

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, February 2, 2016 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

## A REASON FOR HOPE A Study in *Basic Christian Apologetics* Introduction – Part 2 *1 Peter 3:13-17*

*“<sup>13</sup> And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” <sup>15</sup> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” – 1 Peter 3:13-17 NKJV*

**THOUGHT STARTERS:** Listen as each case study is read and respond to the following questions:

- (1) How would you respond to this person? (Give not just your opinion, but back it up scripturally)
- (2) Do you think this person reflects the thinking of our day? Why or why not?
- (3) What affect does this kind of thinking have on your culture generally? On our young people and children? On the future of our country?

*\*Give the names of the case studies/statements*

- (4) Given the names of these case studies/statements... what affect does this have on our cultural? On our young people and children? On the future of our country?
- (5) How do we as Christians/Believers deal with and combat this present day trend?

*“I think there is a puritanical wind that is blowing... I don't believe in God, but if I did I would say that sex is a God-given right. Otherwise it's the end of our species.”*

*– Kevin Bacon*

*“There doesn't need to be a God for me. There's something in people that's spiritual, that's god-like. I don't feel like doing thing just because people say things, but I also don't really know if it's better to just not believe anything either.” – Angelina Jolie*

*“I got brought up being told things were God’s way, and when things didn’t work out, it was called God’s plan. I always had a lot of questions about the world, even in kindergarten. A big question for me was fairness. If I’d grown up in some other religion, would I get the same shot at heaven as a Christian has? When I got untethered from the comfort of religion, it wasn’t a loss of faith for me, it was a discovery of self. I had faith that I’m capable enough to handle any situation. There’s peace in understanding that I have only one life, here and now, and I’m responsible.” –Brad Pitt*

*“I don’t believe in God. There is no ‘there’ there! We impose order and narrative on everything in order to understand it.” – Julianne Moore*

*“I don’t believe in heaven and hell. I don’t believe in God. All I know is that as an individual, I won’t allow this life – the only thing I know to exist – to be wasted.” – George Clooney*

Do you sometimes find yourself at times overwhelmed, perplexed, bewildered and maybe even somewhat intimidated by the secular culture, which often views the Christian Faith as irrelevant, antiquated, unintellectual, out of touch, and for the simple-minded and uneducated? Perhaps you grew up in the faith, but the hard question of the faith that are often raised by objectors to Christianity leave you retreating, looking for some quick way out of the conversation, and feeling like you don’t know what to say.

It’s probably no surprise to you that there are those who question the validity of the Christian faith. The doctrines and beliefs that we, as followers of Christ, hold dear and base our faith on, they scoff at and try desperately to punch holes in.

## **WHAT IS A SKEPTIC?**

**A Definition** – *“A skeptic is a person who has an attitude of judgment against, and frequently criticizes religious belief.”*

And they are everywhere! They are our neighbors, our work associates, in our schools, in our governments, even in our churches. They are your children’s and teenagers educators, teacher and college professors. They are those who are making policy decisions in city halls, and state houses that daily affect our lives. They are everywhere!

### **What does a skeptic look like?**

These day, a skeptic could take the form of your Biology teacher, a Hollywood celebrity, the new kid in class that your child hangs out with, a college professor, a TV talkshow host, or even someone you sit in church with. Religious skepticism abounds, and seems to be growing in our world of tolerance and acceptance.

### **Why is their voice heard and their arguments given such credence?**

#### **4 Reasons the Voice of A Skeptic is Often Accepted:**

**1. Their arguments sound good** – Some skeptics can state their case in eloquent and convincing fashion. They will even use compelling , personal stories on their own journey

of questions and doubts that led them to abandon the faith. But truth is not confirmed or denied based on heart-stirring stories.

*? Have you ever heard a skeptic give a stirring argument for his or her belief? Were they convincing? Explain. (ex. Julianne Moore)*

2. **We are vulnerable** – Most of us, if we are truly honest, have not invested much time in studying the foundations of our faith. We don't know much, if anything, about the origins of Scripture. We haven't contemplated the reason for suffering and evil, or how we would prove historically the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We know what our personal experience with God has been like, but not much beyond that. So, when the skeptic asks hard questions and speak with authority on issues, we don't how to respond.

*? So, have you ever thought much about the deep or hard questions about the origin of Scripture, the problem of suffering and evil, and proof of the resurrection? Why or why not?*

3. **We live in a world where tolerance is king** – To hold to the exclusive truth claim of Christianity, such as Jesus being the only way to salvation, put us in an ever-increasing minority. While our beliefs are seen as backward, out of date, and intolerant, the skeptics views are welcomed and seem much more enlightened.

