

Spring 2016 Gospel Meeting
"Evangelism"

"READY TO MAKE A DEFENSE"

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- 1. As we go into the world and preach the gospel to all nations, we will encounter those who will challenge us on whether what we are teaching is the truth.
- 2. Some do not believe the truth of the gospel.
- 3. How are we to deal with such instances when, in our efforts to evangelize, we encounter the questions of why we teach and practice what we do?
- 4. The apostle Peter admonishes us to "... always be ready to make a defense ..." for our hope and faith (**1 Peter 3:15**). Let's examine how we can do so.

I. Make a Defense

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 - 1. It is used 8 times in the New Testament.

I. Make a Defense

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 - 2. It means to make "a verbal speech, a speech in defense, a reasoned argument." –Vine
 - a) The apostle Paul made a defense before the Jewish council, **Acts 22:1**
 - b) Governor Festus mentioned the custom of the Romans was to allow a person to make a defense before his accusers, **Acts 25:16**

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 - 2. It means to make "a verbal speech, a speech in defense, a reasoned argument." –Vine
 - c) The apostle Paul was appointed for the defense of the Gospel, **Philippians 1:16**
 - d) The Philippians shared with Paul in the defense of the Gospel, **Philippians 1:7**
 - e) Timothy was instructed to correct those in opposition that they may come to their senses, **2 Timothy 2:25-26**

I. Make a Defense

- B. We use reasoned arguments to present our case of the Gospel.
 - 1. Paul reasoned with those in Thessalonica using the scriptures, **Acts 17:4**
 - 2. Paul's defense before the Roman authorities was using words of sober truth, **Acts 26:24-25**
 - 3. There is evidence for what we believe, **Hebrews 11:1**

I. Make a Defense

- C. We must be “ready” to make our case.
 - 1. The Greek word translated “ready” (*hetoimos*, het-oy-mos) carries the idea of being prepared.
 - 2. Being prepared requires study on our part, **2 Timothy 2:15**
 - a) Timothy’s progress in learning the scriptures would be evident to all upon his studying the word, **1 Timothy 4:13-15**
 - b) We must put forth the effort to learn the word of God in order to be able to make a case for our faith.

I. Make a Defense

- D. We must present our case with “gentleness and reverence”
 - 1. Gentleness is one of the fruits of the spirit, **Galatians 5:22-23**
 - a) Gentleness is being mild-mannered, meek
 - b) That does not mean we are weak or timid, for we are to boldly proclaim His word, **Acts 4:31; Ephesians 6:19; 1 Thessalonians 2:2 (cf. 2 Timothy 1:7)**
 - c) We show wisdom when we are gentle, **James 3:13**
 - 2. Reverence is a respect that comes from the fear of the LORD
 - – We serve God in reverence, **Hebrews 12:28**

II. GIVE THE REASON FOR OUR HOPE

- A. The Greek word translated “reason”, (NKJV, ASV, ESV) or “account”, (NASB) is *logos* (log-os), and it means “speech, discourse ... its use as respect to the mind alone; reason, the mental faculty of thinking, meditating, reasoning, calculating; i.e. regard, consideration, reckoning, score; answer or explanation in reference to judgment.”
 - 1. It is used 332 times in the NT and most often translated as “word”, **1 Peter 1:23, 2:8, 3:1**
 - 2. 7 Times it is translated “account”, **1 Peter 3:15, 4:5**

II. GIVE THE REASON FOR OUR HOPE

- B. Our goal in giving a reason for our hope is to defeat any case against the Gospel, **2 Corinthians 10:5**
- C. This is the answer to why do we believe in the Gospel, why do we follow the Gospel, why do we teach and preach the Gospel?

