

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS #89: DEFENDING THE BIBLE

By John Temples

NOTE: A while back I was asked to supply an outline for a teenage class at the Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp in Ohio. My assigned topic was “defending the Bible.” Here is the outline I submitted. I hope it will be of value and encouragement to you.

DEFENDING THE BIBLE

By John Temples

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV)

1. AS A CHRISTIAN, YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED TO DEFEND THE BIBLE. WHY?

a. *Because we are commanded to do so.*

- i. “...I am appointed for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:17, NKJV).
- ii. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...” (1 Peter 3:15).
- iii. “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Colossians 4:6).

b. *Because the Bible is under attack today as never before.*

- i. The inspiration of the Bible is under attack. 26% of Americans—one in four—believe that the Bible is a book of fables, legends, and primitive writings of uninspired men, according to a 2017 Gallup Poll. (Among millennials, the percentage is 45%.)
- ii. The moral code taught in the Bible is under attack. The Bible's teachings on the sinfulness of homosexuality, the sanctity and nature of marriage (one man/one woman), and even gender ("male and female He made them," Genesis 1:27) are being ridiculed and rejected.
- iii. The creation account of the Bible is under attack. The theory of evolution has a stranglehold on our education system and media. Suffice it to say that evolution is a THEORY, not a proven fact. It gets revised every few years or so. Christians need to know that there is a great deal of physical evidence for a sudden creation a few thousand years ago, not a gradual, random, mutation-driven development of life. God thought the knowledge of a divine creation of life was so important that He placed it first in His book, the Bible. If we don't get the explanation of the origin of life right, none of the rest of the Bible—or life itself—will make any sense.
- iv. The God of the Bible and the Christ of the Bible are under attack. People are "re-making God in their own image." God is seen by some as a cruel tyrant, by others as a kindly old grandfather who winks at sin. Jesus Christ is now viewed by many as a hippie, a radical revolutionary, or just a rabbi ahead of his time.
- v. The "narrow-path mentality" of the Bible is under attack. The Bible consistently presents the God of heaven as the only true God. It also plainly states that Jesus is the only way to heaven (John 14:6). His statement "no one comes to the Father except through Me" is viewed with contempt by our inclusive, pluralistic society. Here are some views prevalent today:

1. There are many roads to heaven (if there is a heaven); Christianity is just one way.
2. “There is only one true church” is viewed as hopelessly non-inclusive and bigoted.
3. Christ is just another religious teacher on a par with Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, or Gandhi.
4. There is no such thing as absolute truth—all truth is relative. “Truth” for you may not be “truth” for me.

2. SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT DEFENDING THE BIBLE (WHY MANY CHRISTIANS WON'T DO IT):

- a. *“That’s not my job—the preacher and the elders are supposed to do that.”* Not so. Notice that 1 Peter 3:15 (“be ready to give a defense”) and Colossians 4:6 (“know how to answer each one”) are addressed to Christians in general, not just church leaders. Every Christian—teens, seniors, men, women—should be able, to some degree, to answer basic Bible questions and challenges to the Bible
- b. *“But I’m not a Bible scholar—I’d have to have a PhD to answer complex Bible questions”* This excuse really means, “I’m afraid I won’t be able to answer a question and I will look stupid.” Here are some thoughts on that:
 - i. “I don’t know” is a valid answer to a question, IF it is immediately followed by “But I will find someone who can answer.”
 - ii. Some of our brethren are PhD’s and have written scholarly answers to Bible questions. There is plenty of help out there. Use the Internet! (Or yes, refer the questioner to a preacher or elder.) (Hint: an especially valuable and conservative scholarly brotherhood website is www.apologeticspress.org.)
 - iii. But know this: human beings have a great ability to take simple Bible concepts and make them complicated. There’s an old saying: “People occasionally stumble across the truth, but they usually manage to pick themselves up and move on past it.”
 - iv. There are some Bible subjects that may be complicated or mysterious, but these are NOT subjects you and I must understand to go to heaven!

- v. John 8:32 says, “You shall KNOW the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” What Bible truths does Jesus say I can know for sure? The truths necessary to make me free—the plan of salvation that frees me from sin and death.

- c. *“If I defend the Bible I will be persecuted, ridiculed, ostracized, etc.”*
Given the current religious climate, this is probably true. But you will have the approval of Christ! And you will be in good company. Jesus said, “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).

3. HOW DO I DEFEND THE BIBLE?

- a. First of all, study the Bible to learn its teachings and be able to answer many of the questions you receive. Don’t miss a Bible class. Treat Bible knowledge like you treat a hobby or enjoyable pastime. Suppose computers and technology are your passion. You willingly and joyfully spend hours learning about computers and how to use them. You know EVERYTHING there is to know about computers! You can talk to people about them for hours. Why shouldn’t that be the way it is with Christians and the Bible?

- b. Don’t let attacks on the Bible go unchallenged. If a friend (or a group of friends) starts ridiculing, making light of, or misrepresenting the Bible, let them know in a kind and loving way that you revere and respect the Bible. If they continue their mockery, you didn’t need their friendship anyway.

- c. Look for subtle, “matter-of-fact” ways to let people know you are a Bible believer. Carry a Bible in your backpack and let people see you reading it in appropriate settings...inject a Biblical principle or teaching into a conversation...react to a topic of discussion with something like “I was reading a Bible verse the other day that addressed that very situation.” But don’t do this in a “holier than thou” or “in your face” way. Share the Bible with the attitude of “one beggar telling another beggar where to find food.”

- d. Don't argue, don't question people's intelligence or sincerity, but do stand up for the truth when the occasion presents itself. Remember Ephesians 4:29—"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

- e. Pray for wisdom when interacting with others regarding spiritual things. God has promised to give you wisdom if you simply ask (James 1:5).

--John Temples