

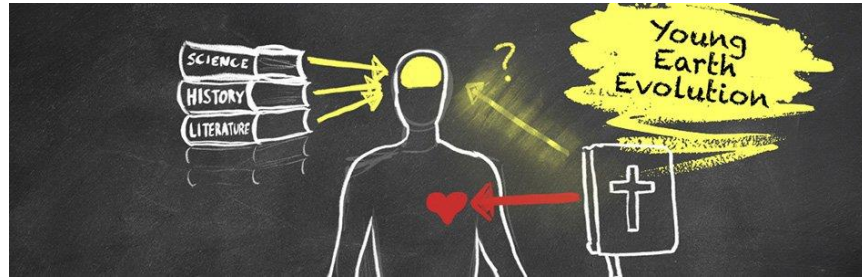
Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Christianity Is Objectively True

ANSWERS IN GENESIS

Responding to Todd Wood's claim of purely subjective faith

1



Most people who go to church grow up mainly hearing the Bible on Sundays, learning Bible stories in Sunday school, and hearing preaching from the pulpit. But then many of them go to schools where the education is purely secular and at least sometimes may be overtly hostile to the Bible. This leads to the impression that “religion” is subjective, emotional, and personal, while the “real world” belongs to the secularists.

One of the main battles of biblical creation is showing that this dichotomy is false—the Bible accurately speaks about the real world. Its events do not happen in Neverland but can be placed in time and space so accurately that archaeologists have been able to use it like a map of the ancient world. In fact, the Bible is inerrant—meaning that when something conflicts with the Bible, we can confidently say that it is *never* the [Bible](#) that is wrong.

A professing young-earth creationist should be the last person to call into question the historical, objective nature of Christianity. However, Todd Wood, in his book *The Quest*, says,

The reason I am not a rampant skeptic, a Richard-Dawkins style scoffer, is because of my own personal, purely subjective experiences with the risen Lord Jesus Christ my savior. This isn't anything I can logically defend. It is my own experience. Yours may be different. I can't account for your experiences, but I know what mine are. (p. 38)

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

It may seem humble and honest to admit that one's faith is purely subjective and that one might even be a skeptic or even a scoffer without that subjective experience, but in reality it is an attack on Christianity itself.

Christianity Is Objective and Historical

Many have a Christianity that is primarily self-centered, focused on what [Jesus](#) can do for them and the wonderful plan he has for their life. While it is true that Jesus does wonderful things for every believer and that we can rejoice in the personal relationship we have with our Creator through worship, prayer, and studying his Word, the personal aspect of our faith rests on historical events. The Nicene Creed, which summarizes key biblical truths of Christianity that we must assent to in order to be [Christian](#) at all, lists the historical events of [God's creation](#) of the world and of Jesus' being born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, buried, and raised from the dead. It further expresses belief in the future return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead as objective events.

The real-world basis of Christianity means it is open to investigation. Does the Old Testament description of the city of Jerusalem match what archaeology shows us? Did the political offices referenced by Luke actually exist in the Roman province of Judea? The Bible is, in fact, the most-studied and fact-checked book of history. And there is not *one* instance where the Bible has been proven wrong about a place, event, or people group it described. Of course, because the Bible is inerrant, we can be confident that it never will be shown to be wrong about anything.

The real-world basis of Christianity means it is open to investigation.

While the Bible is a historically accurate book, it is more than a history book, and Christianity's core claims about Christ's identity as the Son of God and his resurrection from the dead are matters of faith. However, there is a solid basis for that faith; it is not subject to a personal emotional experience.

A Subjective Faith Cannot Be Defended or Shared

Wood's purely subjective experiences cannot be attacked because no one else has access to them. They are fundamentally unverifiable and unassailable. But for the same reason, he can't use those experiences to defend his faith or to share it. He would have no logical answer, based on this statement, to the Muslim or Mormon who claims an equally compelling subjective experience. Personal, purely subjective experiences can be very real and even encourage a person in his or her faith, but they are not a good *foundation* for faith.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

The disciples on the road to Emmaus had an experience with Jesus that included a strong emotional component—they said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road?” ([Luke 24:32](#)). However, the experience itself was objective—Jesus appeared to them and expounded the Scriptures regarding the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah. Their emotional reaction was likely grounded in their knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures and their joy at the realization that Jesus was truly the fulfillment of those Scriptures.

