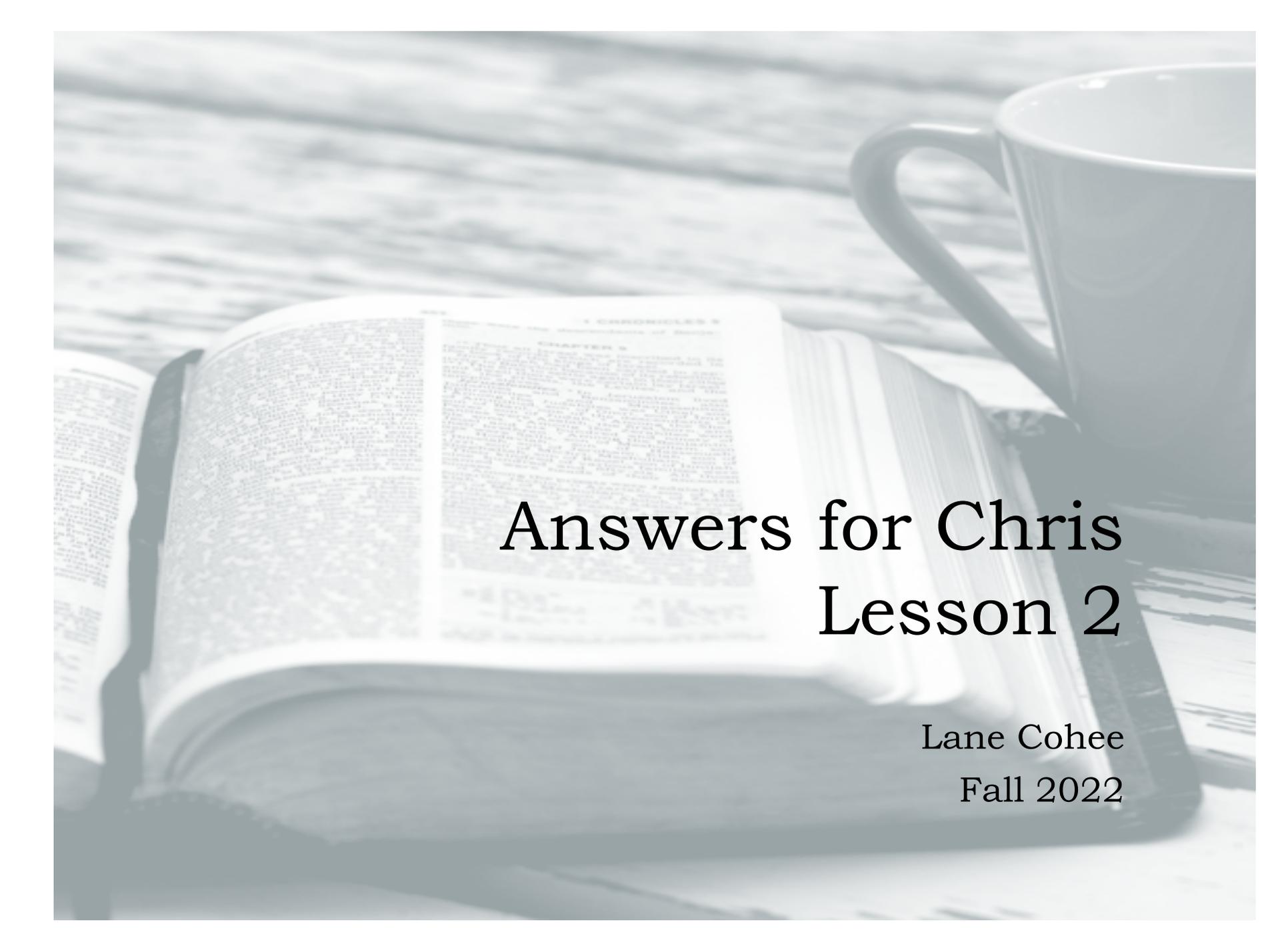
- ▶ We are not only finite beings with incomplete knowledge, but we are also subject to many unconscious cognitive biases, most notably:

Bias	Description
Confirmation	The tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one's existing beliefs. This approach to decision-making is largely unintentional and often results in ignoring inconsistent information.
Self-Serving Attributional	The tendency to attribute positive events and successes to our own character or actions, but blame negative results to external factors unrelated to our character.
Dunning-Kruger Effect	The tendency for people with limited knowledge or competence in a given intellectual or social domain to greatly overestimate their own knowledge or competence in that domain.

# So Where Does That Leave Us?

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- ▶ Approaching Chris with an attitude of humility
  - ▶ Focus on all of 1 Pe 3:15
  - ▶ “Maybe just try Gal 5:22-23?”
- ▶ Challenging modern answers to our culture’s “anxiety ethos”
- ▶ Challenging the underlying belief system that Chris holds by using Jesus’ “Socratic” style
  - ▶ Mt 12:10-11
  - ▶ Mt 21:23-27
  - ▶ Mt 22:41-45
  - ▶ Jn 10:31-36



# Answers for Chris Lesson 2

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# God, Suffering, and Pain

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- ▶ Our world is full of seemingly capricious tragedy, suffering, and pain. If God is good and he really cared, how could he allow these things to happen?

# Getting Started

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- ▶ “By far, the number one question that people wanted to ask God is ‘Why He allows pain and suffering in this world?’”
  - ▶ Lee Strobel citing Barna research poll used in support of his 2017 film, “The Case for Christ”
- ▶ Evidence exists that pain (often in the form of a “father wound” or abusive relationship) underlies even the sharpest-minded of skeptics
  - ▶ Reference Paul Vitz “Faith of the Fatherless: The Psychology of Atheism”
- ▶ Therefore, the issue of suffering and pain needs to be taken very seriously by any Christian “apologist.”

# Our Anger and Sadness Over Suffering Actually Makes the Case for God

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- ▶ Suffering and pain are directly or indirectly tied to the existence of evil in this world
  - ▶ Christianity speaks clearly and directly to the existence of evil. Other views either do not explain it or reject it
- ▶ Our anger and grief over suffering shows that we instinctively know it is unnatural and should not be
  - ▶ This was the reaction of Jesus when faced with a loved one's death (Jn 11:17-37) and it should be ours
  - ▶ However, this “visceral response” is not consistent with a belief system dependent on natural order and selection

# A Detour into The Philosophical “Problem of Evil”

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- ▶ “Is [God] willing to prevent evil but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?”
  - ▶ David Hume
- ▶ Or, put in terms of a syllogism:
  - P1: God is completely good
  - P2: God is completely powerful
  - P3: Evil exists
  - C: Therefore P1 or P2 is FALSE
- ▶ Unless you add
  - ▶ P4: God has a morally good reason for the evil that exists

# God Uses Evil and Suffering as Part of His Redemptive Plan

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- ▶ God does not pretend that evil and suffering are outside his control e.g., Dt 32:39; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6,
- ▶ God does not state that tragedy always follows direct “cause and effect” e.g., Lk 13:1-5
  - ▶ He does state that tragic events like these are a general result of sin and evil in the world
  - ▶ He does state tragic events like these should “touch our pain receptors” and drive us to seek him

“We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world....No doubt pain as God's megaphone is a terrible instrument; it may lead to final and unrepented rebellion. But it gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment. it removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of the rebel soul.”

- C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

# God Uses Evil and Suffering as Part of His Redemptive Plan

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- ▶ God does help the believer understand that pain and suffering is **purposeful** e.g., Gen 50:15-21; Ruth 4:13-17; 1 Sa 1; Ro 5:1-4
- ▶ It is likely that suffering is the gateway by which God best shows his “people in action.”
  - ▶ Reference Sharon James “How Christianity Transformed the World”



# God Uses Evil and Suffering as Part of His Redemptive Plan

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No other God has wounds

- ▶ Os Guinness

- ▶ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Is 53:3)
- ▶ He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Ro 8:32)

