

Christian Apologetics (01)
[Defenders of the Faith]

We begin a new series entitled, Christian Apologetics.

“Christian apologetics is a field of Christian theology that presents a rational basis for the Christian faith and defends the faith against objections, and exposes the perceived flaws of other world views.” (Wikipedia)

Milton Terry suggests that Christian apologetics resulted from “skeptical and rational assaults upon the Scriptures.” (Biblical Hermeneutics, pg.171)

Apologetics is derived from the Greek verb, apologia. Apologia refers to a speech made in defense or a verbal defense. (Vines Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, pg.154)

Paul was a defender of the grace gospel. The realization of the truth of John 1:17 made Paul a great Christian apologetics – “For the Law was given through Moses; **grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.**”

This study will examine Paul’s use of Christian apologetics seven times in defense of the grace gospel against the same charges (Acts 21:15-26:32; 28:17-31).

1. It began with the apostate legalistic Christian church in Jerusalem attacking Paul’s grace gospel

(Acts 21:15-21) “And they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.” (Acts 21:21, 28)

This argument should have been settled at the Jerusalem Church Conference (Acts 15:1, 11, 29; 21:25). **People hear what they want to hear based on positive or negative volition to truth.**

This legalist group of believers allowed things to escalate to a mob trying to kill Paul (Acts 21:30-32). After Paul had been rescued by Roman soldiers, he requested permission to give his defense to the mob (Acts 21:33-40).

Paul gave his first defense for the grace gospel (Acts 22:1-23). Note our outline of Paul’s five points of defense.

- Life before saved (Acts 22:1-5)
- Experience of being saved (Acts 22:6-10)
- Enlightenment after saved (Acts 22:11-16)
- Call to Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21)
- Response to message (Acts 22:22-23)

2. This led to Paul’s second defense against these charges in the Sanhedrin court (Acts 22:30-23:24).

Paul’s second defense was based on the fact that he was aware of the theological conflict between the Pharisees and Sadducees on the doctrine of resurrection (Acts 23:6-11). It resulted in mistrial.

Apostate Jews formed a conspiracy to kill Paul (Acts 23:12-24). Roman soldiers took Paul to Felix in Caesarea.

3. This led to Paul's third defense. It was before the governor Felix with a letter outlining bogus charges (Acts 23:24-35).

Sanhedrin sent a high profile lawyer to represent them in the Caesarea court (Acts 24:1-9). Note our four-point outline of Paul's defense.

- Bogus charges (Acts 24:10-13)
- Follower of Christ (Acts 24:14-16)
- Alms offering for the poor (Acts 24:17-21)
- Belief in resurrection (Acts 24:21)

4. This led to Paul's fourth defense in a private hearing with Felix and his wife (Acts 24:24-27). Note our three-point outline of Paul's defense.

- They wanted to hear about his faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 24:24).
- Paul talked about righteousness, self-control, and judgment (Acts 24:25).
- Felix conversed with Paul many times over two years (Acts 24:26-27).

5. This led to Paul's fifth defense with Festus (Felix successor) (Acts 25:1).

The Jews immediately reopened the case against Paul with the new governor (Acts 25:2-7). Once again the Jews brought their bogus charges against Paul (Acts 25:7). Note our two-point outline of Paul's defense (Acts 25:8-12).

- Paul declares his innocence (Acts 25:8). Festus suggest a return to the Jerusalem court.
- Paul refused and appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:9-12).

6. This led to Paul's sixth defense on the same charges before Agrippa and his wife (Acts 25:13-26:32).

Festus arrived at the truth – “But they simply had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive.” (Acts 25:19)

Note our six-point outline of Paul's defense (Acts 26:1-32).

- Life before saved (Acts 26:2-12)
- Experience of being saved and called (Acts 26:13-18)
- Paul gave the grace gospel (Acts 26:19-23)
- Festus suggests that Paul is insane (Acts 26:24)
- Paul witnesses to Agrippa (Acts 26:26-29)
- Innocence declared (Acts 26:30-32)

7. This led to Paul's seventh defense on the same charge in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).

After two years, Paul's case was thrown out by default. **Note our six-outline of Paul's defense.**