




Christian Evidences

Lesson 1:

Introduction, Apologetics,
Overview of Our Study



“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”
(John 1:1-3,14)

There Is A God!

- A profound and challenging statement
- The basis for all we believe
- Thought provoking
- Provides a reason to live
- Influences how we live
- But some deny God and oppose us
- What will be our response?
 - Are we cowed into silence?
 - Are we intimidated?
 - Are you sure of what you believe?
 - Are you willing to put your faith to the test?

Let us examine the evidence and build a rock-solid faith!

Sometimes, believers are afraid to speak out. Why do you think this is?

- Some are afraid to examine their beliefs
- Lack of information on the subject
- The intelligent in our society are seen as superior
- Some say faith makes reason unnecessary
 - Say you cannot prove the existence of God
 - This is unsound intellectually and scripturally
 - In order for faith to exist, there must be concrete evidence to support it
 - 1 Pet. 3:15 – makes every Christian responsible for defending his faith
- If our faith is illogical and unreasonable, if it is incapable of defense, then the atheist is right and we should give up our faith

What could be the consequences of such attitudes?

- Could lose their faith when challenged
- Never have any real confidence
- Their children see the inconsistency



Apologetics

- “apologetics”
 1. systematic argumentative discourse in defense (as of a doctrine)
 2. a branch of theology devoted to the defense of the divine origin and authority of Christianity
- “apology” – a formal justification; defense; a single defense of a point
- “... be ready to give a defense [apologia] ...” (1 Pet. 3:15)
- Apologia – Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 7:11; Phil. 1:7,16-17; 2 Tim. 4:16
- Apologeomai – Lk. 12:11; 21:14; Acts 19:33; 24:10; 26:2

Are you ready to give a defense?

Biblical Basis for the Christian as an Apologist

Bible examples of Apologists

- Job 38-41
 - God: vindicated Himself to Job and his friends
- Isa. 41:21-29
 - The Lord: challenges those who worship idols
 - *“Present your case,” says the LORD. “Bring forth your strong reasons,” says the King of Jacob ... “Show the things that are to come hereafter, That we may know that you are gods, Indeed you are nothing, And your work is nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination.”*
- Mt. 11:2-6
 - Jesus: defends Himself as the Messiah to John
- Mt. 12:24-37
 - Jesus: answers the charge that He cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub

Bible examples of apologists

- Acts 22:1-24
 - Paul: makes his defense to the Jerusalem mob; defends his Christian ministry to the Gentiles
- 1 Cor. 9:1-18
 - Paul: defending his right to be supported as a preacher which he did not exercise with the Corinthians
- Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6
 - Jesus: defends His healing of a woman on the Sabbath
 - *“The Lord then answered him and said, “Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound - think of it - for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath? And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.”*

John 5:16-47 – “testament”; “witness”

- Vv. 31-36 – “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true...”
 - The Lord thinks that the presenting of evidence is appropriate and necessary.
- Acts 1:1-3 – “... many infallible proofs ...”
 - The appearances of Jesus after His resurrection were incontrovertible evidences of who He claimed to be.
- As in the day of Isaiah, God’s challenge to the unbeliever is this:

“Present your case ... Bring forth your strong reasons ...” (Isa. 1:18)

Biblical Basis for apologetics

- Is it not appropriate for us to present evidence for our beliefs?

➤ No doubt, the Bible has an apologetic element.

*“The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that **I am appointed for the defense** of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:16-17)*

Rational Basis for the Christian as an Apologist

What makes mankind different from the creatures of this world?

