

ON APOLOGETICS

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS: A QUICK OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In this synoptic article, the author argues that apologetics is as old as Adam and a fundamental component of our calling as humankind. He explains that Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden to do the job of apologetics and his mission, among others, was to refute the lies told by the devil against God and rather believe the original word of God spoken to him. The author further defines apologetics as a primary assignment and obligation of man, to contend for his faith in the Word of God by refuting all other forms of intellectual arguments coming directly from other unbelieving humans or indirectly from the Devil, with the intent of protecting other ignorant, rationally feeble or uninformed humans from deception, falsehood, sin, suffering, curses and death. In the author's view, apologetics is about *fighting the good fight of faith, laying hold on eternal life*¹ -the knowledge of the One and Only True God and Jesus Christ- and rejecting all other forms of lies, trickeries and cunning deceptions of the devil perpetrated through human agents, the ultimate goal being, the destruction of human lives". Apologetics is about simultaneously standing for the truth on one hand, and against falsehood, on the other.

Keywords: Apologetics, truth, falsehood.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition

The word 'apologetics' comes from the Greek word *apologia*¹. Although it is derived from the same word as the English noun 'apology' and adjective 'apologetic', its meaning is quite significantly different. In the ancient Greek world an *apologia* alluded to a *legal defence* of oneself, similar to the speech a modern day defence lawyer might give on behalf of their client. Unlike the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of 'apology', the term *apologia* in ancient Greek language did not have the meaning of "a regretful acknowledgement of an offence or failure" but a carefully reasoned defence of one's beliefs or actions.

Hence, it must be noted that while the word *apologia* has its roots in ancient Greek culture, the art and science of apologetics as we have come to understand it in contemporary times, might be as old of man. Christian apologetics, as it is being practiced today, is related to the ancient Greek practice of *apologia*, albeit, with several variations.

What is Christian apologetics? The term Christian apologetics comprises two words, *Christian* and *apologetics*. Christian apologetics is therefore simply, the art and science of apologetics as understood and practiced by Christian.

Coulter (2016) defines Christian apologetics as follows:

"The task of developing and sharing arguments for the truth and rationality of Christianity and the falsehood and irrationality of alternatives with the aim of strengthening the faith of believers and provoking nonbelievers to consider Christ" (p.1).

According to Louw and Nida (1999), *Apologetics* comes from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning "answer," "defense" or "account." Hence, Christian apologetics is about providing answers to critical questions raised by unbelievers or skeptics regarding the Christian faith, defending the Christian faith or giving a rational account or justification for the authenticity of the Christian faith.

The field of theology has many branches such historical theology, practical or applied theology, systematic theology, and apologetics. Therefore, Apologetics could be defined as a branch of theology which seeks to provide a rational justification for the truth claims of the Christian faith and present Christian doctrine clearly and convincingly. Apologetics is the systematic defense of the Christian faith. It seeks to define, establish, defend, and vindicate the presuppositions of Christian theology in the areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology. It also seeks to defend and vindicate the Christian system of truth in every area of thought or investigation.

Apologetics is a fundamental aspect of our calling as humankind. Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden to do the job of apologetics and his mission was to refute the lies told by the devil against God and rather believe the original word of God spoken to him. Adam's failure in executing his

¹ The Greek word *απολογία* means "a verbal defense"

basic job of apologetics is perhaps one reason why we also fail in that area today². I define apologetics therefore as follows:

"Apologetics is as old as Adam. It is a primary assignment and obligation of man, to contend for his faith in the Word of God, by refuting all other forms of intellectual arguments coming directly from other unbelieving humans or indirectly from the Devil, with the intent of protecting other ignorant, rationally feeble or uninformed humans from deception, falsehood, sin, suffering, curse and death. Apologetics is about *'fighting the good fight of faith, laying hold on eternal life'*³ -the knowledge of the One and Only True God and Jesus Christ⁴- and rejecting all other forms of lies, trickeries and cunning deceptions of the

² The Author believes that Adam failed in Apologetics and that the story of the fall of man in Genesis 3 was basically a failure of man to contend for the truth of the word of God.

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Gen 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Gen 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Gen 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Gen 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

Gen 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

Gen 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?

