

2009 Teen Winter Retreat

Grace Based Apologetics

Lesson 1

What is Truth?

Does Absolute Truth Exist?

- What is wrong with the following statement?
- There is no such thing as absolute truth.
- It is self-defeating. A self-defeating statement fails to meet its own standard.
- A survey conducted in 2006 of Christian teens found that:
 - 81% believed that all truth is relative to the individual and his/her circumstances.
 - 70% of the Christian young people surveyed believed there absolute truth does not exist.

Seven Truths About Truth

1. Truth is discovered, not invented. It exists independent of anyone's knowledge of it. (Gravity existed prior to Newton)
2. Truth is transcultural; if something is true, it is true for all people, in all places, at all times. ($2+2=4$)
3. Truth is unchanging even though our beliefs about truth change. (The earth is round)
4. Beliefs cannot change a fact, no matter how sincerely they are held.
5. Truth is not affected by the attitude of the one professing it.
6. All truths are absolute truths. Even truths that appear relative are really absolute.
7. Truth is that which corresponds to its referent.

What is Apologetics?

- I Peter 3:15—Apologetics is derived from the Greek word *apologia* which literally means to give a defense.
- Apologetics is the branch of Christian theology which answers the question, Is Christianity rationally defensible? In other words, can Christianity be defended (and therefore substantiated) by using the same procedures reasonable people everywhere use to determine the truthfulness of anything—whether it be scientific, historical, legal, philosophical, or religious?
- Jude 3—They were to contend for the faith.

Paul the Apologist

- Of the seven times the Greek word apologia is used in the New Testament 6 of the occurrences were either written by Paul or recorded as having been spoken by Paul.
- Philippians 1:7, 17
- Acts 22:1
- Acts 25:16
- I Corinthians 9:3
- Acts 17:21-34—We see Paul in action. He used his knowledge of philosophy to exhort and convince the gainsayers (Titus 1:9).

Four Reasons Apologetics is Useful

1. Exonerates Christianity
2. Strengthens Believers
3. Makes Christianity Relevant
4. Aids in Evangelizing the Lost

Is Evidence Necessary For Belief

Faith	Reason
<p>God the Source Act of Will Believes Truth Involves Trust Founded on Fact Rejects Contradictions Consistent with Reason End of Reason Guides Reason</p>	<p>God the Source Act of Mind Knows Truth Involves Logic and Evidence Deals with Facts Exposes Contradictions Consistent with Faith Beginning of Faith Affirms Faith</p>

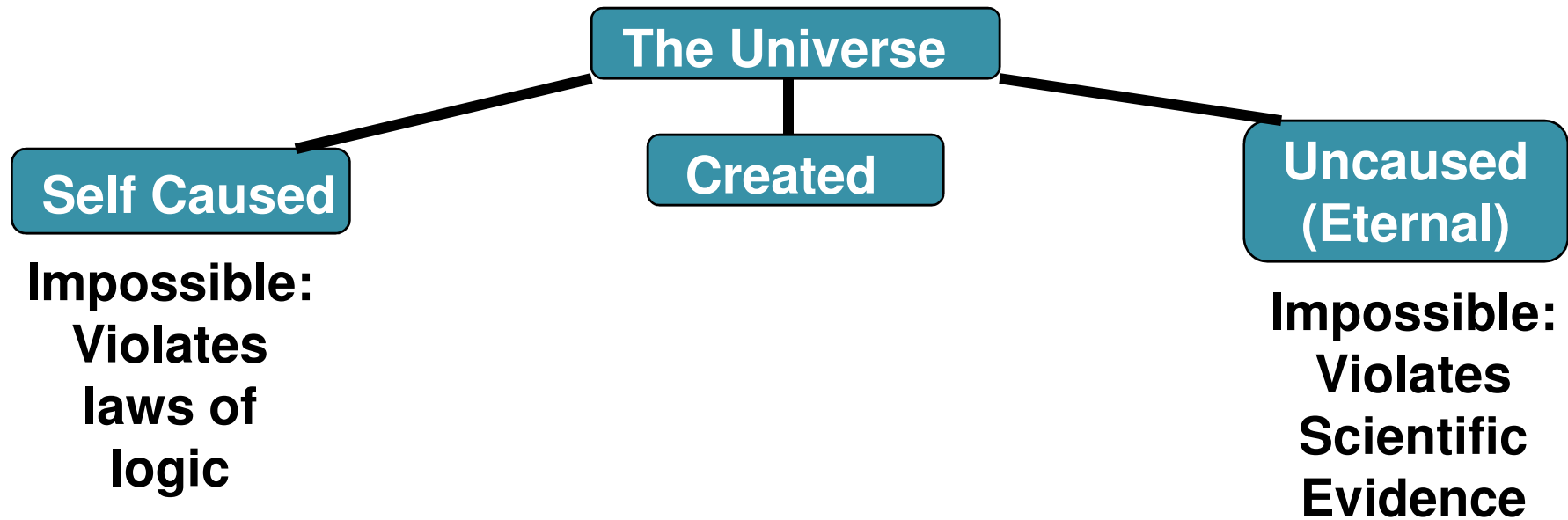
Lesson 2

Does God Exist?

Three Terms You Need to Know

1. Skeptic—says “I doubt that God exists”
2. Agnostic—says “I don’t know (or can’t know) whether God exists.”
3. Atheist—says “I know that God does not exist.”

