

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## Andy Stanley: A Cautionary Tale of the Danger of Wokeness

KYLE WHITT

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*When it comes to truth, Andy Stanley has no legs on which to  
stand, his house is now on the sand*

A Cautionary Tale of the Danger of Wokeness

Wokepedia Podcast

with Kyle Whitt

In a 2019 lecture at Dallas Theological Seminary, speaking to an audience of young soon-to-be pastors, teachers, and professors, Andy Stanley attempted to shift the foundations of the Christian faith from a biblical worldview into an incoherent mixture of empiricism and subjectivity. This speech has recently resurfaced and garnered attention within evangelical circles, in part because it highlights Stanley's deconstructionism applied to his Christian faith. Furthermore, Stanley demonstrates here his dangerous assumptions which rest upon the same ideological underpinnings as wokeness. In the relevant part, Andy states (full transcript at the end of the article):

*"My purpose today is to inspire you... in your preaching and your teaching and your writing... to tether the faith of this next generation to the event of the resurrection rather than the authority and the inspiration, infallibility, or even the inerrancy of the Bible where it should have been tethered all along, and where the Apostle Peter and the Apostle John tethered theirs.*

*"About nine years ago... I was sitting at home, and I'm watching a YouTube video of Sam Harris. [A]nd he is just completely dismantling the Bible. And the crowd is cheering, I mean every time he...takes a shot at the Bible, they just cheer. And as I was watching, something dawned on me that I never thought about before that has rocked my world and changed the way I preach and teach. I made the change almost immediately.*

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*“It dawned on me that Sam Harris shared an assumption with everybody in the room that was a skeptic or an atheist or agnostic...And the assumption that he shared with them he also shared with most Christians, although most Christians haven’t thought about it, and the Christians in the room listening to him, and Christians everywhere, and the assumption that I was raised on, and it’s an assumption that most of you were raised on. And the assumption is simply this: that the Bible is the foundation of the Christian faith, and as the Bible goes, so goes Christianity.*

*“ thought this is a big deal because I was raised, most Christians were raised [on this] assumption [which] is a dangerous thing.*

*“[H]e published another little book called “Letter to a Christian Nation.”...You should all read that book... If your faith survives, then I want you to ask yourself this question: would the faith of the high school students in my church survive this book, with the faith of the college freshmen that are leaving my church?...[W]ould the average faith of the average person in our church survive this book? Because...he goes after the Bible because as the Bible goes so goes our faith and that just isn’t true...”*

To begin, it is important to discuss how this speech is detrimental to Christianity. As we have discussed in a previous episode on our podcast, there are several non-negotiable, fundamental hermeneutical points that one must agree upon to (1) be a faithful Christian, and (2) be able to trust the holy scriptures. Unfortunately, Andy Stanley and his followers would find many if not all of these essential points problematic: that the Bible is the breathed-out word of God (Matt. 4:4, 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21); the Bible contains no errors (John 17:17, Ps. 119:160); the Bible is sufficient as a source for all Christian faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:3, Jude 1:3); the Bible is authoritative, backed by the authority of the creator of the universe (Matt 22:29, Matt.28:18, 1 Cor. 14:37); there is nothing missing or unnecessary within the Bible (2 Tim. 3:17, Rev. 22:18-19); the Bible is universal truth, equally relevant for all peoples, at all times, and in all places (Heb. 4:12); the Bible is accessible to anyone with spiritual ears to hear (1 Cor. 1:26-31, Ps. 19:7); and that the Bible is about Jesus, not you. However, the Bible is written for you, so that you may have eternal life and glorify God (John 1:14, John 20:30-31, 1 John 5:13). If those things are not true, then we cannot trust God’s word, we cannot trust the accounts of the resurrection, and God is not who He says He is. *All* of Christianity blows up when *any* of these points are not true. Likewise, to say the Bible is not necessary, is to reject its authority and sufficiency. This is functionally what Andy says, even if he would say we have accounts of the resurrection in the Bible. Now that we have a foundation of what the scripture says about itself, let’s focus specifically on some of Andy’s points, testing everything by God’s holy word.