*? Do you agree with this statement? Have you ever faced opposition because you held to our exclusive truth claims? Explain.*

4. **They pit faith vs. reason** – The skeptic want to say that if you choose Christianity and the Christian faith, you check your brain at the door. And in the past, believers haven't done much to combat that. We've made faith about what we feel, about our heart and emotions. However faith and intellect should go together.

*? Do you think faith and intellect can really go together? Explain.*

## WHAT IS CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS?

**A Basis Definition of Apologetics** – *Apologetics may be simply defined as the defense of the Christian faith.*

The simplicity of this definition, however, masks the complexity of the problem of defining apologetics. It turns out that a diversity of approaches has been taken to defining the meaning, scope, and purpose of apologetics. Apologetics is the work of convincing people to change their views." Therefore, Christian apologetics is that branch of Christian Theology that deals with answering any and all critics who oppose or question the revelation of God in Christ and the Bible. It can include studying such subjects as Biblical manuscript transmission, philosophy, biology, mathematics, evolution, and logic. But it can also consist of simply giving an answer to a question about Jesus or a Bible passage. The latter case is by far the most common, and you don't have to read a ton of books to do that.

**A Deeper Understanding of Apologetics - The word, "apologetics," comes from the Greek word, "apologia" (pronounced "ap-ol-og-ee'-ah"). It's literal means "a verbal defense."**

Originally this word, “apologia,” was used of a speech of defense or an answer given in reply. In ancient Athens it referred to a defense made in the courtroom as part of the normal judicial procedure. After the accusation, the defendant was allowed to refute the charges with a defense or reply (*apologia*). The accused would attempt to “speak away” (*apo*—away, *logia*—speech) the accusation. The classic example of such an *apologia* was Socrates’ defense against the charge of preaching strange gods, a defense retold by his most famous pupil, Plato, in a dialogue called *The Apology* (in Greek, *hē apologia*).

**A Biblical Understanding of Apologetics -** The Greek word “apologia” is used at least 17 times in the New Testament in verb or noun form. It is a much used Biblical word and was usually used in making a defense of oneself or the faith. The much use of this word under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit certainly supports the important place that “apologetics” should have for the believer.

We will be looking at many of these Biblical citing throughout this study, however our key text for this study is the verse/passage that is perhaps most commonly associated with Christian apologetics, 1 Peter 3:13-17

*“<sup>13</sup> And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” <sup>15</sup> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always **be ready** to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” – 1 Peter 3:13-17 NKJV*

### **Truths About Apologetics from 1 Peter 3:17:**

1. **Be ready** - First, notice that God wants us to **“be ready”** (v.15). Ambassadors of Jesus Christ should be to **“be ready”** to give answers. We may never run across someone who asks tough questions about our faith, but we should still be ready to respond if someone does. To be ready requires some study and preparation ahead of time doesn’t it?
2. **Give a defense** - Second, notice it says, that we are to, **“always be ready to give a defense.”** The Greek word there for "defense" is the word “apologia" which simply means, “to give reason or a defense” It is from this Greek word that that we get our English word “apologetics.” To be skilled in apologetics is to be able to give a defense of the Christian faith to someone who asks, or to someone who challenges your beliefs.
3. **Have a reason** - Notice next that it says we are **“...always [to] be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”** There are good reasons why a person should believe that God exists, that the Bible is trustworthy, that Jesus rose from the dead, etc. The Christian ambassador should be familiar with these reasons and be able to articulate them to those who have questions.
4. **Share hope** – Apologetics is not negative, derogatory, or degrading to the belief system of others, but always holds out the “hope” of the Christian message.” It is the hope that you

have because of these truths that you have experienced and know, that you share your defense.

5. **Show meekness and fear** - There is a spirit with which Christian apologetics is to be exhibited and carried out. Peter says with “meekness” (strength under control) and “fear” (holy reverence for God).

### 3 Things Apologetics is Not?

1. **Apologetics has nothing to do with saying “I’m sorry!”** – Although the words “apology” and “apologize” and the word “apologetics” sound similar they are significantly different. The English word “apologize” or the idea of giving an “apology” to someone for some offence committed has absolutely nothing to do with the study of “Christian Apologetics.” Again the word “apologetics” is the Greek, New Testament word “apologia,” used more than 17 time in the New Testament and is usually translated as “a defense” or “a reason” and means literally “to make a defense” as in a court room setting when you have been accuse of doing something and you offer the evidence as a defense for yourself. In this case it is not saying “I’m sorry,” but rather “This is what I believe and why?” Something many Christian are not prepared to do?
2. **Apologetics is not an excuse to win an argument** – For some “apologetics” may be seen as just another excuse for a fight, to flex your Christian muscles, and brow beat someone into believing what you want them to believe. Apologetics is not the art of intellectually forcing unbelievers into submission holds WrestleMania style. By the way, is this every right? Peter said be, “...ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence,” Doesn’t sound like fighting to me.
3. **Apologetics is not the amusing art of answering silly questions** - For some apologetics is a waste of time because in their minds it traffics in silly questions that have no real bearing. Questions like, “Can God make a rock so big He can’t pick it up?” or “If a tree falls in the forest does it make a sound?” or “How many angels can stand on a pin?” Apologetics is never a meaningless trek into irrelevant questions, but it is simple knowing what you believe and why you believe.... a reason for your faith.

