

Apologetics and the Bible

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS?

Definition (Greek: *apologia* = “defense”)

Christian apologetics is the formal defense of the Christian faith against doctrinal error, misrepresentation, and various objections. Christian apologetics attempts to demonstrate persuasively that the gospel message is true in what it affirms.

- Supporting Scripture (1 Peter 3:15)

For a short video summarizing important topics in Christian apologetics, please visit: <https://www.wilfredgraves.org/apologetics>.

WHAT CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS IS NOT!

1. Christian apologetics is not apologizing (showing remorse) for having faith.
2. Christian apologetics is not about coercing people to embrace a point of view.
3. Christian apologetics is not about simply winning an argument.
4. Christian apologetics is not about the prideful humiliation of others.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF APOLOGETICS

- ❑ Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:1-11 and Mark 2:5-11)
- ❑ Stephen (Acts 6:8-10)
- ❑ Paul (Acts 17:2-4 and Philippians 1:7, 17)
- ❑ Ordained Elders (Titus 1:9)
- ❑ Jude (see entire book, especially verses 3 and 4)

FAMOUS CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS FROM CHURCH HISTORY

- ❑ Justin Martyr, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and others (pre-20th Century)
- ❑ C. S. Lewis, Norman Geisler, Ravi Zacharias, William Lane Craig, and others (Modern)

TWO METHODS OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

1. **Evidential apologetics** uses historical, archeological, scientific, and other types of evidence to demonstrate the truth of Christianity.
2. **Presuppositional apologetics** answers the prior assumptions and biases of the opponents of Christianity in order to argue for the rationality of the Christian worldview in light of human experience.

WHY IS CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS IMPORTANT?

- ❖ *First, Christian Apologetics Combats Doubt.*
- ❖ *Secondly, Christian Apologetics Strengthens Faith.*
- ❖ *Thirdly, Christian Apologetics Serves the Cause of Evangelism.*

SUGGESTED RESOURCE

- Geisler, Norman L. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

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THREE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

1. Does God exist?
2. Has God spoken?
3. Is the Bible the Word of God?

TRADITIONAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. Causation (Cosmological Argument). Everything in the universe has a cause; therefore, the universe itself must have a cause.
2. Order (Teleological Argument). The harmony, order, complexity, and precision of the universe suggest a rational designer.
3. Being (Ontological Argument). Our ability to imagine God implies that he exists.
4. Morality (Moral Argument). There must be some source to our innate sense of right and wrong. God placed his mark on us.

SEVEN ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. The Existence of the Universe
2. The Beginning of the Universe
3. The Argument from Design
4. The Argument from Life's Origin
5. The Argument from Morality
6. The Argument from the Bible
7. The Argument from the Historicity of Jesus Christ

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's written revelation of himself.

- Two key Scriptures: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21.
- If God has spoken to us in the pages of Scripture, then:
 - (1) We should regularly study God's words (individually and collectively).
 - (2) We should daily seek to know God's will and his ways.
 - (3) We should faithfully obey God's commands.
 - (4) We should diligently follow God's principles of righteous living.

MODERN ATTACKS ON THE BIBLE

1. The Challenge of Secularism
2. Challenges from Liberal Scholarship and Popular Fiction

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WHY TRUST THE BIBLE?

1. The Bible is remarkably consistent in its story and message. It weaves together a beautiful account of God's redemption of humankind. That we have such an amazing expression of unity from so many different authors with such diverse backgrounds is clear evidence of divine providence.
2. The Bible contains numerous fulfilled prophecies and miracles. Biblical prophecies are so precise that they provide reliable evidence of divine inspiration. Biblical miracles not only provide evidence for the activity of God, but they often confirm the authenticity of a message that God sends and the messenger through whom he sends it.
3. The Bible is historically accurate. Many of the people, places, and events described within the Bible have been verified by science, archeology, and/or other secular sources. Furthermore, the sheer volume of Biblical manuscripts makes it easy to recognize and dismiss tampering or distortion in these texts.
4. The Bible changes lives. Hundreds of millions of people around the world read the Bible for inspiration, guidance, and encouragement. The Bible's undeniable ability to motivate faith and produce radical life change is one strong indication of its divine origin.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE—HOW DID WE GET OUR BIBLE?

1. Old Testament—Based on Hebrew Bible
2. Apocrypha—Never Considered Authoritative
3. New Testament—Based on Writings of Apostles and their Associates
4. Gnostic Gospels—Legendary Stories Unconnected to Christ, Apostles, or First Century

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The New Testament Canon

Book	Author	Date (A.D.)	Possible reason for inclusion in the canon:
Matthew	Matthew the Apostle	< 70	Apostolic authorship
Mark	John Mark	55	Recorded the teachings of Apostle Peter
Luke	Luke the physician	59 - 63	Recorded the teachings of Apostle Paul
John	John the Apostle	85 - 93	Apostolic authorship
Acts	Luke the physician	63	Contemporary of both Peter and Paul
Romans	Paul	57	Apostolic authorship
1 Corinthians	Paul	55	Apostolic authorship
2 Corinthians	Paul	55	Apostolic authorship
Galatians	Paul	50	Apostolic authorship
Ephesians	Paul	60	Apostolic authorship
Philippians	Paul	61	Apostolic authorship
Colossians	Paul	60	Apostolic authorship
I Thess.	Paul	51	Apostolic authorship
II Thess.	Paul	51-52	Apostolic authorship
I Timothy	Paul	64	Apostolic authorship
II Timothy	Paul	66	Apostolic authorship
Titus	Paul	64	Apostolic authorship
Philemon	Paul	60	Apostolic authorship
Hebrews	unknown (possibly Paul, Apollos, Clement or Barnabas)	< 70	Possible apostolic authorship - generally accepted as authoritative by the Early Church Fathers
James	James, brother of Jesus	48 - 50	Apostolic authorship
I Peter	Peter	64	Apostolic authorship
II Peter	Peter	66	Apostolic authorship
I John	John the Apostle	90	Apostolic authorship
II John	John the Apostle	90	Apostolic authorship
III John	John the Apostle	90	Apostolic authorship
Jude	Jude, brother of Jesus	65	Brother of Jesus
Revelation of John	John the Apostle	< 96	Apostolic authorship