

WELCOME TO APPLIED MATHEMATICS!

Why Should We Do Apologetics? Is Apologetics Necessary?

- I. Introduction**
- II. Reason Demands It & the World Needs It**
- III. Bible Commands It**
- IV. How Should We Live**
- V. Does God use Apologetics?**

I. Introduction:

“Is apologetics necessary? Necessary for whom? And for What?”

Those who often ask these questions are often sincerely confused about the purpose of apologetics and its role in the gospel presentation.

However...

I. Introduction:

“Apologetics is simply to defend the faith, and thereby destroy arguments and every proud obstacle against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:5). In other words, it is opening the door, clearing the rubble, and getting rid of the hurdles so that people can come to Christ.” Dr. Norman Geisler.

Apologetics is simply an attempt to get answers to everybody’s questions in order to tear down the obstacles keeping them from Jesus Christ as well as protect Christian doctrine entrusted to the saints so that they may not compromise into apostasy or succumb to false teaching.

I. Introduction:

“Apologetics is the art of persuasion, the discipline which considers ways to commend and defend the living God to those without faith. As such as it can be practiced by every believer. It is also a branch of theology concerned to meet the questions and objections raised by Christians beliefs with credible and cogent answers. Apologetics seeks to build arguments based on criteria which are true and compelling at the same time. The practice of apologetics involves more than articulating solid reasons for one’s Christian hope.

I. Introduction:

“Following such tests such as 1 Peter 3:15, it begins with a spiritual disposition, sustaining the worship of Christ in one’s heart and exercising gentleness and respect for the questioner, in hopes of vindicating God’s honour. In addition, there is a community dimension meant to complement the verbal argument....Though apologetics is primarily intended to defend the faith when facing outsiders, it can also be used for the correction and edification of believers.”

~ *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, edited by W. C. Campbell-Jack & Gavin McGrath (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 3.

I. Introduction

Is that necessary?

In a world where Satan blinds unregenerate people with false beliefs, philosophies, practices, activities, “divine” encounters, and seeks to destroy Christians, God biblically commands His people to defend the faith, destroy arguments and proud obstacles, rebuke heresy, discern truth from error, share the Good News, and equip the saints with doctrinal truth for godly living.

I. Introduction

Therefore, God uses apologetics to both (1) help break down the walls that the world, the depraved mind, and Satan have built up against the unbeliever/himself and (2) help assure the believer that the Christian faith is correct in view of the pressing and imposing marketplace of naturalism, relativism, world religions, mysticism, skepticism, and the sometimes poor legacy of those who ascribe to the Christian faith who have been involved in abuse, corruption, and neglect in all of its various forms (e.g., wars of religion, anti-Semitism, and moral failures).

Consider the following question...

**Is the Gospel of Jesus Christ heard in isolation
from other alternatives?**

**DOES REASON DEMANDS
APOLOGETICS...DOES THE WORLD
NEED APOLOGETICS?**

(Part II)

Does the World Need Apologetics?

- What claims of truth are being made at school?
- What claims of truth are being made at work?
- What claims of truth are being made on the internet?
- What claims of truth are being made on TV and in movies?
- What claims of truth are being made by your friends, colleagues, and neighbors?

Does the World Need Apologetics?

- What claims of truth are being made by politicians, religious leaders, newscasters, radio hosts, actors, musicians, sport figures, innovative speakers, and activists?
- What claims of truth are being made by advertisements, bulletin boards, books, images, magazines, places of entertainment, and even bathroom walls?
- What claims of truth are being made by your very own parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren?

Does the World Need Apologetics?

Should we live as if atheism, Islam, Eastern Mysticism, or some other belief system is true? How can we *determine* the “true truth” in the midst of myriad of world religions claiming divine experiences, (including conversion experiences, e.g., Mormonism), psychological comfort or fulfillment, sociological ancestral beliefs, religious traditions, scientific explanations, miracle claims, supernatural events, divine books, or philosophical explanations from intelligent and even learned people?

II. Reason Demands Apologetics:

In our western culture where science declares that theology is not a source of genuine knowledge, mysticism that demands the abandonment of reason for illumination, postmodernism that rejects the notion of universal, absolute truth, cults declaring they have found happiness, cynics who question any form of authority as being legitimate, gifted personalities who have the secrets for successful living, and sinners who are looking for legitimacy, appreciation, and participation in their destructive passions through exploitation and propaganda, Christianity is **reduced** to but one voice in a disharmony of competing claims, a central marketplace, or a mountainous buffet of your choosing.

II. Reason Demands Apologetics:

Apologetics helps us determine which truth claim is actually true in the competing market place of ideas.

And though apologetics is not necessary for salvation, it is vital for those who are investigating the claims of Christianity by creating and sustaining a cultural setting in which the gospel can be heard as a viable option for thinking people who are in the marketplace of ideas, beliefs, traditions, and “inner” impressions.

