

Defend the Faith

(prepare to answer difficult questions)

Acts 17:16-34

To the ends of the earth.

- i. Make changes for the mission (Acts 16:1-5).**
- ii. God gives the increase; the birth of the Philippian church (Acts 16:6-40).**
- iii. Receive the Word like Bereans; live like Thessalonians! (Acts 17:1-15).**
- iv. Defend the Faith (Acts 17:16-34).**

Big Idea: Hard questions will arise; so, we prepare to defend our faith.

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"--because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean."

²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. ²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for "'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.' ²⁹ Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." ³² Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." ³³ So Paul went out from their midst. ³⁴ But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Big Idea: Hard questions will arise; so, we prepare to defend our faith.

Defend the Faith

- 1. Let God provoke your spirit (v. 16).**
- 2. Get ready for skeptics (vv. 17-18).**
- 3. Learn to explain the truth of God (vv. 24-31).**
- 4. Share the gospel (vv. 32-34).**

1. Lord, provoke my spirit (v. 16).

¹⁶ **Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was smothered with idols.**

Idolatry is a worship problem (Ex 20:3).

- i. Idols had taken over the city.**
- ii. Paul was deeply distressed by what he saw.**
- iii. We must push against our tendency to become cynical.**
- iv. Pray the Lord would provoke your spirit.**

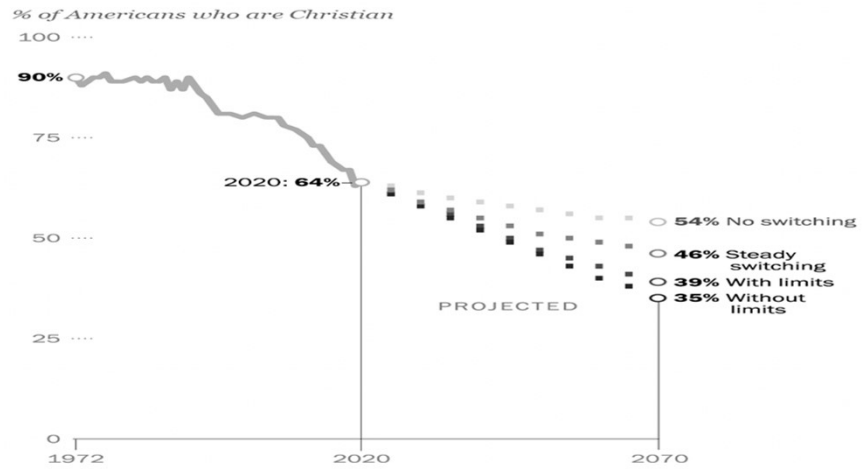
2. Get ready for skeptics (vv. 17-18).

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3 Evangelistic Truths (w.r.t. skeptics)

- i. This is a call to action (v. 17).**
- ii. Don't be surprised by skeptics (v. 18).**
- iii. God saves skeptics, too (v. 34).**

Skepticism abounds in our world.



“What does this babbler wish to say?” (v. 18)

3. Learn to explain the truth of God (vv. 24-31).

i. **Creator (v. 24).**

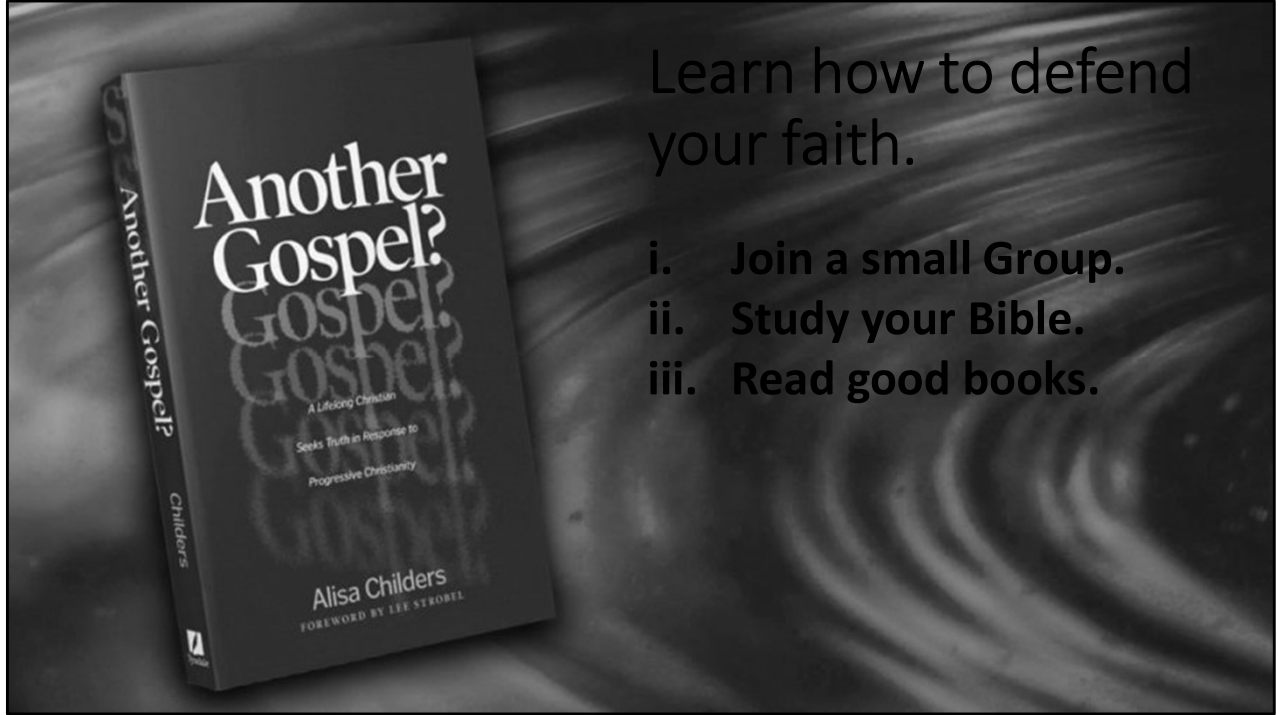
ii. **Sustainer (v. 25).**

iii. **Ruler & King (v. 26).**

iv. **Knowable & wants to be known (v. 27)**

v. **Loving Father of humanity (vv. 28-29).**

vi. **Just & Justifier (vv. 30-31; cf Rom 3:21-26).**



Learn how to defend your faith.

- i. Join a small Group.
- ii. Study your Bible.
- iii. Read good books.

4. Share the gospel (vv. 32-34).

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How will you respond?

Mocking (v. 32a)

Curiosity (v. 32b)

Belief (v. 34)