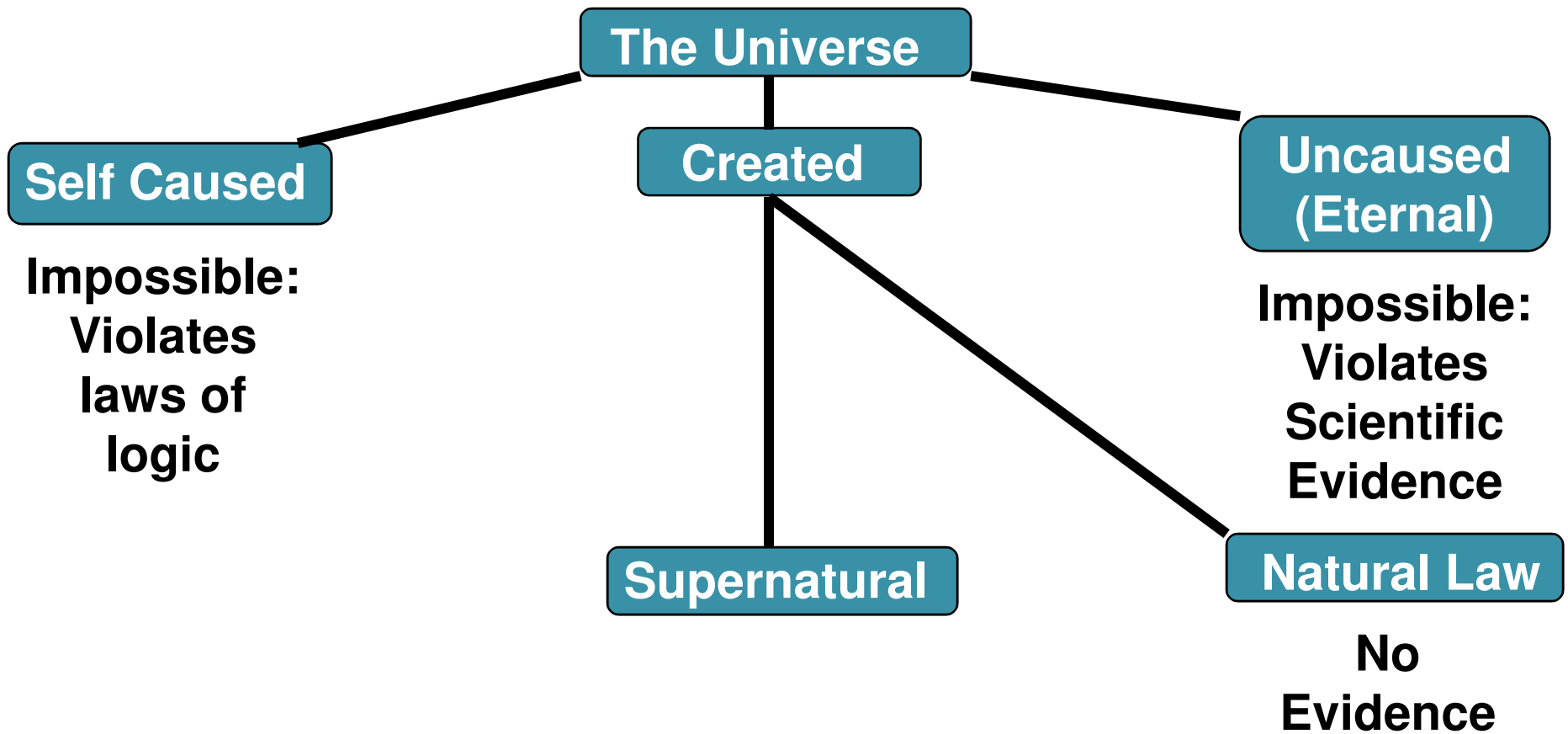
Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?



