

## YOUR ANSWER

**“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15 KJV)**

Occasionally a criminal will plead guilty and occasionally an army will surrender without a fight. Usually, however, there is a trial or a battle to determine who will be victorious. Since believers are in a constant battle with unbelievers, Peter wanted everyone to be ready to give an “answer” or “reason” for the hope we have in Christ. The Bible word for “answer” is “apologia” which refers to a rational defense. It is used repeatedly in Scripture to refer to Paul’s defense of his faith (See Acts 22:1; 25:16; Phil. 1:7, 16; 2 Tim. 4:16; etc.) We also need to be ready to present a rational defense for our faith. A course in “apologetics” is therefore designed to train students to present logical reasons why they believe.

This constant struggle rose to the surface in my mind while studying the rotation of the earth. It is a fact that the earth is slowing down and every 18 months a “leap second” is added to planetary time to keep our day consistent with atomic clocks. As you know, the first and second laws of thermodynamics exclude the possibility of perpetual motion. No machine is 100% efficient. Every satellite we orbit has an life expectancy. So also, the earth’s orbit about the sun cannot be eternal. I was curious to see how evolutionists come to grips with the slowing of our earth’s rotation. Perhaps “billions of years” doesn’t compute. True to form they always have an answer. It may be as absurd as “the dog ate the homework” but they will have an answer, and we need to have one too.

Since we cannot escape from this competition, it makes sense to be prepared. Just as an athlete can learn from watching athletic competition, believers can also learn from verbal confrontations. Isaiah made fun of idolaters who would cut down a tree and use half of it to cook their dinner, and the other half to make an idol to which they would bow down and worship (Is. 44:15 - 20). Early Christians used the same sarcasm to show how irrational it is to be an idolater. Idols, as you know, are frequently covered with bird manure and spider webs. If an idol cannot even blow the spider webs out of his nose, why should anyone believe it can protect anyone from the problems of life?

No matter how irrational it is, however, it seems that there will always be idolaters. No matter how irrational it is, it seems that there will always be atheists. Truly, the fool has said in his heart there is no God (Ps. 14:1). As a point of interest, the Hebrew word translated as “fool” is this verse is “nabal” which refers to someone who is shamelessly immoral. Touche! This helps us to understand wicked men like Stalin and Mao Tse Tung. They killed millions of people as a direct result of not believing in God. They obviously believed they could get away with being shamelessly immoral because in their hearts they said there was no God.

One “answer” you might give to explain your faith involves personal testimony. You are the world’s greatest authority on what has happened in your own life. The man born blind whom Jesus healed made it simple: “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (Jn. 9:25). Paul’s “defense” to an angry mob was merely to tell the story of his life (Acts 22:1 ff.) The transformation of someone’s life is powerful evidence. If God has made a change in your life you have a wonderful “answer” to anyone who would question the “reason” for your hope.

Our answer to unbelievers is to be “seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6). Someone said that an egg without salt is an insipid thing. Our testimony too can be boring and undesirable if it is not properly seasoned. That’s why we are commanded to sanctify God in our hearts and to always be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in us with meekness and fear.