

## 1) Defend Our Text

Our apologetics<sup>1</sup> can be based on an understanding of the Biblical text, allowing us to be confident that we have challenged our own interpretations sufficiently, as to provide a well-versed<sup>2</sup> explanation of our hope.

For the believer, we know why we believe.

*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Romans 10:17).*

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)*

## 2) But what about explaining our “Hope” to those who are less convicted?

We must correctly handle the word of truth. ([2 Tim 2:15](#)), the whole truth. In Paul’s letter to Timothy, the Greek word for correctly handling scripture is “orthotomeo”. A contemporary 1<sup>st</sup> century English euphemism would be to “hold a straight course” or “doing it the right way”.

Paul also describes considering the whole counsel of God in his preaching, always giving his audience the whole truth, a well-versed explanation of the gospel (good news).

*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)*

**When we explain our hope to those who do not yet understand, we have the perfect advantage for justifying or supporting our belief. We know that the Bible “is” Truth. We just have to properly demonstrate its use to those who may not understand its content and form. It is important that, before we can get into how to receive eternal salvation (content) and where to find it in the Bible (form), we must consider the context of what we present.**

## 3) Most common doubt regarding scripture is perceived inconsistencies (errors) in the text.

For us, it takes a lifetime to thoroughly understand who all the supporting characters are and the scenes in which these stories take place. But what if we could prepare for a couple of the most common “what about this” arguments against the Bible’s inerrancy? How powerful would it be to have on hand a mini arsenal of pertinent scripture, a thorough understanding of context, and great familiarity with the characters in the scene?



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<sup>1</sup> In [1 Peter 3:15](#) Christians are commanded to give an *apologia* to anyone who asks the reason for our hope.

<sup>2</sup> Being well versed biblically requires an understanding of Bible content and form. Form being the internal organization of the content.

#### 4) The Study of Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

##### Acts 9:3-9 (34 AD) Luke's record of the initial event.

<sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

<sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

##### Acts 22:6-16 (58 AD) Luke describes Paul's temple speech at Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup> "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. <sup>7</sup> I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

<sup>8</sup> "Who are you, Lord?' I asked.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. <sup>9</sup> My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

<sup>10</sup> "What shall I do, Lord?' I asked.

"Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' <sup>11</sup> My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

<sup>12</sup> "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. <sup>13</sup> He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

<sup>14</sup> "Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. <sup>15</sup> You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup> And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

##### Acts 26:12-21 (60 AD) Luke describes Paul's testimony in front of king Agrippa.

<sup>12</sup> "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. <sup>13</sup> About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. <sup>14</sup> We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic,<sup>[a]</sup> 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

<sup>15</sup> "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. <sup>16</sup> 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. <sup>17</sup> I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

<sup>19</sup> "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. <sup>20</sup> First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. <sup>21</sup> That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.

## 5) Analysis

**(Luke 1-4)** <sup>1</sup>Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup>just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup>With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. **(Acts 1)** <sup>1</sup>In my former book, Theophilus...