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Firstly, despite Stanley's assertion, the Apostles did not base their faith solely on the resurrection, but based it upon the resurrection as the culmination of the entirety of the biblical narrative (1 Cor. 15:3-5, Luke 24:25-27). Hence why these witnesses of Christ also quoted the old testament so much (e.g., John 19:36-37, Romans 4:3, 1 Peter 2:6-8). Andy has already, famously "unhitched" from the old testament, and this explains a lot of why he posits the idea that the faith of the Apostles was solely on the resurrection as an event disconnected from all other context and prophecy. By contrast, Jesus Himself appealed to the old testament and prophecy to explain the gospel (Luke 24:25-27). Therefore, Andy has placed himself in opposition to Jesus, which is a very dangerous place to be.

Despite Stanley's many errors, it is accurate to say that our faith is hitched to the resurrection. It is our hope, our guarantee "according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:17-19). This message was authoritatively recorded in the *exact* words God desired in His word. It is the record of God's Gospel that will never fail, even when men fail. To reject, or even downplay that reality is to risk being eternally accursed (Gal. 1:8).

When listening to Andy's lecture, or any of his recent sermons, one may notice that Andy Stanley never once mentions anything about an unchanging, objective truth regarding any of his claims. This is purposeful: Stanley fundamentally rests his case regarding untethering Christianity from scripture on a postmodern view of epistemology. In other words, he denies objective truth. For Stanley, truth is subjective and fluid. Specifically, we see Andy employ standpoint epistemology, or the view that a person's "lived experiences" grant them a superior view of reality that others *cannot* have. For example, at the 2019 400 Leadership Summit, Stanley posited that white men need to establish friendships and have conversations with black people in order to understand that white men are guilty of racism.

Don't get tripped up about the meaning of standpoint epistemology. This idea does not make a claim about one's ability to learn information intellectually, but instead theorizes about one's access to experiential truth. It denies objective truth, and denies that all people have an equal possibility to access that truth, even if they never *do* access it. However, in reality one can access objective knowledge. For instance, there's a lot about trigonometry that one may not know, but that doesn't change the underlying realities of the universe trigonometry reveals, nor the possibility of one learning about trigonometry.

Standpoint theory says that one's "standpoint" in society, determined by their various intersectional identities, determine both a person's possibility to access truth and what that truth is. These identities include race, sexuality, gender, religion, ability status, etc. In other words, you can't just "learn" something, but instead must essentially create "your truth" through your subjective experiences, especially experiences of oppression and victimization. When a person with a victim identity (e.g., black Americans, women,

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etc.) speaks about their “lived experience” of being oppressed, those in the dominant group (e.g., whites, men, etc.) must listen to and believe these stories without questioning their validity, since only the victimized have access to the knowledge of their own experiences. This is an essential part of what we call “wokeness.” As such, it’s no surprise that we see someone that’s given into this ideology “deconstruct” the faith by breaking it down, questioning those fundamentals of the faith, and in function give into the very first lie: “Has God really said?” (Gen. 3:1).

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Andy is also building off other points here, such as his own “unhitching” from the old testament. In so doing, he compromises those aforementioned fundamentals by slipping further down the slope of heresy, of which others have tragically fallen before Stanley. To make a long story short, there has been a trajectory toward downplaying foundations of the faith in the practice of apologetics (the art of defending the faith) that has influenced men like Andy to indulge in similar error. Many of these “apologists” have compromised biblical truth to not “lose face” in front of militant atheists such as the ones Andy mentioned, like Sam Harris. This theologically wayward drift includes the practice of trying to prove the claims of Christianity *solely* from extrabiblical evidence. One can see how Andy has taken that view to an extreme, compromising on biblical inerrancy and on evolution. Sadly, the “militant atheists” of the 20th century are a nearly dead breed, and we’ve moved into a fully postmodern culture as we transition to a neopagan culture. Ironically, the compromises these apologists have made to fight atheism are now breeding open and blasphemous heresy as their impotent methodologies collide with postmodern, woke men like Andy Stanley.

