# TEACHING APOLOGETICS TO CHILDREN: PREPARING CHILDREN TO CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

PRESENTATION NOTES FOR THE WORKSHOP DELIVERED AT THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CONFERENCE

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## What is Apologetics?

## **Preparation**

- I. Enables us to be ready to give a reason/defense for our Christian faith.
  - A. "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, <u>always being ready to make a defense to</u>
    <u>everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you</u>, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1 Peter 3:15)
  - B. "For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and <u>in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all</u> are partakers of grace with me." (Philippians 1:7)
- II. Allows us to know how to answer each person.

"Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." (Colossians 4:6)

III. Communicates the necessity for contending for the faith.

"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." (Jude 3)

## Confirmation

- I. Allows us to reason the gospel.
  - A. "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present." (Acts 17:16-17)
  - B. Not only for the sake of others, which will naturally flow from our understanding, but for the confirmation of our own faith.
- II. Doubt will eventually arise whether from within or without, and if ignored, will lead to further doubt.
  - A. In may ways doubt is like leaven, it will have influence over us.
  - B. Remember: "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." (1 Corinthians 5:6)

- III. Apologetics establishes the viability of theism, laying the groundwork for the foundation of one's faith in Jesus Christ!
  - A. Apologetics confirms Christians in their faith.
  - B. "So that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught." (Luke 1:4)

## Why do Apologetics?

## The Bible commands it.

- I. "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1 Peter 3:15)
- II. "For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me." (Philippians 1:7)

## Culture demands it.

- I. "Good philosophy must exist to answer bad philosophy." C.S. Lewis
  - A. Relativism: the popular idea that truth is relative. What is true to me is not necessarily truth for you.
  - B. Pluralism: the idea that all opposing beliefs and opinions are true.
  - C. Naturalism: the idea that there are no miracles or supernatural intervention in this world.

    Naturalism is prevalent in atheism, pantheism, deism, and agnosticism. It is unfortunate that today many in the church also hold to naturalism, embracing science over God.
- II. Apologetics allows us to declare:
  - A. Absolute truth in a relativistic time.
  - B. An exclusive message to a pluralistic mind-set.
  - C. A supernatural view in a naturalistic society.

## The results confirm it.

- I. A belief not based in the truth of reality is not worth having. *Sincerity is not a measure of truth, for many are sincerely wrong.*
- II. God created humans as rational beings and He expects them to live rationally.
  - A. Evidence of truth should precede faith.

B. *Belief that* God is (i.e., exists) gives evidential and rational basis for the confidence needed to establish *belief in* God.

## The Role of Apologetics in Children's Ministry

## A reasonable approach to one's faith.

- I. Faith is not unreasonable and is based on fact.
- II. Truth can go beyond reason but it cannot go against reason.
- III. God must exist before someone is able to believe in God.

## Laying the groundwork for proper understanding.

- I. Evidence is a step of faith in the light, not a leap in the dark.
- II. Apologetics provides a foundation for understanding and accepting the centrality of Christ.

## The need to define critical words and concepts.

- I. Understand that context gives a word its meaning.
  - A. E.g., bumper sticker: "Tolerance, believe in it."
    - 1. Tolerance, in traditional context, means enduring an idea, practice, or occurrence with forbearance; it almost always implies a difference in opinion.
    - 2. In this context it is presented as an ideology, one in which we are instructed to place our faith in and accept.
- II. The words we use, often times, obscure what we are trying to convey when we are not explicit in our definitions of those words
- III. It is an unfortunate need today to provide apologetic reasoning to many of our words and concepts because the world has presented many of them in light of its pluralism and naturalism.

## **Classroom Apologetics**

## <u>Understanding who Jesus is.</u>

- I. Who is Jesus?
  - A. In the Bible Jesus claimed to be God.
    - 1. He claimed to be the "I AM" of Exodus 3:14.

"Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:58)

### 2. He forgave sins which only God can do.

*Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven you;" in response the scribes thought, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:5,7)* 

### 3. He claimed He should be honored just as the Father is honored.

*Jesus said, "All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." (John 5:23)* 

### 4. He said He was the Jewish Messiah who is God.

For evidence that the Jewish Messiah was considered God see Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 45:6; 110:1; Zechariah 12:10.

