

Lesson 11

**“The Problem of Universals”**

Based on Lecture 5 of

Greg L. Bahnsen’s *Basic Training for Defending the Faith*

**“God is not the author of confusion”**

**(1 Cor. 14:33a)**

We are now half way through Dr. Bahnsen’s fifth lecture in which he presents the crippling problems inherent in the unbelieving worldview. This is important for you to understand due to the two fold method of biblical apologetics. Not only must you take the positive step in presenting the Christian worldview’s truth claims, but you must also negatively confound the unbeliever by engaging an internal critique of his worldview. You must show him that it cannot account for reality as it is. In a way, your positive and negative work has the evangelistic effect of telling him of heaven and warning him of hell. You are, as Dr. Van Til put it, demonstrating “the impossibility of the contrary.” You are showing that without the Christian worldview man can’t rationally account for anything in human life, experience, or reason.

In our last two lessons we noted two monumental difficulties facing the non-Christian: the problem of moral absolutes and the problem of the uniformity of nature. Without moral principles we would be reduced to living like animals in a fearful world “red with tooth and claw.” Without the uniformity of nature we could not enjoy practical living or engage scientific research. As always, the trouble for the unbeliever is that in denying the existence of God he is asserting chance as the ultimate backdrop of the

Universe. But in a chance Universe man cannot account for principles of morality or laws of nature. Nor, as we shall see, for the laws of logic.

## I. Central Concerns

In this lesson we will be considering the related philosophical issues of the laws of logic *and* universals. These are quite important matters in that without logic and universals we could not understand anything at all or engage in coherent reasoning. Not only must nature as a whole operate under the principle of uniformity (as per our last lesson), but we ourselves must be able to reason by means of the laws of logic accessing universals.

### Universals and Thought

Dr. Bahnsen brings up the problem of “universals” and the “laws of logic” as related issues causing additional problems for the unbeliever. Though you may not normally contemplate universals, you invariably and necessarily employ them in your everyday life.<sup>1</sup> But what are they? And why are they so significant? And how do they demonstrate the existence of God? In his *Van Til's Apologetic*, Dr. Bahnsen defines a “universal” as

“any truth of a general or abstract nature—whether it be a broad concept, law, principle, or categorical statement. Such general truths are used to understand, organize, and interpret particular truths encountered in

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<sup>1</sup>Rather than contemplating universals, Zen Buddhism urges the contemplation of absurd riddles through the exercise of koan. The next time someone asks you what is the sound of one hand clapping, all you have to do to answer that is reach over and slap him in the face. The contemplative riddle will be solved and you can get on about your business in the world of reason rather than contemplating the absurd.

concrete experience. . . . If one does not begin with some such general truths (universals) with which to understand the particular observations in one's experience, those factual particulars would be unrelated and uninterpretable—i.e., 'brute.' In a chance universe, all particular facts would be random, have no classifiable identity, bear no pre-determined order or relation, and thus be unintelligible to man's mind."<sup>2</sup>

Philosophers note that a universal involves three notions: (1) By definition, a "universal" must apply to multiple things (otherwise, they would be particulars); (2) They are abstract rather than concrete (therefore, they do not appear in the material world); (3) They are general truths rather than specific.

In illustrating the function of universals in a simple way, Dr. Bahnsen points to Huey, Louie, and Dewey, the fictional nephews of the Disney cartoon character Donald Duck.<sup>3</sup> He notes that Huey, Louie, and Dewey are "ducks." But then he asks: "To what does the term 'duck' refer?" The answer, of course, is *all* of them. Huey, Louie, and Dewey are *particular* individuals who are in the *class* of "ducks," which is the general, universal organizing concept. They each share "duckness."

Dr. Bahnsen went on to illustrate that universals are immaterial realities distinct from material particulars. For instance, he noted that when you use the concepts of "horseness"

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<sup>2</sup>Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1998), 38, note 10.

<sup>3</sup>If you have ever wondered, the three brothers were named after Huey Pierce Long a politician from Louisiana, Thomas Edmund Dewey a politician from New York, and animator Louie Schmitt. In "Duck Tales," the boys are teenagers with their names revealed as Huebert, Deuteronomy, and Louis Duck. Don't ask me why. I am only reporting the facts: [www.weirdspace.dk/Disney/Huey%20Dewey%20and%20Louie.htm](http://www.weirdspace.dk/Disney/Huey%20Dewey%20and%20Louie.htm)

or “duckness,” you know these apply to *many* individuals but are *separate* from them.