In the end, what Andy’s doing here is why he’s compromised on Critical Race Theory, on Queer Theory (the LGBT movement), etc. And just as he’s a more extreme version of compromises that came before him, he will produce men and women who are even more far gone than he is. Considering that there’s hardly anything recognizable as Christian in Andy, what does that say about those people who are following his example? This is why we fight. This is why Wokepedia exists. Please, for the love of the Gospel...Don’t...Go...Woke.

## Full Transcript:

*My purpose today is to inspire you and to try to convince you in your preaching and your teaching and your writing, to tether the faith of the next generation, and maybe some of this generation, to tether the faith. And that’s the phrase I want you to hang on to: to tether the faith of this generation and the next to the event of the Resurrection, rather than the inspiration, infallibility, or the authority of the Bible. [Andy briefly looks up at the ceiling] Oh good, no lightning. So let me say that one more time...and you can talk bad about me after I leave, you have permission to do*

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*that...From now on, for the rest of our lives in our preaching, and our teaching, and our writing, to tether the faith of this next generation to the event of the resurrection rather than the authority and the inspiration, infallibility, or even the inerrancy of the Bible where it should have been tethered all along, and where the Apostle Peter and the Apostle John tethered theirs.*

*Now let me tell you why I think this is a big deal. About nine years ago...I was sitting at home, and I'm watching a YouTube video of Sam Harris...[a] famous atheist neuroscientist. And I'm listening to this and watching this video...and he's at a university setting, and he is just completely dismantling the Bible. And the crowd is cheering, I mean every time he...takes a shot at the Bible, they just cheer. And he's doing all the normal stuff that Skeptics have done forever. And as I was watching, something dawned on me that I never thought about before that has rocked my world and changed the way I preach and teach. I made the change almost immediately.*

*It dawned on me that Sam Harris shared an assumption with everybody in the room that was a skeptic or an atheist or agnostic...And the assumption that he shared with them he also shared with most Christians, although most Christians haven't thought about it, and the Christians in the room listening to him, and Christians everywhere, and the assumption that I was raised on, and it's an assumption that most of you were raised on. In fact, when I state this assumption, part of your brain will go, "well, that can't be true" and part of you will feel nervous that what I'm saying it's not true. And the assumption is simply this: that the Bible is the foundation of the Christian faith, and as the Bible goes, so goes Christianity.*

*That was the assumption he leveraged all of his skepticism off of, and it's an assumption that most of the people in most of our churches hold to even though they've never thought about it because no one's ever said it like that, the Assumption being that as the Bible goes so it goes to the Christian faith. So as Sam Harris dismantles the Bible, and all confidence in the Bible, he's dismantling Christianity in his mind, and in the minds of the people in the audience, and in the minds and the hearts of people, and students, and high school students, and college students everywhere. And when I say the Bible, I'm talking about, what if you went to a bookstore and said, "I want to see a Bible," what they would bring you. You know, Old Testament New Testament chapter, verse, mapped and wrapped. Okay, like, "the Bible," the whole thing, just to be clear.*

*So after I watched this, I thought, "this is terrible and someone needs to do something." I looked around and it was just me, so I thought this is a big deal because I was raised, most Christians were raised [on this] assumption [which] is a dangerous thing. Especially when it goes underneath the surface, many of you make decisions, we all do, based on assumptions that we don't even know about. And as soon as somebody surfaces the assumption you think, "oh that's not true," and suddenly you make different kinds of decisions.*

*So I read his book, "End of Faith," and as hopefully you know Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett and late Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris. Mainly those four guys, they responded to*

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9-11 by publishing books against religion. All religion, not just Christianity. And so Christians came back at Sam Harris so strong after he published "End of Faith," [so] he published another little book called "Letter to a Christian Nation." ...You should all read that book, and if your faith survives, it may not. You may become an atheist after you read it, just warning you. It's a little tiny book written to Christians. If your faith survives, then I want you to ask yourself this question: would the faith of the high school students in my church survive this book, with the faith of the college freshmen that are leaving my church? ...[W]ould the average faith of the average person in our church survive this book? Because he does what skeptics have done forever, he goes after the Bible because as the Bible goes so goes our faith and that just isn't true...

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