



# WHAT IS APOLOGETICS AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

“Apologetics is the discipline that deals with a rational defense of Christian faith.”  
*Norman Geisler*<sup>1</sup>

## dogma vs doctrine

### dogma

- beliefs that are essential to the Christian faith
- Examples include:
  - Jesus' death & resurrection
  - Jesus' deity
  - Inerrancy of the Bible

apologetics seeks to defend dogmas, but not doctrines

### doctrine

- explaining the application of dogmas
- For example:
  - Jesus' deity is a dogma, but there are various doctrines explaining how Jesus was both God and man.<sup>2</sup>

## the importance of apologetics

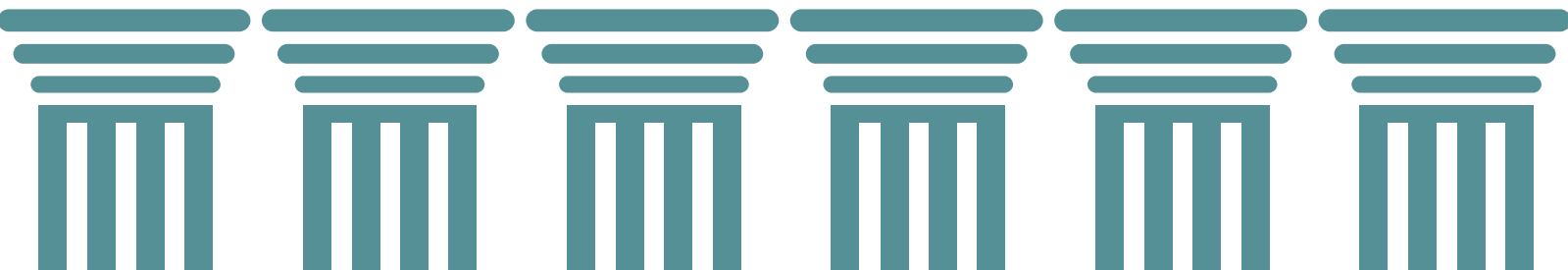
1 assures us that our core beliefs are true

2 allows us to share the gospel more effectively since there is evidence to defend our beliefs

- a person can acknowledge that Christianity might be true which leads to them evaluating the faith more seriously

- a person can become a Christian based on the evidence
- a person can at least recognize that Christians are not blindly following their faith

apologetics is a foundation of our faith because we can have assurance that our faith is rooted in logic and evidence.





# FORMS OF APOLOGETICS

**proactive apologetics -**  
explaining that the Christian faith is logical and true based on evidence

## proactive apologetics

**constructive arguments**

**constructive arguments -**  
arguments that support the truthfulness of Christianity

**deconstructive arguments**

**deconstructive arguments -**  
arguments that deny the truthfulness of non-Christian worldviews

**responsive apologetics -**  
defending the Christian faith against objections

## responsive apologetics

**rebutting arguments**

**rebutting arguments -**  
responding to an objection being raised by citing evidence which proves the objection is false

**undercutting arguments**

**undercutting arguments -**  
explaining that the objection being raised against the Christian faith is fallacious



# CAN MULTIPLE PATHS LEAD TO GOD?

## arguments for multiple paths to God

- It is offensive that Jesus claimed to be the only way to God.
- There are so many religions... do you really believe that your religion is right and billions of people are completely wrong?
- All religions essentially teach the same thing.



## biblical response

**John 14:6**

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

**Acts 4:12**

Salvation is found in no one else [other than Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

**1 John 5:12**

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.



# CAN MULTIPLE PATHS LEAD TO GOD?

## logical response

- Jesus' claim is only offensive if it is not true. If He is the only way to God as He claimed, then He is simply stating the truth.
- World religions contradict one another in their beliefs (see chart on next page). This means that only 1 religion can actually be true. Two or more contradictory beliefs cannot all be true. One will be true and the rest will be false.
- As we can see on the next page, each religion differs on nearly every belief. Slight similarities between different religions does not imply that they are fundamentally the same.
- Ultimately it comes down to whether or not truth is absolute (see below).

