



By

**Mark McGee**



*Thinking About Christian Apologetics: What It Is and Why We Do It* by James K. Beilby is a wonderful introductory book for Christians interested in learning about the foundations of Christian Apologetics.

*“In this book I discuss the nature and goals of apologetics, different approaches to apologetics, objections to the idea or practice of apologetics, and how apologetics should be done. Too often, Christian apologists have either bypassed these important issues or given them cursory treatment.” PREFACE*

Dr. Beilby teaches at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota and has been there for almost 20 years. He is a Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies and specializes in systematic and philosophical theology, apologetics, and ethics.

I recommend *Thinking About Christian Apologetics* as one of the first books budding apologists should read. Dr. Beilby explains the foundation of apologetics in a clear and methodical way that helps build the foundation for why Christians use apologetics in accomplishing the goal Jesus Christ gave us in making disciples of all nations.

*“The goal of apologetics is to defend and commend the truthfulness of Christian belief.” CHAPTER 1, P 20*

One of the challenges of Christian apologetics is to define it and stay on track with that definition. Jesus said that He came to earth to “seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Did Jesus stay on track to His primary goal? He did. What did Jesus assign Christians to do with their lives?

- make disciples of all nations
- baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- teach them to observe everything Jesus commanded us

Christian apologetics should be aligned with that assignment. If we find ourselves drifting from that assignment, we need to adjust our course.

*“Boiled down to its essentials, therefore, those who engage in Christian apologetics are defending and commending the gospel of Jesus Christ and whatever theological concepts are necessary to the gospel.” CHAPTER 1, P 20*

Dr. Beilby believes that success in Christian apologetics is best understood as ‘faithfulness to Jesus Christ.’ I agree.

*“First, what we say should accurately represent who Jesus is, what he taught and, specifically, the good news he brought to the world. Second, the way we do our apologetics should augment our arguments, not detract from them. We must defend Christ in a way that fits with Christ’s message. Finally, we must be faithful to God’s purposes in specific situations. In some cases, apologetics appropriately and naturally leads to an offer for a person to commit her life to Christ, but in the vast majority of cases,*

*our apologetic endeavors are a small step in a person's long and winding journey that one hopes will culminate in relationship with Jesus Christ. Just as in 1 Corinthians 3:6 where the apostle Paul said, 'I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow,' our responsibility is to be faithful to our call in whatever situation God has placed us and help our interlocutor move one more step toward Christ, whether that step be merely acknowledging that not all Christians are morons or committing his life to Christ. In other words, we must approach each apologetic situation pneumatologically, acknowledging that the Holy Spirit has preceded us and will work after we have left. Our task is to discern what God requires of us in each situation."*

#### *CHAPTER 1, P 23*

As you will see in the Contents list below, Dr. Beilby introduces us to Christian apologetics clearly and methodically. I believe you will benefit greatly from reading *Thinking About Christian Apologetics* and using it as a reference as you follow God's leading in your life and ministry.

# Contents

Preface

1. What Is Christian Apologetics?
2. Patristic and Medieval Apologetics
3. Modern and Contemporary Apologetics
4. Varieties of Apologetics
5. Philosophical Objections to Apologetics
6. Biblical and Theological Objections to Apologetics
7. Doing Apologetics Well

A Bibliography of Works on Christian Apologetics

Notes

Name and Subject Index

Dr. Beilby's other books include *Why Bother With Truth?* (with David Clark), *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* and *The Meaning of the Atonement: Four Views* (both with Paul Eddy), *Naturalism Defeated?*, *For Faith and Clarity*, and *Epistemology as Theology*.

## Publisher's Notes

*“Most introductions to apologetics begin with the “how to” of defending the faith, diving right into the major apologetic arguments and the body of evidence. For those who want a more foundational look at this contested theological discipline, this book examines Christian apologetics in its nature, history, approaches, objections and practice.*

*What is apologetics?*

*How has apologetics developed?*

*What are the basic apologetic approaches?*

*Why should we practice apologetics?*

*Countless Christians today are seeking a responsible way to defend and commend their faith. If you are one them, Thinking About Christian Apologetics is the place to start.”*



## Reviews

*“This is a wonderful book. It provides historical, conceptual and philosophical understandings of apologetics without ignoring the interpersonal aspects of sharing one’s faith and the pastoral obligation to equip the church. Although he concerns himself with some sophisticated arguments and issues, Professor Beilby is remarkably clear and readable.”*  
*Francis J. Beckwith, professor of philosophy and church-state studies, Baylor University*

*“Jim Beilby’s volume is distinctive—it’s not your normal apologetics textbook. As such, it is an excellent addition to the growing study in this field. It makes numerous seldom-made distinctions, is handy, and contains dozens of gems. From a brief overview of the history of apologetics, to the major varieties and methods, to answering various objections, and even closing with a ‘how to’ chapter containing a wealth of practical insights, this handbook brings together under one cover a potpourri of items that will not be found in any other text. I recommend it highly.”*

*Gary R. Habermas, Distinguished Research Professor,  
Liberty University Theological Seminary*

*“This is a terrific little book—and much needed. This isn’t a book that does apologetics; this is a book about apologetics. It answers all the important questions that those who want to defend the faith need addressed. What is apologetics? What is the biblical case? How did the field develop? What are the various methods? And most importantly, how can we effectively use apologetics to bring people to faith and glorify God? Dr. Beilby nails it in this splendid introduction. This is a must-read for anyone entering the study of apologetics.” Craig J. Hazen, Ph.D., director of the MA program in Christian Apologetics, Biola University*

*“Finally—a balanced, readable, yet sufficiently nuanced introduction to Christian apologetics! Beilby covers much terrain as he ably summarizes the central themes and assesses the relevant literature. A terrific textbook!” Paul Copan, professor and Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University*

*“This book deserves a place amongst the argument-heavy apologetics texts currently in use.” Todd T.W. Daly, Ph.D., Ethics Medicine, Volume 29:2, Summer 2013*

*“This excellent book is practical and clear, appropriately biblical and theological, suitably historical and philosophical, and basic without being simplistic. Anyone who aspires to understand the apologetics landscape and to adopt an effective way to communicate with skeptics and critics of Christianity will be helped by this book.” Glenn R. Kreider, Bibliotheca Sacra, January-March 2013*

*Thinking About Christian Apologetics: What It Is and Why We Do It*, IVP Academic, 2011, 214 pages