

QUESTION 31

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE BY TRUE FAITH?

WE BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, - AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED. HE DESCENDED INTO HELL. THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD. HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; FROM THERE HE WILL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

READ JUDE 1-4

Jude calls Christians to contend for the faith. He wants to make sure that they fight to defend the true Christian message and to maintain the biblical faith that has been passed down from generation to generation. For some Christians, defending the true faith still involves risking their lives, as Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer did, but for the millions and millions of others it means knowing all about the faith and being able to tell others why you believe it. It involves resisting people who teach false things about the faith. Everyone who knows and understands the true Christian faith does so because of a long, long line of believers who contended for the faith!

What do soldiers do before they go into battle? They train and equip themselves in preparation to contend! Knowing and understanding the Apostles' Creed is one of the ways God's people can prepare themselves to contend for the true Christian faith. In verse 3, Jude calls Christians to defend the faith that was "once for all delivered to the saints." The Apostles' Creed contains the core doctrines that Jude is referring to. It communicates the truth of the gospel as understood by the apostles, who learned it from Jesus himself and who taught it to God's people in the church. All but one of the apostles were put to death by people who opposed the message they taught.

Jude also highlights that the Christian faith was handed to the saints "once for all"; the message was given to the church once for everyone, for all time. Sometimes those who threaten the church and the understanding of the true Christian faith are those who are already inside the church, not simply outsiders. In many churches around the world, the Apostles' Creed is said collectively each week. Saying the Creed together is a good way to remind each other what the true Christian faith is as we prepare to contend for it.

MEMORY VERSE

"I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3)