

FORTIFY YOUR FAITH SERIES

APOLOGIA

Why Should I Believe in God and His Word?

BY PEDRO G. GELABERT

A study in Christian apologetics, evidence, and defending the faith.



Always be prepared to give an answer... — 1 Peter 3:15



**LONG ISLAND
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

658 Blydenburgh Rd, Hauppauge, NY 11788

Christian Apologetics

4 Key Scriptures attesting to our need to make a defense concerning our faith:

Jude 1:3 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.

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer* to everyone who asks you to *give the reason* for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,"

2 Timothy 2:15-16 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. [16] Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

2 Peter 3:16-18 He (*Paul*) writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. [17] Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. [18] But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

*apologia. (ap-ol-og-ee'-ah); from the same as a plea ("apology")!--answer (for self), clearing of self, defense. apologeomai, (ap-ol-og-eh'-om-ahee): to give an account (legal plea) of oneself, i.e. exculpate (self):--answer (for self), make defense, excuse (self), speak for self, to give a reason.

The basic question we are trying to answer, either for the agnostic, atheist, or unrepentant Christian, is twofold:

Why Should I Believe in God and abide in His Word, the Bible?

I – Philosophy

A- Apologetics covers:

- 1- Critical and logical thinking
- 2- Biblical hermeneutics
- 3- Scientific evidence
- 4- Historical cross-referencing and acid tests

B- Within these there are **Christian Evidences** we can consider to support our proposition.

- 1- Each field of apologetics examines how to best gather evidence within that field
- 2- Each field has a unique line of reasoning, an approach to finding truth.
 - a- Philosophy uses Critical and logical thinking to identify assumptions and fallacies.
 - b- Hermeneutics uses exegesis and critical thinking to determine context and meaning.
 - c- Science uses the scientific method to falsify hypotheses by submitting them to empirical scrutiny.
 - d- History uses archaeology and manuscript evidence to corroborate historical data and witnesses.

C- **Proposition to defend**: If it is true that Christianity is the only way our Creator has chosen to restore our relationship to Him, as revealed in the Bible, then we must give our whole lives to Him. If it is false, then we are left to *existentialism*, which means that every man is left to determine what is right for himself.

Christian Apologetics

D- General facts about the Bible

- 1- Written in 1600 years by 40 men from all walks of life.
- 2- 66 books that agree with each other on every aspect of God's personality, eternal consequences, history, science, geography, astronomy, prophecy, and godly thinking.
- 3- The only book that speaks authoritatively about Heaven, Hell, God, Jesus, and the Church.
- 4- It is a historical and factual book, not promoting itself or coming across as mythology or fantasy.
- 5- God has provided man with a wisdom he cannot obtain by science – we call it revelation.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 1:22 CSB** For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom...
 - b. So God decided to save us through something that we could be sure did not come from man, something man considers foolish, to test our faith.
 - c. This revelation came through signs and wonders, and it is a wisdom that comes from God, existential, timeless, and countercultural to every form of man-made wisdom.
 - d. However, it is a wisdom proven to be true time and time again across cultures, peoples, and generations.

II- Science and the Bible

A- The Limits of Science

- 1- It is limited to the five senses.
- 2- It is only limited to empirical tests. The Scientific method can only apply to experiments able to be reproduced in a lab.
- 3- Science does not create; it discovers, i.e., it *perceives* what is already there. Assumptions have to be made about what is observed – a point of reference established.

B- Critical and logical thinking

- 1- Scientism:
 - a- When philosophy overcomes reason and logic.
 - *- Truth becomes dictated by the majority.
 - *- Requires blind faith in theories and explanations that lack empirical evidence
 - *- Science can become a faith unto itself! It is just a tool.
 - b- Scientists are human too!
 - *- Fraud, like the Piltdown man and *ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny* show that scientists can fall prey to biased opinions.
 - *- They look toward science to establish moral and ethical convictions.
 - *- *Social Darwinism* has become an excuse for moral relativity.
- c- True science and true Bible (revelation) go hand in hand.
- 2- Science is limited to proving what can be perceived with the senses.
- 3- Humans do not have the capacity to create but to reason, analyze, and synthesize the information that is already there.
 - a- Our inventions are but reflections of our capacity to reason from what we see in our environment.
 - b- There is nothing new under the sun. **Ecclesiastes 1:9-10.**

C- The Law of Causality (cause and effect).

- 1- It leads us to reason that if we are here (effect), there must have been someone who made all of this happen (cause). **Hebrews 3:4** "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything."
- 2- This leads us to the argument of *design* in everything that we see in nature. Ex.-The camera was designed after the design of the human eye.

D- Age of the Earth

- 1- Appearance of age
- 2- Biblical timeline or made-up timeline?
- 3- Dating methods may be telling us how old it needs to be, but not how long they've been around
 - a. Example of newly created volcanic islands which test as millions of years old

Christian Apologetics

- b. When God made Adam, he was only less than a day old, but if we could have carbon-dated him, it would show the age of an adult male.

