



Reasons for Defending the Truth

By Keith Greer

Why should we defend the truth? Paul said he was ready, "for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). Someone has been said the gospel does not need defending. Sadly, this is not true as long as men are trying to pervert that gospel by teaching doctrines that are contrary to truth. Following are some of the reasons why we **MUST** defend the truth against false doctrine.

Because the truth makes us free. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." {John 8:32} The truth is the only thing that gives men the information they need to attain freedom from the shackles of sin. Denominational doctrines cannot do this.

Because we are to contend for the faith. "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." {Jude 3} Every Christian has a God-given obligation to contend eagerly for the truth when others oppose it.

Because we must be ready to answer. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." {1 Peter 3:15} Are you able to tell others why you believe the message of the cross? Why they can base their hope on the knowledge that it will bring them salvation if they obey its message? In the same vein, we must be able to show men why obedience to denominational doctrines will not bring them the salvation they are seeking.

Because we must prove all things. "Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." {1 Thessalonians 5:21,22} God does not, and never has, expected mankind to take a leap in the dark. Open your mind and the Bible -- God is calling upon you to be able to prove what you believe. Our salvation does not depend on what men say, but squarely and only on God's message.

Because the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. "But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." {1 Timothy 3:15} The church doesn't change the truth of the Bible; it upholds it! Denominational doctrines change what God's word says -- they weaken the pillar.

Because Satan and his ministers are busy teaching error. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." {2 Corinthians 11:13-15} Do you think Satan's ministers don't carry Bibles? Most denominational doctrines contain some truth. Ever wonder why? It makes them resemble the genuine article.

Because many are being misled. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" {Matthew 7:21-23} Denominational doctrines lull men into believing that what they are doing pleases God. God calls it iniquity -- and it becomes a grave matter!

Because Satan must be exposed. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits..." {Matthew 7:15,16} We must speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Denominational

doctrines endanger men's souls and help Satan -- not God. Someone must point out the wolf to protect the sheep! God never said it would be easy, or that men would like us for doing so. To be sure, we must be courageous, but we must also have deep, abiding love for men's souls. We don't judge hearts or motives -- God does. But, denominational doctrine must be exposed for what it is -- spiritually fatal to men's souls!

Because one can believe a strong delusion. "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." {2 Thessalonians 2:9-12} Those who listen to and accept denominational doctrines have lost their love for the truth. Therefore, God will allow them to accept the false doctrines as truth! We must stand ready to guide men to God's truth.

Because false teachers must be exposed. "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple." {Romans 16:17,18} People must learn the truth and why it is that denominational doctrines do not measure up to God's truth. Show the error, right beside the truth, and allow them to make the call.

Because the one who does not continue in the gospel foregoes fellowship with God. "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." {2 John 9-11} Can believing and practicing denominational doctrine cause one to lose fellowship with God? Absolutely! Why? God connects the two -- believing and practicing truth and having a proper relationship with Him.

Because some teaching perverts the gospel. "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." {Galatians 1:6-9} This passage clearly shows that no other doctrine can pawn itself off as the gospel. How can we ensure not being deceived? We must keep our noses in the Book!

Because the one who adds to, or subtracts from God's word will be removed from the book of life! "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." {Revelation 22:18,19} We must not tamper with God's word -- period! What do denominational doctrines do to the scriptures? They add to, subtract from, or amend them. Taking such liberty with divine truth has terrible, eternal consequences -- men need to be warned.

Because religious division is sinful. "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." {1 Corinthians 1:10} Despite the popular slogan that we can just "agree to disagree," God hates religious division. If I teach the gospel of Christ, and another teaches denominational doctrine, can the result be anything but division? If men would get back to the Bible, the division problem would be greatly reduced!

Because worshipping according to men's creeds is sinful. "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men..." {Mark 7:7,8} Denominational doctrines lead to vain worship. We must worship God according to His wishes, not according to the wishes of men!

Because many are going down the broad way. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." {Matthew 7:13,14} Spiritually speaking, in this life, there are only two paths upon which men travel. One leads to eternal life; the other leads to eternal damnation. Do the truth and denominational doctrines lead men in the same direction? No!

Because conversion involves both teaching and learning. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me." {John 6:44,45} The untaught soul cannot be converted. If we teach both the gospel and denominational doctrine, do we convert men to just one thing? Two different messages will convert souls to two different doctrines. Sadly, only one can be right.

Because the gospel is God's only power to save. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." {Romans 1:16} Do the gospel and denominational doctrine have equal amounts of power? According to the Bible, its message is the only message powerful enough to save souls. If this be true, men's messages fall far short of accomplishing the soul-saving job.

Because we must be able to reason with people. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks." {Acts 18:4} The Bible is a book in complete harmony with itself and without contradiction. Can the same be said of denominational doctrines? Do they agree among themselves? We must be able to take God's word and reason with men from the scriptures. The Bible has nothing to fear from open examination. Can men's doctrines make the same claim?

Because some men oppose themselves! "But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am

clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." {Acts 18:6} One of the problems with denominational doctrines is that they change constantly. This being the case, we may find ourselves at odds with certain teaching because it has recently changed. Such will never happen to an unchangeable message, given by an all-knowing God.

Because some have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." {Romans 10:2,3} I know many who have great zeal for man-made doctrines. Sadly, their problem is ignorance about God's message, because they have not rightly divided His word. Knowledge is a wonderful and necessary thing, but it must be true knowledge that comes from God, not from men.

Because those who fail to obey the gospel will pay with their souls. "In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." {2 Thessalonians 1:8} If we choose to obey denominational doctrines, we will lose our souls eternally.

Because we understand the value of the soul. "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" {Matthew 16:26} It doesn't come down to being a matter of human opinion or judgment concerning truth. The soul is man's most precious possession. Denominational doctrines and their teaching endanger that soul's eternal well being. For this cause, we must be ready always to defend the truth against any teaching that can deprive man of this most precious gift.

Yes dear reader, there are many reasons why we must be willing to defend the truth against denominational doctrines. Vital issues are involved. Don't allow Satan to blind you. The stakes are very high. Only man's obedience to ONE message can bring hope for eternal life; men need to know that message is from God -- not man!