

Christian Apologetics
“...always be prepared to give a defense”

I. Introduction

Today we begin a journey...a study in obedience to I Peter 3:15. The Christian faith is under siege in our culture, probably more so than any other time in recent history. Because of that we have two choices – 1) be quiet, ignorant, embarrassed or timid or 2) be vocal, bold, knowledgeable and confident. This series is designed for the second option.

The term **apologetics** can be confusing and intimidating. It does not mean to apologize or feel regret. Both words come from the same Greek root word, but the core definition of **apologetics** is not “apologetic” by any means. “*We must be ready to give an apologia (answer, defense) to anyone who asks us for a reason for the hope that is in us*” – i.e. why we believe what we believe (I Peter 3:13-17).

Apologetics is derived from the Greek word *apologia* meaning “defense” or “answer”, or in a broader sense - a systematic defense of a belief system. **Apologetics** is giving a reason for the hope of Christianity and a defense of the gospel. Because of the identity of Christians with the One true God, the Christian worldview is antithetical [at odds] with the worldview of unbelievers. Christian apologetics serves its Creator by affirming Him as the basis and purpose of rationality before men, and showing that the basis of other worldviews cannot account for the reality they live in. The goal of apologetics is to defend the gospel from the wisdom of the world by silencing its foolishness and offering the only possible interpretation of reality in light and hope of Jesus Christ.

There are at least two practical reasons for doing or practicing apologetics – to convince unbelievers and to instruct and build up believers. But nothing – no argument, no defense, no convincing diatribe – is more effective than the demonstration of the love of Christ and the personal testimony of the believer. [Courtroom example]

But, remember, this is also a **war**. But the war is against unbelief, not unbelievers. It is against spiritual darkness, not people [flesh] *Ephesians 6:10-12*. Its goal is not victory (as in to win the argument), but [to present] **Truth**. And our weapons are not...can NOT... be conventional *Ephesians 6:13-18*. And we must understand that God’s power gives us the power to “cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God!” 2 *Corinthians 10:3-5*.

Why should Christians even care about apologetics? Our world is in a crisis. A three-fold one:

- Cultural – western civilization is on the verge of dying. We are defined by moral decay, ethical erosion and an obsession with pleasure, materialism and self-centeredness.
- Intellectual – absolute truth is rejected; pluralism and relativity are embraced
- Spiritual – our world is in need of Christ, whether they know it (or accept it) or not. God’s judgment is drawing closer and time is running out.

“*Quis est veritas?*” In John 18:38, Pilate asks Christ, “**What is truth?**” Truth today is unpopular. Our culture has replaced it with philosophy, opinions and feelings. This series will hopefully help you discover, reinforce your belief in, and/or defend the Truth regarding the following topics or using the following tactics:

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- The existence of God
- Faith, reason and logic
- Worldviews
- Natural, moral and divine law
- Intelligent design
- Science, God and the cosmos
- Origins of life
- The nature of God
- Christianity
- Good and evil
- Moral and ethical decisions

For clarity and simplicity, we will be focusing our efforts on the tenets of Orthodox Christianity (see supplement “What We Believe”). The trouble today is that many feel that orthodox Christianity needs *apologizing* on behalf of it, not *apologetics* in defense of it.