## is truth relative or absolute?<sup>4</sup>

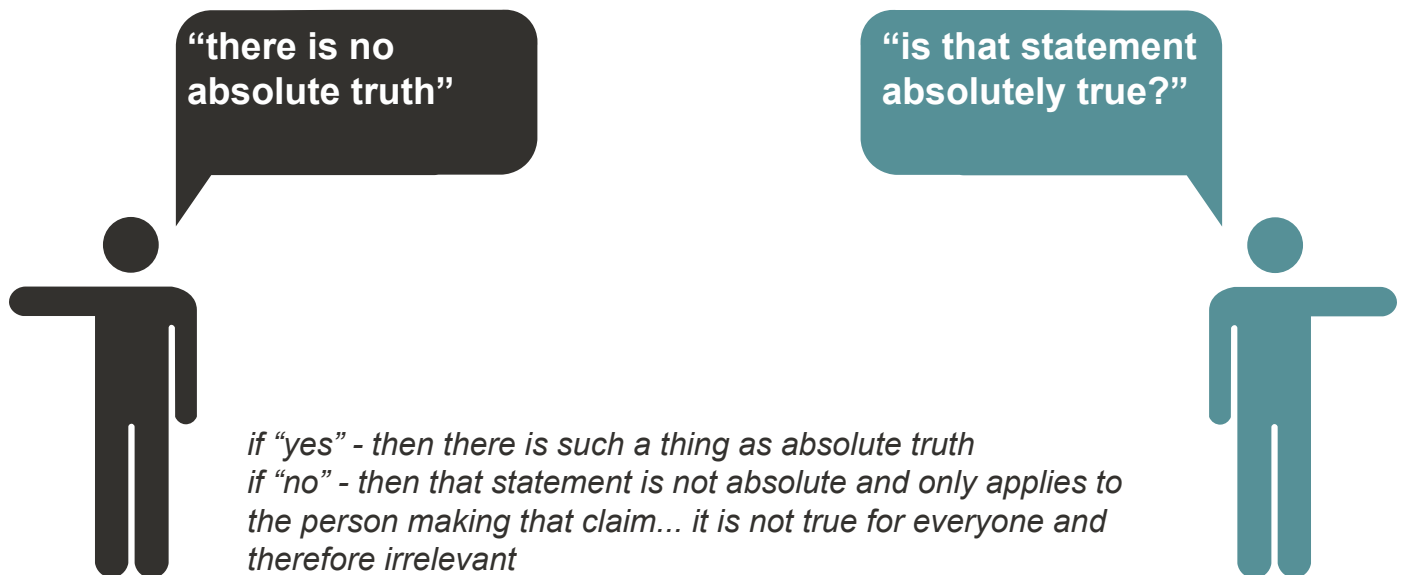
relative truth can mean 1 of 2 things:

- (1) what was true in the past is no longer true now, or
- (2) what is true for you is not true for me

absolute truth means 2 things:

- (1) truth does not change over time and
- (2) whatever is true for one person is true for all people

Truth is absolute because relative truth is a self-defeating belief. See the quick conversation of arguing that truth is relative:





# MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS



**Buddhism**



**Christianity**



**Hinduism<sup>7</sup>**



**Islam**



**Judaism<sup>11</sup>**

	<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Hinduism<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Islam</b>	<b>Judaism<sup>11</sup></b>
<b>God</b>	Usually do not believe in the existence of any gods	Believe in one God in three forms (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)	Believe in many gods which are all forms of Brahman, the Supreme Being	Strict view of monotheism, the unity of God is one of the most important beliefs	Believe in one God
<b>View of Jesus</b>	Jesus was a good teacher or even a spiritual teacher, but not God	Jesus was, and still is, God incarnate (God in human form)	Jesus was a good teacher or even a spiritual teacher, but not God	Jesus is the Messiah, was sinless, and was a great prophet... but not God <sup>9</sup>	Jesus is not the Messiah
<b>Founder of Religion</b>	Prince Siddhartha Gautama (also known as “the Buddha”)	Jesus took the promises of Judaism and applied them to Himself	Unknown	The Prophet Muhammad	God used men like Abraham and Moses to call the Israelites to be a holy people
<b>Religious Text(s)</b>	Pali Canon, however this text is not viewed as an absolute authority	The Bible	The Vedas and the Agamas	The Qur’an which is held in high honor by Muslims	The Old Testament and the Talmud
<b>Human Problem</b>	We are trapped in a cycle of ongoing pain by being reborn after death (reincarnation) <sup>5</sup>	We are all sinners and all deserve eternal punishment for our sin	We are trapped in a cycle of rebirth (reincarnation) and intellectual ignorance <sup>8</sup>	We disobey the commands of God (Allah)	We are in a fallen world because of sin
<b>Solution to the Problem</b>	By following the eightfold path, one will escape this cycle and reach nirvana <sup>6</sup>	Jesus died in our place so that only through Him can we be saved from our sin	By meditating and doing good works, one will escape this cycle	Submit to Allah, this can be summarized in obeying the Five Pillars of Islam	The Messiah’s arrival
<b>After Death</b>	A process of rebirth that does not end until we reach nirvana	Followers of Jesus will go to heaven, everyone else will go to hell	A process of rebirth that does not end until we are finally free from this cycle	Allah will judge us based on our beliefs and our works <sup>10</sup>	The righteous will be rewarded and the unrighteous will be punished
<b>Misc.</b>	One can gain peace through their own works and actions	Christians trust in Jesus alone to save them and turn from their sinful lifestyles	Believe in karma: the law of cause and effect which decides our fate	The Hadith is a text that contains information about Muhammad’s teachings and life	Practicers of Judaism are still waiting for the Messiah



# CAN THERE BE MORE THAN ONE GOD?

## polytheism vs monotheism

### definition

- polytheism is the belief in more than one god
- many Eastern religions in particular adhere to this belief and most religions believe in more than one god



- monotheism is the belief in only one god
- the world religions which adhere to this belief are: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism

### beliefs

- beliefs vary depending on the religion
- typically proponents of this view believe that there are many finite gods of similar power
- sometimes believe in an eternal universe



- Christians believe in a triune God which means that God is one being with three distinct persons.
- Muslims argue that this is not monotheism but Christians do not claim there are three gods, just one God with three persons (more on this later).

### support

- acknowledge that there are various forces at play in the world
- the universe gave birth to the gods
- polytheism assumes that gods are lacking some traits which by definition means that they cannot be a god
- polytheists usually believe that their gods are created beings which means that they cannot be a god



- as we study nature, reality, and morality, we come to some conclusions about God... namely that God is perfect in His power, creativity, holiness, and unity as well as the fact that He is eternal
- polytheism is self-contradictory in their views of their gods and therefore, truth can only be found in one of the monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism)

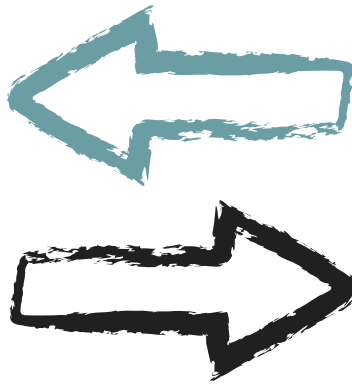
# EVIDENCE FOR AND AGAINST JUDAISM



## the main debate: is Jesus the Messiah?

### yes -

- Jesus has fulfilled nearly all of the Messianic prophecies with the exception of prophecies pertaining to His second coming
- Daniel gave a specific timeline of when the Messiah would arrive, which was the year 31 A.D.



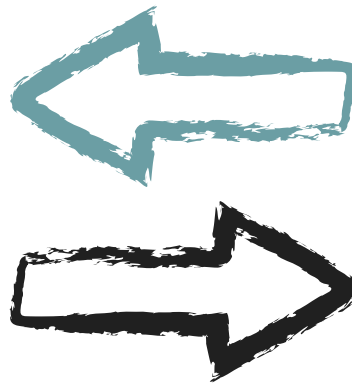
### no -

- cultural reasons (family and friends are Jewish)
- historical reasons (Christians have persecuted Jews)
- religious reasons (Jesus has not fulfilled all the prophecies)

## the Messiah's roles

### suffering servant

- the Messiah had to be crushed before He could reign as king, all of the Old Testament alludes to the fact that the Messiah will be slain as a guilt offering in our place



### conquering king

- the Jews were expecting the Messiah to free them from Roman rule and usher in His kingdom
- Christians believe that Jesus will reign eternally once He returns

Why did Jesus ascend back to heaven for thousands of years instead of beginning His earthly reign immediately? Because He appointed His followers to tell the whole world about His sacrifice in order for all people to have a chance to escape eternal punishment for sin.

