

What Is Apologetics?

by Kenneth D. Boa

Apologetics may be simply defined as the defense of the Christian faith. The word “*apologetics*” derives from the Greek word *apologia*, which was originally used as a speech of defense. The word *apologia* appears 17 times in noun or verb form in the NT, and can be translated “defense” or “vindication” in every case. The idea of offering a reasoned defense of the faith is evident in Php 1:7, 16; and especially 1 Pt 3:15, but no specific theory of apologetics is outlined in the NT.

Philippians 1:7 (NET) ⁷ For it is right for me to think this about all of you, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel all of you became partners together with me in the grace of God. ¹⁶ The latter do so from love because they know that I am placed here for the defense of the gospel.

1 Peter 3:15 (NET) ¹⁵ But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess.

Four Functions of Apologetics

1. The first function may be called ***vindication or proof***.
2. The second function is ***defense***.
3. The third function is ***refutation*** of opposing beliefs.
4. The fourth function is ***persuasion***.