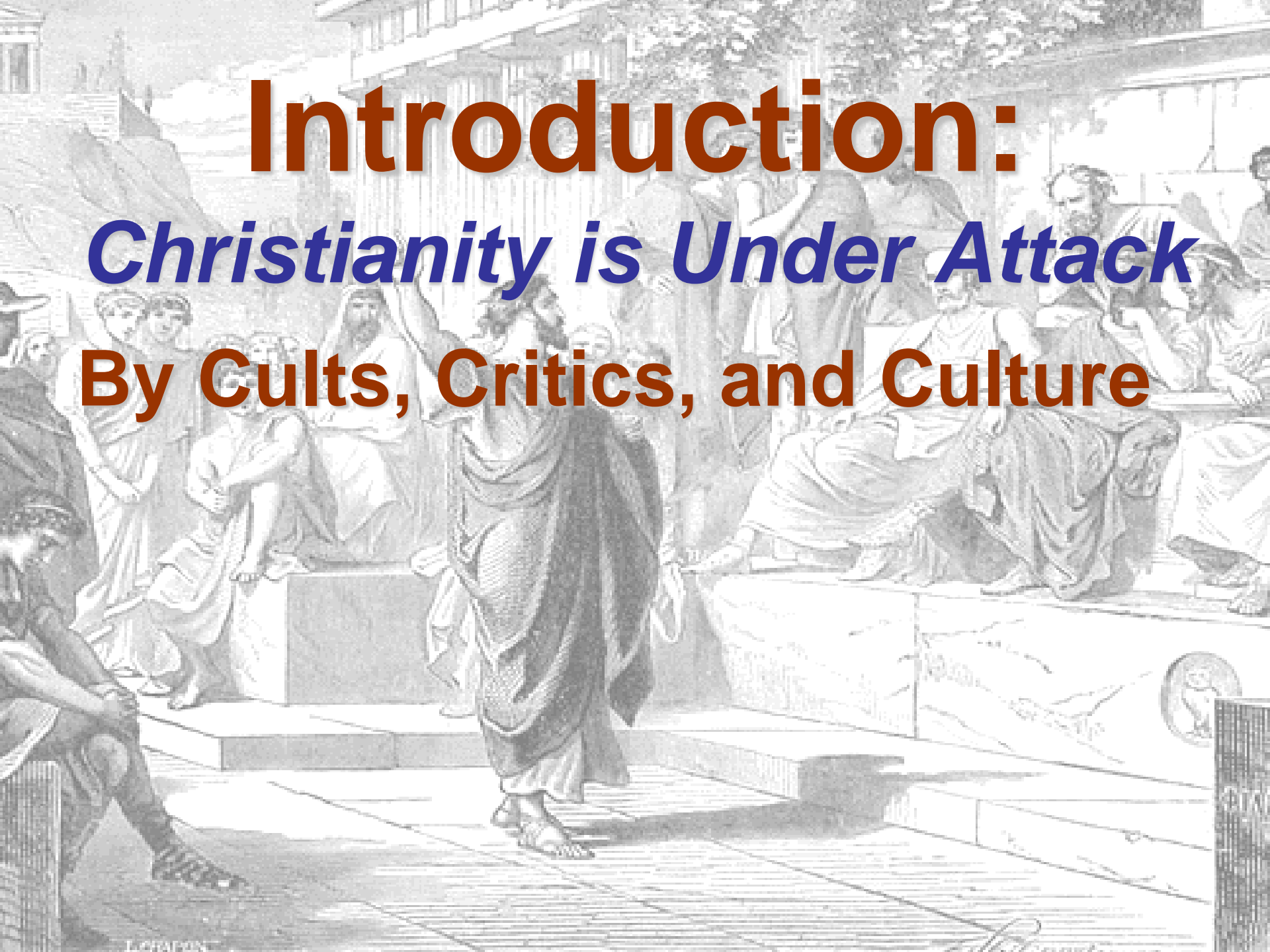




# **An Apologetic for Apologetics**

***Copyright by Norman L. Geisler 2013***





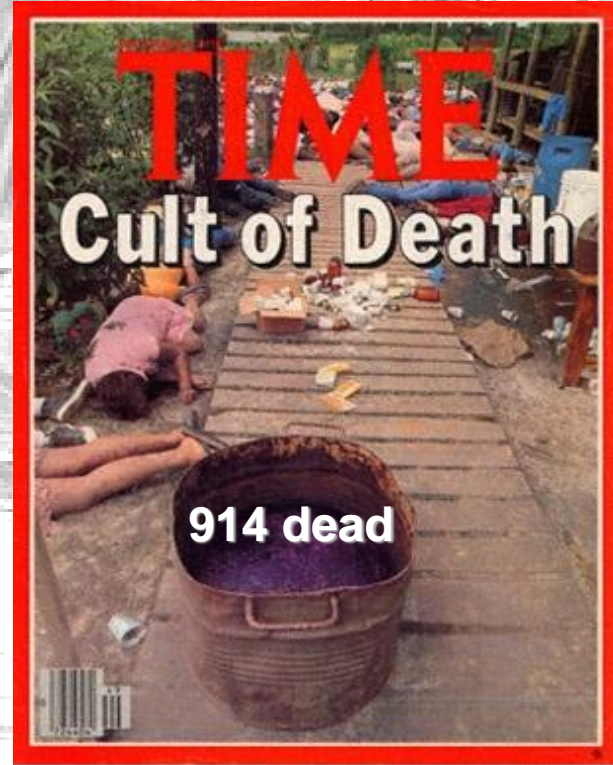
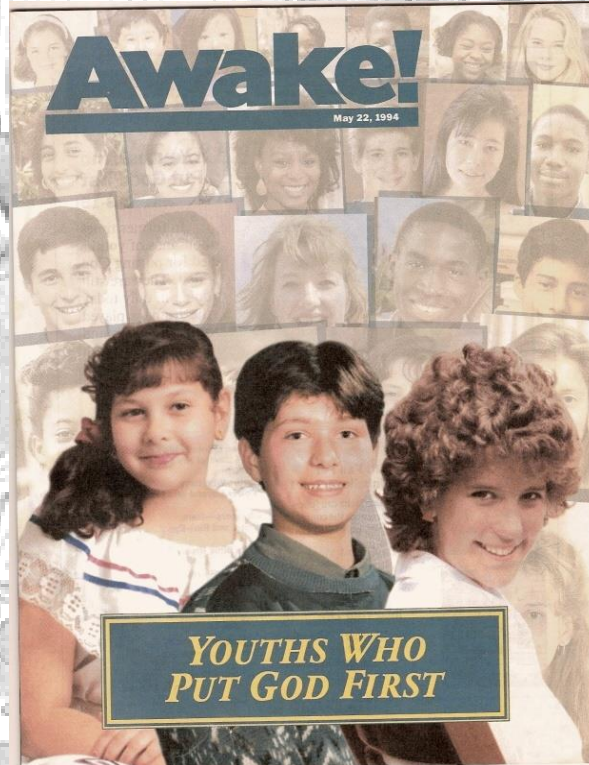
# **Introduction:**

## ***Christianity is Under Attack***

### **By Cults, Critics, and Culture**



# Attack by Cults



**All Deny Essential Doctrines of the Faith**



# Attacked by Critics

## The Jesus Seminar



### THE FIVE GOSPELS

"BOLD AND FASCINATING"  
—ELAINE PAGELE

WHAT DID JESUS REALLY SAY?

*The Search for the  
Authentic Words of Jesus*

NEW TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

ROBERT W. FUNK,  
ROY W. HOOVER,  
AND THE JESUS SEMINAR

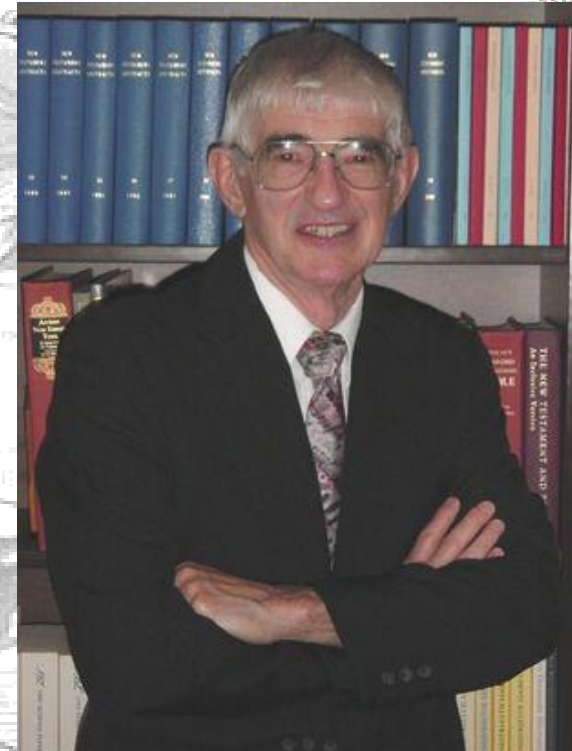
**82 % of Gospels False**

**16 % Doubtful**

**Jesus was not God**

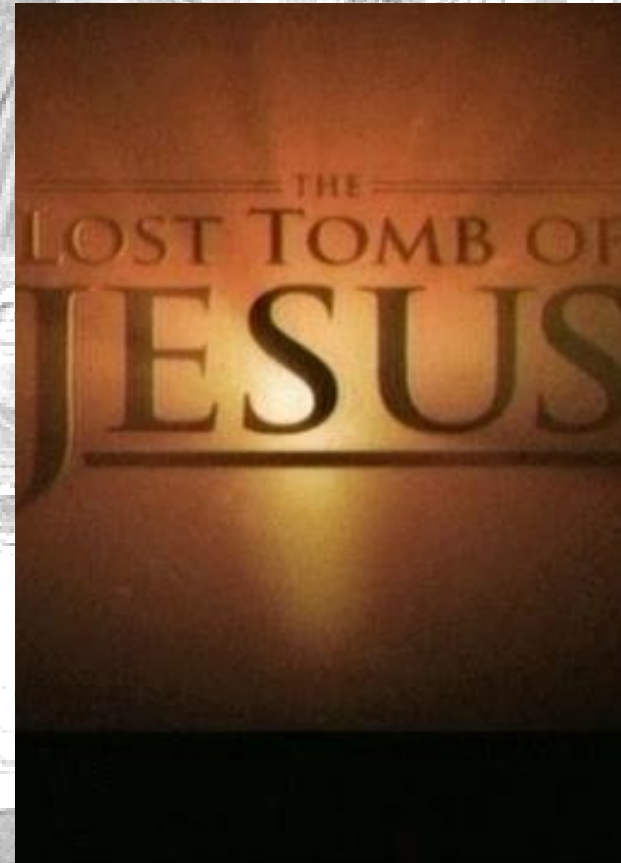
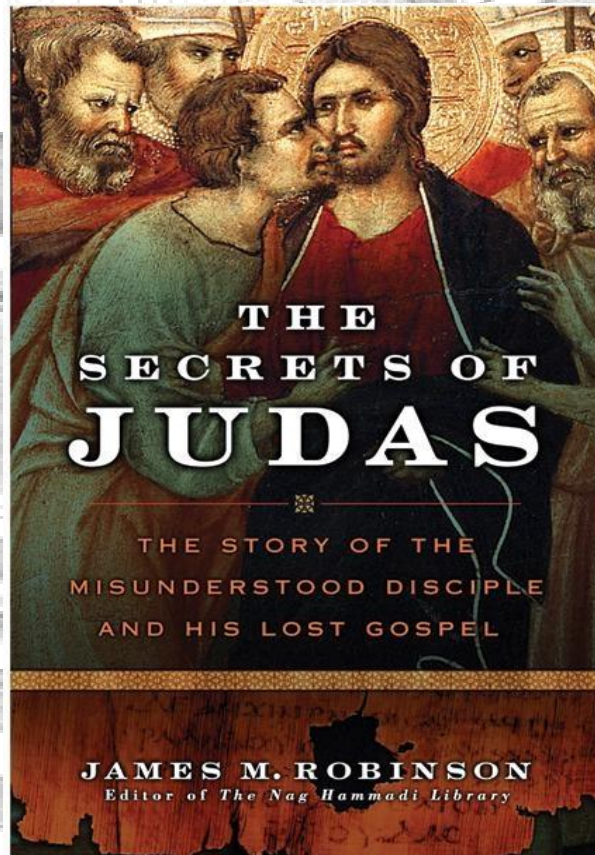
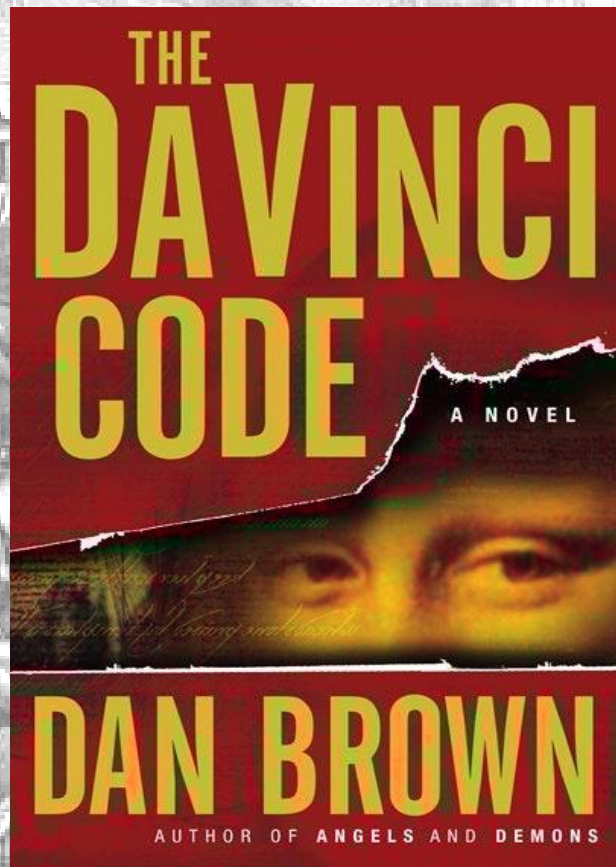
**No Resurrection**

