

ANTITHESIS

1. Definition.

- a. Antithesis is the fundamental war between good and evil, truth and untruth, that happens around us all the time.
- b. ἀντίθεσις: “a statement that involves contradiction or inconsistency, *contradiction*” (BDAG, 88).

2. Reality.

- a. There are two sides to this war, and only two.
 - (1) **Mt 12:30** 30 Whoever is not with me [Jesus] is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.
 - (2) **1 Jn 5:19** 19 We know that we [believers] are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.
 - (3) **3 Jn 11** 11 Whoever does good is from God. Whoever does evil has not seen God.
 - (4) “The biblical doctrine of antithesis reveals that fundamentally there are only *two* kingdoms, not *many*. However varied and multiple these false systems of faith, they are one and allied in their enmity against God’s kingdom. They are united under the kingdom of Satan. Hence, Jesus doesn’t speak of three gates, just two; not three trees, just two; not many kingdoms, just two.”¹

3. Two Sides.

- a. God determines what’s on the good side and what’s on the evil side.
 - (1) **Ge 1:3-4** 3 Then God said, Let there be light, and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.
 - (2) God could have made a world where homosexuality was good and heterosexuality evil, but he didn’t do so. The reason homosexuality is evil is because God has determined it to be so, and he is the Creator.
- b. In the Bible, God specially reveals what is good and evil, so there is no confusion.
- c. It’s only humans who create confusion about what is good and what is evil. We do so because we want to give ourselves permission to do evil.
 - (1) **Ro 1:18** 18 ...The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth [of what is good and evil].

The Antithesis

Good	Evil	Verses
God	Satan	Ge 3:15 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. 1 Co 10:21 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 2 Co 6:16 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? 1 Jn 3:8 8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

¹Alfred J. Poirier, “Conflicting Worldviews and the Defense of the Faith,” Rev. version (2003), 21.

Good	Evil	Verses
Angels	Demons	Re 12:7-8 7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.
Good	Evil	Dt 30:15 15 See, I [Yahweh] have set before you today life and good, death and evil. Is 5:20 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 3 Jn 11 11 Whoever does good is from God. Whoever does evil has not seen God.
Order	Chaos	Genesis 1:1-2 1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
Life	Death	Dt 30:15 15 See, I [Yahweh] have set before you [Israel] today life and good, death and evil. Dt 30:19 19 I [Yahweh] call heaven and earth to witness against you [Israel] today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live.... Pr 12:28 28 In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death. Pr 13:14 14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death. Jer 21:8 8 And to this people you shall say: Thus says Yahweh Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. Jn 5:24 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Ro 5:17 17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Messiah. 1 Jn 3:14 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.
Blessing	Curse	Dt 11:26 26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse.... Dt 30:19 19 I [Yahweh] call heaven and earth to witness against you [Israel] today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Pr 3:33 33 Yahweh's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. Jas 3:9-10 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.
Light	Darkness	Ge 1:4 4 ...God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. Is 5:20 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Jn 3:19 19 ...This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 2 Co 6:14 14 ...What fellowship has light with darkness?
Truth	Falsehood	Jer 9:3 3 They bend their tongue like a bow. Falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, declares Yahweh. Jn 8:44 44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
Wisdom	Foolishness	Pr 1:7 7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Ro 1:22 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools....
Righteousness	Wickedness	Ge 18:25 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Ps 1:5-6 5 ...The wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Good	Evil	Verses
Spirit	Flesh	Ro 8:5-6 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 2 Co 10:3-4 3 ...Though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. Ga 6:14 14 ...Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Messiah, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
Humility	Pride	Jas 4:6 6 ...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
Believers	Unbelievers	2 Co 6:14-15 14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. ... 15 What portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?
Church	World	Jas 4:4 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 1 Jn 2:15-17 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the desire of God abides forever. 1 Jn 5:19 19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

4. Importance.

- a. “We must not forget that historic Christianity stands on a basis of antithesis. Without it historic Christianity is meaningless. The basic antithesis is that God objectively exists in contrast (in antithesis) to his not existing. Which of these two are the reality, changes everything in the area of knowledge and morals and in the whole of life.”²
- b. When antithesis dies, relativism is born.
 - (1) “There can be no other terminus when antithesis dies, when relativism is born and when the possibility of finding any universal which would make sense of the particulars is denied. This is the consensus of the cultural environment, and this is that world-spirit which we must reject and into which we must speak.”³

