

Christian Apologetics

Acts 6:8—8:1a

1. Defended by Wisdom 6:8-11

Non-Judean Jewish arguments against Stephen's God enabled powerful Gospel testimony (that stripped away their righteousness before God as Mosaic law keepers) were useless against Stephen's Holy Spirit given words.

Arguments against our grace enabled Gospel testimony (by those enraged by how it puts them in a bad light before God) are expertly defended by Spirit enabled wise responses.

2. Defended by Scripture 6:12-7:53

a. Past Experience of God 6:12-7:38

Stephen used biblical history (which Sanhedrin knew) as evidence that pointed out that Israel's forefathers had experienced God long before the Mosaic Law was given.

b. Past Law Keeping vs. 7:39-43

Stephen used biblical history and revelation to remind the Sanhedrin that Israel's repetitive rejection of God and his law (which the Sanhedrin prided themselves in keeping) resulted in Israel's exile.

c. Past and Present Presence of God vs. 7:44-50

Stephen used biblical revelation to prove that no one was closer to God in the Sanhedrin's highly prized temple.

Any defence of our testimony concerning Jesus is incomplete without including the biblical proofs that Jesus is and always been God's only plan of salvation for humanity.

3. Defended by Measured Critique vs. 7:37;51-53

Stephen revealed the Sanhedrin's precarious position of being worse lawbreakers than the forefathers through their rejection and murder of the Righteous One who came just as Moses and the Law foretold.

Sometimes it is necessary to provide a measured critique that points out the inconsistencies, inefficiencies, or errors in the faith position of the Gospel's opponents.

4. Defended by Spirit Enabled Certainty vs 54-8:1

Spirit enabled certainty of Jesus' readiness to receive him into heaven, Stephen, like Jesus himself, committed his spirit to the Lord and asked that his murderers be led into forgiveness.

Spirit enabled certainty of our final salvation enables us to faithfully testify about Jesus in the face of opposition who may in their hearing be led to forgiveness too.

Main Idea:

We respond to others criticism of the faith we share with Spirit enabled wisdom, Spirit convicting Scriptures, the confidence of our final salvation, followed by a measured critique of what they are putting their trust in.

Deployment:

- 1) When we depend on God, He provides us the wisdom we need to be His witnesses. What do you think daily dependence on God would look like for us today? What steps do you think you could take so that your life will reflect this kind of dependence?
- 2) A mature disciple is one who has a working knowledge of the Scriptures. What are ways by which we can improve our working knowledge of scripture so that we can continue to mature as a disciple of Jesus and be able to defend the faith when criticism arises?

¹²For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

- 3) Because of our final salvation, we are able to live confidently for Jesus. Read and Reflect on the following Bible passages.

⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6

²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all^a; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."

John 10:28-29

²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Romans 8:29-30

How did you feel as you read and reflected on those Bible promises?

What situations that you have faced or people you know have faced that they needed to cling on to these promises so that they did not waver in their testimony for Jesus?