For instance, you can eat Huey as a particular duck, but you cannot eat duckness.

“Duckness” is an abstract concept that relates those many individual things we call “ducks.”

By the very nature of reasoning you necessarily assume abstract, invariant universals. These are essential to understanding concrete, changing particulars, because you have to be able to associate, classify, and organize in your mind the particular things in your experience. Your everyday, observational, sensate *experience* always consists of particular, historical, objective things. Yet you *reason* in terms of universal, abstract principles so that you can bring it all together and understand it. For instance, you may speak of the particular rock, which you experience through your senses as hard, rough, cold, and heavy. But when you contemplate or speak of any specific rock, you must generalize by abstracting the universals of hardness, roughness, coldness, and heaviness.

Again, universals are absolutely essential to knowing and communicating. As Van Til puts it: “If we wish to know the facts of this world, we must relate these facts to laws. That is, in every knowledge transaction, we must bring the particulars of our experience into relation with universals.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Laws of Logic**

Universals include natures (e.g., human nature), moral values, propositions—and laws. Thus, the laws of logic are universals. They are the most general propositions one can possibly hold. They are used every single time you think or talk about anything

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<sup>4</sup>Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974), 22.

whatsoever. They are the abstract, universal, invariant rules that govern human rationality. In fact, they make rationality possible by allowing for coherent meaning, rational thought, and intelligent communication.<sup>5</sup>

Be careful in how you speak of the laws of logic. You should not say that these are “laws of thought,” as if they were matters of subjective human psychology informing us how people think. We know, of course, that people actually breach the laws of logic regularly. The laws of logic are not laws of thought, but *presuppositions* of (coherent) thinking.

The three basic laws of logic are the Law of Identity, the Law of Contradiction (sometimes called the Law of Non-contradiction), and the Law of Excluded Middle.

The Law of Identity states that “A is A.” This means that if any statement is true, it is true; it cannot be both true and not true simultaneously. That is, anything that exists in reality has a particular identity and is not something else. The thing is what it is. A thing may be a cow, but not simultaneously a cat. A dog may be all black, but not simultaneously all white (that is, both black and white in the same way and the same place).

The Law of Contradiction states that “A is not not-A.” That is, no statement can be both true and false in the same sense at the same time. A person cannot be both alive and not alive simultaneously and in the same way. An astronaut cannot be on the moon and not on the moon at the same time and in the same manner.

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<sup>5</sup>You can see the theological significance of universals, for instance, in the fact that Christ became *truly* human, in that human nature is a classifying universal. “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same” (Heb. 2:14).

The Law of Excluded Middle states that “A is either A or not-A.” That is, every statement must be either true or false exclusively, there is no middle ground.<sup>6</sup> Or to put it differently: if a given statement is not true, then its denial must be true. For instance, we may say that something is either a chair or not a chair, it cannot be *neither* a chair and not a chair. You are either here or you are not here, you cannot be *neither* here and not here.<sup>7</sup>

Obviously universals and the laws of logic are fundamentally important to rationality. Without them you could not relate one thing to another, nor reason about the world and life.

### **Problems for the Unbeliever**

You should recall that the Presuppositional Apologetic is such that it can take *any* fact to demonstrate the existence of God. This, of course, holds true for even the laws of logic and universals. By this stage of the game, you can reflexively utter the apologetic challenge to the unbeliever: “Which worldview makes sense of universals and the laws of logic?”

The recurring problem for the unbelieving worldview arises once again: He cannot *account* for universals and the laws of logic. Remembering that apologetics deals with *worldviews* and the *principles* inherent in them, Dr. Bahnsen explains the unbeliever’s problem for us when he writes:

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<sup>6</sup>This law is sometimes facetiously called the Law of Excluded *Muddle*.

<sup>7</sup>This particular law has been debated by philosophers. You must be careful in understanding it. The law of excluded middle does not say there is no middle ground between opposites (such as large and small). Rather it is dealing with the question of middle ground between a statement and its *negative*.

