

APOLOGETICS

1. The Definition of Apologetics.

- a. ἀπολογία: a speech of defense, defense, reply...the act of making a defense” (*BDAG*, 117).
- b. Apologetics is giving a reasoned defense for an action or belief.
- c. Christian apologetics is defending the Christian faith both to strengthen believers and persuade unbelievers. It is both offensive and defensive.
- d. Apologetics is not apologising or saying sorry for the Christian faith or what Christians have done.
- e. Quotes.
 - (1) “Apologetics [is] that New Testament ministry which seeks to provide rational grounds for believing Christianity in whole or in part and to respond to objections raised against Christianity in whole or in part. So understood, apologetics is a ministry designed to help unbelievers to overcome intellectual obstacles to conversion and believers to remove doubts that hinder spiritual growth.”¹
 - (2) “Christian apologetics is the art and science of answering the question why someone should place their faith in Jesus Christ.”²

2. The Importance of Apologetics.

- a. “The unexamined life is not worth living.”³
- b. “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”⁴

3. The History of Apologetics. Christians have been engaged in apologetics since the beginning of the church.

- a. Apostolic age.
 - (1) **Ac 17:2-3** 2 Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, This Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Messiah.
- b. Early church.
 - (1) “Because Christian beliefs and practices often ran counter to Greco-Roman values and customs, the church found itself in the midst of an increasingly hostile environment. Rumours that Christians practiced incest, cannibalism, and infant sacrifice were widespread among the general population; the state regarded these ‘atheists’ (for Christians did not believe in the traditional Greek or Roman gods) as a threat to its own well-being and guilty of a capital crime; and educated intellectuals like the satirist Lucian of Samosata, Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, and especially Celsus attacked Christian doctrines as a recent and

¹ J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, 131.

² Thinking Matters NZ.

³ Socrates.

⁴ C. S. Lewis.

perverse corruption of sound ancient traditions. In the face of such attacks the Christian apologists (ca. 130-200) sought to defend the faith to which they had committed themselves. They attempted, for example, to dispel the rumours arising out of half-truths and ignorance by describing in general terms Christian beliefs and rituals, to win for the faith a fair hearing from the authorities by asserting their loyalty and value to the government, and to counter the charge of newness by asserting that Christianity was, by virtue of its Jewish heritage, more ancient than Greek philosophy. Writers whose works have survived are Justin Martyr (d. 165), Athenagoras (ca. 170-180), Aristides (ca. 145), Theophilus of Antioch (ca. 180-185), and Tatian (d. 180?). Only fragments have been preserved of the works of Quadratus (ca. 125-130), Melito of Sardis (ca. 170-180?), and Apollinaris of Hierapolis (ca. 170-180), while those of Aristo of Pella (ca. 140?) and Miltiades (ca. 160-180?) have been lost. These, together with the *Epistle to Diognetus*, comprise the Greek Christian apologists.”⁵

4. The Foundation of Apologetics.

- a. The logic of God.
 - (1) God is not afraid of our questions, as long as they are asked humbly and respectfully.
- b. The logic of the universe.
 - (1) If the universe were inherently illogical, there would be no basis for any apologetical discussion.
- c. The logic of the Christian faith.
 - (1) **Jn 20:30-31** 30 Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples that are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
 - (2) **1 Pe 3:15** 15 ...In your hearts honour Messiah 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....
 - (3) Because Christianity is a reasonable faith, unbelievers have a right to ask questions.⁶
 - (4) “It is unbiblical for anyone to say, ‘Just believe!’”⁷
- d. Our ability to reason logically about God and the Christian faith is fundamentally flawed. In our fallen state we are:
 - (1) Unrighteous truth-suppressors.
 - (a) **Ro 1:18-23** 18 The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the

⁵ Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, updated ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 528–529.

⁶ F. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

⁷ F. Schaeffer.

creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, animals, and creeping things.

(2) Idol-worshippers.

(a) **Ro 1:24-25** 24 ...God gave [men] up in the desires of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

5. The Four Functions of Apologetics.

a. Refutation: exposing the weaknesses of non-biblical worldviews.

(1) **Ro 1:18-25** 21 ...Although [men] knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, animals, and creeping things.