# God Promises an Ultimate End to Pain and Suffering for His People...But Not Yet

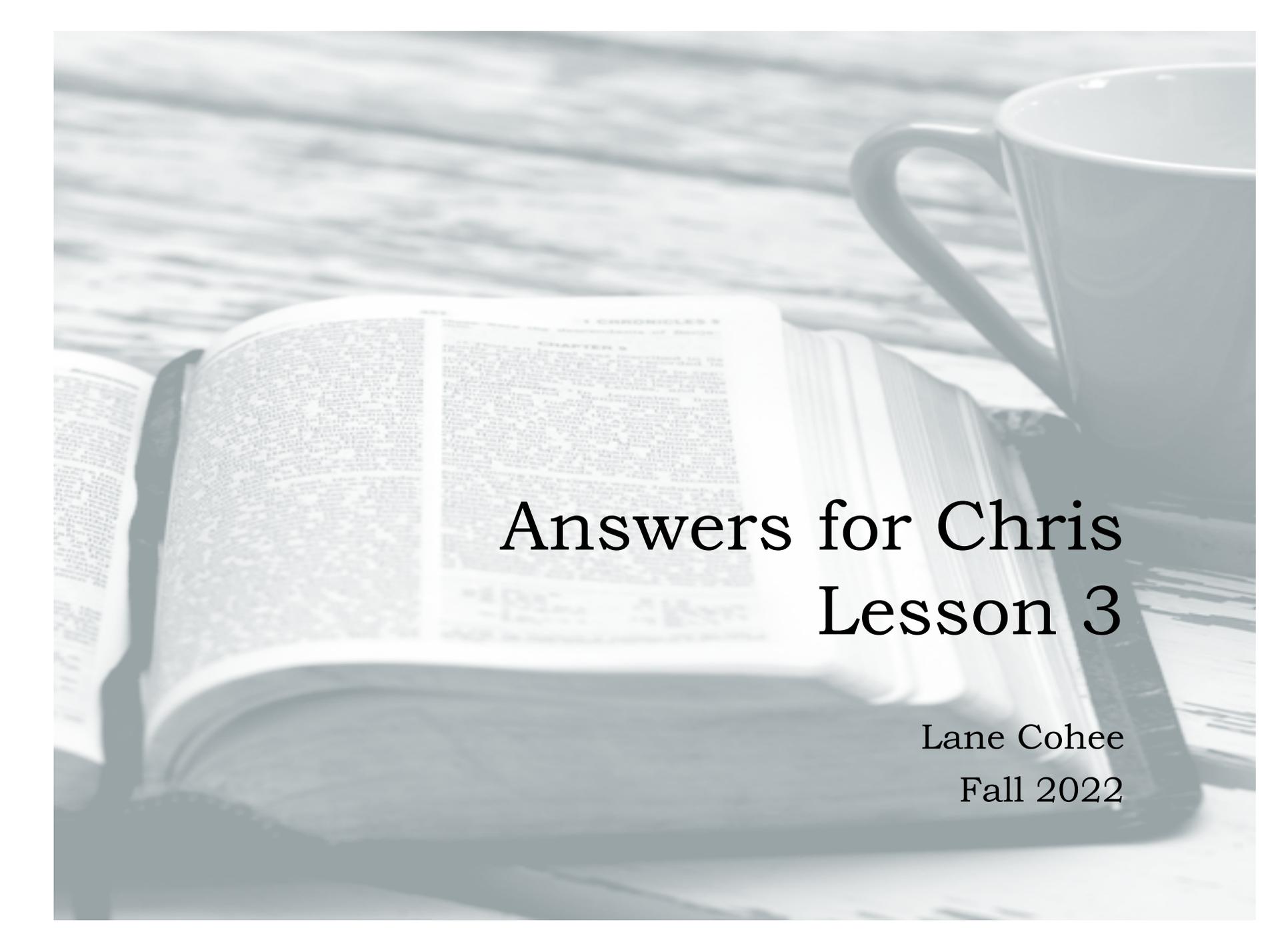
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- ▶ Many claim that a good God would just eradicate evil. Jesus teaches us to be careful what we ask for...
  - ▶ Mt 13:24-30
- ▶ However, there is a day in which this reality will come
  - ▶ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev 21:1-4)

# Some Questions We Might Ask Chris

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- ▶ Since most pain and suffering e.g., genocide, school shootings, wars, suicide bombings is directly linked to human evil and cruelty, what makes you believe that humanity has the solutions to these problems?
- ▶ If you instinctively reject and blame God because there is so much pain and suffering in the world, why don't you instinctively accept and praise God because there is so much joy and happiness in the world?



# Answers for Chris Lesson 3

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# Answers for Chris

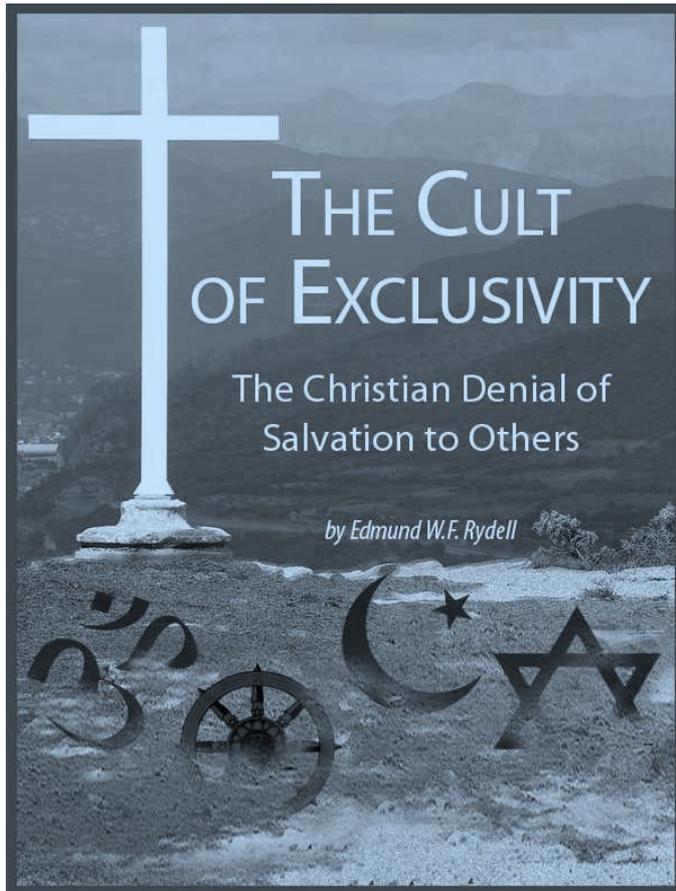
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# Christian Exclusivity

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- ▶ I don't think any religion can claim to be uniquely true. Doesn't this narrow exclusivity just lead to intolerance, division, and war?

# All Belief Systems Claiming to be True are Inherently Exclusive

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- ▶ Christianity does make exclusive truth claims
  - ▶ However, these truth claims do not originate from “personal opinion”
  - ▶ They are true or untrue independent of what we believe
- ▶ **All** belief systems make exclusive truth claims
- ▶ The seemingly most “tolerant” belief systems often quickly become the most intolerant of those who do not share their views
  - ▶ This “dogmatism” is not limited to religion
- ▶ Therefore, the solution is not to find a non-exclusive belief system; rather it is to find the belief system best addressing humanity’s real problem

# Human Violence Transcends Religion Because its Roots are Buried in the Human Heart

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- ▶ Religious belief has been at the center of human division, conflict, and killing
  - ▶ So has every other dimension of human society
  - ▶ Notably, the greatest violence against humanity has come from atheistic regimes that suppressed or controlled all religion
- ▶ The problem is not limited to a belief system or institution; the problem exists within humanity itself
- ▶ Therefore, the answer is found in a belief system that correctly identifies and remedies the problem

# Christianity addresses the real problem of humanity...and God's redemptive solution

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- ▶ Christianity is honest about the existence, seriousness, and spread of evil
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the violence of humanity
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the misuse of religion even amongst its own followers
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the fallibility of its followers
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the need for a real solution and **God's provision** to address the problem

Therefore it is our job to “make much of Jesus”

# Judgment and Hell

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- ▶ I don't believe in a God of judgment. If he is God, he wouldn't be so insecure as to cast down wrath upon those who don't agree with him.
- ▶ How can a loving God ever send anyone to a hell of everlasting torment?

# God and Judgment

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- ▶ Judgment, justice, and standards (aka rules or laws) are all tightly bound together
  - ▶ Humanity believes in justice but we tend to want it on our terms, according to our cultural standards
- ▶ When God's biblical standards and cultural standards collide, humanity tends to redefine God as the “senile benevolent grandfather” (Lewis)
  - ▶ “A God of love wouldn't judge”
  - ▶ Translated...”a God of love would let us do whatever we please without consequence”