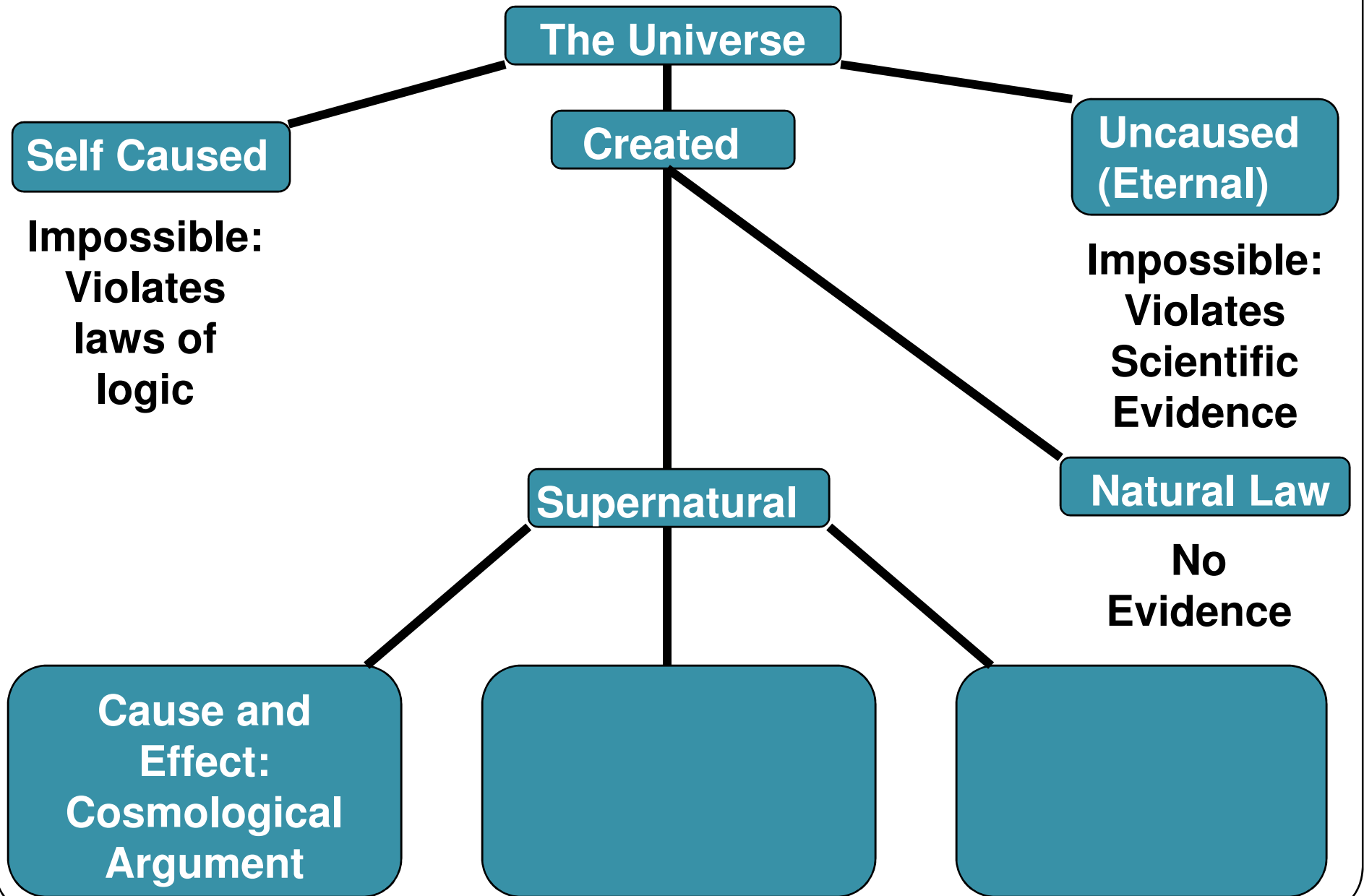
Scientific Evidence Supporting the View that the Universe is not Eternal

- S—The Second Law of Thermodynamics
- U—The Universe is Expanding
- R—Radiation from the Big Bang (beginning)
- G—Great Galaxy Seeds
- E—Einstein's Theory of General Relativity

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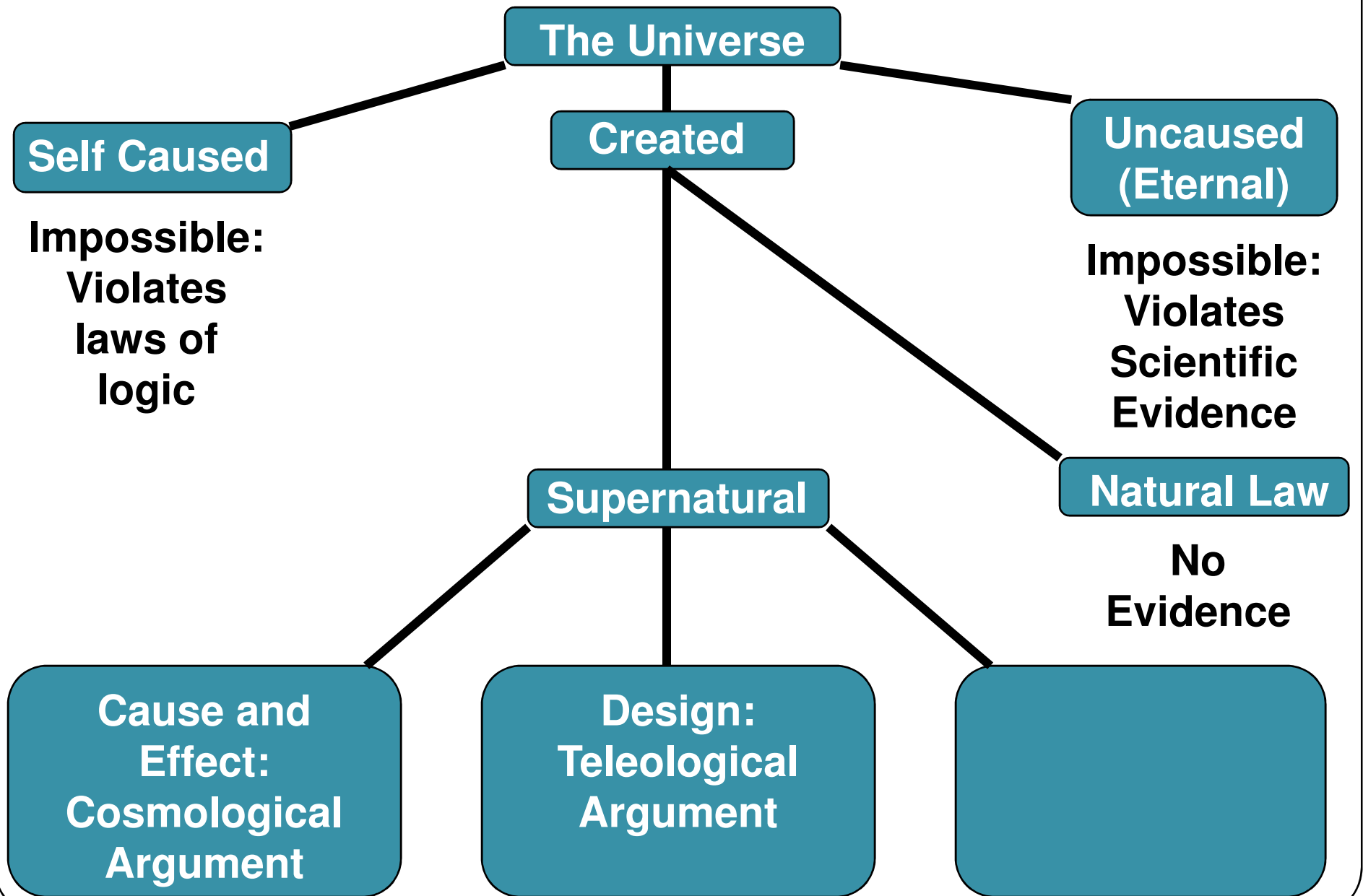
Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?



