

One Minute Apology 1

1. “The *Apology* to the Augsburg Confession” is a major section of the Lutheran Book of Concord. Yet instead of expressing contrition for their views of the Gospel to the Roman Catholics, the Lutheran Reformers *strengthened* their position on the Gospel. In other words, to give an *apology* is NOT to say, “*I am sorry,*” but, to the contrary, to literally give “*a reason for the hope that is in us*” (1 Peter 3:15 -- *apo-logia*). Indeed, in a courtroom it meant to give a legal defense of one’s position.

One Minute Apology 2

2. The case for Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is grounded on a body of at least 6 solid historical facts that can be known by anyone who will bother to look and explore them. (See Gary Habermas, “Minimal Facts on the Resurrection that Even Skeptics Accept.” <https://ses.edu/minimal-facts-on-the-resurrection-that-even-skeptics-accept/>). While many Christians are not concerned about this claim, others non-church-goers today assume the Bible is a book of fables. Yet the Bible actually never requires anyone to believe in Easter “just because the Bible says so.” Any-one who dares to look at the evidence with an open mind will be astonished. The fact is the list of facts that Habermas identifies has never been undermined or explained away.

One Minute Apology 3

An apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration!

The first *scientific* clue that the universe was created, was discovered by Edwin Hubble when he noticed through his telescope on Mount Wilson (north of Los Angeles) in 1931, that faint blotches of light were “red-shifted.” He realized that they were galaxies outside of our own Milky Way Galaxy which are flying away from each other. Because this proves the universe is expanding, it also proves (by extrapolating backwards in time) that it had a beginning out of nothing in a manner that Genesis 1:1 declares which says, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” Atheists have no possible way of explaining this beginning by *scientific* causes.

One Minute Apology 4

An apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration!

The strongest scientific evidence I mentioned in “Apology 3” last week which “proves” that the universe was created by God out of nothing (Genesis 1:1) is that all galaxies have been flying farther apart from each other ever since the “Big Bang” (just like “shot” exiting a shotgun barrel). For similar reasons, this expansion also began slowing down immediately, even as the universe has been cooling down ever since, just as astronomic instruments record. One might reasonably ask then, “*If the case for God is so strong, why do so many scientists dismiss God’s existence?*” I reply that their own books often dismiss these documentable facts altogether by instead speculating on theories that can never be proved.

One Minute Apology 5

An apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration!

The scientific evidence which proves the universe is expanding (see last week) does not undermine the Bible. To the contrary, the prophet Isaiah in 40:22 speaks of God as the one “*who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in.*” Indeed five different Old Testament writers echoed this same declaration for a total of eleven times. These passages include Job 9:8, Psalm 104:2, Isaiah 40:22, 42:5, 44:24, 45:12, 48:13, 51:13, Jeremiah 10:12, 51:15, and Zechariah 12:1. This does not mean these writers in their own time understood the discoveries of modern astronomy. Since the Bible is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16), who alone understands cosmology even better than today’s greatest scientists (duh!), we have grounds to see the above statements as portions of God’s revelation.

One Minute Apology 6

An apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration!

The New Testament (NT) never mentions the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. as an *accomplished* event. This astounding crisis, among other things, brought an absolute end to the Jewish system of sacrificing animals to atone for the sins of their people. Why then this omission of mention? This reality would have actually bolstered the Christian claim that the blood of Jesus, the “Lamb of God,” replaces the Jewish sacrificial system. So the NT is silent about that point because the Jewish “disaster” had **not yet happened**. This is a strong argument that virtually all the NT books were written before that date, that is, within 40 years of Jesus’ death and resurrection in 33 A.D. Since multitudes of eye-witnesses of Jesus’ passion circulated in that time, the popular charge that the Gospels are merely legend or myth, falls apart.

One Minute Apology 7

An apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration!

Not every Christian approves of apologetics. Their objection is that since the Bible is God’s Word, it is not appropriate to seek evidence to support our faith. Yet Surprisingly the Bible does **not** disapprove of evidence. To the contrary Psalm 19:1 says all of God’s creation gives evidence for His existence, while Romans 1:18-20 says it is sinful to suppress nature’s testimony. Also, in John 14:11 Jesus said, “*Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works [miracles] themselves.*” Even in John 20:26-29 He did not belittle evidence *per se*, but instead chided Thomas for not believing the **eye-witness** testimony of his brothers and sisters. My paper, “The Pervasive Employment of Apologetics,” highlights over 80 clear examples in the Bible where it highlights apologetic arguments in order to advance faith in God. You may request a copy through the office.

One Minute Apology 8

An apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration!