# God is a Warrior King, not a Senile Benevolent Grandfather

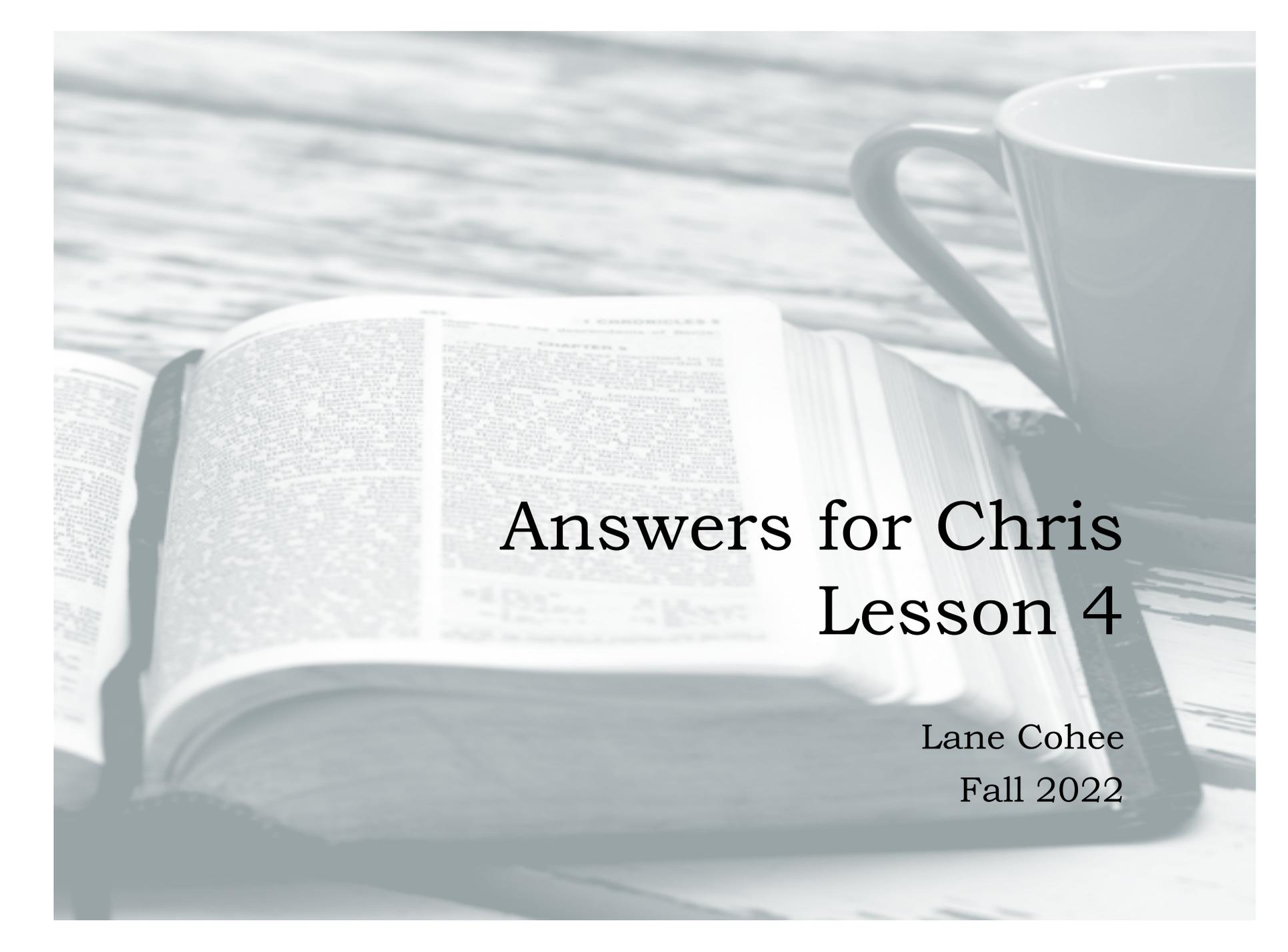
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- ▶ The “Warrior King” is both passionately loving toward his people and fiercely angry toward his enemies
  - ▶ His fierce anger is driven by his passionate love
  - ▶ His anger is directed at those who would violate his creation and compromise his dominion
- ▶ The “Warrior King” archetype is compelling when we think of a King David or Aragorn
  - ▶ We tend to see no contradiction between their simultaneous passionate love and fierce wrath
  - ▶ We see a contradiction with God because we are trained to believe he has no enemies which is simply not true

# God and Hell

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- ▶ According to Christian doctrine, Hell is a state of eternal, conscious, misery reserved for the enemies of God
  - ▶ This misery appears to be caused by eternal separation from God and—some have suggested—the continued trajectory of human depravity
- ▶ The doctrine of Hell is obviously uncomfortable and has been watered down/eliminated in many Christian circles, however:
  - ▶ The less serious we take hell, the less serious we take love
  - ▶ The less serious we take hell, the less serious we take God's provision of salvation through Jesus Christ



# Answers for Chris Lesson 4

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# Biblical Genocide

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- ▶ In Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua and elsewhere, God promotes genocide, the systematic destruction of entire populations of human beings. Doesn't this make him a “moral monster?”

# Genocide is very serious and should be treated equally by all people

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- ▶ As Christians today watch their systematic eradication and displacement in places like Syria and Afghanistan, we share Chris' moral concerns over genocide
  - ▶ Are we all equally concerned about the atrocities that are happening in modern times?
  - ▶ We may also question why neo-atheists like to “camp out” in Canaan but seem to say little about major 20<sup>th</sup> century genocides in atheistic regimes
- ▶ Philosophically we might also ask Chris why, in a naturalistic system, he doesn't view genocide as a normal element of human evolution?

# Canaan Examined in the Context of God's Redemption

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- ▶ The Bible is a narrative of God's redemptive plan
- ▶ Israel is central to God's redemptive story because
  - ▶ Israel provides the backdrop of the law and lawkeeper
  - ▶ Israel provides the framework of a sacrificial atonement system
  - ▶ Israel provides the holy "prototype" for God's people
  - ▶ Israel provides the promise and lineage of the Savior
- ▶ The Canaanites were destroyed and displaced out of judgment and to deliver the land to Israel
  - ▶ Canaanites culture was dominated by depravity
  - ▶ After 400 years (Gen 15:16), God judged Canaan
  - ▶ God exercised his judgment through Israel e.g., Dt 7

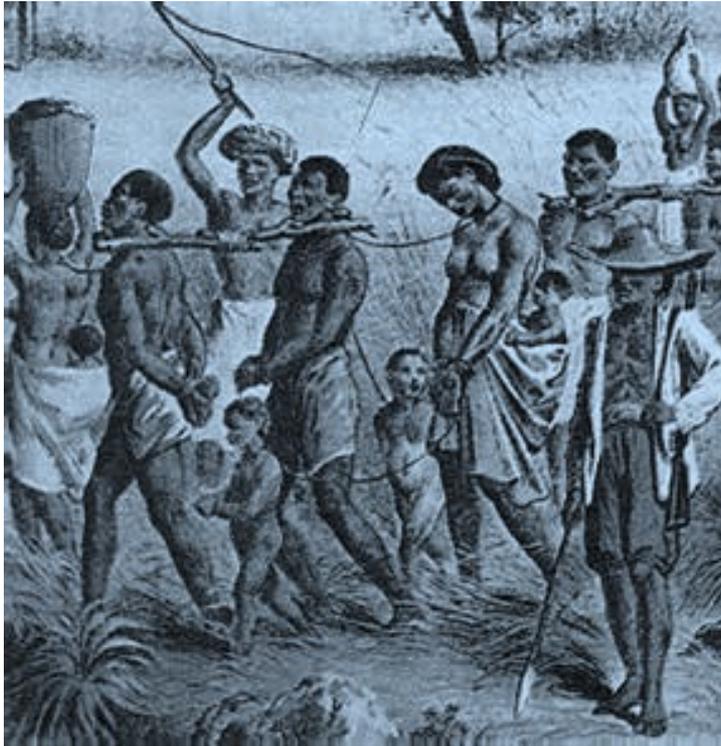
# Canaan Examined in the Context of God's Redemption

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- ▶ As the “Warrior-King” God has a right to judge and he exercises that judgment according to his plan
  - ▶ Although his sovereign judgment/mercy is often viewed as cruel or unjust, it is actually our basis of justice that tends to be flawed
- ▶ The severity of God's judgment against Canaan was directly proportional to
  - ▶ Canaanite sin
  - ▶ The threat Canaan posed to Israel's fidelity
- ▶ While God's action against Canaan could justifiably be taken against any nation, Canaan is not a “normative model”
  - ▶ It was a specific event directed by God for a very specific purpose
  - ▶ Under the New Covenant, while there may be just and necessary wars, there are no more theocratic “holy wars”

# Slavery and the Bible

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- ▶ Why does the Bible tolerate and even seem to condone the practice of human slavery?

# Human Dignity

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- ▶ Like Chris, we should take the issue of human dignity seriously
  - ▶ **Today**, there are an estimated 40-50 million slaves worldwide
  - ▶ **Today**, some 300,000 minors that are victims of sex trafficking in the United States alone
- ▶ In the context of natural order, how does Chris arrive at the truth that one person should not own another?
  - ▶ As people created in the image of God, the Bible actually establishes the basis for man's natural dignity
  - ▶ The Bible goes further by explaining that there are no "classes" in Christ (slave/free, male/female, rich/poor)

# The Bible and Slavery

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- ▶ The Bible's primary focus is deliverance from ***sin's captivity*** independent of the civil law in place
- ▶ Overview of slavery in the Old Testament
  - ▶ Slavery was permitted with different rights existing for countrymen and foreigners (Ex 21, Lev 25, Deut 15)
    - ▶ Established rules for obtaining, punishing, and freeing slaves
    - ▶ Established special treatment for countrymen
    - ▶ Kidnapping was forbidden
- ▶ Overview of slavery in the New Testament
  - ▶ Greco-Roman slavery was the backdrop
  - ▶ Slaves encouraged to win freedom if possible (1 Co 7:21-24)
  - ▶ Masters given instructions regarding treatment of slaves (Eph 6:5-9)
  - ▶ Focused on equality in Christ (Philemon 16, Gal 3:28)

# Comparison of Greco-Roman and New World Chattel Slavery

Category	Greco-Roman	Chattel
Basis	Normally financial	Race/ethnicity
Entry	Typically voluntary e.g., indebtedness	Typically involuntary – kidnapping
Occupation/ Social Status	High occupational diversity; tended not to be distinguishable from free men	Primarily manual labor – property of owners and distinguished by race
Rights	Limited – tended to be governed by masters	None – property of masters
Duration	Normally not lifelong – could purchase freedom	Normally lifelong

- ▶ While we should not romanticize Greco-Roman slavery, we should understand its differences from chattel slavery
- ▶ We should also understand that the institution of slavery was legal in all societies prior to the modern era

