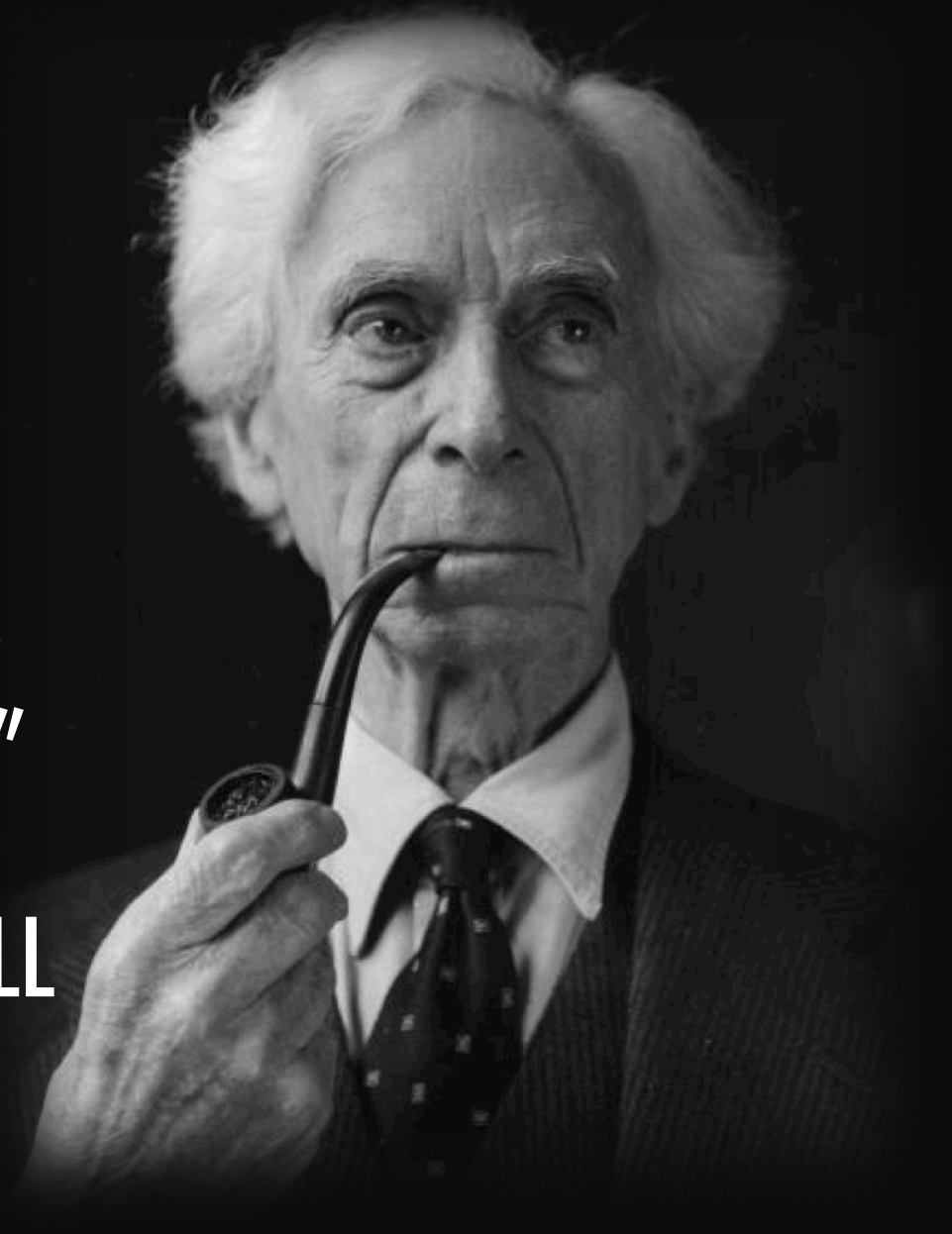
