

Four Powerful Words in Apologetics

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Introduction

I believe that there are four very powerful words that if learned and used, can help you to truly understand the conflicts involved in modern apologetics, and to acquire enough understanding to answer many of the intimidating questions used by modern scientists that intimidate those who trust the Scriptures.

As Christians engage in apologetics for the faith, we often put the cart before the horse. In other words, we often make our view of Scripture subservient to the authority of man. When our book of Genesis is assaulted by scientists claiming that most of Genesis is non-scientific and consequently just myth, what do we do with that? Here are three typical responses:

1. We think that because these scientists are professionals, they have mastered their field and surely should know what they are talking about.
2. We think that we are being unreasonable and inflexible and tend to think that we should probably reinterpret portions of Genesis to be more in line with what scientists say.
3. We become silenced into doubt and unbelief.

We must remember, as Christians, that our authority is Scripture, not man, making the authority of Scripture our starting point in all things. My desire is for you to be thoroughly equipped in the Scripture as those words which have been God-breathed, and to gain a confidence that you can use the Scripture to tear down false ideas and false concepts put forward as truth by the science community.

Four Powerful Words is written to help you not lose your way in the challenge of apologetics and communicating the truth of the gospel. If we can remember to use this tool not only to help our own faith but also to help others who are being confused by the tangled web of words and their meanings in modern science, we will do a better job of challenging people to think about what they believe and why.

Most of my references will be in the context of geology because it has universally affected every area of science beginning in the 1700s. Although many of the first scientists were Bible-believing, it was the field of modern geology, beginning in the late 1700s, which turned the scientific culture of the day to its totally atheistic framework of today.

I trust that the information in this book will help you gain more confidence in the Scriptures as the word of God and that your faith becomes stronger as a result. Thank you for taking the time to read this valuable book.

Please note that the intent of this short book is not to tackle all the particular questions and issues you might have. It is only to help you sort out the truth of what is science and what is not.

At the end of each chapter, I include a list of questions. Some of the answers to these questions can be found within the text of the lessons. Others are for discussion.

Patrick Nurre
May 20, 2020

Knowing the Scriptures in the Secular Scientific Age

What is apologetics?

The word apologetics comes from the Greek word, *apologia*, from which we get our English word, *apology*. But that is not what it means. Apology as is used in our modern language means to be sorry for or to feel bad for what I did or said. That is not the Biblical meaning. As the word is used in Scripture, it has several meanings, including:

- A defense
- An answer
- Making things clear or as we sometimes say, “clearing the air”

The modern church uses this word to mean the discipline of marshaling a whole host of evidences to support the Christian faith, such as proper theology, books and commentaries, quotes by famous people of science, rigorous training, and lots of evidence. But this is too narrow. It can include these things, but the word *apologia* is broader.

When we think of apologetics and those who are apologists, we typically think of somebody, a specialist, who has studied and memorized facts and figures and can arrange them in an orderly manner to convince others that the Christian faith is true. This could be included, but it falls far short, as it leaves most of the Christian community out of involvement.

Think about it: How many experts in apologetics do you personally know? How many would you find in the

Christian community? Not many. Most of us don't have the time or the energy to devote to that. We feel more comfortable leaving it to others.

Apologetics and the Scriptures

But there are a number of Scriptures, which indicate that apologetics is for every believer. I have listed a few of these passages below. Take some time to familiarize yourself with their content:

- 1 Peter 3:13-16
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 2 Corinthians 7:11
- 2 Timothy 4:16-17
- Jude 3
- Romans chapters 1-11 (Paul's defense of the faith)

You probably noticed that some of these passages contain the word *apologia*, some don't. But the concept behind apologetics in these Scriptures is that Christians have a faith and a hope that the world needs. Consequently, all Christians need to be engaged in the apologetics that influences faith. As Hebrews 11:6 tells us, *without faith it is impossible to please God.*

All Christians must stay involved and engaged with the world around them for one main reason – to witness to that faith, and to explain that faith and hope. It does involve learning some evidence. That is true. But it also involves learning how to identify preconceived ideas, incorrect assumptions and speculations raised up against the knowledge of God, and to defeat them. (2 Corinthians 10:5) This is apologetics.