**Jesus Eaten by Dogs**





# Attacked by the Culture



**All Deny Fundamentals of the Faith**



# Outline

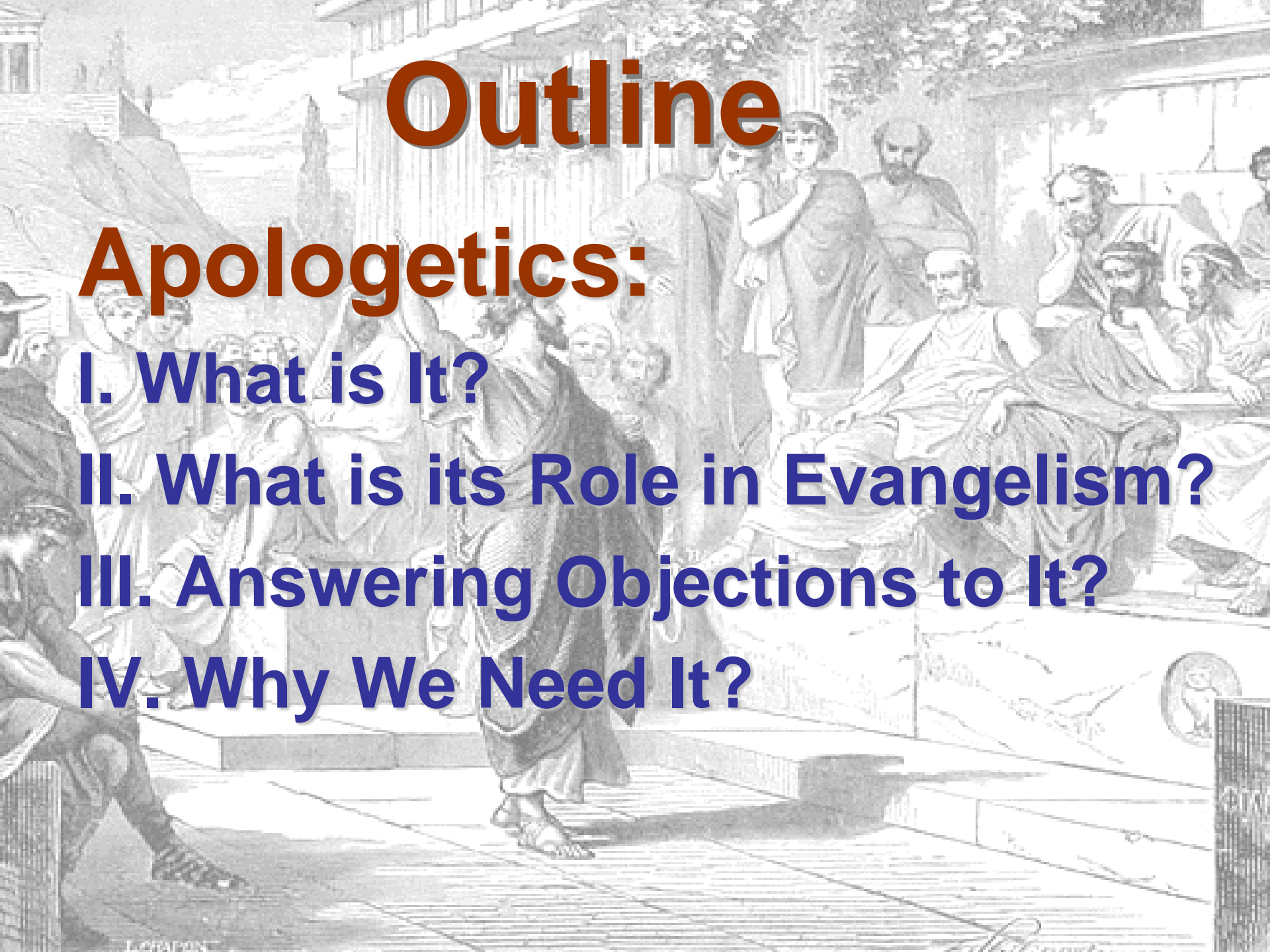
## Apologetics:

I. What is It?

II. What is its Role in Evangelism?

III. Answering Objections to It?

IV. Why We Need It?







# Outline

## I. What is Apologetics?

### A. Apologetics Defined

### B. Apologetics Described





# Outline

## I. What is Apologetics?

### A. Apologetics Defined

*“Set apart the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to **give a reason** (Gk. apologia) for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).*

