

HELP

The Essence of Apologetics - Part 2 A Biblical basis

Os Guinness

Dr Os Guinness presents a four part introduction to the essence of apologetics. Although these talks were given some years ago, they contain a timeless explanation of apologetics.

In Part 2 of this series, Dr Guinness considers whether there is a Biblical basis for apologetics, from both Old and New Testaments.

Part 1: What is the essence of apologetics?

Part 2: A Biblical basis for the essence of apologetics

Part 3: How to communicate in apologetics

Part 4: Persuading the hard-hearted

A few notes and quotes from the talk:

Apologetics in the New Testament

Some conclusions from the New Testament evidence:

§ Apologetics is Biblical, not post-Biblical

§ It has nothing to do with 'being apologetic'

§ The New Testament metaphors are mainly legal, not military

§ Covers the formal and informal defence

§ It is for all Christians, not just for some

§ It is used with 'insiders', as well as 'outsiders'

§ It is profoundly intellectual, but it is equally powerful morally and spiritually

"Apologetics is pre-evangelism, which is communication that clarifies what is obscuring and obstructing the good news. And in this sense, it is the necessary foreword or preface wherever there is indifference or complacency or resistance

or hostility. It is the intellectual, moral, spiritual bush-clearing operation that is the preparation for the gospel to come in."

Apologetics in the Old Testament

Apologetics is implicit throughout the Old Testament. Dr Guinness traces its roots back to the Fall itself and shows how the Old Testament is an object lesson in using different methods of communication appropriate for the listener.

Some conclusions from the Old Testament evidence:

§ The greater the resistance and hostility, the more the Bible uses questions rather than statements ... because a question is self-involving

§ The use of parables

§ The use of visual aids

§ The use of street theatre

§ The use of people (and their names) as living signs

"Apologetics is not primarily human, it is divine. God is the one who is doing it – we only come in under him, at best. It is not primarily defensive, it's primarily prosecution. It is not solely intellectual – it is intellectual-come-moral-come-spiritual... It is not a matter of answering people's questions, it's first a matter of asking people questions and making them uncomfortable. It's not a matter of 'proving God', it's a matter of disproving unbelief. It's not even purely literary or verbal. In the Old Testament it's dramatic and uses the whole of life as means.... It's not just one to one or purely individual, it's also used nationally and corporately.... But all of it rooted in this idea of God being framed in the dock and therefore faith wants to clear God, so concerned is it with the zeal for His name and His character."

"The real danger of apologetics is the exact opposite of the one that is the danger of what apologetics has often become. Apologetics often leads to the danger of being sterile and dry and bloodless and intellectualistic. But this sort of apologetics can never be that. It's at the very heart of a person's love for God and zeal for His character and desire that He may be seen to be

who He is. So the danger is precisely the opposite there. That it is so all-engaging, it is so central to our commitment as disciples and children of God that it becomes in a different sense heady and intoxicating. And there's a danger of being over-zealous for God."

"The patron saint of apologists should be Balaam's ass."

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