Paul had an intensely personal experience with the risen Lord on the road to Damascus—his companions could not see Jesus but only heard his voice ([Acts 9:7](#)). However, even though Scripture records him telling his testimony multiple times, the [gospel](#) he proclaimed regarded the objective facts about Jesus’ death, resurrection, and lordship. His call to repentance did not include an invitation to have a subjective emotional experience!

Worse than classifying his own faith as subjective, Wood implies that it is valid to be a Richard-Dawkins-type scoffer if someone *doesn't* have that personal experience. This brings up huge questions of theodicy, because if someone who lacks a personal experience with Christ is justified in skepticism, how is God just when he sends the unrepentant and unbelieving scoffer to hell?

Why an Objective Foundation Is Important

If a subjective, emotional experience is all you have to ground your faith in, then a different subjective experience could displace that faith. It is very common to hear people’s deconversion and deconstruction stories, where a faith that had no real foundation was replaced with an equally vacuous atheism.

But there is an objective foundation for the Christian faith. And we should be very glad about this because there will be times in all Christians’ lives when we don’t *feel* God’s presence or the reality of our salvation. When our faith is weak, we especially need to be able to lean on the solid reality of what God has done for us.

The only way to evaluate one’s own faith in relation to someone else’s “Do you worship the same God I do?” is to see whether you share the same foundation. If someone claims that they worship Jesus, but they believe he was only a man, that he was the first created being, or that he was actually Satan’s brother, I can confidently say we are not worshipping the same Jesus! Shared faith comes from a shared foundation in Scripture. Subjective inner experiences, no matter how real, cannot be a foundation for a shared faith.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Disingenuous Hyperbole

Reading a little further into Wood's book, it seems that he reaches the conclusion that the Bible's creation narrative intends to be history for many of the same reasons most creationists do: the creation and flood narratives have markers of historical writing, the later writers of Scripture interpret them as history, and the theology of [sin](#) presented in Scripture only makes sense if a historical Adam was the first human sinner (chapter 5).

In fact, reading Wood's book shows that he has a grasp of the text of Scripture and the major theological truths that come out of it. He has concern for the spread of the gospel and has a love for others. That leads to the conclusion that the quote above about experiences being the cause of his faith is not entirely accurate.

We nevertheless have to call out Wood's claim of a subjective basis for his faith, because it is dangerous to teach others that such a faith would be acceptable. This is especially true in a postmodern society which teaches that people's subjective experiences are everything. Even if a subjective experience were the starting point for faith, we would expect a person's faith to mature past considering that experience as the *basis* for their faith.

If he did not have the objective foundation of Scripture, he would have no way to associate his subjective experience with the God of the Bible.

Wood claims to be unable to defend his faith but then goes on to defend it. He claims a foundation of subjective experience but then goes on to discuss Scripture, history, science, and theology in a way that makes it clear he has an objective foundation for his faith. If he did not have the objective foundation of Scripture, he would have no way to associate his subjective experience with the God of the Bible. Wood is not kept from being the next incarnation of Dawkins only by a subjective experience with God—his faith, like that of all true Christians, is grounded in the truth of Scripture and the definitive work of Christ on his behalf, no matter how much we might disagree with his approach on this and perhaps other matters. And it is perplexing why he would claim otherwise.

* Featured in *Should Biblical Creation Become More Like Evolution?*

© Answers in Genesis, January 27, 2023. Retrieved February 27, 2023.

<https://answersingenesis.org/young-earth-evolution/christianity-objectively-true/>

WWW.LIONANDLAMBAPOLOGETICS.ORG

© 2023, LION AND LAMB APOLOGETICS—1305 CHESTER ST—CLEBURNE, TX 76033