(2) Often the best use of apologetics is to unsettle the confidence one has in their false worldview, to the point that they seek a better answer to the questions of life.⁸

(3) “It is true that the decisive thing is the regenerative power of God. That can overcome all lack of preparation, and the absence of that makes even the best preparation useless. But as a matter of fact God usually exerts that power in connection with certain prior conditions of the human mind, and it should be ours to create, so far as we can, with the help of God, those favourable conditions for the reception of the gospel. False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervour of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root. ...[This] method of procedure is based simply upon a profound belief in the pervasiveness of ideas. What is today a matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires. In that second stage, it has gone too far to be combated; the time to stop it was when it was still a matter of impassionate debate. So as Christians we should try to mould the thought of the world in such a way as to make the acceptance of Christianity something more than a logical absurdity.”⁹

b. Defense: Answering attacks against the Christian faith.

⁸ Ron Matsen.

⁹ J. Gresham Machen, “The Scientific Preparation of the Minister,” an address delivered September 20, 1912, at the opening of the 101st session of Princeton Theological Seminary.

- (1) “We must show our Scriptures not to be in conflict with whatever [our critics] can demonstrate about the nature of things from reliable sources.”¹⁰
- (2) **2 Co 10:5** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Messiah.
- c. Reinforcement: Reassuring Christians their faith is reasonable and true.
 - (1) “When people learn what they believe and why, they become bold in their witness and attractive in the way they engage others in debate or dialogue. They become confident, articulate, bold Christians.”¹¹
- d. Persuasion: Making a positive case why a person should believe in Jesus.

6. The Characteristics of Apologetics.¹² To be effective, apologetics must be:

- a. Revelational.
- b. Relevant.
 - (1) “Apologetics must be thought out and practiced in the rough and tumble of real life.”
 - (2) “Practice apologetics in the battles of your generation. . . . We can never expect the testimony of a previous generation to be sufficient for our own time.”
 - (3) “Follow the itch that people are scratching in your community.”
 - (4) Take serious the intellectual issues, problems, and questions of your children.¹³
- c. Rational.
 - (1) Apologetics contributes to a general perception that moral and religious issues are not mere matters of private taste but rather areas where rational argument are appropriate.¹⁴
- d. Redemptive.
 - (1) Apologetics is not an end in itself.
 - (a) “. . . [A]rgument and evidence play an essential role in our showing Christianity to be true, but a contingent and secondary role in our personally knowing Christianity to be true. The proper ground of our knowing Christianity to be true is the inner work of the Holy Spirit; and in our showing Christianity to be true, it is His role to open the hearts of unbelievers to assent and respond to the reasons we present.”¹⁵
 - (2) Coming to faith in Jesus is never just a matter of apologetical reasoning.
 - (a) “The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing.”¹⁶
 - (b) “What makes one regard philosophers half mistrustfully and half mockingly is not that one again and again detects how innocent they are. . . . but that they display altogether insufficient honesty. . . . They pose as having discovered and

¹⁰ Augustine.

¹¹ J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*.

¹² Steve Kumar.

¹³ F. Schaeffer.

¹⁴ J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 11-12.

¹⁵ William L. Craig, *Reasonable Response*, 315.

¹⁶ B. Pascal.

attained their real opinions through the self-evolution of a cold, pure, divinely unperturbed dialectic... while what happens at bottom is that a prejudice, a notion, an 'inspiration,' generally a desire of the heart sifted and made abstract, is defended by them with reasons sought after the event."¹⁷

- (c) "Like many of my classmates at Chicago, I knew lots of T. S. Eliot by heart. I was attracted by Eliot's suggestions that only committed Christians... could overcome their unhealthy preoccupation with their private obsessions, and so serve their fellow humans with proper humility. But a prideful inability to believe what I was saying when I recited the General Confession gradually led me to give up my awkward attempts to get religion. So I fell back on absolutist philosophy.... [Platonism] had all the advantages of religion, without requiring the humility that Christianity demanded, and of which I am apparently incapable."¹⁸