- a) "The woman said to Him, 'I know the Messiah is coming'...Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'" (John 4:25-26).
- b) "The high priest asked Him..., 'Are you the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Blessed?' Jesus said, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest said, 'What further need do we have of witness? You have heard the blasphemy!'" (Mark 14:61-64).
- 5. He accepted worship on numerous occasions which is due only to God.
  - a) The Bible forbids worshipping anyone but God.

"Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve."" (Matthew 4:10); see also Exodus 20:1-4 and Deuteronomy 5:6-9.

- b) Jesus, however, accepted worship from:
  - (1) A blind man;

"Then he said, 'Lord, I believe!' And he worshiped Him." (John 9:38)

(2) A healed leper;

"And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.'" (Matthew 8:2)

(3) The Gerasene demoniac:

"When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him." (Mark 5:6)

(4) A ruler;

"While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him..." (Matthew 9:18)

(5) His disciples;

"Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God.'" (Matthew 14:33)

(6) A Canaanite woman;

"Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!'" (Matthew 15:25)

### (7) The mother of James and John;

"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down..." (Matthew 20:20)

### (8) The women at the tomb;

"So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him." (Matthew 28:9)

(9) His disciples at the resurrection.

"When they saw Him, they worshiped Him." (Matthew 28:17)

(10) Doubting Thomas;

"And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:28)

- 6. He put His words on the level with God's.
  - a) Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (Matthew 24:35)
  - b) Jesus said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48)
- 7. He asked His disciples to pray in His Name.

Jesus said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13)

- 8. He accepted the titles of Deity.
  - a) "And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28), and Jesus commended him.
  - b) "Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'" (Matthew 16:16–17)
- B. There is no mistaking the claims Jesus made, and the reactions from the Jewish leaders indicate they understood He claimed to be God.
  - 1. "They [the Jewish leaders] plotted to put Him to death." (John 11:53)
  - 2. "They took up stones to throw at Him." (John 8:59)
  - 3. "They sought to lay hands on Him." (Mark 12:12)

- 4. "The chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death." (Matthew 26:59)
- II. Why should we believe Jesus' claim to be God?
  - A. Jesus' claim to be God is confirmed by three sets of miracles.
    - 1. Jesus' claim is confirmed by miraculous predictions (prophecy).
      - a) Jesus was born to a virgin (which Mary was).
        - (1) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)
        - (2) "Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS." (Luke 1:30–31)
      - b) Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem.
        - (1) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2)
        - (2) "...Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king..." (Matthew 2:1)
    - 2. Jesus' claim is confirmed by a miraculous life.

There are over 60 miracles recorded in the Gospels.

- a) Jesus turns water into wine.
  - "This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." (John 2:11)
- b) Jesus heals the blind man.
  - "And Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." (John 9:39).
- c) Jesus lived a sinless life.
  - "...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.'" (1 Peter 2:21–22)
- 3. Jesus' claim is confirmed by a miraculous resurrection.
  - a) Jesus was crucified, died, and rose from the dead.

Paul said, "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

b) Jesus ascended to heaven.

"Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:53)

B. Jesus' miraculous life corresponds with His claim to be God, proving His claim to be true.

### III. Why is it important to understand Jesus is God?

- A. Only Jesus is able to fulfill prophecies concerning the Messiah.
  - 1. The Old Testament predicted the Messiah would be God.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

- 2. Jesus is the Messiah.
  - a) "The woman said to Him, I know the Messiah is coming...Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He." (John 4:25-26)
  - b) The high priest said, "'Are you the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the blessed?'
    And Jesus said, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest said, 'what further need do we have of witness? You have heard the blasphemy!'" (Mark 14:61-62)
- 3. So, Jesus must be God in order to fulfill the predictions of the Messiah.
- B. Only Jesus is able to live a sinless life because He is both God and man.
  - 1. Jesus is God.

*Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)* 

2. Jesus became man.

"The Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1,14)

3. Jesus is both God and man.

"God was manifested [revealed] in the flesh..." (1 Timothy 3:16)

- C. Only Jesus is able to redeem humanity.
  - 1. Jesus is the Mediator between God and man.

