

How to Study the Bible -- Session 5 **Monday, March 4 at 7:00 - 8:15 pm**

One way to study the Bible is to equip ourselves with answers for those people who oppose the Christian faith or hold false doctrine.

All throughout the N.T. we see both the Lord Jesus and the apostles defending God's Word before people who opposed them. This defense is what we call "**apologetics**", a word derived from the Greek "apologia".

Every Christian will at some point be confronted with opposition towards his or her faith. First Peter 3:15 says, "**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense (Gr. apologia) to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.**" Also Phil. 1:7, 17 & Acts 22:1; 26:2.

Consider the following points in relation to apologetics:

1. It is important to understand the beliefs of the person you're talking to. For example, when trying to convince a Christian who is an a-millennialist that there will be a literal 1000-yr. reign of Christ, your **common ground** is the mutual acceptance of the inspired Word of God and faith in Christ. When talking to an atheist your common ground is far smaller. It may only be the witness of history, the observable universe and/or the voice of our conscience.
2. Defending your faith involves:
 - a) **Making a positive case** for what and why you believe. (ex. Paul's defense before the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 22 where he basically tells his story of conversion and why he is a Christian).
 - b) **Refuting arguments** of those opposed to the Christian faith and/or sound doctrine. (ex. Paul's defense against arguments that deny the resurrection in 1 Cor.15, especially vs. 12-19 where he shows the logical consequences of denying the believer's resurrection).
3. Be aware of the **spiritual warfare** going on in relation to the defense of the Gospel (2 Cor. 10:4,5). A good defense of the faith is not a matter of intellect and eloquence, but taking a courageous and humble stand for the Lord Jesus. This means that we ourselves as Christians need to be in the right spiritual condition to be able to be used by the Lord in defending the faith and hope that we have. (see 1 Pt. 3:15,16 & 2 Tim.2:23-26).
4. Logical arguments alone are seldom enough to convince those that oppose Christianity or sound doctrine. The real opposition is from man's **rebellious heart** and will. (Rm. 1:18-20, 2 Pt. 3:5).
5. False teachers often quote Scripture out of context. For this reason it is important to know the **context of Scripture** which can only be learned through diligent systematic study of Scripture.
6. We need to remember that there is a difference between heresy, error and disagreement.

In our session we are going to imagine that we have been invited by a group of Orthodox Jews to give a positive defense about **why we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament**. (This is what Paul did in Acts 9:20-22).

After stating our case we will look at the following **Jewish objections** and try to answer them. Make sure your arguments are well supported by Scripture. Before you find answers summarize for yourself what common ground you have with these Orthodox Jews. If you don't have enough time to find answers for all four objections, pick out at least one and prepare yourself.

1. "Jesus didn't bring the kingdom of peace, as foretold by the prophets, and didn't make Israel the pre-eminent nation in the world. For this reason we, Jews, reject Jesus."
2. "We, Jews cannot accept the Christian teaching that the Messiah is both God and Man. Where is that in our Bible (the Old Testament)."
3. "Our Bible (O.T.) forbids us to make human blood sacrifices. (Deut. 12:29-32; 18:10; Jer. 32:35). Only animals can be sacrificed to God, as Abraham learned in Genesis 22. For this reason we, Jews, cannot accept the sacrifice of Jesus."
4. "Christians have committed many crimes in the name of Jesus, especially against us Jews. Didn't Jesus say, "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit", and "you will know them by their fruits" (Mat.7)? How can Christianity be good then?"