



Apologetics

How to Reason with Compassion

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“APOLOGIA”

Apo – from *Logos* – intelligent reasoning

Definition: a reasonable, well-thought-out, and articulate defense of the Christian worldview

Why is Apologetics important?

- The Christian worldview is no longer an essential part of our culture
- Many Christians struggle when confronted with challenges or questions
- Apologetics is often a necessary bridge to the Gospel (pre-evangelism)
- The Bible *commands* and *commends* apologetics

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Ephesians 4: 11-16

Hebrews 6: 19

I Peter 3:15



Colossians 2: 8

2 Corinthians
10: 3-5

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“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

I Peter 3: 15-16



“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**”

2 Corinthians 10: 3-5



“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”

Colossians 2: 8



“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”

Ephesians 4: 14-15



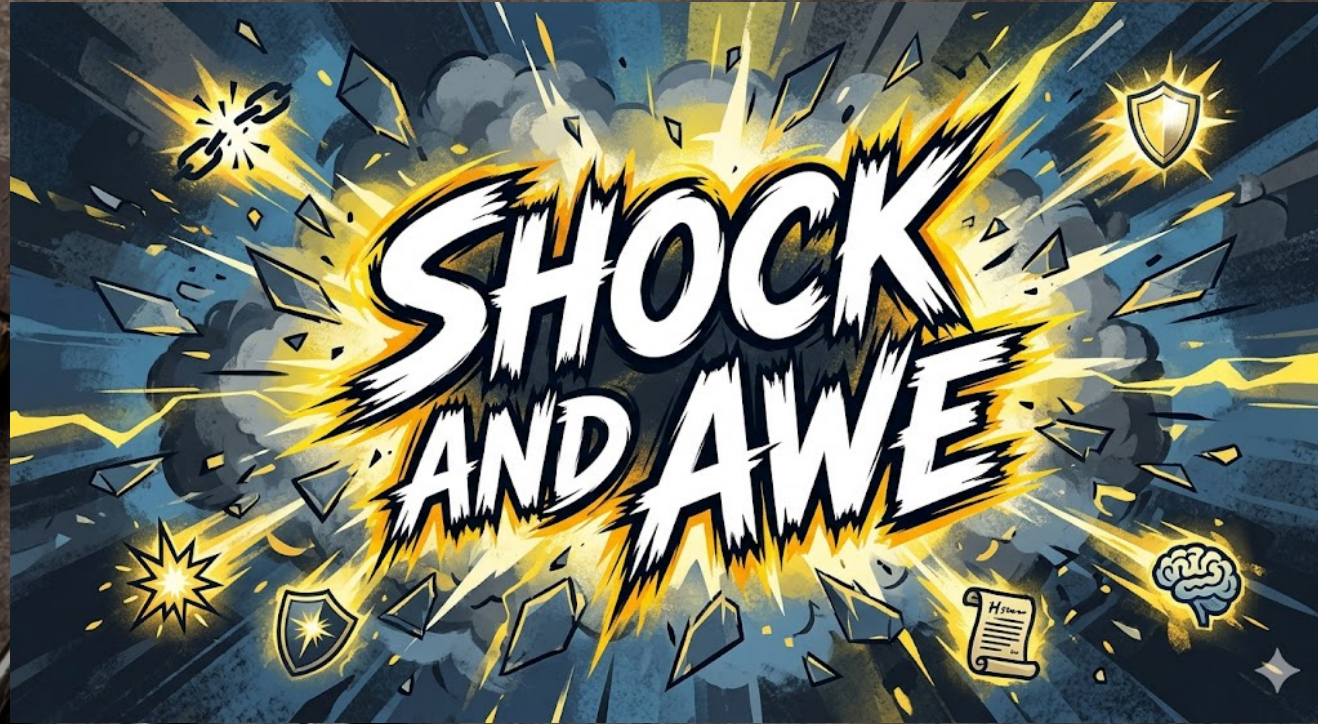
“God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, **we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.** It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain...”

Hebrews 6: 19

Philosophical Apologetics and its Approaches



A really fast overview of some of the most powerful arguments from each of the apologetic methods .



...don't try to take notes!

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Classical Apologetics

A “two step” approach that (1) starts with arguments for God from natural theology and then (2) demonstrates that the God of the Bible perfectly fits the attributes of God discovered in step 1.