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- A. The New Testament writers used several methods for providing a defense of the Gospel
 - 1. Peter used the Scriptures to show how Jesus is the promised Messiah, **Acts 2:14-36; 3:11-16**
 - 2. Paul also pointed to Scripture to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, **Acts 13:22-39; 17:1-4; 28:23-24**
 - 3. The apostles used external evidences from nature to show that the God they preached is the one true God, **Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-32; cf. Romans 1:18-20**

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- B. JESUS LIVED
 - 1. The evidence from extra-biblical sources:
 - a. Roman historians attest to this fact
 - 1) **Tacitus (112 AD)** in his "Annals"
 - 2) **Pliny the Younger (112 AD)** in his letter to the emperor Trajan
 - 3) **Seutonius (120 AD)**, a court official under Hadrian

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- B. JESUS LIVED
 - 1. The evidence from extra-biblical sources:
 - b. Jewish sources, while denying His deity, attest to His having lived.
 - 1) **Flavius Josephus (born 37 AD)**, a Jewish general and historian makes several references to Jesus
 - 2) **The Talmud**, Books of Jewish law, speak frequently of Jesus. They do not deny that Jesus lived, only that He was not what He or others claimed.

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- B. JESUS LIVED
 - 1. The evidence from extra biblical sources:
 - c. **Thallus (52 AD)**, a Samaritan historian who tried to explain away the darkness at the crucifixion
 - 2. So overwhelming is the evidence, even atheistic historians admit Jesus lived.
 - – **"One is obliged to say, 'Here was a man. This part of the tale could not have been invented.'"** (H.G. Wells, Outline Of History)

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- C. EVIDENCE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT
 - 1. Its authors claim to write as historians or even eyewitnesses to real events
 - a. Luke, the physician, wrote as one describing historical events – **Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3**

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 - 1. Its authors claim to write as historians or even eyewitnesses to real events
 - b. John, the beloved disciple
 - 1) His gospel was written as an eyewitness account – **John 20:30-31; 21:24-25**
 - 2) In his first letter, he claimed to be an eyewitness – **1 John 1:1-4**

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- C. EVIDENCE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT
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 - c. Paul, the apostle untimely born, claimed to have been an eyewitness, along with others – **1 Corinthians 15:3-8**

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- C. EVIDENCE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT
 - 2. As a historical document, its evidence is remarkable.
 - a. It is noted for its historical accuracy in areas that can be tested.
 - 1) The dates given, the names of historical figures, the names and locations of cities, etc. All of these can be verified and have been throughout the centuries.

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- C. EVIDENCE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT
 - 2. As a historical document, its evidence is remarkable
 - b. The manuscript attestation for the New Testament is unsurpassed
 - 1) There are over 4,000 Greek manuscripts, 13,000 copies of portions of the New Testament
 - 2) Contrast that with other historical documents (Caesar's "Gallic Wars", only 10 Greek manuscripts; "Annals" of Tacitus, 2; Plato, 7)

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- C. EVIDENCE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT
 - 2. As a historical document, its evidence is remarkable.
 - c. In the time between the originals and earliest copies
 - 1) Fragments exist that are within 50-100 years; complete copies that are within 300-400 years after originals were written

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- C. EVIDENCE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT
 - 2. As a historical document, its evidence is remarkable.
 - c. In the time between the originals and earliest copies
 - 2) Compare this with manuscripts of other classical histories:
 - a) "Histories of Thucydides" - earliest copy is 1,300 years removed from the original
 - b) "Histories of Herodotus" - earliest copy is 1,350 removed from the original
 - c) Julius Caesar's "Gallic War" - 950 years

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 - c. In the time between the originals and earliest copies
 - 2) Compare this with manuscripts of other classical histories:
 - d) Roman History of Livy - 350 years (and the earliest copy is only a fragment)
 - e) "Histories" of Tacitus - 750 years
 - f) "Annals" of Tacitus - 950 years

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- D. What variances that do exist between the ancient copies are minuscule
 - – Only 1/2 of one percent is in question (compared to 5 percent for the Iliad)

III. REASONS FOR OUR HOPE

- – Such evidence for the New Testament has led to the following statement: "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be as beyond all doubt."
 - – F. F. Bruce (Biblical scholar from England)

CONCLUSION

- 1. We are called upon to be prepared to make a case for our hope in God.
- 2. We have plenty of evidence to make a strong argument for why the gospel we preach is the word of truth and not some invention by man, **Colossians 1:3-5; 1 Peter 1:20-21**