

# Christian Apologetics – Lecture 1

## The Biblical Mandate

Sovereign Grace Church

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Phil Sasser

### I. Why study apologetics?

#### A. God commands it.

1 Peter 3:14-16

<sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

1. “Have no fear of them, nor be troubled”
2. “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy”
3. “Always being prepared to make a defense”
4. “To anyone who asks you”
5. “For a reason for the hope that is in you”
6. “Yet with gentleness and respect”

#### B. Christianity is reasonable

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Acts 19:8 And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

1. A reasonable person should be a Christian.
2. It is the only worldview that fits or works.
3. It is the only worldview that gives a basis for reason

4. God wants to “reason” with man.
5. Those who reject Christ are “without excuse.”

## II. What are our objectives in Apologetics?

### A. To answer the questions/objections of unbelievers – Defensive

Philippians 1:7

<sup>7</sup> It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

Philippians 1:15-16

<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.

<sup>16</sup> The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

### B. To answer the attacks of the foolish – Offensive.

Psalms 14:1

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”  
They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds,  
there is none who does good.

1 Corinthians 1:18-26

1 Corinthians 3:18-20

2 Corinthians 10:5

<sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

### C. Christianity is the answer that the world needs.

### D. The Limitations of Apologetics

1. You can win the argument and lose the sinner.
2. In the end, God must reveal himself to man.
  - a. Matthew 11:25-27
  - b. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

3. Beware of apologetics where the gospel is not preached first and foremost.
4. Proving the “Uncaused Cause” is not the same as Christian Theism.
5. Probabilities are not proofs.

### III. Differing Apologies Offered

- A. **Liberal Apologetics**: An approach to apologetics which attempts to show that the Christian worldview, when properly interpreted, is in accord with the best, current philosophical systems. Holders of this position include C.S. Pierce, Williams James, Samuel Alexander, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Langdon Gilkley, Process Theology, the New Hermeneutic, Origen?
- B. **Classical Apologetics**: An approach to apologetics based upon attempted deductive demonstrations of God’s existence and character. Holders of this position include Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Philo, Clement, Justin Martyr, early Augustine, Anselm, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Rene Descartes, Berkely, Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, Charles Hartshorn, Norman Geisler, Alvin Plantinga, R.C. Sproul, John Gerstner, Arthur Lindsley, and William Lane Craig.
- C. **Evidential Apologetics**: An approach whereby one attempts to render the truth of Christianity most highly probable (over and against other views) by the inductive gathering of historical and scientific evidences. Holders of this position include William Paley, Joseph Butler, F.R. Tennant, John W. Montgomery, Stuart Hackett, Floyd Hamilton, Bernard Ramm, Clark Pinnock, C.S. Lewis, The Creation Research Institute, Ken Hamm, Josh McDowell, John Gerstner (in part), B.B. Warfield, and Fundamentalists by and large.
- D. **Presuppositional Apologetics**: An approach to apologetics which attempts to demonstrate the dependence of all worldviews on “presuppositions” or basic foundational assumptions, and the inadequacy (and, in fact, absurdity) of all except the Christian set of presuppositions. Holders of this view include later Augustine, John Calvin, Anselm, James Orr, Cornelius Van Til (the father of modern presuppositionalism), Francis Schaeffer, Hermann Dooyeweerd, John Hick, Gordon Clark, Greg Bahnsen, R.J. Roushdoony, and Doug Wilson.

### IV. Telling your story

- A. Tailoring your story to the need of the moment.
  1. Who is your hearer?
  2. What is the context? (one time or repeated opportunities)
  3. How much time?

B. The content of your story

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

C. Connecting your story to the listener.

D. **Assignment:** Chose one of the following situations and write out what you would say. You only have 5 minutes.

1. You've just reconnected with an old acquaintance that you knew before you were a Christian. He asks "What happened to you?"
2. You're taking a class at Wake Tech and you make a new friend. Over lunch, he tells you he's an atheist. What would you say in response?
3. You have a colleague at work who says she doesn't believe in God because of all of the bad things that happen in the world. How would you respond?

E. **Assignments:**

1. Bahnsen chapters 13-18 (optional)
2. [The Cosmological Argument](#) by Mike Marshall, the Long Version – You Tube
3. [Greg Bahnsen verses Gordon Stein Debate](#), Full Version – You Tube