

## Apologetics: The Term “Apologia”

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer (apologia): to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15)

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense (apologia) to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15 ESV)

1 Peter 3:15 is the go-to scripture in presenting the subject of apologetics. It is our duty and obligation to “...sanctify (to separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, sanctify; regard or reference as holy) the Lord God (Christ the Lord) in your hearts: and *be* ready (prepared) always to *give* an answer (to make a defense): to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (yet do it with gentleness and respect).

What a directive! What a challenge that is set before us. To make a prepared defense of the gospel without being disrespectful or Calvinistic. Respectfully, even confidently, full of passion, lively and forceful without making it personal, without being defensive, and without taking a defensive posture. Apologetics is of great importance and is a worthy subject of study. L. Russ Bush says:

“Apologetics is a confusing term to many younger theological students, because the English word *apology* has been applied as a synonym for excuses, especially those where one is sorrowfully admitting guilt and asking for forgiveness. The term is used by the writers of the Bible, however, to describe a reasonable and forceful defense...” (L. Russ Bush, ed., *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983, ix).

The word *answer* (G627; *apologia* Gr.) is defined by Thayer as: 1) verbal defence, speech in defence. 2) a reasoned statement or argument.,

The term apologia is also found in the following scriptures:

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence (apologia) which *I make* now unto you. (Acts 22:1)

To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer (apologia) for himself concerning the crime laid against him. (Acts 25:16)

Mine answer (apologia) to them that do examine me is this. (1Corinthians 9:3)

For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves (apologia), yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. (2 Corinthians 7:11)

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence (apologia) and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. (Philippians 1:7)

But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence (apologia) of the gospel. (Philippians 1:17)

At my first answer (apologia) no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. (2 Timothy 4:16)

Adam Clarke states the following, “The word *απολογία*, which we translate answer, signifies a defense; from this we have our word apology, which did not originally signify an excuse for an act, but a defense of that act. The defences of Christianity by the primitive fathers are called apologies” (Clarke, note from 1 Peter 3:15).

Bernard Ramm says, “The historical origin of apologetics is to be found in the legal procedures in ancient Athens. The plaintiff brought his accusation (*katēgorea*) before the court. The accused had the right of making a reply (apologia) to the accusation. The reply was an effort to show the falsity of the accusation; hence the accused attempted to “speak off” the charge.”

“Hence, we have the verb *apologesthai*, “to make reply, to give an answer, to legally defend one’s self”; and the noun *apologia*, “the answer given, the defense made”, and *apologētikos* which refers to the art or skill of making one’s reply or answer...”

Ramm also states, “Besides noting that the vocabulary of apologetics is to be found in the New Testament we also note considerable apologetical activity. For example on numerous occasions Jesus was *accused* of some fault by the Jews, and to this *accusation* our Lord made his defense (apologia) even though it was not named as such. A beautiful example of the apologetical activity of Christ may be seen in Matthew 22 where three leading questions were asked of him by the three leading Jewish sects of the day. In each instance our Lord made reply (apologia) and gave a most judicious answer” (Bernard Ramm, *Varieties of Christian Apologetics*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965, 11).

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