Gen 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Gen 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

³ The Author believes that Adam`s purpose in the garden, amongst other things, was to fight the good fight of faith, by laying hold of the knowledge of the True God he had at that time, instead of believing in the lies and deception of the Devil. Jesus Christ, the second Adam, came to earth, and unlike Adam, He won the fight of faith in what we call, the temptations of Jesus (cf Luke 4). The Christian walk with God is also essentially about the fight of faith that is choosing to believe the word of God and of Christ alone as true, and rejecting all other claims and supposed paths to salvation and eternal life.

1Ti 6:12 *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

4 Joh 17:3 *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus*

devil perpetrated through human agents, the ultimate goal being, the destruction of human lives". Apologetics is about defending and contending for the truth and standing against the spirit of error and falsehood (Asamoah, 2018).

"Modern Christian apologetics is a multidisciplinary field of study and practice that relies on knowledge, principles, facts, information and truths from disciplines of philosophy, mathematics, secular religions, Christianity, history, archeology, science, psychology, sociology and anthropology, to provide rational justifications for Judeo Christian theology, doctrines, and belief systems, as being the only exclusivist path to gaining a true relationship with God, and salvation in life, whilst also offering contemporaneous arguments that refute other religious belief systems that are deemed as false". (Asamoah, 2018).

1.2 Purpose of Apologetics

The purpose of Christian apologetics is to remove intellectual barriers that prevent a person from accepting the gospel. Good apologetics focuses not so much on giving answers to questions, but providing rational ideas to stimulate thinking. There is no obligation to answer every question. One of our tasks is to be "prepared to give an answer." The apologist's goal is not to win debates, but to reason with others to help them come to the conclusion that Christianity is correct (Asamoah, 2018).

Apologetics is generally said to have three functions, although it should be realised that not all Christian apologists accept that all three functions are valid (some would say that we should not try to construct positive arguments for Christian faith but simply focus on refuting accusations against it) and there is considerable variation between different schools of apologetics as to what arguments should be used within each function:

1) Arguments for the truth of the Christian faith (vindication / proof / positive apologetics)

The main aim of this approach to apologetics is to show that Christianity is reasonable / rational. The method employs philosophical arguments and evidences from science, archaeology and history to show that the Christian faith has greater power than any alternative belief system to explain and interpret the world we live in.

2) Arguments refuting accusations made against the Christian faith (defence/negative apologetics). The aim of this approach is to show that Christianity is not unreasonable / irrational. Removing objections that are made against Christianity, for example claims of contradictions in the Bible, alternative interpretations of historical and scientific evidence and misconceptions about Christian belief.

3) Refutation of opposing beliefs (offense)

The goal of this approach to apologetics is to show that non-Christian belief systems are unreasonable / irrational. Focuses not on specific attacks against Christianity but on undermining the foundations of other belief systems.

4) Persuasion of People of other faiths (reasoning)

Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Some writers add a fourth function, namely persuasion. They claim that apologetics also aims to persuade people to believe in the Christian message. It is probably better to see the task of persuasion as the overarching aim of apologetics, with the three functions above playing different parts within it. This is a helpful reminder of the fact that apologetics alone is not enough – evangelism is also necessary.

Another way to think about the purpose of apologetics is to think about how it relates to those who are believers and those who are nonbelievers. Apologetics aims both to strengthen the faith of the faithful and to remove obstacles to faith for those who do not believe.

Moreland (1987) highlights three good reasons to engage in apologetics.

1. The Scriptures command it (1 Pet 3:15, 16).

2. You are provided with the opportunity to engage in the overall purpose of apologetics, which is to remove intellectual and emotional barriers from someone coming to faith.

3. It strengthens your faith.

a) Confidence in your beliefs leads to confidence in your Christian walk.

b) Looking deeply into these issues should give you a greater love for and appreciation for the Lord. Looking at a starry sky to some people is like looking at a bunch of lights, but to others it is an exciting adventure—why? One has knowledge and the other does not. Do you enjoy listening to an orchestra play? Those who have trained their ears for it enjoy it to a much greater extent. It is the same with paintings and other art forms. In the same way, when we come to know the philosophical depths of God's world, we appreciate the Creator even more.

