

The first defense is the wall of doctrine. The second defense is a building that strengthens the resolve and the power of the believer to defend him or herself.

As believers in Jesus Christ, it's simple, but it takes persistence. It takes consistency. It takes discipline.

Jude 21: “keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” (NASB)

But further, by “building” as verse 20 requires, you are, as verse 21 demands, “keeping yourself in the love of God.”

1. The keeping in the love of God is directly connected to the “continuing of building.” You will keep yourself in the love of God.
2. The two are connected. It is just a different way of saying the first one (continuing to build). To maintain a mature mental attitude as His love for God grows and is built.
3. A mature mental attitude comes from that Grace Apparatus for Perception, which keeps you in the “love of God,” which is part of your second line of defense. The love of God motivates the believer to counter all of the false teaching.
4. What you build up through the Grace Apparatus for Perception and the keeping in the love of God will keep the believer unharmed. Defended!
5. It sustains the fortifications in the believer's soul against what? Against the hatred and the assaults of the worldly-minded, of those who are devoid of the human spirit and the Holy Spirit.
6. So we have another result of the “building” in verse 21, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Mercy is a very misunderstood word. We will actually get into as we get into verse 22 and 23.

Our word for “mercy” in Jude 21 is the accusative singular neuter noun “*ἐλεος*” – “*éleos*.” It can mean “compassion” or “mercy.”

But what does it mean here?

1. Mercy is God's grace in action toward you. God is a merciful God and that simply means that is grace in action toward you.
2. Here, mercy describes the entire scope of eternal life that is provided by His unlimited grace. Your eternal life comes to you because of God's grace.
3. Because of His mercy, we have a certainty of eternal life. What's that called? Eternal security. We have eternal security for one reason: God's grace.
4. Eternal security is protection; protection from the fatalism and hopelessness of the unbeliever's life.
5. It's protection from the paralyzing fear of losing one's salvation.
6. The fear of losing your salvation, or sometimes the fear of an inadequate faith, mires a believer in constant worry about the future.
7. Fear precludes focusing on the grace of our great God. That fear is manifested by certain thoughts which you may have falsely entertained from time to time.

Have you ever wondered if you really have eternal life? If you could really be certain? Well, you have the mercy of God rationale.

People do think about this, and if they don't have this defense, what goes on in their soul?

Am I good enough to receive eternal life? Have I done enough to be assured of my salvation? How many works do I have to do? Have I borne enough fruit to be acceptable to God and to give proof of my salvation to other believers? These are all things going on right now, all questions that believers ask themselves.

That is a long way from grace orientation. That fearful believer still has eternal life but will never have a relaxed mental attitude. Always they will be uneasy about the future. The faith-rest rationale of eternal security is MIA. Grace orientation and the love of God is not in such a person who has that kind of fear.

Spiritual growth is minimal, and, in that mode, there can be very little service to the Lord or even operating under one's spiritual gift.

Just staying in fellowship and maintaining the filling of the Holy Spirit is a major task.

But confidence in the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ is grace in action and is the attitude for defense and service.

What we'll find in verses 22 and 23 is that sometimes the best defense is a good offense, even though the two lines of defense that I've already covered can never be abandoned in the Christian life.

We must always defend ourselves, but that doesn't mean we can't have a good offense.

Jude 21: “Keep yourselves in the love complex of God, waiting with anticipation for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ resulting in eternal life.” (EXT)

Jude 22: “And have mercy on some, who are doubting;” (NASB)

Jude 22a begins the description of the Christian offense in the case of falsehood and false teachers. It says, “have mercy on some who are doubting.”

This is an action that you must do. Since early in Jude, it's been defending. Now here's something that you must accomplish as a believer in Jesus Christ.

There are two particles in verses 22 and 23. The particle in verse 22 is the simple word, “*μέν*” – “*mén*.”

Then, at the beginning of verse 23, we have the particle, “*δέ*” – “*dé*.” These two particles, when they appear together as in this case, it indicates a contrast.

