

Acts 17 A Reasonable Faith June 28 2009

Key Statement: “Faith is not a suspension of the intellect, rather the mind is fully engaged in seeking truth and believing the evidence that God will do what He says. Biblical faith is perfectly reasonable; it is not a leap into the dark, but a step into the light.”

A. Logical reasoning from the scriptures.

A1. Study the Biblical Background of your audience.

Acts 17:1-2 (HCSB)

¹ Then they traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.

² As usual, Paul went to them, and on three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

Acts 17:10 (HCSB)

¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea. On arrival, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

(Does the person you are talking with accept the Bible as the word of God? Even if not it is still powerful, but your presentation should be adaptable.)

A2. Share the Biblical truth that turns the world upside down.

Acts 17:3 (HCSB)

³ explaining and showing that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead, and saying: “This is the Messiah, Jesus, whom I am proclaiming to you.”

Acts 17:6 (HCSB)

⁶ When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city officials, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too,

Acts 17:11 (HCSB)

¹¹ The people here were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, since they welcomed the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

A3. Scripture has the power to convert the lost.

Acts 17:4 (HCSB)

⁴ Then some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, including a great number of God-fearing Greeks, as well as a number of the leading women.

Acts 17:11-12 (HCSB)

¹¹ The people here were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, since they welcomed the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

¹² Consequently, many of them believed, including a number of the prominent Greek women as well as men.

Romans 10:14-17 (ESV)

¹⁴ But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

B. Logical reasoning from shared beliefs.

B1. Study the religion and philosophy of your audience.

Acts 17:17-21 (HCSB)

¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

¹⁸ Then also, some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him. Some said, "What is this pseudo-intellectual trying to say?" Others replied, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign deities"—because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

¹⁹ They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, and said, "May we learn about this new teaching you're speaking of?"

²⁰ For what you say sounds strange to us, and we want to know what these ideas mean.”

²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

(Study aides from NAMB, etc.)(Earning a hearing.)

B2. Start where they are, not where you wish they were!

Acts 17:22-23 (HCSB)

²² Then Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect.

²³ For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

B3. Share what you have in common because of creation.

Acts 17:24-28 (HCSB)

²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands.

²⁵ Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.

²⁶ From one man He has made every nation of men to live all over the earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live,

²⁷ so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

²⁸ For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’

B4. State the biblical truths they need to carefully consider.

Acts 17:29-31 (HCSB)

²⁹ Being God’s offspring, then, we shouldn’t think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination.

³⁰ “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent,

³¹ because He has set a day on which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”

B5. Separated by the truth of the gospel.

Acts 17:32-34 (HCSB)

³² When they heard about resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him. But others said, “We will hear you about this again.”

³³ So Paul went out from their presence.

³⁴ However, some men joined him and believed, among whom were Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Invitation: A Time of Separation.