5. Origin.

- a. The nature of God.
 - (1) “The Christian worldview does not begin with antithesis but with *Shalom*. Biblical truth is the ‘thesis’ over and against which the antithesis stands. Hence, we need to know the truth about the nature of God, creation, man, fall, and redemption against which the antithesis is played out.”⁴
 - (2) If the antithesis were actual at creation, God wouldn’t be good.
- b. The fall of Satan.
- c. The fall of man.
 - (1) **Ge 3:15** 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.
 - (2) At creation, antithesis was potential but not actual. After the fall, it is actual.

² Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 24.

³ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 52.

⁴ Alfred J. Poirier, “Conflicting Worldviews and the Defense of the Faith,” Rev. version (2003), 4.

(3) The Bible tells the story of how the thesis overcomes its antithesis.

First World	Second World	Third World
Evil potential, but not actual	Evil actual	Evil neither actual nor potential
Antithesis potential, but not actual	Antithesis actual	Antithesis neither actual nor potential

6. Characteristics.

- a. Abnormal.
 - (1) Reality does not require permanent antithesis.
- b. Temporary.
 - (1) Christians are temporary dualists, but not eternal dualists.
 - (2) God would be evil if he allowed the antithesis to continue indefinitely.
- c. Necessary.
 - (1) **Ge 3:15** 15 *I* will put enmity between you and the woman....
 - (2) In our fallen world, antithesis is good.
 - (3) Where evil exists, antithesis must exist.
 - (4) Synthesis in a fallen world would require good to sign a peace treaty with evil.
This will never happen!
 - (5) Shalom is not possible until evil is totally and finally defeated. But evil won't go down without a fight.
 - (6) "Absolutes imply antithesis."⁵
- d. Pervasive.
 - (1) The fundamental nature of our present world is conflict.

7. Scope.

- a. "The conflict of worldviews (antithesis) is at heart a religiously motivated conflict that God has ordained as a judicial curse upon rebellious persons (demonic and human) to serve his redemptive purposes. This conflict or antithesis is worlds-wide (things visible and invisible), system-wide (e.g., legal, economic, and political systems), and affects every aspect and realm of existence. Consequently, our apologetic is naïve and less than biblical if we disregard the reality and nature of antithesis and its significance for our defense of our faith."⁶

8. Dimensions.

- a. Angelic.
 - (1) **Eph 6:11-12** 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- b. Spiritual.

⁵ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 22.

⁶ Alfred J. Poirier, "Conflicting Worldviews and the Defense of the Faith," Rev. version (2003), 1.

- (1) “Every time you take the earth standpoint—think as men think, talk as men talk, look as men look—you take a place below the powers of darkness. The mastery of them depends upon your spirit abiding in the place above them...God’s outlook, God’s view, God’s thought, God’s plan, God’s ways, by abiding with Christ in God.”⁷
 - (2) “Our war is spiritual, not physical. Therefore, we should fight with spiritual weapons....”⁸
- c. Mental.
- (1) **2 Co 10:3-5** 3 Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses [in our minds]. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah [the biblical worldview].
 - (2) “The war is in our minds.”⁹
- d. Physical.

9. Major Players.

- a. God.
- b. Satan.
 - (1) Satan is an outstanding war strategist.
 - (a) E.g., C. S. Lewis’ *Screwtape Letters*.
 - (2) Synthesis is Satan’s strategy.
 - (3) Satan has developed sophisticated ways of getting us to call evil good and good evil.
 - (a) **Is 5:20** 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
 - (4) Examples of synthesis are:
 - (a) Moral relativism: what is right and wrong is not absolute.
 - (b) Religious pluralism.
 - 1) **Ex 23:24-33** 24 You [Israel] will not worship [the Canaanite] gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds. But you will utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces. ...32 You will make no covenant with [the Canaanites] or with their gods. 33 They will not live in your land, because they will make you sin against me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.
 - (c) Hegelianism: progress is achieved through the conflict between thesis and antithesis.
 - (d) Pragmatism: don’t talk to me about right and wrong—just tell me what works.
 - (e) Agnosticism: I don’t know whether God exists, and it doesn’t really matter.
 - (5) Satan attacks the Bible because it so clearly reveals the antithesis.
 - (a) “Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to having a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn’t

⁷ James Frazier, missionary to China.

