



# Three Paradoxes of Biblical Apologetics

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# What is Apologetics?

- This is a technical term in theology for “defense of the Christian faith against attacks & the positive evidence for the truth of Christianity.”
- It does not have anything to do with apologizing in the usual sense of that word today.

# Doing Apologetics

- In thinking about how to help Christians and seekers in defending the faith & giving evidence for it, the Bible provides some guidelines that are most helpful.
- Yet some of these are puzzling; we might call them paradoxes n statements which at first sight seem to be contradictory.

# Three Paradoxes

1. Do unbelievers already know the truth?
  - Some passages suggest the answer is yes; others that it is no.
2. Just how plain to humans is the truth?
  - Some passages suggest it is clearly seen; others that no one knows.
3. What should we do to help?
  - Should we respond or not?
  - And how?

# Do they already know?

- They are suppressing the truth.
  - Romans 1:18
- Their way seems right to them.
  - Proverbs 14:12

# Romans 1:18

18 (NIV) The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness...

# Proverbs 14:12

12 (NIV) There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

(see also Proverbs 16:2-5)

# Proverbs 16:2-5

2 (NIV) All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

3 Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

4 The LORD works out everything for his own ends n even the wicked for a day of disaster. 5 The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.



# Do they already know?

- Yes, and no.
- At some level they know enough to know that they don't want to go that way. So they suppress the truth to keep from facing it.
- To the extent they are successful in suppressing the truth, they may be able to feel relatively sincere about their lifestyle.
- They need God to show them what is going on in their hearts. We may be able to assist.

# How plain is the truth?

- The truth is clearly seen.
  - Romans 1:19-20
- No one knows.
  - Ecclesiastes 8:16-17

# Romans 1:19-20

18 (NIV) The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities in his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

# Ecclesiastes 8:16-17

16 (NIV) When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth in his eyes not seeing sleep day or night in 17 then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it.

# How clear is the truth?

- It is clear enough to make us responsible for not responding properly. God has given real & objective evidence of Himself in cosmos and conscience.
- Yet it is possible to ignore or distort the evidence.
- And none of us know the whole story. There is much that is deep & mysterious about God and what He is doing.

# What should we do?

- Don't answer a fool...
- Answer a fool...
  - Proverbs 26:4-5

# Proverbs 26:4-5

4 (NIV) Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

# What should we do?

- The book of Proverbs uses the term “fool” for one who denies or ignores the claims of God on his/her life.
- This proverb n an intentional paradox n shows us there are dangers in how we respond to fools.
  - If we don’t respond, they will think their views are unanswerable.
  - If we do respond, there is a danger of becoming like them.



# Summary on Apologetics

- 1 Peter 3:15
  - Be ready.
  - Be reasonable.
  - Be humble.
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26
  - Be patient.
  - Be trusting.

# 1 Peter 3:15

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

# 1 Peter 3:15

- Be prepared...
- To give an answer...
- To everyone...
- Who asks for a reason...
- Do it with gentleness & respect.
- Do it under the lordship of Jesus.

# 2 Timothy 2:24-26

2 Timothy 2:24 (NIV) And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

# 2 Timothy 2:24-26

- Don't be quarrelsome.
- Be kind.
- Be competent.
- Be gentle.
- Realize it is God who must give repentance.
- They are ensnared by Satan.