“*Mén dé*” is a very standard classical Greek construction and, used in this way, these two particles reveal a contrast between the actions of verse 22 and verse 23.

There a contrast between the act of showing mercy in verse 22 and the act of saving and pulling them out of the fire in verse 23.

Therefore, in verse 22, we have “Moreover, on the one hand,”

“*Mén dé*” in classical Greek is translated “on the one hand and then on the other.” That shows you the contrast.

Next, we have the present active imperative of the verb “*ἐλέγχω*” – “*elénchō*.” This is in the imperative mood, so it is a command. It means “dispute” or “refute.” The contrast is from a position of “refuting” in verse 22 to “saving” verse 23.

The meaning in verse 22 is “to refute” or “to convict” or “to convince” those who are in doubt, who have departed from truth.

Believers are to convict some who are in doubt, who are being swayed by false doctrine. Now it's referring to you.

What does it mean, to convict, or refute, or convince? Because that's part of what you are required to do by this passage when you have those who are close, friends or loved ones, who are into false doctrine.

This is instruction for you, and it makes perfect sense. Jude has spent twenty or twenty-one verses describing for us false doctrine, false teachers, those who are into it, and the defense.

Now, he is telling you what your offense is. This verb is what the original author meant for you to do under those conditions.

Then we have the present middle participle from the verb “*διακρίνω*” – “*diakrínō*” and it means “to be at odds,” “to take issue with,” “to dispute.”

So, the phrase with the verb “*elénchō*” is then translated, “to refute or convince them when they dispute with you.”

That means this is a doctrinal issue between you and someone else. But that's not what Jude 22 says. The question is, exactly how do you convince?

Convincing them would put the emphasis on refuting the falsehood, actively refuting false doctrine. Why? For the purpose of changing a mind away from falsehood.

This does not mean refuting through harsh criticism or slandering their person or their position.

It requires using a convincing argument against the wrong choice for false doctrine. Refuting that false doctrine by presenting sound doctrine, giving a clear choice for this apostate to consider, without browbeating or confrontational attitudes.

So you see, there is a way and a means to speak to people who are in falsehood.

It requires convincing and kindly refuting, not clearing the error of the falsehood in which a person is involved. However, even in refuting and in convincing, there is an element of mercy and graciousness.

If you remember what our context in Jude is, it's about false teachers, false doctrine, and those who are falling prey to it.

“*Elénchō*” carries a connotation of having mercy. In other words, the way that you convince is gracious and merciful. Never try to convince another person with a superior attitude, with high-handed, arrogant means.

1. Jude is not demanding that believers angrily argue with other believers who are out to lunch, attempting to forcefully change the unbelieving false teachers' minds. You cannot beat falsehood out of people. Their minds have to be changed.
2. Our verb “*elénchō*” is an imperative of entreaty. He is entreating them to do it. You could say he is begging them to do it, knowing full well that he cannot force them to do it.
3. The advancing believer, the one with true doctrine in his soul, should verbally convict or convince of the danger of the false doctrine. Stick to the doctrine.
4. You should refute the false teacher with correct doctrine in order to have a positive effect on a confused believer who is being led into false doctrine.
5. True doctrine overcomes false doctrine. Not every time because some reject it, but it is the only way to overcome false doctrine completely and totally.

6. The convicting words that you speak should be factual, biblically. You don't get into an argument about whether or not the Bible is truth, whether the Bible is really divinely inspired.
7. If you don't know the answer to a falsehood, but you know what that falsehood is, before you launch into a convicting or refuting speech, find out what you're talking about.
8. Then, you should be able to talk intelligently and do some good refuting, kindly, persuasively, graciously, filled with the Holy Spirit. So, the first thing you need to do is rebound!

That's exactly what Jude in this verb, “elénchō,” is talking about.

For any believer to correctly execute the verb “elénchō” toward another believer requires something on your part. It requires that you grow up.

It requires that you have some spiritual advance. You must be a believer who is well-versed in the subject of Bible doctrine.

