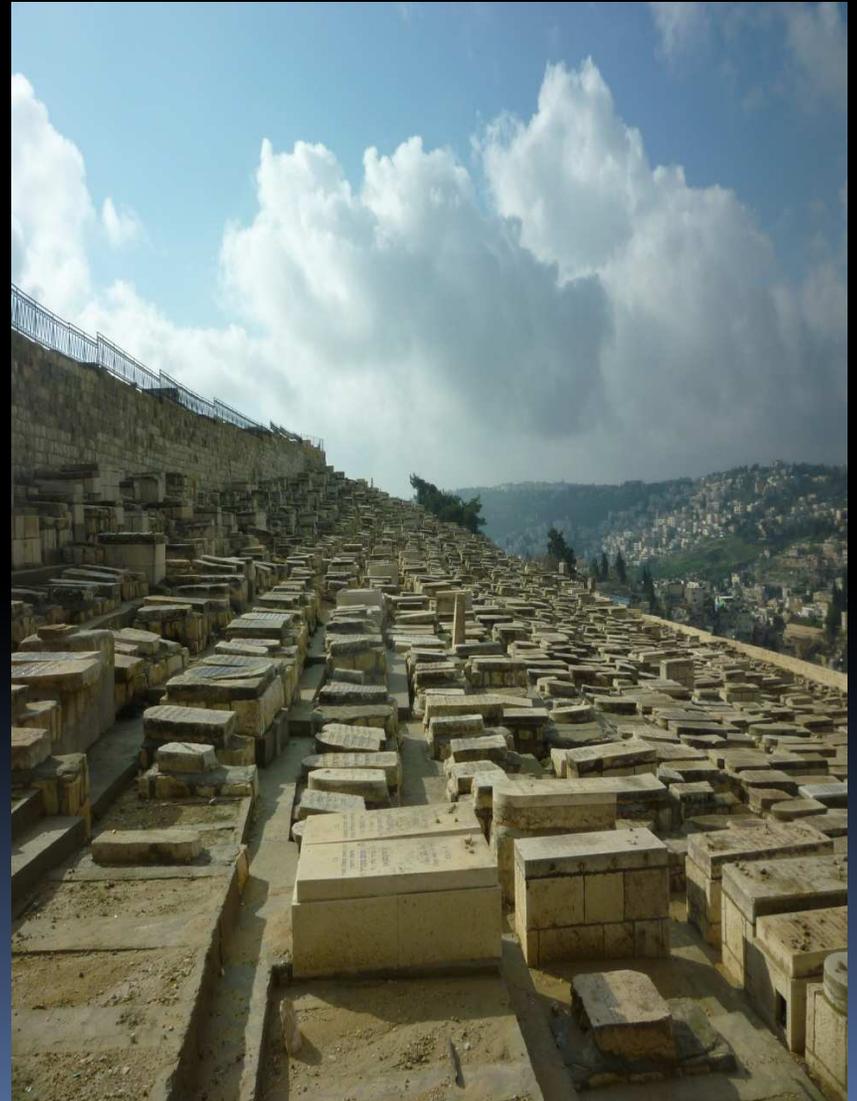


Biblical Case for Defending the Christian Faith:

Why should we offer arguments, evidences, draw upon the existential struggles of one's soul, and make appeals to religious experiences if people are "dead in sin" and "faith alone" is the condition for salvation?



1 Peter 3:15-16a:

We are commanded to defend the Christian faith: 1 Peter 3:15-16a But in your hearts set apart [*hagiazō*; consecrate, dedicate, make holy] **Christ as Lord**. Always [constantly, unceasingly, regularly] **be prepared to give an answer** [give a defense] **to everyone** [all] **who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have**. **But do this with gentleness** [humility, meekness] **and respect** [clear conscience, i.e., free from defilement. Fear of God rules out human intimidation].

“**Be prepared**” means to be ready/prepared to bear witness to the gospel (see also Eph. 6:15). This word is also used for being “prepared” for good works (Titus 3:1 cf. 2 Tim. 2:21) and “being ready” for the return of Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:44).

“**Answer**” or “**defense**” (*apologia*) has two overlapping nuances in biblical Greek. (1) defend oneself, make formal justification (Ac 25:16; 2Co 7:11; Phil. 1:7, 16; 2Ti 4:16; 1Pe 3:15) and (2) defense, the content of the answer or reply (Ac 22:1; 1Co 9:3). Here it is used to mean “speech in defense.”

“**Reason**” [*logos*] is used here to mean reason, statement, or speech (adj.) cause for something (see also Mt 5:32; Ac 10:29; 1Pe 3:15). To understand this nuance of *logos* is used, notice Acts 10:29: “I ask, therefore, for what reason did you send for me?”
Acts 10.29

2 Corinthians 10:5:

B. We are commanded to refute false ideas about God: 2 Cor. 10:5. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

“Demolish” [καθαίρω, *kathaireō*]: means here to mean eliminate, cause to cease (cf. Acts 19:27).

“Arguments” [Gk. λογισμοὺς] means fallacious and deceptive reasoning and, by implication, based on evil intentions, false reasoning and false arguments.

“Every Pretension” [ὑψωμα, *hypsōma*] means arrogance, pride, conceit or any other act or attitude that sets itself up as an “obstacle to the emancipating knowledge of God contained in the gospel of Christ crucified and therefore keeps men in oppressive bondage to sin.” It is closely related to the expression *pan noema* “ever thought.”

Murray Harris of *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, pg. 380, comments on vs. 5, “...the picture seems to be that of a military operation in enemy territory that seeks to thwart every single hostile plan of battle, so that there will be universal allegiance to Christ.

