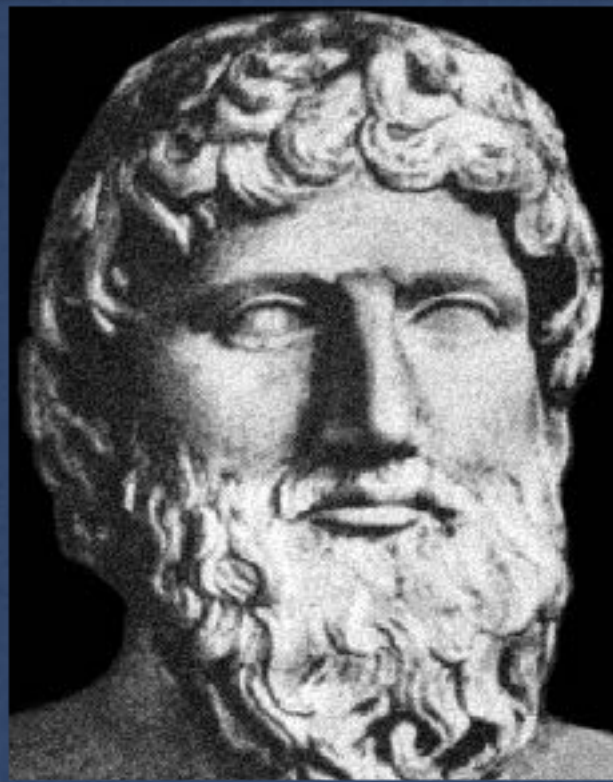


Defending Your Faith

An Introduction



Why Apologetics?

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“The mentality which says that our seminaries should aim at producing pastors rather than scholars is ironic because it is precisely our future pastors, not simply our scholars, who will have need of this scholarly training.”

~ William Lane Craig



Why Apologetics?

“...If Christian laymen don’t become intellectually engaged, then we are in serious danger of losing our children. In high school and college Christian teenagers are intellectually assaulted on every hand by a barrage of anti-Christian philosophies and attitudes.”

~ William Lane Craig



Why Apologetics?

“People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought which they seldom use.”

~ Soren Kierkegaard



Acts 17:16

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.)

"Babbler" = Scavenger Bird, or Idea-Picker

"Resurrection" - The Greeks misunderstood Paul and thought that he was promoting two foreign deities

19 So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.” 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

Acts 17:22 Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23 For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

24 The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26 From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, 27 so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. 28 For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

29 Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. 30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."
Acts 17:32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, "We will hear you again about this." 33 At that point Paul left them. 34 But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Our Reputation Among the World

“The atheist’s only hope in debating William Lane Craig is to offer better arguments. Remember, Craig is defending the theory that an ancient Semitic sky god created the universe with his magical powers, let it evolve in violence and meaninglessness for billions of years, then intervened quite recently by sending a man-god to earth, who rose from the dead into a new body with superpowers and now talks to you and grants you wishes as your invisible friend. That is *literally* what he has to defend, so one would think that even without equal debating skills an atheist would stand a chance to defeat *that* theory.”

-Luke Muehlhauser



What Is Apologetics?

-Apologetics — arguing in defense of something.

-In this context, apologetics will mean trying to:

- A) Show that believing in the essential tenants of the Christian faith is fully reasonable
- B) Show that unbelievers are mistaken in rejecting essential Christian beliefs

There are two different types of apologetics

- 1) *Positive* – giving arguments or reasons why a person should believe
- 2) *Negative* – providing answers to challenges to the Christian faith

These arguments will fall into one of two categories

- 1) *Deductive* – demonstrates that if its premises are true, then their conclusions must necessarily be true
- 2) *Inductive* – demonstrates that if its premises are true, then the conclusion is probably true

There are two different groups of traditional arguments for the existence of God

1) *A Priori* – the premises of the argument are known independently of experience

2) *A Posteriori* – the premises of the argument are known based upon experience

- 1) *Metaphysics*— the branch of philosophy that examines first things
- 2) *Cosmology*— the branch of metaphysics concerned with the origin, elements, beings, and laws of the cosmos
- 3) *Ontology*— the branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature of ultimate reality or substance
- 4) *Epistemology*— theory of knowledge