

# Why 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 it [Greek - "apologia"]. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way..." 1 Peter 3 15-16 NLT*

The term Apologetics (a-pol-o-get-ics) comes from the Greek word ἀπολογία, (ap-ol-og-ee'-ah), which means "**speaking in defense.**" Christian apologetics is a field of Christian theology that presents a rational basis for the Christian faith. The Apologetics Study Bible explains - **"...Christian apologetics is the practice of giving reasons that support the Christian faith and responding to objections raised against it."**

### Why Apologetics

#### 1. Apologetics Supports Evangelism

Acts 17:2-4 NLT (Paul beginning to minister in Thessalonica)  
*"2 As was Paul's custom, he went to the synagogue service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people. 3 He explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, "This Jesus I'm telling you about is the Messiah." 4 Some of the Jews who listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women."*

Q1. What custom did Paul have? How does this reflect apologetics? (v.2)

Q2. What apologetic evidence did Paul use? (v.3)

Q3. What were the results of Paul's conversations? (v.4)

Sean McDowell writes, "The apostles of Christ ministered in a pluralistic culture. They regularly reasoned with both Jews and pagans, trying to persuade them of the truth of Christianity. They appealed to fulfilled prophecy, Jesus' miracles, evidence for creation, and proofs for the resurrection... Some were persuaded as a result..." Sean McDowell, "Introduction: Apologetics for a New Generation," in *Apologetics For A New Generation*, ed. Sean McDowell (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), 19-20.

Q4. What similarities do you see between the above quote from Sean McDowell and Acts 17:2-4?

Apologetics author and seminary professor, Douglas Groothuis, wrote, "The defense of Christianity as objectively true, rationally compelling and subjectively engaging also plays a leading role in evangelism... **Apologetics can be used to remove or diminish intellectual obstacles that hinder people from embracing Christ as Lord;** thus it serves as pre-evangelism." Douglas Groothuis. *Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 28.

Q5. What do you think are the major intellectual obstacles that hinder people from embracing Christ?

#### 2. Apologetics Strengthens the Christian's Faith

Douglas Groothuis, wrote, "But apologetics is offered not only in response to the doubts and denials of non-Christians. It also fortifies believers in their faith, whether they are wrestling with doubts and questions or simply seeking a deeper grounding for their biblical beliefs." *Christian Apologetics*, 25.

Sean McDowell explained, "Apologetics training can offer significant benefits in the personal life of Christians. For one thing, knowing *why* you believe *what* you believe and experiencing it in your life and relationships will give you renewed confidence in sharing your faith... Training in apologetics also provides an anchor during trials and difficulties. Emotions only take us so far, and then we need something more solid." (*Apologetics for A New Generation*, p. 18).

Galatians 1:6-7 NLT

*"6 I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News 7 but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ."*

Q6. Why was Paul shocked at the Galatian Christians? (v.6)

Q7. Why were the Galatians being fooled? (v.7)

Jude 20-22 NLT

*"20 But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, 21 and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. 22 And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering."*

Q8. What spiritual need did Jude say every Christian has? How is this accomplished? (v.20)

Q9. What effect can skeptics have on our faith if we have not been taught apologetics? (v.22)

### 3. Apologetics Is a Weapon in Spiritual Warfare

A spiritual struggle is occurring for the souls and minds of people. The devil and his forces seek to deceive and distract people from following Jesus Christ, from worshipping God, and from nourishing themselves on God's Word. The Bible mentions that the devil is a liar and deceiver (John 8:44; 1 Timothy 2:14; Revelation 20:3, 8, 10). The Bible also warns against the deception of false teachers (2 Timothy 3:13; Titus 1:10; 2 John 1:7). Doubt and confusion are common tactics of the devil and false teachers. Apologetics helps answer the questions of people and remove the error, misinformation, and deception that is a spiritual barrier to faith. Apologetics battles for the hearts, minds, and souls of people.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NLT

*"4 We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of **human reasoning** and to destroy **false arguments**. 5 We destroy every **proud obstacle** that keeps people from knowing God. We **capture their rebellious thoughts** and teach them to obey Christ."*

Q10. *If apologetics is one of God's mighty weapons, what does it enable us to do?*

2 Corinthians 4:4 NLT

*"4 Satan, who is the god of this world, has **blinded the minds** of those who don't believe. They are **unable to see** the glorious light of the Good News. They **don't understand this message** about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God."*

Q11. *What is one of Satan's major tactics against people? Why does apologetics enable us to combat this?*

### 4. Apologetics Solidifies Young People Who Are Exposed to Humanistic Skepticism at Secular Schools or in the Business World.

Large numbers of college-age young people and young adults going into the business world are shaken in their Christian faith as they encounter skepticism, criticism, or attacks on the Christian faith. Josh and Sean McDowell wrote, "A number of different studies track how many students leave the church during their college years, and, overall, the stats indicate that, after high school, between one-third and two-thirds of young people do leave. (Wallace, AYP) While they leave for many different kinds of reasons (moral, volitional. Emotional, relational, etc.), intellectual questions are *one* important factor. Young people have genuine intellectual questions. And when these questions are not answered, many leave the church... Bottom line: *if you want to train up young people to remain strong in the Christian faith, one vital component is training in apologetics.*" Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, Ph.D. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017), xxxiv-xxxv.

One study revealed that in American colleges, large numbers of professors are agnostics and atheists. Sean McDowell wrote, "More than 50 percent of college professors believe the Bible is 'an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts.' Students are routinely taught that Darwinian evolution is the substitute creator, that the Bible is unreliable, that Jesus was like any other religious figure, and that any Christian who thinks differently is at best old-fashioned and at worst intolerant, bigoted, and hateful. These ideas are

perpetuated in the classroom through reason, logic, and evidence. The church must teach students to counter these trends." (*Apologetics for A New Generation*, p. 19).

Q12. *Do you know of anyone who actively attended church but dropped out after leaving High School? If so, why did they drop out? Have they returned?*

Colossians 2:4, 8-10 NLT

*"4 I am telling you this so no one will **deceive you with well-crafted arguments**."*

*"6 And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. 7 Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."*

Q13. *What warning did Paul make to believers? (v. 4)*

Q14. *What can we do to grow a strong faith in the truth that resists deception? (vs.6-7)*

***8 Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. 9 For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. 10 So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority."***

Q15. *What other warning does Paul make? How does Paul describe the world's philosophies? (v. 8)*

Q16. *What is the alternative to the world's philosophies? Why must we keep our minds and hearts centered on Christ? How does apologetics relate to this? (vs. 9-10)*

### Conclusion

Sean McDowell wrote, "I am convinced that C.S. Lewis was right: The question is not really *if* we will defend the Christian faith, but *if* we will defend it *well*. Whether we like it or not, we are all apologists of a sort." (*Apologetics for A New Generation*, p. 16).

Q17. *Do you agree with the statement? What does this mean to you? How well do you think the average Christian has done in defending the Christian faith? What can you do to be better prepared to defend the faith?*