

REASONS TO BELIEVE

PART I: Uniqueness of the Christian Faith

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Be prepared to give reasons for your faith

1. **1 Pet. 3:15:** *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to **give an answer** to everyone who asks you to **give the reason** for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect*

a) “Give an answer”

- (1) Gk. *apologia* = “make a plea, give an answer or defense”: **apologetics** [NOT apologizing!]

- (2) “Give a logical defense” [AMP]

b) “Give the reason”

- (1) Gk. *logos* = “reasoning, logic, computation”
- (2) We must study, prepare, and be ready to give logical reasons for our faith

B. Give a defense

1. *Apologia* translated “defense” of the gospel in Phil. 1:7, 17
2. We must know how to *contend for the faith* (Jude 3)

C. Know how to answer (**Col. 4:6 – AMP**): *Let your speech at all times be gracious (pleasant and winsome), seasoned [as it were] with salt, [so that you may never be at a loss] to **know how you ought to answer anyone [who puts a question to you].***

D. Win souls, not arguments!

1. **BUT** do this with **gentleness and respect** (1 Pet. 3:15)
 - a) “**Courteously and respectfully**” [AMP]
 - b) “**With meekness and fear**” [KJV]
2. **2 Tim. 2:23-26:** ²³*Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. ²⁴And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵Those who oppose him he must gently instruct,*

in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

II. EXCLUSIVE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

A. The God of the Bible claims to be the only true God, the Creator of heaven and earth

1. **Jer. 10:10-12:** ¹⁰*But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God, the eternal King. When He is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure His wrath.* ¹¹*“Tell them this: ‘These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.’”* ¹²*But God made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding.*
2. **John 17:3:** *Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.*
3. **Isa. 40:12-15:** ¹²*Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, or with the breadth of His hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?* ¹³*Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed Him as His counselor?* ¹⁴*Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten Him, and who taught Him the right way? Who was it that taught Him knowledge or showed Him the path of understanding?* ¹⁵*Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; He weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.*
4. **Isa. 40:25-28:** ²⁵*“To whom will you compare Me? Or who is My equal?”* says the Holy One. ²⁶*Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing...* ²⁸*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom.*

5. **Isa. 44:6-8:** *⁶This is what the LORD says— Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the **first and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God.** ⁷Who then is like Me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before Me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come— yes, **let him foretell what will come.** ⁸Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. **Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.***
- B. Christ claimed to be the only way to God, to salvation & to heaven
1. **John 14:6:** *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.**”*
 2. John 6:48-51; 10:1-10; 11:25, etc.
- C. The Bible claims to be the only true revelation from God
1. **Isa. 8:20 (NKJV):** *To the law and to the testimony! **If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.***
 2. **2 Tim. 3:16 (NKJV):** ***All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,** and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*
 3. **2 Pet. 1:19-21 (NKJV):** *¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that **no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,** ²¹for prophecy **never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.***
 4. **Rev. 22:18-19:** *¹⁸**I warn everyone** who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **If anyone adds anything to them,** God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹**And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city,** which are described in this book.*
 5. **John 10:35** – *the Scripture cannot be broken.*

- D. The way of salvation presented in the Bible is claimed to be the only way
1. **Acts 4:12:** *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*
 2. **1 Tim. 2:5:** *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*
 3. **Gal. 1:8-9:** *⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*

III. UNIQUE HISTORICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIANITY

- A. Based upon historical **facts** – creation, man's fall, redemption & resurrection
- B. Founded not on Christ's teachings alone, but more importantly on the **Person of Christ** – who He is and what He did

IV. UNIQUE ACCOUNT OF ORIGINS

- A. No other religion (or their scriptures) gives a clear explanation about the origin of matter and energy, the origin of the universe, and the origin of man (Genesis)
- B. God the Creator reveals Himself and where everything came from

V. UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST

- A. No one like Him in all history!
- B. His first advent was predicted in precise detail (His lineage, birthplace, time, career, purpose, nature of death, resurrection, etc.) hundreds of years beforehand [NOTE: We will examine fulfillment of prophecy in more detail later in this study]
- C. As Messiah, His coming into the world was anticipated for centuries prior to His birth

- D. Uniqueness of His virgin birth – nothing like it ever imagined!
 - 1. Mat. 1:18-25
 - 2. Luke 1:26-37
 - 3. Isa. 7:14
- E. Human-Divine nature – fully God, fully man!
 - 1. John 1:1-14
 - 2. Phil. 2:5-11
- F. Sinless life
 - 1. 1 Pet. 2:22 – *He committed no sin*
 - 2. 1 John 3:5 – *In Him is no sin*
 - 3. 2 Cor. 5:21 (NKJV) – *He knew no sin*
- G. Uniqueness of His teachings (Sermon on the Mount, parables, etc.)
 - 1. **John 7:46:** *“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.*
 - 2. **Mat. 7:28-29:** ²⁸*When Jesus had finished saying these things, the **crowds were amazed at His teaching,*** ²⁹*because **He taught as one who had authority,** and not as their teachers of the law.*
- H. Uniqueness of His death
 - 1. **John 10:17-18:** ¹⁷*The reason my Father loves Me is that **I lay down my life**—only to take it up again. ¹⁸**No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of my own accord.** I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.*
 - 2. **John 19:30:** *When He had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, He bowed His head and **gave up His spirit.***
- I. Uniqueness of His resurrection
 - 1. All of the other founders of religions (Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Darwin, etc.) are dead and in their grave!

2. But Jesus was ***declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead!*** (Rom. 1:4)
3. [NOTE: We will examine Christ's resurrection in more detail later in this study]

VI. UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

- A. From Gk. *biblos* = "book": The Bible is a Book like ***NO OTHER!***
- B. Unity in diversity
 1. 66 books written by 40 different authors over a period of more than 2,000 years, yet with a unified message!
 2. Gradually united into one volume by a process that no one can even fully understand or explain
 3. [NOTE: We will look more closely at the authenticity of the Old and New Testaments later in this study]
 4. There is nothing remotely comparable in the millions of other books written by man – the Bible is *still* the **all time best seller!**
- C. Fulfilled prophecy
 1. Hundreds of specific prophecies, often declared hundreds of years before their fulfillment
 2. No other book has made so many specific, detailed predictions that came to pass
 3. [NOTE: More about prophecy later]
- D. Accuracy
 1. Numerous accounts of history in the Bible have been confirmed by archaeology and historical records
 2. Many principles of natural and earth sciences that were not even understood at the time they were written have now been confirmed by modern scientific discoveries
- E. Honesty and authenticity
 1. The Bible makes no attempt to cover up or "sugar coat" the failures of God's people – it tells about Noah's drunkenness, Abraham's lying, King David's adultery and murder, and Peter's (the founder and leader of the whole Christian movement!) denial of Christ

2. It doesn't try to portray anyone as a superhero; rather, it reveals human weakness and shows all to be "men of like passions"
- F. Miraculous preservation
1. Kings, rulers and priests have tried to eradicate the Bible – millions of copies have been burned, etc. and many of its followers put to death
 2. Professors and atheists have tried to refute and discredit the Bible for centuries
 3. But the Bible is still #1 on the Bestseller List!
- G. Claims of its own writers – many claimed to be oracles inspired by God

VII. UNIQUENESS OF SALVATION BY GRACE

- A. Every other religion in the world teaches some form of salvation by works – they are all man's attempts to reach God or godliness through his own goodness and efforts
- B. There is *no other* message like the Gospel of Jesus Christ that reveals a salvation that is entirely God's idea from start to finish, is totally and absolutely free, and yet is not cheap!