

Christian Presuppositional Apologetics

Part One: The Priority of Apologetics

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I. Introduction

A. The topic at hand: A biblical defense of the faith

Many exegetical, theological, philosophical aspects to this issue

B. The purpose:

1. Not to give you a theological lecture or bore you with something you cannot relate to.
2. Not to confuse you with **Heavy** philosophical or logical arguments, or mandate you to learn reams of evidences or procedures for dealing with various kinds of error.
3. But, it is to **challenge** you, to stir you up to make you think about how to **defend the truth** of Christ and the Bible when your faith is challenged -- and to do so **Biblically -- Presuppositionally!** – that is, reasoning on the basis of starting points.

C. The question:

1. How do you answer the question: Why do I believe in God?
2. What do you say to your family member, brother, your precious son, or your dear friend who has walked away from the Christian faith.
3. How do you answer the charges and false teachings of the skeptic, the so called atheist, the Mormon, the follower of Islam, or your Jewish friend who rejects The Messiah?
4. You need answers to these questions. The Bible speaks to these issues.
I want to:
 - a. **Provide** a Biblical framework for answering these questions.
 - b. **Develop** a Biblical method for dealing with all such questions
 - c. **Apply** this method to specific instances so that you understand how to use it in witnessing and counseling situations.

D. The plan

1. **The Priority of Apologetics** -- introduction and laying the ground work
2. **The Critical Issues in Apologetics** -- place of scripture, theology, evidence, the use of reason, and short comings of classical or traditional apologetics (last pocket of Arminian leprosy in the bosom of Calvinism)
3. **The Presuppositional Approach to Apologetics**
4. **The Practical Applications of Presuppositionalism** -- defending Christianity, teaching truth to believers and unbelievers, and counseling

disobedient believers.

II. The True Condition of the Human Heart

A. Man's desperate **depraved** condition

1. He is dead in their sins Eph 2:1-3
2. He is desperately wicked Jer 17:9
3. His mind and conscience are defiled Titus 1:15
4. His mind is blinded by sin 2 Cor 4:3-4

B. Man's fixation upon a **lie** (sins of the mind)

1. He has exchanged the truth of God's Word for a lie. Rom 1:25a. He is not neutral but in open **rebellion** against the truth, engaged in lies and foolishness. Prov 1:7; Matt 12:30; Eph 4:17-19.
2. He worships the creature rather than the Creator - idolatry, false religion. Rom 1:25b.
3. He has foolishly decided that there is no God. Ps 14:1-3 (Rom 3:10-12)
His **heart** is against God -- inner control center
Out of it are the issues of life -- Prov 4:23
Location of human character -- Luke 6:45
Aspect of man that concerns God most -- 1 Sam 16:7
The **heart** is the seat of man's Spiritual (Prov 3:5), moral (Mark 7:20-23), intellectual (Heb 4:12), volitional (Dan 1:8), and emotional (Prov 15:13) aspects of man life.
4. He seeks to wipe out God and be his own god
Gen 3:1-7 Satan told Eve a lie -- she would not be like God knows in perfect holiness. Adam and Eve sought to **interpret the universe** without God -- Jer 8:9 Rejecting wisdom from the Lord.

Note: Lost men are **usurpers** of God's place; they are acting "**autonomously**."
The **opposite** of truth is **rebellion**!

C. Man's **suppression** of the truth in unrighteousness

1. Rom 1:18-20
18a God wrath is continually being poured out on unbelievers
18b Unbelievers suppress the truth in unrighteousness
- 19 God has revealed Himself to all men in the Creation (Psm 19:1-2)
20 Unbelievers know about God (His eternal power as he sustains the universe; and His Godhead as he provides everlasting deliverance) but the do not know him as they ought to know him.
Conclusion: The know him and they continual to cast Him aside.
James 2:19 demons know and shudder
2. Romans 2:15 Law is written in their hearts (conscience) -- moral conscience
They know it is wrong to kill -- reject the God who put this in their heart but they cannot give an **account** for why they believe his
Calvin: **Inescapable sense of Deity in the heart of every person**

Note: We **do not** have to **prove** God to unbelievers
Lost men are **spiritual weasels!**

D. Man's **ridicule** of the truth in **Pride** -- **Pride is the critical issue**

1. He sears their conscience -- I Tim 4:1-3
2. He is arrogant -- II Tim 3:1-5
3. He is the enemy of God -- Rom 5:10
*The unbeliever refuses the truth
His problem is ethical and moral issue (not intellectual) — Jer 9:6; Luke 13:34.
4. Man is in desperate need of salvation to be rightly related to his creator in humility and truth.

III. God's Gracious Gift of Salvation

A. The nature of **Gospel**

1. It was promised at the outset of man's rebellion Gen 3:15 Christ will bruise the head of the serpent
2. It was anticipated in later prophecy Isa 9:6-7
3. It was fulfilled in the person of Christ John 1:29,36
4. It was completed in the work of Christ Rom 5:8, Heb 2:9, 7:21-25
5. It is freely offered to every man Rom 10:9-10,13
6. It is entirely the gift of God Rom 8:28-29
- 7 It is only by faith (justification) Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Rom 4:16,22

B. The nature of **Faith** -- three levels; three Latin words, leading to saving faith.

1. **Notitia** — knowledge -- the good news, the message of Christ, knowledge of the facts
2. **Assensus** --accepting the message as true; an intellectual cognitive faith
e.g. James 2:19
3. **Fiducia** — trust or the commitment or the giving of one's will over to the truth flowing out of convictions. Heb 11:1-3; belief John 1:12
Only true Christianity understands saving faith -- it is a gift of God
Heb 11:6

C. The nature of **Evangelism**

1. Evangelism is the declaration of the message of gospel to the lost
I Cor. 15:3-4; John 3:3; 16
2. Evangelism involves reasoning with unbelievers out of the Scriptures
Isa 1:18; 41:21-24

IV. The Obligation to Defend this Message from Attack

Many view Apologetics as:

The refutation of Cults and false teachings

The amassing and presentation of the overwhelming evidences for Scripture.