⁸ Ashley.

⁹ Kristie.

think of doctrines as primarily ‘true’ or ‘false,’ but as ‘academic’ or ‘practical,’ ‘outworn’ or ‘contemporary,’ ‘conventional’ or ‘ruthless.’ ...Don’t waste time trying to make him think that materialism is true! Make him think it is strong or stark or courageous—that it is the philosophy of the future. That’s the sort of thing he cares about.”¹⁰

- c. Adam.
- d. Man.
 - (1) Our whole lives are lived in the midst of antithetical warfare.
 - (a) **Eph 6:12** 12 ... We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
 - (2) We cannot declare neutrality. We all must choose a side in this great war.
 - (a) **Lk 11:23** 23 Whoever is not with me [Jesus] is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.
 - (b) “Because there are only two kingdoms, there is no neutral ground. Every square inch of the universe is claimed by Messiah Jesus and counter-claimed by Satan.”
 - (c) In New Zealand, it’s easier to forget the antithesis. That’s why it’s a popular place and why the New Zealand church is so sleepy.
 - (3) The antithesis is not a war between classes, ethnicities, nations, races, or the sexes.
 - (a) **Ga 3:28** 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Messiah Jesus.
 - (b) **Re 5:9-10** 9 They sang a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.
- e. Israel.
- f. Jesus.
- g. Church.
 - (1) Like Israel, the church is to be distinct from the world.
 - (a) **Ex 33:15–17** 15 [Moses] said to [Yahweh], If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth? 17 And Yahweh said to Moses, This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.
 - (2) Like Israel, when the church loses her distinctiveness, she fails.
 - (a) **Ex 23:24-33** 24 You [Israel] will not worship [the Canaanite] gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds. But you will utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces. ...32 You will make no covenant with [the Canaanites] or with their gods. 33 They will not live in your land,

¹⁰ Uncle Screwtape, in C. S. Lewis [d. 1963], *Screwtape Letters* (1959).

because they will make you sin against me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.

- (b) **Jas 4:4** 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- (3) The church is ever in danger of thinking like the world.
 - (a) “[W]hen the Jew stepped out of the narrow circle which he had drawn around him, he was confronted on every side by Grecianism. It was in the forum, in the market, in the counting-house, in the street; in all that he saw, and in all to whom he spoke. It was refined; it was elegant; it was profound; it was supremely attractive. He might resist, but he could not push it aside. Even in resisting, he had already yielded to it. For, once open the door to the questions which it brought, if it were only to expel, or repel them, he must give up that principle of simple authority on which traditionalism as a system rested. Hellenic criticism could not so be silenced, nor its searching light be extinguished by the breath of a Rabbi. If he attempted this, the truth would not only be worsted before its enemies, but suffer detriment in his own eyes. He must meet argument with argument, and that not only for those who were without, but in order to be himself quite sure of what he believed. He must be able to hold it, not only in controversy with others, where pride might bid him stand fast, but in that much more serious contest within, where a man meets the old adversary alone in the secret arena of his own mind, and has to sustain that terrible hand-to-hand fight, in which he is uncheered by outward help. ... One step only remained.... It was simply to advance towards Grecianism; frankly to recognise truth in the results of Greek thought. ... There was the mighty spell which Greek philosophy exercised on all kindred minds, and the special adaptation of the Jewish intellect to such subtle, if not deep, thinking. And, in general, and more powerful than the rest, because penetrating everywhere, was the charm of Greek literature, with its brilliancy; of Greek civilisation and culture, with their polish and attractiveness; and of what, in one word, we may call the ‘time-spirit,’ that *tyrannos*, who rules all in their thinking, speaking, doing, whether they list or not.”¹¹
 - (4) The church must not give up the idea of antithesis.
 - (a) “If Christians abandon the idea of antithesis, they have nothing left to say. Biblical Christianity demands antithesis.”¹²
 - (b) “To the extent a believer gives up antithesis, he has moved over to the other side, even if he tries to defend orthodoxy.”¹³
- h. Antimesiah.

10. Difficulty.

- a. Synthesis is popular and easy. Antithesis is unpopular and difficult.
- b. The antithesis comes before our personal relationships, even our own families.

¹¹ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1:20-22.

