

From the Word

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The literal meaning of “apology” is “from the Word” (Greek, *apo logos*) and is the basis upon which a growing field within the realms of Christendom is being built. Supposedly this field is rising up to defend and contend for the faith but too many of the players on this field seem to have failed to recognize the lethal arena into which they have so blithely inserted themselves. And it is precisely here that we can see both the subtlety and the effectiveness of Satan’s schemes. Speaking from the Word and defending and contending for the faith are good things - *if* they are done in and by the Holy Spirit of truth, righteousness and love. If these things are done apart from Christ, it is nothing. (Jn. 15:5) If in the strength of the flesh or the demonic, it is *enmity* against God and the faith. (Rom. 8:7, 1 Tim. 4:1) And there simply is no middle or neutral ground. Paul wrote, “For the flesh lusts [wars, strongly desires, covets] against the Spirit [or spirit], and the Spirit [or spirit] against the flesh; and these are contrary [diametrically opposed] to one another.” (Gal. 5:17)

The first confusion is found in the phrase itself. The Greek words *apologeomai* [626] and *apologia* [627] are found in the New Testament but refer only to a legal defense or answer one makes in response to legal charges. Thus the phrase *apologos*, “apologetics,” as it is now being used, is not to be found in the New Testament any more than can Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists or any other modern divisive sect name that men most commonly now call “denominations,” to avoid coming face to face with the fact that these things are called sins in the New Testament - dissensions or divisions (Greek, *dichostasia* [1370] – Gal. 5:20, Rom. 17:17), contentions (Greek, *eris* [2054] – Gal. 5:20, Tit. 3:9, etc.) and heresies (sects, Greek, *haireisis* [139] – Gal. 5:20, 2 Pet. 2:1) Similarly, the apologist’s primary vocabulary – like the “church’s” pulpit, pews and buildings – simply cannot be found anywhere in the New Testament. Neither exegesis and eisegesis (respectively, taking from or reading into the text at hand) are ever once spoken of by any of the New Testament writers – to rely on these things as the primary basis of interpreting any text is an extreme (but entirely overlooked) eisegesis! In fact, the writers of the New Testament at times openly violate the rules the modern “scholars” have concocted. (compare, as but one example, Matthew’s claim that Jesus fulfilled a “Messianic” prophecy – Mt. 2:15 – but the Old Testament passage is merely a description of *Israel!* - Hos. 11:1)

In addition, the apologist’s central methodology, hermeneutics, is not only absent from the New Testament, the name itself derives from the Greek god Hermes (the messenger god with winged feet) and the practice derives from the Greek practices of rhetoric, philosophy and sophistry (deceptive, manipulative “wisdom.”) Hermeneutics is hailed as a “science” and is structured with laws and rules and precedents that mandate how a text should be interpreted. Christ did not die on the cross and rise from the dead just to place us back under laws that men can manipulate and use to exploit and oppress other men who think differently than the apologist. Simply viewing how all this intellectualizing of the gospel will fare among illiterate, poor people or ignorant “jungle savages” should (but probably won’t) expose the fallacy upon which this “science” is constructed. “No lie is of the truth.” (1 Jn. 2:21) Another simple fact - that few apologists actually agree with one another on their interpretations of various texts – equally exposes the deceptive basis of this “science.” If most “apologists” could simply be in agreement, one might be more convinced of the value of “apologetic” techniques and tactics!

A second confusion is found in the use of the word *logos* (“word” [3056]) A more accurate description of modern “apologetics” would be “from the Bible.” And here we do not mean a rightly divided word of truth appropriately nested in the whole counsel of God as revealed and stirred to life by the Spirit of truth (2 Tim. 2:15, Acts 20:27 , Jn. 16:13) – that indeed would be “from the Word”! Instead, “apologetics” is too often some Bible “scholar” or lawless “theologian” defending and contending for their own peculiar, private interpretations (2 Pet. 1:20-21), their own pet doctrines or their own carnal (or demonically induced!) understanding of New Testament concepts.