"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." (1  $\it Timothy~2:5$ )

- 2. Jesus is the Reconciler of God and man.
  - "In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19)
- 3. Therefore, Jesus must be both God and man to be Mediator and Reconciler. (more on this below)

## Understanding miracles must be possible for Jesus to be God.

- I. What is a miracle?
  - A. A miracle is:
    - 1. Something God does that...
    - 2. Produces an event that could not happen by natural events.
  - B. Miracles confirm a message from God.
    - 1. Peter said, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man <u>attested by God to you by miracles</u>, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst..." (Acts 2:22)
    - 2. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, <u>God also bearing witness [of Jesus]</u> both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:3–4)
- II. What if there were no miracles?
  - A. The Bible cannot be the Word of God.
    - 1. The Bible is filled with miracles.
    - 2. If these miracles did not occur, then the Bible is not credible.
    - 3. Hence, without miracles the Bible's claim to be the Word of God is not credible.
  - B. Jesus cannot be the Son of God.
    - 1. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God.
    - 2. Jesus did miracles to prove His claim.
      - a) "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."
         (Matthew 12:40)

- b) Jesus said, "'But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins'—He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.'" (Mark 2:10–11)
- 3. So, if these miracles are not credible, then neither are Jesus' claims.
- C. There would be no resurrection, and therefore no salvation.
  - 1. Without the resurrection there is no salvation.
    - a) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16)
    - b) "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)
  - 2. So if the resurrection did not occur, we cannot be saved. "And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!" (1 Corinthians 15:17)

### III. Why are miracles possible?

- A. The existence of God makes miracles possible.
  - 1. If a supernatural God exists, then supernatural acts of God are possible.
  - 2. If God is the God of creation, then He is able to intervene in His own creation. *Otherwise the effect is greater than the cause.*
- B. If God exists, miracles are possible.
  - 1. In order to disprove miracles one must disprove God.
  - 2. No one is able to disprove God.

### Understanding how Jesus is both God and man.

- I. If Jesus is God, how is He also a man?
  - A. Jesus has two natures, both a human nature and a God nature.

So when answering a question about Jesus we must provide two answers: one according to His Deity (i.e., God nature) and one according to His human nature.

- B. Jesus was always God, but took on a human nature.
  - 1. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)
  - 2. "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh..." (1 John 4:2)
  - 3. "For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (2 John 1:7)

### II. Why did Jesus take on a human nature?

- A. Jesus' human nature allows Him to:
  - 1. Go to the Father on our behalf;

"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)

2. Understand our weakness to sin;

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

3. Show us the Father;

"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?'" (John 14:9)

- B. Jesus' human nature is absolutely necessary to our salvation.
  - 1. A sinless (i.e., perfect) sacrifice was necessary to satisfy the justice of God.
    - a) God is just and cannot overlook sin.
      - (1) "For the LORD our God is holy." (Psalms 99:9)
      - (2) "God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day." (Psalms 7:11)
    - b) He is gracious and wants to forgive sin.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

2. Jesus took on human nature and lived a sinless life.

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

- a) God accepted payment for sin when the sinless (i.e., just) Christ died for the sinful (i.e., unjust) humans.
  - (1) "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)
  - (2) "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18–19)
- b) The justice of God was then, and only then, satisfied, through Jesus' own sacrifice.

"But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4–7)

## <u>Understanding the Trinity.</u>

- I. How do you explain the Trinity?
  - A. There is only one God.
    - 1. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4)
    - 2. "Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.""(Mark 12:29)
    - 3. Paul writes, "...there is no other God but one." (1 Corinthians 8:4)
    - 4. "For there is one God..." (1 Timothy 2:5)
    - 5. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (James 2:19)
  - B. Three Persons are called God:
    - 1. The Father is God.
      - a) "Paul, an apostle—not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead." (Galatians 1:1)
      - b) "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Remember, only God can forgive sins: Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven you;" in response the scribes thought, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:5,7)

2. The Son is God.

Jesus allowed Thomas to call Him "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)

3. The Holy Spirit is God.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16)

C. All Three are Distinct Persons.

*Person* = one with a mind, will, and feeling (He can think, choose, and feel).