You must understand the difference between the truth and the lie and be advanced enough not to lose your temper and to arrogantly try to refute.

In other words, an advancing believer who is on sure doctrinal footing. And remember this, you may have a part to play in the recovery of a believer who is headed in the wrong direction, in their choice for sound doctrine instead of false doctrine.

That is just as satisfying as having a hand in ensuring someone, an unbeliever, will not end up in hell.

In other words, providing the information, the gospel information, so that they will have eternal life. That's a fantastic feeling.

It's the same under these circumstances. When you know somebody's headed in the wrong direction, off into legalism or whatever false doctrine is filling their empty souls, and you're able to present something that's truth, and they see it, and the next thing you know, they're sitting next to you in Bible class, just soaking it up. There is tremendous satisfaction, because you've done your job, as Jude asks you to do.

So that's Jude's exhortation for going on the offensive against false teaching and false doctrine.

Another thing you should keep in mind is that you should not be discouraged if there is no positive response.

You must let the doctrine that comes from your soul to theirs convince them by simply presenting it accurately. Present the truth. That's your job.

By the way, not even your compassionate delivery is the deciding factor, although it is the means. You should be able to make an issue clear, which would come from doctrine resident in your soul.

Not only is doctrine important for your own spiritual growth and for your spiritual life, which is primary, but it can also be important for someone else's spiritual life through you.

It's the Holy Spirit who teaches the doctrine to the believer and does the convincing and brings the conviction to the soul of the strained believer, but you can have a part to play.

That's what “*elénchō*” means. Our expanded translation of Jude 22:

“Moreover, on the one hand, with reference to some (negative reversionistic believers), keep on refuting (with truth) when they take issue (dispute against truth) you;” (EXT)

In Jude 23 he presents two more imperatives for advancing believers to become active aids in combating falsehood. This verse, too, is you, as a believer, on the offensive.

Jude 23: “save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.” (NASB)

Verse 23 says, “save others.” There's the first action. You're going to refute, in verse 22, now you're going to save. Both of these have you on the offensive.

Verse 23 begins with a particle (we covered earlier in verse 22), “*δέ*” - “*de*.” We also have the pronoun “*ὅς*” - “*hós*.”

Jude 23: “On the other hand, with reference to others (negative reversionistic believers),

Then comes the verb that describes your action toward these other categories of people who are drifting off course.

The first verb is the present active imperative (again we have the imperative of entreaty) “σώζω” – “sōzō.” It means to “save” or “to make an attempt to save others.”

“Sōzō” can have several connotations depending upon the object. In other words, save an unbeliever; “sōzō” simply means for you to present the gospel, witness to an unbeliever, tell them about Jesus Christ. Therefore, they can be saved.

So your part is to speak the truth so that an unbeliever may express positive volition, faith in Christ, and receive eternal life.

That's the unbeliever, “sōzō.” If a believer is the object of “sōzō,” then he or she must also be saved, no question.

Saved here does not mean to “save,” as in salvation. It means to “rescue from error.

Where the believer is involved, this verb does not mean a second work of salvation. Once saved, always saved. Faith alone in Christ alone. So that's not what “sōzō” means for the believer.

Further, the imperative of entreaty here carries a sense of urgency in this exhortation of “saving others” or “rescuing others.” There's an urgency here.

Next, we have “ἀρπάζω” – “harpázō” best translated “snatched away.” “Harpázō” has the connotation of forcefully take away. This goes along with a sense of urgency.

The group that needs saving is dealt with, in this case, directly and vigorously. It was gentle persuasion before, this is a little more direct and vigorous. And by being saved, they are being snatched away from some dire circumstance.

And what is that something? It is the preposition “ἐκ” – “ek” plus the noun “πυρὸς” – “pyros.”

The preposition “ek” plus the ablative singular of “pyro,s” this prepositional phrase is translated “out from the fire.”

So our translation of verse 23a, “On the other hand, save others (negative reversionistic believers) by snatching them out from the fire,”

For unbelievers, it is obvious that salvation is being snatched away from the eternal lake of fire.