1.3 Origins of Apologetics

As Christianity in the second century AD began to engage at an intellectual level with Greek philosophy and attracted greater attention from Roman society, a number of writers produced reasoned defences of the Christian faith. Perhaps the best known and the most significant of these Christian apologists was Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD), a gentile from Samaria who was converted after seeking truth in numerous philosophies and eventually died as a martyr in Rome. The writings of these as 'apologists', as there were generally referred to, collectively show three major concerns:

- To defend Christianity against false accusations (e.g. that Christians were atheists, sexually immoral or cannibals)
- To argue for the truth of Christianity on the basis that it fulfilled Old Testament prophecy
- To show that Christianity was superior to or fulfilled Greek philosophical ideas (Coulter, 2016).

It is important to point out that other eminent Christians at the time stood against the approach of the apologists. For example, Tertullian criticized Justin's use of Greek philosophy, saying famously, "*What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?...* But things haven't changed significantly

even in contemporary times as the difference of opinion continues to divide evangelical Christians today.

On the one hand, some have a positive attitude towards apologetics, believing that all truth is God's truth and that it is necessary to defend Christianity in the realm of philosophical debate. Others, on the other hand, are suspicious of apologetics and argue that we should put our energies into proclaiming the gospel instead. But one would ask, what gospel are we to reach and what should our motivation be if not that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way, truth and source of life? If we believe the gospel is the truth and others doubt it, some even going to the extent of providing counter arguments, proofs and evidences, so-called, to weaken the gospel message, the Being of God, the person of Jesus Christ and His claims and the validity of the biblical canon, should we just sit back and ignore such people and their false arguments and assertions? Obviously not. The mandate of preaching the truth of the gospel must also involve standing against all forms of lies, deception and falsehood.

Interestingly, as well noted by Coulter (2016), all three of the main lines of argument advanced by the apologists of the second century find precedents in the New Testament book of Acts, making Luke (or perhaps Paul, whose words he recorded) the first recorded Christian apologist.

Renowned biblical scholar F.F. Bruce wrote:

Of three main types of Christian apologetic in the second century Luke provides first century prototypes: apologetic in relation to pagan religion (Christianity is true; paganism is false); apologetic in relation to Judaism (Christianity represents the fulfillment of true Judaism); apologetic in relation to the political authorities (Christianity is innocent of *any offence against Roman law*).

So, then, apologetics could be said, arguably, to have originated in the New Testament, developing further in the second century in response to challenges encountered as it crossed cultural boundaries into the Greco-Roman world. Throughout the history of Christianity apologetics has continued to adapt to new cultural challenges (Coulter, 2016).

However, it must be sated that Bruce`s (1987)⁵ observation, as is supported by other scholars such as (Coulter, 2016) and Boa and Bowman⁶ should be understood as referring to what one might call *modern apologetics*. The term *modern apologetics* refers to the systematic approach to defending the gospel as was practiced by first century apologists such as Paul in Rome. In first century Rome, Christian apologists who had been accused of false teachings or heresies, or disrespecting roman authority because of their zealous preaching about another King, Jesus Christ, were often brought before the courts of law and they were given the opportunity to defend themselves and their faith, after hearing the charges levelled against them.

⁵ F.F. Bruce 'Paul's Apologetic and the Purpose of Acts', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* (1987) 89:2, pp.38990

⁶ *A Brief History of Apologetics* by Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman. Available at <http://bible.org/seriespage/briefhistoryapologetics> (<http://bible.org/seriespage/briefhistoryapologetics>) (accessed 16/1/18)

Therefore, if one only considers the field apologetics in its official and systematized fashion, one would trace its origin to ancient Greece and Rome. However, if we understand the art of apologetics as generally *contending for the truth of God's word*, then it becomes clear that apologetics is as old as Adam, as his primary assignment in the garden, was to protect the truth of God's word against perversion by the Devil⁷. Using that logic, we could refer to the lives of old testament biblical figures such as Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, and Jeremiah, to mention just a few, as apologists. These patriarchs and prophets essentially stood for the truth in their day and many of them suffered persecutions and even lost their lives because of that. Again if we understand the mandate of apologetics as contending for the truth of God, then John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and most of the New Testament Apostles could be described as apologists, not in the sense of all of them practicing the art of modern apologetics (defending the gospel, as it were, in a court of law or other public arenas) but presenting the truth of the gospel and standing by it, even in the midst of tribulations and persecutions, and dying, in most cases, for the sake of the truth of the gospel.