- 1. The Father is a Person.
  - a) He knows and has a mind (in order to know, one must think, and if one thinks, one must have a mind).

"For your heavenly <u>Father knows</u> that you need all these things." (Matthew 6:32)

### b) He has a will and therefore can choose.

"Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. <u>Your will</u> be done On earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9–10)

## c) He can feel and therefore has feelings.

"And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and <u>He was grieved</u> in His heart." (Genesis 6:6)

### 2. The Son is a Person.

### a) He has a mind.

"Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because <u>He knew</u> all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for <u>He knew</u> what was in man." (John 2:24–25)

### b) He can choose.

Jesus said, "'Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (John 10:17–18)

### c) He can feel.

"Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

### 3. The Holy Spirit is a Person.

### a) He has a mind.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, <u>He will teach you</u> all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26)

### b) He can choose.

"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills." (1 Corinthians 12:11)

#### c) He can feel.

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God..." (Ephesians 4:30)

# 4. If there are three distinct Persons called God, and only one God, there are three distinct Persons in one God.

## II. What is a good example of the Trinity?

## A. First, some bad illustrations:

### 1. Water is a liquid, gas, and vapor.

This is the heresy modalism, which views one Person of God playing three modes or roles.

## 2. An egg is comprised of a shell, egg white, and yolk.

This is the heresy tritheism, which states that there are three gods in one God. Any of these three parts can exist on its own, in fact, often times the shell is discarded to prepare the egg.

### 3. A chain with three links.

Again this is tritheism; a link can be separated and you still have a chain of two links.

### 4. Humans are comprised of body, soul, and spirit.

Another example of tritheism; soul and spirit can survive without a body.

### B. Some better illustrations:

- 1. The Trinity is like a triangle which must have three corners.
- 2. In God there is one *What* and three *Whos*.
  - a) What is His nature and the Whos are His Persons.
  - b) Keep in mind that in Jesus there is one *Who* and two *Whats*.
- 3. St. Augustine's example: The Trinity is like the trifold nature of love: Lover, Loved, and Spirit of Love.
- 4. The Trinity is like a stick which has two ends and one middle.

## <u>Understanding the truth about truth.</u>

#### I. What is truth?

Note that his is the same question Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:38.

- A. Truth is what agrees with (or corresponds to) the facts.
  - 1. Therefore, the opposite of true is false.
  - 2. False is a misrepresentation of the facts.
- B. Christianity claims absolute truth.
  - 1. Absolute truth is truth for everyone, everywhere, at all times.
  - 2. Christians are expected to know this truth.

E.g., we are told to worship in truth: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

3. Christianity claims that the truth is knowable.

Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31–32)

### II. How do we understand truth?

- A. In order to understand truth we must understand who God is, because God is a God of truth.
  - 1. God the Father is true.

Jesus said, "He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him." (John 8:26)

2. Jesus is the truth.

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

3. The Holy Spirit is truth...

- a) Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." (John 14:16–17)
- b) ...and He will lead us to the truth.

  Jesus said, "when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, <u>He will guide you into all truth;</u>
  for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak"
  (John 16:13)
- B. Knowing who God is, along with all of His attributes, helps us identify the truth because if God is a God of truth then everything He does, everything He says, and everything thing He is must be truth.

## According to Jesus the Bible is the Word of God.

- I. Why is the Bible true?
  - A. Throughout John's Gospel we learn much about truth; we learn that:
    - 1. Jesus is full of truth.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, <u>full of grace and truth</u>." (John 1:14)

2. Truth comes from Jesus, in the following ways:

"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and <u>truth came through Jesus Christ</u>." (John 1:17)

- a) Jesus bears witness of the truth;
  - "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going." (John 8:14)
- b) Jesus speaks the truth.

Jesus describes Himself as "a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God." (John 8:40)

3. Therefore, since the Bible records Jesus' words and actions, the Bible is true and records the truth so we can know the truth.