- The *Cosmological* Argument (*why is there something rather than nothing?*)
 - the Kalam argument from mathematics and logic
 - the Thomist arguments from contingency and from motion
 - the Leibnizian argument from sufficient reason
- The *Teleological* Argument (arguing from complexity and purpose)
- The *Axiological* Argument (arguing from morality)
- The *Ontological* Argument (arguing from Being)
- Also: arguments from *math, music, consciousness, the intelligibility of the universe and the reliability of science*, and many others...

Evidentialism

A “single step” approach that uses *empirical evidence* to start from a “neutral” position and build a case that demonstrates that the Christian worldview is objectively true.

- The “Minimal Facts” argument for the resurrection of Jesus
- The “Fine Tuning” (anthropic) argument for Divine creation of the Universe
- The argument from the improbability of chance fulfillment of prophecy
- Archeological discoveries consistently confirm the reliability of the Bible
- There is very strong textual and historical evidence to support the assertion that the Gospels are truthful, accurate eyewitness accounts.
- The discovery of incredibly complex, information-rich biological organisms points to an intelligent creator of the Universe

Comparativism

Evaluating the claims of Christianity by comparing its truth claims to other worldviews and religions. It seeks to demonstrate that the Christian worldview is *superior* - a more logical, coherent, useful, and healthy explanation of reality.

- Comparing Jesus to the founders/leaders of other religions or philosophies
- Contrasting Christian answers to the “Big Questions” with other views
- Demonstrating serious logical flaws or contradictions in other worldviews
- Comparing core beliefs of the Christian worldview with other worldviews in order to demonstrate that Christianity is superior to the other worldviews in terms of its ability to account for what we find in the actual world
- Comparing the Christian worldview with other worldviews in order to demonstrate that Christianity is coherent and other views are not

Presuppositionalism

This one does NOT start from “neutral ground.” It starts with the basic presupposition that the Christian worldview is the *only* consistent foundation for reason, science, and morality.

- Without God as a “starting point” it is impossible to make sense of the world
- Logic is universal, immaterial, and unchanging. In a purely material/accidental universe, there is no basis for such universal laws.
- Science only “works” if our world is an orderly uniformity of cause and effect, but our world can only be that way if God exists
- No one can make *any* moral claim without God. If humans are just biological accidents, then “morality” is just a subjective chemical reaction or a social instinct. But people do not believe this or act upon it consistently.
- The apologist exposes *unfounded* claims which are crucial to another worldview in order to point out logical flaws, absurdities, or unlivable beliefs

Experientialism (Verdical method)

This approach shifts away from external, objective evidence and focuses on internal, “self-authenticating” experiences.

- The argument from *religious experience* argues that God can be directly experienced (the Holy Spirit “bears witness” to us intangibly)
 - Psychological arguments – Christians experience many measurable physical and mental health benefits from their faith
 - The argument from Human Desire: “If I find myself desiring that which no human experience can satisfy, the most probable conclusion is that I was made for another world.” (C. S. Lewis)
 - The Christian faith provides powerful “existential evidence” through the many positive changes in attitude & actions that accompany regeneration
- * one weakness of this method is that it is often perceived as too subjective*

Philosophical (or “integrated”) Apologetics

The apologist calls on all of the best arguments from these methods and *weaves them together* to present a very powerful case for Christianity. Some of the key elements of this approach are:

- Finding / identifying common ground or specific areas of disagreement
- This method proceeds as a *dialogue* – “give and take” conversations
- This method demands a basic knowledge of key philosophical beliefs
- This method relies heavily on asking penetrating questions and using appropriate tactics to both defend and attack worldview assertions
- It is the MOST EFFECTIVE but MOST DIFFICULT way to do apologetics
- It is the way you should try to do apologetics!



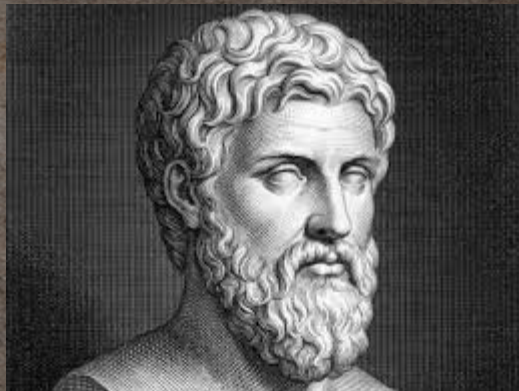
QUIZ:

Do you see the necessity and value in being able to reasonably and clearly defend your Christian faith?

Do you believe that you understand the basic concept and methods of Christian apologetics?

Are you willing to find and use the *many* apologetic resources available to you?

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“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a Fire to be lighted.”

- Plutarch

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