# The Bible and Slavery

## General Observations

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- ▶ To have a useful conversation, we should
  - ▶ Understand the division of the Mosaic Law and how to evaluate its civil component in modern times
    - ▶ The Mosaic civil law tailored and refined customs and culture of ancient times – it did not entirely overhaul them
    - ▶ The “general equity” of the civil law is intended to be viewed through the lens of progressive revelation e.g., Mark 10:3
  - ▶ Understand that New Testament Christianity did not seek to directly overhaul civil government but did so through personal/individual transformation
    - ▶ For example, advocacy for abolition came out of rights established for all people in the Christian gospel

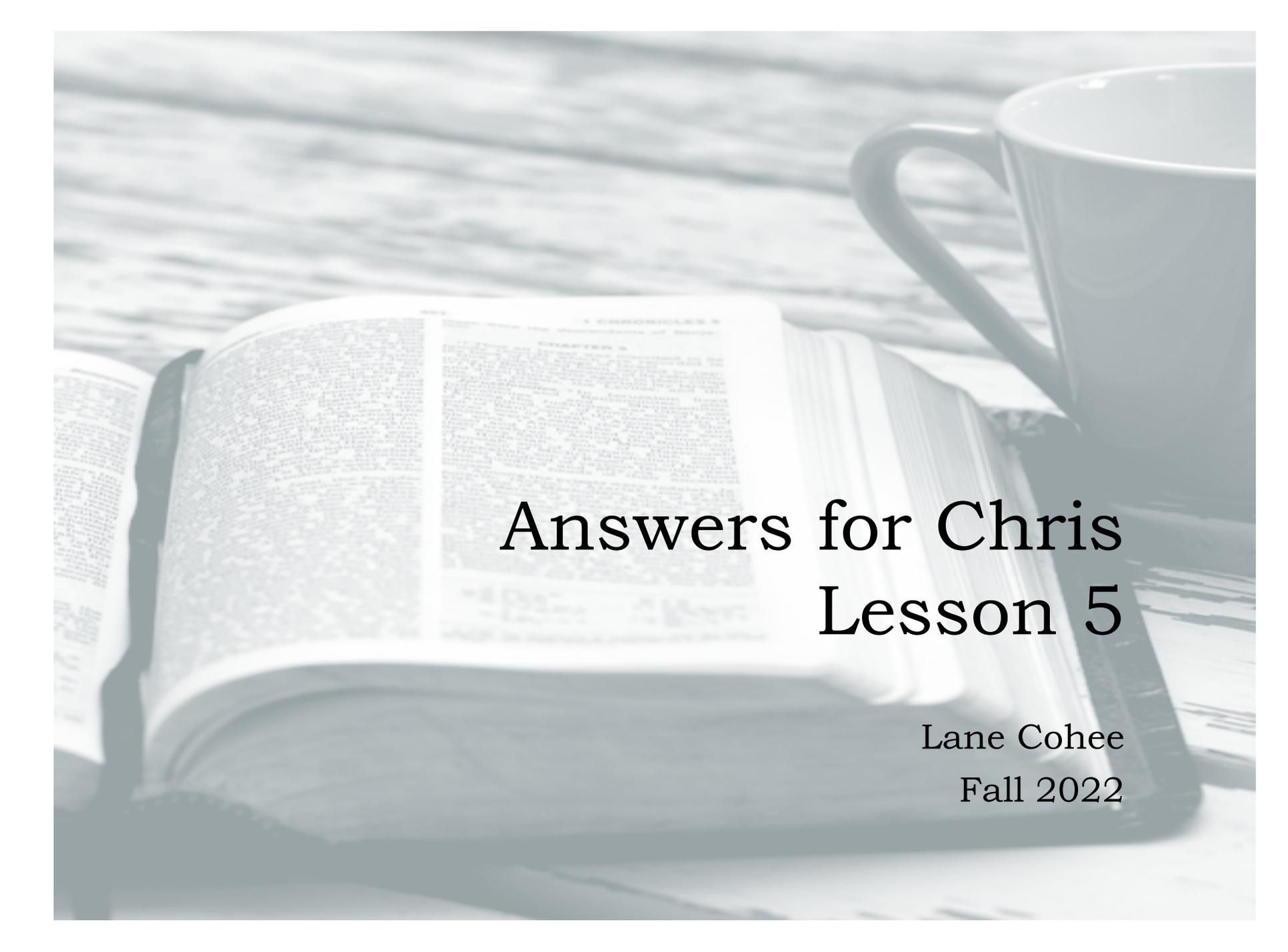
# The Bible and Slavery

## Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

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- ▶ While we do seek to redeem our culture, Christianity more focused on redeeming slaves to sin
- ▶ Even in a democratic free society, people are helplessly enslaved on many fronts by their personal idolatry

Therefore the most important thing we can tell Chris is that Jesus came to free us from the tyranny of sin so that we might be able to serve a perfect master (Ro 6:16-23)



# Answers for Chris Lesson 5

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# Biblical Treatment of Women

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- ▶ Doesn't Christianity oppress women? Since the Bible contains commands regarding head coverings, submission, and silence in churches, doesn't that prove it is patriarchal and misogynistic?

# Biblical Treatment of Sexuality and Gender Expression

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- ▶ Isn't Christianity homophobic and oppressive of the LGBTQ community?
- ▶ Doesn't Christianity condemn those seeking to express themselves through different gender identities?

# Christianity and Culture

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- ▶ Undoubtedly, there is an increasing divide between historic Christianity and western culture, particularly in the area of human sexuality
- ▶ However, we might ask Chris
  - ▶ Do cultural standards ultimately make something right or wrong?
  - ▶ Does being a more technologically advanced society translate to being a morally advanced society?
  - ▶ Does it seem that the cultural transformation of our society is resulting in more or less anxiety/depression, confusion, chaos, division, and violence?

# The Pattern of Sin (Gen 3)

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- ▶ Sin always begins by disbelieving God and acting autonomously (v 1-4)
- ▶ Sin always follows a pattern of (a) seeing, (b) desiring, and (c) taking (v 6)
  - ▶ The desire is always for something acting as a counterfeit of God's created order
  - ▶ The ultimate counterfeit is that ***autonomy from God brings freedom and god-likeness*** (v 5)
- ▶ In reality, autonomy from God brings slavery and misery
  - ▶ Shame, exposure, and fear (v 7, 10)
  - ▶ Disordered relationships between men and women (v 16)
  - ▶ Pain, toil and death (v 16-19)

# The Progression of Societal Sin (Ro 1:18-32)

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- ▶ **Based on Greco-Roman culture, the Bible gives us a blueprint for the moral devolution of a society**
  - ▶ Suppression of truth about God (v 18)
  - ▶ Refusal to worship God according to who he is (v 19-20)
  - ▶ Religious and personal idolatry (v 21-23)
  - ▶ Sexual degradation and impurity (v 24)
  - ▶ Homosexual and lesbian sin (v 26-27)
  - ▶ Depraved God-haters full of envy, murder, violence and deceit; lacking in love and mercy (v 28-31)
  - ▶ Approving and applauding evil at every level (v 32)

“Therefore God gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts...” v 24

# Some Common Societal Definitions of Sex and “Gender Identity” 1 of 2

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- ▶ **Sex** refers to a person's biological status and is typically assigned at birth, usually on the basis of external anatomy. Sex is typically categorized as male, female or intersex.
- ▶ **Gender** is often defined as a social construct of norms, behaviors and roles that varies between societies and over time. Gender is often categorized as male, female or nonbinary.
- ▶ **Gender identity** is one's own internal sense of self and their gender, whether that is man, woman, neither or both. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not outwardly visible to others.
- ▶ **Gender expression** is how a person presents gender outwardly, through behavior, clothing, voice or other perceived characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine or feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture.

Source: NPR – [A Guide to Gender Identity Terms](#)

# Some Common Societal Definitions of Sex and “Gender Identity” 2 of 2

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- ▶ **Sexual orientation** refers to the enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or other genders, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight orientations. People don't need to have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation. They need not have had any sexual experience at all. They need not be in a relationship, dating or partnered with anyone for their sexual orientation to be validated. For example, if a bisexual woman is partnered with a man, that does not mean she is not still bisexual.

Sexual orientation is separate from gender identity. As GLAAD notes, "Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman. A person who transitions from female to male and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a gay man."