¹² Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

¹³ Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

- (1) **Ex 32:25-29** 25 When Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on Yahweh's side? Come to me. And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. 27 And he said to them, Thus says Yahweh God of Israel, Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother, his companion, and his neighbour. 28 And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. 29 And Moses said, Today you have been ordained for the service of Yahweh, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.
- (2) **Lk 12:52** 52 ...From now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three.
- (3) **Lk 14:26** 26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.
- c. To live out the antithesis is one of the most difficult things we must do as believers.
 - (1) "Live the antithesis. No neutrality. Don't set aside Messiah in any philosophical debate."¹⁴
- d. Believers in the West are not very good at living out the antithesis.
 - (1) In general, Kiwis are conflict averse. They are a flight culture, not a fight culture.
- e. The antithesis creates tensions.
 - (1) "A religious statement... which says 'do not be conformed to the values of society' swings an axe at the trunk of civil religion. Civil religion eases tensions, where biblical religion creates them. Civil religion papers over the cracks of evil, and biblical religion strips away the covering, exposing the nasty places. Civil religion prescribes aspirin for cancer, and biblical religion insists on the knife."¹⁵
- f. We don't like conflict, but conflict is an essential aspect of our fallen world.
 - (1) **Mt 12:30** 30 Whoever is not with me [Jesus] is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.
 - (2) **Lk 12:51-53** 51 Do you think that I [Jesus] have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. 52 For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.
- g. Because of the antithesis, the nature of the Christian life is warfare.
 - (1) **2 Ti 4:7** 7 I [Paul] have fought the good fight.

11. The Antithesis in New Zealand.

- a. The power brokers of New Zealand are government, news media, entertainment media, academia, public education, big business, and big tech ("the Big Seven").

¹⁴ Alliance Defending Freedom, Blackstone Fellowship.

¹⁵ H. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 252.

- b. Wealthy, powerful non-Kiwis view New Zealand as just the right place to experiment with their globalist vision. There are lots of missionaries for globalism in New Zealand.
- c. There is disturbing uniformity of thinking and peer pressure among elites in New Zealand.
- d. The church in New Zealand has generally given up on antithesis. As a result it has been AWOL in New Zealand's culture war. It has made itself irrelevant.
- e. Try telling a friend, "If a person doesn't believe in Jesus, he's going to hell."

12. Resolution.

- a. The outcome of the antithesis is not in doubt. Even Satan knows how it will turn out.
- b. The antithesis is not resolved through synthesis, as in Hegel, but by the thesis defeating the antithesis.
- c. The rebellion of angels and men against God cannot and will not go on forever.
- d. Jesus has already destroyed evil positionally. One day he will destroy evil practically.
 - (1) **Jn 12:31** 31 Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.
 - (2) **Heb 2:8** 8 In putting everything in subjection to [Jesus], [God] left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.
- e. The biblical story is one of victory. Jesus will finally defeat sin and death.¹⁶
 - (1) **Ro 16:20** 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
 - (2) **1 Co 15:55-57** 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- f. Final judgment will forever resolve the antithesis.
 - (1) **Re 20:11** 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.
- g. In the new heavens and earth, the antithesis will be no more.
 - (1) **Re 21:3-4** 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

13. Application.

- a. Believe in Jesus.
 - (1) **Jn 3:18** 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.
 - (2) Believing in Jesus is switching sides from the evil side to the good side.
- b. Prove your loyalty.
 - (1) "Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."¹⁷

¹⁶ Alfred J. Poirier, "Conflicting Worldviews and the Defense of the Faith," Rev. version (2003), 18.

¹⁷ Martin Luther.

