

# What Is Apologetics?

## Apologetics - Defending and Declaring the Evidence for Biblical Christianity

*"15 ...if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain [Greek - "apologia" defend] it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way..." 1 Peter 3:15-16 NLT*

Q1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word apologetics? What doubts or questions have you had about the Bible, God, and Christianity?

The term Apologetics (a-pol-o-get-ics) comes from the Greek word **ἀπολογία**, (ap-ol-og-ee'-ah), which means **"speaking in defense."** The dictionary explains Apologetics as the discipline of **defending** a position (usually religious) through the systematic use of reason. The word "apologia" appears 17 times in noun or verb form in the New Testament and can be translated as "defense," "answer," "reason" or "vindication" [see Philipians 1:7, 16; 1 Peter 3:15].

Christian apologetics is a field of Christian theology that presents a rational basis for the Christian faith. According to *The Apologetics Study Bible*, **"...Christian apologetics is the practice of giving reasons that support the Christian faith and responding to objections raised against it."**

Apologet, John M. Frame, explained that Apologetics has three elements:

- (1) **proof**, rational confirmation of the faith;
- (2) **defense**, replies to criticism; and
- (3) **offense**, bringing criticism against non-Christian ideas.

(John Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics," in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 215.)

Apologetics bases its defense of Christianity on **historical** evidence, **philosophical** arguments, **scientific** investigation, and other **disciplines**.



Josh McDowell, in his book, *More Than A Carpenter*, writes about his days as a college law student. He did research over a two-year period seeking to disprove the Bible and Christianity. He thought it would be an easy task. However, he was surprised with the **large amount of evidence** that supported the Bible and Christianity. **He didn't know there were facts.** He concluded that Christianity was **not a leap into the dark, but a step into the light.**

Q2. What do you think Josh McDowell meant by "leap into the dark" and "a step into the light"?

### 1 Peter 3:15 NLT

*"15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it [Greek - "apologia"]."*

Q3. What does Peter say every Christian should be prepared to do? (1 Peter 3:15)

As we talk with people, our conversation will occasionally turn to spiritual issues. People may ask, *Is Jesus the only way to heaven? If God exists, why would He allow suffering and evil? Can we trust the Bible to be true?* Plus many other questions. The Apostle Peter tells us *"if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it."*

We should welcome the questions of people and be prepared to share the reasons for our faith. Not only should we be knowledgeable in answering their questions, but we should also be prepared to suggest books, DVDs, websites, and other literature or resources that will be helpful. Also, we need to be trained to share our personal salvation story (testimony) and a simple gospel explanation. *Are you prepared?*

Q4. How prepared are you to explain **why** you believe the Bible and Christianity are true—not prepared, moderately prepared, or well prepared?

### 1 Peter 3:16 NLT

*"16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way..."*

Both the **message** and the **manner** of communication are important to fruitful apologetics and evangelism. David Geisler writes, "We must also be careful not to come across as arrogant or portray ourselves as being better than others because of our beliefs. As others have often said, Christianity really is one beggar telling another beggar where he found bread. If we are going to be heard, we must learn to present the truth of Christ in a meek and gentle way." (David Geisler, "Conversational Apologetics: Evangelism for the New Millennium," in *Apologetics For A New Generation*, ed. Sean McDowell (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), 111.)

Q5. Do your discussions about Christianity usually end up in a heated argument or a gentle and respectful conversation?

Q6. According to **1 Peter 3:16**, in what manner are Christians to communicate the reason for their hope?

### Apologetics and Discipleship

Sean McDowell writes, "People often confuse apologetics with apologizing for the faith, but the Greek word *apologia* refers to a legal defense. Thus, apologetics involves giving a defense for the Christian faith... **All Christians are to be trained in apologetics**, which is an integral part of discipleship. This involves learning how to respond to common objections raised against the Christian faith and also how to positively commend the gospel to a particular audience." (*Apologetics for A New Generation*, p. 17-18).

Q7. How would discipleship in apologetics benefit you?

## Areas of Apologetics Specialization

### Philosophy & The Existence of God Apologetics

**William Lane Craig, Ph.D.**  
reasonablefaith.org.

William Lane Craig is an American analytic philosopher and Christian theologian, apologist, and author. He is a Professor of Philosophy at Houston Baptist University and Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology. Craig has defended the Kalam cosmological argument for the existence of God.