**Apologetics is giving a reason or defense for our Christian Faith.**

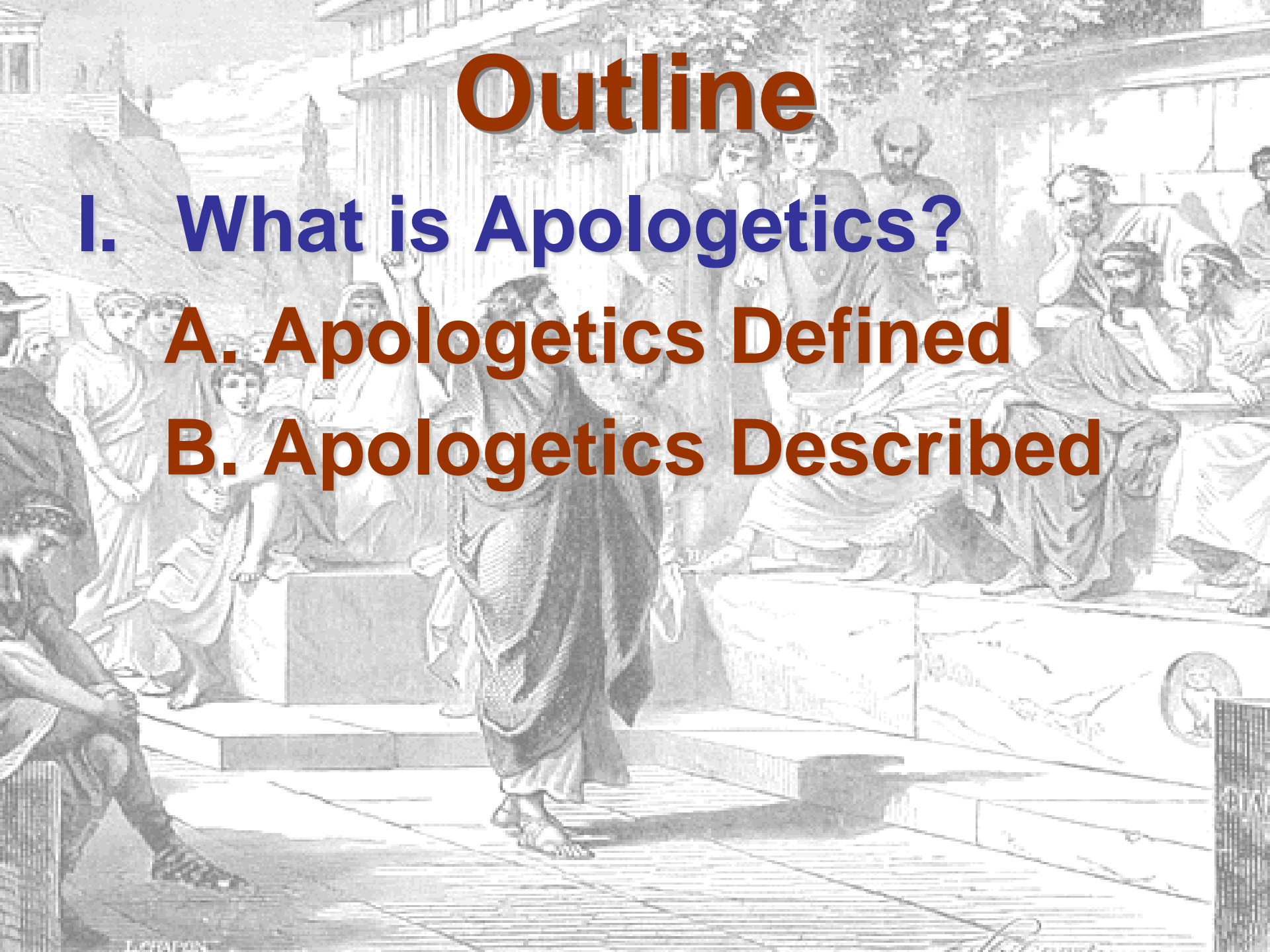


# Outline

## I. What is Apologetics?

### A. Apologetics Defined

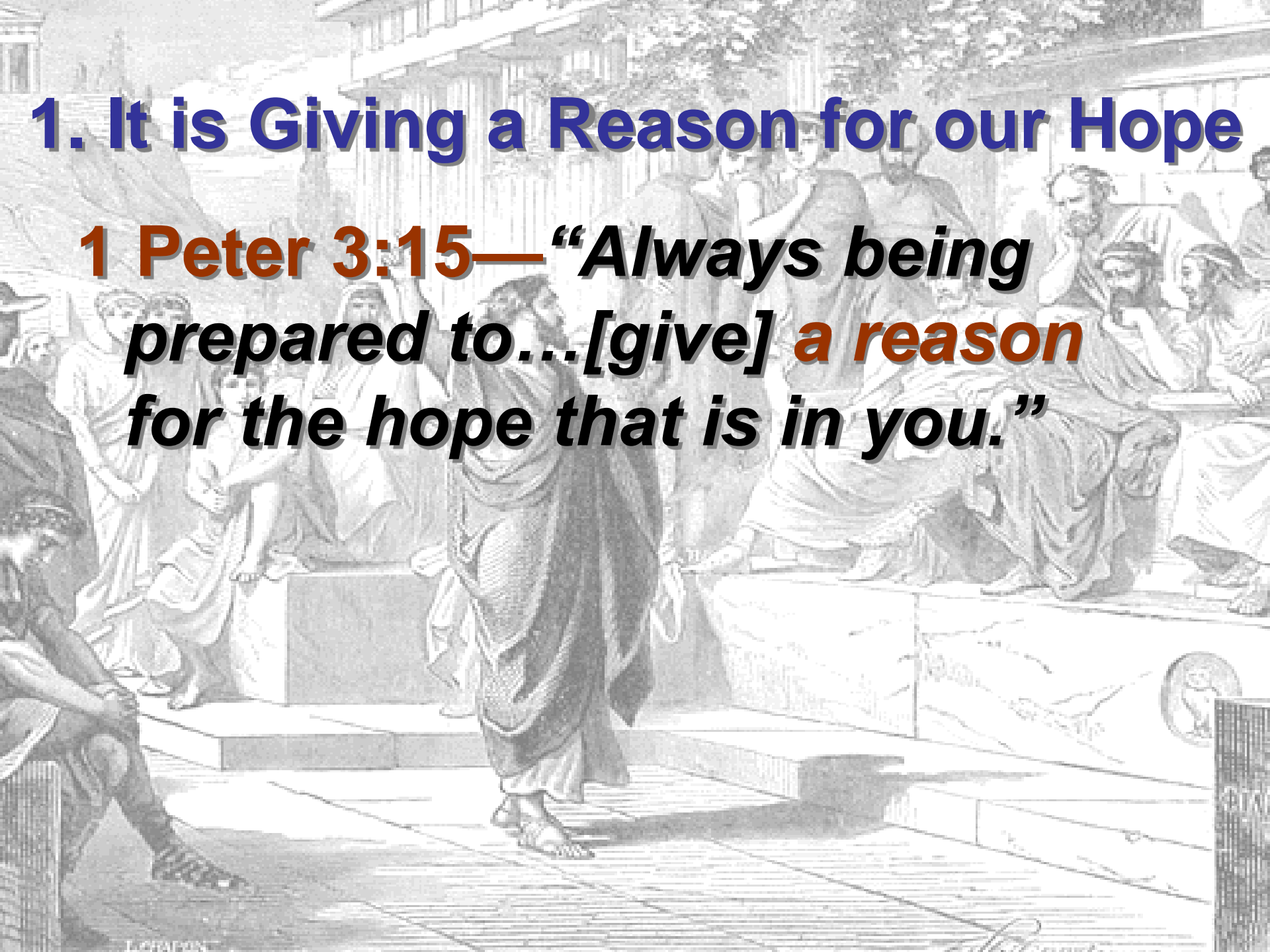
### B. Apologetics Described





# 1. It is Giving a Reason for our Hope

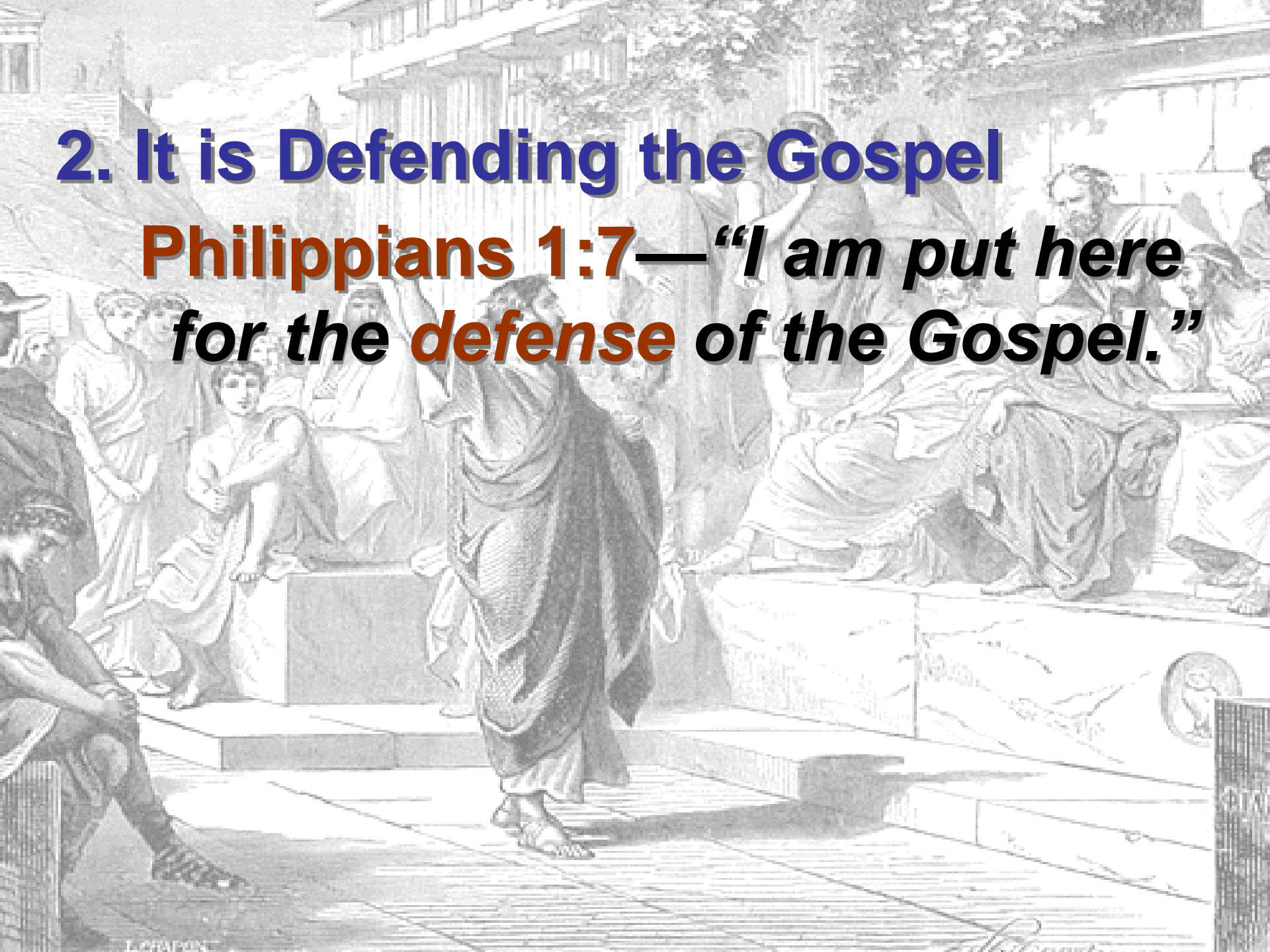
**1 Peter 3:15**—*“Always being prepared to...[give] **a reason** for the hope that is in you.”*





## 2. It is Defending the Gospel

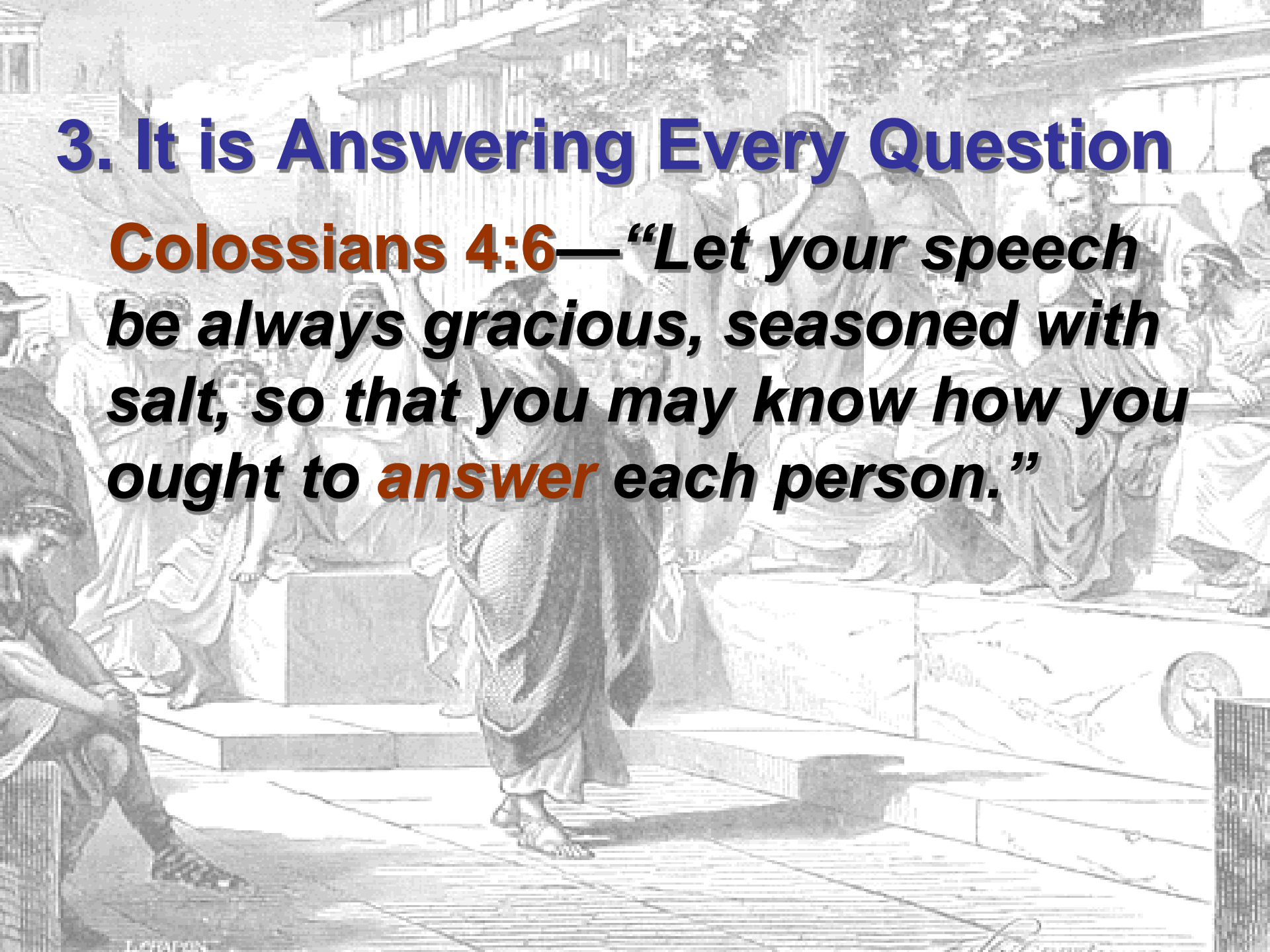
**Philippians 1:7**—***“I am put here  
for the **defense** of the Gospel.”***





### 3. It is Answering Every Question

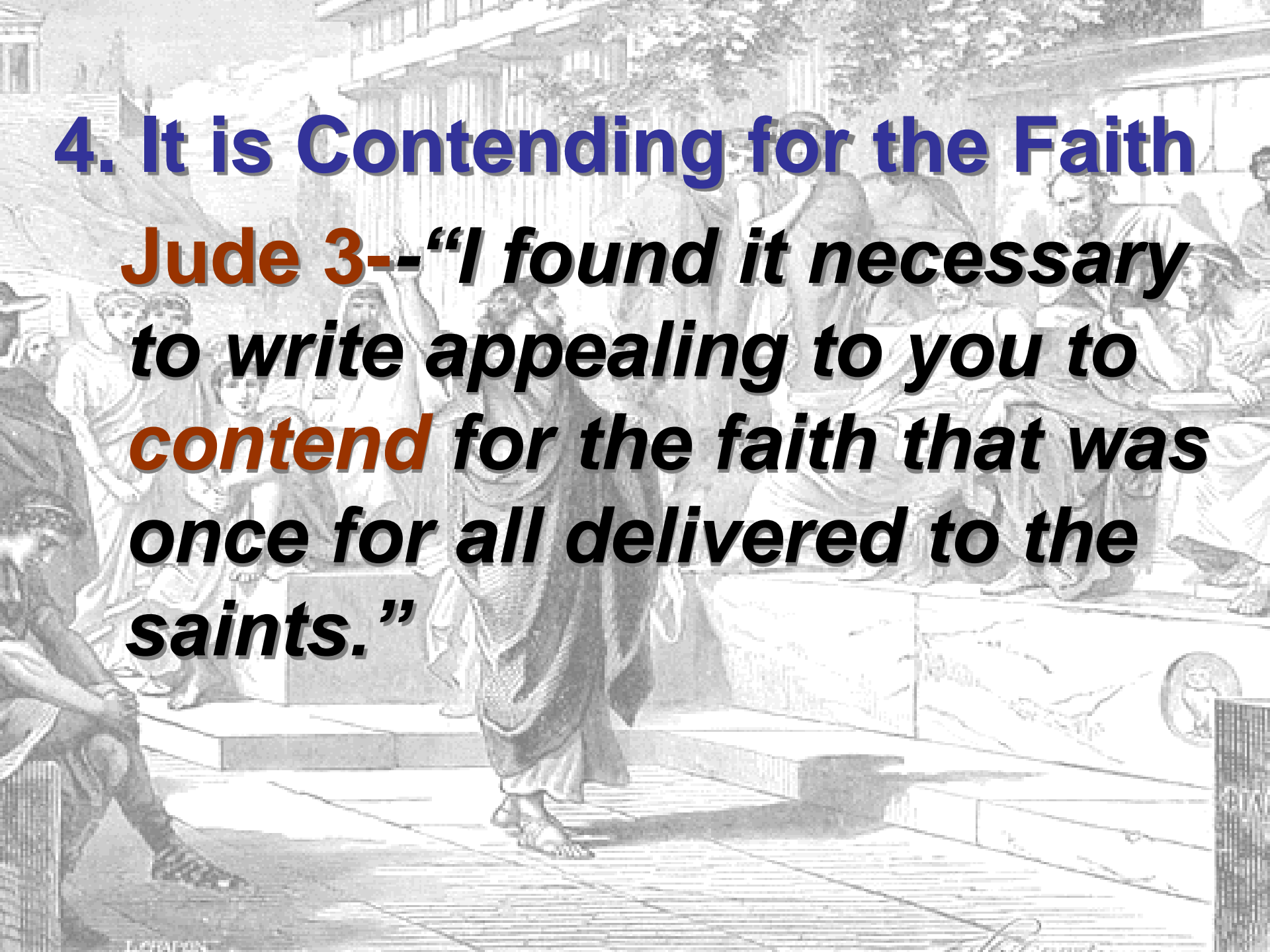
**Colossians 4:6**—*“Let your speech be always gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to **answer** each person.”*





## 4. It is Contending for the Faith

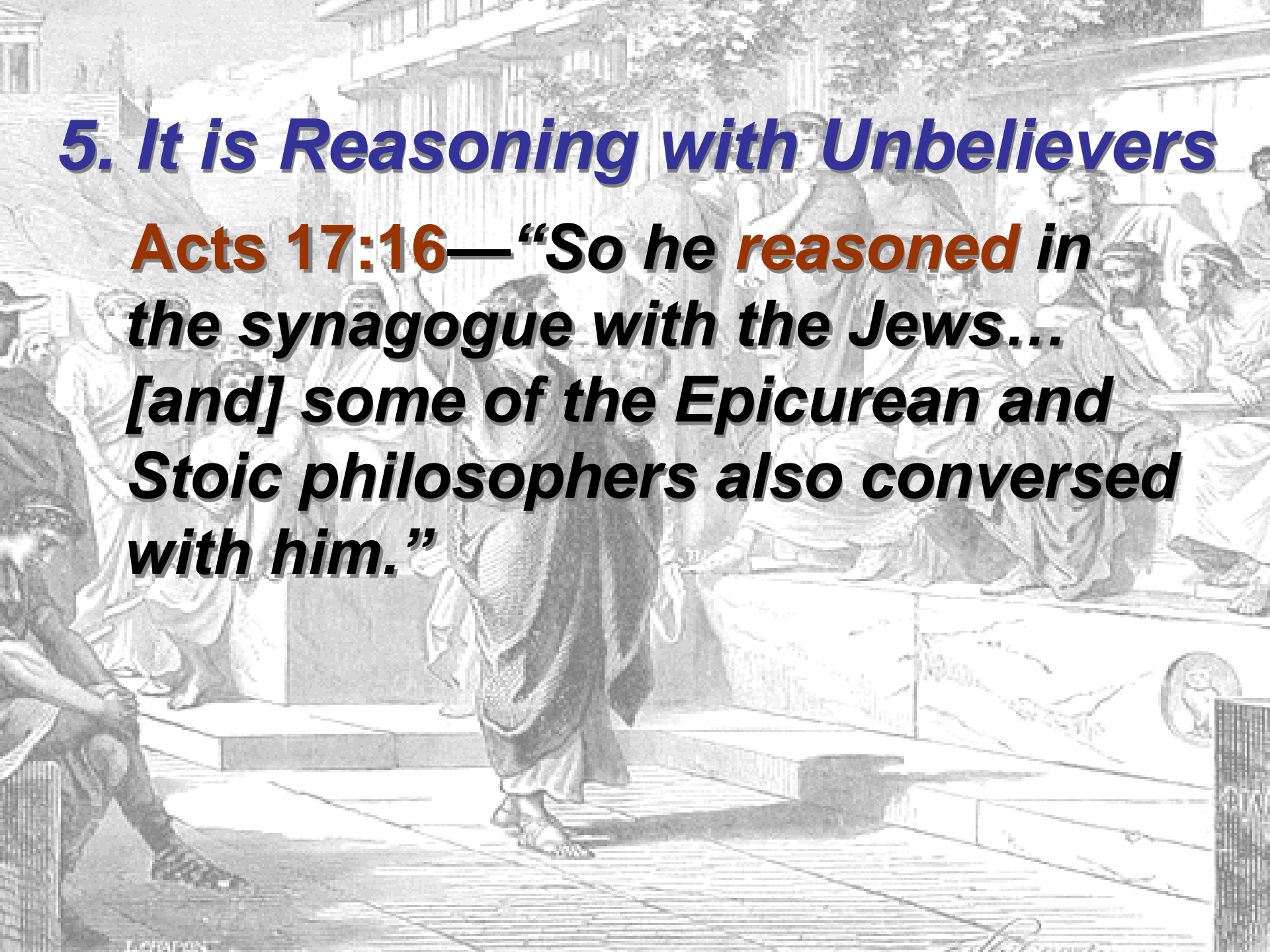
**Jude 3--***“I found it necessary to write appealing to you to **contend** for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”*





## ***5. It is Reasoning with Unbelievers***

**Acts 17:16**—“So he **reasoned** in the synagogue with the Jews... [and] some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him.”





