

## Apologetics

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**Apologetics** (from Greek *apologia*/ἀπολογία, "speaking in defense") is the body of knowledge that defends the philosophical, historical and doctrinal truths of Christianity against attacks by others who possess (usually) a very different belief system.

### Read 1 Peter 3:15.

What is it that we are giving a reason for? \_\_\_\_\_

Always bear in mind that behind every question is a questioner. Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias describes apologetics as "answering a questioner, gradually putting your arm around that individual metaphorically while answering the question". Do it with humility, because ultimately the answer is in the person of Christ, not in an argument. A rational presentation of the gospel routinely serves as the catalyst that propels many to faith in God. Ultimately, however, whether someone accepts the message of the Gospel is not our responsibility - it is the task of the Holy Spirit.

You will also encounter people of non-Christian faiths. Religious worldviews are typically broken down into Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Erroneously, many people state that these religions are fundamentally the same, and only superficially different... **No!** They are fundamentally different and **only superficially similar**.

Everyone has a worldview, whether they believe in God or not, even if they aren't even aware that they have a worldview! A worldview is a set of beliefs THROUGH WHICH you analyze and interpret the world around you. You use your worldview in every choice or decision you make in day to day living. A functional worldview offers answers to five necessary questions: (1) origin, (2) meaning, (3) morality, (4) destiny, and (5) 'what does it mean to be human?'. These are the most critical questions of life.

1. **ORIGIN:** The question of origin has puzzled mankind for centuries. Where did the universe come from? How did life come to be? Where did mankind come from?

Science has proven that the universe had an immediate beginning and is expanding in all directions. The atheist would argue that the entire universe came into existence for no reason with no explanation. By far, the leading scientific theory for the beginning of the universe is The Big Bang Theory, which states that our entire universe, all of the planets, stars, and galaxies, came from a tiny point of energy 'less than a million billion billionth the size of a single atom'. The atheist will tell you, "We haven't got a clear answer on how that original energy got there or how it came to be." Even the scientists that endorse the Big Bang Theory admit that it contradicts many indisputable scientific laws. Do an internet search for "problems with the big bang theory" and prepare yourself for hours upon hours of reading.

The current National Geographic article explaining the Big Bang Theory contains the following statements: 'as if they had all been propelled by an ancient explosive force' ... 'our current theories haven't yet figured out' ... 'To pull this off' ... 'By the time the universe was a billionth of a second old, the universe had cooled down enough' ... 'Somehow, some excess matter survived' ... 'physicists think that vast clouds of dark matter, a still-unknown material' ... and 'driven by a force that repels gravity called dark energy. We still don't know what dark energy is'. Talk about faith!

- As Christians, we believe in the story of creation as told in the book of Genesis.
- Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

How does this insight into origins prepare you to make a well reasoned defense for your faith?

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2. **MEANING:** What is the meaning of life? Why am I here?

The atheist believes that life is ultimately without meaning or purpose. Just like every other living creature, human beings are the random product of time plus matter plus chance. How can you argue that human life is 'meaningful' if we came into existence accidentally, by chance? For your brief existence it is whatever you make it to be. Alom Shaha, author of "The Young Atheist's Handbook", suggests to his pupils that "Yes, of course I know that life is ultimately without meaning or purpose, but the trick is not to wake up every morning and feel that way. ...Embrace it."

- As Christians, we are made to live in loving community with God and His people in a world He created filled with wonder and beauty. We are given meaningful work and service to do **for His glory** and the good of all people.
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
- Matthew 5:16 says, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

According to your Christian world view, where do you find meaning in life? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. **MORALITY:** What is right? What is wrong? Who determines right and wrong?

Postmodernists (typically atheists or agnostics) state that truth is relative and truth is up to each individual to determine for himself. They do not attempt to define right or wrong, true or false, good or evil. They believe that there isn't such a thing as absolute truth. No one has the authority, let alone the right, to define truth or impose upon others his idea of moral right and wrong.

We do, however, find ourselves in a world that comes packaged with a 'moral law' that we did not invent. Unfortunately, it is impossible to make sense of "right" and "wrong" without reference to an ultimate standard. This makes sense only if there exists a moral lawgiver who made us capable of apprehending an objective moral standard. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist, because there is no way of ultimately grounding them.

Atheists argue that 'human morality' is the result of evolution. If morality were a direct product of evolution, why would people constantly argue about what's right and wrong? Why would we experience inner conflict between what we think is morally right and what we really want to do?

- Christian morality is the law of God written on every conscience and placed in every heart that tells us how to relate to Him and treat people with the dignity and value God has placed on every individual. The teaching of Jesus Christ is the perfection of morality described in powerfully simple terms: Love God and love others, as you love yourself.
- In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

What is a biblical view when it comes to morality? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. DESTINY:** What happens to me when I die?

Atheist Australia Blog: when I die, I am dead and gone, my conscious life will end, my interactions with others will end, and I will be simply GONE. Atheist and physicist Stephen Hawking summed it up this way: “I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark.”

- John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
- 1 John 5:13 says, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”
- John 10:28 says, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”
- In John 11:25, Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.”

What happens to you when you die? \_\_\_\_\_

**5. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?**

The atheist has difficulty answering this question. They would essentially say that humans are the current tip of the evolutionary tree. Richard Dawkins, perhaps the most influential living atheist today, claims that human beings are “gigantic lumbering robots” controlled by our “selfish genes.”

But things get confusing when we consider evil. Whenever ‘evil’ actions are described, a human being is involved. Deadly tornados are not considered ‘evil’. When a dog gets into a rabbit pen and kills 20 rabbits, it is not spoken of as ‘evil’. The very fact that the problem of evil is raised either by people or about people tells us that human beings see other human beings as having intrinsic worth. If we human beings are the random product of time plus matter plus chance, how do we arrive at intrinsic worth? The atheist has the impossible task of explaining how a human being can have intrinsic worth in spite of coming into existence by accidental causes. If we are the result of evolution, we can only have extrinsic worth—that which is given by some human government or statute. If intrinsic worth applies to all people regardless of their status or belief, it can only come from another entity (i.e. God).

- As Christians, we believe that mankind was created ‘in the image of God’. We have an eternal soul, or spirit.
  - Genesis 1:27 says, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God He created them.”
  - Genesis 2:7 says, “Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

What does it mean to be created in the image of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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**MEMORIZE John 3:16**