

Defending the Gospel

Acts 6:8-7:60

Main Point:

Defend the gospel for the sake of your Savior and the good of your neighbor.

1. The gospel will always be under attack.

2. As a Christian, your job is to defend the gospel when this happens.

3. You should defend the gospel because it confronts our religious formalism.

4. You should defend the gospel because it is the truth of God.

5. You should defend the gospel because it is worth dying for.

Cross-References and Quotations

Dennis Johnson “Unable to best Stephen in open debate, his enemies resorted to perjury.”

Leviticus 24:16 ¹⁶ “And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of *the LORD*, he shall be put to death. (NKJV)

Luke 21:17 ¹⁷ “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. (NKJV)

R.C. Sproul “The gospel of Jesus Christ must be defended in every generation. It is always the center of attack by the forces of evil.”

Derek Thomas “Stephen’s sermon answers these charges, not in a neatly discernible and distinct way, but in a tightly woven argument embedded within a retelling of the redemptive history of Israel.”

Derek Thomas “Stephen’s example is a clarion call for us to be prepared to make whatever stand in defense of the gospel that may be asked of us.”

1 Peter 3:15 ¹⁵ 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; (NKJV)

Jude 1:3 ³ ... contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (NKJV)

1 Kings 8:27 ²⁷ “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! (NKJV)

Dennis Johnson “Throughout his selective history of Israel, Stephen noted God’s presence with his servants in all sorts of places, not only outside the temple and Jerusalem but even outside the land of promise.”

Derek Thomas “Having the outward symbols of church membership is no guarantee whatsoever of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. Only faith alone in Jesus Christ alone can assure us of that.”

Philippians 3:8-9, ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (NKJV)

Dennis Johnson “They precisely fit the pattern set by their ancestors, rejecting God’s deliverers and turning from their God to become fixated on things made by human hands.”

Romans 1:16 ¹⁶ 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. (NKJV)

Derek Thomas “The sight of heaven opening up before him, disclosing the glory of God and the sovereign rule of Jesus, made him see with a different perspective the things that were happening to his body. He was on his way home to be with his Savior. He was at death’s door, and on the other side were the arms of Jesus waiting to embrace him.”

Luke 6:22-23 ²² Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man’s sake. ²³ Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. (NKJV)