7. The Aim of Apologetics.

- a. Christian apologetics pursues absolute, objective, ultimate truth.
- (1) "An absolute is a category that is so big that everything first inside and nothing is left over. The category of absolute reality includes everything in existence. It's a theory of everything."¹⁹
 - (2) Christians pursue objective truth, not just something vaguely religious that seems to work psychologically.²⁰
 - (a) Be sure the unbeliever understands you are talking about real truth, and not about something vaguely religious which seems to work psychologically.²¹
 - (3) Christians are free to follow the truth wherever it leads.
 - (a) "A confident mind is a mind free to follow the truth wherever it leads, without the distracting fear and anxiety that come from the attitude that maybe we are better off not knowing the truth. Christians need not fear the honest examination of their faith."²² Apologetics shows it is the Christian faith that best accounts for all the evidence.
- b. Postmoderns, by contrast, aren't that concerned with what is true.
- (1) "[A]n effective response to our culture requires an accurate diagnosis of that culture. In the minds of some Christians, since we live in a postmodern culture, we should abandon any attempt to commend our faith rationally as the truth about reality. Instead we just share our narrative and invite people to join in it. ...[T]his is a suicidal course of action. It will destroy any sense of the church's claim to

¹⁷ F. Nietzsche, "On the Prejudices of Philosophers," in *Beyond and Evil*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1990) 36.

¹⁸ R. Rorty, "Wild Orchids and Trotsky," in *Wild Orchids and Trotsky: Messages from American Universities*, ed. Mark Edmundson (New York: Penguin, 1993), 37-38.

¹⁹ E. Potter, *3 Theories of Everything*, 2.

²⁰ F. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

²¹ F. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, in *The Complete Works*, 1:[].

²² J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*.

- have the truth about the way the world is—that will be given by scientific naturalism—and Christianity will be seen as mere mythology.”²³
- (2) “Postmoderns generally choose the worldview of their community. They don’t choose a worldview because it’s true.”²⁴
- c. Because of our human limitations, apologetics deals with probabilities.
- (1) “Many times we think that believing something with less than complete certainty means we really do not believe it. But this is not true. If you believe something, you must be at least slightly more certain that it is true than you are that it is false. You must be more than fifty-fifty regarding the belief.”²⁵
- (2) In Anglo-American law, the four standards of proof are: (1) beyond all doubt; (2) beyond a reasonable doubt; (3) clear and convincing evidence; and (4) preponderance of the evidence. All these standards are legitimate and useful.
- (3) Just because we don’t know everything doesn’t mean we can’t know anything.
- (4) We act on less than absolute certainty every day.
- d. Don’t allow circumstantial evidence to be devalued and maligned.
- (1) In law, both direct and circumstantial evidence are accepted and always have been.
- (2) We make decisions based on circumstantial evidence every day.
- (3) The more pieces of circumstantial evidence, the more reasonable the conclusion.
- (4) “[C]ircumstantial cases are powerful when they are cumulative. The more that evidence points to a specific explanation, the more reasonable that explanation becomes....”²⁶
- (5) Circumstantial evidence has been unfairly maligned over the years. Direct evidence is simply unavailable to anyone studying historical events. Devaluing circumstantial evidence prevents one from understanding anything about history.²⁷
- (6) “All of us need to respect the power and nature of circumstantial evidence in determining truth so that we can be open to the role that circumstantial evidence plays in making the case for Christianity. ... When we treat circumstantial evidence as though it is not evidence at all, we do ourselves a disservice as ambassadors for the Christian worldview.”²⁸
- (7) “Circumstantial cases are built on the strength of multiple lines of evidence and the fact that all the individual pieces point to the same conclusion.”²⁹

8. The Attitude of Apologetics: Confidence.

²³ William L. Craig.

²⁴ Unknown speaker at Dallas Theological Seminary.

²⁵ J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*.

²⁶ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*, 1st ed. (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013), 69.

²⁷ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*, 1st ed. (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013), 69.

²⁸ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels*, 1st ed. (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013), 69.

²⁹ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 209.

- a. We can't be beat.
 - (1) "No non-Christian can be consistent to the logic of his presuppositions."³⁰
 - (2) "The church should be able [and is able] to outthink its critics."³¹
 - (3) Many great thinkers in history have concluded Christianity is uniquely credible and trustworthy.
- b. The biblical worldview best accounts for the evidence available to us.
 - (1) "To be true, a theory must be noncontradictory, one must be able to live consistently with the theory, and the theory must conform to what we observe in a wide consideration of man and how he behaves."³²
 - (2) "Which worldview best accounts for all the evidence available to us?"
 - (3) God's attributes are clearly perceived in the things that have been made.
 - (a) **Ro 1:19-20** 19 ... What can be known about God is plain to [men], because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.
- c. Turning against the biblical worldview leads to hopelessness, despair, and brokenness.
 - (1) "If you go against the grain of the universe, you're going to get splinters."
 - (2) **Pr 21:30** 30 No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against Yahweh.
 - (3) **Ro 1:24-25** 24 ... God gave [men] up in the desires of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.
 - (4) Is secular humanism and postmodernism solving the problems of our world?
 - (5) God has made foolish the wisdom of the world.
 - (a) **1 Co 1:18-31** 18 The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For because, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.
- d. Every worldview appeals to an authority who cannot be questioned.
 - (1) "What makes one regard philosophers half mistrustfully and half mockingly is not that one again and again detects how innocent they are...but that they display altogether insufficient honesty. ... They pose as having discovered and attained their real opinions through the self-evolution of a cold, pure, divinely unperturbed dialectic...while what happens at bottom is that a prejudice, a notion, an