If Christianity is so clearly true as Pastor Gary suggests it is, then why don’t more scientists believe in God? I am certain most of you have asked yourself this because it is, in fact, a very reasonable question. For the next four weeks I will offer different reasons why “educated” people reject or dismiss belief in God. Stated briefly in advance, (1) scientists, like the rest of us (John 3:19) resist the authority of God in their lives, (2) many assume, without proof, that science and Christianity can’t possibly be

reconciled, (3) with respect to causation, many won't consider any explanation for the existence of the universe except mechanistic forces, and (4) the previous prejudice accounts for why many scientists haven't even investigated the evidence. But be assured that the evidence I lay out each week is rock solid. Stay tuned!

One Minute Apology 9

An apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration!

If Christianity is as true as Pastor Gary suggests it is, why don't more scientists believe in God? In reply, it is firstly vital to note that even the greatest Christians sin (Rom. 7:14), the ablest of athletes commit potentially game-losing mistakes, and medical staff who know better, smoke cigarettes. Similarly, scientists too are vulnerable to *intellectual* error. Mere training in the sciences is no guarantee that their conclusions are always *scientifically* sound since they, just like the rest of us, *may* substitute truth-seeking for lust or *personal* ambition. This is why the scientific community insists that scientists adhere rigorously to the scientific method. How exactly they fall short of this goal will be the subject of upcoming postings. But it is no slam on science to point out that no scientist is free from the temptation of secret gain called sin.

One Minute Apology 10

An apology is not an "I'm sorry," but an *official* declaration!

If Christianity is true as I argue it is, why don't more scientists believe in God? The second reason I briefly listed in Apology 8 notes, "*Many assume...that science and Christianity cannot possibly be reconciled.*" But that position is false. While they *may* conflict in some cases, that does not mean they must *always* be in conflict. Indeed the same truth can *often* be expressed in both scientific and non-scientific language. For example, Genesis 1:1 harmonizes perfectly with the Big Bang. And it isn't only Christians who have to be corrected in cases of conflict. While it is true that people in the Middle Ages, who believed the Sun revolved around the earth, were corrected by scientific calculations, the opposite happened in the 20th Century. For example, until the discovery of the Big Bang, scientists held that the cosmos always existed, while Genesis 1:1's declaration of creation, was right all along.

One Minute Apology 11

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but an *official* declaration!

If Christianity is true as I argue it is, why then don't more scientists believe in God? In Apology 8, I list as a third reason, namely that many (not all) scientists will not consider any cause for the beginning of creation except mechanistic forces. Is that a fair demand? No! The problem with that insistence is that, prior to the universe, there was absolutely nothing material at all. There was neither matter, nor energy, nor space, nor time, through which scientific processes could even conceivably work to bring the cosmos into being. Consequently the only rational answer to the question, where did the universe come from is, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1).

One Minute Apology 12

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but an *official* declaration!

Ken Ham (answersingenesis.org) charges that the Big Bang (**B.B.**) is atheistic and anti-biblical. Yet Genesis 1:1 to the contrary teaches five truths which harmonize with the B.B., while they challenge Ham's "young-earth" views. (1) The creation of the entire universe happened even before Day One. (2) It was all created out of nothing. (3) The sun, as part of "the heavens" in 1:1, existed prior to Days One and Four. (4) No duration of time is mentioned regarding the events in 1:1, and so it could entail

billions of *our* years. (5), Since our eternal God (Deuteronomy 33:27) stands outside of time so that it does not limit His power, even eons of time are nothing to Him (Psalm 90:4); but only to us. Except for item number 3, Mr. Ham never mentions these truths.

Request from the office my paper, "How Genesis 1:1, 2 Easily Accommodates the Big Bang."

One Minute Apology (OMA) 13
An Apology is not an "*I'm sorry*," but an *official* declaration!

Over recent weeks I have considered the question, "*If Christianity is true, as I claim it is, why don't more scientists believe in God?*" Surveys indeed show that while 95% of our population believes in God, only 51% of "scientists" do (<https://www.pewforum.org/2009/11/05/scientists-and-belief/>). In OMA # 8, my 4th point concerned the power of prejudice to shut down one's intellectual curiosity. Just like the rest of us, it is impossible for scientists to know about subjects they won't bother to even look at (creation). For that reason, their refusal to consider certain kinds of evidence results not only in judging without knowledge (called prejudice), that posture also exhibits a profoundly **anti**-scientific attitude.

Ask the office for copies of my two papers, "How Genesis 1:1, 2 Easily Accommodates the Big Bang," and "16 Clues in the Text of Genesis 1 Indicate that Creation is Ancient."

