

“How Should We Defend the Faith?”

A TES super seminar on Apologetics

Rev. Cliff McManis—Jupiter, FL; March 23-24

Introduction

1. The discipline of apologetics comes from the NT Greek word *apologia*, meaning “_____” or “give an answer” (cf. Luke 12:11)
2. _____ is usually highlighted as the key verse legitimizing apologetics, but there are other pertinent verses (Acts 22: ff.; Philip 1:16)
3. There is great _____ among Christians as to the definition, purpose and methodology of “apologetics.”
4. Many would say there are _____ to _____ distinct approaches.
5. I believe there are only 2 approaches to apologetics:
 - A. _____ apologetics (TA)
 - B. _____ apologetics (BA)
6. ‘Traditional apologetics’ includes ‘_____, rationalist, philosophical, scholastic, evidential, verificationist, Catholic, Thomistic, Reformed, intelligent design, Covenantal’ and other like methods
7. ‘Biblical apologetics’ is typified by being consistently ‘presuppositional,’ presupposing the _____ as the ultimate source of truth
8. Popular Traditional Apologists (TA): _____

9. Biblical Apologists (BA): _____



TA



BA

Critical Questions

10. The crux, part I: **What is our operating Authority?**

- A. Traditional apologetics = prove the _____, then use the _____
- B. Biblical apologetics = use the _____

11. The crux, part II: **What is our methodology?**

- A. Traditional apologetics = defend _____
- B. Biblical apologetics = defend your _____

12. The crux part III: **What is the unbeliever's malady?**

- A. TA = unbelievers have a _____ problem
 - 1) informational
 - 2) experiential
- B. BA = unbelievers have a _____ problem
 - 1) _____ blindness
 - 2) _____ blindness

13. The crux, part IV: **What is the only remedy?**

- A. TA = _____ reason/logic (natural theology, the Aristotelian Laws of Logic, formal philosophy, archaeology, scientific evidence, personal experience) can change sinners
- B. BA = only _____ revelation (the gospel/Scripture) changes sinners

14. The crux, part V: **Who is an apologist?**

- A. TA = elite, sanctioned, professional _____
- B. BA = every _____



“What is the Evidence?”



1. “Traditional/classical apologetics” is also called “evidentialism”
2. Traditionalists say true belief is based on evidence
3. Traditionalists say presuppositionalists believe without the need of any evidence
“it requires resting in contradiction. Faith is more a matter of the will (choice) than of mind. This is leap-of-faith syndrome which refuses to ground faith in any rational proof or evidence. Not only is rational evidence unnecessary...it is undesirable as well...” It’s an “irrational faith—a faith without reason” (Sproul, Gerstner, A Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics, pp. 422, 424)
4. So, supposedly my belief in the doctrines of Christianity is not based on any evidence...rather it’s a ‘leap of faith’, ‘blind faith’, ‘irrational faith’, ‘mysticism’
5. But this is fallacious—my belief is based on evidence; if there was no reliable evidence then I would not believe
- 6. Presuppositionalists disagree with traditionalists on what constitutes efficacious, coercive, soul-changing evidence**
7. Traditionalists say coercive evidence includes archaeological discoveries, philosophical arguments, the consensus of scholars, scientific theories/ observations, awe-inspiring experiences—I call this all “human evidence” or non-supernatural evidence
8. Traditionalists say that the unbeliever does not have a deficit in the intellectual realm, therefore said evidence (#7) is sufficient to enable them to believe; the unbeliever primarily has an informational deficit, supposedly

9. Presuppositionalists say the unbeliever has a deficit primarily in the moral, spiritual, and religious realm, and only supernatural evidence is sufficient to enable them to believe
“their foolish heart was darkened...” (Romans 1:21)
“you were dead in your trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1)
“darkened in their understanding...hardness of their heart” (Eph 4:18)
“a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor 2:14)
“you must be born again” (John 3:7)
10. Presuppositionalists say the evidence needed to believe is alien to human experience; it is evidence beyond or outside of ourselves
11. Presuppositionalists say saving evidence is given by God as a gift and is of supernatural origin
“God so loved the world that He gave...” (John 3:16)
“By grace you have been saved....” (Eph 2:8)
12. Presuppositionalists say saving evidence results only from divine or special revelation
“God...provided proof/assurance to everyone...” (Acts 17:30-31)
13. Presuppositionalists say faith is the evidence (Hebrews 11:1)
“faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (KJV)
“faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (NAS)
14. Presuppositionalists say saving faith results only from hearing the Word of Christ.
“faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17)
15. Therefore, faith is part of the evidence—“I believe in order to understand.”
“we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7)
“He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you—go in peace’” (Lk 7:50)
“By grace you have been saved through faith...” (Eph 2:8)
16. The evidence is faith in special revelation resulting from special revelation as confirmed by the Holy Spirit as He works in the human heart