# Sin as Identity Deconstruction

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- ▶ In the midst of our shame, exposure, fear, disordered relationships, and pain, sin offers another counterfeit, which is ***identity***
- ▶ That is, where the gospel offers ***true*** identity and approval in Christ, sin offers a ***counterfeit*** identity and approval in gender-based terms

# True Freedom Found in True Identity

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- ▶ That is, ***in Christ***
  - ▶ You have meaning because God made you a new creation
  - ▶ You have worth because God paid everything to redeem you
  - ▶ You are safe because God is your strong tower
  - ▶ You are powerful because God is the strength of your heart
  - ▶ You are valued because God delights and rejoices over you
  - ▶ You are highly esteemed because God created you for a unique purpose
  - ▶ You are loved because God finds you altogether beautiful <sup>1</sup>
- ▶ But being in Christ also means ***rejecting*** the counterfeit beliefs, systems, and practices of our modern culture

<sup>1</sup> Derived from 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:31–32; Proverbs 18:10; Psalm 73:26; Zephaniah 3:17; Ephesians 2:10; Song of Songs 4:7

# The Biblical Treatment of Women

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- ▶ Like Chris, we should take the issue of all human dignity, both male and female, seriously
  - ▶ We oppose practices against women such as domestic violence, sex trafficking and exploitation, rape, forced marriage, and genital mutilation
- ▶ We also believe that as one created in the image of God, the Bible actually establishes the basis for woman's natural dignity
  - ▶ The Bible goes further by explaining that there are no "classes" in Christ (slave/free, male/female, rich/poor)
- ▶ We also believe that strife existing over "gender roles" is rooted in the disorder and deconstruction of sin

# The Bible and Women

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- ▶ **The Bible teaches the principle of male/female equality not equivalence**
  - ▶ Difference ≠ Superiority/Inferiority
- ▶ **Equality is identified by ultimate value and significance**
  - ▶ Gal 3:28 – there is neither male nor female in Christ
  - ▶ Jn 4 – Jesus acting contrary to cultural divides
  - ▶ Women’s engagement in Jesus and the apostles’ ministries
- ▶ **Equivalence is identified by assuming identity between sexes in terms of physical capability, behavioral and emotional responses, and roles and responsibilities**

# Biblical Non-Equivalences That Often Sound Offensive to Chris

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## ▶ Physical strength

- ▶ I Pe 3:7 states women are the “weaker partner.”
  - ▶ This deals with physical differences but actually encourages honor and non-oppression of wives

## ▶ Authority and leadership in the home and church

- ▶ “Headship” and “submission” verses (e.g., I Co 11:3, Eph 5:22, I Ti 2:11-12 and I Pe 3:1) along with elder/deacon qualifications communicate a chain of authority
- ▶ Chris often infers this as gender inequality and male dominance...a thorough conversation is required to unpack the differences

# The Bible and Authority/Leadership

## General Observations

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- ▶ To have a useful conversation, we should understand
  - ▶ The Bible states **everyone** is under authority...even Christ (1 Co 11:3)
  - ▶ The Trinity itself demonstrates equality without equivalence (Php 2:5-8)
  - ▶ Without clear lines of authority and leadership, disorder reigns (1 Co 14:33)
  - ▶ **Submission does not mean subjugation** and **authority does not mean authoritarianism** (1 Pe 3:7, Eph 5:25)
- ▶ Anecdotally, I find fewer women concerned about men leading than apathetic men leading poorly

# The Bible and Authority/Leadership

## Handling Some Difficult Verses

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### ▶ Head-coverings (1 Co 11:2-16)

- ▶ In Paul's time, women were approaching the Lord in public worship with heads uncovered
  - ▶ Similar to pagan priestesses
- ▶ In most ancient cultures including Corinth, and some modern cultures, removing of head covering indicates respect in the presence of a superior
- ▶ Therefore Paul says:
  - ▶ When a man approaches the Lord he is to “uncover” as a sign of respect before Christ
  - ▶ When a woman approaches the Lord , she is to remain “covered” as a sign of man's authority between she and Christ
- ▶ The head covering is cultural, the principle is persistent

# The Bible and Authority/Leadership

## Handling Some Difficult Verses

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- ▶ **Teaching, authority, silence, and deception (1 Ti 2:9-15)**
  - ▶ Teaching and authority refers to formal pastor/teacher role within the sphere of public worship
  - ▶ Quietness refers to not acting as the teacher
  - ▶ Paul reinforces
    - ▶ the created order (v 13)
    - ▶ the failure of both sexes in the Fall (v 14)
    - ▶ the blessing of both sexes in redemption

# The Biblical Treatment of Sexuality and “Gender Identity”

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- ▶ Like Chris, we should take the issue of all human dignity seriously
  - ▶ We oppose disrespectful speech and violent acts against others based on their sexual behavior or “gender identification”
- ▶ We do believe that God created us male and female and there should be no distinction between biological sex and gender identity/expression
- ▶ We do not accept that opposing LGBTQ practices constitutes fear or hatred i.e., homophobia
- ▶ We do not accept that in order to love someone, we must agree with their lifestyle

# Where Modern Christians Have Been Right and Wrong

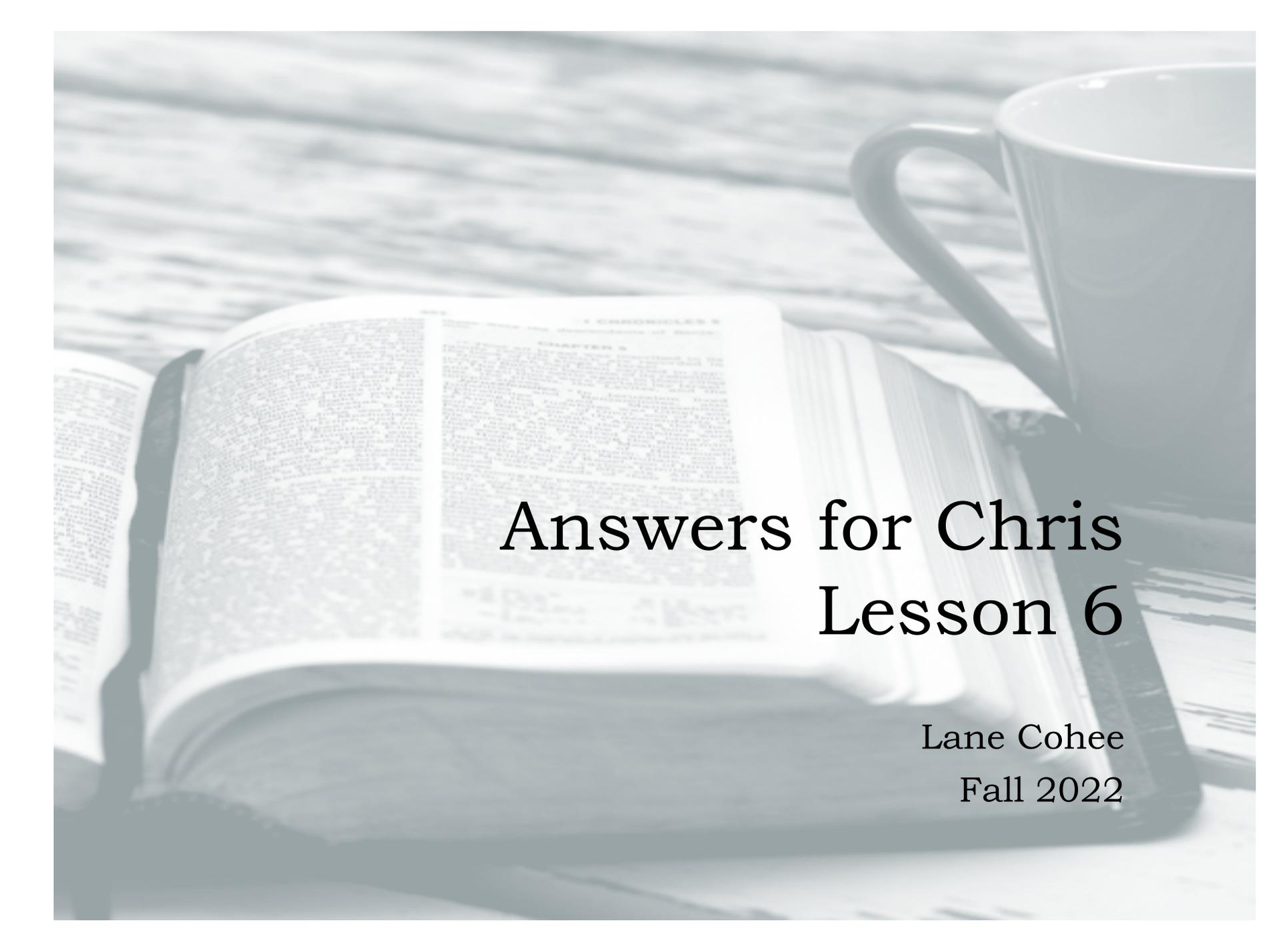
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- ▶ Christians have been right to identify LGBTQ behavior as Biblical sin
  - ▶ Ro 1, 1 Ti 1, 1 Co 6
- ▶ Christians have been right to uphold marriage between one man and one woman
  - ▶ Mark 10: 1-12
- ▶ Christians have been wrong to “camp out” on LGBTQ sins to the exclusion of sexual/marital sins
- ▶ Christians have been wrong to focus primarily on reforming societal behavior rather than gospel redemption

# The Bible and Sexual Sin

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- ▶ To have a useful conversation, we should
  - ▶ Decouple the linkage between the way the Bible treats race and sexuality
    - ▶ Race is amoral while sexuality has a distinctly moral component
    - ▶ Race is immutable while research suggests there is no absolute genetic vs. environmental contribution to sexuality
  - ▶ Show God's view on sexuality is not culturally adaptable and LGBTQ sin is not a greater sexual sin than others
  - ▶ Diffuse the stereotype that opposing a belief or lifestyle translates to hatred or fear
  - ▶ Show **the solution** for LGBTQ sin is the same as any other sin – there is no difference (1 Co 6:11)



# Answers for Chris Lesson 6

Lane Cohee  
Fall 2022

# Answers for Chris

## Course Overview

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- ▶ Lesson 1 - Chris' World – Values, Meaning and Truth in Our Culture
- ▶ Lesson 2 - Questions About God, Suffering and Pain
- ▶ Lesson 3 - Questions About Christian Exclusivity, Judgment and Hell
- ▶ Lesson 4 - Questions About Genocide and Slavery in the Bible
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- ▶ Lesson 6 - Questions About the Bible and Science
- ▶ Lesson 7 - Questions About the Bible, Superstition, and Mythology

# The Bible and Science

## Part I

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- ▶ Faith is irrational because it believes in something that cannot be tested or verified. Since science relies on verification and evidence, why shouldn't we use it as the basis for all true understanding?