Jesus said to the Father, "Your Word is truth." (John 17:17)

- B. If the Bible is the Word of God, which it is, and God is a God of truth, then the Word of God must be true, for anything a truthful God says must be true.
- II Is all of the Bible true?
  - A. It is also important to understand that Jesus is the theme of the entire Bible.
    - 1. Old Testament: Anticipation of Jesus Christ

### a) Law – the Foundation for Christ

"Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

## b) History – Preparation for Christ

"And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God." (2 Samuel 7:23–24)

## c) Poetry – Desire for Christ

"Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You." (Psalms 73:25)

## d) Prophecy – Expectation of Christ

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem <u>until Messiah the Prince</u>, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times." (Daniel 9:25)

### 2. New Testament: Realization of Jesus Christ

### a) Gospels – Presentation of Christ

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

### b) Acts – Publicizing of Christ

"Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that <u>by</u> the name <u>of Jesus Christ of Nazareth</u>, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole...Nor is there salvation in any other, for <u>there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved</u>." (Acts 4:10,12)

### c) Epistles – Explanation of Christ

"But now <u>in Christ Jesus you</u> who once were far off <u>have been brought near by the blood of Christ.</u>" (Ephesians 2:13)

### d) Revelation – Completion in Christ

"'And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.' Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:12–14)

- 3. If the theme of the entire Bible is Jesus, and Jesus is truth according to John 14:6, then the entire Bible is about the truth and therefore must be true.
- B. The Bible is the key to the truth by which we need to live our lives, and Jesus, along with the help of the Holy Spirit, is our way to understanding that truth!

## **Gaining Perspective**

## The Role of Apologetics in Your Classroom

- I. Your students are going to encounter questions regarding faith, whether these questions are generated from the world or from within.
  - A. This is a good thing.
  - B. Questioning our understanding forces us to grow and mature.
    - Paul urged the Corinthians, regarding their faith, to "Test yourselves." (2 Corinthians 13:5)
    - 2. James tells us that "the testing of your faith produces patience." (James 1:3)
    - 3. Peter tells us to rejoice "that the tested genuineness of your faith...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:7)
- II. It is our job to prepare them for such times.
  - A. Asking these type of questions we just reviewed helps prepare students for those times when their need for the answer is crucial.
  - B. Training them to view the Bible as truth, and teaching what the Bible has to say, equips our students with the greatest resource that allows spiritual growth and combats the permeation of doubt.

## You can do this!

- I. Apologetics does not have to be frightful.
  - A. Much of apologetics is training ourselves how to think properly:
    - 1. Understanding that all truth is absolute.
    - 2. Understanding that the Word of a truthful God must be true.
    - 3. Understanding that anything contrary to the truth must be false.
    - 4. Understanding that two contrary ideas cannot both be true.
  - B. Philosophy and logic have their place in apologetics, but they are not starting points.
    - 1. Start with the truth.
    - 2. Jesus' own prayer to the Father regarding us was this: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17)

- 3. The Bible is the apologist's greatest resource.
- C. Use apologetics to both prepare and confirm your students' faith in their exploration of Christianity.
  - 1. There is no need for debate, only a need to present the truth.
  - 2. Remember, this is not *your* truth, this is God's truth, which is absolute, which means it is the truth for everyone, everywhere, at all times.
- II. It is, however, impossible to teach what you do not know...
  - A. So, I leave you with Paul's encouragement to Timothy: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)
  - B. ...and allow us to help you.
    - 1. Visit <a href="www.CalvaryCurriculum.com">www.CalvaryCurriculum.com</a> for information on Sunday School needs, curriculum, and an apologetic section that will be available in the next few months.
    - 2. Contact me at <u>danielkoncur@gmail.com</u> with any questions or concerns you come across in your study of apologetics.

## **Suggested Reading**

## **Understanding God**

Charnock, Stephen. Existence and Attributes of God. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.

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### **Understanding Jesus**

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Bullinger, E.W. *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1979. Torrey, R.A. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1910.

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## **Logic**

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## **Apologetics**

- Geisler, Norman, and Ron Rhodes. *Conviction Without Compromise*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2008.
- ———, and Thomas Howe. *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Books, 1992.
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