The Cosmological Argument

- Everything that had a beginning had a cause.
- The universe had a beginning
- Therefore, the universe had a cause.
- Since no effect can be greater than its cause, whatever caused the universe must be greater than the universe itself.
- In short, to explain the existence of a contingent, noneternal universe there has to be a noncontigent being (Creator) who is absolutely independent of the physical universe.

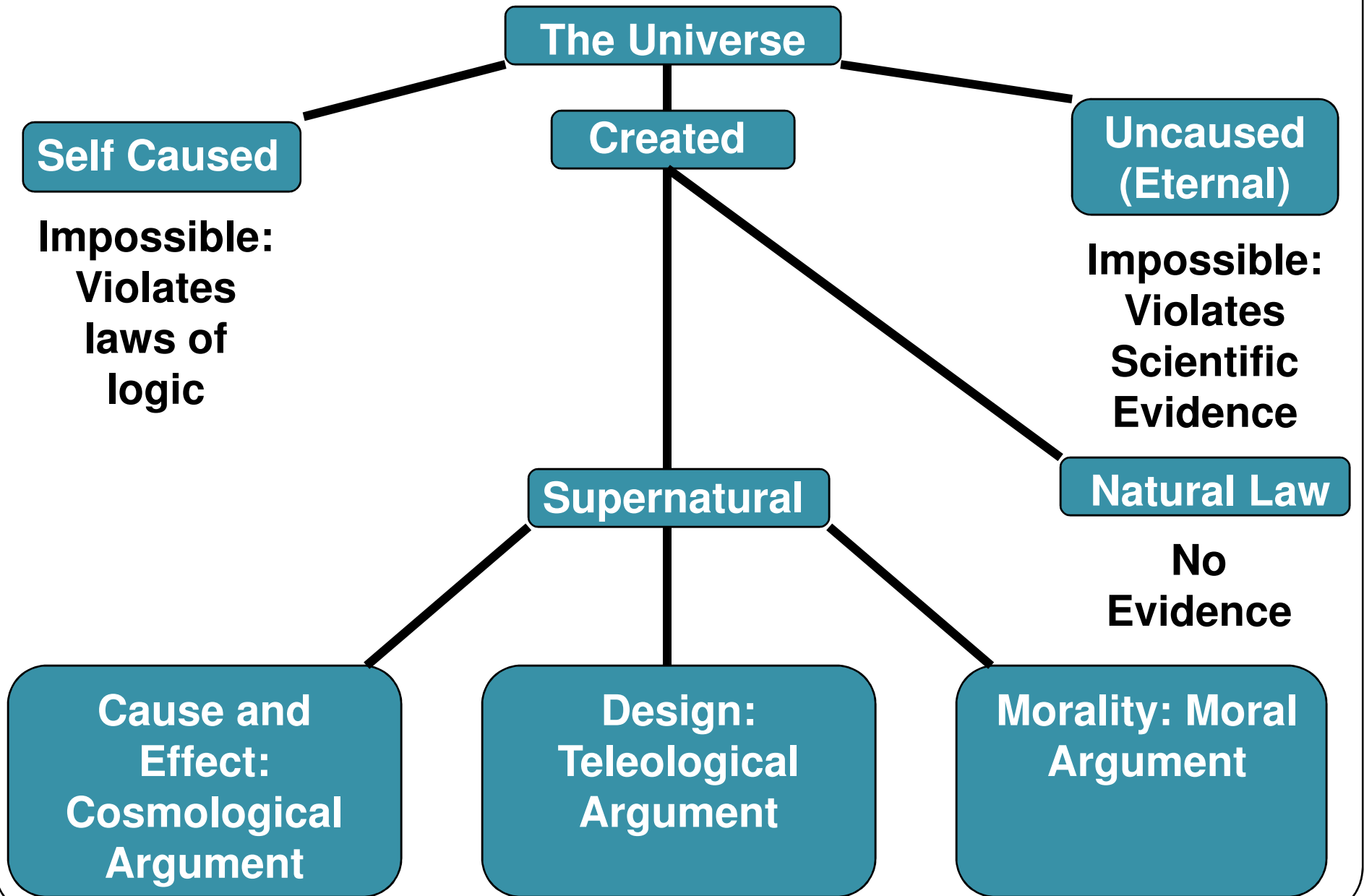
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The Teleological Argument

- Every design has a designer.
- The universe has highly complex design.
- Therefore, the universe had a designer.
- Every watch requires a watch maker.
- The greater the design, the greater the designer. A thousand monkeys sitting at typewriters for millions of years would never produce Hamlet. But Shakespeare did it on the first try. The more complex the design, the greater the intelligence required to produce it.

Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?



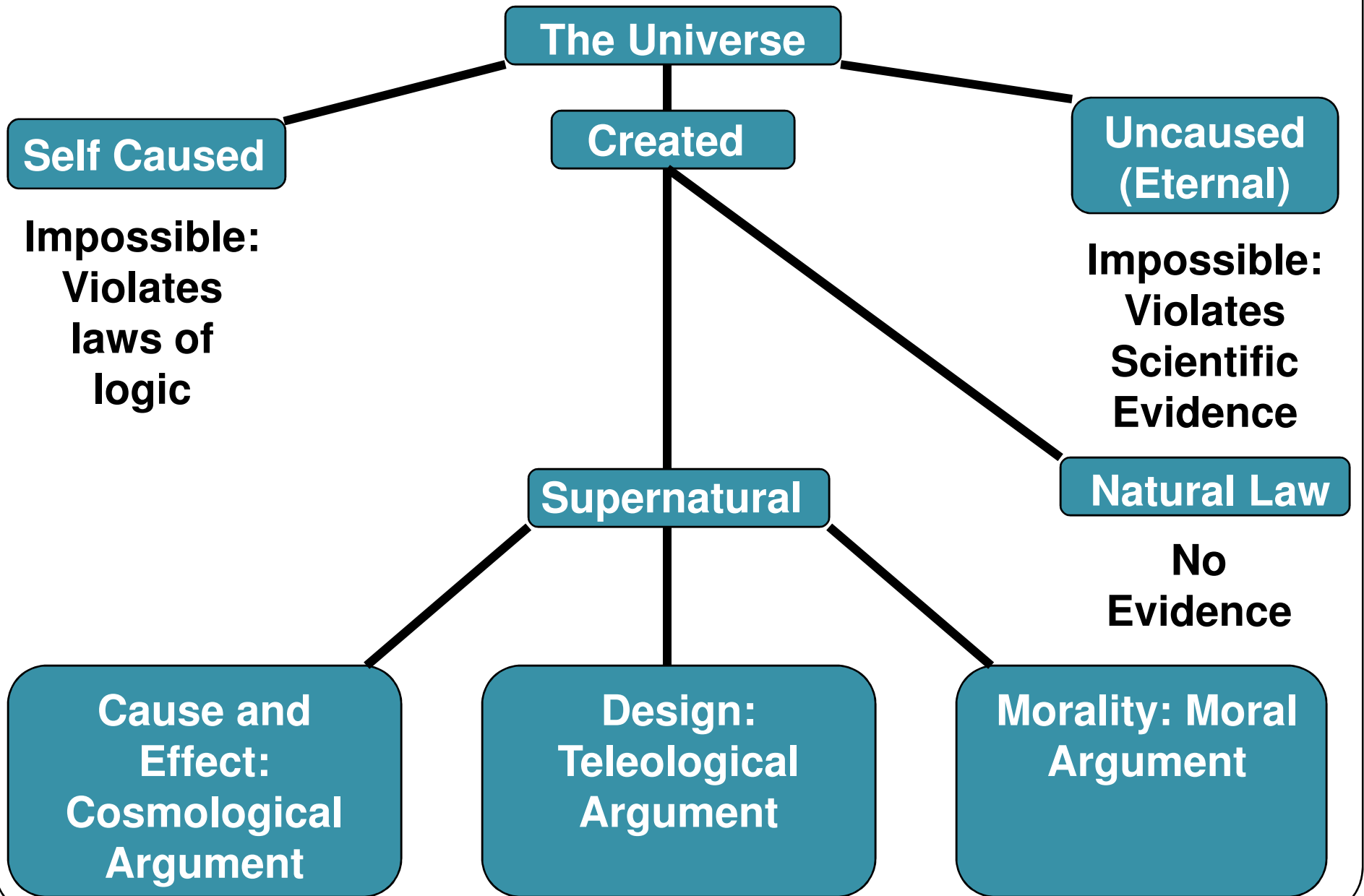
The Moral Argument

- Every law has a law giver.
- There is a Moral Law.
- Therefore, there must be a Moral Law Giver.
- Romans 2:12-15

8 Ways to Know the Moral Law Exists

1. The Moral Law is undeniable.
2. We know it by our reactions.
3. It is the basis of human rights.
4. It is the unchanging standard of justice.
5. It defines a real difference between moral positions (Mother Teresa vs. Hitler).
6. Since we know what absolutely wrong, there must be an absolute standard of rightness.
7. The Moral Law is the grounds for political and social dissent.
8. If there were no Moral Law then we would not make excesses for violating it.

Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?



Lesson 3

What About the Bible?