GOD COMMANDS WE DO APOLOGETICS:
(PART III)

III. The Bible Commands It:

- A. We are commanded to defend the Christian faith: 1 Peter 3:15-16a** **But in your hearts set apart** [*hagiazō*; consecrate, dedicate, make holy] **Christ as Lord. Always** [constantly, unceasingly, regularly] **be prepared to give an answer** [give a defense] **to everyone** [all] **who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness** [humility, meekness] **and respect** [clear conscience, ie., free from defilement. Fear of God rules out human intimidation].

“**Be prepared**” means to be ready/prepared to bear witness to the gospel (see also Eph. 6:15). This word is also used for being “prepared” for good works (Titus 3:1 cf. 2 Tim. 2:21) and “being ready” for the return of Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:44).

“**Answer**” or “**defense**” (*apologia*) has two overlapping nuances in biblical Greek. (1) defend oneself, make formal justification (Ac 25:16 ; 2Co 7:11 ; Phil. 1:7 , 16 ; 2Ti 4:16 ; 1Pe 3:15) and (2) defense, the content of the answer or reply (Ac 22:1 ; 1Co 9:3). Here it is used to mean “speech in defense.”

“**Reason**” [*logos*] is used here to mean reason, statement, or speech (adj.) cause for something (see also Mt 5:32; Ac 10:29; 1Pe 3:15). To understand this nuance of *logos* is used, notice Acts 10:29: “I ask, therefore, for what reason did you send for me?”
Acts 10.29

III. The Bible Commands It:

- B. We are commanded to refute false ideas about God: 2 Cor. 10:5. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

“Demolish” [καθαιρέω, *kathaireō*]: means here to mean eliminate, cause to cease (cf. Acts 19:27).

“Arguments” [Gk. λογισμοὺς] means fallacious and deceptive reasoning and, by implication, based on evil intentions, false reasoning and false arguments.

“Every Pretension” [ὑψωμα, *hypsōma*] means arrogance, pride, conceit or any other act or attitude that sets itself up as an “obstacle to the emancipating knowledge of God contained in the gospel of Christ crucified and therefore keeps men in oppressive bondage to sin.” It is closely related to the expression *pan noema* “ever thought.”

Murray Harris of *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, pg. 380, comments on vs. 5, “...the picture seems to be that of a military operation in enemy territory that seeks to thwart every single hostile plan of battle, so that there will be universal allegiance to Christ.

III. The Bible Commands It:

C. We are commanded to discern true from false prophets: 1 John 4:1. Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, **but tests the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

δοκιμάζω (*dokimazō*): (present tense imperative...keep on testing) word means to test, to examine.

In context (1 John 4:1-3) the idea of “testing the spirits” is related to the O.T. example of whether one is idolatrous, a false prophet (Deut. 13:1-3).. John contends in verses 2-3 that the spirits are to be tested on the basis of their christological confession: the person motivated by the Spirit of God will confess “Jesus as the Christ come in the flesh”; while the person motivated by the spirit of deceit will not confess “Jesus” and is therefore not from God (See also 1 Cor. 12:3).

Therefore, knowing that there are many false idolatrous prophets, we are to called to keep on examining whether one is of God or not.

III. The Bible Commands It:

- D. Jesus corrected error: Matt. 22:29.** Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”

- E. Jesus refuted false teachings. Matt. 15:6-9.** Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

- F. Paul reasoned with people: Acts 17:16-17.** While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. **So he reasoned** [διαλέγομαι *dialegomai*; discuss with reasonable discourse] in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace by day with those who happened to be there.”

III. The Bible Commands It:

G. Paul refuted those who opposed the truth: Titus 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message it has been taught, **so that he can [or be able; “*dynatos*” which can mean “possibly” or even “competently” be able to]** encourage others by sound doctrine and **refute [i.e., “*elegchō*” expose, refute, show one’s fault] those who oppose it.**

We must be able to distinguish between truth and counterfeits.

H. Paul commanded that false teachers be rebuked: Titus 1:13 This testimony is true. Therefore, **rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound [Gr. *ηγιανω*; accurate] in the faith...**

“**Rebuke**” (*elegchō*) means to expose; refute, show one’s fault, implying that there is need of convincing of that fault.

“**Sharply**” (*apotomōs*) means harshly, severely, rigorously.

III. The Bible Commands It:

I. Paul defended the Gospel: Phil. 1:7. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or **defending and confirming the gospel**, all of you share in God's grace with me.

“Defending” [ἀπολογία, *apologia*], means to defend oneself, to make formal justification (see also Acts 25:16; 2Co 7:11; 2Ti 4:16; 1Pe 3:15). In 4th century B.C. this term was used to give an account of the receipts.