- Made in God's image
- Sense of ought (right and wrong)
- Ability to reason in a complex sense and form plans
- Far superior communication and language skills
- The creative ability
- Can express oneself in an artistic fashion – music, art, literature
- An appreciation for beauty

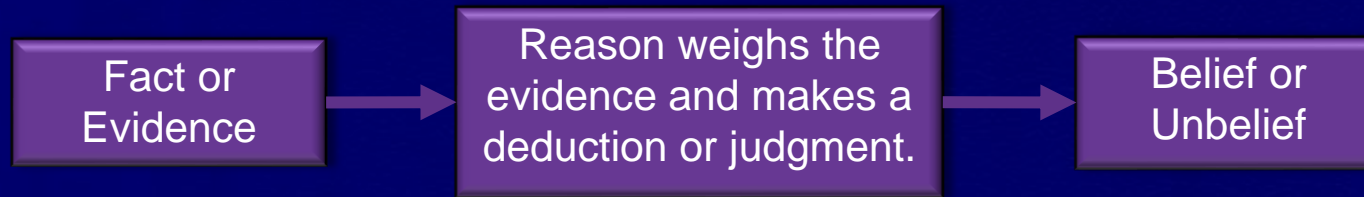
Rational Basis for the Christian as an Apologist

- Human reason is divinely given
 - Man cannot believe that which seems to him incredible
 - Belief must be more rational than unbelief ... so, the rational ground for the belief must be presented
- The powers and functions of reason are limited
 - Must have the necessary evidence
 - Demands sufficient ground for our faith
- The scope of reason is limited
 - Creation and Revelation
 - One can reason only on that which he finds as a creation
 - Or, on that which is revealed

Rational Basis for the Christian as an Apologist

- In Lk. 8:18; 1 Thes. 5:21; 1 Jn. 4:1, what are we being warned against?
 - Take heed how you hear - Lk. 8:18
 - Test all things - 1 Thes. 5:21
 - Test the spirits (false teachers) – 1 Jn. 4:1.
 - We must not be too ready to believe what others may tell us.
 - Don't be too gullible.
 - Evaluate the truthfulness of claims or teachings.

Rational Basis for the Christian as an Apologist



- Acceptance of the evidence depends on five things
 - The **weight** of the evidence.
 - The **clarity** with which the evidence is presented.
 - The **honesty of the examiner** of the evidence, i.e., the hearer.
 - The **logical ability of the hearer** to evaluate the evidence.
 - The **background prejudices** of the hearer.

Our Study of Christian Evidences

What terms are some of the philosophies of unbelief known by?

- Atheist – confidently asserts, “There is no God”
- Skeptic – not quite so bold, simply doubts the existence of a Supreme being
- Agnostic – argues that there is not sufficient evidence to establish a case for the existence of God; one simply cannot know whether or not there is a God
- Deist – theoretically acknowledges the existence of a Supreme Creator, but this “God” has no interest in, or contact with, man.

These have forced the evidence from their minds,
because unbelief is not natural (Rom. 1:28)

Our Study of Christian Evidences

Why do you think some people do not believe in God?

- A failure by parents to instill a wholesome respect for authority in children
- Inordinate pride
- A desire to be free of moral responsibility
 - Aldous Huxley, in “Confessions of a Professed Atheist”, argued that belief in God and viewing the world as having meaning were hindrances to “sexual freedom”
 - Psa. 14:1 “... The fool has said in his heart, ‘there is no God’ ...”
- Faith in someone professing to be a devout believer in God has been shattered
 - Prov. 25:19 – “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint.”

Our Study of Christian Evidences

What are some things they must necessarily believe instead?

- God does not exist
- Eternal existence of matter
- Spontaneous generation
- Order is a result of chance
- Consciousness arose out of non-conscious matter
- Man is without any responsibility for his conduct
- No moral values
- All thought is irrational

Our Study of Christian Evidences

What are some reasons we should study Christian evidences?

- Commandment
 - Our duty to be ready to give a defense (1 Pet. 3:15)
- Conviction
 - A study of evidences helps to remove doubts
- Communication
 - Can deal intelligently with questions presented
 - Can be better equipped to teach others
 - A sort of pre-evangelism. People will resort to challenging questions to avoid dealing with truth.

Our Study of Christian Evidences

During this quarter, we will answer such questions as ...

- Why we believe in God
- Why we believe the Bible to be God's word
- Why we believe in Jesus Christ
- Why we believe in the Biblical account of creation

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

(Heb. 11:6)

