

## Doctrine of Apologetics

1. The science of Apologetics is devoted to providing an intellectual defense of the claims of the Christian faith.
2. The purpose of Apologetics is to enable people to know what they believe, and why they believe it.
3. The term Apologetics does not mean to be sorry for what one believes. Rather, the term is from a Greek word, apologia (apo-lo-gia), which means literally, “to give a reply,” or, “to give an answer.”
4. The Christian is commanded to be an apologist for the hope that is in them.
  - *1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*
5. The purpose for being an Apologist is to be able to silence false accusation.
  - *1 Peter 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.*
6. In the early church, the Christians were constantly on the defense. Church leaders were compelled to give answers to the vile charges leveled against Christians.
  - Christians were accused of cannibalism, because they “ate” the body, and “drank” the blood of their Leader.
  - Christians were accused of immorality, because they held “love” feasts.
  - Christians were accused of being unpatriotic, because they would not take the loyalty oath and say that Caesar was Lord.

### ***Special Note.***

Whenever Christians live out the ethics of the kingdom of heaven, they will be resented, and falsely accused. On May 8, 1999, during a speech at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, former United States Senator, John D. Ashcroft, who became U. S. Attorney General, said,

"Unique among nations, America recognized the source of our character as being godly and eternal, not being civic and temporal. And because we have understood that our source is eternal, America has been different. We have no king but Jesus."

The reaction against Mr. Ashcroft was swift and severe.

- Christians were accused of atheism, because they worshipped only one God, and rejected the polytheism of the Roman culture.
7. Justin Martyr (AD 100 -165) wrote his Apology to Antoninus Pius (AD September 10, 86 – March 8, 161) in response to the critics of the Christian church.
  8. Sometimes, Christians had to die for their faith, such as Polycarp (AD 69 – 155).

***Special Note.***

In the year 155, during the persecution of Marcus Aurelius, some soldiers were sent to arrest him. After offering them a good supper, he prayed with such devotion that several of them were converted.

In the Martyrdom, Polycarp is recorded as saying on the day of his death,

"Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong",

which could indicate that he was then eighty-six years old, or that he may have lived eighty-six years after his conversion. Polycarp goes on to say,

"How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked."

Polycarp was burned at the stake, and was pierced with a spear, for refusing to burn incense to the Roman Emperor. On his farewell, he said, "I bless you Father for judging me worthy of this hour, so that in the company of the martyrs I may share the cup of Christ."

The date of Polycarp's death is in dispute. Eusebius dates it to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, c. 166–167 (Wikipedia).

9. Not only did the early church have to defend itself against false accusations, and practices within the Roman culture, it had to respond to Judaism, and then to Greek philosophy, which was in sharp decline. It was at Athens that Paul preached to the Greek philosophers.
  - *Acts 17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.*
10. An argument can be made that Western society was saved from the corruption of Greek philosophy. Christianity gave a new world order based on the principle of love for God, and love for one's fellowman, as opposed to the self-centeredness of a society built on bloodshed, violence, enslavement, and taking the spoils of war.

11. In arguing with the Greek philosophers, the apostles, and early Church Fathers, used as their favorite motif, or idea, the Logos.
12. The term Logos, means word. There was no higher concept in Greek philosophy than the power of the word, and so John wrote that Jesus Christ was the Logos, the word the Greeks honored. John went on to argue that the Word, the Logos, became flesh.
  - *John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
  - *John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*
13. John distinguishes the Word, from God, and then in the next statement identifies the Word, as God. The Word is the One by whom all things came into being.
  - *Colossians 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

***Special Note.***

The Greek philosophers were interested in the ultimate source of unity. They gave much thought to the one, the Universe, and the many, all that is manifested within the Universe, and wondered how this came into existence. Christian philosophy provided the answer in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Life is not illogical. Life is not disjointed. Life is not the product of time, plus space, plus chance.

The Greeks were wiser than modern day atheists, such as the infamous Carl Sagan (1934 – 1996). The Greeks understood that out of nothing, nothing comes. Carl Sagan in his famous book, *Cosmos*, made a distinction between cosmos, and chaos, and rightly so. To the Greeks, “cosmos” meant “orderly.” If something is orderly it fits together, it makes sense. But there has to be some overarching principle, or power, that brings unity to the orderliness of the universe which allows for diversity. It is obvious there is order in the Universe. In Greek philosophy the concept of unity, and harmony, was called the Logos.

John embraced the Greek philosophy of the Logos, and united it with the Hebrew concept of God, which included all of His attributes, such as omnipotence (power), omniscience (knowledge, wisdom), and omnipresence (presence). What was profound to the Greeks, what amazed them in Christianity, was that the apostles taught that the One who was the Logic (Logos, Word) of the universe, was personal. The Logic (Logos, Word) was Immanuel, God with us as a person, an eternal person with mind, will, and identity.

14. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Christians must continue to give a defense of the faith, and must be willing to die for the cause of Christ. Many believers are dying for Jesus reflected in the rise of Islam in the Middle East, which is committing genocide.