The Importance of the Bible

- If Christians can demonstrate that the Bible is truthful in all areas in which it can be validated, we have before us the most powerful and compelling evidence for the truthfulness of Christianity.
- Every apologetic argument rests on the reliability of the Bible, including the existence of God, as well as the deity and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- If the Bible alone can sustain its truth claims in areas in which it can be investigated, then it is reasonable to trust it in spiritual matters.

Unique in its Continuity

- The Bible is the only book that was:
- Written over a 1,500 year span.
- Written by more than 40 authors from every walk of life, kings, military leaders, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, tax collectors, poets, musicians, statesmen, scholars, and shepherds.
- Written in different places:
 - Moses in the wilderness
 - Jeremiah in a dungeon
 - John while in exile on the isle of Patmos

Unique in its Continuity

- **Written at different times:**
 - David in times of war
 - Solomon in times of peace and prosperity
- **Written during different moods:**
 - The heights of joy
 - Depths of sorrow and despair
- **Written on three continents:**
 - Asia
 - Africa
 - Europe

Unique in its Continuity

- Written in three languages:
 - Hebrew
 - Aramaic
 - Greek
- Written in a wide variety of literary styles:
 - Poetry, historical narrative, song, romance, personal correspondence, memoirs, satire, biography, autobiography, law, prophecy, parable, and allegory.

Unique in its Continuity

- The Bible addresses hundreds of controversial subjects that create opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed including
 - Marriage, divorce, homosexuality, adultery, obedience to authority, telling the truth, lying, parenting, nature and revelation of God.
- In spite of its diversity, the Bible presents a single unfolding story: God's redemption of human beings.

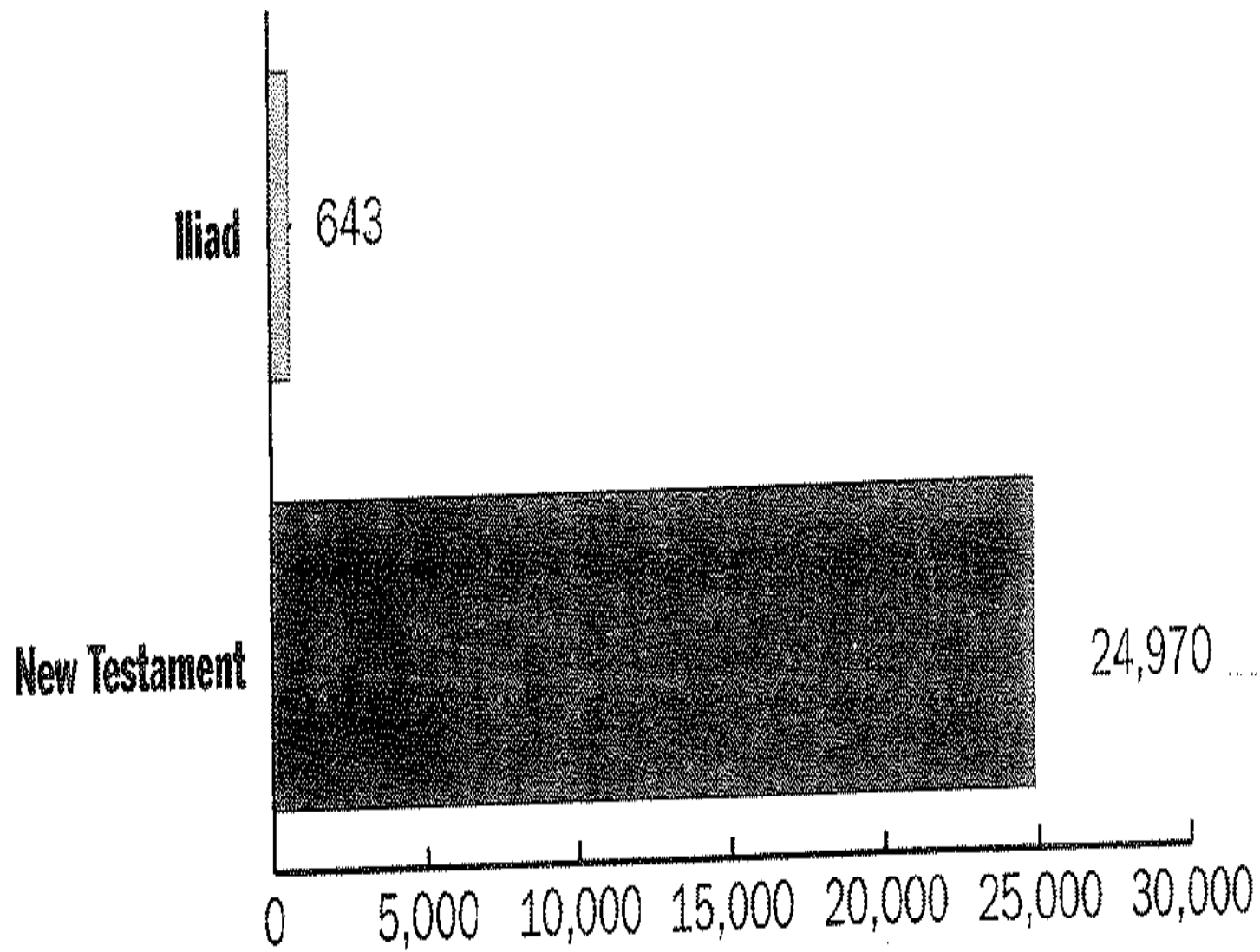
The Reliability of the Old Testament

- There are basically three primary points that establish the reliability of the Old Testament
- Transmission
- Archaeology
 - No archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. In other words, in every instance where the Bible could be checked-out historically against extra-biblical sources, the Bible has always been found accurate in what it reports.
- Fulfilled Prophecy

The Reliability of the New Testament

- *Eyewitness Testimony*--The New Testament writers were either eyewitness themselves or interviewed eyewitness to the events they recorded.
- *Early Eyewitness Testimony*--The New Testament documents are written within 35 of the events recorded. No other religious or secular document from antiquity can make such a claim.
- *Short Time Gap*--Many other religious documents have tremendous time spans between when they were transmitted orally and when they were eventually written down.
- *Copies Galore*--There are more manuscripts of the New Testament than there are of only 10 other works of ancient history combined.

