



Who Needs Philosophy?

by Jeffrey Breshears

Our fall seminar in 2014 is a new Areopagus course, “Socrates Meets Jesus: How Philosophy Leads to Christianity.” My hope for those involved, as with all our apologetics classes, is that they will find this course to be stimulating, inspiring, relevant and practical. But realistically, I know that many Christians have a built-in resistance toward philosophy, which is why I always try to use the ‘p’ word with discretion.

Ever since the dawn of philosophy in ancient Greece in the 6th B.C. it has been used by many to serve a humanistic agenda in which “Man is the measure of all things.” In addition, from the outset philosophy has been an intellectual and a moral morass due to the noetic effects of sin on the human soul. In short, many people either cannot or will not think straight because they are morally incapacitated as a result of intentional and habitual sin to the point that they lose the ability to discern right and wrong – or else they know full well the difference but resist what is Good and True because it impinges upon their own egoistic impulses and ambitions.

There is, however, another reason why many Christians resist philosophy, and it is steeped in a misunderstanding of what the Bible says about philosophy. For example, in Colossians 2:8 the apostle Paul cautions believers, “Be careful that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the principles of this world rather than on Christ.”

In I Corinthians 1-2 Paul elaborates on this theme. He declares that “the wisdom of this age” – i.e., human wisdom, philosophy and scholarship – is object “foolishness” compared to the wisdom of God. He reminds his readers that during the time he spent in Corinth, teaching and discipling them, “I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom,” but rather, “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Therefore, he asserts, “My message and my preaching were not with wise and

persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.” After all, he writes, we have “the mind of Christ” as a result of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Yet Paul himself was well-versed in philosophy, as is evident in his address at the Areopagus in Athens in Acts 17. And those who disparage philosophy based on I Corinthians 1-2 should keep reading to the end of the book. In chapter 15 Paul makes a strong philosophical and apologetical argument in support of the gospel based on the logical ramifications of the resurrection of Christ.

Logic and reason are gifts of God. Being made in the image of a rational and omniscient Creator, we are blessed with the capacity to acquire knowledge and wisdom. In fact, God insists that we use all our faculties to serve him (ref. Prov. 4:7; 10:14; 19:2; and II Tim. 2:15). As Jesus taught, this is the Greatest Commandment: to love God not only sincerely and passionately, but mindfully.

So who needs philosophy? In fact, we all do. Due to our own egoistic desires, which at times can be over-powering, we need an accurate mental map to guide us along the road of life and guardrails to channel our thoughts and actions. As C. S. Lewis put it: “Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.” And in a world full of “bad philosophy,” this alone should be sufficient motivation for Christians to know “good philosophy.”

Join Dr. Richard Howe and me for our fall seminar on “Socrates Meets Jesus.” There are no good reasons not to!

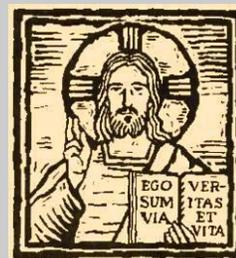
The Areopagus Calendar

Seminars

Christianity Thru the Centuries From Jesus To the Reformation

Dr. Jeffrey Breshears

President, The Areopagus



Sundays – 11:15 AM

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church / Loft A

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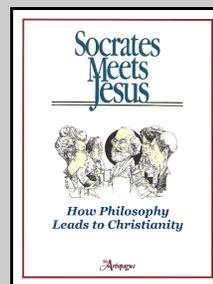
Socrates Meets Jesus: How Philosophy Leads To Christianity

Dr. Jeffrey Breshears

and

Dr. Richard Howe

Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Apologetics,
Southern Evangelical Seminary



Tuesdays – Beginning August 26th
7 PM

Perimeter Church / Midtown Auditorium

– and –

Wednesdays, Beginning August 27th
7 PM

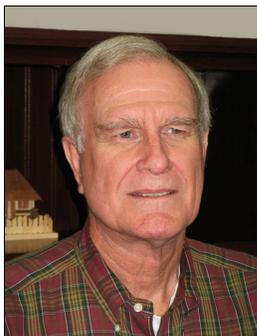
Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Room 108

Areopagus Profiles

Areopagus board members and associates

Rae Mellichamp

I graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in Industrial Engineering in 1962 and then served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force for two and a half years. Upon completing my military service, I worked as an engineer in industry for another two years and then returned to academia



where I would spend the next 40 plus years of my life. I received a Ph. D. in Engineering Management from Clemson University in 1969, and began teaching in the College of Business at the University of Alabama, retiring as Emeritus Professor of Management Science after 25 years and a very satisfying academic career.

During my years as a university professor I was fortunate to be able to work for most of the time in an emerging new field—knowledge-based systems, a branch of the discipline of Artificial Intelligence. In this capacity, I conducted research and consulted for some of the leading organizations in the country including AT&T, General Motors, NASA (The Space Shuttle program), and the U.S. Army. And as university professors must do, I published scholarly articles in such journals as *The Harvard Business Review*, *Management Science*, *Decision Sciences*, and *The Journal of Intelligent Manufacturing*.

In the summer of 1970, my wife Peggy and I attended a conference for Christian professors at Arrowhead Springs, California, sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ where I was challenged to consider how I could use my influence as a Christian

professor in the lives of my students and colleagues, in the teaching and research activities of my university, in my academic discipline, and in attempting to restore truth to the culture. We joined Crusade as associate staff members in 1972 and helped to launch Crusade's faculty ministry, Christian Leadership

Ministries. Upon retirement from the University of Alabama in 1994, we joined Crusade full-time and continued working until 2010 with the faculty ministry which included a network of about 10,000 Christian professors and academic staff in the U.S. and a dozen or so other countries. We have spoken professionally and from a ministry perspective to faculty and student audiences on over 100 university and college campuses in the U.S. and a dozen other countries in the last 15 years.

I have enjoyed serving on the Board of Directors for The Areopagus for a number of years and teaching a men's Bible Study, Daybreak for Men, in Johns Creek for nearly 20 years. In the last couple of years I have published several books including:

- *Mere Christianity: Discussion and Study Guide for the Book* by C.S. Lewis;
- *The Call: Discussion and Study Guide for the Book* by Os Guinness;
- *The Training of the Twelve: Discussion and Study Guide for the Book* by A.B. Bruce;
- *Go Fast, Turn Left: Simple Instructions for Following Jesus*; and
- *The Bible vs. Science? Or Not!*

The Areopagus Calendar

Forums

New Discoveries and Controversies in Biblical Archaeology

Ted Wright

Executive Director, CrossExamined



– Thursday, Sept. 17th –
7:30 PM

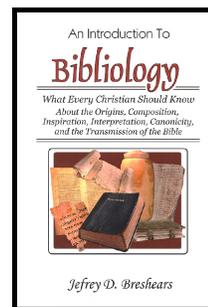
Perimeter Church / Fellowship Hall

NEW FROM AREOPAGUS PUBLISHING

An Introduction To
Bibliology

What Every Christian Should Know About the Origins, Composition, Inspiration, Interpretation, Canonicity, and the Transmission of the Bible

Jeffrey D. Breshears



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AND OTHER BOOK DISTRIBUTORS

www.TheAreopagus.org