## 6. It is Pre-Evangelism

We cannot effectively evangelize until we first **pre**-evangelize.

**There cannot be:**

...the Son of **God**,

...the Word of **God**,

...miraculous acts of **God**,

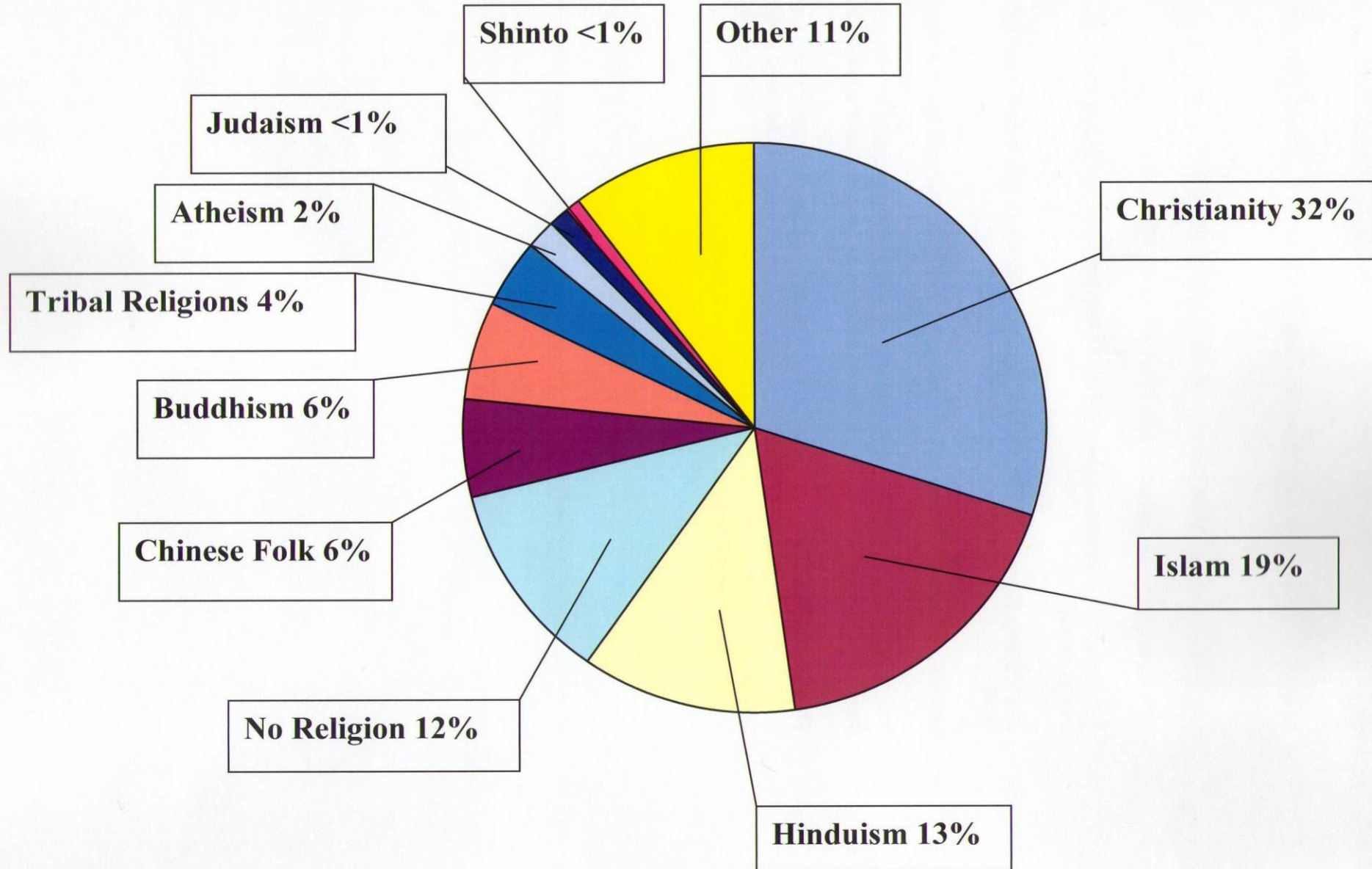
...and salvation of **God**—

**unless there is a God!**





# How Much of the World is Non-Theistic?



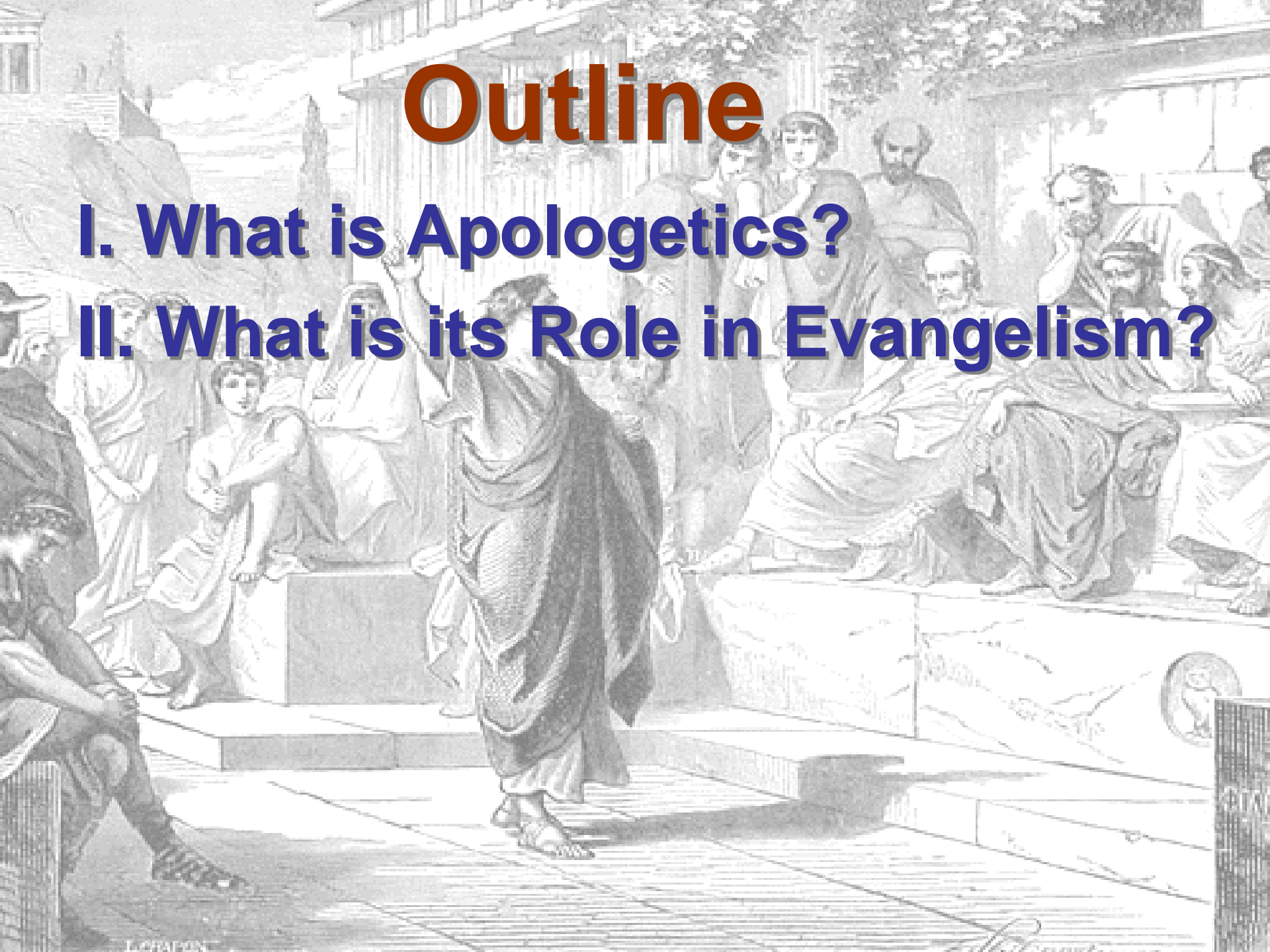
**Almost Half of it!**



# Outline

**I. What is Apologetics?**

**II. What is its Role in Evangelism?**





## II. What is its Role in Evangelism?

**A. Its Pre-evangelistic role**—convincing non-Christians to accept the Faith.

*“He **reasoned** with them from the Scriptures ...explaining and **proving** that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead...and some of them were **persuaded** and joined Paul and Silas....”*

**B. Its Post-evangelistic role**—confirm Christians in the Faith.

*“It seemed good to me...to write an orderly account for you...that you may have **certainty** concerning the things you have been taught” (Lk. 1:4).*



# **Apologetics Helps Pre-Evangelism**

**“This past Sunday a first year college student visited our Sunday morning service and spoke to me afterwards. He said, “I am an atheist.” A few years ago that statement would have left me scrambling for a way to reach him. However, the materials I have received from you have been a great help. With the Lord’s help I was able to answer his arguments and in the end he really had no reason to deny God’s existence, he just didn’t want God to control his life. At the end of our discussion he was standing in the back of our building with tears in his eyes. He hasn’t yet received Christ, but he is now left without reasons to deny that God exists.” (Pastor Jones 11/18/05)**



# **It Brings Assurance to Believers**

**“My son is dying of cancer and for months all I could think of was ‘What if there really isn’t a God?’ ‘What if there isn’t a heaven?’ ‘What if my son just disappears?’ ‘Why is my Christian religion correct and others incorrect?’ .... Thank you so much for this book you wrote.... It answered all my questions for me.... I am now able to pick up my Bible and read it and find comfort in the words during this very difficult time of my son dying from cancer. I can pray to God and feel assured that my son will soon be in His hands.” (Nancy Dickens 8/2/05)**



# **The Pattern of Paul**

**He started where they were:**

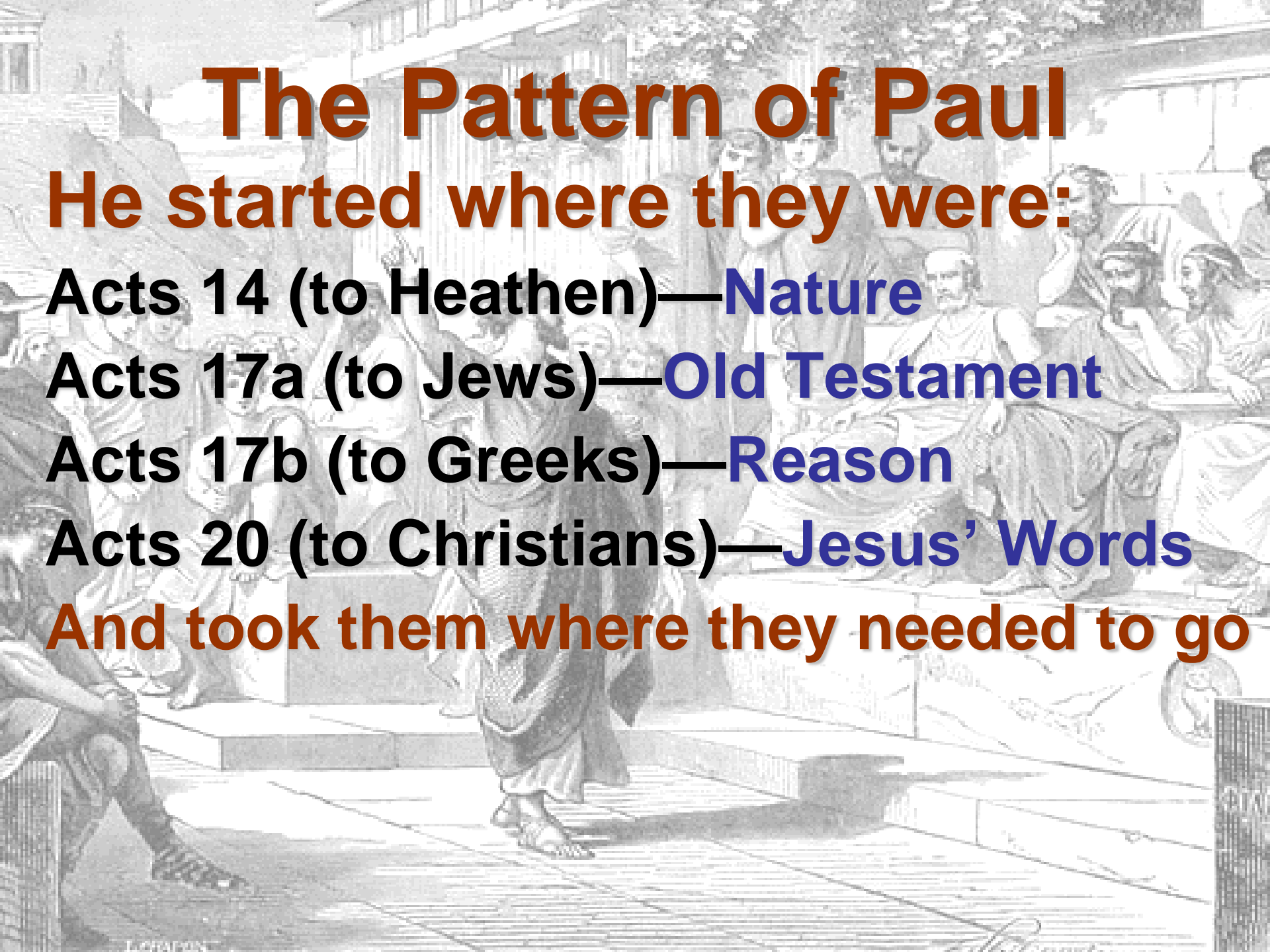
**Acts 14 (to Heathen)—Nature**

**Acts 17a (to Jews)—Old Testament**

**Acts 17b (to Greeks)—Reason**

**Acts 20 (to Christians)—Jesus' Words**

**And took them where they needed to go**





# The Pattern of Paul

He started where they were:

