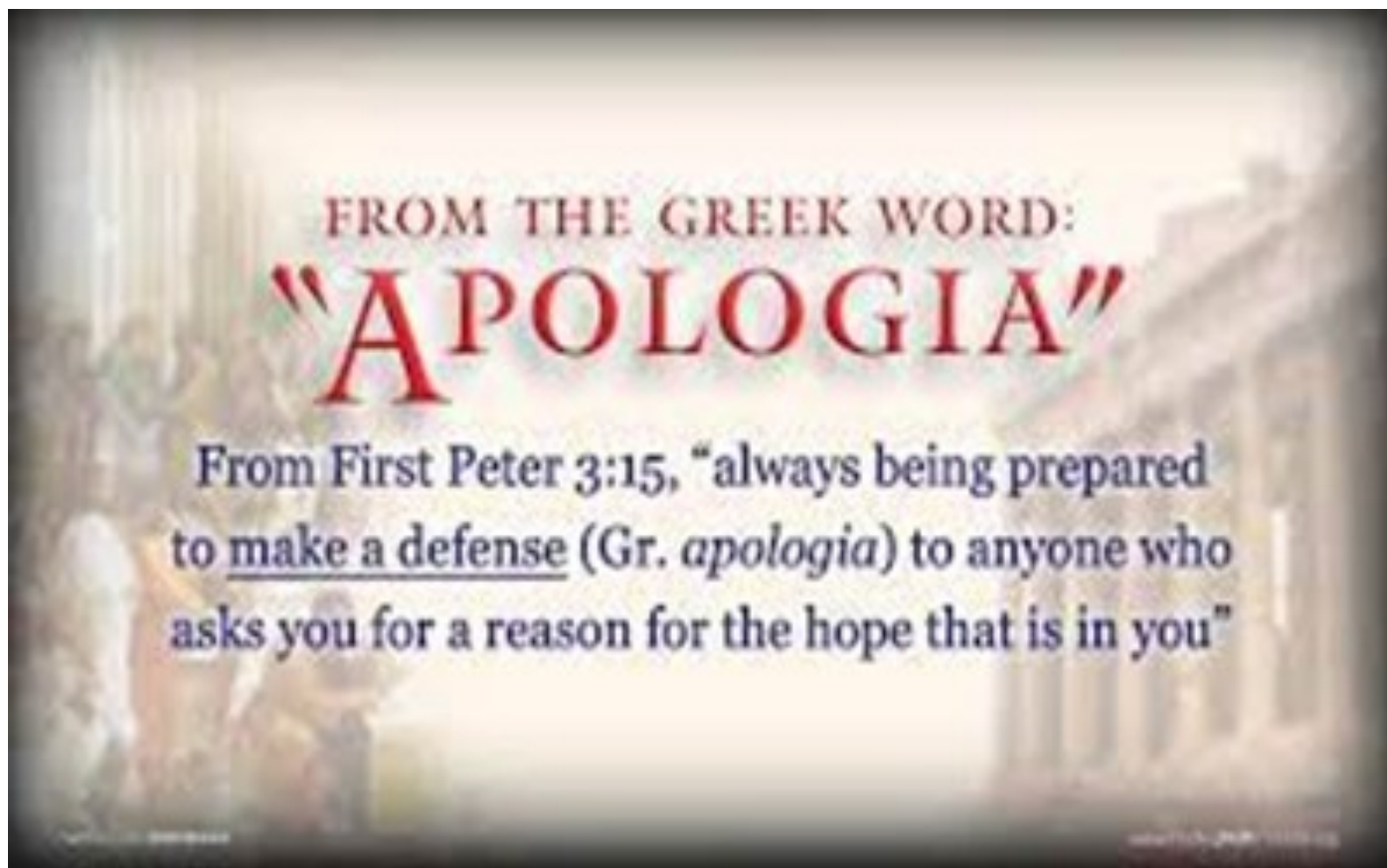




In The Defense of Our Faith “Witnessing For Christ in a Hostile World” 1 Peter 3:13-17

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The term “Apologetics” is not referring to the proper ways of offering an apology.