# Agreements and Differences

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- ▶ We affirm the value of scientific discovery and application, particularly when it leads to the understanding of creation and improvement of human life
- ▶ We do not accept that natural science is the basis for evaluating all truth and reality
  - ▶ This is a philosophically self-refuting claim
- ▶ We maintain that philosophy and natural science are inextricably linked and that materialism is inadequate to fully explain reality or “do science”

# The Changing Definition of Faith

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- ▶ Pistis (Greek NT) - conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it (Thayers Dictionary)
  - ▶ Belief (pisteuo) – conviction of something being true and worthy of being trusted
- ▶ Faith (modern definition) - belief or trust: belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something, especially without logical proof (Bing Dictionary)

# The Changing Definition of Science

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- ▶ Science – In a general sense, knowledge, or certain knowledge; the comprehension or understanding of facts by the mind. The science of God must be perfect (Websters Dictionary, 1828)
- ▶ Science (modern definition) - knowledge about or study of the natural world based on facts learned through experiments and observation (Merriam-Webster online)

# Historic View of the Material and Non-Material Realms

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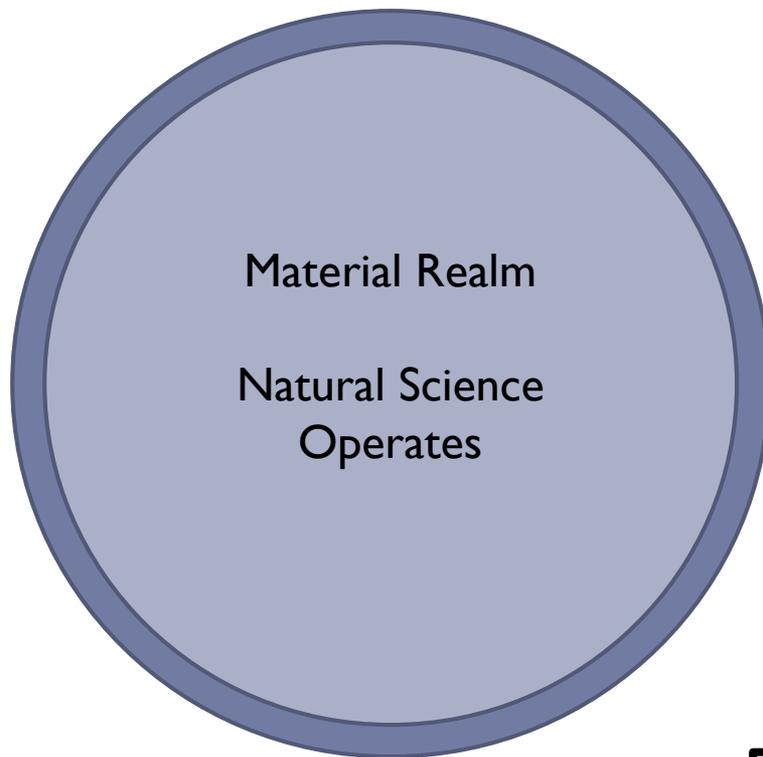


Material realm: God operates  
*potentia ordinata*

Non-material realm God operates  
*potentia absoluta*

# Modern View of the Material and Non-Material Realms

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Asserted change: If natural science cannot evaluate something, it does not exist

Actual change: Philosophy (materialism) uses natural science to redefine reality

This is analogous to the “streetlight effect”

# Materialism is self-refuting and insufficient to fully explain reality

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- ▶ The claim that something can only be true if it is materially provable (i.e., via natural science) is itself not materially provable
- ▶ Materialism does not adequately account for immaterial transcendent laws like logic and mathematics
- ▶ Materialism does not appear to adequately account for consciousness and transcendent themes such as love and justice
- ▶ Materialism does not account for our understanding of properties such as “redness”

# Materialism is philosophically insufficient to “do science”

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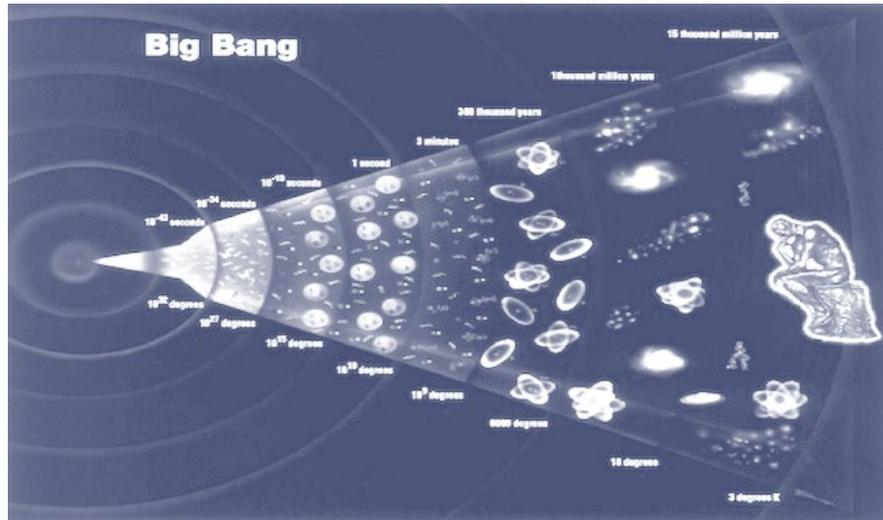
- ▶ The scientist assumes the reliability of sense data. Materialism cannot support that assumption
- ▶ The scientist assumes repeatability and order to conduct physical experiments. Materialism cannot support that assumption
- ▶ Science relies on higher laws of logic to conduct experiments and derive conclusions. Materialism cannot explain transcendent logic

Science relies on the very system that many scientists in turn seek to refute

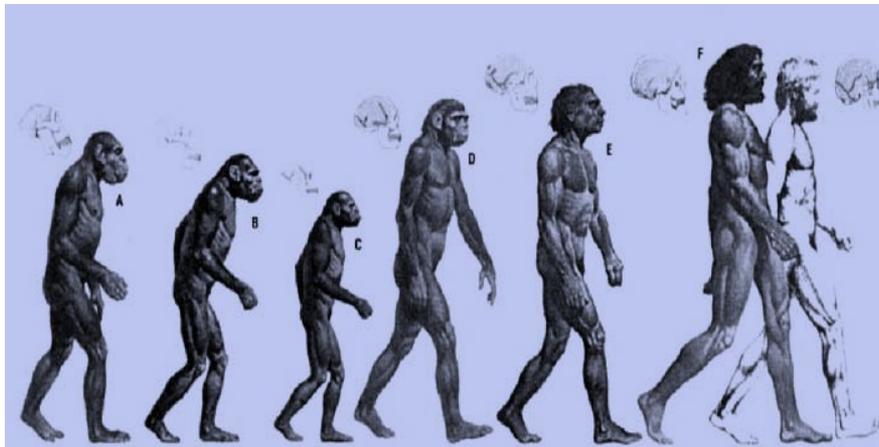
# The Bible and Science

## Part II

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- ▶ Hasn't science disproved most if not all of Christianity?



# The Bible and Science

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- ▶ The vast majority of tension between Christian and dominant scientific opinion surrounds origin science
  - ▶ Origin of the universe (cosmology)
  - ▶ Origin of humanity (paleontology, biology)
- ▶ Origin science is unique inasmuch as there is no exact experiment to reproduce original events
  - ▶ Conclusions must be inferred based on existing data, analysis, and “gapfiller” assumptions
  - ▶ Historically, even though assumptions change, ultimate conclusions do not i.e., no real falsification
- ▶ Therefore, modern equivalences between repeatable observable phenomena (e.g., gravity) and origin theories (e.g., macroevolution) are categorically false

# The Bible and Science

## Comparison of Origin Opinions

Position	Age of Universe	Origin of Universe	Age of Earth	Origin of Humanity
Majority Science	13.7 billion yrs	Big Bang (alternate theories exist)	4.5 million yrs	Evolution from common descent via natural selection
Special (144 Hour) Creation	6,000-10,000 yrs	God's direct creation "ex nihilo"	6,000-10,000 yrs	God's direct creation
Progressive Creation (6 "long" days)	13.7 billion yrs	God's direct creation via Big Bang	"Old Earth" ~ 4.5 million yrs	God's direct creation
Theistic Evolution	13.7 billion yrs	Big Bang	4.5 million yrs	Evolution from common descent as directed by God

