

## The Case for Christianity Part 1

Earlier I wrote that one of the tasks of apologetics is to present a case for the truth of the biblical message. Now I'd like to present a few foundational considerations, and after that we'll look at how we might construct a case.

When Christians are called upon to present a case for the faith, they are, in effect, being asked to offer proof that Christianity is true. What evidences or arguments can be marshaled to establish the truth of what we believe?

What we would like to do is make a case which no person of reasonable intelligence can fail to accept. But the Bible acknowledges the reality that many people will not believe no matter how compelling the evidence. Remember the story in Luke 16 about the rich man who died and suffered torment? He begged Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his brothers about what they also faced. Listen to the response. Abraham said, **"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead."** A determined will can ignore the best of evidence.

Unless we are talking about proof in the mathematical sense, we need to note that proof is person-relative; what will convince one person might not convince another. **This doesn't mean, however, that Christianity only becomes true when someone is convinced. It's true whether anyone believes it or not.**

In making a case for the faith we seek to present a sound argument which will be persuasive for a particular listener. On the one hand, this consideration frees us from the responsibility of having an argument which will convince everyone; on the other hand, it means that we must not depend upon "one-size-fits-all" arguments.

Even if we're able to deal adequately with the challenges of a given individual, we need to also note what the real basis of our belief is. A true knowledge of God is based upon divine testimony which is accepted by faith, but which is also confirmed for us by evidences of various types. The testimony of Scripture about such matters as the work of Christ on the cross and justification by faith are things which can't be proved; they are accepted by faith.

We must also remember the nature of our message. Christianity is not just a system of beliefs, but rather the message of the One who is truth. This is an especially pertinent point today, given the mentality of the younger generations. Today we've lost the confidence in our ability to reason through the major issues of life in a disinterested, scientific manner and come to firm conclusions. Conceptual schemes that don't touch us where we really live hold little interest anymore. We need to draw people to Jesus who is the answer to the major questions of life. Christianity is living truth, and it should be preached and defended as such.

We might only be able to convince the non-believer that Christianity is plausible or believable. But that's a good start; often it takes many steps for a person to come to faith. Our job is to provide a solid intellectual foundation to make those steps sure.

## The Case for Christianity Part 2

Now we'll finish our discussion by outlining a way of presenting a case for Christianity. Note that this is just an outline; it'll be up to you to fill in the details.

Since God created the universe and is active in His creation, there is no lack of evidence for the truth of Christianity. When I use the word "evidence," I'm using it in a broad way to include not only factual evidence, but logical arguments and human experience as well. **Evidence is anything that can be brought to bear on the truth-claims of Scripture.**

As we present evidence, we must be aware that the false presuppositions unbelievers hold about God, man, and the world might skew their evaluation of the evidences. In fact, the idea of encouraging people to evaluate Christianity makes some people uneasy. Are we allowing sinful people to bring God to the bar of judgment? No, we aren't. We are simply recognizing that, although the Bible never hints that anyone is justified in rejecting its message, it does present witnesses to the truth, typically through historical reminders and miracles. Further, because unbelievers are made in God's image and live in God's world, they have some understanding of the truth, and we can appeal to that understanding.

**We can divide the kinds of evidence at our disposal into three categories: fact (or empirical evidence); reason (or logical thinking); and experience (or human nature and the experience of life).**

These three kinds of evidence can be used two ways: evaluation and explanation.

**First, we can look for evidence in a given area which confirms Scripture. This is the evaluation aspect of apologetics. So, for example, we can ask, Are there observable facts which affirm what Scripture teaches?** Consider history and archeology. Are the teachings of Scripture coherent and logically consistent? Yes, they are. Typically, people who say there are contradictions in the Bible have a hard time remembering one. Is what the Bible says about human nature and human experience true to what we know? Yes it is; we can identify with biblical characters.

**The second way we use evidences is to see if Christianity can explain them.** The following questions might clarify what I mean. We can ask, Does the Christian world view explain the facts of nature? Yes, it does, for it says that Jesus created and sustains the universe. Does Christianity provide an explanation for the reliability of human reason itself? Sure; we are created in the image of God with intelligence. Does the Bible explain human nature and experience? Yes, for it relates that, while the image of God and common grace enable us to do good to a certain extent, we are given to sin because of the Fall.

In this essay I've tried to provide some foundational principles for defending the faith. As we prepare to give an answer to our society, it's important that we learn to think logically, that we respond to the questions of our day, **that we become familiar with the broad range of evidence at our disposal**, and that we consider the person or persons we are addressing as we present our case. **With this in mind, we exhibit the truth of Jesus Christ in all its splendor, and, as always, leave the results to God.**

Lessons 1-3 are Taken from **Christian Apologetics *An Introduction*** by Rick Wade © 1997  
Probe Ministries International with additional information and insight from Kevin Hoffman.

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What are the three main kinds of evidence?  
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What are the two ways evidence can be used?  
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Describe evaluation. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Describe explanation. \_\_\_\_\_  
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