Acts 14 (to Heathen)—Nature

*“He [God] did not leave himself without witness for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness” (v. 17).*

*“For His invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:19-20).*



# The Pattern of Paul

He started where they were:

Acts 14 (to Heathen)—Nature

Acts 17a (to Jews)—Scripture

***“And Paul...reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead...” (Acts 17:3).***



# The Pattern of Paul

He started where they were:

Acts 14 (to Heathen)—Nature

Acts 17a (to Jews)—Scripture

Acts 17b (to Greeks)—Reason

***“As even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are all his offspring.’ 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” (v. 29).***



# The Pattern of Paul

He started where they were:

Acts 14 (to Heathen)—Nature

Acts 17a (to Jews)—Scripture

Acts 17b (to Greeks)—Reason

Acts 20 (To Christians)—Jesus' Words

*“He sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church [and spoke of] the ministry **I received from the Lord Jesus** [who said] ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (vs. 24, 35).*

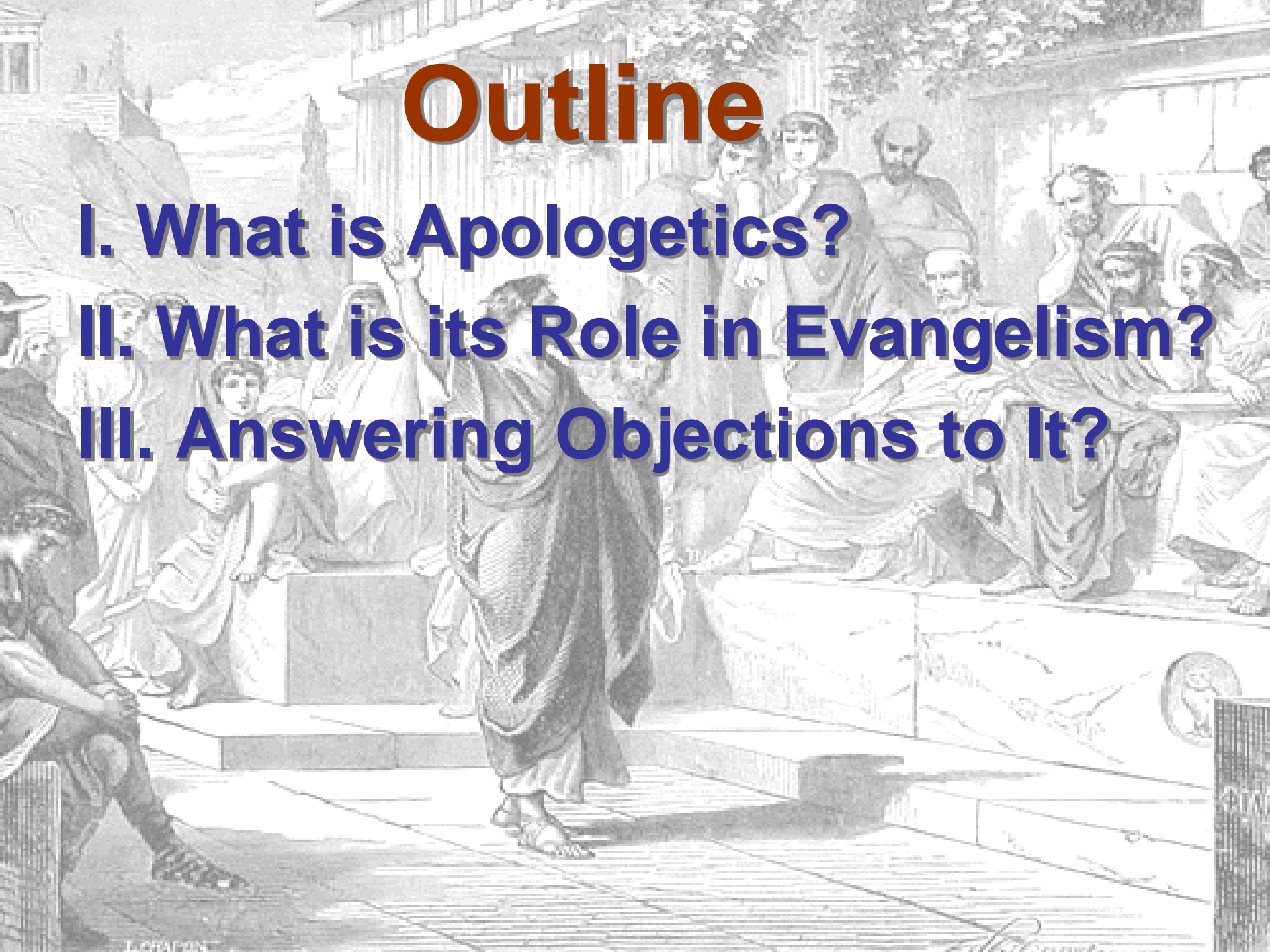


# Outline

**I. What is Apologetics?**

**II. What is its Role in Evangelism?**

**III. Answering Objections to It?**





# III. Answering Some Objections

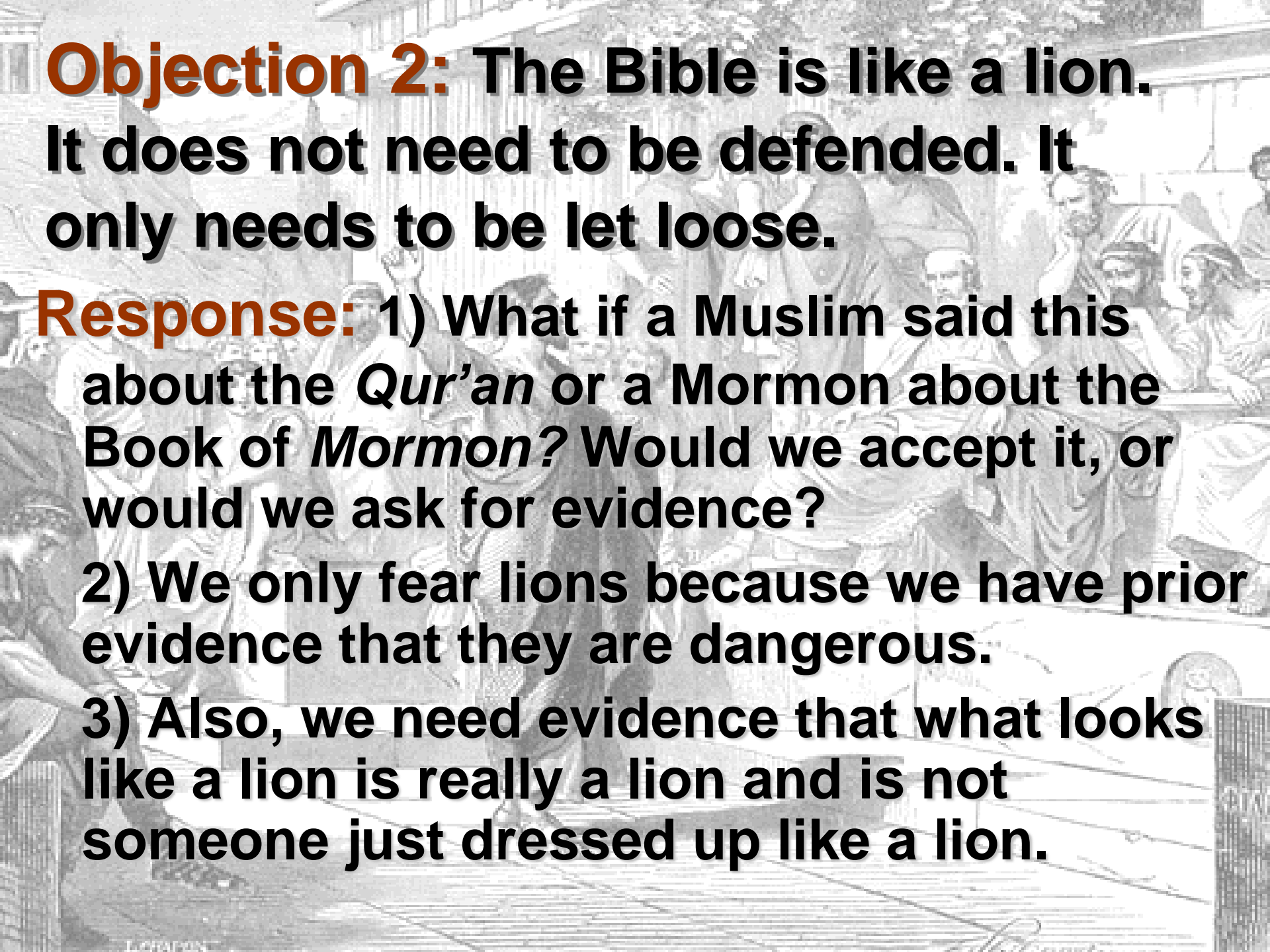
**Objection 1:** Only the Holy Spirit can save, not apologetics?

**Response:** True, but He can use evidence to convince them to be saved.

1. Almost no one believes because he thinks it is irrational and without evidence.
2. Almost everyone who believes is convinced that it is the most reasonable thing for him to do.

**Note:** Apologetics can lead the horse to the water, but only the Holy Spirit can persuade him to drink it!





**Objection 2:** The Bible is like a lion. It does not need to be defended. It only needs to be let loose.

**Response:** 1) What if a Muslim said this about the *Qur'an* or a Mormon about the *Book of Mormon*? Would we accept it, or would we ask for evidence?

2) We only fear lions because we have prior evidence that they are dangerous.

3) Also, we need evidence that what looks like a lion is really a lion and is not someone just dressed up like a lion.





**Objection 3:** Paul tried apologetics on Mars Hill (Acts 17) but failed. He later turned to preaching Jesus only (1 Cor. 2:2).

**Response:** This is not true because:

- 1) He had good results for “**Some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them**” (Acts 17:34).
- 2) **He had the same results here as elsewhere:** some mocked, some believed, and some wanted to hear more (v. 32).
- 3) **He did preach Jesus and his resurrection here** (vs. 31-32). He just pre-evangelized them first.
- 4) He did not use a different method in Corinth. **He gave them the strongest evidence for the resurrection anywhere (1 Cor. 15).**



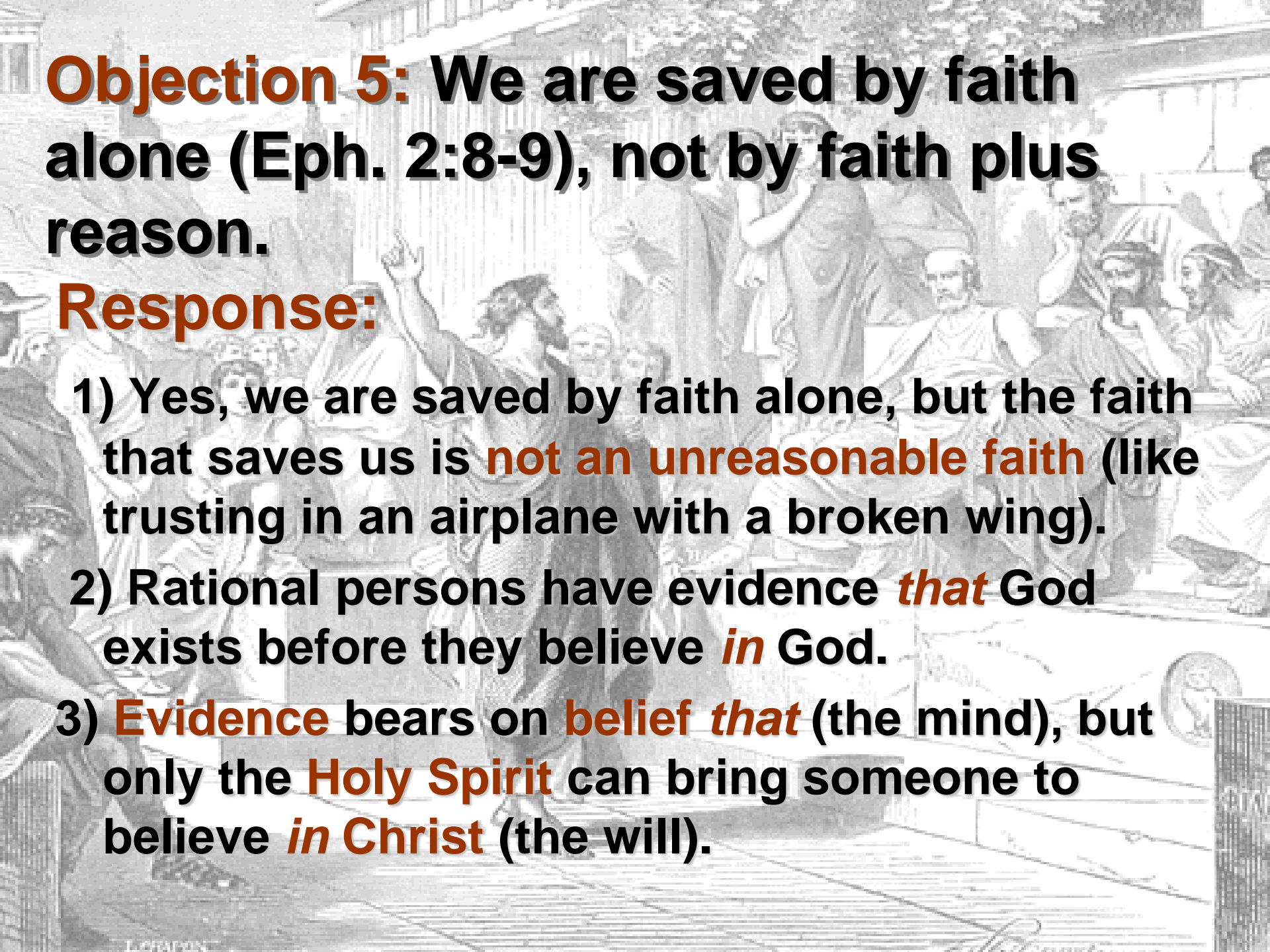


**Objection 4:** Paul said the natural man does not even understand spiritual things, let alone be convinced by arguments (1 Cor. 2:14).