One Minute Apology 14
An Apology is not an "*I'm sorry*," but a *legal* declaration of truth!

How does the Bible regard science? Both skeptics and certain believers (for different reasons) suspect that it is opposed to scientific study because its outcome would likely undermine belief in God. I say to the contrary that the scientific case for God's existence is stronger than ever! But my point here is to clarify what God's Word really says about this matter. Psalm 19:1 says that both the sky above and the natural world around us declare God's creative work. To this day science cannot answer either how the universe came into existence out of nothing, or how the glorious variety of living creatures is so abundant. The Bible never warns us to distrust *proven* science. To the contrary Romans 1:18-20 warns us to **not suppress** the witness of nature, but instead notice that it reconciles with God's revealed Word.

One Minute (or so) Apology 15
An Apology is not an "*I'm sorry*," but a declaration of truth!

In Isaiah 36-37 and 2 Kings 18-19, the Bible narrates Assyrian King Sennacherib's (**KS**) destruction of the Judean city of Lachish, and also his *threat* to destroy Jerusalem. In his Annals, KS wrote, "*Forty-six of [Hezekiah's] strong-walled towns and...numerous smaller villages...I besieged and conquered.*" Indeed at his palace have been found¹ carved metallic murals of his victories, even as the ruins of Lachish remain to this day. However, the fate of Jerusalem was different. Just as KS's General, Rabshakeh promised King Hezekiah of Jerusalem in earshot of his city, that he would *destroy* their city, his threats suddenly vanished for the reason that "*The angel of the LORD...struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians*" (Is. 37:36). Sennacherib did not claim to destroy Jerusalem, but merely said, "*I shut Hezekiah up like a bird in a cage.*" Notice then what is missing in his recounting of the facts!

In my next installment I will clarify my point about this account. Please read both Bible passages.

¹ These images can be viewed by looking up on the internet the term "Sennacherib Lachish images."

One Minute Apology (OMA) 16

An Apology is not an “I’m sorry,” but a declaration of truth!

Both Isaiah (36-37) and 2nd Kings (18-19) narrate Assyrian King Sennacherib’s (Scb) assault on Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem. I closed my previous OMA (15) by hinting that while Scb. described his encounter with Hezekiah as having “*shut [him] up like a bird in a cage,*” he neglected the further detail that his own military was suddenly “*struck down,*” as in decimated (Isaiah 37:36). One should not be surprised by Scb’s omission. Ancient empires in that day **rarely recorded their own military losses** in their chronicles or inscribed them on their monuments,² while the Bible, in stark contrast, was an open record of *Israel’s* sins, weaknesses, and failures. Since for example the Old Testament freely unaided Israel’s “dirty laundry” to the entire world, we have strong reason to hold that the history the Bible narrates is trustworthy.

One Minute Apology 17

An Apology is not an “I’m sorry,” but a declaration of truth!

Messianic Prophecy is a type of prophecy that foretells the ultimate coming of the Christ, as in *Jesus* Christ. “Christ” is the Greek term for Hebrew word “Messiah,” both of which literally stand for “*the anointed one,*” that is, the king or emperor. Each of the 456 Old Testament prophecies that have been applied to the “Messiah” in ancient rabbinic writings, foretold a singular aspect of the coming of Jesus; but none would tell the whole story—far from it. The Apostle Peter wrote following Jesus’ earthly life, “*The prophets...searched and inquired...what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.*” (1 Peter 1:10-11). So these prophecies were each like a single piece of a puzzle which made little sense until they were shown to fit into the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and Him alone. If this leaves you puzzled, there’s more to come!

² John Bright. The History of Israel. (Westminster, 1959), pp. 119-20.

One Minute Apology 18

An Apology is not an “I’m sorry,” but a declaration of truth!

The media today routinely ridicules everyone who denies that the recent Presidential election was honest. Yet the grounds for their scorn **cannot hold a candle** to our case that Jesus is the Son of God. Rather, instead of offering evidence, the media not only **censors** every fact that, in any way, challenges their cherished views, they also resist their own investigation, and refuse to answer honest questions. The Bible, by contrast says both, “*Put God to the test*” (Malachi 3:10), “*Always be prepared to give an answer (apologia in Greek) for the hope that is in you*” (1 Peter 3:15). Indeed, Christians eagerly invite others to challenge what we believe since the grounds of our faith will not fail, but instead shine, under scrutiny. For this evidence, consider Lee Strobel’s book, “The Case for Faith.”

