

And we need to answer people in a way that points them to Jesus.

An example...

How can I be sure God exists?

- i) the design of the world
- ii) my own experience of God
- iii) the person of Christ

All 3 are valid but iii) brings people face to face with the claims and actions of Jesus.



Demolition Men I: Introduction to Apologetics

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1 What are we talking about?

NOT apologising (at least as we understand it!)

A Bible definition:

But in your hearts set apart 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 behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Note the focus of this passage on the Christian not the “argument”!

Or alternatively:

The process of Christians giving a reason for the hope that they have so as to demolish wrong arguments and show the rightness of the message of Christ for all people.

2 Why do we need to do this?

The short answer: because not everybody is a Christian!

The longer answer: because in the web of things that God asks us to do in order to bring people to know Jesus apologetics is part of the mix!

To see a bit more how that works let's take a step back...

- *Why don't people believe in the truth of Christianity?*

4 What weapons can we use?

- Read Acts 17:16-34. What weapons does Paul use?

A word about “neutrality”...

5 What do we hope will happen?

Not that we will win – but that people will turn to Christ!

SO we need to be confident that:

The gospel is really true

The gospel touches all of life

The gospel stands up to scrutiny

Lots of different reasons why people don't believe! And answered in the Bible by various different means...

- *What does God ask us to do in response to the fact that people do not believe?*

The mistake not to make – trying to make the reasons people don't believe answerable by specific methods.

Paul not making the mistake! 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

- i) Why don't people believe the gospel of Christ?
- ii) What does Paul do in response to this and how does he do it?
- iii) How do people come to believe?

So: apologetics is one of the ways in which God brings people to know him and it is for all Christians.

3 Three aspects of apologetics¹

a) Proof

¹ This list is drawn from John Frame's very helpful book "Apologetics to the Glory of God", P&R (Phillipsburg, NJ), 1994 p2

Acts 18:24-28

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 – How is Paul going about "proving" something here?

b) Defence

Philippians 1:7

Matthew 22:23-33

- What is the objection to Christian faith in Matthew ww:23ff?
- How does Jesus answer the objection?

c) Attack

2 Corinthians 10:5

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

- How does Paul describe his apologetics? (2 Cor 10:5)
- Why does he do this? (1 Cor 2:6ff)