

# APOLOGETICS

BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER

Introduction to the Series

# Series objective and agenda

Address intellectual doubts about a variety of topics.

- Is the Bible God's word?
- Critical thinking
- Questions about God and creation
- Questions about Jesus
- Cultural issues

# This Morning's Objectives

- Provide some context for the summer series.
- Create some anticipation of this series and its prospects for making a difference in ours and others' lives.

# This Morning's Agenda

- What is apologetics?
- Why apologetics?
- A rich history & hopeful future

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What is Apologetics?

# What is apologetics?

- Apologian (ἀπολογία in 1 Pe. 3:15) = a defense, an answer
- Apologetics = the study of defending the Christian faith, giving an answer to those who ask
- It provides a rational defense against various attacks on the Christian faith
- Summarized in two parts:
  - Objective reasons and evidence that Christianity is true (it corresponds to reality)
  - The communication of that truth to the world

# Examples of questions

- Why does God allow people to suffer?
- Why did God commit genocide in the OT?
- What is the evidence for the reliability of the Bible?
- What makes you think God exists?
- You don't believe in evolution?
- Did Jesus rise from death?
- Doesn't the light in Genesis 1:3 contradict the light in Genesis 1:14?

# The goal of apologetics

- Defend the faith, but not to win an argument at all costs
- Key words in apologetic passages: gentle, kind, patient, reverent
- The ultimate apologetic: John 17:21
  - Be Christ-like, “so that all men may believe that you sent me.”

# Methods

- Respond to a question – Relational evangelism
- A structured systematic defense – Summa Theologica
- This series, websites, blogs

# Method from [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org)

- Classical apologetic approach: (a simplified outline)
  - Truth exists (objective reality can be known)
  - God exists (classical arguments for God's existence
    - The Cosmological Argument
    - The Teleological Argument
    - The Moral Argument
  - Miracles are possible (the universe is not a closed system)
  - The NT is Historically Reliable (manuscripts & archaeology)
  - Jesus has risen from the dead

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Why Apologetics?

# Supported in scripture

- We're commanded

- 1 Pe. 3:15
- 2 Tim. 2:24-25
- Col. 4:5-6

- Approved examples

- Matt. 22: 37-46 – Jesus
- Acts 2:22-36 – Peter
- Acts 17:17 – Paul
- Acts 18:1-4 – Paul

# Why apologetics? (cont.)

- Protect our young people

- 72.9% of professors at elite universities say that “The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men”
- 84.1% of professors disagree with the statement “The theory of intelligent design IS a serious scientific alternative to the Darwin theory of evolution”
- “. . .it is clear that on the whole, and measured in various ways, professors are less religious than the general U.S. population.”

*Source: How Religious are America's College and University Professors?*  
Research done by Neil Gross & Solon Simmons

- “...young people are rejecting the Bible in favor of science. I encounter it wherever I speak or sign books or in the emails I receive from all around the world...I hear it especially from...parents of college-age kids reared in the Church who are now surrendering to various degrees of apostasy...I’m convinced that if the Church does not awaken to this growing phenomenon it will alienate an entire generation.”

Michael Guillan, theoretical physicist and follower of Christ

# Why apologetics? (cont.)

- Aggressive opposition

- “. . . we try to arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic, religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like our own ... we do our best to convince these students of the benefits of secularization. We assign first-person accounts of growing up homosexual to our homophobic students for the same reasons that German schoolteachers in the postwar period assigned The Diary of Anne Frank... You have to be educated in order to be ... a participant in our conversation ... So we are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable. We are not so inclusivist as to tolerate intolerance such as yours ... I think those students are lucky to find themselves under the benevolent Herrschaft [domination] of people like me, and to have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents ...” - Richard Rorty, former philosophy professor at Princeton University

# Why apologetics? (cont.)

- **Aggressive opposition**

- “For the foreseeable future, [conservative parents] will continue to drop off their children at the dorms. After a teary-eyed hug, mom and dad will drive their SUV’s off toward the nearest gas station, leaving their beloved progeny behind. And then they all are mine.” - *Bill Savage, Lecturer at Northwestern University* (article "Lessons Learned.").

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A Rich History &  
Hopeful Future

# The first Christian apologists

- Matt. 22: 37-46 – Jesus used prophecy and necessary inference
- Acts 2:22-36 – Peter reasoned using fulfilled prophecy
- Acts 17:2-3 – Paul reasoned with the Jews from the scriptures
- Acts 17:17 – Paul reasoned with everyone in the marketplace
- Acts 17:22-31 – Paul reasoned with Greeks using nature and philosophy
- Acts 18:1-4 – Paul reasoned with Jews and Greeks
- Paul uses “therefore” 25 times in the book of Romans

**Slide 17**

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**DW1** Vines: bring reasons together; reason, dispute (use arguments)  
Dennis Wade, 6/3/2018

## Apologists – Centuries 2-4

- Justin Martyr – Used typical legal petition (Roman administrative procedure)
- Early “church fathers” – Modeled their arguments after contemporary philosophical refutations
  - Origen – Showed that the miracle stories of paganism are far less credible than those of the Gospels
- Effective? “The church triumphed (over Rome)...it outthought it, outwrote it, and outlived it.” Dr. Harold Mattingly, *Christianity in the Roman Empire*

## More great apologists

- Augustine of Hippo – Developed a Christian worldview
- Thomas Aquinas – Summa Theologica
- Isaac Newton – Scientist and philosopher
- Gottfried Leibniz, Renee Descartes, Baruch Spinoza
- William Paley, Søren Kierkegaard
- CS Lewis, Karl Barth
- Francis Schaeffer, Alvin Plantinga
- William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel, Francis Collins

**DW2** Summa - the five ways:  
the argument from "motion";  
the argument from causation;  
the argument from contingency;  
the argument from degree;  
the argument from final cause or ends

Dennis Wade, 6/3/2018

# Going Forward

- “Certainly we see a trend toward a postmodern mindset and ‘post-truth’ culture. But, having said that—I think that evangelism in the 21st century is spelled “apologetics.” I think it is still relevant. ... I think young people are interested, and I think it’s partially a reaction against the postmodern mindset. They are looking for something solid. They are looking for something to believe in.” Lee Strobel
- Philosophies come and go, and the Christian faith will always be ridiculed, but it is still here, holding society together. 1 Peter 3:15 is very relevant today.
- “The hand that rocks the cradle...rules the world.” William Ross Wallace

# Great tools

- Books
  - Case for Christ, Case for the Real Jesus, Cold Case Christianity, and many more
- DVDs
  - Unlocking the Mysteries of Genesis, The Intelligent Design Collection, Evolution's Achille's Heels, and many more
- Websites
  - <https://crossexamined.org/christian-apologetics/>
  - <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/>
  - <http://www.intelligentdesign.org/>
- Cosmological argument video
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CulBuMCLg0>
- Debates
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tYm41hb48o> (Craig & Hichens)