# EVIDENCE FOR ISLAM



## Muhammad is a prophet of God

### the divine calling of Muhammad

- Muhammad was visited by an angel that revealed the Qur'an to him

### the miracles of Muhammad

- Muhammad produced the Qur'an (the greatest miracle of all) and performed many miracles by the power of God

### the moral example of Muhammad

- Muhammad married a widow
- Muhammad adopted his son
- Muhammad was a great leader
- Muhammad was free from major sin
- Muhammad was humble
- Muhammad was generous

### the success of Muhammad

- Muhammad successfully spread Islam throughout the world by the power of God even under intense persecution

### the Bible's prophecies of Muhammad

- the Bible itself prophesied about Muhammad (John 14:16; Isaiah 21:7; Deuteronomy 18:15-18, 33:2, 34:10; Psalm 45:3-5)

## the Qur'an is inspired by God and is without error

### the beauty of the Qur'an

- the Qur'an is so beautiful that it can only be produced by God (10.37)
- Muhammad was illiterate so he could not have written the Qur'an (7.157)

### the preservation of the Qur'an

- the Qur'an has been kept from textual alterations, this is not true of any other holy book

### the impact of the Qur'an

- the Qur'an has changed the lives of countless readers

### the prophecies of the Qur'an

- the Qur'an contains prophecies which verify its divine origin

### the scientific foresight of the Qur'an

- the Qur'an contains scientific information that was unknown to mankind at the time of its revelation to Muhammad

### the unity of the Qur'an

- the Qur'an does not contain contradictions

## Jesus did not die on the cross and is not God

### the Qur'an teaches that...

- *tawhid* is the doctrine of Islam which states that God is absolutely one
- the Qur'an rejects the trinity (4.171)
- the trinity is not logical since it is too complex and self-contradictory
- the word trinity is not found in the Bible and is not compatible with the absolute unity of God
- Jesus did not die on the cross (4.157)  
*Jesus either was on the cross and passed out or someone was made to look like Him and died in His place*
- Jesus did not claim to be God (4.171)
- Jesus did not seek His own worship (5.116)



# EVALUATING THE EVIDENCE FOR ISLAM



## Muhammad is a prophet of God

### the “divine” calling of Muhammad<sup>12</sup>

- Muhammad was choked by the angel
- Muhammad contemplated suicide because of these interactions
- Muhammad believed he was being visited by a demon

### the “miracles” of Muhammad

- Muhammad pointed to the Qur’an as his miracle, the rest of his miracles are part of Islamic tradition but not in the Qur’an

### the moral example of Muhammad<sup>13</sup>

- Muhammad had 15 wives while saying that men could only have 4 wives
- Muhammad consummated the marriage with his 9 year old wife when he was 53
- Muhammad sought revenge and violence on many occasions<sup>14</sup>

### the success of Muhammad

- Islam spread through violence

### the Bible’s prophecies of Muhammad

- none of these verses pertain to Muhammad in any way and are taken out of context<sup>15</sup>

## the Qur’an is inspired by God and is without error

### the beauty of the Qur’an

- the Qur’an must be read in it’s original language in order for this to be tested
- beauty is not proof that something has divine origin
- the Qur’an says that Muhammad was illiterate but this is using the Qur’an to prove itself which is not good evidence<sup>16</sup>

### the preservation of the Qur’an

- there were various versions of the Qur’an in circulation shortly after Muhammad’s death<sup>17</sup>

### the impact of the Qur’an

- the Bible has impacted it’s readers too

### the prophecies of the Qur’an

- the Qur’an’s prophecies are vague and therefore they are widely discredited

### the scientific foresight of the Qur’an

- scientific foresight does not support the claim that something has divine origin

