

D. Thomas Holt

SESSION ONE ∞ APOLOGETICS & CULTURAL/PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS



PHL 501 – Professorial Nuance/Nuisance & Opening Salvos

MY BIASES

1. I suffer from cultural toxicity sensitivity. To wit, I am easily disturbed, if not obsessed, with how our culture as Christ followers as manifested in our –

- A. language (e.g., “Jesus Christ”),
- B. clothing (e.g., “bare ankles”),¹
- C. art (e.g., Holy Spirit as a “dove”),
- D. values (e.g., denominational hubris),² and/or
- E. behavior (e.g., “Sunday as the ‘LORD’s Day’ “)

What do you believe about the faith that is wrong/false/untruthful?

COLORS, IF NOT POISONS, THE TRUTH!

2. I do indeed believe there is TTruth. But, I also believe there is ttruth; i.e., little-t truth exists. Little-t truth is manifested by Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior –

Human beings see, hear, remember, understand, and do what they want to see, hear, remember, understand, and do. Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior—Simplified: People believe what is useful to them.

Thus, little-t truth explains *why* people do what they do, and is thus invaluable for understanding *how* and *why* people understand, but does little to help us understand capital-T Truth. Capital-T Truth is manifested by:

Reasoned dependence on evidence independent from cultural bias. That’s why we:

- A. Insist on placebo treatments in medicine.
- B. Use a yardstick, instead of our elbow.
- C. Deploy clocks instead of our perception of the earth’s rotation.
- D. Study the Scriptures as Truth from the LORD God, and not just how men and women understand the LORD God Almighty, or translate the Scriptures for that matter.



3. What do **you** want from PHL 501; i.e., beyond "credit for the degree," what particular value do you expect to find in studying how we should defend/explain the faith in the Lord God Almighty?

¹There is an interesting, negative correlation between a church group’s rules regarding “mixed swimming” and the church building’s distance from the beach. In the early 20th century, a woman was escorted from the downtown square of my hometown, Springfield Missouri, for wearing a dress which showed her ankles.

²Roman Catholics are wrong because... Baptists are wrong because... Pentecostals are just wrong because... Muslims are wrong because...

4. So, **how** do we distinguish between swine and non-swine, between pearls and non-pearls.³

5. So, what are your concerns about “defending the hope that is within you?”

6. What do you believe about the faith that is wrong/false/untruthful?

PHL 501 is a dangerous course. When we deal with disease, it is often contagious. Apologetics is dangerous. We deny we have the disease; then yes, it can infect, affect, and effect you. My job: teach you how to protect you from this disease (prophylactic) and teach you remedies (therapeutic) for yourself and others. Biggest contagious factor in apologetics? Our culture, our language, what we have been taught and how we have been taught. For example—

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bifurcated thinking; no gray, all gray. • What we do not know about Deity is okay; it’s mystical. • We can know all about Deity; we just do not yet understand. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deviance from cultural norms is equated to trespass. • Jesus was a real human <u>and</u> a manifestation of Deity; i.e., the Christ. • Baptism is necessary—salvation, confession and sanctification. |
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7. What do you consider the most important explanation for the hope that is within you?

8. What are **your** questions about the syllabus and course expectations?

³Matthew 7:6; Jesus the Christ is quoted as saying: “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE YOU FOUND THESE BELIEFS
CHALLENGING TO EXPLAIN?

CIRCLE ONE FOR EACH AUDIENCE—

Belief:	Mature Believer	Weak Believer	Unbeliever
⌘ The Christ's birth was indeed human; i.e., Jesus of Nazareth was more than Deity.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ His mother, Miriam, was a virgin.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ He died/was killed while on earth.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ He overcame the enemies of believers.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ He was resurrected from the grave.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ His death was a sacrifice to atone for human trespasses against Deity.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ The absence of Deity is hell.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ An afterlife with Deity is heaven.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ Humans deserve hell; Deity can prevent hell.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ We really do not know what prevents people from spending an afterlife without Deity.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ The church is responsible for seeing that people's eternal destiny is with Deity.	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes