

**Jude 1:3** From Strength to Strength: Defend the Faith

This series of ten messages is collectively titled, “From Strength to Strength” based upon **Psalms 84:7**: “**They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.**” This ninth message deals with our witness and defense of the Gospel.

When Jude began his letter he intended to write about the salvation we share as believers (**v. 3a**), but then the Holy Spirit compelled him to appeal to his readers to defend the faith:

**Jude 1:3b: “I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”**

- Grammatical Usage: “**appealing**” or in the Greek, “parakaleó” meaning, “compel; admonish”; “**contend**” or “epagónizomai” meaning, “struggle earnestly”.
- Literal Interpretation: I feel compelled to make my letter to you an earnest appeal to put up a real fight for the faith which has been once and for all committed to those who belong to Christ.
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word, God continually uses His Word. **V. 1** tells us that as Christians we have been “**called**” and are “**loved by God the Father**”; but **v. 3** tells us that we are not only to rejoice in the Faith and enjoy the blessings of the gospel, not only to spread the good news so that others may be saved, but we are to contend for it, defend it. This presupposes that the Faith is being attacked. This was the case in AD 66 when Jude was writing (**v. 4**), and it is certainly true today. In those days wolves had come into the fold in sheep’s clothing (**Acts 20:29**). Also today, although we should be concerned about evil forces at work outside the Church, we should be particularly concerned about those forces at work inside the Church where there are many false prophets doing the enemy’s work (**2 Corinthians 11:15**). It is therefore the clear duty of every believer to defend the Faith.

#### 1. What is it we are to defend?

We must defend the Faith “**once for all entrusted to the saints**” – that is, we are to defend the whole body of revealed truth contained in the whole of the inspired canon of Scripture, God’s Word. We are told four things about this precious truth:

- A. It is divine in its origin. It was “**once for all entrusted to the saints**” – but by whom? By man? No – see **2 Timothy 3:16**; **2 Peter 1:21**. God is the author of the Faith which He has “**entrusted to the saints**” by “**men who spoke from God**” – and it is this Faith which is divine in its origin that we are to defend.
- B. It is unique in its content. There is no other Faith – this is the one and only perfect revelation of God. Jude carefully uses the definite article – it is “**the faith that was once for all entrusted...**” (**Hebrews 1:1-3**).
- C. It is complete in its revelation. It is described as “**the faith that was once for all (literally) entrusted...**” That is, it is a complete and final revelation; it can never need any addition or any revision, for it is complete and will never change. With the closing of the canon of Scripture, God completed the revelation of His truth.

- D. It is holy in its nature (**v. 20**). It was given by a holy God by the agency of the Holy Spirit, through holy men, and called the Holy Scriptures, for the purpose of producing holy living and leading men to the holy City (**Revelation 21:10**).

Significantly Jude mentions most of the fundamental articles of the Faith which we are to defend. Notice the following:

- a) God is the Father of all who believe – **v. 1**.
- b) The glorious Person of our Lord Jesus Christ – **v. 4**.
- c) The doctrine of the grace of God – **v. 4**.
- d) The total depravity of man – **v. 7**.
- e) The personality of the Holy Spirit – **v. 19**.
- f) The existence of a personal Devil – **v. 9**.
- g) The fact of judgment and Hell – **vv. 6-7, 13**.
- h) The justification of the sinner by faith alone – **v. 11**.
- i) The personal return of Christ – **v. 14**.
- j) The eternal security of believers – **v. 24**.
- k) The sovereignty and keeping power of God – **v. 25**.
- l) The historical accuracy and the prophetic value of the Scriptures – **vv. 5-19**.

## 2. Why are we to defend the Faith?

Today every one of the fundamental, foundational truths of the Christian faith are being attacked and denied, not only by outsiders but by those inside the Church. From the shameless antisemitism on our college campuses to the blatant anti-Christian bigotry in Congress, the message from the cultural intelligentsia is clear: If you are one of those rubes who still believe in the Old Testament, the New Testament — or both — you are anathema, you should be silenced, you are unworthy of leadership and, in the case of Israel, you should be killed. Prophecy has been fulfilled (**2 Timothy 3:1-8; 4:1-4**). We must defend the faith; we must stand up for the truth.

## 3. How are we to defend the Faith?

We must defend it “**earnestly**” (**v. 3**). There must be action. We are to defend the Faith “earnestly but not furiously” (Matthew Henry) – look up James 1:20 – but we must do it in three ways:

- A. By living it. There is no greater defense of the Faith than a life that proves the reality of the Faith by its beauty and Christ-likeness. Although we must speak the truth and stand up for it, we must do so in love (**Ephesians 4:15**). Let us beware of becoming hard, critical and uncharitable in our defense of the Faith (**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**).
- B. By proclaiming it. Preach the gospel, the positive certainties! This will kill error in the quickest possible way. By all means expose error but do so mainly by positive instruction in the truth.
- C. By suffering for it. Rather than allowing the Faith to suffer, we must be willing to suffer, as many thousands are doing so today. Our forefathers died for the Faith. May God give us grace to follow their fine example and at all costs to stand up for the truth (**Acts 7:54-60**). Compare **Acts 5:41-42**.

➤ Conclusion: To defend is to both believe and behave.