**Response:**

- 1) His understanding is distorted by the fact that he does not “receive” (Gk: *dekomaī*) them.
- 2) The Bible says **perceive** the truth (Rom. 1:18-20), but they do not **receive** it (1 Cor. 2:14).
- 3) The real power is not **mind** power but **will** power.





**Objection 5:** We are saved by faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9), not by faith plus reason.

**Response:**

- 1) Yes, we are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves us is **not an unreasonable faith** (like trusting in an airplane with a broken wing).
- 2) Rational persons have evidence **that** God exists before they believe **in** God.
- 3) **Evidence** bears on **belief that** (the mind), but only the **Holy Spirit** can bring someone to believe **in Christ** (the will).



**Objection 6:** No one is saved by using apologetics but by preaching Christ (Rom. 1:16).

**Response:**

- 1) It is not either one or the other; **it is both.**
- 2) Christ is the only way to God, but **apologetics is one way to help bring people to Christ.**
- 3) It is unreasonable to believe that the **God of reason**, who created **people with reason**, would **bypass reason** to reach people for Christ.
- 4) God wants to reach the heart, but **he does not bypass the head on the way to the heart.** He said,  
    *“Come now let us **reason**...”* (Isa. 1:18).  
    *“Give a **reason** for your hope...”* (1 Pet. 3:15).  
    *“Love the Lord with all your...**mind**”* (Mt. 22:37).





# Outline

**I. What is Apologetics?**

**II. What is its Role in Evangelism?**

**III. Answering Objections to It?**

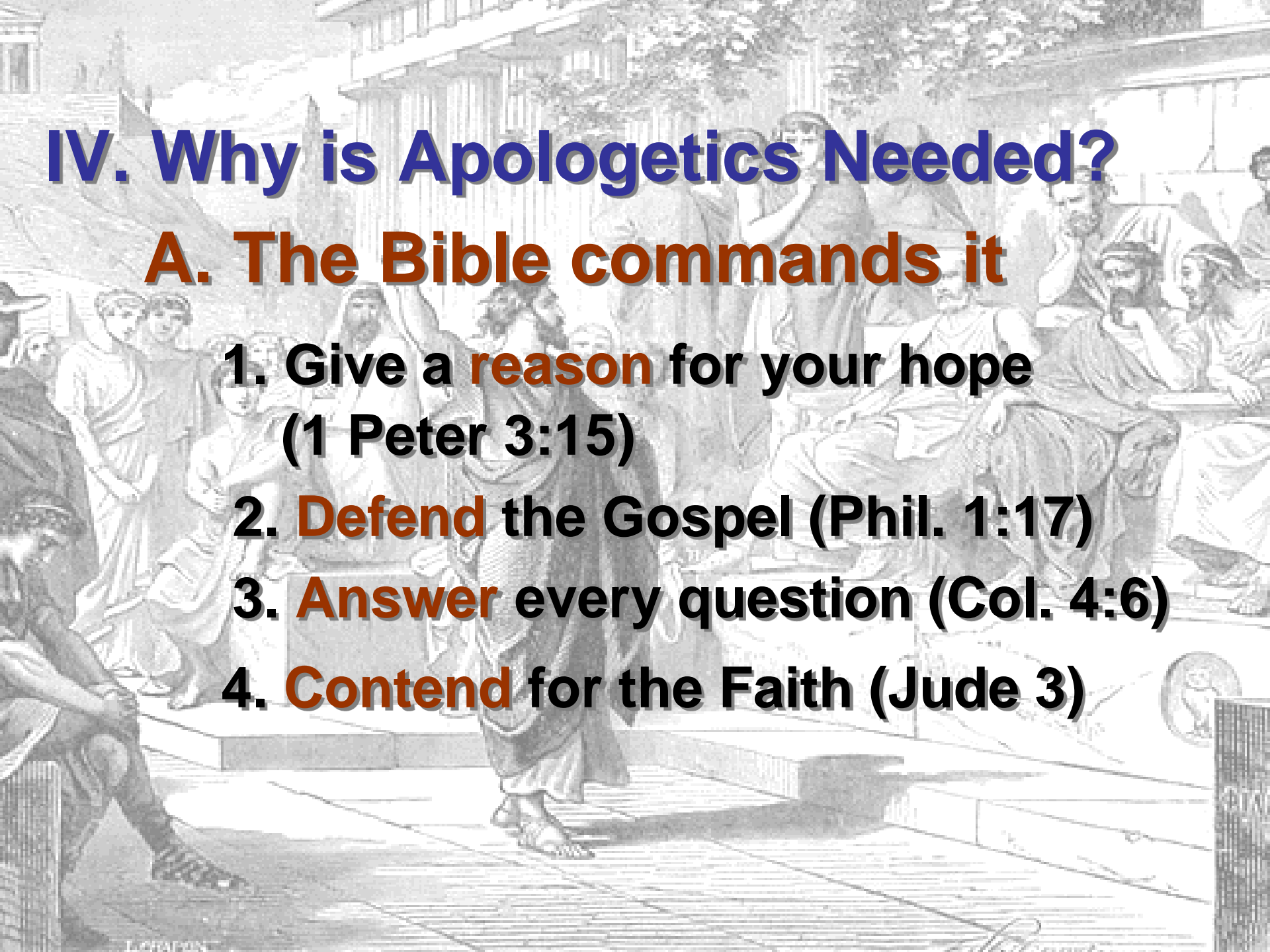
**IV. Why is Apologetics Needed?**



# IV. Why is Apologetics Needed?

## A. The Bible commands it

1. Give a **reason** for your hope (1 Peter 3:15)
2. **Defend** the Gospel (Phil. 1:17)
3. **Answer** every question (Col. 4:6)
4. **Contend** for the Faith (Jude 3)





# **IV. Why is Apologetics Needed?**

**A. The Bible commands it**

**B. The Culture demands it**

**1. Relativism**—No view is absolutely true.

**2. Pluralism**—All views are relatively true.

**3. Naturalism**—No supernatural view is actually true.

**Apologetics answers these obstacles to faith**



# C. S. Lewis on Why Apologetics?



***"To be ignorant and simple now--not to be able to meet the enemies on their ground--would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."***

*(The Weight of Glory, 50)*



# The Problem

## Christianity is declaring:

1. An **absolute** truth in a **relativistic** time.
2. An **exclusivistic** message to a **pluralistic** mind-set.
3. A **supernaturalistic** view in a **naturalistic** venue.

**Note:** Addressing the challenge of our culture is needed so that they are able to understand the content of our communication.



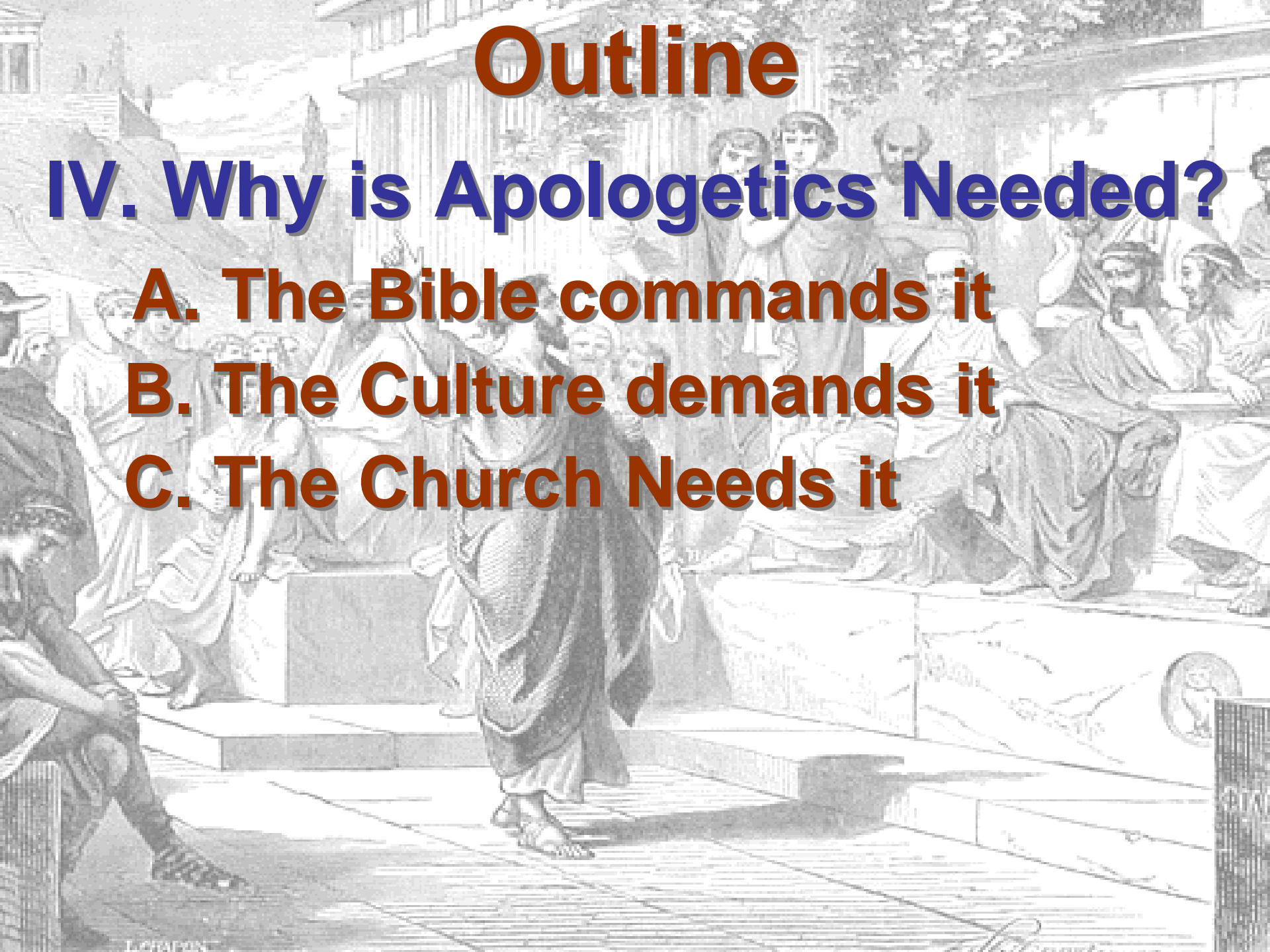
# Outline

## IV. Why is Apologetics Needed?

**A. The Bible commands it**

**B. The Culture demands it**

**C. The Church Needs it**





## C. The Church needs it

1. 80% of active teens leave in their 20s
2. Main reasons are doubts in the Bible
3. When did the doubts begin:

4% in Grade School

40% in Middle School

44% in High School

11% in College

**Note 1:** **Doubt** begins in Grade School;  
**Departure** occurs in College

**Note 2:** Only **9% of evangelicals** have a Christian world view!

Only **51% of evangelical pastors** have a Christian world view!



# Outline

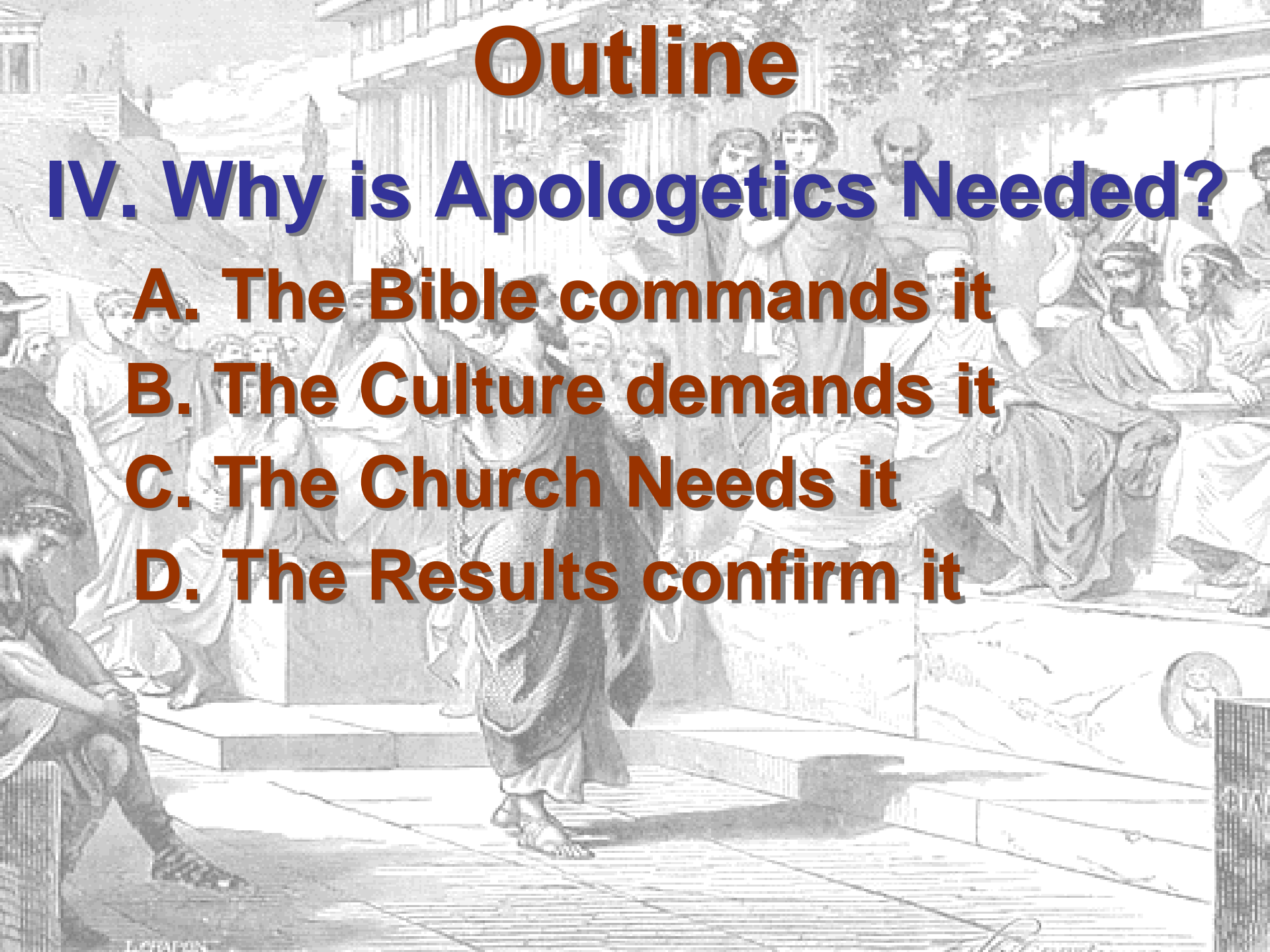
## IV. Why is Apologetics Needed?