Van Til says the spiritually dead man cannot *in principle* even count and weigh and measure. Van Til says that unbelievers cannot even do math or the simplest operations in science. By that he means *the unbeliever's espoused worldview* or philosophy cannot make counting or measuring *intelligible*. Now why is that? Briefly, because counting involves an abstract concept of law, or universal, or order. If there is no law, if there is no universal, if there is no order, then there is no sequential counting. But the postulation of an abstract universal order contradicts the unbeliever's view of the universe as a random or chance realm of material particulars. Counting calls for abstract entities which are in fact uniform and orderly. The unbeliever says the world is not abstract—but that the world is only material; the universe is not uniform, but is a chance realm and random. And so by rejecting God's word—which account for a universal order or law—the unbeliever would not in principle be able to count and measure things. As it is, believers do in fact count and do in fact measure and practice science, but *they cannot give a philosophical explanation of that fact*. Or as Van Til loved to put it: unbelievers can count, but they cannot account for counting.<sup>8</sup>

Logic is crucial to any rational thinking: it provides common laws of reasoning, good patterns of inference. “In the generic sense ‘reason’ simply refers to man’s intellectual or

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<sup>8</sup>Greg L. Bahnsen, “At War with the Word: The Necessity of Biblical Antithesis” ([www.reformed.org/apologetics/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/apologetics/At\\_War\\_With\\_the\\_Word.html](http://www.reformed.org/apologetics/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/apologetics/At_War_With_the_Word.html)). Emphasis mine.

mental capacity. Christians believe in reason, and non-Christians believe in reason; they both believe in man's intellectual capacity. However, for each one, his view of reason and his use of reason is controlled by the worldview within which reason operates."<sup>9</sup> But which worldview makes laws of logic intelligible? Can the unbeliever justify the laws of logic in his chance Universe? Especially a chance Universe conceived naturalistically as involving only material things? Once he tries to justify universals and the laws of logic, he steps out of his worldview and into yours. His presuppositions cannot sustain his worldview and cannot account for universals. Let us see how this is so.

### *The Non-Christian's Predicament*

Why can't the unbeliever's worldview account for universals and the laws of logic?

#### *1. Empirical Limitations.*

When modern man commits exclusively to the scientific method, then he has committed to empiricism. And empiricism is the view that all human knowledge ultimately derives through the senses and through experience. We discover laws of physics, for instance, by observing, measuring, counting, and analyzing the behavior of things around **us**.

The unbelieving empiricist cannot account for the laws of logic which regulate human reasoning. The laws of logic are not physical objects existing as a part of the sense world. They are not the result of observable behavior of material objects or physical actions. Do the laws of logic exist in the natural world so that they can be empirically examined? If we are materialists, then only that which is objective in the realm of sense experience is

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<sup>9</sup>Greg L. Bahnsen, "At War with the Word: The Necessity of Biblical Antithesis," in *Antithesis* (1:1), 8.

real. What sense do the laws of logic make for unbelievers? What are the laws of logic? If they are just the firing of nerve endings in the neural synapses, then logic differs from person to person and are therefore not laws at all. The inherent materialism in the modern world cannot account for laws of logic.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, since the laws of logic are universal, invariant, abstract, eternal truths, how do they continually apply in our changing world of experience? How do we get those laws from “above” down into the historical process?

The unbelieving world cannot account even for universals beyond the laws of logic. They obviously speak about concepts, but if they are devoted to the scientific, empirical method then they must hold that only things which exist in the material world are real. As Dr. Bahnsen observes: When unbelievers talk of concepts, they need a worldview to make them meaningful. But they do not have one. With all of their particulars, they can't account for universals. As Dr. Van Til expressed it, they are “trying to put beads on a string with no holes in the beads.” They have no universals to hold things together.

## *2. Chance Foundations*

Not only does the unbeliever's investment in empirical science destroy the laws of logic and universals in principle, but so does his commitment to a chance Universe.

One of the most renowned atheists was also a philosopher—a philosopher of science. Bertrand Russell took chance to its ultimate conclusion, destroying unity: “Academic philosophers, ever since the time of Parmenides, have believed that the world is a unity.

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<sup>10</sup>Remember our earlier quotation by Theodosius Dobzhansky who was referring to Jacques Monod noting that Monod “has stated with admirable clarity, and eloquence often verging on pathos, the *mechanistic materialistic* philosophy shared by *most* of the present ‘establishment’ in the biological sciences.”

. . . The most fundamental of my intellectual beliefs is that this is rubbish. I think the universe is all spots and jumps, without any unity, without continuity, without coherence or orderliness . . . . Indeed, there is little but prejudice and habit to be said for the view that there is a world at all.”<sup>11</sup> Oddly enough, at least he was consistent with his atheism in stating this, though the act-of-stating is evidence against his view! Elsewhere he called upon man “to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built; undismayed by the empire of chance.”<sup>12</sup>

Jacques Monod has written: “Pure chance, absolutely free but blind, [lies] at the very root of the stupendous edifice of evolution.... The universe was not pregnant with life nor the biosphere with man. Our number came up in the Monte Carlo game.”<sup>13</sup> Evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley (1887–1975) has written:

The broad outlines of the new evolutionary picture of ultimates are beginning to be clearly visible. Man’s destiny is to be the sole agent for the future evolution of this planet. He is the highest dominant type to be produced by over two and a half billion years of the slow biological improvement effected by the *blind opportunistic workings of natural selection*; if he does not destroy himself, he has at least an equal stretch of evolutionary time before him to exercise his agency.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Bertrand Russell, *The Scientific Outlook*, 98.

