

# **Reasons for Our Hope: Defending and Commending the Christian Faith in Today's Complex World**

## **Definitions of Apologetics**

that branch of Christian theology which seeks to provide a rational justification for the truth claims of the Christian faith

William Lane Craig

developing one's authentic self so as to present one's faith as helpfully as possible to one's neighbor

John G. Stackhouse

to demonstrate that Christianity is reasonable and thus (a) to assure Christians that their faith is not idiotic and (b) to clear away the obstacles and objections that keep nonbelievers from considering the arguments and evidence for the truth of Christianity

James W. Sire

the discipline that deals with the a rational defense of the Christian faith

Norman L. Geisler

the task of defending and commending the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a Christlike context-sensitive and audience-specific manner

James Beilby

the business of engaging the worldviews of the day intelligently and thus bearing witness to Christ with credibility

Michael Goheen

the application of Scripture to unbelief

John Frame

the discipline that teaches Christians how to give a reason for their hope

John Frame

Defensive Apologetics – Answering the Objections of Unbelief

Offensive Apologetics – Attacking the Foolishness of Unbelief

<sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup>but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup>having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 1 Peter 3.14-16

Word DEFENSE or ANSWER is Root word for APOLOGETICS

Peter doesn't say that they will ask about our faith.

Or about our doctrine.

Or even about our good conduct.

They might ask those things. We want them to...

But Peter expects they will ask about our *hope*. Why?

Hope is a heartfelt, joyful conviction that our short term future is governed by an all-caring God, and our long-term future, beyond death, will be happy beyond imagination in the presence of the all-satisfying glory of God. John Piper

## 1. Hope and Salvation

Peter begins his letter on this note:

“According to God’s great mercy, he has caused us to be *born again to a living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”  
1 Peter 1:3

To be born again is to be alive with hope.

Hope is not an addition to Christian experience.

It is part of the first things. The essential things.

It is a vital component of saving *faith*,

because part of what we *believe* relates to our future.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.  
Hebrews 11:1

Peter > Urges the Suffering Exiles of the Empire >> HOPE

Hope is not substituted for faith; it is faith as it looks to the future of our Lord’s salvation...a sure hope, not wishful thinking...firmly grounded in the redemption that Jesus Christ has established for us.

Edmund Clowney

1<sup>st</sup> Command in Letter...

“*Hope fully* in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ”  
1 Peter 1:13

2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus in Glory > Earnest Hope of Believer’s Heart

Peter had tasted the glory with Jesus on the Mt of Transfiguration...

“We made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” 2 Peter 1:16

He “a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed” 1 Peter 5:1

He promised the elders among them...

“When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory”  
1 Peter 5:4

Explained to Suffering Saints > God’s Purpose in Sorrows...

“that the tested genuineness of your faith . . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” 1 Peter 1:7

Slander >> Praise, Pain >> Glory, Shame >> Honor

“After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” 1 Peter 5:10

“You were ransomed . . . not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” 1 Peter 1:18–19

“Rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed” 1 Peter 4:13

“Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7

He cares now. He will care tomorrow. And he will care forever.

Why the world asks about the Christian hope is that *vibrant, living, unshakable, blood-bought hope is the defining motion of the Christian heart.*

## 2. Hope is our Strength

v. 14 *Have no fear of them, nor be troubled...*

Christians’ *hope* is prompted by their perceived *fearlessness*.

Hope is the root of fearlessness.

“The holy women who *hoped* in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and *do not fear anything that is frightening*” 1 Peter 3:5–6

Godward hope makes gutsy women. And men.

Hope is not directly visible. It is a *heartfelt* conviction.

Only God can see the heart directly.

But when hope produces fearlessness it is on the way to being visible.

“rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings” 1 Peter 4:13

Demeanor becomes Counter-Intuitive > Someone may Ask

God warns Isaiah > How he should Feel about his Unbelieving

Countrymen and about the Lord God

“For the Lord spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, "Do not call conspiracy all that this people call conspiracy and do not fear what they fear nor be in dread. But reverence the Lord of hosts; let him be your fear and let him be your dread." Isaiah 8.11

Peter takes Word of God to Isaiah about Adversaries >> Christians

"Don't fear what they fear, but reverence the Lord instead."

"But reverence the Lord of hosts; let him be your fear and let him be your dread." Isaiah 8:14

Lord of HOSTS = v. 15 “honor Christ the LORD”

God to Isaiah > Offending God more Dreadful than being Persecuted

And Peter says they ask about your hope.

Christian gives Impression to Others > Not Hoping in Security,  
Comfort, Approval, Wealth...

Our Fearlessness & Joy in Affliction > We have Hope

1<sup>st</sup> God PUTS Hope in those He SAVES

2<sup>nd</sup> that HOPE gives believers STRENGTH in Adversity

### 3. Hope is Seen

World is LOOKING for HOPE...

“I’ve given up hope and I feel much better.” Bumper Sticker on Car

“Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, *signifying nothing.*”  
Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*

Prominence in Peter’s letter > Good Deeds

“The time is past for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. . . Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler”  
1 Peter 4:3,15

Few deeply Impressed with Lifestyle Only avoids Bad Behaviors

Peter > Christian Hope overflows in Good Deeds

Peter’s letter abounds with Good Deeds > for our ENEMIES

“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing”

1 Peter 3:9

“Rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings” 1 Peter 4:13

Give REASON for Your HOPE amidst your SUFFERINGS

For them HOPE could NOT have been in Govt, Possessions, Earthly Future, Work Opportunities, Academic Options, Vacations, Gadgets.

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, *set your hope fully* on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:13

Radically Counter-Intuitive Behavior > Hope in Christ

“suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God”

1 Peter 3:18

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, *because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you*” 1 Peter 4:14

“If when you *do good* and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God”

1 Peter 2:20

“Let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator *while doing good*”

1 Peter 4:19

Triple Goal > Silence Ignorance, Shame Slanderers, Convert All

This is the will of God, that *by doing good you* should put to **silence** the ignorance of foolish people. 1 Peter 2:15

Have a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your *good behavior* in Christ may be put to **shame**. 1 Peter 3:16

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your *good deeds* and **glorify God** on the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:12

Good Deeds – esp for our Enemies - are Compelling, Irresistible

Someone is going to ask: What are you hoping in?

“*zealous* for what is good” 1 Peter 3:13

## **Pray They Would Ask**

King Agrippa asked Paul > Gave Reason for his Hope...

And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers... Acts 26.6

Does the world ask you and me? If not, why not?

Peter didn't say how often it would happen.

He says be ready when it does.

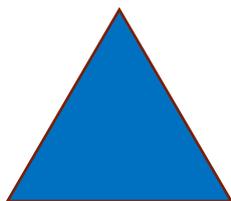
God's Spirit creates Seasons in History

People of God are More Hopeful, More Fearless, More Merciful

THEN the World is More Attentive

Let us pray for such a season!

*Honor Christ as Lord*



*Make a Defense*

*Gentleness and Respect*