- I. The first 4 words of Acts tells us that he wrote the book of Luke first. The name **Theophilus** means a 'friend of God' and is a distinctively Hebraic name. In calling him '**Most Excellent**' Luke is addressing someone of prominence. Could it be any believer reading his work?
- II. In Luke 1-4 he tells us he has carefully investigated everything from the beginning and wished to write an orderly account of what happened. This account would have included first hand witness, interviews of Jesus family, references to writings from earlier apostles, and interviews of those who witnessed events related to the travel of the Gospel.
- III. Luke is considered a highly polished Greek writer. It is likely that Greek was his first language. All of the other (8) New Testament writers were Israelites (native lang. Aramaic). Luke was most likely Greek born, a God Fearer who was circumcised and attended synagogue prior to his Christian conversion. He likely attended the medical school in Philippi. There are points in Acts where Luke joins Paul's travels near Philippi and drops out near Philippi. Perhaps this area in Macedonia was near his home.
- IV. Around 58 AD Paul then participates in a purification rite at the temple to show that he still adhered to the Jewish law. However, he was recognised by some Jews from the province of Asia and they started a riot. Having been in Jerusalem for only 12 days Paul was arrested and taken to Caesarea. Paul was then imprisoned at Caesarea for 2 years. Nazerite vow lasts 7 days, have to abstain from things then make offering at the temple.
- V. When Paul was taken to Caesarea, the "we" passages stop. So, where was Luke while Paul was at Caesarea? It seems reasonable to suppose that he stayed with the Church in Jerusalem. During this time, we know that he at least met James, the brother of Jesus, who could have provided him with the family background information on Jesus that is provided in the first 2 chapters. Luke could have also talked to the numerous women that Jesus encountered. Mary the mother of Jesus was an initial member of the Church and may have still been around. Others could have also recalled Mary's testimony. Some scholars suggest Luke may have sourced some of his writing from Mark.
- VI. Luke was at Paul's Agrippa testimony see [Acts 26:1](#) and [Acts 26:30-32](#)
- VII. The last word from Luke is at the end of Acts while Paul is under house arrest. Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy was Paul's last letter. It was written after his first defense, which seems to have gone poorly. He is no longer under house arrest. He is now bound with chains in a Roman prison and he states that "the time has come for my departure". In (Tim 4:11) Paul states, "Only Luke is with me". At that time, it was very dangerous to be associated with Paul.
- VIII. Paul is under house arrest in 60/61-62 AD for 2 years. We don't know the outcome of Paul's appearance before Nero, but we know Nero began his persecutions in 64 AD. Paul, James, and Peter were all executed in the mid-60's. Luke records earlier martyrs, why not these? The Jewish wars began in 66 AD and the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. Luke most likely completed Acts during Paul's house arrest. A logical conclusion is Luke lost his life around the time of Paul losing his.

## IX. Herod Agrippa II

Marcus Julius Agrippa (Agrippa II) and his sister Bernice were the children of Herod Agrippa I. Educated in Rome, the younger Agrippa was still a teenager when his father died in AD 44.<sup>3</sup> Because he was too young to rule, the emperor Claudius, made Judea a Roman Province again. Four years later, Agrippa II was granted authority over the affairs of the temple in Jerusalem, and then in AD 50, was made king of Chalcis.

When Nero became emperor he added more territory to Agrippa's kingdom. Agrippa collaborated with Rome, and actively sought to keep the peace between the Romans and the Jews, but to no avail. When the First Jewish Revolt broke out, he sided with the Romans. In AD 70, he even helped Titus with the final conquest of Jerusalem. Herod Agrippa II ruled until the end of the first century, as an inscribed lead weight was found near Tiberias that mentions his forty-third regnal year (AD 97/98).

The close relationship between Agrippa and his sister, Bernice, is affirmed archaeologically with an inscription that is currently housed in the National Museum of Beirut. It has been reconstructed to read:

*The great King Agrippa Philocaesar and Queen Berenice, children of the great King Agrippa, restored in the colonia of Julia Augusta Felix Berytus, from their own money, this bathhouse (?), which their ancestor, King Herod, had built and which had fallen to ruins, and re-erected the marble statues and these six columns.*

All the Herods in a list:

- a. Herod the Great (King of Judea, ca. 37-4 BC) – Arguably the greatest of the Herodian kings (hence his moniker), this is the Herod of the Christmas story – the one who tried to kill baby Jesus by killing all the baby boys around Bethlehem (Mat 2:1-12).
- b. Herod Archelaus (Ethnarch of Judea, Samaria and Idumea, ca. 4 BC – AD 6) – This son of Herod the Great is mentioned once in Scripture: “But when he [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee.” (Mat 2:22)
- c. Herod Antipas (Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, ca. 4 BC – AD 39) – Antipas was another son of Herod the Great, whom Jesus called, “that fox” (Luke 13:32). He killed John the Baptist who criticized him for marrying Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Mat 6:17, [Josephus Antiquities 18.5.2](#)). He also interviewed Jesus before his death, although Jesus refused to respond to him (Luke 23:9).
- d. Herod Agrippa I (King of Judea ca. AD 37-44) – Agrippa was the grandson of Herod the Great who killed James and put Peter in prison (Acts 12:1-19). He was struck by an angel and eaten by worms because he did not give God the glory when people hailed him as a god (Acts 12:20-23; [Josephus Antiquities 19.8.2](#)).
- e. Herod Agrippa II (king of Chalcis, later Tetrarch of Batanaea and Trachonitis, ca. AD 50-93) – Agrippa II, the great-grandson of Herod the Great, was the ruler before whom the Apostle Paul made his defense in Acts 25-26.