

# Equipping Your Mind To Impact Your World

“The business of Apologetics is to establish the truth of Christianity as the absolute religion, directly and as a whole. Apologetics consequently takes its place at the head of the departments of theological science, and finds its task in the establishment of that knowledge of God which forms the subject-matter of these departments.”

Benjamin B. Warfield  
Theologian and Apologist

# What is Apologetics?

- “Always be 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.”

I Peter 3:15

(Translation by William Lane Craig)

Apologetics is making a rational case for the Truth-Claims of Christianity and Jesus Christ.

# Why is Apologetics important?

- **Shaping Culture** - “False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.” J. Gresham Machen
- We must understand that the Gospel is never heard in isolation, but in the context of culture.

# Why is Apologetics important?

- Strengthening Believers - the impact of apologetics in a Christian's personal life is huge. Knowing WHY you believe as well as WHAT you believe will make you confident in your Christian walk and witness.

# Why is Apologetics important?

- Winning Unbelievers

# What did the Early Church Believe and Why did They believe it?

- “To them also He showed Himself alive after His passion (suffering in the garden and on the cross) by [a series of] many convincing demonstrations [unquestionable evidences and infallible proofs], appearing to them during forty days and talking [to them] about the things of the Kingdom of God.” (Amplified)

# What did the Early Church believe and Why did they believe it?

- Luke records that Jesus furnished them with “many convincing proofs,” from the Greek word *tekmeriois*, ‘to forever remove all doubt that He was resurrected in a physical, tangible, yet glorified body. (Luke 24:42,43; Acts 1:3).

# Equipping Your Mind

- What is meant by Truth?  
Text
- Definition #1: Truth is relative or What's true for you.
- Definition #2: Truth is what matches the Facts.



# What is meant by Truth?

- “Truth is true - even if no knows it. Truth is true - even if no one admits it. Truth is true - even if no one follows it. Truth is true - even if no one but God grasps it fully.”

Dr. Paul Copan

# The Two Tests for determining Truth

- Test #1: Examining All the Facts to See what matches Reality.
- Test #2: Learning to Think Correctly (Logically).

# What is meant by Truth?

- “True for you but not for me is a self-defeating and therefore false statement. You can prove this one conclusively to yourself today. Just drive 90 MPH in a 55 MPH zone and when the cop stops you for speeding, just say, ‘That’s true for you but not for me’ and speed off. Since it’s not true for you, he can’t give you a ticket, right? Dr. Frank Turek

## Issues concerning the Historical Reliability of the Christian Scripture

- “There is, I imagine, no body of literature in the world has been exposed to the stringent analytical study that the four gospels have sustained for the past 200 years... scholars today who treat the gospels as credible historical documents do so in the full light of this analytical study.” F.F.

Bruce

# The Factuality of Conservative View

- Fact One: The Existence of thousands of Greek and Latin manuscripts, with the papyri and early uncials dating much closer to the originals than for any other ancient literature.
- Considered one of the world's most brilliant archaeologists of his day, William F. Albright stated: "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80."

# Historical Reliability of the Christian Scripture

- Dr. John A.T. Robinson was a distinguished scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge. He had accepted the academic consensus that the New Testament was written a 100 years after the life of Christ. Robinson's research revealed that the New Testament books were written by the Apostles and finished no later than 70 A.D. His book, *Redating the New Testament*, declares that Matthew's Gospel was written as early as 40 A.D.

# Historical Reliability of the Christian Scripture

- Fact Two: The lack of proven fraud or error on the part of any New Testament author.
- Fact Three: The writings of reliable Christian resources outside the New Testament.
- Fact Four: The existence of a number of Jewish and secular accounts about Jesus.
- Fact Five: Detailed archaeological data concerning the New Testament.

# Historical Reliability of the Christian Scripture

- Fact Six: The existence of many powerful enemies of Jesus and the Apostolic Church would have proven fraud or pointed out other problems they faced.
- Fact Seven: The presence of living eyewitnesses to the events recorded.
- Fact Eight: The positive appraisals by conservative and liberal authorities on the issue of the genuineness of traditional authorship and the early date of the New Testament.



# Historical Reliability of the Christian Scripture

- Fact Nine: The consistent scholarly, factual reversals of the conclusions of higher criticism that undermine its own foundations and credibility.
- Fact Ten: Legal and other testimony concerning reliability of the New Testament.

# The Impact of Archaeology

- Millar Burrows of Yale: “Archaeology has in many cases refuted the views of modern critics. It has been shown in a number of instances that these views rest on false assumptions and unreal, artificial schemes of historical development...The excessive skepticism of many liberal theologians stems not from a careful evaluation of the available data, but from an enormous predisposition against the supernatural.”

# The Impact of Archaeology

- Dr. Clifford Wilson: “It is the studied conviction of this writer that the Bible is...the ancient world’s most reliable history textbook...I was not always the ‘literalist’ I am today. I’ve always had a profound respect for the Bible...Over 40 years have passed since I first became professionally involved in biblical archaeology and my commitment to the Bible as the world’s greatest history book is firmly settled.”

# The Gospel before the Gospels: What Did the Early Church Know About Jesus and When Did They Know It?

- There are two major principles of historiography that are crucial in any historical study: 1) Eyewitnesses and 2) Testimony as close as possible to the events in question.
- Other considerations:
- 1) Ground Zero in this study: the Crucifixion of Jesus (30 A.D. or 33 A.D.);
- 2) Paul's epistles (letters) are considered by

## The Gospels before the Gospels

- Conservative Scholars accept all 13 of Paul's letters as being authentic.
- But Critical Scholars accept at least six as authentic: Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and I Thessalonians.
- Scholars regard I Corinthians as the key text written A.D. 54 - 55.

## I Corinthians 15: 3 - 8

- “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.”

## The Timeline of Paul

- Galatians 1: 15 - 19 - “But when God...was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.”
- Paul uses Greek term *historesai* which means

# The Timeline of Paul

- What was the dominant theme of the Early Church about the Identity of Jesus and the Gospel?
- Noted historian and scholar Dr. Gary Habermas: “An increasing number of exceptionally influential scholars have very recently concluded that at least the teaching of the resurrection, and perhaps even the specific formulation of the pre-Pauline credal tradition in I Corinthians 15:3-7, dates to A.D. 30!...there never was a time when the message of Jesus’ resurrection was not an integral part of the earliest apostolic proclamation.



## The Timeline of Paul

- “No less a scholar than James D.G. Dunn even states regarding this crucial text: ‘This tradition, we can be entirely confident, was *formulated as tradition within months of Jesus’ death.*’”

## What Does This Mean?

- If Jesus came back from the Dead and He is God, what does this mean?
- HE IS LORD!
- What key REALITIES are true for the Christian?
- Justification
- Propitiation