

## **Five Apologetic Questions That Every Christian Should Know How to Answer**

Apologetics is a tool for evangelism. Its great potential lies in removing intellectual, historical, ethical, and emotional objections your non-Christian friend may have so that you can keep focus on Jesus and His saving message in the Gospels. For your non-Christian challenger, whose attention span often is only 140 characters long, you need answers that are brief, simple, and understandable, yet not simplistic. These answers need to be well informed and therefore credible. You will leave this workshop equipped with practical know-how and useful background knowledge to tackle five important topics.

**Pasi Turunen**, theologian (M.Th), author, blogger, and apologist, has been working as a Christian radio broadcaster for 25 years. He studied theology at Helsinki University, where his master's thesis dealt with Jewish views on resurrection in the intertestamental Jewish literature. Turunen is a well-known Bible teacher and is often invited to speak to various apologetic seminars in Finland. He has written number of books dealing with subjects such as cult evangelism, same-sex marriage, inerrancy of the Bible, and apologetics. He has experience with Christian television and currently hosts a weekly radio program that analyzes current events and changing culture in light of the Christian worldview and the Scriptures. Turunen has also appeared on secular national television and radio programs in Finland defending Christian faith and views on contemporary issues. He is the current president of the Patmos Foundation for World Missions, an evangelical missions and relief organization bringing humanitarian aid and the Gospel of Christ to 25 nations across the world. The Patmos Foundation has an extensive media ministry in Finland and was the first Finnish Christian organization to start broadcasting Christian programs on commercial radio stations in 1985. Pasi is married to Parvin, who was born in the Middle East and in 1984 was supernaturally led to Finland to find Jesus and be saved.

### **I. DID JESUS EVER EXIST?**

#### **A. What proof do we have of Jesus outside the New Testament?**

1. Proof that predates the New Testament (19)
2. Archaeological proof (4)
3. Non-Christian sources outside the New Testament (17)
4. Christian sources outside the New Testament (5)
  - a. Altogether 45 ancient sources enumerating 129 reported facts concerning the life, person, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus, plus the disciples' earliest message (Habermas).

#### **B. The Gospels as eyewitness testimony**

1. Gospels as Greco-roman *Bios* (Burridge)

2. Eyewitness accounts (Bauckham)
3. Unintended coincidences (MacGrew)

C. NT manuscript evidence compared to other ancient sources

1. Written within a generation
2. Well preserved

## II. WAS THE STORY OF JESUS BORROWED FROM PAGAN MYTHS?

A. Jesus among other gods: virgin birth, miracles, dead for 3 days, resurrection?

1. Mithra (Persia 1200 BC)
2. Krishna (India 900 BC)
3. Dionysios (Greece 500 BC)
4. Horus (Egypt 3000 BC)

B. Problems with alleged parallels

- a. Historical parallels inaccurate or lacking (History of Religion: *parallelomania*).
- b. Late sources, after NT time.

## III. HOW DO WE KNOW JESUS REALLY ROSE FROM THE DEAD?

A. Three established facts:

1. empty tomb

2. post-mortem appearances
3. origins of the disciples' belief in his resurrection
  - a. N.T. Wright – Needs explanation: *resurrection peripheral issue in 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Judaism → Central in early Church and NT documents.*

#### **IV. FAITH AND SCIENCE: HAS SCIENCE PROVED THERE IS NO GOD?**

- A. Evolution vs Creation? – Intelligent design.
- B. God of the gaps vs. Science of the gaps.
- C. Problem of the mind? – Materialism challenged.
- D. How do we know what we know? – Scientism challenged.
- E. What comes after death? – NDE's
- F. Shroud of Turin – What about if it is the burial cloth of Jesus?

#### **V. BIBLE ETHICS – IS GOD IMMORAL?**

- A. Ethics in the Bible: Why did God command genocide of Canaanites?
- B. Ethics in Christian history: What about Crusades, witch-hunts, slavery etc.?
- C. Ethics from the Bible: Bible is not applicable in modern times?

***Suggested Readings:***

Paul Copan. *Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Baker Books, 2011)

William Lane Craig. *On Guard – Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (David C Cook, 2010)

Gary R. Habermas. *The Historical Jesus – Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (College Press, 5<sup>th</sup> printing 2001)

Ronald H. Nash. *The Gospel and the Greeks – Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* (P&R Publishing, 1992, 2003)

Robert E. Van Voorst. *Jesus Outside the New Testament – An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence* (Eerdmans Publishing, 2000)

Daniel B. Wallace (ed). *Revisiting the Corruption of The New Testament – Manuscript, Patristic, and Apocryphal Evidence* (Kregel 2011).

***Articles:***

Justin Taylor, “The Best Defence of Old Testament Ethics” (TGC)

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/the-best-defense-of-old-testament-ethics/>