One Minute Apology 19

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

Messianic Prophecy is a type of prophecy that foretells the ultimate coming of the Christ, as in *Jesus Christ*. “Christ” is the Greek term for Hebrew word “Messiah,” both of which literally stand for “*the anointed one,*” that is, the king or emperor. Each of the 456 Old Testament prophecies that have been applied to the “Messiah” in ancient rabbinic writings, foretold a singular aspect of the coming of Jesus; but none would tell the whole story—far from it. The Apostle Peter wrote following Jesus’ earthly life, “*The prophets...searched and inquired...what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.*” (1 Peter 1:10-11). So these prophecies were each like a single piece of a puzzle which made little sense until they were shown to fit into the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and Him alone. If this leaves you puzzled, there’s more to come!

One Minute Apology 20

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

Among the most common criticism of the Christmas story as recorded in Luke 1:1-20 concerns its mention of a Roman Census, because, as they say, no Emperor would have wished such upheaval in their own empire by requiring its citizens to return to the place of their birth in order to register there! Indeed, imagine for yourselves the level of chaos that such a command would have produced! Yet even though the ancient historian Josephus wasn’t referring specifically to Luke, he wrote of a similar census in 8 B.C. (*Antiquities*, Bk. 18, Ch. 1). This event is also mentioned in Acts 5:37. Although the correlation of this census with the birth of Jesus is uncertain, it does prove that such events as Luke described were in fact conducted every 14 years or so. Indeed, Luke, who was an educated medical doctor, is renowned for his historical accuracy. We will be hearing more about his care in up-coming columns.

One Minute Apology 21

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

Yesterday afternoon as Ann and I were out walking, the sky was beautiful, clear, and ablaze; not just with the Sun setting behind us, but also with a full-moon ahead, utterly aglow. It was spectacular! Science gives solid clues not only that it was created by God, but also that in the multitudes of ways that He *fashioned* it so that we can thrive within His creation. The moon is a vivid example. If we didn’t have a moon just the size it is and also the distance from us that it is, we could not live here. Both of those factors are exactly what they are so that, to give some examples, it causes the tides in the oceans which in turn moderate both our oceanic and atmospheric temperatures, even as it freshens the air. The winds they cause contribute to frequent weather changes, which plants and animals need to flourish. And finally, the revolving moon stabilizes our rotating planet so that it doesn’t wobble too much! These truths are mentioned in astrophysicist Dr. Hugh Ross’ book, *Why the World is the Way it Is*.

One Minute Apology 22

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

The biblical character named Luke wrote over a fourth of the New Testament that includes *The Gospel According to Luke* and also its sequel, *The Book of Acts*. It is also vital to know that Luke was a physician (Colossians 4:14), and for that reason was habitually careful to get his facts right not only medicine, but the life and times of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). How careful was he? Skeptical professor Sir

William Ramsey of the University of Tübingen in Germany doubted that he was accurate at all. To prove it he travelled to Asia Minor (now modern Turkey) with the *Book of Acts* in hand to check out every site that Luke recorded in *Acts*. What he discovered *overturned his skepticism*. He concluded that, not only every location, also but every single personal title (tribunal, magistrate, clerk, proconsul, etc.) was correctly assigned to the right persons. This is especially significant because the governmental systems **varied from city to city** across the Roman Empire. After Ramsey's 20-year investigation covering thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands, he concluded that "*Luke made no mistakes*" (Norman Geisler. Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. (Baker, 1999), p. 431).

One Minute Apology 23

An Apology is not an "*I'm sorry,*" but a declaration of truth!

For the sake of improved clarity this is a thorough rewrite of what appears in our bulletins

I was criticized recently by another Christian in the *Daily American* for my interpretation of Genesis regarding the age of creation. My view that it is around 13-billion years old, hinges on whether Gen. 1:1 is a heading, or rather the first stage in creation. Hebrew grammar is clear that 1:1 isn't a heading for the reason that the next verse (1:2) begins with the conjunction, "*and.*" This means 1:2 can't be the first verse of the narrative because no story or chronicle ever starts with the word "*And.*" So when 1:1 says, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,*" it means the entire cosmos was created prior to the first creation Day (1:3-5). Since time is fundamental to our experience as earthlings, what God created in an instant because He stands outside of time (2 Peter 3:9), can without contradiction be measured by us to be around 13 billion years. 1:1-2 can easily accommodate that timeframe.

One Minute Apology 24

An Apology is not an "*I'm sorry,*" but a declaration of truth!

The story is told of a budding scientist looking into a microscope while at the same time drawing a picture of what he was seeing. When he finished, he eagerly called his supervisor to identify the "strange creature" he had sketched. But the director instead replied, "*It seems that you have just drawn a picture of your own eyelash,*" for the student had mistakenly confused a few of his own hairs for what he was hoping to discover with the lens. On a more serious note, in John 9:39 Jesus said, "*For judgment I came into the world that those who do not see may see...*" This was His way of warning that we too often miss out on truth unless Jesus is allowed to open up our minds and hearts the much larger reality of life He reveals. On the other hand, if we *resist* those truths, we will shut ourselves off from His truth.