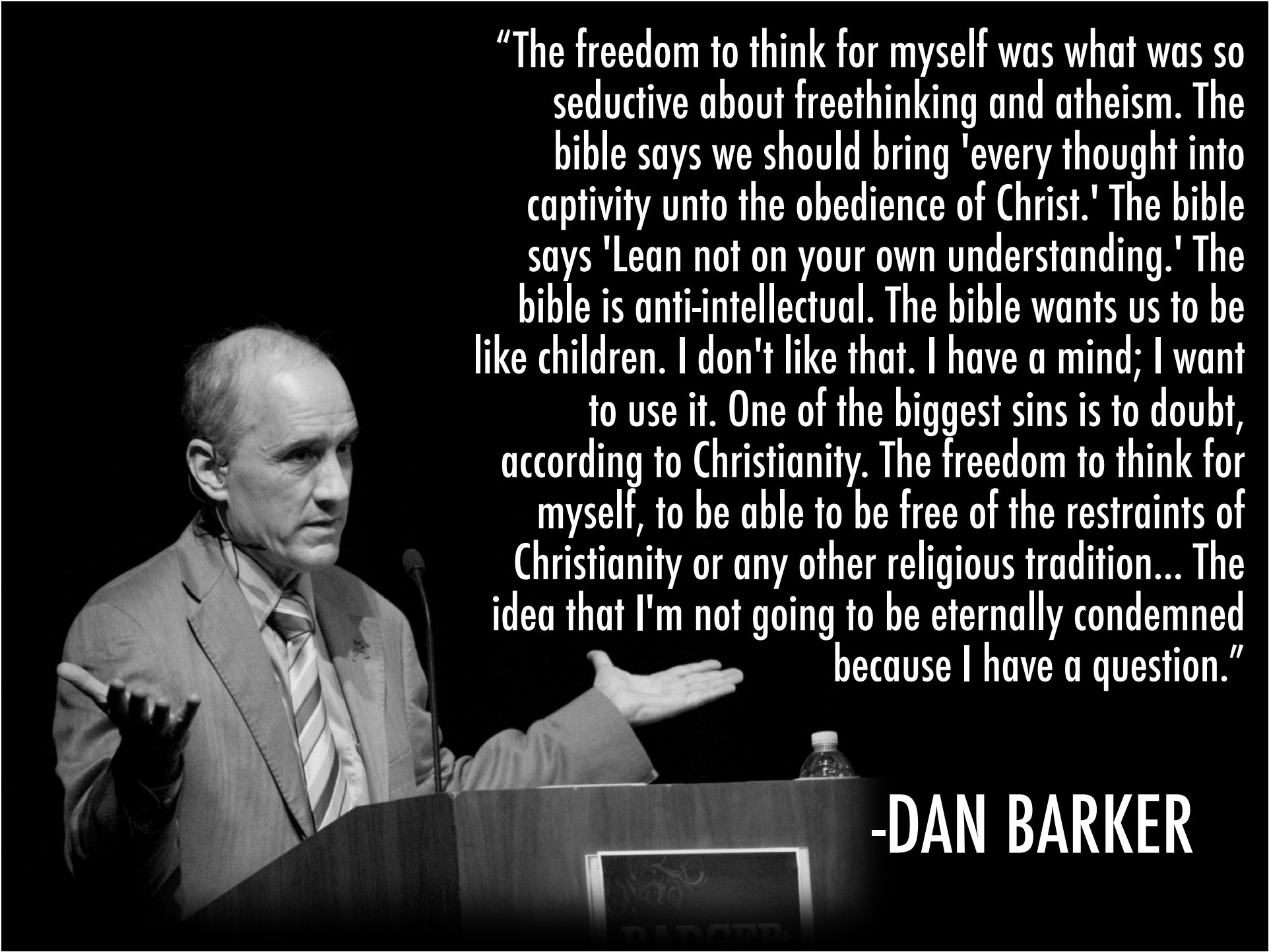


