

## What Apologetics Is



By [Nathan Jones](#)

For the average Christian, the word "apologetics" is a very strange and sometimes scary word. Does it mean the act of one who goes around and apologizes for the Christian faith? Can one be an expert in apologetics? So, just what is apologetics, anyway?

Lamb & Lion Ministries interviewed one of today's foremost defenders of the faith, Eric Barger, the founder and director of [Take a Stand! Ministries](#) headquartered in the Dallas area. Dr. James Kennedy once told his congregation everyone needs to read Eric Barger's insights. And, the late national radio host Marlene Maddox called Eric one of the utmost authorities on the cults, the New Age, and rock music today. From his past as a former drug addict and rock n' roll musician who was deeply involved in the New Age movement, Eric has emerged since he gave his life to Jesus Christ to become one of today's greatest defenders of Christianity in America.



Eric Barger

Eric was asked a number of question related to that curious word "apologetics."

### **What does "apologetics" mean?**

Well, I try to explain that every time I speak or mention that word, because there is always someone out there who doesn't understand. "Apologetics" is the Bible school term for the defense of the faith. In fact, the word that we get the English word "apologetics" from is found eight times in the New Testament and it is *apologia*. Maybe the most famous reference to *apologia* is [1 Peter 3:15](#), which says we are to be ready to give every man an answer. And, that's the word "apologetics," from *apologia*.

We are to be able to defend the faith, and that is what apologetics is — the defense of the faith.

### **What do you do in apologetics?**

I am going to throw out another term to you — "polemics." Polemics is often times exposing other religions for being worthless in order to save someone. So, polemics and apologetics move together. Apologetics is understanding Christianity and being able to defend that, and to explain it to the culture in such a way that people will understand orthodox biblical Christianity. Polemics then is the exposé about false cults. And that is a lot of what I do, dealing with cults, the New Age Movement, and the occult.

I have written about all of those things and, of course, speak about them full-time. This is our 25th anniversary in the full-time traveling ministry, so I have been out there doing it quite awhile.

### **What aspect of Christianity do you find needs the most defense?**

Sound doctrine.

We see a church today with many people who believe, and they go to church every week, but I think there is a void in preaching and teaching the sound understanding of the elements of Christianity that make up Christianity, such as the virgin birth, blood atonement, salvation by grace, the inerrancy of the Scripture, who God is, who Jesus is, etc. I mean, we don't have a lot of teaching like that today. There is some and, of course, a lot of pastors are preaching that all the time. But, I think that in evangelical circles there is a void on these things, and I am concerned about that.

Doctrine is important. The word "doctrine" is used 50 times in the Scriptures. We ought to understand that if we don't have that, if we don't understand good sound Biblical doctrine, then we're really game for the cults, and we are game to become cultist ourselves.

Most people do not realize that most of the people that joined a cult over the years were Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterians and so forth. They are people who just grew up as cultural Christians, but really didn't know anything about the faith and could not defend anything. They just inherited the faith and that was it.

If we don't know what we believe, when the storms hit us or when other religions are before us and confronting us saying that they are "the way," then we won't know what to say. Not only will we not be any good to get through to them to present the real Jesus who can save them eternally, but we will fall prey to it, too.

The Mormon church has a huge promotional campaign going on to try to appear like a more enlightened Christian denomination today. They are preying on Christians who don't know their doctrine.

When people tell me that doctrine is really not all that important, one of the things that immediately comes to mind is the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus. It is amazing how many Christian leaders there are today who would even deny the resurrection of Jesus. And you know, if He wasn't resurrected, we don't have a faith. We better find another religion, because He could have fulfilled all the other prophecies in the Scriptures about the Messiah, but if He didn't raise from the grave He wasn't the Messiah.

Also, perhaps the doctrine that has been dismissed the most as just being completely irrelevant is the doctrine of the virgin birth, but that is an important doctrine. I mean, Jesus was God in the flesh.

### **How can pastors teach doctrine if they also consider the Bible isn't inerrant?**

If the Bible is filled with errors then you just can't teach doctrine. You will fall back on what many preachers today seem to be falling back to, and that is the self help type of study that it's all about you and not about God. Every sermon ends up being about you and what God can do for you. Too much of the preaching today is all about the here and now and not about eternity.

Again, the virgin birth and the resurrection in my opinion are the two most attacked doctrines and the ones most marginalized. The virgin birth, for example, if Jesus wasn't born of a virgin then we've got errors in the Scripture because Matthew 1 is very clear that He was born of a virgin. Isaiah talks about the virgin birth as one of the prerequisites for the Messiah. And so, Jesus either was, or He wasn't. And, the same is true with the Resurrection, either Jesus was or He wasn't. These are two things that I talk in detail about.

For instance, we have a major Christian University in the Dallas area and a few years ago the Professor Emeritus of New Testament at that University gave an Easter sermon and it was so revolutionary. *The Dallas Morning News* posted the whole sermon. It went like this: after Jesus died the disciples sat around the table and they just remembered things Jesus said and it was kind of like the followers of Martin Luther King after he died. They sat

around and drank coffee and said, "You remember when Martin said this, you remember when Martin said that." And, as they talked about Martin, he came alive in their hearts. And, that is all there was to the Resurrection — Jesus just came alive in their hearts. Sounding just like Oprah, this example shows a feeling experience and not a believing experience, with no literal interpretation.

Without a belief in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, you can teach doctrine, but it won't be right doctrine.