

"Contend Earnestly For The Faith" REVIEW PARTS 1 - 6

by Erik Olsen

"...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." – Jude 3

-- **INTRO: this week and the next two weeks we're going to review key concepts from the past 16 weeks in the *Contend Earnestly For The Faith* series**

-- **Satan is the mastermind behind all false teachers and one of his chief tactics is deceit...**

--Jesus called Satan "the father" of lies (John 8:44)

-- **the "Sword of the Spirit" is our primary weapon in the battle against the lies of Satan promoted by false teachers**

--The Word of God is the "Sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17)

--Jesus gave us an example of combating Satan's lies with the Word of God. Each time Satan tried to tempt Jesus, He replied by quoting Scripture. One time Satan even tried to tempt Christ by quoting Scripture out of context; Jesus replied by properly quoting Scripture in context. (Luke 4:1-13)

--Jesus "left us an example, that we should follow His steps..." (1 Peter 2:21)

-- **6 steps to gain a solid grasp of the "Sword of the Spirit..."**

--LISTEN, READ, STUDY, MEMORIZE, MEDITATE, FOLLOW God's Word

--each step is rooted in the Great Commandment: "love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)

--all steps can be summed up by concept of Communication with God.

--Just like communication is important in marriage, so communication is important in our relationship with God that is compared to marriage (2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:25, Romans 7:4)

--verbal communication: God speaks to us through His Word, we speak to God through prayer

--non verbal communication: following the Word of God (actions often speak louder than words)

--meditation on the Word of God cultivates Spirit-filled prayer

-- **Jesus Christ is the central theme of God's Word...**

--from the roots of His ministry (the Old Testament), to the details of His ministry (the Gospels), to the present result of His ministry (book of Acts and the Epistles) to the future of His ministry (Revelation)

--the roots of His ministry can be traced all the way back in the Garden of Eden: Shortly after God created all the animals He had to kill an animal (the first time blood was ever shed!) in order to make clothing out of animal skin to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness... this was symbolic of how Christ's blood had to be shed in order for our sins to be covered

--the result of His ministry: **repentance** and **remission of sins** preached in the name of Christ and **the Holy Spirit sent** to dwell inside us" (Luke 24:46-49)

-- **most false teachers try to undermine the entire ministry of Christ by teaching that He is not God**

--in warning about false teachers, Paul wrote, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. **I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.** 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your **sincere and pure devotion to Christ.** 4 For if someone comes to you and preaches **a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached...**" (2 Corinthians 11:1-4)

--when our sins are forgiven, we enter a personal relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit and in a sense become like "a pure virgin to Christ" (our spirit is cleansed of sin), we become His bride... (the collective church is formally identified as the bride of Christ but the relational aspect of bride and groom also applies to our individual relationship with Christ, as in the 2 Corinthian passage)

--only God Himself could have this kind of relationship with us

--Scripture repeatedly confirms that Jesus is God (online article: www.lettersofchrist.com/qa_deity_of_christ.htm)

-- both Old Testament prophecy and the historical reality of ancient Israel prove that the New Testament portrait of Christ is true

--classic example of Old Testament prophecy: "... when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. ... But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ... **He was led as a lamb to the slaughter**, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. ... For He was cut off from the land of the living; ... He poured out His soul unto death. ... And **He bore the sins of many**. ... And made intercession for the transgressors. "

--to the Jews the statement "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter" was loaded with symbolic meaning

--Christ was crucified and "bore the sins of many" at the same time the Passover festival was going on in Jerusalem where tens of thousands of families brought a lamb to Jerusalem to be sacrificed and symbolically bear their sins

--the lambs used in the Passover had to be "without blemish" which was symbolic of Christ being without sins so that He could bear our sins. Only God is sinless.

--Revelation 15:4: "Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For **You alone are holy.**"

--2 Corinthians 5:20-21: "For **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

--the entire nation of Israel was built around the sacrificial system that pointed to the diety and atoning death of Jesus Christ, and to this day the ruins of the temple remain in Jerusalem...

--what is now the faint sound of archaeological evidence and Israel's rebirth as a secular nation will one day be like the sound of a whaling trumpet when Israel as a nation embraces Jesus Christ as their Messiah and He returns to deliver them from their enemies... At that time, nobody will be able to deny who Jesus Christ is! "...and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, 'when I am hallowed in you before their eyes...' (Ezekiel 36:23)

-- the denial of the deity of Christ leads to the second Hallmark of false teachers: distortion of the message of Christ

--after warning about "another Jesus" in 2 Corinthians 11:4, Paul warns about "a different gospel"

--If Jesus isn't God then forgiveness of sins can't be preached in His name, for only God can forgive sins...

--Luke 5:20-25: "When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? **Who can forgive sins but God alone?**" 22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man [another name for the Son of God] has power on earth to forgive sins" — He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God."

--Luke 24:46-47: "Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name** to all nations..."

--the majority of false teachers not only deny the deity of Christ but also teach salvation based on good works rather than grace, thus reducing the love-based relationship with Christ to fear-based legalism... the unconditional relationship with Christ that can't be lost (compared to marriage and adoption) is replaced by a conditional relationship that can be lost (compared to slavery)

--Romans 8:15: "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'..."

--we are "sealed" with the Holy Spirit who is the "guarantee" of our salvation (Ephesians 1:14)