Number of Mss Available for the NT and for the Iliad



AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	NO. OF COPIES
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs.	643
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480–425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460–400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs.	200
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100–44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C.–A.D. 17	4th cent. (partial) mostly 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs. c. 1,000 yrs.	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus	<i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61–113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50–100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	+ 50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366

Early Patristic Quotations of the New Testament

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3 (266 allusions)	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement (Alex.)	1,107	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,992
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Grand Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

Conclusion

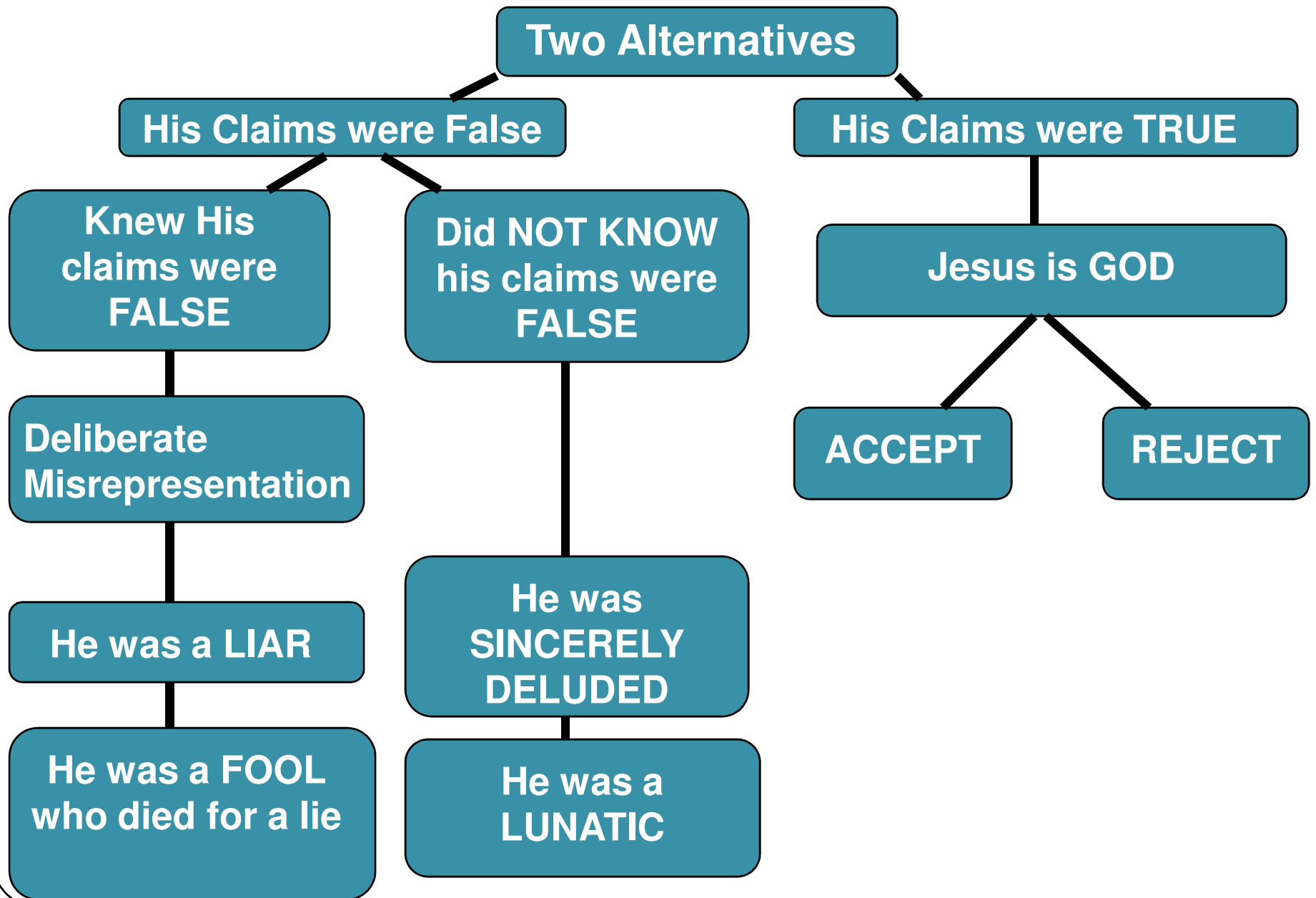
- There is more evidence for the reliability of the New Testament text than any ten pieces of classical literature combined.
- The Bible is in better textual shape than the thirty-seven plays of William Shakespeare written in the 17th century after the invention of the printing press.
- All of this demonstrates the huge bias that people have against the Bible in their thinking.

