

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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## **Society**

"My men have sometimes failed to take a position, but to defend one, never!" – Stonewall Jackson

"Our nation must defend the sanctity of marriage." – George W. Bush

"There's no better book with which to defend the Bible than the Bible itself." – Dwight L. Moody

"The problem in defense is how far you can go without destroying from within what you are trying to defend from without." – Dwight D. Eisenhower

"I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it." – Voltaire

There is no doubt that we can become quite passionate when we defend something that we believe in or cherish. It can obviously invoke some pretty strong emotions.

Certainly that holds true when it comes to the Bible. But is that defense based upon truth or something that we have been convinced to accept as truth? And yes, we can believe an error. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 14:12). If it is indeed truth, then we have every right and need to defend it!

One can readily feel for the apostle Paul. He had to defend his apostleship from those who refused to acknowledge his authority from the Lord. How sad that we struggle even today in presenting the truth only to have those question that authority of the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

We indeed can honor the thoughts of Paul and his desire to stand up for Jesus. He openly declared to the brethren at Philippi that he was "appointed for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17). The word "defense" is from the Greek *apologia*, the very same from which we derive our word, "apology."

Many folks do not realize that the reference in Scripture to an "apology" is not an expression that one is sorry, but rather the support of information to show an evidence for what one believes. This can be illustrated in what Paul stated, when he gave his defense to Jerusalem: "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense (apology) before you now" (Acts 22:1).

There is certainly nothing wrong for defending what we believe to be the truth. "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 Pet. 3:15).

There is a proverbial fly in the ointment in that far too many today cannot defend what they believe. Their knowledge of the sacred Scriptures is sorely lacking. They need to study what they hope to defend (2 Tim. 2:15).