

Series: Apology — Giving a Defense for the Faith

Title: Part 5 — Evidential Arguments

Text: 1 John 1:1-3

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“Instead of having to prove God’s existence before moving to specific evidences...the evidentialist treats one or more historical arguments as being able both to indicate God’s existence and activity and to indicate which variety of theism is true.” **Gary R. Habermas**

The two-step approach:

- 1) Demonstrate that the existence of _____ is plausible.
- 2) Demonstrate that the _____ of Christianity are credible.

1. THE PRECEDENT FOR EVIDENTIAL APOLOGETICS IN SCRIPTURE

“Empirical” = something that is verifiable by _____.

John _____

Exodus _____

1 John _____

2 Peter _____

2. EVIDENTIAL ARGUMENTS

Using the acronym “S.M.A.R.T.,” I would like to propose five evidential arguments one can use in favor of the Christian faith...

1. The _____

A. _____ Manuscripts

“...the New Testament is without doubt the best-attested book from the ancient world.”

Norman Geisler and Frank Turek

B. The _____ Sea Scrolls

“...one of the first scrolls to be discovered in the Qumran caves near the Dead Sea was a complete scroll of Isaiah. It is approximately one foot wide and twenty-four feet in length. Even though it is older than the medieval manuscript of Isaiah by one thousand years, a comparison of these two ancient manuscripts reveals the accuracy with which God’s Word was copied during those one thousand years.” **Michael Bere**

C. Fulfilled _____

“There is no more powerful argument, in a sense, for believing in the unique inspiration and authority of the Scriptures than the fact of prophecy.” **Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

2. _____

“...we hold that modern scholarship can no longer deny miracles simply by referring to a closed universe and to our civilization as being ‘too advanced.’” **Gary Habermas**

3. The _____ Witness

Watergate involved a conspiracy to cover up, perpetuated by the closest aids to the President of the United States—the most powerful men in America, who were intensely loyal to their president. But one of them, John Dean, turned states evidence, that is, testified against Nixon, as he put it, “to save his own skin”—and he did so only two weeks after informing the president about what was really going on—two weeks! The real cover-up, the lie, could only be held together for two weeks, and then everybody else jumped ship in order to save themselves. Now, the fact is that all that those around the President were facing was embarrassment, maybe prison. Nobody’s life was at stake. But what about the disciples? Twelve powerless men, peasants really, were facing not just embarrassment or political disgrace, but beatings, stonings, execution. Every single one of the disciples insisted, to their dying breaths, that they had physically seen Jesus bodily raised from the dead. Don’t you think that one of those apostles would have cracked before being beheaded or stoned? That one of them would have made a deal with the authorities? None did. You see, men will give their lives for something they believe to be true—they will never give their lives for something they know to be false. **Chuck Colson**

“Of the basic historicity of the account there are no questions. And the story about the women is strong evidence, although not absolute proof, of the historicity of the resurrection itself.”

James A. Brooks

4. The _____

5. The _____ Brothers

James, the skeptical brother of Jesus, suddenly becomes convinced that his brother is the Son of God, and then becomes the leader of the church in Jerusalem. He later suffers martyrdom at the hands of the high priest. (We all know that family members can be the most difficult people to convince to our religious viewpoint...If there was no resurrection, then why did James — who was called “the Just” by second-century historians Clement and Hegesippus — suddenly come to believe that his brother really was the Messiah? Unless he saw the resurrected Christ, why would James become the leader of the church in Jerusalem and suffer a martyr’s death?)

Norman Geisler and Frank Turek

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the “one-step” or “two-step” approach is more helpful/useful nowadays? Which would you prefer to use?
2. Which evidential argument do you find to be most helpful for today’s culture?
3. What would it look like to use these arguments in a daily conversation or interaction?
4. Take time practicing using the “S.M.A.R.T.” arguments with a friend or with someone who is studying with you.