

APOLOGETICS

Lesson 1: Purpose of Apologetics

Reference: Page 36-42

What is apologetics?

The word apologetics comes from a Greek word *apologia* which means “defence”. In Apologetics we learn about defences or reasons for why we believe there is God. In a world full of unbelief, where many people now believe that there is no God and they define faith to be a process of non-thinking.

People who don't believe in God would find a fault with Abraham's faith when he said he heard God commanding him to sacrifice Isaac. Indeed some have remarked that how could a man hear a voice and then immediately obey it. Wouldn't such a situation lead to confusion and people committing terrible acts in the name of believing what the voice told them? Apologetics aims to equip you with knowledge that will enable you to “*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*” (1 Pet.3:15).

Understanding the words Proof, Evidence and Faith

(1) Proof

- Proof is something that establishes an absolute fact, leaving no room for doubt.
- Proof proves something to be true.
- If all things could be as easily verifiable, we would have a problem-free world with no need for juries and magistrates. But we find ourselves in a world where certain things can only be ascertained by means of evidence.
- Example of proof: Before me is a computer screen which is *15 inches* long; you can prove the fact by simply measuring the length of the monitor. Proof can repeat and be verified.
- In Apologetics, just like in Science or Philosophy, we affirm what we believe on the basis of evidence, not proof.

(2) Evidence

- Evidence refers to a thing or situation that indicates something to be true.
- When different facts seem to be consistent in support of an observation, we say there is *evidence*.
- Example of evidence: The Big Bang is affirmed to be true not because it can be proved but because of many interrelated facts - such as the expansion of space, microwave background radiation and some mathematical computations - that supply the evidence.

(3) Faith

- Faith is not performing acts by mere emotion or speculation. Faith is based on evidence. Abraham had an experience of hearing the voice of God and what it said was consistently true. That voice told him Sodom and Gomorrah would be burnt to ashes and it came to pass. The voice assured him he would have a baby despite his wife having been too old and the miracle happened. He learned to trust that voice. When Moses went before pharaoh and threw down the rod, he wasn't performing an act by chance. No, God had given him an assurance when he was alone. His faith relied on evidence.
- In Hebrews we find this definition of faith: “*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb.11:1).