E- Uniformitarianism vs Catastrophism

- 1- *The present is the key to the past...*
- 2- Charles Darwin used this as his foundation for human evolution.
- 3- Still taught in schools, even though evolutionists themselves have been challenging this as an incorrect assumption.
- 4- Catastrophism, originally championed by geologists who saw the evidence of it in the fossil record and earth strata, fell out of favor due to prejudice simply because people linked to the Bible.

F- Scientific evidence in the Bible

- 1- How to determine scientific evidence from the Scriptures.
- 2- The Biblical writers catalog a list of concepts and principles yet unknown to the mind of man at that time.
- 3- As we have delved into the process of uncovering our world generated by the *Age of Reason*, man has gained some minute insight into his physical world.

G- Examples of Scientific Evidences in the Bible

- 1- II Law of Thermodynamics (**Romans 8:20-22**) "Bondage to decay..."
- 2- Law of Biogenesis (**Genesis 1:21-24**) **kind** is Hebrew: *miyn* (meen): a sort, family or genus.
- 3- Oceanography (**Psalms 18:15**) speaks of the valleys of the sea.
- 4- Dinosaurs (fossils) (**Job 40:15-22**) **Behemoth** is Hebrew for a large aquatic quadruped.
- 5- Spherical shape of the Earth (**Isaiah 40:22**) *khug* is Hebrew for sphere or circle.
- 6- Medical Facts of circumcision in **Leviticus 12:3**, shows that circumcision was done in the eighth day because on that day the newborn shows an exponential increase in the clotting factor prothrombin, due to mass production of vitamin K in the body.
- 7- **Genesis** supports the cataclysmic model that systematically explains the 17 major topographical and geological features our planet has due to Noah's flood.

III- Prophecy

- A- Important discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls proves the prophecies written before their fulfillment.
- B- Date of the earliest manuscript circa 90 A.D. (fragments of the Gospel of John.)
- C- Very detailed prophecies about the Messiah and God's Kingdom hundreds of years before fulfillment passing the acid tests of predictive fallacies:
 - 1- Delphi Fallacy
 - a. No predictions or vague predictions
 - b. The prediction is too ambiguous or vague to verify whether it is true or false.
 - 2- False Prophet Fallacy
 - a. Many predictions
 - b. Occurs when a hypothesis appears to be confirmed by a single striking prediction, but it is only one in a set of predictions, so taken as a whole it disconfirms the hypothesis.
 - c. Example: Darwin's hypothesis of macroevolution. Even though microevolution is an observable fact, macro isn't. There is no scientific evidence for it.
 - d. Nostradamus' prophecies also fall within this fallacy
- D- About 1300 prophecies, all fulfilled except one: the return of our Lord Jesus.
 - 1- Jesus fulfilled nearly 300 references to 61 specific prophecies of the Messiah. The odds of this happening are a mathematical impossibility: 1 in 2.8×10^{28} .
 - 2- It was reported that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) calculated the odds of Jesus fulfilling just eight of the prophecies and the result was 1 in 100 trillion.
- E- **Isaiah 41:22-24** "Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, [23] tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. [24] But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable."

Christian Apologetics

- F- The Resurrection of Jesus is by far the single largest proof that He is God and that His Word is true:
1 Co. 15:13-15 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. [14] And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. [15] More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

IV- Historical Evidences

A- The Bible passes the **acid test** of history with flying colors. This test is the fact that the people who were around to denounce the things written in the New Testament were still alive when numerous copies of these documents were in circulation.

- 1- People could have edited, rewritten, or circulated contradictory accounts from eyewitnesses saying those things were untrue.
- 2- Instead, we see overwhelming support for the manuscripts from the copying and distribution of them.

B- Archaeology

- 1- Confirms the historical accuracy of the Bible.
- 2- Brings Bible history to the real-world context.
- 3- Sheds light on the historical background of the Bible.
- 4- Significant discoveries:
 - a. Dead Sea Scrolls – shows consistency of Bible Manuscripts over centuries.
 - b. Tel Dan Inscription – one of the earliest extra-biblical references to the historical figure of King David, supporting the biblical narrative.
 - c. House of Peter in Capernaum – offers a tangible connection to the life of Jesus and his disciples.
 - d. City of Jericho – Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of a collapsed outer city wall that can be linked to this event.
 - e. Sites of Sodom and Gomorrah – At Tall el-Hammam, there is evidence of a large-scale destruction layer that dates to around the time period suggested for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Some researchers have interpreted this destruction layer as a potential indication of a catastrophic event unlike anything else of that time.
 - f. Hezekiah's tunnel – This ancient water tunnel in Jerusalem is mentioned in the Bible in 2 Kings 20:20. Its discovery and exploration provide insights into ancient engineering and water management.
 - g. Pool of Siloam in Israel – The Pool of Siloam was discovered in Jerusalem in 2004. Its identification helps confirm the location of certain biblical events.