One Minute Apology 25

An Apology is not an "*I'm sorry,*" but a declaration of truth!

What's wrong with revelation? In academics that includes especially the natural sciences, the notion that the Bible is the Word of God, is mockingly rejected out of hand. "*Who needs the Bible?*" they say, "*We will stick to facts that we can see and measure!*" Yet such objections are wrong-headed. Do these people treat spouses or friends that way by sitting in silence while they examine the person in front of them? Of course not! We can only actually know and understand another person by not only speaking, but also listening to each other. To shut out the Bible represents the same postures that are represented above. If one will not read the Bible, it is their fault that they cannot possibly know God. Stay tuned as we consider another common, though faulty, objection to reading the Bible next week.

One Minute Apology 26

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

Just recently a letter by a Christian to the Editor of *The Daily American* newspaper said readers should stop listening to science and instead "simply believe." Well, what does the Bible actually say about that question? It in fact never once demands denying evidence outside of the Bible, whether it be from science or history. With my website (www.christianityontheoffense.com) now up and running, you can now access my article, "The Pervasive Employment of Apologetics in the Bible," which includes 60 examples (tactics, incidents, and statements) from both Testaments, including from the life and teaching of Jesus. At my website, click the "4 lines" icon on the top left of the screen and then click the word, "articles."

Less-than Two Minute Apology 28

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

There are 12 historical facts surrounding Jesus' resurrection which, as Dr. Gary Habermas states, "*even the harshest critics agree are historically sound.*" These facts include (1) Jesus died by crucifixion, (2) He was buried, (3) His disciples despaired over His death, (4) the tomb was found empty a few days later, (5) the disciples were convinced they literally met the risen Jesus, (6) they were transformed from cowards to becoming His bold witnesses, (7) His resurrection became their main message, (8) it was preached right at the scene of the "crime" (Jerusalem), (9) this preaching this caused the Church to grow, (10) the primary worship day changed from Saturday to Sunday, (11) and Jesus' skeptical brother James, and (12) arch-enemy of Christianity, Paul of Tarsus, were both converted to faith in Jesus Christ. Skeptics today must come to terms with all of these facts if they are to explain away Jesus' resurrection. Stay tuned these coming weeks to see why only the Biblical message of Easter fits all of these facts.

One Minute Apology 29

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

For the time leading up into Easter, I will be asking you each successive week to refer to my 28th Apology where I list twelve rock-solid historical facts that surround his resurrection. Each time, I will address a different theory which attempts to undermine the Christian claim that Jesus rose from the dead. Today I am considering the theory that **the disciples went to the wrong tomb** which, if true, would explain why Jesus was not found there. The problem however is that this theory violates points 5,6,7,8,9,10,11, and 12 (see Apology 28, above). To give just two (out of the eight examples, that is facts # 5 and 6), serious historians hold both that the disciples sincerely believed that they met the risen Jesus and also that they were transformed into bold witnesses of Jesus who willingly died for their beliefs in Him.

One Minute Apology 30

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

Please notice first the instructions that I posted in my previous *Apology* (no. 29). Similar to the last attempt to undermine the case for Jesus' resurrection, this time I consider the objection that the location of Jesus' burial place was allegedly altogether unknown. Yet in reality this charge ignores nine historically-firm facts (points 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, and 12). Since they are almost identical to last week's, I ask you to firstly review the grounds found in Apology 29. Now then for today, consider the fact that first, they began claiming Jesus' resurrection only a few days after His death, and second, that their

“podium” was right in the middle of Jerusalem. This means both that the relevant evidence was as fresh as possible, and also that the “scene of the crime” was right in the middle of their “home” so that everyone who wished to investigate the evidence could do so easily without need of travel elsewhere. Yet no evidence exists which undermines the Christian claim that Jesus rose from the dead.

One Minute Apology (OMA) 31

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

Perhaps the most common reason why people are dismissive of the Christian claim that Jesus rose from the dead is the charge that our message is pure **legend**. That charge can easily be refuted as incorrect. I ask you to recall the 12 historical facts cited in OMA 28 which even serious non-Christian historians concede are solidly grounded. In light of that reality it is vital to know that the “legend” theory is **contradicted by all twelve of the above “facts.”** I emphasize just facts # 4 and 8 which state firstly that the tomb was shown to be empty just two days after Jesus’ death, and secondly that the disciples broadcast that news, not in far-off Russia, but instead right in Jerusalem where anyone could investigate the details to discern whether they were true or false. Scholars point out that legend requires many decades to form when witnesses had all died. The Christian claim, by contrast arose when multitudes of people, whether opposed to Jesus or instead believers in Him lived at “ground zero,” which ensures that the account of Jesus could not have been successfully invented.