But for the believer what is their fire? The surety of misery that comes to a believer who is in reversionism, doing all the things that we would wish we could do from the human viewpoint.

So reversionism is the fire of trouble for them; a maturing believer recognizes the symptoms and takes action as by the rescuing imperative, the first imperative.

But how is a believer involved in rescuing another believer from the fire of reversionism?

By living the spiritual life as an example. Happiness in the face of misery: their misery, your happiness, a relaxed mental attitude under adversity.

There is no life that is a greater example than living the Christian way of life in the eyes of someone who is miserable. You don't even have to say anything. It's obvious.

Another way to rescue is by speaking truth. Speaking doctrine when the opportunity presents itself without haranguing. And, of course, let's not forget one of the most powerful of all weapons under these circumstances: the power of prayer for their recovery.

But for the apostate believer, inundated with falsehood and false teachers as Jude has described them throughout this epistle, these are the ones who may be moving toward reversionism, and so they must be rescued from temporal discipline for that drift.

In this case, fire is metaphorical. This is a more difficult rescue as they progress deeper and deeper and deeper into reversionism, which is what false doctrine does.

So there is no time to lose. Now in the phrase, “snatching them out of the fire,” Jude has in mind an Old Testament passage. It is Zechariah 3:2.

Zechariah 3:2: “The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” (NASB)

Zechariah was referring to Israel in a different dispensation than we are currently residing in. That was the dispensation of Israel. We live in the dispensation of the church, so there are some differences here.

Israel was a client nation, and this is referring to the nation as a whole, whereas Jude is referring to believers individually.

This is still pertinent to us because there is a parallel between Israel in this case and the one who is falling into reversionism.

Zechariah is referring to God's people in that dispensation being delivered or rescued from the Babylonian captivity to return to the land of Israel. In 586 BC, Judah was destroyed by the Chaldean army of Nebuchadnezzar.

Zechariah is talking about God's rescue accomplished by His grace for an apostate people.

They went to Babylon in 586 BC, a nation that had rejected God in every way. But in Babylon, over a period of 70 years, which was the period of the captivity, men like Daniel set the example of a spiritual life for Israel, remaining true to the Lord amidst heathen, idolatrous Babylon, which is exactly what Jude is exhorting you to do: remaining true to the Lord in the midst of pure apostasy all around you.

Daniel and a remnant did not succumb to Chaldean idolatry or worship of the Chaldean king.

So, in Israel there was a remnant that was spiritually renewed and rescued, ready to return to the land, and the Lord blessed that remnant with such a return under

Zerubbabel in 516 BC by the decree of Cyrus the Great of Persia, and Daniel had great influence on him.

Cyrus, of course, the year before, conquered the Chaldeans, and his empire was even greater than Chaldea, and God used this very man as the instrument to rescue Israel. He decreed in 516 BC that Zerubbabel and 50,000 Jews return.

So, in Israel there was that remnant who were spiritually renewed and rescued and returned in 516 BC.

Terrible discipline had been meted out on Israel 70 years earlier in the form of that Babylonian captivity.

But with spiritual advance in the souls of some of those people, through men like Daniel and some other prophets (Ezekiel was also taken captive), some others were rescued by the grace of God.

That is Jude's message to you in verse 23.

One word, "*sozo*." Don't ever forget it. It is your obligation. It is your privilege. It's just done in a different way.

But there's still another aspect to this rescue in verse 23 and it must be done with great care, very, very carefully, because, you see, the advancing believer, who in this case is the rescuer, must not become affected by association with the reversionist.

The believer, in association with a reversionist, can get burned in the fire of his own discipline.

It is entirely possible for the rescuer, for the one who is riding to the rescue of the reversionist, to be influenced by that reversionism, especially when it's in your area of weakness, i.e., when things look attractive, or when the person that's involved is someone you are very close to.

So the rescuer may need rescuing himself and that is the conclusion of the final lines of verse 23.