³⁰ F. Schaeffer.

³¹ J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*, [].

³² F. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

- ‘inspiration,’ generally a desire of the heart sifted and made abstract, is defended by them with reasons sought after the event.”³³
- (2) “[God] must be known for what He is, and known to the extent that he is known, by authority alone. Have we no philosophical justification for the Christian position? Or are we to find a measure of satisfaction in the fact that others too, non-Christian scientists and philosophers as well as ourselves, have in the end to allow for some mystery in their system? To all this we must humbly but confidently reply by saying that we have the best philosophical justification for our position. It is not as though we are in a bad way and that we must seek for some comfort from others who are also in a bad way. We as Christians alone have a position that is philosophically defensible. The frank acceptance of our position on authority, which at first blush, because of our inveterate tendency to think along non-Christian lines, seems to involve the immediate and total rejection of all philosophy—this frank acceptance of authority is, philosophically, our very salvation.”³⁴
 - (3) As Christians, we freely admit authority is a major reason we believe the biblical worldview, and we’re not ashamed of it.
 - (4) With our God-given reason, we are able to evaluate the authority claim of the biblical worldview compared with the authority claims of other worldviews.
 - (5) “All alternatives to Christian doctrine are themselves grounded in unprovable assumptions, and in that sense cannot be distinguished from positions of faith. Dogma is inescapable notwithstanding the failure of so many to recognize the pervasiveness and fragility of their own belief systems.”³⁵
- e. What’s the alternative?
- (1) “That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built.”³⁶
 - (2) “Small children start off with the hope and trust that reality makes sense. ...By the time they are adults, most people have lost their hope and trust about how everything fits together. Their concept of reality shrinks to a narrow cultural

³³ F. Nietzsche, “On the Prejudices of Philosophers,” in *Beyond and Evil*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1990) 36.

³⁴ Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972) 8.

³⁵ H. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, xix.

³⁶ Bertrand Russell, *Free Man’s Worship*.

viewpoint, to self-protection and control, or to indifference. They live in a small reality because the big reality, the absolute reality, is too difficult.”³⁷

(3) “It is a beautiful theory but ruined by a brutal gangs of facts.”³⁸

9. The Practice of Apologetics.

- a. Invite people to state their case, then examine it.
 - (1) **Pr 18:17** 17 The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.
- b. Question the questioner.
 - (1) **Mt 21:23-27** 23 When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority? 24 Jesus answered them, I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?
- c. Establish every charge by the evidence of two or three witnesses.
 - (1) **Mt 18:16** 16 ...Take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.
- d. Point out the presuppositional strongholds in which people trust.
 - (1) **Pr 21:22** 22 A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust.
- e. Answer a fool according to his folly.
 - (1) **Pr 26:4-5** 4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.
- f. Speak with wisdom and the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) **Ac 6:9-10** 9 Some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen..., and of the Cyrenians, of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.
- g. Be provoked at idolatry.
 - (1) **Ac 17:16-17** 16 While Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.
 - (2) **Ac 19:26** 26 You see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.
- h. Point out the religiosity of your opponents.
 - (1) **Ac 17:22-23** 22 ...Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: To the unknown god. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

³⁷ E. Potter, *3 Theories of Everything*, 1.

³⁸ Sigmund Freud.