When it comes right down to it, winning an argument really does not depend on you, but on God's work in the hearer. After all, the hearer is at war with God. But you can work with God in this process by speaking to the conscience that God gave to each man and woman.

Apologetics and science

Apologetics is no more applicable than to the subject of science. Science, as broadly taught today, is more than the exploration of physical properties, chemicals, animals, and plants – the world we live in. It has, by and large, embraced a worldview that is not about science. This worldview excludes God and the Scriptures, in favor of naturalism and the exaltation of man. But it wasn't always this way. Where did this type of reasoning come from? We need to go back and take a look at the Enlightenment for part of the answer to that question.

Science and the Enlightenment

During the Enlightenment, (17th-19 centuries) the idea of compartmentalization began to take shape in Western Civilization. The generally accepted view was that we should leave matters of science to the scientists and matters of religion should be left to the church. This was a subtle shift that taught that only qualified scientists could interpret matters of science and nature. But by creating this division, the Scriptural explanation of our world that God created was undermined, and, therefore, faith in the Scriptures. If the Bible was not to be trusted when it spoke of the Creation and the Flood, then why would it be trusted when it spoke of other issues?

This lack of trust in the Scriptures has led many, inevitably, to relativism: that is, a lack of moral accountability to the

Scriptures. This has had its outworking in many ways, but especially in our lifetime, it has included redefining marriage, and confusion of sexual identity. And when you remove the authority of the Scriptures, it also removes a sense of purpose for our lives.

Knowing our Scriptures

So, we must know our Scriptures. Apologetics involves more than winning an argument by sheer weight of the evidence. It means that we clarify the issues and set the record straight. Regardless of how much so-called evidence could be marshalled against the Scripture, we as Christians must believe the Scripture and therefore must master its content and an ability to communicate it clearly. That is a Christian's domain. The Christian, of all people, has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. And the Christian, of all people, should be able to discern that which is contrary to God's word and how to set the record straight.

I would suggest that the first step in developing apologetics is to know and master the Scriptures. I have personally discovered that many Christians do not know the Scriptures, nor have they wrestled through understanding them. We must become convinced that every word in Genesis is from God. Paul expresses this in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is inspired by God..." (*"Inspired by God"* is often translated, *"God-breathed."*) Are we personally convinced of this? This must be resolved before we can proceed to other areas of apologetics. It does no good to have all the answers about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, if we are wavering when it comes to what Genesis says. Sooner or later it will dawn on us that the God who spoke the gospels, also spoke Genesis. And it will be at this point that we will either agree that all of Scripture must have been spoken by

God, or we will eventually doubt all of the Scripture as directly breathed by God.

Questions:

1. What does the word, *apologia*, mean?

2. What does the activity of apologetics include?

3. Give a short descriptive sentence summarizing each of the passages listed as referring to apologetics.
 - 1 Peter 3:13-16
 - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
 - 2 Corinthians 7:11
 - 2 Timothy 4:16-17
 - Jude 3
 - Romans chapters 1-11 (Paul's defense of the faith)

4. What is the first step in understanding apologetics?

5. Why should that be the first step?

Four Practical Exercises in Learning the Four Powerful Words

Exercise 1 – The Genealogies and Chronologies of Genesis: Are They Accurate and Reliable?

One of the biggest stumbling blocks for Christians is the age of the earth question. Does the Bible indicate just how old the earth is, and can I trust it? Can the Bible even resolve this issue? I believe the answer is right in front of us, if we will just take the time to explore the Scriptures that address it – in the genealogies and chronologies of Genesis.

Many say that Genesis cannot be used as a chronology to date the age of the earth. To this statement I say, “Why not?” And the answers are varied, but go something like, “Science has demonstrated through radiometric dating that the earth is 4.6 billion years old.” Or, “Genesis has gaps in the genealogical record such that we don’t know how many years are involved. Therefore, although the genealogies are probably accurate, the chronologies are not.” How can I answer this?