<sup>12</sup>“Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian, And Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Simon and Schuster, Clarion, 1957), 116.

<sup>13</sup>Jacques Monod, *Chance and Necessity* (New York: Knopf, 1971), 112.

<sup>14</sup>Julian Huxley, ed. *The Humanist Frame* (New York: Harper, 1961), 17.

Harvard Paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould (1941–2002) exercised much influence in evolutionary circles. Walter Gilberti’s obituary for Gould states that he “concluded that the sudden accelerations of evolutionary change that have certainly manifested themselves throughout the earth’s history were the result of events in which chance played the preponderant role. For Gould, the determinism in nature that is contained within the blind process of natural selection was increasingly de-emphasized in his writings, in favor of the purely accidental. Gould’s ‘radical’ contingency even excluded any notion of direction, such as evolution from the simple to the complex, for example.”<sup>15</sup>

Physicists are committed to the notion of chance as the ultimate source of all reality.

As astronomer and cosmologist Marcus Chown comments:

Space and the material world could be created out of nothing but noise.

. . . According to [physicists] Reginald Cahill and Christopher Klinger of Flinders University in Adelaide, space and time and all the objects around us are no more than the froth on a deep sea of randomness.

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“This is where physics comes in,” says Cahill. “The Universe is rich enough to be self-referencing for instance, I’m aware of myself.” This suggests that most of the everyday truths of physical reality, like most mathematical truths, have no explanation. According to Cahill and

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<sup>15</sup>Walter Gilberti, “On the Death of Palaeontologist Stephen Jay Gould,” World Socialist Website: [www.wsws.org/articles/2002/jul2002/goul-j01.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/jul2002/goul-j01.shtml)

Klinger, that must be because reality is based on randomness. They believe randomness is more fundamental than physical objects.<sup>16</sup>

But chance can't account for law. Universals and the laws of logic are inimical to chance and randomness: "In a chance universe, all particular facts would be random, have no classifiable identity, bear no pre-determined order or relation, and thus be unintelligible to man's mind."<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, an evolving, chance Universe cannot account for absolute, unchanging, universal laws of logic. Indeed, absolute law contradicts the notion of incessant change which necessarily involves relativism.

3. *Dialectical Tension*. But of course the modern scientist does operate on in terms of universals and law. It is just that his worldview can't account for it. This brings dialectical tension (contradiction) into his system:

On the assumptions of the natural man logic is a timeless impersonal principle, and facts are controlled by chance. It is by means of universal timeless principles of logic that the natural man must, on his assumptions, seek to make intelligible assertions about the world of reality or chance. But this cannot be done without falling into self-contradiction. About chance no manner of assertion can be made. In its very idea it is the

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<sup>16</sup>Marcus Chown, "Random Reality," *New Scientist* (February 26, 2000), 24.

<sup>17</sup>Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic*, 38, note 10.

irrational. And how are rational assertions to be made about the irrational?<sup>18</sup>

This tension is also seen in the unreflective association of logic and empirical science. For instance, Kyle Ash writes of “logic and empiricism—fundamental aspects of science.”<sup>19</sup>

One recurring complaint made against us is that Christianity depends more upon faith than upon reason. In fact, it is as though the whole notion of faith *necessarily* discounts reason. The modern mind is enamored with the rationality of science and pities the naivete of faith. As Thomas Paine expressed it two centuries ago, since the Enlightenment we are in the “Age of Reason,” while Christianity is a part of the primitive, out-moded “Age of Faith.” The Harvard Objectivist Club at Harvard University presents on their website arguments for Objectivism (the philosophy developed Ayn Rand), noting that “reason is the only source of knowledge.” This obviously precludes by definition divine revelation as a source of knowledge.

To the modern man who challenges us with Reason, we should ask him what form of reasoning does he follow? Empiricism? Utilitarianism? Pragmatism? Foundationalism? Logical positivism? Existentialism? Essentialism? Idealism? Sensationalism? Objectivism? Nihilism? Intuitionism? Instrumentalism? Fallibilism? And why are there so

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<sup>18</sup>Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1955), 143.