- Apologetics refers to the proper way to defend our position on the various issues of life, as well as the proper ways to refute the lies of the world regarding those issues.
- Therefore, Christian Apologetics refers to the proper way to defend the basic doctrines of the Christian Faith, including:
 - Our trust in the reliability of the Holy Scriptures, i.e., that the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God; truth with no mixture of error in its content and intent; sufficient in all matters of faith and the expression of our faith.
 - The existence of the God, who is revealed in the Bible as the only true God, and manifested in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

- God's plan for the redemption of lost man through the sacrificial death of His only begotten Son, and therefore, our expressed faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and our complete submission unto Him as our Lord.

The Apostle Peter wrote this epistle around 62-63 AD, during the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero.

- To avoid severe persecution, including martyrdom, Christians left Rome and took refuge in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.
- The overall theme of this letter is how a Christian perseveres under persecution.
- Peter made three things abundantly clear in the first to chapters:
 - That the believers' future with God is absolutely secure.
 - That Christians are God's holy people, which means we are set apart here on earth to accomplish His purposes.
 - That all believers will experience suffering in this life, especially to those who seek to live as Jesus lived.
 - Therefore, Christians should expect and accept such suffering as God's will, and be prepared to give a defense for their position to everyone who asks them.

The best witness for Christ in a hostile world is a balance of good behavior backed up with words of truth spoken in love.

- Christians should not to be troubled or intimidated by the hostility of the world.
 - Since Jesus said all who live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, Christians should expect to be slandered for our expressed faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior.
- The best witness combines both good behavior and thoughtful words.
 - We are to be zealous for what is good, we are to live righteous and holy lives, and we are to always be on our best behavior, to, in effect, declare our faith in the finished work of Christ.
- Therefore, rather than complaining about our suffering and whining as if God has abandoned us, we are to "sanctify" the Lord God in our hearts, and accept the fact that such suffering is in the will of God.
 - If God allowed it, there must be a divine reason for it, which may or may not include us, but God does, and we can trust Him with that.

1. God has called us to be His witnesses in this hostile world.

- In verses 10-12, Peter quoted Psalm 34, showing God's people how to live in peace even in a hostile world – we are to seek peace with everyone.
- **Proverbs 16:7 – “When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”**
- However, there are some unrighteous, and others who are down-right evil, whose goal is to tear people down,

especially Christians.

- Matthew 10:28 – ***“Do not fear those who kill the body, but who are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”***
- The fear of physical death should never keep us from following the will of God for our lives; our greater fear should be of disobeying a holy God who can destroy both our body and our soul.
- When we use the term “hostile world,” we tend to think of those Christians who live in those areas where the majority of the people are not Christians.
- However, many Christians feel the same way about their family members, who have become intimidated by their way of life, or their view of life
- Matthew 5:11-12 – ***“Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”***
- John 15:18-19 – ***“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”***

2. God has called us to be His witnesses with our lives and then our lips.

- The integrity of our lives provides the foundation for our lips to speak about the glorious gospel of our salvation, i.e., we manifest what we believe by our behavior.
- As Christians, it is especially important that our lives match up with our lips, so that the name of Jesus Christ will not be dishonored.
- Each time a Christian is caught in a moral failure, their sinful behavior not only sullies the name of Jesus Christ, but it casts a shadow on the character of all Christians, and gives a defense to those who don’t believe the gospel has the power to change their lives – they don’t see the evidence.
- Lost people watch us all of the time, but especially when we are going through difficult times, or being persecuted.
- When, they ask us how we are able to remain so hopeful in the midst of such circumstances, we must be prepared and ready to give them a reason for the hope that is within us, along with a well-reasoned but also a well-seasoned presentation of the gospel, sufficient to show them their sin, their need of a Savior, and Jesus Christ as the Savior they need.

3. The governing power in our witness is the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1 Peter 3:15- ***“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.”***
- To “sanctify” means to make holy or to set apart; it is the meaning of the phrase ***“Hallowed be Thy Name!”***
- To “sanctify” means to treat Jesus as if He is God, for all authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Him.
- Therefore, we can trust Him in all things, including the purpose for the sufferings we may endure for His sake.
- If the enemies of God persecuted Jesus, why should those who believe in Him expect to be treated any differently?
- Knowing what Jesus achieved for us as a result of His suffering and death, can we not understand what God may be doing for others through our suffering?

Apologetics is not a way to win an argument but a way to reason with those with whom we differ.

- Remember, our battle is not with others, for we do not fight with flesh and blood.
- Apologetics is a spiritual battle against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces in the heavenly realm, which can only be won through fasting and prayer.