The Defense Of The Gospel

Introduction. In Philippians 1:12-18, Paul is discussing what had occurred while he was in prison. Although confined, his spirit was unhindered -- no retreat, no surrender!

Paul’s imprisonment motivated others to preach. Some preached out of selfish ambition; they saw Paul as a competitor. Some preached out of good will and love; they saw Paul as a faithful defender of the truth. He ultimately had no resentment and rejoiced in spread of gospel. He was set for the defense of truth, not for himself.

Giving a defense means to present evidence, to give answers and to respond to objections. When we have a discussion on a particular Bible topic with our friends or relatives, we are “debating” in a sense and are trying to determine the truth. In order to help us in this endeavor, we are going to investigate the defending of the gospel.

I. Why Is It Necessary To Defend The Gospel?
   A. Because the devil declared war on truth of God’s word (Matthew 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12). This goes all the way back to the beginning (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-6). Adam and Eve departed from the truth which led to sin and broke their fellowship with God.
   B. Because we must defend God’s word as true (Titus 1:10-14). We can know the truth about the Savior and salvation (1 John 5:10-12, 20) and it can set us free (John 8:31-32).
   C. Because we must stop the spread and effect of false doctrine (2 Peter 2:1-2).
   D. Because we must save souls (Romans 1:16-17; Jude 3). Error is from Satan and it will destroy souls (Matthew 15:13-14).

II. Who Is Responsible To Defend The Gospel?
   A. Every Christian is responsible in accordance with their ability and opportunity.
   B. The Philippians provided financial and moral support (Philippians 1:7).
   C. Philip told and defended the gospel story (Acts 8:3-4).
   D. We have to give a defense in word and in deed (1 Peter 3:15-16).

III. What Weapons Do We Use To Defend The Gospel?
   A. The spiritual weapons of God’s word; they are sharper than any sword (Hebrews 4:12).
   B. It is a mighty power to defeat error and bring souls to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).
   C. We should have no deceit, only a clear presentation of truth (2 Corinthians 4:1-2).
D. We should not “debate” with strife, arrogance, personal animosity or bitter wrangling (2 Corinthians 12:20).

IV. Debates In Bible Days
A. In John 8:12-58, Jesus debated with the Pharisees on bearing witness of Himself.
B. In Matthew 22:23-33, Jesus debated with the Sadducees on the resurrection.
C. In Luke 13:10-17, Jesus debated with the ruler of the synagogue on the Sabbath day’s work.
D. In Acts 15:1-21, Peter debated with the believing Pharisees on whether circumcision was required.

V. Debates Today
A. Debate on the essentiality of baptism -- refute the error of denominations.
   1. The great commission teaches baptism (Mark 16:15-16).
   2. Would one believe Jesus on water in the new birth (John 3:16, 5)?
   4. We are saved by grace through faith when we are baptized, not before and without baptism (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 19:5).
   5. We are not saved by faith alone (James 2:24).
B. Debate on modern miracle claims -- refute the error of Pentecostals and charismatics.
   1. Miracles confirmed the word (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:1-4).
   2. Miracles ended when the truth was fully revealed (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).
C. Debate on instrumental music -- refute the error of denominations and the Christian Church.
   1. Gopher wood excluded all other kinds of wood (Genesis 6:14).
   2. “Sing” excludes other kinds of music (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
   3. Figurative language does not determine our practice in the church (Revelation 5:8; cf. 1 Timothy 2:8).
D. Debate on institutionalism -- refute the error of liberal brethren.
   1. Each congregation raised its own funds by the contributions of its members (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
   2. Each congregation supported evangelists to preach the gospel according to its ability as the Lord ordained (1 Corinthians 9:14; 2 Corinthians 11:8).
4. Each congregation was edified through the strength supplied by its own members (1 Corinthians 12:22-27; 14:26; Ephesians 4:14-16).

**Conclusion.** The truth must be defended against competing, contrary claims. Discussing the scriptures with people allows us to listen to the other side with an open mind (Matthew 13:15), to preach the truth as we presently understand it (2 Timothy 4:2), to encourage study of the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15), to allow our position to be examined and tested (John 3:19-21) and to seek religious unity (Ephesians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 1:10; John 17:20-23). We are in a battle for souls and we must do our best to stand for truth.