“Confirming” [βεβαίωσις, *bebaiōsis*] means verification, confirmation. To cause something to be known as certain, to confirm, verify, to prove to be true and certain; certification, verification.

III. The Bible Commands It:

- J. Jude urges that we contend for the faith (vs. 3):** Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith** that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

“Contend” ἐπαγωνίζομαι (*epagōnizomai*): struggle for, contend, fight; it means to exert *intense effort* for the doctrine entrusted to the saints of God.

The context is that there were heretics (antinomians who were abusing God’s grace) infiltrating the church. Jude appeals to believers to stand their ground, fight for the faith they had learned. The word “faith” as used here refers to things believed, the body of truths as taught by Christ and the apostles (cf. Gal. 1:23; 1 Tim. 4:1).

Caution...

Paul speaks about avoiding the worldly "wisdom" [philosophy that attempts to make sense of reality] and, in simplicity, by preaching Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). The wisdom the Greek philosophers offered were not adequate means for salvation. Rather, Paul depends upon the Holy Spirit to convict men of the truth (1 Corinthians 2).

Caution...

Therefore, wisdom or philosophical explanations will not cause a person to become a believer. Even clever debating will not cause “one” to believe; we can’t raise a “dead” or spiritually separated person with the most forceful arguments. Rather, we realize that people are saved when they receive the free gift of eternal life by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone (John 3:16). Our duty is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, evangelizing those who come in our sphere of influence, engaging them to let go of their inadequate worldview and embrace Jesus Christ.

Caution...

God uses apologetics to demonstrate they believers have true truth that truly makes sense of reality.

Otherwise, we may see a contradiction between 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 and both the historical account of Mars Hill in Acts 17 and Paul's command in passages like 2 Cor. 10:5, Peter's command in 1 Peter 3:15, and Jude 3.

The role of reason...

However, we are following the example of Jesus and the direct commandment of the apostle Paul, Peter, and Jude by giving to both unbelievers and believers alike, “reasoned presentations” why Christianity is true and apostolic truth is accurate by clearing obstacles that Satan’s counterfeit kingdom offers and removing masks of self-deception. We leave conviction of the truth to the Holy Spirit.

The role of reason...

Notwithstanding, since God created humanity as rational beings, He expects them to look before they leap. This does not mean there is no room for faith. But God wants us to take a step of faith in light of evidence, rather than to leap in the dark. As Geisler states:

The role of reason...

“No rational person steps in an elevator without some reason to believe it will hold him up. No reasonable person gets on an airplane that is missing part of one wing and smells of smoke in the cabin.. People deal in two dimensions of belief: *belief that* and *belief in*. *Belief that* gives the evidence and rational basis for confidence needed to establish belief in. *Once belief that* is established, one can place faith in it. Thus, the rational person wants evidence that God exists before he places his faith in God. Rational unbelievers want evidence that Jesus is the Son of God before they place their trust in Him.” ~ Dr. Norman Geisler, *Baker’s Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 38.

How Should We Then Live?

1. Know the truth accurately...to the extent that we can give a reasonable presentation. Sometimes people are only one answer away from knowing Jesus Christ.
2. Practice the truth consistently with *gentleness and respect* for **All** people are made in the image of God.

How Should We Then Live?

3. Defend the truth vigorously for Satan's counterfeit kingdom seeks to destroy the unbeliever, the believer, and the corporate body of Jesus Christ.
4. Communicate the truth competently. Like Jesus and Paul we should be able to reason with others, refute false ideas, demolish arguments, defend the gospel, and rebuke false teachers and apostates.

CONSIDER THIS...

**RELIGIOUS BELIEF DOES NOT GUARANTEE A
BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW.**

Supplement # 2:

Has God ever used historical evidence, reason, signs, historical proof, and even pagan philosophy in some way to validate any of His truth claims or to reach any adult who came to Jesus Christ? If one, and only one case can be proven, then apologetics is divinely purposeful for evangelism and edification.

Supplement # 2:

Miracles in Egypt confirmed that God spoke through Moses (Exod. 4:1-9).

Elijah did apologetics on Mount Carmel when he proved miraculously that God, not Baal, is the true God (1 Kings 18).

Jesus used “signs and wonders” to prove that He was the Son of God (John 3:2; Acts 2:22).

Supplement # 2:

Paul did apologetics at Lystra when he gave evidence from nature that the supreme universe existed and that idolatry was wrong (Acts 14:6-20)

Paul's reasonable presentation that God existed from nature, historical proof that Jesus was the Son of God...he even cited pagan philosophy in support of his arguments, demonstrates apologetics.

Supplement # 2:

“Doubting” Thomas

The conversion of atheist C.S. Lewis (read *Mere Christianity*)

The conversion of atheist Josh McDowell (read *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*)

Harvard Law professor Simon Greenleaf was led to accept the authenticity of the Gospels by applying the rules of legal evidence to the New Testament.