

# What is a Defender of the Christian Faith?

by **Sir Knight Jay T. King**

I vowed to hold myself a "Defender of the Christian Faith" and since that solemn promise, I have heard blasphemous statements from other "Sir Knights" leading me to ask the question: What is a Defender of the Christian Faith? I chose to use the only resource that truly matters: the Holy Bible, the rule and guide of my faith. As I searched the divine scriptures for answers I found "light" as to what my sacred promise actually means. Jesus tells Peter in Matthew 16:18 "... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". The "church" that Jesus speaks of is not a building but individuals who profess the gospel of Jesus; that He was god and man, and that He died on a cross, rose from the dead, and is the only mediator between God and man. The use of "gates" is interesting as gates keep danger out and the illustration is that the church is ATTACKING Hell! To be a "Defender of the Christian Faith", the Knight is to be proactive in the name of Christ and on the offensive against the gates of hell.

The question now becomes, "How do I defend the Christian Faith?" The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines "Defend: 1 a: to drive danger or attack away from b (1): to maintain or support in the face of argument or hostile criticism 2c: to attempt to prevent an opponent from scoring at."

Scripture teaches us that the Holy Trinity is comprised of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and mortal man is comprised of the mind, body and spirit. To defend our Christian faith, we must do so on three fronts: the mind (God); the body (Jesus); the moral spirit (Holy Spirit).

Can men "defend" God, or does He want us to? First, we do not defend the Christian faith by embracing non-Biblical ideas; we "defend" every word in the scripture with passion and conviction. Titus 3:9 warns us "But avoid foolish questions...for they are unprofitable and vain". "Maintain or support in the face of argument or hostile criticism". (i.e. evolution vs. creation). Jesus told the disciples in the gospel of Luke "take no thought as to what their answers would be when they were questioned, but that the Holy Spirit would tell them what to say." Paul tells us in Colossians 4, to "Let your speech be always with grace... that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." And in 1 Peter 3:15 "...be ready always to give an answer...of the hope that is in you." God wants us to answer and defend our beliefs, to a world that rejected him. Jesus commands us in Mark 16 to "go into the entire world preaching the gospel". We must argue the gospel verbally with those who teach doctrine that is contrary to the word of God. Paul's letters demanded that the church reject the teachings of the Gnostics and follow truth. In Matthew 10:32 Jesus promises that "He who confesses me before man, him will I confess before the Father". The Risen Savior will speak my name before the throne of God, and all I have to do is defend him publicly.

The next dictionary definition of defend relates to the body. To defend Jesus is a physical action "1 a: to drive danger or attack away from." Christian men have become non-

confrontational when dealing with attacks on their faith; far from James and John who were known as the "Sons of Thunder". From John the Baptist to the Reverend King Jr., outspoken Christian men have been persecuted for Christ...and have changed the world.

Modern Christian men seldom go to church or pray before meals, and avoid drawing attention to themselves. Today's Christian wouldn't dare go to a city council meeting and proclaim "No more!", let alone handcuff themselves to the door in protest. After all, a night in jail may cost us our jobs. What a generation of wimps! Men proclaiming to be defenders of the faith should show more courage. In Luke 22:36 Jesus ordered the disciples to arm themselves: "...and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." The Son of God who walked among the disciples ordered them to sell their most valuable possessions for swords.

Stephan was stoned for teaching Christ; Paul and James were imprisoned and killed. Early Defenders of the Faith were not passive men, and when we look at how Peter, at night, far outnumbered, drew his sword and cut the ear off the servant, this was a seasoned street fighter with very dangerous skills on the offensive to defend Christ! Matthew 21:12, Mark 11:17 and Luke 19:46 tell that "Jesus turned over tables...of the money changers...cast them out...and them that bought." So Jesus walks in, knocks over tables, gives a thrashing, and throws them into the street while calling them names. Jesus did this to defend the temple (body).

My fellow Knights, Christianity is not passive, and I would dare say that if we are not being abused for our faith, we are doing something wrong. If we are to call ourselves "Defenders of the Christian Faith" then there must be a physical consequence.

Lastly, the Bible teaches that we are to defend Christianity Spiritually. Ephesians warns us that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, principalities and powers in high places." To defend the faith we must battle on the spiritual level with prayer. Our definition describes "Defend, c: to attempt to prevent an opponent from scoring at." Prayer is God's way of stopping evil in our lives.

The Bible tells us how, when, and where to pray. In Matthew Jesus says "if we ask anything in prayer, believing, we will receive". Because we fight a spiritual battle, we are instructed to "pray without ceasing" in 1 Thessalonians. The original Knights of the Temple plunged their swords through the hearts of Saracen invaders, and through a strict prayer life, also struck a spiritual sword through Lucifer's advancements by calling on the Grand Architect of the Universe. Divine intervention and prayer are synonymous. How can we defend the Faith when our prayer life consists of a poem before dinner? The Bible promises when two or more are gathered in His name, he will be with us. Two men...in agreement, can call down the power of the Living God!

God has given us spiritual armor to use and Ephesians 6 lists how we can be victorious in the spiritual battle. We must "Pray at all times in the spirit" and "with all prayer and supplication (Humble request)"; to be "alert with perseverance"; "Make supplication for all saints; and pray that the mouth will boldly proclaim the mystery of the gospel".

Through scripture I have outlined my point, that the Holy Bible directs we who call ourselves Defenders of the Faith, to be in a proactive and offensive role. To do this, we must do so with our mind, our body and our spirit. To be defenders of the Christian faith we must adhere to these virtues and not only be willing to take up our cross daily, but to be the first to do so, and to lead others in the example how. Have I boldly argued Gods Word? (the mind). Have I been an ambassador in chains for Christ sake? (the body; not metaphorical). Have I prayed in the spirit for all things? (the spirit).

If so, then you will have fulfilled your vow and the commission of 1 Thessalonians 2:4 "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God." With this daily sacrifice, you may then call yourselves, "Defenders of the Christian Faith".

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