Most Americans including Christians do not fit squarely in any one camp

# The Genesis Record

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- ▶ Although there are many opinions on the details of the Genesis record, the following elements are essential to the Christian gospel and hold up very well in any discussion with Chris
  - ▶ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth
  - ▶ God created mankind innocent and uniquely in his image
    - ▶ Male and female he created them to be joined together, multiply, and “subdue the earth”
  - ▶ Humanity sinned against God and fell into moral corruption
  - ▶ Humanity was cursed as a result of sin
  - ▶ God initiated a plan to redeem his creation and his people from the curse of sin

# In the Beginning...

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- ▶ There are dozens of variants of cosmological theories
  - ▶ Most center on static, oscillating, or expanding/contracting universe
- ▶ From enlightenment era until Einstein, the “Kantian” steady state, infinite universe was most popular non-theistic model
  - ▶ Problem of actual “infinite time”
- ▶ With introduction of Einstein’s theory of general relativity, Hubble’s “red shift” and cosmic microwave radiation, majority opinion shifted to Big Bang
  - ▶ There is no uniform opinion amongst scientists about what “started” the Big Bang or what the universe is expanding into

# Male and Female He Created Them...

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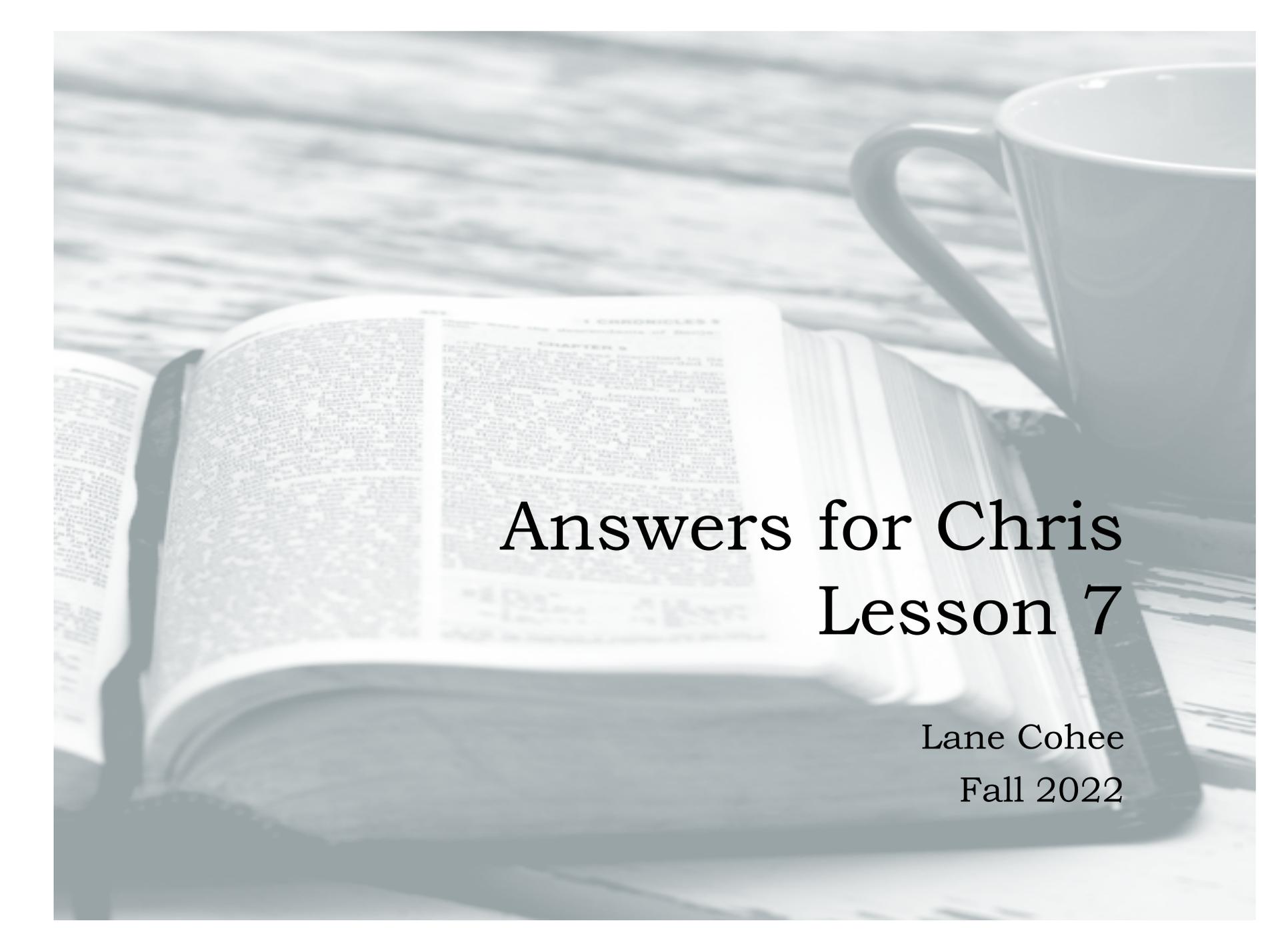
- ▶ While “Origin of Species” (1859) represents origin of modern evolution ideas of human evolution existed in ancient Greek philosophy
  - ▶ Although the theory has been adapted since Darwin, core elements include: (a) diversity of species evolved from (b) common descent, via (c) natural selection
  - ▶ Distinction should be made between adaptation (aka microevolution) and transitional life forms (aka macroevolution)
- ▶ Core areas of debate
  - ▶ Complexity of the cellular structure – probability of random occurrence of genetic sequencing
    - ▶ Not all evolutionists defend pre-biological evolution (i.e., theistic evolution or extra-terrestrial “seeding” of earth)
  - ▶ Fossil record and transitional forms
  - ▶ “Power” associated with natural selection

The dogmatism of the debate takes on a religious proportion because it is a religious debate

# Some “Sniff Test” Questions We Might Ask Chris

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- ▶ Do you believe something can come from nothing via natural causes?
- ▶ Do you believe everything you know about humanity can be explained via a natural evolutionary process?
- ▶ Do you believe order naturally comes out of disorder?
- ▶ Do you believe there is a natural “force” that is driving selection of more advanced species along the “evolutionary tree”?
- ▶ Do you believe male and female variants of a species stayed “lock stepped” through millions of years of evolution so that continuous reproduction could occur?



# Answers for Chris Lesson 7

Lane Cohee  
Fall 2022

# Answers for Chris

## Course Overview

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- ▶ Lesson 1 - Chris' World – Values, Meaning and Truth in Our Culture
- ▶ Lesson 2 - Questions About God, Suffering and Pain
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# The Bible, Superstition, and Spirits

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- ▶ In the Bible, Jesus exorcised demons. Isn't this just superstition from a primitive age? Are we really supposed to believe in demons and ghosts and spirits today?

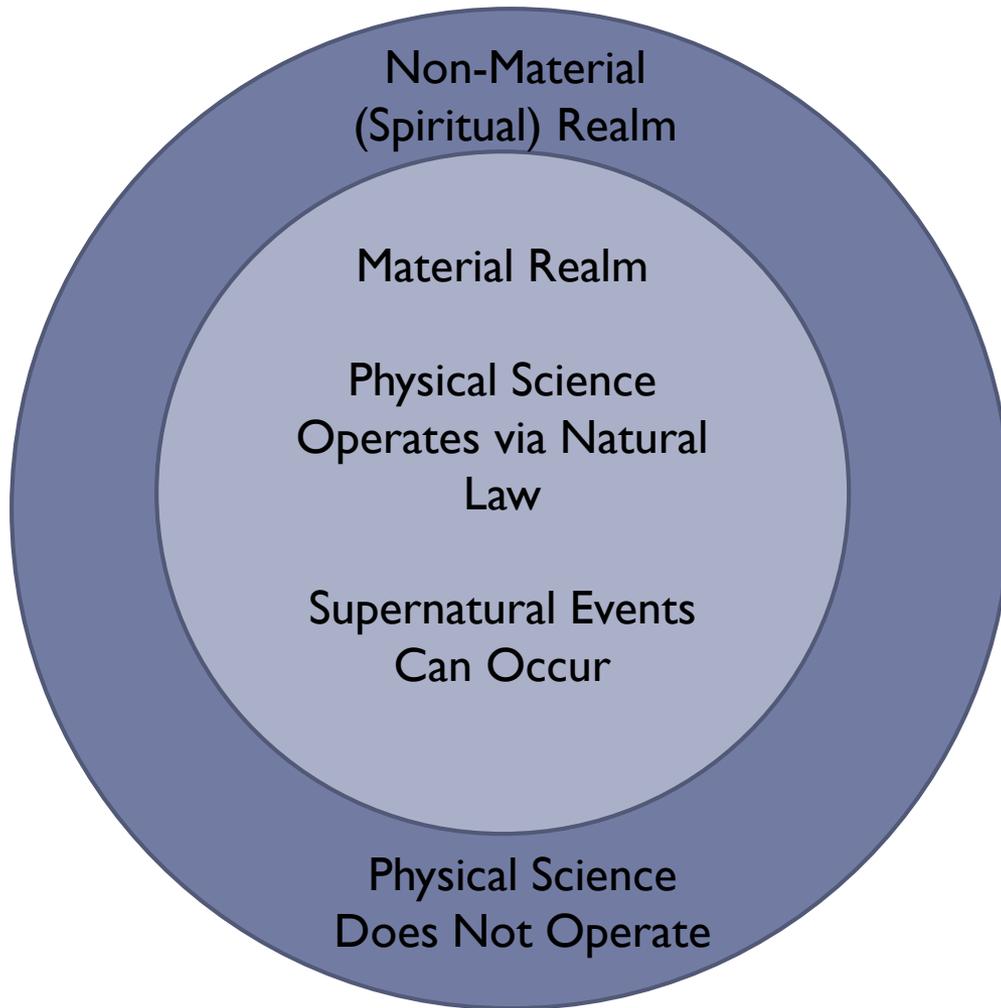
# Agreements and Differences

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- ▶ We agree that there are many superstitions such as “good luck charms” and “omens” that are frivolous and nonsensical
- ▶ We agree that there are religious sects that falsely sensationalize “casting out demons” and performing supernatural “miracles”
- ▶ We do not agree that any belief in the supernatural automatically equates to superstition
  - ▶ This is driven by materialistic bias
- ▶ We believe powers of good and evil exist and operate inside and outside the spiritual (non-material) realm