Lesson 4

What About Jesus?

Was He Really God? Did He Really Rise From the
Dead?

Jesus Claims to Be God



Resurrection Hoax or History?

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever devised by the minds of men, OR it is the most fantastic fact of history.
- Jesus has three basic credentials: 1) The impact of His life, through His miracles and teaching upon history, 2) Fulfilled prophecy in His life, and 3) His resurrection.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ and Christianity stand or fall together.

12 Agreed Upon Facts

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
2. He was buried, most likely in a private tomb.
3. Soon afterwards his disciples were discouraged, bereaved, and despondent, having lost hope.
4. Jesus' tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.
5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were actual appearances of the risen Jesus.
6. Due to these experiences, the disciple's lives were transformed. They were even willing to die for their belief.

12 Agreed Upon Facts

7. The proclamation of the Resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of church history.
8. The disciples public testimony and preaching of the Resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried.
9. The gospel message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
10. Sunday was the primary day for gathering and worship.

12 Agreed Upon Facts

11. James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, was converted when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus.
12. A few years later, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) became a believer, due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.

Skeptical Theories About the Resurrection

- *Hallucination Theory*
 - This theory states that the disciples were all deceived by hallucinations.
 - Hallucinations are not experienced by groups but only by individuals.
 - Jesus did not appear to just one person—he appeared on a dozen separate occasions, in a variety of settings to different people over a 40 day period.
 - Jesus was seen by men and woman, inside and outside, eating and talking.
 - Jesus was seen by more than 500 people and they were not all seeing the same hallucination.

Skeptical Theories About the Resurrection

- *The Witnesses Went to the Wrong Tomb*
 - This theory states that the disciples went to the wrong tomb and then assumed that Jesus had risen.
 - Read *I Don't Have Enough Faith*, page 302-303
- *Swoon or Apparent Death Theory*
 - This theory states that Jesus didn't really die on the cross. In other words, he was still alive when he was placed in the tomb, but he somehow escaped and convinced his disciples that he had risen from the dead.
 - Read *I Don't Have Enough Faith*, page 305

Skeptical Theories About the Resurrection

- *The Disciples Stole the Body*
 - This theory states that the disciples stole Jesus' body.
 - Read *I Don't Have Enough Faith*, pages 306-307
- *A Substitute Took Jesus' Place on the Cross*
 - This theory states that Jesus was not crucified, but someone like Judas was killed in his place. Many Muslims offer this theory.
 - Read *I Don't Have Enough Faith*, pages 310-311
- *The New Testament Writers Copied Pagan Resurrection Myths*
 - This theory states that the New Testament writers merely copied pagan resurrection myths.

Explanations For the Empty Tomb

A Human Work

1. Removed by enemies—No Motive
2. Removed by friends—No Power

A Divine Work

1. Most Logical Explanation
2. Scriptures Teach that Jesus Miraculously Rose From the Dead

Lesson 5

Jesus Among Other God's: Is There Really Only
One Way to God?

Three Terms You Need to Know

- *Pluralism*: is the belief that every religion is true, that each provides a genuine encounter with the Ultimate. One may be better than the others, but all are adequate.
- *Relativism*: is similar to pluralism, claiming each religion is true to the individual who holds it. Relativists believe that since there is no objective truth in religion, there are not criteria by which one can tell which religion is true or which religions are false.
- *Exclusivism*: is the belief that only one religion is true and all others opposed to it are false.

Truth vs. Tolerance

- While most religions have some beliefs that are true, not all religious beliefs can be true because they are mutually exclusive—they teach opposites.
- In other words, some religious beliefs must be wrong. But we are not supposed to say that in America today. We are supposed to be tolerant of all religious beliefs.
- Tolerance no longer means to put up with something you believe to be false. Tolerance now means that you're supposed to accept every belief as true.

Word	Traditional Understanding	Postmodern Understanding (Youth Culture)
<i>Tolerance</i>	Accepting others without agreeing with their beliefs or lifestyle choices.	Accepting that each person beliefs, values, lifestyles, and truth claims are equal.
<i>Respect</i>	Giving due consideration to others beliefs and lifestyles choices without necessarily approving them.	Wholeheartedly approving of others beliefs or lifestyle choices.
<i>Freedom</i>	Being free to do what you know you should	Being able to do anything you want to.
<i>Truth</i>	An absolute standard of right and wrong	Whatever is right for you
<i>Personal Rights</i>	Everyone should be treated fairly under the law.	Right to do what he/she believes is best

Conclusion

- Absolute truth does exist.
 - Skepticism and agnosticism are both self defeating
- God does exist.
- The Bible is historically reliable.
 - Transmission
 - Archeology
 - Fulfilled Prophecy
 - Manuscript Evidence
- Jesus Was God
 - Claimed to be a was to death for his claim.
 - Lord, Liar, Lunatic

Conclusion

- Jesus did rise from the dead.
 - Empty tomb—supernatural explanation only one that makes sense.
- Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.
 - Bible says so
 - World's religions are mutually exclusive and teach opposites
 - Religious pluralists are not really tolerant at all.
- Response: the only response that a truly open mind will accept is to reach out in faith and trust that Christ, die, was buried, and rose again as the only total and complete payment for your sin.

People



God

Sin separates
us from
God

Receive

People



God

Jesus Christ