<sup>19</sup>Kyle Ash, “International Animal Rights: Speciesism and Exclusionary Human Dignity,” *Journal of Animal Law*, Michigan State University College of Law (11), 198: [www.animallaw.info/journals/jo\\_pdf/vol11\\_p195.pdf](http://www.animallaw.info/journals/jo_pdf/vol11_p195.pdf)

many competing and contradictory approaches to knowledge and understanding, if reason stands alone as *the* source of knowledge?

4. *Conventional Subjectivity*. In his debate with atheist Gordon Stein, Dr. Bahnsen asked Dr. Stein to give an account for the laws of logic. Dr. Stein took a common non-absolutist route when he declared that they are “human conventions” agreed upon by man. This was the best he could do in his chance world. In the first place the laws of logic are not agreed upon by all people. Stephan Bevans interacts with Raimon Panikkar on this sort of issue:

Panikkar maintains that Indians cannot really accept the principle that might be called the backbone of western philosophical thinking: the principle of contradiction. For Indians, Panikkar insists, things can indeed ‘be’ and ‘not be’ at the same time....This seems to be close to the Taoist idea of yang and yin, where all things participate in the reality of their opposites: light and darkness, male and female, good and evil, flesh and spirit, and so forth.”<sup>20</sup>

William Dyrness also notes this of Eastern thought:

“There are those who argue that these Eastern patterns of thought are inviolable and Christianity must adapt to them completely. Jung Young Lee has argued that in Asia we must get out of the habit of thinking in

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<sup>20</sup>Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 5.

terms of either/or; we must be able to think of both/and. Change, he believes, may be the key to the universe, and ambiguity and differences merely the reflection of aspects of reality. In traditional Chinese thought, yin and yang are believed to be complementary modes of being. . . . He seeks to apply this to his view of God.”<sup>21</sup>

This problem arises from the basic monism at work in these systems. Since all is one, obviously there can be no law of contradiction. The renowned Zen Buddhist D. T. Suzuki notes that: “Zen is one thing and logic another. When we fail to make this distinction and expect Zen to give us something logically consistent and intellectually illuminating, we altogether misinterpret the signification of Zen.”

If the unbeliever states that the laws of logic are agreed upon conventions, then they are not absolute because they are subject to “vote” and therefore to change. The laws of logic are not dependent upon people; they are true whether or not people exists.

### *The Christian’s Resolution*

1. *The Source of Logic.* The Christian holds as a basic presupposition that God is the creator of the world (Gen. 1) and of the human mind (Gen. 1:26–27), so all intelligibility is due to him. He is the author of all truth, wisdom, and knowledge (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Col. 2:3). Christians see the laws of logic as expressions of God’s thinking, his own consistent personal nature, not as principles outside of God to which he must measure up. The laws of logic reflect the nature of God, for in him we find perfect coherence. “The law of

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<sup>21</sup>William A. Dyrness, *Learning about Theology from the Third World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 140–141.

contradiction, therefore, as we know it, is but the expression on a created level of the internal coherence of God's nature."<sup>22</sup>

We must be careful here, though. We are not saying God *created* the laws of logic by his volitional self-determination. Were this so, then he could alter or discard them as well. On the Harvard University website, the Objectivist Club mistakenly discount theism on the basis that "The existence of god would imply that there exists a being capable of suspending the laws of nature by sheer act of will. This contradicts two important premises of Objectivism: the primacy of existence and the Law of Identity."

Rather, we are saying that the laws of logic reflect his *nature*, the way he is in himself. They are, therefore, *eternal* expressions of the *unchanging* character of God (Num. 23:19; Mal. 3:6; Jms. 1:17). God's unchanging character is just that, unchanging. Therefore, the laws of logic (which reflect that character) are unchanging and unchangeable, in that God "cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13).

2. *The Coherence of the World.* For our experience to be rationally coherent, a correspondence must exist between our minds and God's, since he is the ultimate source of uniform reality and coherent reason. This is just what we find in the Christian system: Man is created in the image of God to engage the world in a rational way. Not only is man's mind analogical to God's, but it is compatible with the God-created Universe because of God's designing us and our environments. In fact, "the gift of logical reason was given by God to man in order that he might order the revelation of God for himself."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 11. Cited in Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic*, 235.

<sup>23</sup> Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974), 256.