### Why should we do apologetics?

1. **The Bible commands us to -** *1 Peter 3:15, “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence,” (NASB).* The importance of humility: *1 Corinthians 8:1, “. . . Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.” The importance of love: 1 Corinthians 13. Jude 3, “I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” Jude 22, “And have mercy on some, who are doubting.”* Apologetics is to be coupled with mercy and love.
2. **Jesus did apologetics** - Jesus gave evidence for His claims. His fulfillment of prophecy (Mk. 14:61-62, Lk. 24:44-45). His Miracles Resurrection: Prediction (Jn. 2:19-21, cf. Mt. 12:39-40) and Accomplishment (1 Cor. 15, Lk. 24:26-27). Healings (Mt. 11:2-5). Corrected false interpretations of Scripture (Mt. 4:1-11).

3. **Paul did apologetics** – Greeks at Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-34) Quotes pagan poets Aratus and Epimenides. Jews in the Synagogues (Acts 17:1-3) False teachers within the Church (Galatians, 1 Corinthians, etc.) Paul's mission Phil. 1:7--"the defense and confirmation of the gospel." Phil. 1:16--"I am appointed for the defense of the gospel." Paul's criteria for ordaining elders Titus 1:9, "Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict," (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24).
4. **The church did apologetics** – The Early Church with the Apostles The Apostle Paul: Galatians and 1 Corinthians The Apostle John: 1, 2, and 3rd John The Early Church after the Apostles Apologists: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, etc. Heresies: Gnosticism, Arianism, etc.
5. **Apologetics help Christians** –

#### **5 Ways Apologetics Help Christians:**

- (1) **To better know their faith and share it more effectively.**
- (2) **To answer peoples' real questions which hinder them from accepting the Gospel.**
- (3) **To have influence in the public square (education, media, etc.).**
- (4) **To prevent doctrinal apostasy in the Church.**
- (5) **To answer the false claims of cults and religions**

#### **WHY DO WE NEED CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS?**

There are several reasons why we need apologetics.

#### **Eight Reasons Why We Need Apologetics:**

1. **We are commanded to in Scripture** - The first and most obvious is that we are commanded to defend the faith: 1 Peter 3:15 says, *"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."*
2. **It helps Christian to know their faith** - Second, we need apologetics because it helps Christians know their faith. This is something that is sadly lacking among many believers today. Most don't know much about their faith, let alone be able to describe the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, His physical resurrection, or even to tell the difference between justification and sanctification. As believers we know to not only know what we believe, but why we believe it and how to support that claim. Apologetics helps to define and defend what the truth of the gospel is.
3. **The important task of evangelism** - Third, apologetics is an attempt to keep people out of Hell. God takes sin very seriously, and He will punish those who have rebelled against Him and are not covered in the blood of Christ. As Christians, we should be motivated to present the truth of salvation in Jesus. We should not sit idly by and ignore the dilemma of the unbeliever. We need to tell them that sin is real because God is real and that breaking God's law has a consequence. Since we have all sinned, we cannot keep God's law perfectly. Also, we cannot undo the offense to an infinitely holy God because we are not infinite or holy. The only thing left for us is to fall under the judgment of God. But God has provided a way for us to escape that judgment. That is why God became man in Jesus. He claimed to be God (John 8:24, 58, compare with Exodus 3:14). Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet.

2:24). By trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, we will be spared from the rightful judgment of God upon the sinner. Salvation is not found in Buddhism, Islam, relativism, or in one's self. It is only found in Jesus. We need to not only defend God's Word and truth but also present the gospel to all people, so they can escape the judgment to come.