One Minute Apology (OMA) 32

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

One lesser-known attempt to explain away Jesus’ resurrection is called the “twin brother” theory. Its inventor, Dr. Robert Greg Cavin holds that Jesus had an unknown twin brother who snuck into Jesus’ tomb, both stole and hid His body, and pretended to be the risen Jesus by walking out of the tomb alive. Yet Dr. Craig Hazen points out that this theory contradicts historical facts 4 and 11 listed in OMA 28. It is firstly a solid fact that the tomb was discovered only two days after Jesus’ death, and secondly that Jesus’ brother James **only** came to believe He was God’s Son **because He came back to life**. If it had been true that Jesus was a twin, James would know that fact best. Indeed he came to be martyred on account of his knowledge that his brother rose from the dead!

One Minute Apology (OMA) 33

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

The list of “Twelve Historical Facts,” can be accessed at www.christianityontheoffense.com

Some skeptics who deny Jesus’ resurrection argue that instead of the disciples actually “seeing” Jesus, they were merely hallucinating (**HL**) about him. These doubters say the disciples so *wanted* their Jesus back that they *imagined* he was back. Yet this view at the very least ignores historical facts # 5, 11, and 12. Firstly, non-Christian Jewish scholar Dr. Pinchas Lapide, rejects the HL theory for the reason that the disciples risked their own safety for the remainder of their lives. Other historians follow Lapide’s views too). Secondly, both James (Jesus’ formerly skeptical brother) and St. Paul (the former enemy of Christianity) were so convinced that Jesus was alive, they too became followers of Him.

One Minute Apology (OMA) 34

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

The list of “Twelve Historical Facts” can be accessed at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com

Some critics of Jesus’ resurrection admit that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was found empty on “*the third day.*” But the reason it was empty, they say, was because the disciples *stole* His body. Yet that explanation contracts historical facts 5,6, 11 and 12. Remember, for example, that even critics concede the disciples honestly believed they saw Jesus alive again. Indeed, they were transformed from being cowards into bold proclaimers who were willing to die for their beliefs. Yet who, it must be asked, would willingly be killed for proclaiming what they know is a lie?

One Minute Apology (OMA) 35

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

The list of “Twelve Historical Facts” can be accessed at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com

Please allow me to depart briefly from the theme of Christ’s resurrection to address a different concern that you may have. Perhaps you never hear other pastors speak about apologetics. Maybe instead you are told such lines as, “*God doesn’t need us to defend Him,*” or “*The Bible, as God’s Word, doesn’t need science to defend it.*” Yet consider the following three points. Firstly, Psalm 19:1 appeals to nature (science) as a witness of God’s existence, even as Jesus in Matthew 11:4-5 uses our abilities to gather public facts to draw conclusions about Him. Secondly, the Bible uses this strategy many times (see my paper, “The Pervasive Employment of Apologetics,” at my website, above). And thirdly, not only Christians are obligated to justify what we believe, but scientists too (indeed everyone).

One Minute Apology (OMA) 36

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

The list of “Twelve Historical Facts” can be accessed at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com

It is vital to revisit the charge by contemporary critics that Jesus’ tomb was empty because either his disciples or the guards stole his body. In reply it must first be asked, what would the disciples gain for attempting such a deception? They would have died for their claim of his resurrection knowing it was a hoax that they made up. On the other hand, what would the *officials* gain by stealing the body? Since, after all, they wanted the “Jesus movement” finished, they hoped to *publicly* produce his corpse to prove that he was still dead. But in reality, the disciples courageously proclaimed Jesus’ resurrection all the way to their deaths, while neither the Roman nor the Jewish officials ever found their “trophy.”

One Minute Apology (OMA) 37, Sunday, April 25, 2021

An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry,*” but a declaration of truth!

The list of “Twelve Historical Facts” can be accessed at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com

Many critics of Jesus’ resurrection admit that the tomb in which He was buried was found empty on “*the third day.*” But the reason it was empty, they say, was because the disciples *stole* His body. Yet that explanation contracts historical facts 5,6, 11 and 12 (above). Remember, for example, that even critics concede that the disciples were certain they were seeing Jesus alive again. Indeed, as a result, they were transformed from being cowards into bold proclaimers who willingly died for their beliefs. So it must be asked, who would willingly allow themselves to be martyred, (killed) for proclaiming what they knew to be a lie (if indeed that was the case)? Since the obvious answer is, no sane person, we too can be certain that Jesus in truth was raised from the dead.