### Creation Versus Evolution Apologetics

**Creation Ministries International (CMI)**  
creation.com.

Creation **Ministries International (CMI)** exists to support the effective proclamation of the Gospel by providing credible answers that affirm the reliability of the Bible, in particular, its Genesis history. CMI has offices in Australia, Canada, Singapore, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and the United States of America.

**Ken Ham and Answers in Genesis -**  
answersingenesis.org

Ken Ham is an Australian Christian fundamentalist, young-Earth creationist and apologist, living in the United States. He is the founder, CEO, and former president of Answers in Genesis, a creationist apologetics organization that operates the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter



**Hugh Ross, Ph.D., and Reasons to Believe,** reasons.org

**Reasons to Believe** is a creationist group that promotes day-age forms of old-Earth creationism. It was founded in 1986 by Hugh Ross, a Canadian-born astrophysicist, and creationist Christian apologist.



### Intelligent Design Apologetics

**Stephen C. Meyer, Ph.D.**  
www.intelligentdesign.org.

**Stephen C. Meyer** received his Ph.D. in the philosophy of science from the University of Cambridge. A former geophysicist and college professor, he now directs Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture in Seattle, which is the main organization behind the intelligent design movement.

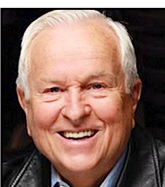


**Intelligent design (ID)** is an argument for the existence of God, presented by its proponents as "an evidence-based scientific theory about life's origins."

### General Apologetics - Removing Barriers to the Gospel.

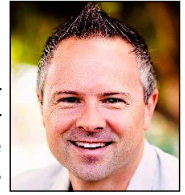
**Josh McDowell, josh.org**

Josh McDowell is an evangelical apologist and evangelist. He is the author or co-author of over 150 books. His book *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* was ranked 13th in Christianity Today's list of most influential evangelical books. Other well-known titles are *More Than a Carpenter*, *A Ready Defense*, and *Right from Wrong*.



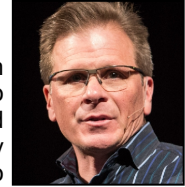
**Sean McDowell, Ph.D.,**  
seanmcdowell.org.

Sean McDowell, the son of Josh McDowell, is a gifted communicator with a passion for equipping the church, and in particular young people, to make the case for the Christian faith. He connects with audiences tangibly through humor and stories while imparting hard evidence and logical support for viewing all areas of life through a Biblical worldview. Sean is an Associate Professor in the Christian Apologetics program at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University.



**Frank Turek, D.Min.**  
www.crossexamined.org.

Frank Turek is an American Christian apologist, author, public speaker, and radio host. He is best known as the founder and president of Christian apologetics ministry CrossExamined.org. Turek co-authored two books with Christian philosopher Norman Geisler. In addition, Turek has authored two of his own books.



**Lee Strobel - leestrobel.com.**

Atheist-turned-Christian **Lee Strobel** is the former award-winning legal editor of The Chicago Tribune and best-selling author of more than twenty books. His classic, *The Case for Christ*, is a perennial favorite which details his conversion to Christianity.



### Cults & World Religions Apologetics

**Watchman Fellowship,**  
watchman.org.

The Watchman Fellowship is an independent, nondenominational Christian research and apologetics ministry focusing on new religious movements, cults, the occult, and the New Age. It was founded in 1979 and is based in Arlington, Texas.



### Archaeology Apologetics

**Joel Kramer - expeditionbible.com,**  
shepherds.edu

Joel Kramer serves as Adjunct Professor of Biblical Archaeology — "archaeologist in the field" at Shepherds Theological Seminary. He is the author of *Where God Came Down* showing the archaeological evidence that agrees with the Bible.



Q8. Which type of apologetics appeals to you most? Why?

### Suggested Reading:

*More Than a Carpenter* by Josh and Sean McDowell.  
*I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek

*The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel and Mark Mittelberg  
*The Case for Faith*, by Lee Strobel and Gary Poole  
*Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, by Josh and Sean McDowell.