4. **To preserve a proper view of Christ and His church** - Fourth, we need apologetics to counter the bad image that Christianity has received in the media and in culture. Televangelists and their scandals--both sexually and monetarily--are a disgrace to Christianity. The Catholic church hasn't helped with its scandals involving priests. On top of that, the media is very biased against Christianity, and you will see negative opinions of Christianity promoted everywhere.
5. **To answer false teaching and apostasy** - Fifth, we need apologetics because there is a constant threat of apostasy in the visible Christian church. Such is the case with the Metropolitan Community Church denomination, which openly advocates the support of homosexuality in violation of Scripture (Rom. 1:18-32). Also, as of 2002, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is in risk of apostasy by entertaining the idea of accepting homosexual relationships into church. "The United Church of Christ set up a \$500,000 scholarship fund for gay and lesbian seminarians Friday and urged wider acceptance of homosexuals by other denominations," (United Church Makes Gay Scholarship, CLEVELAND, June 16, 2000, AP Online via COMTEX). Or "The supreme court of the United Methodist Church was asked Thursday to reconsider the denomination's ban on gay clergy," (*Church court of United Methodists asked to decide on gay clergy ban*, NASHVILLE, Tennessee, Oct. 25, 2001, AP WorldStream via COMTEX). Such examples are demonstrations of the incredible need for defending Biblical truth within those churches that claim to be Christian.
6. **To refute and identify false religions and cults** - Sixth, another reason we need apologetics is that of the many false teachings out there. Mormonism teaches that God used to be a man on another world, and he brought one of his goddess wives with him to this world and that they produce spirit offspring that are born into human babies and that you have the potential of becoming a god of your own world. The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that there is no Trinity and that Jesus is Michael the Archangel, there is no Hell and that only 144,000 people will go to Heaven. Atheism denies God's existence, openly attacks Christianity, and is gaining ground in public life and schools. Islam teaches that Jesus was not God in flesh and that Jesus did not rise from the dead and that He did not atone for our sins. It also teaches that salvation is partly based on one's works and partly based on Allah's grace. It teaches that the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel (Surah 2:97, 16:102) and that Jinn are unseen beings created (51:56) from fire (15:27, 55:15) and that Muhammed was greater than Jesus. Even within the Christian church, there are false teachings. We can see that from both within the Christian church and outside of it, false teachings are bombarding believers (and non-believers) all over the world.
7. **Give and answer to the immoral drift of our culture** - Seventh, the rise of immorality in America is a threat not only to society but also to Christianity. This is a serious issue because an immoral society cannot last long. The Barna Research group statistics show that 64% of adults and 83% of teenagers said that moral truth depends on the situation that you are in. Nineteen percent (19%) of the adult population believes that "the whole idea of sin is outdated." Fifty-one percent (51%) believe that "if a person is generally good, or does enough good, he will earn a place in Heaven." When a society's morals fail, the society fails. Just look at history and think of Ancient Rome, Ancient Greece, or present-day Enron,

Watergate, and White House interns. Immorality seeps down into all areas of our culture. Consider this: In the *New York Times*, online, of May 12, 2002, in the article, "With Games of Havoc, Men Will Be Boys," the author, Warren St. John, interviews some players of what he says is a very popular video game. One young man says, "What I like to do is get in the car and drive around and do drive-by shootings. You can haul someone out of their car and beat on them and steal their money and their car. It's kind of amusing that you have that ability." . . . A publicist from Long Island says that the game's allure comes down to "just going on killing sprees." Not all video games are violent, but the fact that it is so popular and that the youth are being trained up by them is very disturbing. I am not advocating a theocratic socio-political rule administered by stern Christians wearing black-and-white outfits and tall hats. But these kinds of social trends are disturbing, and they reflect a moral decline in America where what is good is called evil and what is evil is called good. God tells us in Phil. 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." We cannot ignore God's Word without a consequence.

- 8. Refute the teaching and indoctrination of irreligious thought especially in higher education (but sometimes and in some please in public schools) -** The eighth reason we need apologetics is that schools are not friendly to Christianity. My own experience in non-Christian schools was a strong awakening to the unprovoked hostility that exists in school where the philosophy teachers, history teacher, and even the art teacher all took shots at Christianity. Don Feder in the *Conservative Chronicle* in his article of Sept. 22, 1993, titled, "Fighting Censorship, PAW Does it Its Way," said that in some junior high libraries, book titles included *The Joy of Gay Sex* and *How to Make Love to a Single Woman*. There is an impressions series for grades one to six which promote the New Age and the occult and a controversial drug education program called Quest, which tells students that they alone can decide whether or not it's OK to use drugs as well as texts that direct students to fantasize about suicide, attack religion, and undermine family authority. Following is an email I received that represents the hostility of secular schools.

he fact is that Christianity is under attack in the world, and we need to fight the good fight of the faith without shrinking back. We need apologetics to give rational, intelligent, and relevant explanations of Christian viability to the critics and the prejudiced who would seek to undermine the teachings of our Lord Jesus. If there was ever a time that apologetics is needed, it is now.