With this new level of understanding, Jesus Christ Himself therefore becomes the greatest Apologist of God. With Him in focus, it becomes very difficult to separate the task of apologetics from preaching or teaching. This is because we find in many instances in the gospel how Jesus, in the midst of His preaching and teaching, had to criticize, disdain, show contempt for and frown upon anything that represented a lie, falsehood, or deception that stood in the way of the truth of God. It is very common to see Jesus, in the gospel accounts, lambasting the Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees and Teachers of the law, for twisting the truth of God for their selfish gains and personal aggrandizement.

It is not the goal of this paper to really show that Jesus Christ is the greatest Apologist of God. However, it must be noted that there are countless evidences in the gospel accounts that indicate that Jesus wasn't only interested in preaching and teaching the gospel but also contending for His Father's sake and taking certain bold, unconventional and sometimes even `violent` and `radical` means to defend the truth. Here are a few instances:

1. Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Luk 19:45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

Luk 19:46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Luk 19:47 And he taught daily in the temple. *But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,*

Luk 19:48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

⁷ **Gen 2:15** And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. *The Hebrew word translated **keep** also means to **guard, protect, and defend**.*

The reader should imagine what would happen to them if they did something similar to what Jesus did then in today's church. The chief priests, the archbishops and the senior prophets of the church would plot to kill you just as they did against Jesus. It is that simple.

2. Jesus Defies mere Religious observance of the law of the Sabbath and heals A Man with a Withered Hand

Mat 12:1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

Mat 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

Mat 12:3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

Mat 12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

Mat 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Mat 12:6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

Mat 12:7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

Mat 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Mat 12:9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

Mat 12:10 And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

Mat 12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

Mat 12:12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

Mat 12:13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

Mat 12:14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

Here we see how Jesus demonstrated the ministry of the apologist, by standing for the truth of God's word even in what might appear to be defiance of the law of Moses. The truth He sought to present is that the *Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day* (Mat 12:8). The word *Lord* is the Greek *kurios*, and it means master or controller. It appears that the Pharisees were more interested in people being sick and in bondage to the Devil, and were hiding under the ordinance of the Sabbath day to prevent these people from getting their healing and deliverance. Jesus, on the contrary, wanted to teach them, that God was more interested in the welfare of the people than mere observance of the law of the Sabbath. Hence, although the Law of Moses forbade the Jews from working on the Sabbath day,⁸ Jesus wanted to teach them the truth of God's word,

⁸ Exo 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

that human life, value and wellbeing, more precious in the sight of God than the strict religious observance of His own law. Because of this truth, Jesus, the Ultimate Apologist, had to risk His life, to heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day. And indeed, we find that He did many such miracles elsewhere in the gospels, where He appeared to have defied the Law of Moses.

In John 8 verses 1 to 11, Jesus again appears to defy the Law of Moses in order to save the life of a woman caught right in the act of adultery⁹. Such instances, where Jesus apparently disregards the Pharisees and scribes should not be misunderstood as being acts of lawlessness on the part of Jesus, but rather be seen as His unwavering passion and zeal for contending the truth of the word of God- apologetics.

I consider the John chapter 8 versus 31 to 59 as Jesus Greatest apology for the truth of God's word¹⁰.

Exo 20:9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

Exo 20:10 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

Exo 20:11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

⁹ **Joh 8:1** Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

Joh 8:2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

Joh 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

Joh 8:4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

Joh 8:5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

Joh 8:6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*.

Joh 8:7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

Joh 8:8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

Joh 8:9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Joh 8:10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

Joh 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

¹⁰ Joh 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are

ye my disciples indeed;

Joh 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Joh 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Joh 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

Joh 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

Joh 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Joh 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

Joh 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

Joh 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

Joh 8:40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

Joh 8:41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

Joh 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Joh 8:43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

Joh 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Joh 8:45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

Joh 8:46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

Joh 8:47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

Joh 8:48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

Joh 8:49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

Joh 8:50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Joh 8:51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Joh 8:52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

Joh 8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

Joh 8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

Joh 8:55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

Joh 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.