One Minute Apology (OMA) 38, Sunday, May 2, 2021

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

The list of "Twelve Historical Facts" can be accessed at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com

Since Palm Sunday in late March, almost every Sunday we have considered the most significant ways critics have tried to explain away the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Yet week by week these alternative theories have all been demonstrated to fail for the reason that they all contradict rock solid facts that even non-Christian historians who have investigated the facts, acknowledge to be true (see "Twelve...Facts," above). The only theory which fits all the facts without fail is the Bible's claim that God, the Father miraculously raised His Son from death following His crucifixion. The best that skeptics can do is ignore this reality since they have not explained it away. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

One Minute Apology (OMA) 39, Sunday, May 9, 2021

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

Naysaying is the easy way out. By "naysaying" I mean the posture of just saying "no" to everything without ever bothering to face the evidence. The very first sin the Apostle Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans is "*suppress[ing] the truth,*" (1:18). Surely you have at some time heard a person say to you, "*I simply don't believe in your Jesus!*" and just leave it at that. End of conversation. Yet there is nothing rational about that kind of rejection. Scientific thinking for example always seeks to have all the facts before reaching a conclusion, a principle which also applies to every other realm of life. Even though it is right to "*just say no*" to certain things (drugs, etc.) other areas demand that we be "*in the know,*" including the facts about Jesus' resurrection (1 Peter 3:15).

One Minute Apology (OMA) 39, Sunday, May 16, 2021

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

Christianityontheoffense.com/articles

Sometimes a case needs to be made, not for the truth of Christianity, but instead for the validity of making a case for Christianity in the first place. The term, "fideism," refers to the belief that it is not proper to defend Christianity, but to believe it without evidence, which is a view I do not accept. This past week I received a strong approval of my position from NALC theologian and lecturer Dr. Bob Benne when I presented to him a paper copy listing almost 150 articles I have written that are posted on my website (above). Just a few days later, this is what he emailed me: "*Gary, you have written an incredible amount of learned, well-argued materials in religion and science. I have read around in them and am very impressed...It was very good to meet you and to see your scholarly output.*"

One Minute Apology (OMA) 40, Sunday, May 23, 2021

An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!

Christianityontheoffense.com/articles

I just heard conservative Jewish talk show host Dennis Prager say on the radio today (5/19, 11:25 am) that in the 1950s religion was a highly revered concept, while the opposite is the case in our day, especially "Judeo-Christian belief," which holds that God is the Creator of all existence. Secularism, by contrast, seeks to explain everything without reference to God. Yet the fatal problem with that view is that, apart from God, there is no rational explanation of the existence of existence. Indeed science (which acknowledges the universe had an absolute beginning) cannot possibly account for existence

either. The reason is that, if there is no god who preexisted the universe, there was nothing else at all to bring creation into being. Genesis 1:1 is the only answer to the question of how everything came to be.

One Minute Apology (OMA) 41, Sunday, May 31, 2021
An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry*,” but a declaration of truth!
www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles

I made the bold claim last week that science cannot account for the existence of creation, but only for how things came to be after it began. Someone may protest that as a Pastor (not a scientist), I have no right to challenge scientists on their own subject. Yet suppose I decided to preach on a theme that is ANTI biblical. Would you have the right to object? The answer is yes! Pastors are obligated to be faithful to the Bible, though there are times when that confidence is violated. It’s the same for scientists that they are expected to be faithful to the *scientific* evidence. Yet the scientists who ignore the Bible’s claim that the universe had a beginning (Genesis 1:1) prefer to deny the supporting evidence which is available for all to see, by instead speculating about theories that can never be tested scientifically. See my flyer, “God’s Prints are Everywhere,” at my website, above.

One Minute Apology (OMA) 42, Sunday, June 6, 2021
An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry*,” but a declaration of truth!
www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles

One of the most significant religious conversions in the academic community in the last hundred years occurred in May of 2004. It was then that the most accomplished and respected atheist of the 20th Century, Dr. Antony Flew, renounced his unbelief in God and acknowledged the existence of a creator of the entire universe. Although atheist societies as a *whole* did not join him, Flew was determined to leave the crowd behind and, in the words of Plato, “*follow the evidence where it leads*.” Two of the biggest reasons he came to believe in God include 1) the evidence from DNA that life is way too complex to exist solely because of blind, unguided processes, and 2) the demonstrated beginning of the universe out of nothing at the Big Bang. See my posting, “Why Atheist Antony Flew Came to Believe in God,” at my website (above).