1 John 4:1

C. We are commanded to discern true from false prophets: 1 John 4:1. Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but tests the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

δοκιμάζω (*dokimazō*): (present tense imperative...keep on testing) word means to test, to examine.

In context (1 John 4:1-3) the idea of “testing the spirits” is related to the O.T. example of whether one is idolatrous, a false prophet (Deut. 13:1-3).. John contends in verses 2-3 that the spirits are to be tested on the basis of their christological confession: the person motivated by the Spirit of God will confess “Jesus as the Christ come in the flesh”; while the person motivated by the spirit of deceit will not confess “Jesus” and is therefore not from God (See also 1 Cor. 12:3).

Therefore, knowing that there are many false idolatrous prophets, we are to called to keep on examining whether one is of God or not.

Matthew & Acts:

- D. Jesus corrected error: Matt. 22:29.** Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”
- E. Jesus refuted false teachings. Matt. 15:6-9.** Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”
- F. Paul reasoned with people: Acts 17:16-17.** While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned [διαλέγομαι *dialegomai*; discuss with reasonable discourse] in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace by day with those who happened to be there.”

Titus 1:9, 13:

G. Paul refuted those who opposed the truth: Titus 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message it has been taught, so that he can [or be able; “*dynatos*” which can mean “possibly” or even “competently” be able to] encourage others by sound doctrine and refute [i.e., “*elegchō*” expose, refute, show one’s fault] those who oppose it.

We must be able to distinguish between truth and counterfeits.

H. Paul commanded that false teachers be rebuked: Titus 1:13 This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound [Gr. *ηγιαννω*; accurate] in the faith...

“Rebuke” (*elegchō*) means to expose; refute, show one’s fault, implying that there is need of convincing of that fault.

“Sharply” (*apotomōs*) means harshly, severely, rigorously.

Philippians 1:7:

I. Paul defended the Gospel: Phil. 1:7. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or **defending and confirming the gospel**, all of you share in God's grace with me.

“**Defending**” [ἀπολογία, *apologia*], means to defend oneself, to make formal justification (see also Acts 25:16; 2Co 7:11; 2Ti 4:16; 1Pe 3:15). In 4th century B.C. this term was used to give an account of the receipts.

“**Confirming**” [βεβαίωσις, *bebaiōsis*] means verification, confirmation. To cause something to be known as certain, to confirm, verify, to prove to be true and certain; certification, verification.

Jude 3:

J. Jude urges that we contend for the faith (vs. 3): Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith** that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

“**Contend**” ἐπαγωνίζομαι (*epagōnizomai*): struggle for, contend, fight; it means to exert *intense effort* for the doctrine entrusted to the saints of God.

The context is that there were heretics (antinomians who were abusing God’s grace) infiltrating the church. Jude appeals to believers to stand their ground, fight for the faith they had learned. The word “faith” as used here refers to things believed, the body of truths as taught by Christ and the apostles (cf. Gal. 1:23; 1 Tim. 4:1).

1 Corinthians 2:

Paul speaks about avoiding the worldly "wisdom" [philosophy that attempts to make sense of reality] and, in simplicity, by preaching Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). The wisdom the Greek philosophers offered were not adequate means for salvation. Rather, Paul depends upon the Holy Spirit to convict men of the truth (1 Corinthians 2).

Clarification:

Therefore, wisdom or philosophical explanations will not cause a person to become a believer. Even clever debating will not cause “one” to believe; we can’t raise a “dead” or spiritually separated person with the most forceful arguments. Rather, we realize that people are saved when they receive the free gift of eternal life by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone (John 3:16). Our duty is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, evangelizing those who come in our sphere of influence, engaging them to let go of their inadequate worldview and embrace Jesus Christ.

Caution...

God uses apologetics to demonstrate they believers have true truth that truly makes sense of reality.

Otherwise, we may see a contradiction between 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 and both the historical account of Mars Hill in Acts 17 and Paul's command in passages like 2 Cor. 10:5, Peter's command in 1 Peter 3:15, and Jude 3.

Be Reasonable, Be Biblical:

However, we are following the example of Jesus and the direct commandment of the apostle Paul, Peter, and Jude by giving to both unbelievers and believers alike, “reasoned presentations” why Christianity is true and apostolic truth is accurate by clearing obstacles that Satan’s counterfeit kingdom offers and removing masks of self-deception. We leave conviction of the truth to the Holy Spirit.

Be Reasonable, Be Biblical:

Notwithstanding, since God created humanity as rational beings, He expects them to look before they leap. This does not mean there is no room for faith. But God wants us to take a step of faith in light of evidence, rather than to leap in the dark. As Geisler states:

Be Reasonable, Be Biblical.

“No rational person steps in an elevator without some reason to believe it will hold him up. No reasonable person gets on an airplane that is missing part of one wing and smells of smoke in the cabin.. People deal in two dimensions of belief: *belief that* and *belief in*. *Belief that* gives the evidence and rational basis for confidence needed to establish *belief in*. *Once belief that* is established, one can place faith in it. Thus, the rational person wants evidence that God exists before he places his faith in God. Rational unbelievers want evidence that Jesus is the Son of God before they place their trust in Him.” ~ Dr. Norman Geisler, *Baker’s Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 38.

How Should We Then Live?

1. Know the truth accurately...to the extent that we can give a reasonable presentation. Sometimes people are only one answer away from knowing Jesus Christ.
2. Practice the truth consistently with *gentleness and respect* for **All** people are made in the image of God.

How Should We Then Live?

3. Defend the truth vigorously for Satan's counterfeit kingdom seeks to destroy the unbeliever, the believer, and the corporate body of Jesus Christ.
4. Communicate the truth competently. Like Jesus and Paul we should be able to reason with others, refute false ideas, demolish arguments, defend the gospel, and rebuke false teachers and apostates.