Genesis as a genealogy

Let’s go directly to the first genealogy in Genesis 5 and camp there. But first, take some time to read Genesis 5 through and write down every place you see a gap in the genealogy.

History, chronologies, and genealogies

After reading Genesis 5, you might want to take some time to make your own chart of the chronologies and genealogies found there. The following charts are ones that I created that are compiled directly from the Scriptures and are meant

to help you understand the historical nature of the Biblical genealogies and chronologies.

Note: Some people have a problem with the long age spans given for the Patriarchs. Remember that these lived before the Flood and genetically were very close to the physically perfect human being, Adam. Given that, it is not unreasonable to think that they truly lived this long. Conversely, if the ages do not mean what they say, then what are we to make of the ages of the Patriarchs when they had their sons?

The Genealogies and Chronologies of the Patriarchs

First Chart

Creation – year 0		The Flood – about 1600 years after the creation
Adam	The first man; age at death = 930 years	
Seth	A son of Adam; age at death = 912 years	
Enosh	A son of Seth; age at death = 905 years	
Kenan	A son of Enosh; age at death = 910 years	
Mahalalel	A son of Kenan; age at death = 895 years	
Jared	A son of Mahalalel; age at death = 962 years	
Enoch	A son of Jared; age when God took him = 365 years	
Methuselah	A son of Enoch; age at death = 969 years. Died the year of the Flood.	
Lamech	A son of Methuselah; age at death = 777 years. Died a few years before the Flood.	
Noah	A son of Lamech; age at death = 950 years, Lived for 344 years after the Flood	

The Historical record from Adam to Noah

The Genealogies and Chronologies of the Patriarchs

Second Chart

Patriarch	Age when he had the patriarchal son	Patriarchal son	Age of Patriarch at death
Adam	130	Seth	930
Seth	105	Enosh	912
Enosh	90	Kenan	905
Kenan	70	Mahalalel	910
Mahalalel	65	Jared	895
Jared	162	Enoch	962
Enoch	65	Methuselah	365
Methuselah	187	Lamech	969
Lamech	182	Noah	777
Noah	Not mentioned	Shem, Ham, & Japheth	950

The Historical Record from Adam to Noah

Genesis 5:1 states, “This is the book of the generations of Adam....” The word *book* is from the Hebrew word meaning *document* or *scroll*. Note the words: “This is *the* book of....” This is a definitive statement. It is authoritative. So, what we are about to look at is not to be taken lightly or as an unimportant writing of some kind. And we do not have the freedom to change any of its meaning.

The next word of significance is the word, *generations*. The word means *a history, a lineage, a family register, or record*. It is the genealogy of Adam through Noah. Just how important is this family register? Is it just an item of curiosity? This is not just some passing list of persons in this record. This is the critical record of Adam’s lineage from himself as the very first man, made in the image of God, created out of nothing, to Noah’s sons through Seth, one of Adam’s sons. After the

Flood, another record picks up the lineage of Noah's sons starting with Shem and finishing with Abraham in Genesis 11.

There is something else that is critical to see here and that is that this genealogy comes through Seth, not through Cain or any of the other many descendants of Adam and Eve. There is a very good reason for this.

What's in a name?

It is important to note that in the Bible, people were named in response to events that were important or hopes that were desired. When we look at Seth, therefore, we need to notice the meaning of his name. The name Seth means *substitute*. Why is this important? Remember that the very close relationship between Adam and God had been lost in the garden of Eden. In my opinion, I think that Eve, as the one who influenced Adam to disobey, must have been very emotionally affected by her wrong decision. Put yourself in her position. The weight of guilt for what she had brought on the creation of God must have been overwhelming. She said of Seth, "God has appointed me another offspring *in place* of Abel, for Cain killed him." (Author's emphasis.) Why, of the many sons and daughters that Adam and Eve produced, were Seth and Abel mentioned? What was so important about them?

Throughout Scripture we are told that Abel was a righteous man and that his sacrifice pleased God. This is the same idea expressed throughout the book of Leviticus when the sacrifices were offered to God in His way according to His word – the offering rose as a *sweet savor to the Lord*. In light of sin and its disastrous consequences, the sacrifice pointed....