One Minute Apology (OMA) 43, Sunday, June 19, 2021
An Apology is not an “*I’m sorry*,” but a declaration of truth!
www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles

In my last OMA I cited Antony Flew as a former atheist who turned around and came to believe in God in part because of the Big-Bang beginning of the universe out of nothing (consistent with Gen. 1:1). In addition former atheist Albert Einstein did the same thing after he first resisted the truth. For example, his “General Theory of Relativity” indicated that the universe is expanding, and since that is so, it must have had a beginning, and since it had a beginning, God would necessarily be its causal agent. Because he rejected the notion of God, he created another theory he hoped would explain away that troubling that expansion. So he decided to invent another theory in an attempt to thwart an expanding universe. But the problem was this alternate theory did not fit with the facts. Finally Einstein admitted that ploy was the greatest blunder of his life so that he came to acknowledge God’s existence after all. You can read this for yourself at Stephen Ball, Ph.D. “A Christian Physicist Examines the Big Bang Theory,” p. 7f, at <https://www.letu.edu/academics/arts-and-sciences/files/big-bang.pdf>

One Minute Apology (OMA) 44, Sunday, June 27, 2021
An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!
www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles

What Belief in Absolute Truth Is, and What it is NOT

Belief in absolute truth (**A.T.**) in our culture is waning away. Three fourths of Americans deny the reality of A.T. including certain Christians (<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/church/absolute-truth/>). I believe that skepticism about A.T. has a lot to do with misunderstanding that term. Let me begin by stating what belief in A.T. does **NOT** mean. Belief in A.T. does **not** claim that we either know all there is to know or that we have a capacity to understand everything. **Neither** does belief in A.T. claim that we are correct about everything we *think* we know. Instead belief in absolute truth holds that truth is not "*in the eyes of the beholder*," but instead exists as an unchangeable reality which is independent of our personal wishes. Belief in A.T. finally trusts that mathematics, rationality (logic), moral principles, and the existence of God, are unalterable. Although no one can fully comprehend these truths, Jesus says we can grow in our knowledge of truth by seeking it in trust that it is there to be found (Matt. 7:7).

One Minute Apology (OMA) 45, Sunday, July 4, 2021
An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!
www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles

"Why Disbelief in Absolute Truth (understood correctly) is Destructive"

"You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes." (Deut. 12:8)

There is no question that living according to the Word of God is a *biblical* imperative. Yet what is less clear to many people why it is also a *rational* necessity that people as a whole (our society) also adhere to a common set of morals which have their source, not in our gut, or even our heart, but rather from the highest authority, who is God. Of course not everyone believes this. Secularists hold that we can form our values completely apart from God. Up until now our society seemed to function without appealing to God's Word as a *public* authority, but now secularism is urging that the Bible be banned altogether from guarding our society from a moral landslide. So where are we left? With values shifting daily as well as declining at a rapid pace. The Constitution that has been a blessing to us all cannot handle this rejection of God. Vice President John Adams correctly stated once, "*Our Constitution is made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the governance of another.*"

One Minute Apology (OMA) 46, Sunday, July 11, 2021
An Apology is not an "I'm sorry," but a declaration of truth!
www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles

Romans 1:18-21

Will God hold people accountable for what they do not know? The answer to this question is complicated. Please understand that it is very different from another question, which is "Will God hold people accountable for what they *cannot* know?" The latter question concerns matters that we simply cannot know even if we want to. The former question concerns being ignorant about things that we could know if we wish to, but nevertheless decide to ignore. The Bible passage (above) from Romans gives an important example of this by citing the very first specific sin St. Paul references by stating, "*the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who, by*

their wickedness suppress the truth" (v. 18). This means that seeking to ignore truths that we don't want to face is one way that God highlights our disobedience to Him. To "*suppress the truth*" that God reveals is indeed to shut out one way that God uses to bring us to faith in Him.

One Minute Apology (OMA) 47, Sunday, July 18, 2021

An Apology is not an "*I'm sorry,*" but a declaration of truth!

For entire list see www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles

I pointed out in my last OMA that Romans 1:18-20 insists that the testimony of nature points to the existence of a creator. Is that declaration really true? Emphatically yes! I just completed reading a 450-page book titled, "Return of the God Hypothesis," by Dr. Stephen Meyer. He has both debated leading atheists and fielded their criticisms of his printed positions. Indeed his book quotes extended criticisms of his views that assert to the contrary that creation created itself out of nothing after all. Yet without exception these criticisms all fail to offer "evidence" of a kind that can be tested by scientific means. Genesis 1:1, which is entirely consistent with the scientific evidence, vindicates Rom. 1:18-21.