**A. The Bible commands it**

**B. The Culture demands it**

**C. The Church Needs it**

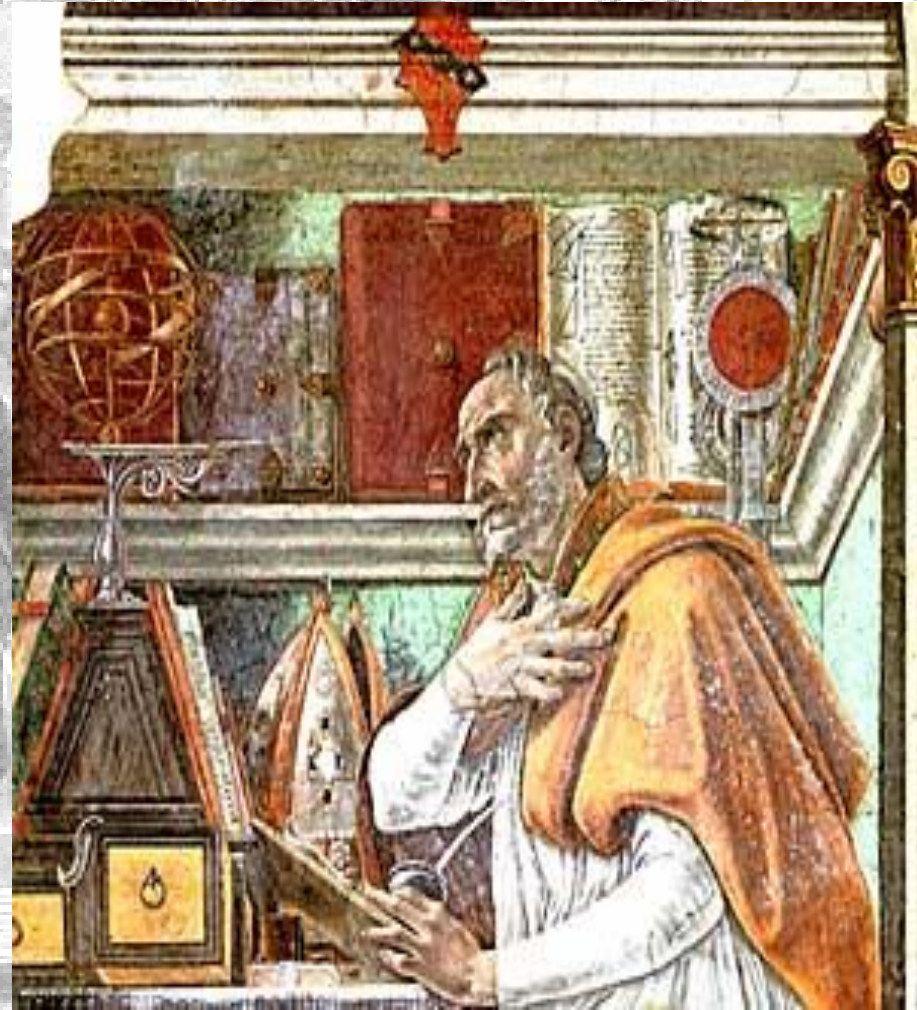
**D. The Results confirm it**





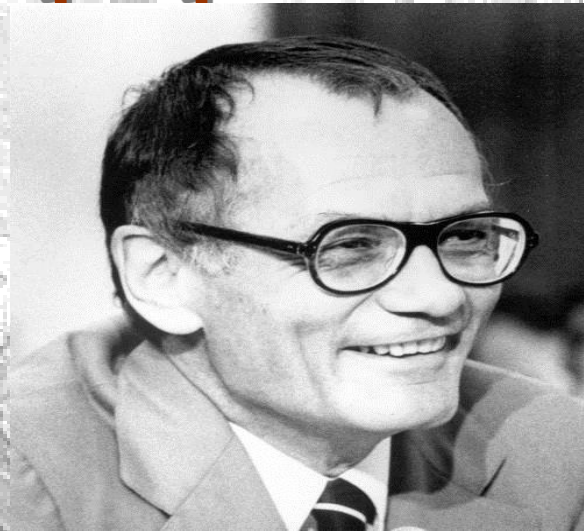
# How Apologetics Helped Augustine

- He reasoned his way from **skepticism**.
- A Christian debater helped deliver him from **Manichaeism**.
- The philosopher Plotinus helped him reason from **materialism**.





# Astronomy Leads to Genesis



"Now we see how  
cal evidence  
ads to a biblical  
view of the  
origin of the world.

The details differ, but the  
essential elements in the  
astronomical and biblical  
accounts of genesis are the  
same: the chain of events



# **Atheist Reasons to Designer**

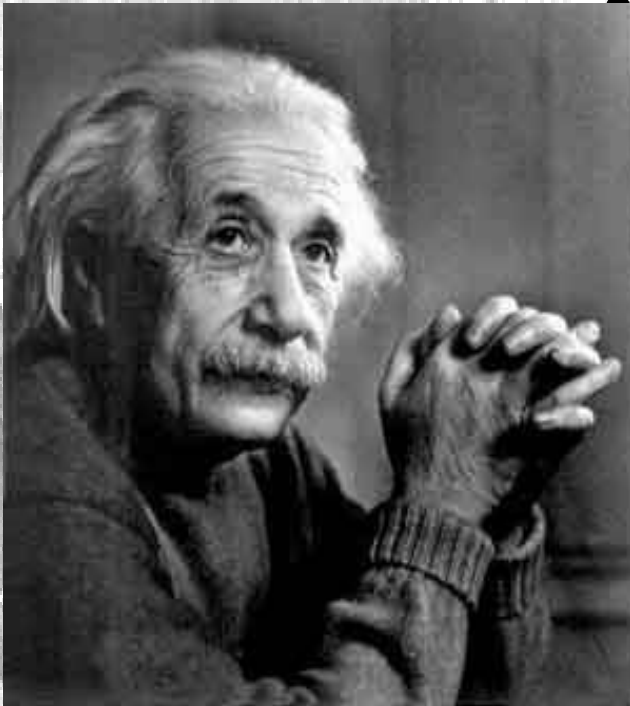


**"Biochemical systems are exceedingly complex, so much so that the chance of their being formed**

**through random shuffling ...is insensibly different from zero." So, there must be "...an intelligence, which designed the biochemicals and gave rise to the origin of carbonaceous life" (Hoyle, *Evolution from Space*, 3, 143).**



# ***Scientific Evidence led Einstein to Posit Mind Behind Nature***




**Albert Einstein**

***"The harmony of natural law...reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection" (cited in Heeren, Shew Me God, 66).***



# Notorious Atheists Reasoned to God

A photograph of Anthony Flew, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and a striped tie. He is standing behind a podium, speaking into a microphone. To his left is a large arrangement of white flowers and greenery. The background is dark and out of focus.

*“It is simply inconceivable that any material matrix or field can generate agents who think and act... A force field does not plan or think. So...the world of living, conscious, thinking beings has to originate in a living Source, a Mind”  
(There is a God, 183).*

*Anthony Flew*



# Reason Leads Atheist to God

THERE IS ~~NO~~ GOD

How the world's

most notorious atheist

changed his mind

"Towering and courageous. . . . Flew's colleagues in the church of fundamentalist atheism will be scandalized."

—Francis S. Collins, author of *The Language of God*

ANTONY FLEW

with ROY ABRAHAM VARGHESE

**"Nor do I claim to have had any personal experience of God or any experience that may be called supernatural or miraculous. In short, my discovery of the divine has been a pilgrimage of reason and not of faith" (93).**



# Famous Astronomer Finds God



***“The world is too complicated in all of its parts to be due to chance alone.... The more one learns of biochemistry the more unbelievable it becomes unless **there** is some kind of organizing principle --an architect for believers...” (Truth [1985], 54).***



# Noted Atheist Found God!



***“I do not feel that I am the product of chance, a speck of dust in the universe, but someone who was expected, prepared, prefigured. In short, a being whom only a Creator could put here”***  
***(National Review, 11 June, 1982), 677.***



# Moral Law Led Atheist to God



**C.S. Lewis**  
***Mere Christianity*, 45.**

***[As an atheist] my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.***

**Straight Line = Absolute Standard**

---



# Converted Atheists



**OBJECTIONS,  
OBSTACLES,  
ACCEPTANCE**  
*An interview with J. Budziszewski*

**“What actually led me back was a growing intuition that my condition was objectively evil.... Evil is deficiency in good; there is no such thing as an evil "substance," an evil-in-itself. So if my condition really was evil, there had to be some good of which my condition was the ruination.... I had been so wrong, for so long, so profoundly, that it seemed that almost anything might be true—even the faith that I had abandoned”** (*Ignatius Press, 2006*).



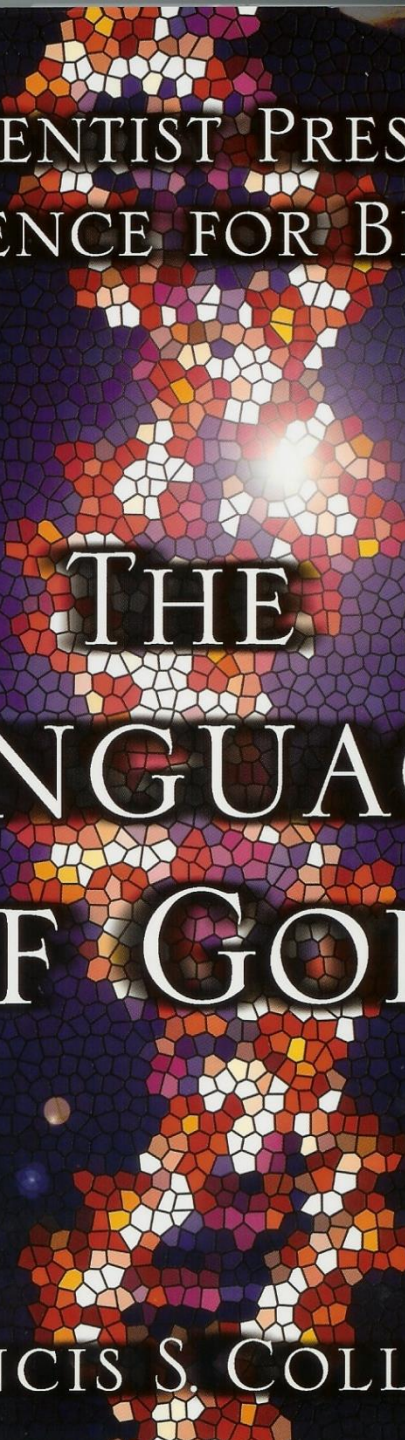
# Noted Atheist Scientist Finds God



**Francis Collins**

***“Why would such a universal and uniquely human hunger [for God] exist, if it were not connected to some opportunity for fulfillment?... Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water” (The Language of God, 38).***



