

S T U D Y G U I D E



**DEFENDING YOUR
FAITH**
AN OVERVIEW OF CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS
R. C. SPROUL

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Defending Your Faith

An Overview of Classical Apologetics

R.C. Sproul



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Introduction to Apologetics

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

Do you know what you believe and why you believe it? If you are like most Christians, you are not as certain of the answer as you would like to be. In this lecture, R.C. explains that the science of apologetics is designed to aid Christians in the joyful task and responsibility of defending their faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the history and definition of apologetics.
2. To be encouraged to observe and imitate the Bible's apologetical methods.

QUOTATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Logos: Greek, meaning “word” or “reason”. In biblical Greek, especially in the book of John, it often refers to the Second Person of the Trinity. In early Greek philosophy, it was used to denote the supreme ordering force of the universe.

LECTURE OUTLINE

- I. What is apologetics?
 - a. Apologetics is devoted to promoting an intellectual defense for truth claims, in this case the truth claims of the Christian faith.
 - b. It has no reference to apologizing for something you did wrong, though it comes from the same Greek root.

II. The Bible and Apologetics

- a. First Peter 3:15 says, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.”
- b. The positive reason for apologetics is the sanctification of the Christian, but the negative one is to make non-Christians ashamed of attacking the Christian faith.
- c. Justin Martyr wrote “The Apology.”
 - i. It was a response to the charges of sedition, cannibalism, and atheism by the Roman authorities.
 - ii. In 2001 John Ashcroft was forced to make a similar “apology” when he remarked, “We in America have no King but Jesus.”
 - iii. Christians have always responded intellectually and Biblically to the various cultural and political movements that questioned the reality of the Christian faith.
- d. The *Logos* and Apologetics
 - i. Early apologists appealed to the *logos* concept to explain the nature of Jesus to the Greek culture.
 - ii. *Logos* was used in philosophical discussions among the Stoics and Heraclitians to denote the primary organizing force of the universe.
 - iii. The Apostle John picks up on this and uses this word to explain the nature of Christ to a primarily Greek-thinking culture. But he fills it with Hebrew content and theology.
 - iv. There are significant points of contact between the Christian and non-Christian world, in this case, a semantic one
 - v. Sensing this connection, Gordon Clark translates the first verse of John’s Gospel as, “In the beginning was logic, and logic was with God, and logic was God. And the logic became flesh and dwelt among us.”

III. It is the contributions of the early apologists in interacting with surrounding cultural ideas that provide the first clues for the content of apologetics. The rest of this course will explore the implications and applications of this example.

STUDY QUESTIONS

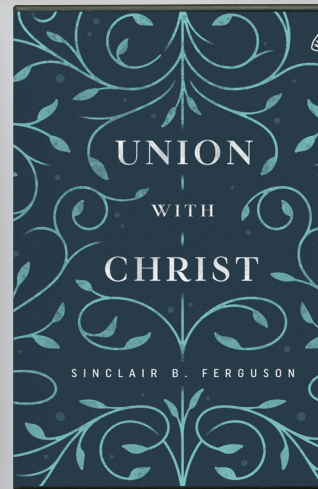
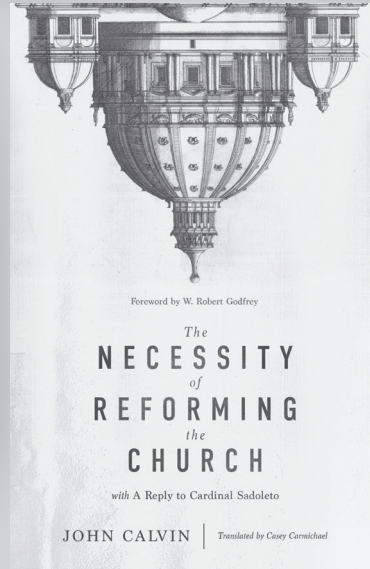
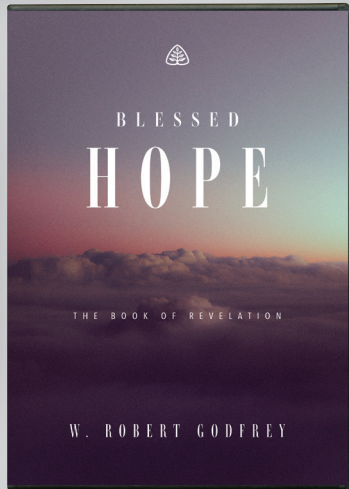
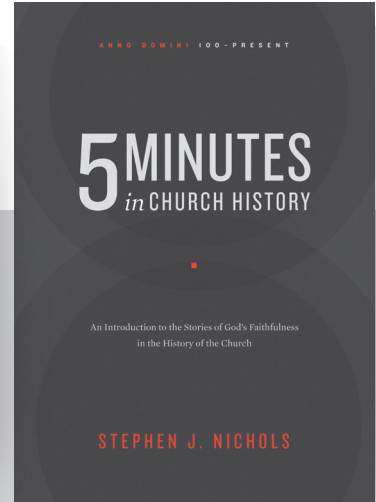
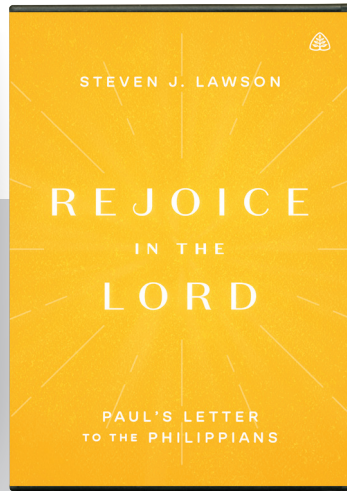
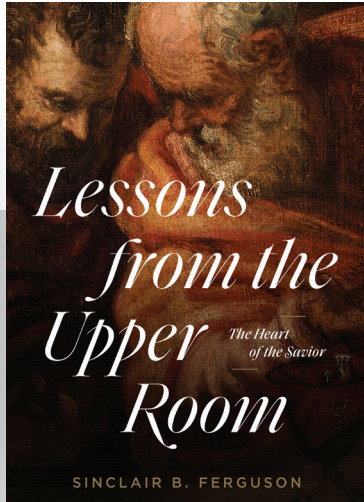
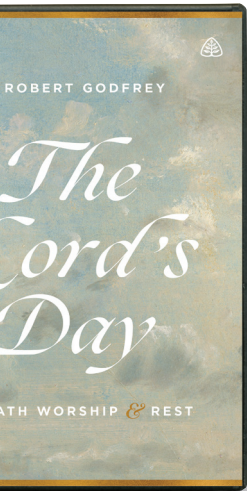
1. What is the definition of the word “apologetics”?
2. What two Biblical passages have impacted the study of apologetics? Why?
3. What was the use of the word *logos* in

- a. Normal Greek?
- b. Greek philosophy?
- c. John's Gospel?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 Peter 3:15. What can we learn about the purpose of apologetics from this passage?
2. Looking at Acts 17, is there a clear distinction between doing apologetics and evangelism in Paul's preaching? What are the differences and similarities?
3. What are three points of contact with Christianity in your culture? Think of art, politics, vocational issues, etc.
4. Make at least three goals—one intellectual, one emotional, and one kinetic or “doing” to give you direction as you prepare to take this course.
 - a. I want to learn. . . .
 - b. I want to feel. . . .
 - c. I want to do. . . .

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