- (2) **Ro 1:24-25** 24 ...God gave [men] up in the desires of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.
- i. Quote popular culture.
- (1) **Ac 17:27-28** 27 Yet [God] is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for “In him we live and move and have our being.” As even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.”
- (a) “They fashioned a tomb for thee, O Holy and high one...But thou art not dead, thou livest and abidest forever, For in thee we live and move and have our being....”³⁹
- (b) “Let us begin with Zeus: never, O men, let us leave him unmentioned. Full of Zeus are all the ways and all the meeting-places of men; the sea and the harbours are full of him. It is with Zeus that every one of us in every way had to do, for we are also his offspring.”⁴⁰
- (c) Paul understood not only the ideas and beliefs of his culture. He knew their song lyrics.
- j. Start with theism, then move to trinitarian monotheism.
- (1) **Ac 14:15-17** 15 Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.
- (2) **Ac 17:24-29** 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, because he himself gives to all mankind life, breath, and everything. 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for In him we live and move and have our being. As even some of your own poets have said, For we are indeed his offspring. 29 Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold, silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.
- k. Contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.
- (1) **Jud 3** 3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.
- (2) Effective apologetics always starts with knowing our own faith well.
- l. Prove that Jesus is the Messiah.

³⁹ Quoted in F. F. Bruce, *Paul: An Apostle of the Heart Set Free*.

⁴⁰ Epimenides, quoted in Aratus, *Phainomena* 1-5.

- (1) **Ac 9:22** 22 ...Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.
- (2) **Ac 17:2-4** 2 Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead and saying, This Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Messiah. 4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.
- (3) **Ac 17:17-18** 17 ...[Paul] reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, What does this babbler wish to say? Others said, He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.
- (4) **Ac 18:27-28** 27 ...When [Apollos] wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Messiah was Jesus.
- (5) **Ac 19:8-10** 8 [Paul] entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.
- (6) **Ac 28:23-24** 23 From morning till evening [Paul] expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Torah of Moses and from the Prophets. 24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.
- (7) **1 Pe 3:14-16** 15 ...In your hearts honour Messiah the Lord as holy....
- (8) Give an apology for Jesus, not the church.
- m. Assert final judgment.
 - (1) **Ac 17:30-31** 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to change their minds, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed. And of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.
- n. Withdraw from those who are stubborn and who speak evil of the Christian faith.
 - (1) **Ac 19:8-10** 8 [Paul] entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.
- o. Make yourself a servant of all.
 - (1) **1 Co 9:19-23** 19 Though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them [per God's general call].... 22 I have become all

things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

- p. Renounce underhanded ways.
- (1) **2 Co 4:2-2** We have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.
 - (2) **1 Pe 3:14-16** 14 Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honour Messiah 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, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Messiah may be put to shame.
- q. Speak the truth in love.
- (1) **Eph 4:15** 15 Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Messiah.
 - (2) Let your speech be gracious, seasoned with salt.
 - (a) **Col 4:5-6** 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.
- r. Make a defense with gentleness and respect.
- (1) **1 Pe 3:14-16** 14 Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honour Messiah 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, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Messiah may be put to shame.
 - (2) **2 Ti 2:23-26** 23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies. You know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them a change of mind leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his desire.
- s. Don't be frightened.
- (1) **Php 1:27-28** 27 Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Messiah, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.
 - (2) **1 Pe 3:14-16** 14 Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honour Messiah 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, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Messiah may be put to shame.
- t. Do not be taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit.
- (1) **Col 2:8** 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Messiah.
- u. Be prepared to make a defense.

- (1) **1 Pe 3:14-16** 14 Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honour Messiah 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, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Messiah may be put to shame.
- v. Develop your skills over time.
- (1) **Ac 18:24-26** 24 A Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

10. Apologetics and the Church.

- a. The Church is to be the pillar and buttress of the truth.
- (1) **1 Ti 3:14-15** 14 I [Paul] am writing these things to you [Timothy] so that, 15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.
- b. Church leaders should devote energy and time to apologetics.
- (1) “People who intend to serve long-term in the ministry of answering people’s questions must themselves cultivate skill, temperance, patience, and care for the practice of asking and answering questions. We must dedicate ourselves to being lifelong learners as leaders who seek to serve others.”⁴¹
- c. Churches should equip those in the public arena as well as ordinary believers.
- (1) “We long to see greater commitment to the hard work of robust apologetics. This must be at two levels. (1) We need to identify, equip and pray for those who can engage at the highest intellectual and public level in arguing for and defending biblical truth in the public arena. (2) We urge Church leaders and pastors to equip all believers with the courage and the tools to relate the truth with prophetic relevance to everyday public conversation, and so to engage every aspect of the culture we live in.”⁴²

⁴¹ J. E. Gorra, *Reasonable Response*, 358.

⁴² Lausanne Movement, *The Cape Town Commitment* (2011).

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