**"So far as I can
remember, there is not
one word in the Gospels
in praise of intelligence"**

-BERTRAND RUSSELL



A black and white photograph of Dan Barker, a man with thinning hair, wearing a suit and a striped tie. He is standing behind a dark wooden podium, gesturing with both hands as if speaking. A microphone is positioned in front of him, and a small water bottle is on the podium to his right. The background is dark.

"The freedom to think for myself was what was so seductive about freethinking and atheism. The bible says we should bring 'every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.' The bible says 'Lean not on your own understanding.' The bible is anti-intellectual. The bible wants us to be like children. I don't like that. I have a mind; I want to use it. One of the biggest sins is to doubt, according to Christianity. The freedom to think for myself, to be able to be free of the restraints of Christianity or any other religious tradition... The idea that I'm not going to be eternally condemned because I have a question."

-DAN BARKER

A person is standing on a hilltop, looking through binoculars. The background shows a vast landscape with hills and a cloudy sky. The title 'EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE?' is overlaid in large white letters.

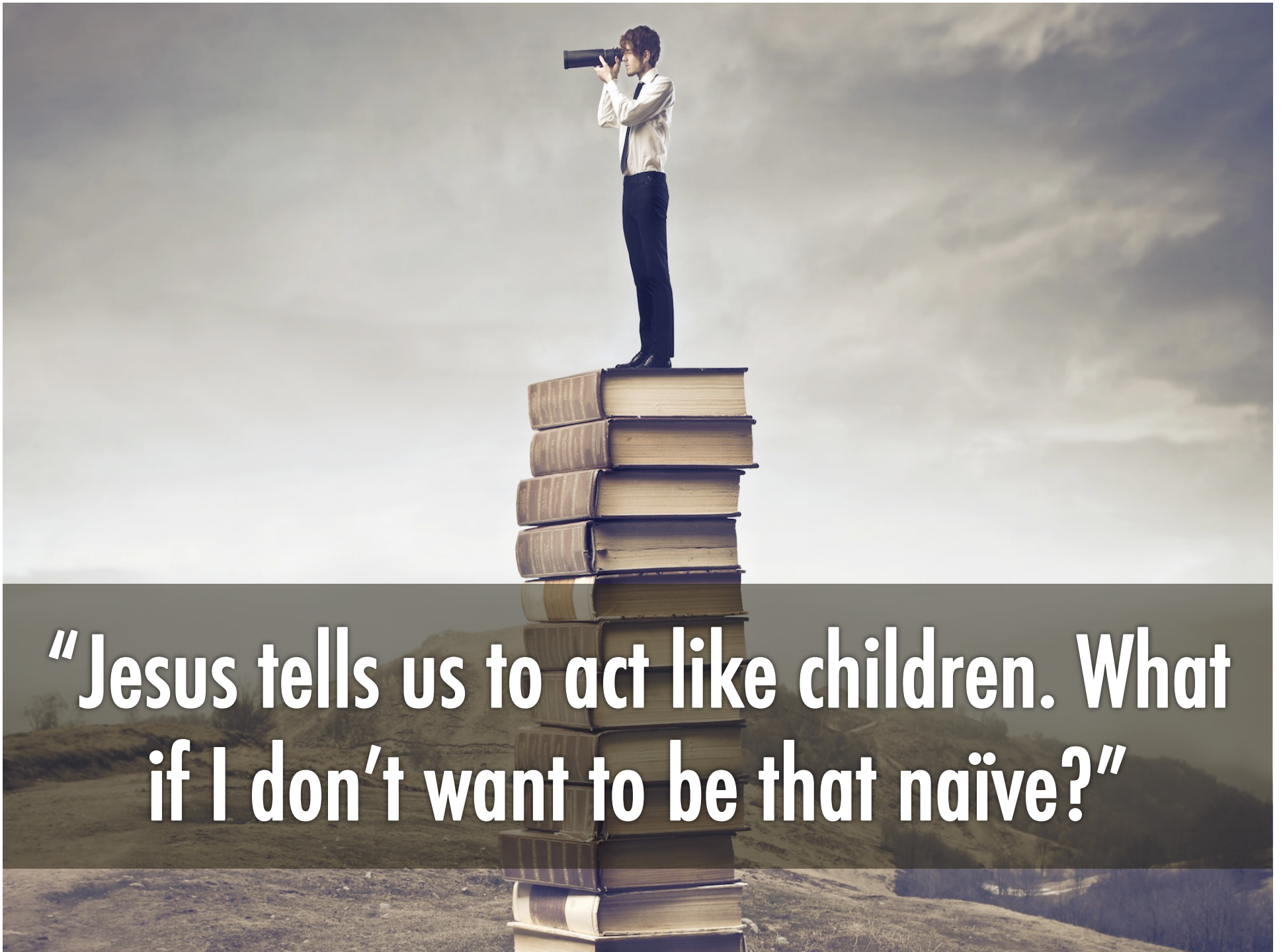
EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE?