Van Til speaks of our “thinking God’s thoughts after him.” That is, we must think according to the pattern of God’s mind, rationally and realistically. Perfect coherence characterizes the mind of God so that for us to reason we must think with logical consistency.

## **II. Exegetical Observations**

God’s own revelation expresses or assumes the primary logical laws. For instance, the law of identity is affirmed by God when he identifies himself: “I am that I am” (Ex. 3:14). God is himself and not something else. Though the pantheists claim God is everything and everything is God, and though monists believe all is one (including god), in Scripture we find a fundamental and unrelenting assertion of the Creator / creature distinction (Rom. 1:25; cp. Gen. 1:1). Here in Exodus 3:14 God defines himself in such a way as to underscore the law of identity. Consider all of Jesus’s “I am” statements, such as “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 41, 51; 8:58; 10:7, 11; 14:6; 15:1).

The law of non-contradiction lies beneath the command to “Let your yes, be yes, and your no, no so that you may not fall under judgment” (James. 5:12). A “good tree” is different from a “bad tree” (Matt. 12:33). After all, “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33) and “it is impossible that God should lie” (Heb. 6:18).

The law of excluded middle appears in the notion of antithesis, as when Jesus says: “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters” (Matt. 12:30, cp. Mark 9:40). Obviously, one is either “for” Christ or “against” him. There is no middle ground—according to Christ himself.

We should note that Jesus used logic (Matt. 21:24–27) and Paul “reasoned” with the Greeks (Acts 17:17; 18:4). In fact, as a matter of Christian witness we are called upon to “give an answer” to those who ask of us (1 Peter 3:15).

### **III. Questions Raised**

1. What do we mean when we speak of “universals”?
2. Is the concept of universals practical to our everyday lives? Explain.
3. What three notions are involved in universals that define them?
4. Are laws of logic in the category of universals? Explain.
5. Why should the laws of logic not be called “laws of thought”?
6. State and briefly define each of the three basic laws of logic.
7. What is the basic apologetic question we must ask of the unbeliever regarding universals and the laws of logic?
8. How is the scientific method problematic to the laws of logic in the unbeliever’s worldview?
9. How is the unbeliever’s ultimate commitment to chance problematic for the laws of logic?
10. How does the unbeliever’s worldview involve internal tension and contradiction when it tries to affirm the laws of logic?
11. What is the problem with claiming the laws of logic are human conventions adopted by men?
12. What is the relationship between the laws of logic and God?
13. Cite some verses that affirm each of the three laws of logic.

## **IV. Practical Applications**

1. To the untrained mind, the laws of logic can seem to be saying the same thing from three different angles. Look up some explanations of the laws of logic on the Internet. Write a three page summation explaining and distinguishing each of the laws of logic, giving one page to each law.
2. Try to think of other Bible verses that affirm each of the three laws of logic.
3. Write a two or three lesson study on the importance of the laws of logic and their compatibility with Scripture. Teach these lessons to a small group interested in apologetics.
4. Once you have familiarized yourself with the laws of logic through the previous studies, discuss them with a non-Christian friend. After discussing these laws, ask the unbeliever how he can account for them. Be ready to point out their incompatibility with affirmation of a chance Universe.
5. Read the materials at Christianlogic.com on how to study logic ([www.christianlogic.com/articles/suggested\\_course\\_of\\_study\\_for\\_logic.htm](http://www.christianlogic.com/articles/suggested_course_of_study_for_logic.htm)). Take the recommended course of study outlined there.
6. Buy a copy of Morris S. Engel's *With Good Reason*. Read this book and study its principles to improve your logical abilities.

## **V. Recommended Reading**

Bahnsen, Greg L., "Apologetics in Practice":

[www.salemreformed.org/ApologeticsinPractice.html](http://www.salemreformed.org/ApologeticsinPractice.html)

Bahnsen, Greg L., “Tools of Apologetics”: [www.cmfnow.com/articles/PA101.htm](http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/PA101.htm)

Hawkins, Craig S., “The Bible, Logic, and the Post-modern Predicament”:

[www.apologeticsinfo.org/papers/logicpostmodern.html](http://www.apologeticsinfo.org/papers/logicpostmodern.html)

Patrick Johnston, “The Transcendental Refutation of Atheism”

<http://wherethetruthhurts.org/tractsbooksread.php?w=15&p=1#top>

“Irrationality and the Eastern Mindset”: [www.christian-](http://www.christian-faith.com/religion/irrationality.html)

[faith.com/religion/irrationality.html](http://www.christian-faith.com/religion/irrationality.html)