Joh 8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Joh 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

The context is that the word of God being preached by Jesus Christ is the only source of the truth that brings ultimate freedom and liberation mankind, and that a disciple of Jesus is the one who keeps and practices the words of Jesus (vs 31-36). Again Jesus makes it clear that the cost of true apologetics, as it has always been, is that your enemies would want to kill you (vs 37). He also shows us the motivation of the true apologist- speaking only what he has seen with God Father (vs 38).

In verse 39-44, Jesus makes us understand that the true apologist will always clash with religious zealots, who base their righteousness not in the word of God, but some great ancestors or historical icons they celebrate (vs 39). He further lets us know that the apologist is always in danger of being killed by religious adherents for speaking the truth (vs 40). Jesus also makes it clear that true descendants of Abraham would love Him and that those who do not belong to God cannot understand the gospel He preached (vs 41, 42 & 43). Then in verse 44, Jesus reveals something very interesting, which the true apologist needs to understand, that in doing the work of apologetics, we need to understand who the real enemy is- the devil. According to Jesus, the devil is the primary agent that controls the lives of people negatively, making them immoral and non-receptive to the gospel. Again, the devil is not only a murderer from the beginning, but he could not abide in the truth because there is no truth in him. Also, Jesus tells us that the Devil is the source of lies and his native language is lying. This is very important to note because it lets us know that the ministry of apologetics is really fighting the good fight of faith, standing on the truth of God's words, to refute, and reject all the lies, falsehoods and deceptions of the devil.

Clearly, Jesus' statements here provide support for my earlier statement that apologetics is as old as Adam. Indeed, the references Jesus is making to Satan being a murderer from the beginning and the source of lies are related to Genesis 3. (vs 44). In verses 45 to 48 of John 8, Jesus again lets us know that the ministry of apologetics is about telling the truth, whether people believe you or not. Again, Jesus reveals that it is possible for people to not believe the truth presented, even if they find no moral or character flaws in the life of the apologist and the only reason people would refuse the truth being presented by the apologist is because they are not of God.

Verse 48 is very important because here Jesus is accused as having a devil or demon. We see in verse 49, that Jesus immediately responds, *‘I have not a devil;’* .. and gives us reasons as to why He was so passionate about preaching the truth despite the opposition. According to Jesus, the purpose and motivation of true apologetics-*contending for the truth of God's word*-is to honor God the Father and seek His glory, but the apologist should know that men will dishonor them for that (vs 49 & 50). The true apologist should, therefore learn how to immediately respond to

Joh 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

false accusations, not only against their character but against the truth of the word of God. But in doing so, the apologist shouldn't forget that men might ridicule, mock, attack, or even persecute them.

Finally, in verses 51, to 58, Jesus continues arguing with the Jews, speaking the truth and pursuing only the glory and honor of God the Father, even to the point of He being stoned (vs 59). The ultimate lessons we learn from these few examples in the life of Jesus tell us that

1. Adam (and all humans) were originally created for apologetics.
2. The Devil came into the garden to destroy the mission of apologetics. The fall of Adam was essentially an apologetics failure-that is Adam (and Eve) failing to contend for the truth and rather in believing in the lie spoken by the Devil.
3. The patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets of the Old Testament were all apologists of God, in one way or the other.
4. Jesus Christ came into the world¹¹ fundamentally for apologetics-contending for the truth, whilst exposing lies and deceptions.
5. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Apologist of all time.
6. The Apostles of Jesus Christ were also apologists of Christ who were expected to continue the work began by their Lord, Jesus Christ.
7. True Apologetics is about speaking the truth of the word of God with the intent of bringing glory and honor to God the Father and Jesus Christ.
8. True Apologetics could cost the life of the apologists, as the enemies of Christ could defame, mock, ridicule, dishonor, and attack, persecute, or even kill the apologist.
9. The real enemy of the apologist is the devil, not unbelieving men and women.
10. True apologetics should be swift in refuting false accusations of unbelievers against Christians, Christ, the Bible or the Being of God.