The presentation of philosophical arguments and the use of the laws of

logic as the criteria for truth.

This is not the primary focus of apologetics

A. What is **Apologetics**?

1. The greek word “Apologia” means **defense**, justification, vindication
 “a reply to a formal charge”
 “To speak in defense of”
 “a defense of one’s innocence”
 Literally, “Your statement of why you should be deemed innocent of these charges”
2. Scripture
 Acts 22:1 Paul before the people “hear my defense”
 Acts 24:10 Paul before Ananias “I cheerfully make my defense”
 Acts 25:16 Paul before Festus “to make his defense against the charges”
 Acts 26:1 Paul before Agrippa defending himself
3. **Christian Apologetics**: “Our statement as to why Christ is innocent of the Charges alleged against Him.”
 Not because we are ridiculed but because **He** is ridiculed -- a grievous thing.
 Formally : The vindication (or Justification) of the Christian World View against the attacks of non-Christian World Views; protecting the Christian World view from Attack.

Not presumed guilt “I’m sorry” but presumed innocence.

B. How does **Apologetics** relate to **Evangelism**?

Apologetics is Evangelism

Apologetics accompanies Evangelism

Apologetics supports Evangelism

1. Paul’s statement on Evangelism I Cor 15:3-4
 “Christ died for our Sins”
2. Paul relates Evangelism to Apologetics Phil 1:7
 “defense and confirmation of the Gospel”

C. What is our **Moral obligation** in defending the Faith?

I Peter 3:15 “**the Magna Carta of Apologetic Texts**”

1. **Non negotiable “Always Ready”** 15b

when ever the faith is challenged and by whoever it comes from

(The street person or the Ph.D)

Titus 1:9 Pastors are to “**Exhort in Sound doctrine**” and

“**Refute those who contradict**”

Jude 3 “Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto

the saints.

Question: Do we need Apologetics?

Some say the Word needs no defense; just let the lion out of his cage!

Does the God of the universe need a puny man to defend him?

Acts 17:25 God does not need anything

Romans 11:33-36 Who has become His counselor?

He does not need us for anything but **He chooses to use us**

So with Evangelism

He made Balaam's donkey speak Numbers 22

He could make the very stones cry out Luke 19:40

In both evangelism and apologetics, God does not need us but He chooses to accomplish his work through us God, who need no defense asks us to defend him through out testimony and apologetic.

A moral necessity!

2. We are to give a **clear answer** -- an account or reason for the hope 15c

To give the Biblical Answer to his question or objection to the hope

To answer his argument in such as way as to close his mouth

so that they stand before the irrefutable truth of the Word

of God with nothing credible to say. (they might still continue to talk!)

Romans 3:19 "Every mouth may be stopped"

Titus 2:8 "The opponent may be put to shame"

Isa. 52:15 "Kings will shut their mouths on account of him"

Psm 8:2 "To make the enemy and the revengeful cease"

Not a matter of **Persuasion**. Only the a Holy Spirit can make him change his mind. (I Cor 2:4). He should be trusted to do so as He has amazing experience working with sinners -- Heb 4:12

*** The problem with much apologetics today:**

a. We have under estimated the power of Satan to completely blind the human heart

b. We have under estimated the power of the Holy Spirit to work in the heart of the sinner in bringing about

repentance.

The Apologetic is won when you give a irrefutable answer as it is not ours to persuade but the Holy Spirit

Not a matter of **Subjectivism**. An inner conviction of salvation or assurance of truth given by the Holy Spirit. While this assurance Is true, truth is not subjective, but objective in God.

Not a matter of **Relativism**. Saying something is "true for me" in dis-

inction from that which is true for someone else.

3. We are to give rational answers in the **right way** 15a
 - a. A mind submitted to Christ 15a
clear thinking biblically with theological precision -- we, like David, cannot fight Goliath in Saul's armor.
 - b. A proper attitude 15d
gentleness -- a godly spirit. Apologetics is **not contentious**-- that is to overwhelm them with a powerful argument
reverence, humility, love -- avoiding provocation. **Not pugnacious**, that is looking for a fight, we answer when they ask a question. Eph 4:15; 2 Tim 2:25-26.

V. Taking the Apologetic Challenge -- a moral necessity and priority.

1. Make a list of the three most commonly used excuses you encounter.
2. Write an evangelistic/ apologetic letter to someone you know who steadfastly rejects the truth.

VI. Some Suggested Books

Bansen, Greg L. *Always Ready* Atlanta: American Vision, 1996
Pratt, Richard L. *Every Thought Captive* Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979
MacArthur, John *Ashamed of the Gospel* Crossway, 1993
Van Til, Cornelius *The Defense of the Faith* Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967