C- Witnesses

- 1- **Hostile**
 - a- Jewish- Flavius Josephus, Talmud
 - b- Ancient Pagan- Tacitus, Pliny
 - c- Modern Atheists- Will Durant, H.G. Wells
 - d- Hostile witnesses offer excellent proof of Jesus and His miracles & resurrection being real.
- 2- **Christian Witnesses**
 - a- 1st century Christians multiplied the writings; they didn't discard them
 - b- Apostolic Writings were all in accord with each other about factual events.
 - c- The Apostolic Fathers (disciples who sat at the Apostle's feet) writings were also in accord.

D- Manuscript Evidence

- 1- Transmission of the Greek NT**
- 2- Canonization of the New Testament and Translation Issues**
- 3- Dead Sea Scrolls support the accuracy of today's Bible.
- 4- 1400 New Testament Manuscripts indicating accuracy and content of source material.
- 5- The Jewish Pseudepigrapha, produced in the Second Temple period (roughly 5th century BC to 1st century AD) and were not included in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), offers hostile witness.
- 6- The Talmud, developed after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD, also offers hostile witness.

Christian Apologetics

V- Jesus

- A- Liar, lunatic, or Lord? Only three possibilities!
- B- Miracles are presented from a historical perspective, not mythical. Hostile witness corroborates.
- C- History clarifies the pain and death of Jesus upon His crucifixion.
- D- Jesus' resurrection is also treated as a historical fact by hostile witnesses.
 - 1- Empty tomb indicates bodily disappearance, not a stolen body.
 - 2- Recorded appearances of Him and other resurrected people indicate witness to the resurrection.
 - 3- Many of the people involved in His crucifixion were converted, having witnessed His death first.
 - 4- The Roman government and the Jewish leaders wanted his death certified and went to great lengths to keep Christianity dead.

VI-The Gospel-God's Love for You

- A- The mission of Jesus was to reconcile man to God. **John 3:16**
- B- Sin, evil, and disorder prove the existence of Goodness, righteousness, and order.
- C- The Resurrection shows the existence of eternity and the finiteness of physical life.
- D- Jesus came to educate us about the existence of our soul, our eternal destiny, and our need for God's Spirit and sustenance.
- E- **The Gospel (good news): 1 Co 15:1-5**
 - 1- Man, because of sin, is destined to eternal punishment. **Romans 3:9-18; 6:23**
 - 2- Jesus paid the price for us to be set free through His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - 3- We must obey the gospel to have eternal life. **1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thess. 1:8**
 - 4- How do you obey the gospel (*i.e.*, Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection)? **Romans 6:1-9**

VII- Making Jesus our Lord

- A- What does it take to be a disciple?
 - 1- Abiding in His Word **John 8:30,31**
 - 2- Having the *BE* attitudes **Matthew 5, 6 & 7**
 - a- Noble and good heart **1 Timothy 1:5**
 - b- Good soil **Luke 8:15**
 - 3- Perseverance **1 Timothy 4:16; Hebrews 10:36; James 1:12**
- B- Listening to the Lord **Matthew 7:21-27**
 - 1- The deceitful heart and the entangling sin **Jeremiah 17:9,10**
 - 2- Godly fulfillment of God-given desires **John 9:31; Titus 2:11,12**
- C- The hope of living forever in our Heavenly Home. **John 14:2-4**
 - 1- The sacrifice of Jesus shows us the significance of our spiritual existence
 - 2- Only a willingness to commit to His true expression of love can bring us comprehensive fulfillment of our every need.
 - 3- His truth *truly* sets us free! **John 8:31,32**
- D- Spreading the Good News!
 - 1- Shining our lights without hindrance. **Matthew 5:14-16**
 - a- Convicting or convincing by loving
 - b- Actions speak louder than words
 - 2- Learning to be refreshed by first refreshing others.
 - 3- Being a servant in our own homes **first!**
 - 4- The Great Commission begins at home **Matthew 28:19-20**
 - a- We can't live double lives **James 1:6-8; James 4:8**
 - b- Effective witnessing comes by being compelled by **love 2 Co 5:14-21**
 - c- When we lift up Jesus in our life (lift up the cross) He will draw people unto himself.
 - *- God will draw people to Him. (His light will shine when we let the Spirit lead us)
 - *- We won't get in His way. (By denying ourselves, dying to self and *exalting* Him)
 - *- We will focus on helping, not condemning (We surrender ourselves)
Bear their wounds so they may be healed.

Christian Apologetics

Equip Yourself!!

For the **Apologetics Press** Catalogs and *Reason & Revelation* subscription see
<http://www.apologeticspress.org/>

- *Roger E. Dickson's* Fall of Unbelief or Dawn of Belief is by far the most complete resource for Christian Apologetics that I have found.
- *Josh McDowell's* Evidence That Demands a Verdict is also a good alternative or supplement.
- *Edward C. Wharton's* Christianity, A Clear Case of History is an excellent examination of the historical facts surrounding Jesus' life and death.

To order a special book on evidences or any topic in this outline not found in the Apologetics Press catalog try **Sunset Bookstore** in Lubbock, TX (800) 221-9065.

If you are looking for a book or document and are not able to locate it, or for further help on the matter contact Charlie Gomez or Pedro Gelabert.

May God bless you in your preparation for relaying the message!