

Reason, Evidence, Persuasion

*Apologetics as a Biblical
Model of Evangelism*

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Apologetics Basics

- Apologetics is a species of evangelism
- The goal of apologetics is to bring people to the cross of Christ
- All believers are exhorted to be ready to give reasons for our hope in Christ (1 Peter 3:15)
- Apologetics is both positive (giving reasons for faith) and negative (answering objections)

The Need for Apologetics



I don't always engage in religious debate



But when I do, I use evidential apologetics

Making the Case for Christ



Evidence, reason, persuasion

Apologetics as a biblical model of evangelism

- The biblical model of evangelism includes the use of reason, evidence and persuasion
 - Reason--Acts 17:2 “from the Scriptures” (also Acts 17:17; 18:4; 18:19; 19:8,9; 20:7,9)
 - Evidence--Acts 17:3, Mt 9:2-8, 2 Thes. 1:5
 - Persuasion--Acts 14:1, 17:4, 17:34, 18:4

Biblical references dealing with the task of the Apologist

1. 1 Peter 3:15 be ready
2. Jude 3 strive
3. 2 Corinthians 10:4 refute arguments
4. Colossians 2:4, 8 understand arguments
5. Philippians 1:7 prove the gospel true

(1) I Peter 3:15--be ready

- ἔτοιμοι δὲ ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία
- “always ready to make a defense”

- ετοιμοι (*hetoimoi*) “ready, prepared”
- αει (*aei*) “always”
- απολογία (*apologia*) “make a defense”

Why most Christians are not ready

- Young people are not taught apologetics and critical thinking, because
- Parents are not taught apologetics, because
- Churches aren't teaching apologetics, because
- Pastors aren't teaching apologetics, because
- Most seminaries are not teaching apologetics

Good News

- There is a new renaissance of Christian thinking
- As a result, apologetics has made a comeback (it used to be taught as a branch of systematic theology, along with dogmatics and ethics)
- Seminaries are now offering graduate degrees in apologetics
- The ministries of organizations like Ratio Christi are growing rapidly

(2) Jude 3--strive

“*contend earnestly* for the faith”

“*contend earnestly*” is επαγωνιζομαι
(*epagonizomai*, is the verb “*agonize*” with a
preposition--a Greek verb is intensified by a
preposition)

“to contend for a prize” (athletic term)

Translated “*fight*” by Arndt & Gingrich, *A Greek
Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 281)

Why the Church has not been contending earnestly for the faith

- Unprepared
- Takes hard work to be ready
- Priorities are skewed
- Easier to avoid issues than engage culture
- Monastic mentality (subtle surrender)
- Misunderstanding of Scripture

(3) II Corinthians 10:4 refute arguments

τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ
for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,

ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων--
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses--

λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες

We are destroying speculations

It is time we debated the issues



You can win the audience



■ Gloria Allred



Erwin Chemerinsky



■ Roy Masters



Bill Press

II Corinthians 10:4

- καθαίρεισιν (*kathairesin*) “destruction” (“pull down without the use of force” Luke 1:52, Acts 13:29)
- οχυρωμάτων (*ocuiromaton*) “fortresses”
 (“of the arguments and reasonings by which a disputant endeavors to fortify his opinion and defend it against his opponent” Thayer)
- Thus, the weapons of our warfare (i.e., evidence, arguments) are to defeat (“pull down”) the arguments and reasonings of our opponents

II Corinthians 10:4(5)

- λογισμούς (*logismous*) “a reasoning, such as is hostile to the Christian faith” (Thayer)
(NASB “speculations” NIV “pretension” KJV “imagination”)
- καθαιροῦντες (*kathairountes*) “we are pulling down, destroying”
“the (subtle) reasoning (of opponents) likened to fortresses i.q., ‘to refute’ ” (Thayer)

Find the way inside the fortress



II Corinthians 10:4 summary-- refute arguments

- We have divinely powerful intellectual and spiritual weapons to refute (“demolish”) the arguments used against Christianity and the reasoning (i.e., speculations, pretension, imaginations) that is hostile to the Christian faith.

(4) Colossians 2:4, 8 understand arguments

- τοῦτο λέγω ἵνα μηδεὶς
- I say this so that no one
- υμασ παραλογίζεται ἐν πιθανολογία
- will delude you with persuasive argument.

Delude



Colossians 2:4

παραλογίζεται (*paralogizomai*) “delude” lit.
“reason alongside” (Aristotle “cheat by false
reasoning”)



Colossians 2:4

πιθανολογια (*pithanologia*) “persuasive speech”



Colossians 2:4

- "...so that no one will be deceived by false reasoning that was employed through persuasive speech."

Colossians 2:8

- βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν
see to it that no one takes you captive
- διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης
through philosophy and empty deception

Colossians 2:8

- συλαγωγῶν (*sulagogon*) “to carry off as a spoil; lead captive”
- κενῆς ἀπάτης (*keneis apateis*) “empty, vain deceit”

Colossians 2:8

- The verb *sulagogeo* ("takes you captive") means "to carry off as a captive or as booty." The context of verse 8, then, is to avoid being deceived (vs 4) through false reasoning (vs 4), otherwise we will be "carried away like booty" (vs 8) through philosophy and empty deception. The thrust is to be able to tell the difference between a good, sound argument and a false argument (*paralogizomai*, vs 4)

Colossians 2:4, 8

understand arguments

- Colossians 2:8 is an argument in favor of studying philosophy so that we can understand more, not less, about philosophy, reason and logic. The more we know about “good philosophy,” the easier it is to detect false reasoning and avoid being taken captive by attractively-presented error.
- “Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.” C.S. Lewis

(5) Philippians 1:7-- prove the gospel true

- τῆ ἀπολογία καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου
“In the defense and confirmation of the gospel”
- Βεβαιοῶ (verb *bebaio*) “confirm, prove true”
- Βεβαιωσις (noun *bebaiosis*) “confirmation, to produce confidence”
- Thus, “defending and proving the gospel to be true in order to produce confidence”

The approach of the Apologist

- “with gentleness and respect” (I Pet 3:15)
- “speaking the truth in love” (Eph 4:15)
- “have mercy on (or, “reprove”) those who are doubting” (Jude 22)

Christianity, a “fact-based” faith

- Nearly every miracle (“sign”) Jesus performed was to demonstrate He was the Messiah
- Matthew 9:2-8 (Jesus’ use of evidence)

Even believers need confirmation
that our faith is based on fact

Matthew 11:2-5, John the Baptist



What Christians Need to Do

- Study the Scriptures
- Know what you believe, and why you believe it
- Develop your critical thinking skills
- Learn to use evidence, reason and persuasion in presenting the gospel
- Do your homework, and you won't have to worry about engaging skeptics

2 Peter 1:16, “we did not follow cleverly invented stories...but we were eyewitnesses...”



Conclusion

But you, be sober in all things,
endure hardship, do the work of
an apologist, fulfill your ministry.

2 Timothy 4:5

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