This confusion is built upon the fallacy that *logos* refers to the written words in the Bible and nothing else. The New Testament itself clearly refutes this distortion.

- “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from *His* sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of *Him* to whom we must give account.” (Heb. 4:12-13) The Bible, as good and beneficial as it is, is still merely a man-made product manufactured from dead tree parts, dried ink pigments and (if you have a leather cover) dead cow skin which will all burn up if dropped into a fire. Bibles do not make good (physical) weapons (though some, like an original Scofield’s, might make a good club!) and no Bible will ever sit in judgment over anyone. Only *He* - the Word of God – will do that. (Rev. 20:11-12, etc.)

- “Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.” (Jas. 1:21) Anyone who has a Bible implanted somewhere in their body will soon after have serious medical complications! And not even the latest of modern medical science can implant a Bible in a man’s soul!

- When Jesus taught the parable of the sower and the soils, He explicitly said, “The seed is the Word of God.” (Lk. 8:11) Under the “apologetic” presupposition that “the Word” equals “the Bible,” one can almost envision the sower reaching into his seed bag, pulling out pocket-sized New Testaments and scattering them all over the ground! When Jesus spoke this, there were no Bibles – pocket-sized or otherwise – as we now know them and possess them.

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was Life and the Life was the Light of men... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (Jn. 1:1-4, 14) John makes it abundantly clear that the Word of God is Jesus Christ Himself, the Man who is also God. No Bible sits as part of the Godhead, no Bible participated in creation and no Bible (apart from the work of the Spirit of truth) lights up the hearts of men. Sadly, men can read the Bible all their lives and never once hear the Word of God.

Men love to turn the written truths found in the Bible into facts, into pieces of information, into data to be processed, into independent knowledge that can be systematized, categorized, catalogued and now digitized because all this conveniently excludes God from the process of our knowing good and evil. The independent knowledge of good and evil is the tree which God told man not to eat of (Gen. 2:17) but apologetics is often little more than man's latest attempt to possess that independent knowledge and still "put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" in his fallen, unrenewed, carnal, dying condition (Gen. 3:22) – a fate that just might be worse than hell itself!

The Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of truth (Jn. 15:26), must guide us into all truth. For great reason Paul called the Word of God "the sword *of the Spirit*." (Eph. 6:17) Any man – scholar or otherwise – can wield the words of the Bible, twisting and distorting the truth to their own and their listeners' destruction. (2 Pet. 3:16) Only the man led by the Spirit of truth – whether an intellectual scholar of legendary prowess or a "Galilean fisherman" dumber than a rock – can use the Scriptures so that they become for the listeners "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness [what is right in God's eyes] so that the man of God [every man in Christ] may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17) God's manifold grace is given to *each one* from the oneness that is God (Eph. 4:4-7) and, as *each one* matures in his or her own unity with God, God's grace is dispensed so that the saints are equipped for the work of ministry or service. (Eph. 4:11-12) Though the apologists place great stock in their education in "the Word" (note well how the "best" apologists have their titles prominently displayed before and their degrees listed after their name!), Jesus had no such training (Jn. 7:15) and neither did the original apostles. (Acts 4:13)

Apologists place great emphasis on Jesus' recognition of the first and greatest commandment – "you shall love the LORD your God...with all your mind..." (Mk. 12:30) – but they act as if the commandment said nothing whatsoever about the rest of a man's being, his heart, soul and strength! Paul wrote, "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your *whole spirit, soul, and body* be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Ths. 5:23)

Paul also warned:

"Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, *the things of the Spirit*. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is *life and peace*. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, *if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you*. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness [what is right in God's eyes]. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies *through His Spirit who dwells in you*. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if *by the Spirit* you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are *led by the Spirit* of God, these are sons of God." (Rom. 8:5-14 – emphasis added)

There are several things here that we all, but especially the apologists who rely so heavily on their mind and intellect, need to be aware of:

- The mind must be willfully and consistently set upon the things of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:5) Paul later speaks of our need to have our minds regularly or routinely renewed by the Spirit so that we can even know what God's will is. (Rom. 12:2) Many apologists act as if their one-time commitment to Christ (however sincere or insincere, however complete or incomplete that may have been) guarantees that their minds are automatically and always renewed. Such presumption implies that Paul was entirely stupid for ever instructing us to "be *diligent* to present ourselves approved by God, workers who do not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15, etc.) Many apologists will one day find how great their shame is because they tried to rightly divide a word of spiritual truth with their carnal, unrenewed mind.