# Historic View of the Natural and Supernatural

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- ▶ Spiritual beings inhabit the spiritual (non-material) realm
- ▶ Natural law normatively operates in the material (physical) realm
- ▶ Spiritual beings are capable of supernaturally influencing the material realm outside normal operation of natural law

# Modern View of the Natural and Supernatural

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- ▶ Many people deny supernaturalism *ipso facto* based on their assumption that materialism is true
  - ▶ This is simply concluding the premise
- ▶ This is an assumption rooted in philosophy, not nature or science

Materialism can become a self-fulfilling prophecy *when the material world is all we train and allow ourselves to see*

# What the Bible Teaches About Angels and Demons

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- ▶ Angels and demons are spiritual beings created to do the bidding of their respective masters
  - ▶ Although powerful, they do not share God's incommunicable (aka "omni") attributes
- ▶ Angels are messengers and ministers of God
  - ▶ Perpetually attending the throne of God (Eze 1-2, Rev 4-5)
  - ▶ Doing God's will on earth (Gen 3:22-24, 2 Ki 6)
  - ▶ Ministering to others, including Jesus (Mt 4:11)
  - ▶ Delivering a message from God (Josh 5:13-15, Lk 5:1-38)
- ▶ Satan (adversary) is "angel of light" and "ruler of this world" opposing God's plan/people through power, lies, murder, and deceit
  - ▶ In the gospels, demons do Satan's bidding through opposing Christ and conducting possession, oppression, physical harm and property damage (Luke 8: 26-36)
  - ▶ Although powerful, they do not overpower or inhabit those having God's Spirit

# Observations and Questions About the Supernatural

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- ▶ Skeptics often like to lump “ghosts, goblins, witches, and spirits” as if the Bible is talking about Halloween
  - ▶ More precision is needed about what the Bible teaches
- ▶ Do you believe good and evil are explainable solely through natural behavior?
  - ▶ If so, why do themes of light and darkness e.g., music and archetype seem to impact us at a “core” level?
- ▶ In our increasingly advanced technological society why do you think there is so much interest and obsession with supernatural themes?

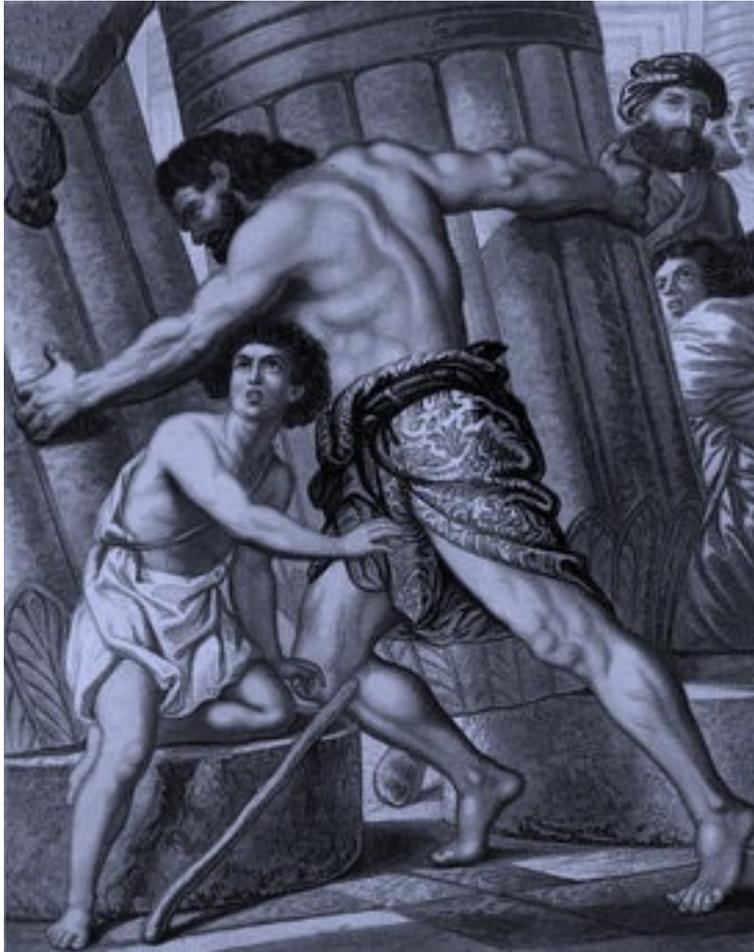
# Observations and Questions About Demonic Influence

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- ▶ We would agree that understanding of human behavior was more elementary in ancient times.
  - ▶ Do you believe they attributed every mental disease to demon possession? (e.g., 1 Sa 21: 12-14)
- ▶ Demonic activity appears to be amplified during the gospel ministry of Christ. Why?
- ▶ In our increasingly advanced technological society
  - ▶ why do we see a growing number of disorders and increasing behavior like cutting and self-harm, random deadly violence, sexual predators, and even cannibalism?
  - ▶ do you believe psychological characterization of a disorder means it is limited solely to natural causes?

# The Bible, Mythology and Miracles

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- ▶ Samson purportedly killed 1000 men with a jawbone and derived his strength from the length of his hair. Aren't these Bible stories just mythology from primitive times?

# Mythology Defined

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- ▶ Historically, mythology is a narrative or body of stories attempting to explain the origins and fundamental values of a given culture and “higher meanings” such as the nature of the universe and humanity.
- ▶ Modern connotations of mythology usually translate primitive and outdated fantasy stories
  - ▶ When associated with Christianity, this criticism sometimes ties to accuracy of historical events
  - ▶ However it is usually connected to supernatural events like divine inspiration and miracles

# Biblical Historical Accuracy

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- ▶ While there are ongoing timeline debates about the Jewish exodus and Canaan occupation (e.g., Ai), the Bible has held up very well against prior historical criticism e.g.,
  - ▶ 19<sup>th</sup> century assumptions about Mosaic writing and law codes (aka JEDP or Documentary Hypothesis) disproven in 1970s
  - ▶ 19<sup>th</sup>/ 20<sup>th</sup> century statements of Hittite, Sargon (Assyrian king), and Belshazzar non-existence disproven in 20<sup>th</sup> century
  - ▶ Pre -21st century beliefs that patriarchal systems did not exist in Abraham's times has been invalidated
  - ▶ Dating of Daniel's prophecy validated with findings of the DSS
  - ▶ Early (1<sup>st</sup> century) dating of gospel authorship validated
- ▶ Evidential debates can quickly devolve into “my facts and figures vs. yours” but history indicates skeptics should keep an open mind about Biblical historical accuracy

# Samson and Mythology

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- ▶ Samson's Nazirite vow was a statement of dedication to God (Jdg 13:5)
- ▶ In the "meta-narrative," Samson is commissioned to deliver Israel from Philistia
- ▶ In the "personal-narrative," Samson is a testimony of the downfall of a flawed man consumed by passions and lusts...and the ability to still be redeemed
- ▶ Although one could infer his strength was tied to his hair-length, more appropriate is his downfall allowed by God due to his relentless sensuality and pride (Jdg 16:17)
- ▶ In the Bible, at least 15 instances of one thousand can be taken as "a symbol of multitude"
- ▶ If Samson's story is a myth, it is a myth that should be learned by every young man

This is just one example of analyzing the Biblical message with Chris

# Observations on Miracles

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- ▶ Biblical miracles have a specific purpose – to authenticate God’s message and messengers
  - ▶ Jn 10:38, Jn 20:30-31, Ro 15:17-19, 2 Co 12:12
  - ▶ If the Christian view of the world is true, how else would God authenticate himself?
- ▶ While God certainly can and may do miracles today, we should “test the spirits” against their ultimate purpose
  - ▶ The miracles performed by Christ and Apostles were not refuted by eyewitnesses in their day – and they easily could have been
  - ▶ It is unclear how many “modern miracles” can stand up against similar scrutiny

# The Miracle That Matters Most

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- ▶ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. (1 Co 15:3-8)
  - ▶ Were they all lying?
  - ▶ Were they all deceived?
  - ▶ Would it have been easily discredited?
  - ▶ Would they all be willing to die for it?