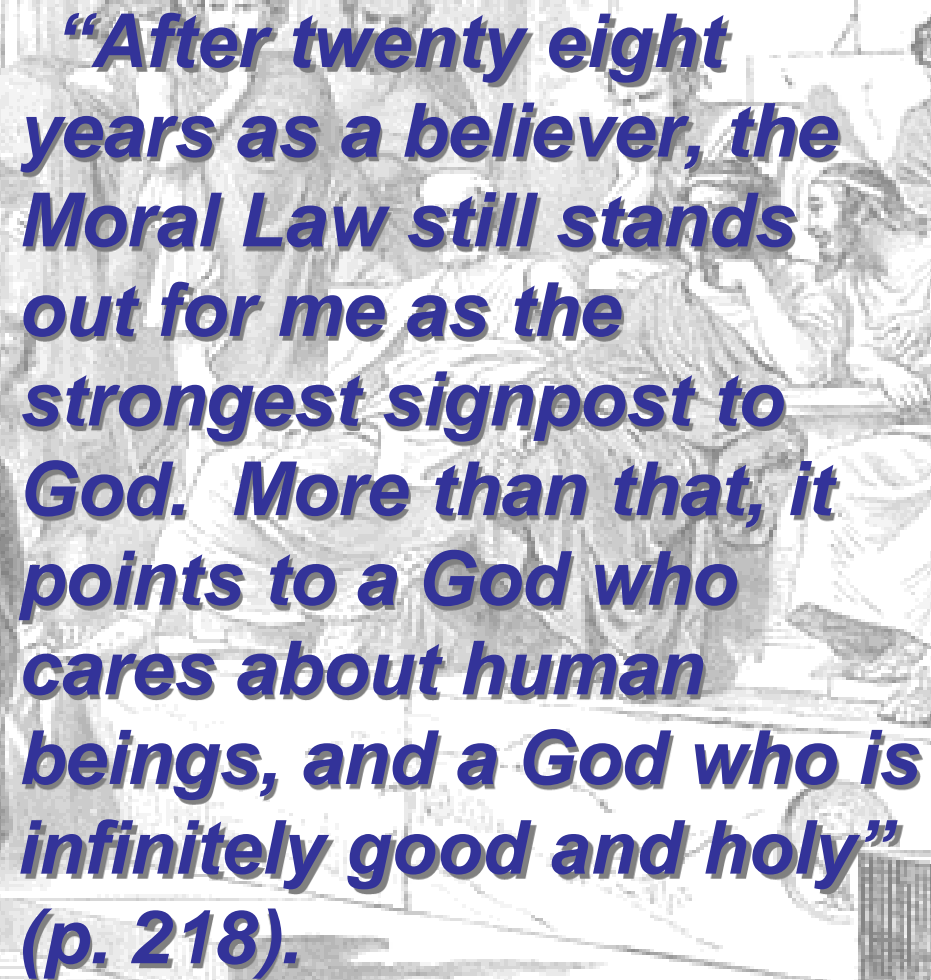


A SCIENTIST PRESENTS  
EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF

THE  
LANGUAGE  
OF GOD

FRANCIS S. COLLINS

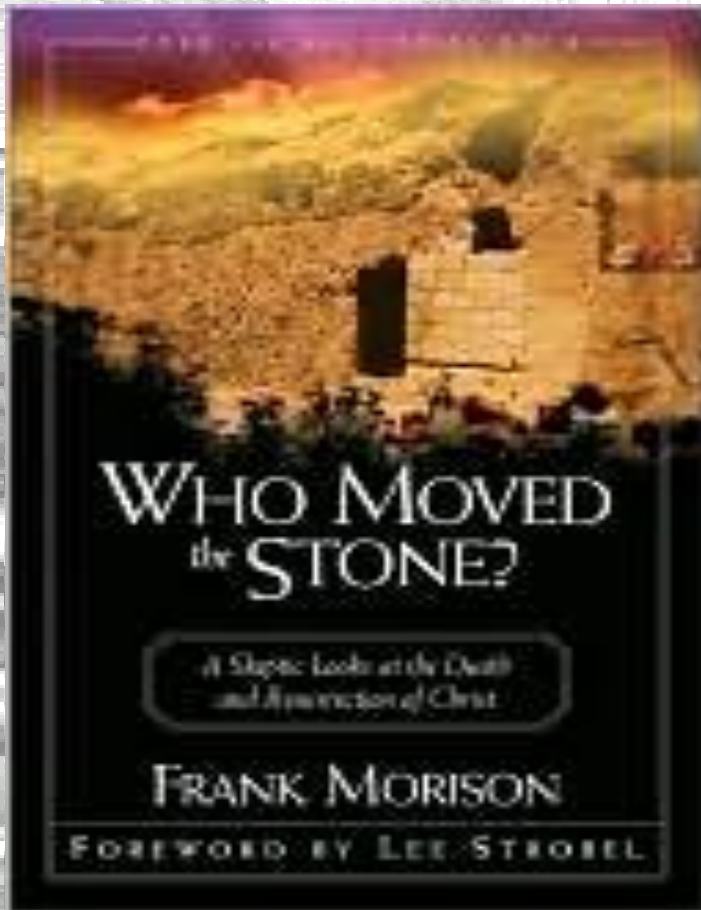
## Former Atheist:



*“After twenty eight years as a believer, the Moral Law still stands out for me as the strongest signpost to God. More than that, it points to a God who cares about human beings, and a God who is infinitely good and holy” (p. 218).*



# Evidence Leads Skeptic to Christ



- **Skeptic converted in attempt to disprove Christianity**
- **First Chapter titled *“The Book that Refused to be Written”***



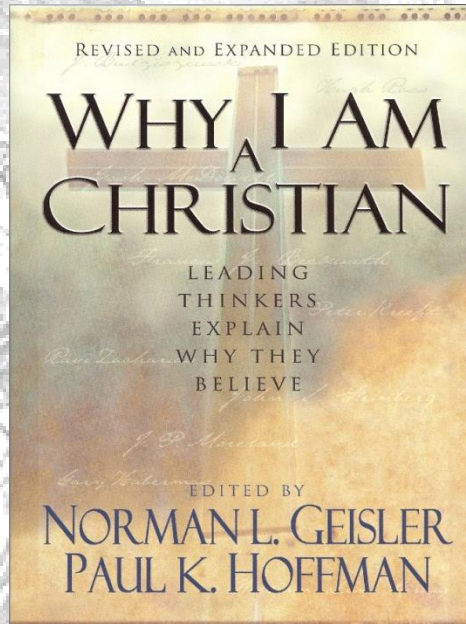
# From Atheism to Christianity



- **Former Atheists**
- **Donald Bly and family**
- **Near St. Louis, MO**
- **Converted 1971**
- **Mundelein, IL**



# Apologetics Clears Roadblocks to Faith

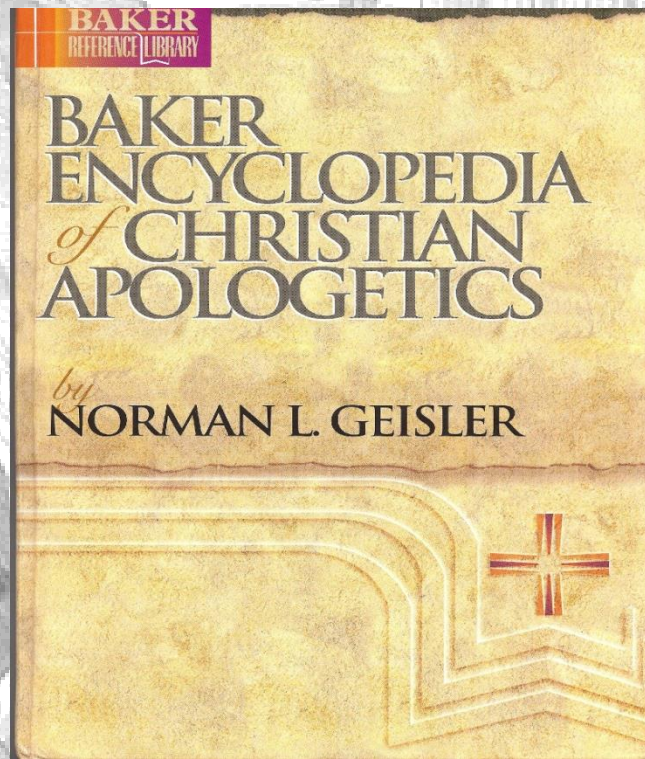


**“WOW! I just got done reading *Why I Am a Christian*, and I was blown away. It is perhaps the most powerful and influential Christian book I’ve ever read. It was exactly what I was looking for. It provided the answers to**

**the roadblocks that were guarding against my faith.... Your book pressed the red button setting off the nuclear bomb of my faith.”**  
**(James Warmels 6/27/05)**



# God Used Evidence to Bring Real Faith

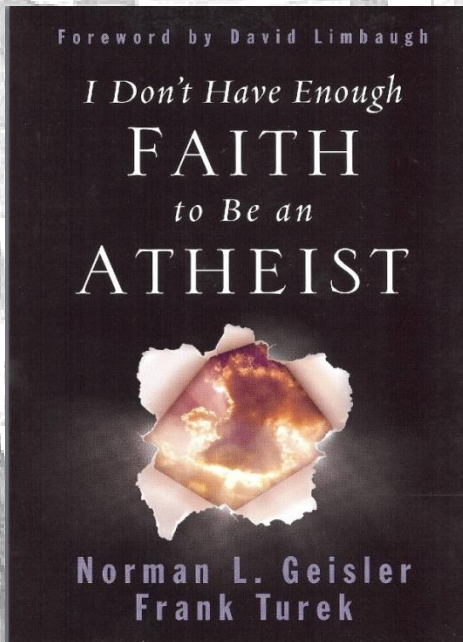


**“This book, ‘Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics,’ is something I will have forever.... I cannot even express with enough words all the ways **God has proven Himself to me**.... I was raised in a Christian**

**home but I came to realize that I believed in Christianity merely because I was told it was true, which is interesting because **now that I know it to be true** I know that I never truly BELIEVED to begin with.” (R. Johnson 12/1/06)**



# Apologetics Can Lead to Salvation

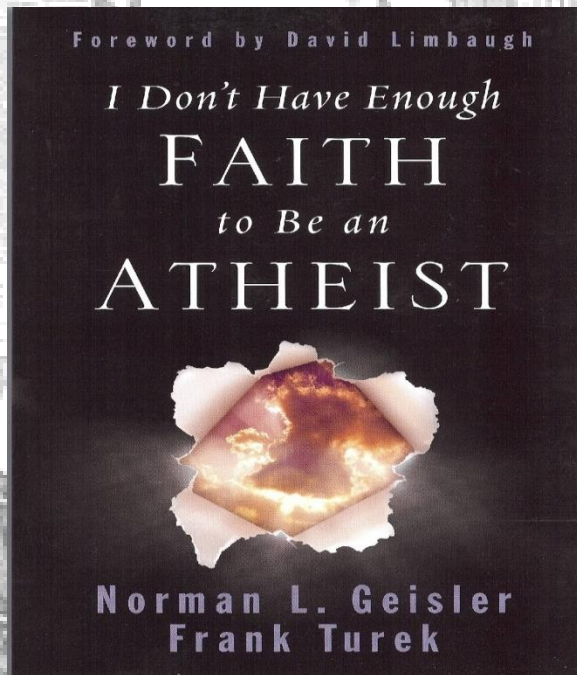


**“God sent me your book ‘I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist’.... I opened the book thinking I would rip it apart with my superior viewpoint and **about one quarter of the way through I****

**ended up apologizing to God and accepting him into my heart. I have since grown exponentially in Christ, and I thought I would thank you for your inspiring book (Ryan 11/10/06).**



# Some Unbelievers Converted



***“For several [years] we’ve prayed for my son in law an avowed Atheist. After reading your book...here is his note: “I thought I’d drop you a line and let you know that I finished the book yesterday, and as I was***

***sitting at my desk at work that morning, I came to realize that even if I didn’t have every answer to every question, I at least had a preponderance of evidence in my hands, which has finally tipped the scales in God’s direction again. So I said a prayer and accepted Jesus.”*** (Bernard LaTour, 6/4/05)

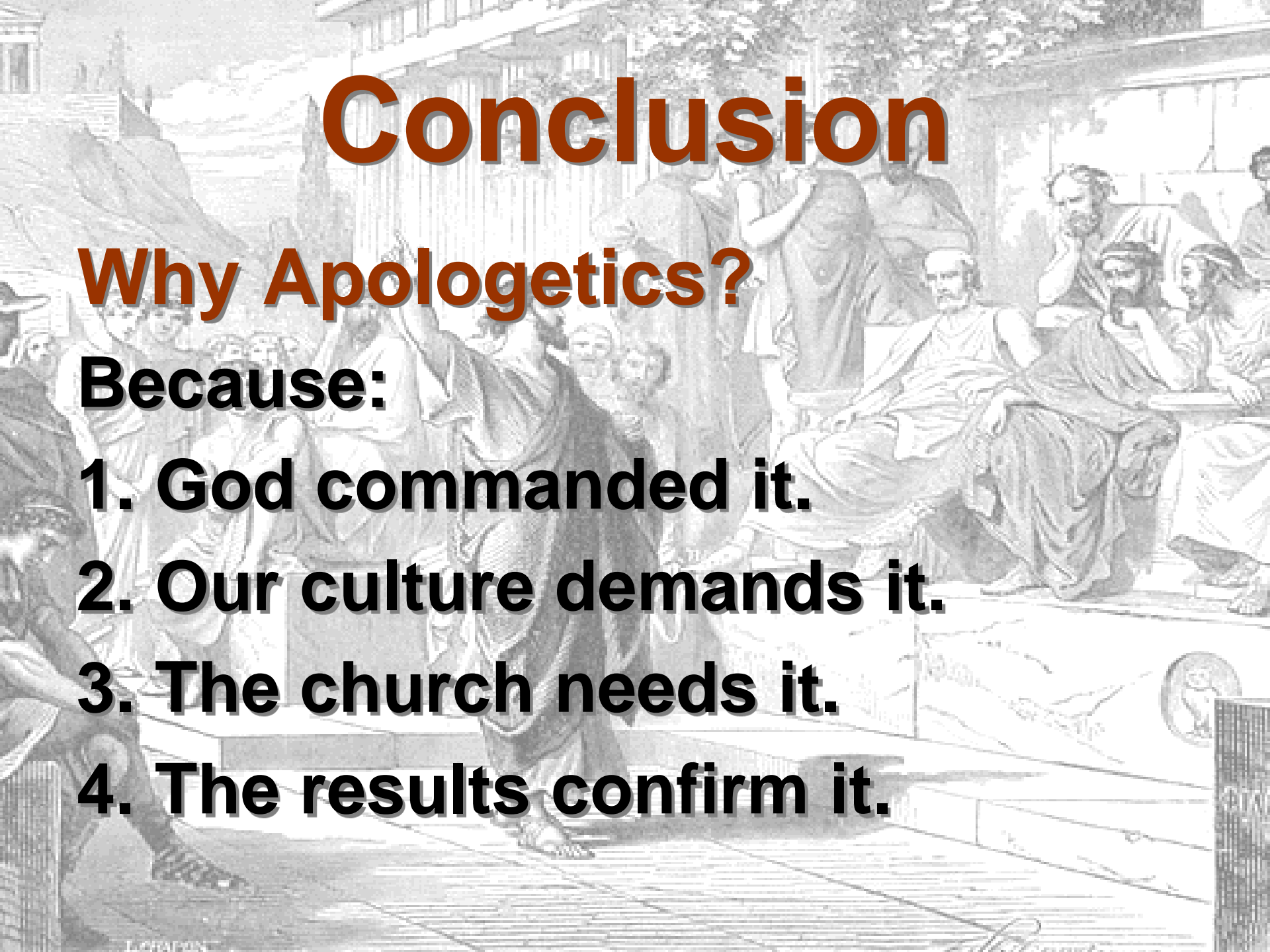


# Conclusion

## Why Apologetics?

**Because:**

- 1. God commanded it.**
- 2. Our culture demands it.**
- 3. The church needs it.**
- 4. The results confirm it.**







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