

*What We Believe... Why We Believe It*

By  
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## **Practical Apologetics—Part II**

In last week's installment I began telling you about the resources you would have to have if you want to learn about apologetics. We finished up by talking about the various versions of the Bible. To begin this installment, let's talk a little about the Bible in general.

To begin, there are a few realities you need to understand about the Bible. First, the Bible came from the Church, not the Church from the Bible. Protestants and some others will want to argue that point with you, and we'll cover how to handle that objection in a couple of weeks.

Second, the Bible is not the sole rule of faith. This is another point Protestants will want to argue with you, and we'll be covering it too. For now, though, you need to understand that the Bible is just one leg on the stool of Divine Revelation; there are two others beside the Bible.

Third, the Bible is not necessary. Yes, I really said that. Jesus commanded His disciples to go out and preach, not to go out and write a book. Because Jesus gave the Church His own authority to teach, if we never had a Bible it wouldn't be missed because the Church alone proclaims Christ's truths and has done so for 2000 years in perfect continuity.

People can give a lot of reasons why God gave us the Bible, but all those reasons really boil down to just two. I don't care who you are, everyone—from the pope down to you and me—has to be re-evangelized every day, and reading the Bible daily aids in that. The other reason is, since we're displaced 2000 years from our spiritual ancestors, the Bible affords us a tool to fulfill Christ's command that we "go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15).

Simply having Bibles as resources is not where it ends. You must get in the habit of daily Bible reading. You can't explain what you don't know. I've read the entire Bible through from cover to cover six times, and I'm really a pretty seasoned apologist who has read the Bible daily for years, so the advice I'm about to give you comes from experience.

Begin with the Gospels and Acts, because these are the historical books of the New Testament. It's better to read the New Testament twenty times than to read the Old Testament

twice, but don't neglect the latter either. Read it enough so you're at least familiar with what's there.

Immerse yourself in the Gospels above all else. Once you've read them through, go back and read Matthew, Luke, and John through twice more, followed by one more reading of Acts.

*"But, Joe, you're talking about a lot of reading."*

A lot of reading? Is it a lot of reading when you curl up on the sofa or in your bed with your latest novel? In the time you take to read a novel in one sitting you could read all four Gospels through one time—they really aren't that long. I'm only advocating that you read your Bible a mere fifteen minutes a day. Anyone can do that.

After you've gone through the Gospels once and Matthew, Luke and John a second time, then move on to the Pauline epistles. Read all Paul's letters, then go back and re-read those which (in my opinion) have the greatest apologetical value: Romans, I Corinthians, Ephesians and Hebrews. Then finish up by reading the general epistles, and Revelation.

Let me give you a word of caution about Revelation, also called the Apocalypse. Please pay attention, as this is very important.

*DO NOT GET CAUGHT UP IN THE PROTESTANT TRAP OF BECOMING OBSESSED WITH REVELATION.* Protestants (many of them anyway) get all caught up in Revelation and the end times. They get so obsessed, in fact, that they think and talk about the end times to the point of neglecting growth and development in their own Christian life. And this is exactly what the Church feared from the beginning.

It was the Church that gave us the canon of scripture at the Council of Hippo (A.D. 393) and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397). When the bishops of the Church were deciding what books were inspired and should be included in the canon, the book of Revelation was almost not included. It wasn't because they doubted its inspiration, but rather because they feared exactly what many modern Protestants have done; to become obsessed with the end times. The Catholic Church very clearly teaches us to be concerned more with our own end times (which could happen before you take your next breath) than to be concerned with the end of time. So again, do not get caught up in the Protestant trap with becoming obsessed with the book of Revelation.

I'll finish our series on apologetical resources in the next week's installment. I'm doing this so you can know What We Believe... Why We Believe It.

Got any questions? Visit [JoeSixpackAnswers.com](http://JoeSixpackAnswers.com) to get your answers. It just so happens that at this writing I am hosting a webinar series on apologetics. If you're interested in joining us for our webinars, please fill out the form with your name and email on the right hand side of the page on [JoeSixpackAnswers.com](http://JoeSixpackAnswers.com). You'll begin to receive weekly invitations to register for the webinars.