1.4 The Link of Apologetics to Evangelism

'Evangelism' is generally understood to mean sharing the good news message (gospel) about Jesus Christ. Evangelism is a part of the broader soul winning mandate or what is popularly called the great commission. The great commission is about the transformation of unbelievers within every recognizable ethnos of life into committed disciples of Jesus Christ. Some view apologetics as either pre-evangelism or as part of the process of evangelism. It removes barriers to belief and prepares the ground for the seed of the gospel to be sown. It is vital not to divorce apologetics

¹¹ Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I **born**, and for this cause came I into the world, that *I should bear witness unto the truth (Emphasis mine)*. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. *Testifying to the truth is what apologetics is all about and that is why Jesus Christ came into the world (Asamoah, 2018)*.

strictly from evangelism. It is unlikely that people who have intellectual objections to the existence of God or the historicity of Jesus will receive the gospel message, and apologetics will help to remove these obstacles by appealing to intellectual reasoning. At the same time, a person could be intellectually convinced of the credibility and even the truth of the Christian faith but still not be a Christian. The gospel appeals not only to the mind, it also appeals to the emotions and, most importantly of all, to the will. Conversion occurs when mind, heart and will are surrendered to God in repentance and faith. As such it will often be wise to share the gospel as we engage in apologetic arguments or vice versa. Moreover, we must not see apologetics are relevant only when we are embarking upon evangelism. We should rather see every opportunity we have, especially in the midst of skeptics of the Bible and critics of Jesus Christ, to make a case for the gospel and afterwards invite people to accept the gospel in faith and obedience.

1.5 The Methodology of Apologetics

Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman combines epistemology and the approach to constructing Arguments and identify four approaches to apologetics, namely, Classical apologetics, Evidential apologetics, Reformed apologetics and Fideism. The following table, adapted from Boa and Bowman, details the characteristics of these four approaches to apologetics¹²:

Table 1: Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman’s Four approaches to Apologetics

	Classical	Evidential	Reformed	Fideist
Basis	Reason	Fact	Revelation	Faith
Form	Rational	Empirical	Transcendental	Paradoxical
Precursors	Anselm; Aquinas	William Paley	Calvin; Thomas Reid	Luther; Kierkegaard
C 20th advocates	C. S. Lewis; Norman Geisler	J. W. Montgomery; Richard Swinburne	Cornelius Van Til; Alvin Plantinga	Karl Barth; Donald Bloesch
Popular with	Catholics; evangelicals	Arminians	Calvinists	Lutherans; neoevangelicals

Source: Retrieved from: <http://bible.org/seriespage/speakingtruthloveperspectivesapologetics>) where the table is developed in more detail (accessed 6/1/18).

¹² Table adapted from <http://bible.org/seriespage/speakingtruthloveperspectivesapologetics> (http://bible.org/seriespage/speakingtruthloveperspectivesapologetics) where the table is developed in more detail (accessed 6/1/18)

1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be stated that apologetics is as old as Adam. Right from Genesis, God`s intent was for Adam, and indeed of his natural seed, to stand for the truth of the word of God and refute all forms of lies that would be perpetrated by the Devil and his agents. Throughout the scriptures, there are numerous examples of Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles who engaged in the ministry of apologetics either as preceding or as being an ongoing part of evangelism or sometimes in the form of open confrontations to kings, who had deviated from the way of righteousness. However, Jesus Christ Himself is the ultimate Apologist and we see several illustrations in the gospel accounts where He was actively engaged in apologetics. In practice, therefore, apologetics and evangelism should go hand in hand, especially in our day when there appears to be a global rise in skepticism. But in engaging in apologetics, we must not forget that our true adversary is the Devil, not the unbelieving human agents. Therefore, we must rely on Holy Spirit in order to do this work of apologetics successfully. We must also remember, that the ultimate motivation for doing apologetics is to honor God the Father and Jesus Christ, to contend for the truth of the Word of God, to refute all lies and provide rationale justification for the Bible, and the Christian faith. But we must not forget, that there are costs associated with doing the ministry of apologetics such as, being scorned and mocked, being attacked or persecuted or even being killed. The modern apologist must therefore have the mindset of an ancient martyr.

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