- c. Realise the true battle is fought in our souls.
- d. Ask God for an understanding mind to discern between good and evil.
 - (1) **1 Ki 3:9** 9 Give your servant...an understanding mind to govern your people, that I [Solomon] may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?
 - (2) **Is 5:20** 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
 - (3) **Jas 1:5** 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.
- e. Call good, good, and evil, evil.
 - (1) **Is 5:20** 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
- f. Resist the spirit of the world in the form it takes in your generation.
 - (1) “The Christian must resist the spirit of the world in the form it takes in his own generation. If he does not do this, he is not resisting the spirit of the world at all. This is especially so for our generation, as the forces at work against us are of such a total nature.”¹⁸
 - (2) The Christian “must understand what confronts him antagonistically in his own moment of history. Otherwise he simply becomes a useless museum piece and not a living warrior for Jesus Christ. The orthodox Christian has paid a very heavy price, both in the defense and communication of the gospel, for his failure to think and act as an educated person understanding and at war with the uniformity of our modern culture.”¹⁹
 - (3) “To fail to exhibit that we take truth seriously at those points where there is a cost in our doing so is to push the next generation into the relative, dialectical millstream that surrounds us.”²⁰
- g. Be careful how you walk.
 - (1) **Eph 5:15-16** 15 Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
- h. Take every thought captive to obey Jesus.
 - (1) **2 Co 10:3-5** 3 Though we [believers] walk in the flesh [the material world], we are not waging war according to the flesh [the material world]. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh [material world] but have divine power to destroy [intellectual] strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Messiah.
- i. Refuse to conform to reigning idolatries.
 - (1) “In the New Testament, the metaphors commonly used to describe the church’s external relations were those of war. The ethic of the early church made it inevitable that strife would come from its refusal to conform to the reigning idolatries. On the other hand, dialogue is for the church the great metaphor of decline and defeat, a dispirited acknowledgment that one does not have the truth.

¹⁸ Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

¹⁹ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 28.

²⁰ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 63.

It is expressed on the popular level by the currently faddish emphasis on peace, security, and prosperity as the normal outcomes of Christian faith.”²¹

- j. Destroy arguments raised against the knowledge of God.
 - (1) **2 Co 10:3-5** 3 Though we [believers] walk in the flesh [the material world], we are not waging war according to the flesh [the material world]. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh [material world] but have divine power to destroy [intellectual] strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Messiah.
 - (2) Expose the world’s biases, contradictions, fallacies, illogic, and inconsistencies.
- k. Beware of unholy alliances.
 - (1) **1 Co 10:20-21** 20 ...I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.
 - (2) **2 Co 6:14-18** 14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Messiah with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. Then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.
 - (3) Examples.
 - (a) Some American evangelicals got too close to Trump.
 - (b) Some New Zealand Christians got too close to the anti-mandate protests in Wellington.
 - (c) Protestants, Catholics, and Evangelicals banded together to create Alliance Defending Freedom.
- l. Take advantage of our unique moment of opportunity.
 - (1) “In this situation which so desperately cries out for the remedy which only biblical Christianity can give, we seem to be failing. This cannot be due to lack of opportunity; already men are partway to the gospel, for they too believe that man is dead, dead in the sense of being meaningless. Christianity alone gives the reason for this meaninglessness, that their revolt has separated them from God who exists, and thus gives them the true explanation of the position to which they have come. But we cannot take advantage of our opportunity, if we let go in either thought or practice the methodology of antithesis (that is, that A is A and A is not non-A). If a thing is true, the opposite is not true; if a thing is right, the opposite is wrong. If our own young people within the churches and those of the world outside see us playing with the methodology of synthesis, in our teaching and evangelism, in our policies and institutions, we can never expect to take advantage

²¹ H. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 334.

of this unique moment of opportunity presented by the death of romanticism. If we let go of our sense of antithesis, we will have nothing left to say.”²²

- (a) A church that forsakes antithesis is a powerless, irrelevant church. This is the type of church New Zealand’s high schoolers come into contact with in RE at a typical Anglican or Presbyterian high school in New Zealand.
 - (b) Our situation is very similar to the situation of the early church.
 - (c) Listen to This Cultural Moment.
- m. Communicate the antithesis when sharing the gospel.
- (1) **Ac 26:16-18** 16 Rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the nations, to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.
 - (2) Say, “We can’t both be right.”

Paul’s Antithetical Preaching in Acts 17

Greeks	Paul
Polytheism	Monotheism (v. 24)
The gods dwell in man-made temples	God does not dwell in man-made temples (v. 24)
Impersonal fatalism	Sovereignty of a personal God (vv. 26-31)
God is distant (Epicureans and Stoics)	God is near (vv. 27-28)
No bodily resurrection (Aeschylus)	Bodily resurrection (v. 31)
Bodily resurrection bad	Bodily resurrection good (v. 31)
History is cyclical and has no goal	History is linear and has a goal (v. 31)
No final judgment (Epicurus)	Final judgment (v. 31)

²² Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 62-63.

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