

Apologetics as Explanation and Proclamation (Acts 2:1-42)

The apostle Peter himself engaged in apologetics on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers gathered in Jerusalem. The tongues of fire and the sudden outbreak of speech in the languages of the “devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem” (v. 5) caused such a commotion and attracted so much attention that Peter, surrounded by the rest of Jesus’ disciples, addressed the gathering crowd.

He explained what was happening, linked it to Hebrew prophecy, and then explained who it was they had just crucified, what had happened later (the resurrection) and, again by reference to the Scriptures, what it all meant.

Here apologetic proclamation emerged from events. It had not been planned by the disciples but was their response to a stellar opportunity to present the gospel in a fully intelligible and intelligent way. That day about three thousand people were added to the community of faith. Today we would call this mass evangelism. Then it was a simple, completely reasonable response under the impetus and in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

(A Little Primer on Humble Apologetics by James W. Sire, Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2006, 17, Paragraph Structure Modified)