- Are “freethinking” unbelievers right that the Bible commands us to be intellectually dull? Is there silence in the gospels regarding the subject of knowledge?
- Barker quotes 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, though he only refers to part of the passage. The rest of the context indicates that our “warfare” is very much an intellectual endeavor.
- Paul is only encouraging believers to take their stand in the worldview they have espoused (don’t we all do that?). The appeal to objectivity is empty, which actually makes your choice of worldviews more important.



YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING?

- Proverbs 3:5-6 is also quoted, but, again, only in part. To most atheists, this verse is saying that we should never think critically, ask questions, or use our intellect to search and understand the world.
- Yet the verse itself is calling for intellectual discretion, because the greatest gains we make in the mind come when we accept our own limitations and seek understanding from one with a higher understanding (Proverbs 14:12).
- Teachers, home repair, medical advice, etc. – If we believe that God is omniscient, then why not lean on Him?



“Jesus tells us to act like children. What if I don’t want to be that naïve?”



**"Truly, I say to you, unless
you are converted and
become like children,
you shall not enter the
kingdom of Heaven.
Whoever then humbles
himself like this little
child, he is the greatest
in the kingdom of
Heaven"**

Matthew 18:1-4



ACTING LIKE CHILDREN?

- The contexts of Matthew 18:1-4, 19:14, & Luke 18:15-17 all indicate that Jesus is praising the humility of children, not their naivety or ignorance.
- Other passages clarify that God does not expect us to behave like children in *every* way (1 Cor. 14:20, 13:11).
- Children might not know everything, but their curiosity, love of inquiry, clear sense of justice, and creativity are unmatched. They will question a parent to tears with every "why not?" or "How?" or "But you said..."



PRAISING INTELLIGENCE

- When atheists decry the supposed lack of praise for “intelligence” in the Bible, one wonders what is actually meant? There is, of course, false intelligence (1 Cor. 1:20ff, 1 Timothy 6:20). When one’s sense of knowledge is first and foremost guided by an atheistic or secular worldview, it should be no surprise that his conclusions look different than the Christian’s.
- But this does not mean God is anti-intellectual! Quite to the contrary, many passages praise true wisdom...

A person is standing on a tall stack of books, looking through binoculars. The background is a landscape with hills and a cloudy sky.

PRAISING INTELLIGENCE

- “Sophia” (wisdom, full of intelligence, use of knowledge) – Matthew 11:19, Luke 7:35, Matthew 12:42, Luke 21:15.
- “Apologia” (verbal defense, reasoned argument) – 1 Peter 3:15. Also notice the reasoned, honest skepticism of the Bereans, whose faith was evidence-based (Acts 17:11). Paul “reasoned” with people (Acts 17:2-3, 17:17, 18:4, 18:19).
- Does not wisdom cry out from the Bible? Proverbs 8:1, 3:21, 4:5, 7, 11. Solomon makes the same connection between wisdom and humility that Jesus did when He praised little children (Proverbs 11:2).