- If, as many apologists claim when challenged, that the Spirit of God indeed dwells in them, why do they not allow *Him* to shape their spiritual understanding? Why is it shaped by men of impeccable credentials but questionable, even objectionable spirits? Why is the apologetics movement characterized by men who proclaim "truth matters most" but who, when their "theology" is challenged and refuted and exposed as carnal darkness, exude arrogance, bitterness, vindictiveness and snide condemnation of anyone so stupid as to oppose their superior intellectual prowess and spectacular grasp on "the truths of God." Any man who has not submitted – and who does not continue to submit – his knowledge to the reign and rule of the Spirit of God within is most likely to be only the most dangerous man in any given assembly.

- The wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24 and following) are both plants – and each bear great resemblance to one another, especially in their immature stage, a condition perpetuated under "church" deceptions. Each similar plant is even planted in the same field, the world. The wheat are the true sons of the kingdom – the tares are the sons of the murderous, deceitful devil. (Mt. 13:37-39, Jn. 8:44) The wheat practice righteousness (what is right in God's eyes) and loves (with self-sacrificing, divine *agape* love) his brother (both in Christ and his fellow human beings) – the tare practices lawlessness (what is right and good in his own eyes – see Jdgs. 21:25) and uses his brother as a stepping stone for his own status (popularity, wealth, etc. – see 1 Jn. 3:10) Only those who are led by the Spirit of God (in *all* their pursuits but especially in their intellectual, religious, spiritual and theological ones!) are the true sons of God. (Rom. 8:14) Those apologists who contend for the faith in the power of the flesh, their carnal mind and intellect, have only succeeded in disqualifying themselves from the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:20-21 – see again *contentions*, Greek, *eris* [2054])

The tendency of men to handle the things of the Spirit with the arm of the flesh is by no means new. Montanus, in the middle of the second century over-reacted to the authoritarianism and moral laxity of some of the Catholic bishops. His followers called themselves *pneumatics*

(spirituals) and referred to the Catholics as *psychicals* (soulicals, carnals). Montanus and his followers went hyper-spiritual whereas the Catholics went the way of Nicolaitan (Rev. 2:6, 15) “church” and each side began to go beyond the realms of the revealed truth. Shortly after this, another man, Marcion, arose who wanted only Paul’s writings and ideas. The Catholics responded to these two men by cementing the canon (the standard list of books to be included in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible). But the real victim of all this was the simple truth that the true believer must be a spiritual being, and not merely an intellectual being, in order to follow Christ – and that the true believer shall live “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Apologetics is too often only the latest attempt to turn a stone, or in this case, a book, into a loaf of bread! (Mt. 4:3-4, Jn. 6:48-51)

Oswald Chambers wrote, “If in preaching the gospel you substitute your knowledge of the way of salvation for confidence in the power of the gospel, you hinder people from getting to reality.” (*My Utmost for His Highest*, Dec. 3) The apologists who use their unrenewed intellects to preach their version of “the gospel” are no different than the scribes and Pharisees who stood in front of the door to the kingdom of God, neither going in themselves nor allowing others to enter in either. (Mt. 23:13)

