

Introduction to Apologetic Evangelism

Doctrinal Foundations Class 1/Calvary Chapel Temecula – Pastor Joe Holden

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I. What is Apologetics?

A. Definition

1. The word “apologetics” comes from the Greek word *apologia* which means “reasoned defense.”
2. The word is used at least nine times in the New Testament (I Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11; I Pet 3:15; Phil 1:7, 16; II Tim 4:16; Acts 25:16; 19:33; 22:1).
3. It is a *judicial* term which describes the way a lawyer defends his client in a court room (II Tim 4:16). It is not a *military* term.
4. Therefore, apologetics is the branch of Christian theology that deals with the verbal defense of the Christian faith. (Classical, Evidential, Fideism, Presuppositional approaches)

B. Bible and apologetics

I Pet 3:15-16

Jude 3

Philippians 1:7, 16

II Timothy 2:24-25

Titus 1:9-11

C. Two aspects

1. Negative

II Corinthians 10:5

Titus 1:9-11

2. Positive

Providing evidence and reasoned answers (Romans 1:19-20, Luke 24:39; Isaiah 1:18, 1 Pet 3:15; Acts 1:3; Luke 24:39ff.; Romans 1:19-21)

D. Why apologetics?

1. Because the Christian faith is under attack from the outside

- a. From the cults
- b. From the occult
- c. From non-Christian religions
- d. From secular humanism and Atheism

Atheist, G. Richard Bozarth said “And how does a god die? Quite simply because all his religionists have been converted to another religion, and there is no one left to make children believe they need him. Finally, it is irresistible – we must ask how we can kill the god of Christianity. We need only insure that our schools teach only secular knowledge. . . . If we could achieve this, God would indeed be shortly due for a funeral service. Bozarthg, “On Keeping God Alive,” *American Atheist* (Nov 1977): 8; cited in John Whitehead, *Texas Tech Law Review* (Winter 1978): 40.

Atheist, George Smith writes, “It is my purpose, however, to demonstrate that the belief in god is irrational to the point of absurdity. . . .” (Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God*, p. xi)

- e. Understanding the Fact – Value Dichotomy (Western Humanistic worldview)

	<u>FACT</u>	(separated from)	<u>VALUE</u>
	Truth		Faith
	What Is		Ought/Morals
	Science		Religion
	History		Myth
	Matter		Spiritual
	Visible		Invisible
(Thomas Hobbes)	The Corporeal		Bible/Jesus
(Francis Bacon)	Inductivism		Opinions
	Empirical Science		Miracles

(*Use the language (*i.e.* truths) of archaeology, science, biology, philosophy, logic, and history to bridge the gap between the two domains – John 3:12; Acts 17:22-34)

2. Christian Aberrancy

- a. Open Theism – God doesn't know the future
 - b. Faith Movement – power of your own faith and spoken word
 - c. Jesus Seminar – anti-supernatural presuppositions applied to biblical studies – only 2% of words in red in the gospels spoken by Jesus
3. Apologetics can *help* lead others to Christ
- a. St. Augustine – abandoned his Manichean cult
 - b. Simon Greenleaf – Chair of Harvard Law School applied rules of legal evidence to the gospels – authored *Testimony of the Evangelists*
 - c. Frank Morison – Convinced of the arguments for the resurrection of Christ - authored *Who Moved the Stone?*
 - d. C.S. Lewis – former atheist “reluctantly” embraced Christ because of the evidence
 - e. Doubting Thomas – materialist is convinced by the evidence
4. Unreasonable to believe without evidence
- a. Approach to everyday life (car driving, elevator)
 - b. Fideism – just believe, reason not necessary
5. Because Jesus asks one to take a *step in the light*

Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow;”

Matthew 22:37-38 And he said to them, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment.”

Mark 2:10-11 “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins . . . I say to you, arise, take up your bed and go to your house.”

John 3:12 “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things.”

Romans 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service . . . and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .”

6. Because the use of feelings alone is not a good test for what is true
 - a. Opposing religious systems
 - b. Feelings change and truth does not change. Truth is absolute.
 - c. Proper use of feelings

<u>Proper Use</u>	<u>Improper Use</u>
Enjoy	Test
Exuberant	Criteria
Excited	Basis

7. Because Jesus did apologetics

- a. He showed “Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3).
- b. He dispelled the disciples’ doubts by presenting his body as evidence of his resurrection. (Luke 24:38-39)
- c. Jesus provided empirical evidence (miracles) to confirm his message.

Mark 2:8-11 - “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say ‘arise, take up your bed and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’ — He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’ Immediately he arose . . . and . . . all were amazed and glorified God . . .”

Acts 2:22 - “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus of Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.”

- d. He defended the existence of the afterlife (Mt 22:23-33) with reason and Scripture when the Sadducees (Mt 22:15).

8. Because Paul customarily used reason to defend the Gospel and persuade others to believe in Jesus

Acts 9:22 “But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.”

Acts 17:2-4 “Then Paul, as his custom was, went into them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead. . . . And some of them were persuaded.”

Acts 18:4, 19 “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. . . . And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.”

Acts 19:8 “And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.”

“To be ignorant and simple now-not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground - would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen.” (C. S. Lewis, *Weight of Glory*, 50)

E. The Limits and Laws of Apologetics

1. The limits of apologetics

How far can apologetics go in bringing someone to faith in Christ? *Apologetics can save no one.* However, it can be used to clear away obstacles to faith. The distinctions between faith and reason are as follows: (Faith *that* vs. Faith *in*)

<u>Faith that</u>	<u>Faith In</u> ¹
Intellectual	Volitional
Mind	Heart
Teaching	Preaching (Gospel)
Apologetics	Evangelism (Holy Spirit)
Understanding	Receiving

¹ N.L. Geisler, Southern Evangelical Seminary unpublished class notes (1995).

2. Apologetic Laws

The “Seven Laws of the Apologist” are principles that the apologist can use while engaging in the defense of Christianity. *See JW Montgomery, *Sensible Christianity*.

A (always give the gospel first)

N (never be offensive)

S (search out the real issues – no rabbit trails)

W (walls are to be removed – be personal)

E (evangelistic techniques are to be used)

R (relationships are essential)

S (self-analysis of our own doubts about Christ)