### the unity of the Qur’an

- the Qur’an was updated many times over the course of only 20 years<sup>18</sup>

## strict monotheism (tawhid)

- just because we cannot comprehend the trinity does not mean it is false... we should expect to have difficulty understanding some things about our creator
- the word *tawhid* is not found in the Qur’an

## Jesus did not die on the cross and is not God

### the Bible teaches that...

- Jesus died on the cross (Mark 15:37)
- Jesus did claim to be God (Mark 14:62)
- Jesus did seek His own worship (Matthew 14:33)
- See “evidence for and against Jesus’ deity” in 2 pages for more information

# EVIDENCE FOR AND AGAINST THE BIBLE



## proactive argument

The Bible has been changed and corrupted over the years. The Bible we have today is very different from the original Bible.

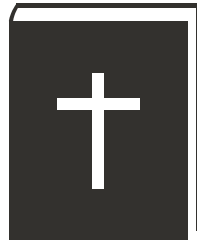


## responsive argument

The thousands of copies of the Bible give us great confidence that we possess an accurate version of the Bible. *See chapter 3 for more information*

## proactive argument

There are many contradictions in the Bible which discredit it as the "Word of God". If God truly inspired this book, then there would be no mistakes in it. Since there are mistakes in it, the Bible cannot be the Word of God.



## responsive argument

The fact is that every so called contradiction in the Bible can be explained. Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe explain that we find contradictions when we misinterpret scripture.<sup>19</sup> Correct study of the Bible finds that there are no contradictions.

## proactive argument

The Bible is just a giant collection of fairy tales. The stories are made up and not meant to be taken seriously.



## responsive argument

The Bible has been proven time and time again to be historically accurate. Archaeological evidence has been used to confirm that the authors of the Bible were writing about actual people and places in their accounts.<sup>20</sup>

## proactive argument

The writers of the Bible were biased. They were proponents of the belief system they were recording and therefore their testimony is unreliable and biased.



## responsive argument

The writers of the Bible were almost always eyewitnesses to the events they were recording. Many of the writers were skeptics until they actually witnessed the events they ended up recording.



# EVIDENCE FOR JESUS' DEITY

**the debate of whether or not Jesus is God comes down to whether or not Jesus died on the cross and then rose from the dead**

## Jesus died

we can be sure that Jesus died on the cross because of...

- the intense flogging Jesus endured
- the training of the Roman guards as professional executioners
- the brutality of crucifixion
- the spear that pierced Jesus' side



## Jesus' tomb was empty

we can be sure that Jesus' tomb was empty because...

- enemies of Christianity could have immediately produced Jesus' body in order to stop the Christian movement
- enemies of Christianity claimed that the disciples stole Jesus' body (they would not have claimed this if Jesus' body was still in the tomb)



## the disciples' belief

we can be sure that the disciples saw the risen Jesus because...

- the disciples were afraid to be associated with Jesus when He was arrested and killed
- a week later they were boldly proclaiming that Jesus appeared to them alive
- they were willing to die for this belief



## Paul's conversion

we can be sure that Paul saw the risen Jesus because...

- he was an enemy of Christianity and suddenly converted to Christianity after, as he claimed, he was visited by the risen Jesus
- the same thing happened to Jesus' brother James



see *"Evidence For Jesus' Resurrection"* for a thorough examination of this evidence



# WARNINGS ABOUT APOLOGETICS

## dangerous approaches to apologetics



### overemphasize

#### these people...

- get into arguments with people of opposing views
- unsympathetically spew facts and evidence without forming relationships and being understanding to the person behind the questions
- question their faith each time one piece of evidence comes against their worldview



### underemphasize

#### these people...

- cannot articulate basic evidence for their worldview
- blindly follow their faith, they do not care what beliefs the evidence supports
- give off the impression to others that they are unintelligent

## have the right attitude



### respectful

- share our beliefs respectfully
- ask and answer questions respectfully

### kind

- we share the truth out of love and compassion



### humble

- we are always learning
- we do not have all the answers<sup>21</sup>



### peaceful

- nobody is argued into heaven
- do not cause division