Paul wrote, “For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20) He also wrote, “If anyone teaches [unsound doctrines and practices] and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ [the true Word of God], and to the teaching which *accords with godliness*, he is proud, knowing nothing [spiritually and as he ought], but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt [carnal] minds and destitute [bankrupt] of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.” (1 Tim. 6:3-5) If this describes the atmosphere and attitude of the apologist, he or she is a false messenger, a false worker who is in reality opposed to the way of Christ. Anyone who insists you pay money to be welcome at their conference, seminar or workshop is one who believes that godliness is a way to make money. “From such withdraw yourself,” Paul instructs. (1 Tim. 6:5)

The carnal apologist will know many key verses that he twists or distorts in order to support his conclusions. The Spirit-led apologist will bring forth the rightly divided truth and nest it appropriately in the whole counsel of God on the matter. The carnal apologist will want to discuss “the truth” until what he believes is contradicted and exposed as deception – then his true spirit will be manifested. The Spirit-led apologist, as his level of spiritual maturity enables him, will not quarrel but will gently teach, admonish, exhort and even rebuke with all authority in Christ, humbly correcting those who oppose the truth in the hope they will repent and escape the deceptive snares of the devil. (2 Tim. 2:24-26, Tit. 2:15, etc.) The carnal apologist wants everyone to hear him and follow his opinions. The Spirit-led apologist wants everyone to hear the Lord – the Shepherd (Jn. 10:27), the Spirit (1 Jn. 2:27), God’s laws and ways written in their own hearts (Heb. 8:10) – for themselves! The carnal apologist will believe that being “in the flesh” only refers to blatant sin and evil and will not be able to recognize that it is his choice of what is *good* and *right* that makes him lawless. The Spirit-led apologist will know deeply that “no good thing” dwells in his flesh (Rom. 7:18) and will take great care to speak carefully about what he says the Bible means. The carnal apologist will never recognize that by claiming his scholarly opinions come “from the Word” he has said, “Thus says the Lord” and made himself a false prophet. The Spirit-led apologist will have the fear of the Lord before his eyes always lest he somehow misrepresent his Lord and Master or prevent someone from entering into the reality of Christ and God.

The flesh still wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. (Gal. 5:17) Anyone who thinks they've already and entirely won that war is deceived indeed. Anyone who thinks they can preach the gospel with the tools and weapons of this world (education, rhetoric, sophistry, eloquence, charisma) is confused as to what Christ came to accomplish. (1 Jn. 3:8, 1 Cor. 1:29) Anyone who relies on his intellectual abilities to sway his listeners' opinions and who does not insist that all – men, women and even children – must be led into all truth by the Spirit of truth into the unanimity (Greek, *henotes* [1775]) of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) and the unanimity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4:13), is one who is ignorant of the original, genuine and spiritual way of following Christ.

Only those who are genuinely led by the Spirit of God – the Spirit of truth, holiness, righteousness, love, etc. – are the sons of God. (Rom. 8:14) All else are tares who cause sin and stumbling – these will be removed and cast into the fire. (Mt. 13:41-42) “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption [death], but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” (Gal. 6:7-8) Let it be clearly stated that everyone who claims to be an apologist walks a fine line. By definition, the apologist claims to speak “from the Word,” the linguistic equivalent of “Thus says the Lord.” If he or she has spoken truly, all is well. But if they are mistaken, they have walked upon holy ground with unclean feet. And let it also be as equally and unequivocally stated that the Spirit of truth will never lead anyone, apologist or otherwise, to interpret any given Bible text in such a way that it is wrongly divided or applied, or that is inappropriately settled into the whole counsel or purpose of God, or that is delivered in rudeness, sarcasm or arrogance or that exalts anyone but Christ Jesus as King and Lord. Any such “bad fruit” immediately indicates the presence of either error, deception, demonization or some combination thereof. The apologist who does not submit his knowledge to God and wait on Him to sift, sort and clarify which is truth, which is error and which is some mixture of the two will never be qualified to be a true leader on the road that leads to life because his own existence is contaminated with intellectualized death. Follow such a man or woman to your own peril. Be certain that you do not turn your ears from the Spirit of truth just to listen to some apologist's “scientifically” manufactured *fables*. (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

Let he who ears hear.

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