

"Contend Earnestly For The Faith" REVIEW PARTS 7 - 10

by Erik Olsen

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

--false religions have no foundation and are often built on the fiction of one person who appeared out of nowhere...

- Mormonism... Joseph Smith
- Jehovah's Witnesses... Charles Taz Russel
- Scientology... L Ron Hubbard

--true Christianity is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone..." (Ephesians 2:20)

--Jesus Christ is the "chief cornerstone" of a massive foundation

--Jesus Christ didn't just appear out of nowhere like so many false teachers; over 1500 years of recorded prophecy and culture embedded in the heart of the nation of Israel anticipated His coming

--example of the the Passover festival that served as a graphic picture of the atoning death of Christ for over 1500 years before He came... "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter..." (Isaiah 53:7)

--the Jehovah's Witness organization, Mormonism, and the Roman Catholic Church are classic examples of false teachers arising out of the church, as the apostle Paul warned about...

--Acts 20:28-31: "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also **from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things**, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years **I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.**"

--Jehovah's witnesses: Charles Taz Russel "twisted" Scripture and claimed that only he could properly interpret Scripture (2 Peter 3:16)

--Mormons: Joseph Smith claimed that the true church and the true gospel had been lost and he alone had been given new revelation to restore them

--the Catholic Church claims that it is the ultimate authority on the interpretation of the Bible and for most of their history tried to prevent people from reading the Bible for themselves... so people wouldn't discover that what they taught wasn't in the Bible.

--the apostle Paul warned that the message of false teachers would "spread like cancer..." (2 Timothy 2:17)

--we need to check what teachers say against the standard of Scripture...

--the ultimate authority of the true church is the Bible, which carries the authority that God gave to the original apostles and prophets

--the early church subjected itself to the authority of the Bible...

--the Bereans exemplified this: "[they] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." (Acts 17:11)

--the apostle Paul went so far as to say that even his preaching was invalid if not aligned with Scripture: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 **But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel** to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9)

--the battle cry of the Protestant Reformation was "Sola Scriptura!" – which means "Scripture Alone!"

--Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses preach glaring examples of "another Jesus..." and "a different gospel..." while the Roman Catholic Church preaches a more subtle counterfeit

--2 Corinthians 11:3-4: "**I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness**, so your minds may be corrupted from **the simplicity that is in Christ**. 4 For if he who comes preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, ... or **a different gospel**..."

--"the simplicity that is in Christ..."

--**Jesus Christ achieved salvation for us and declared "it is finished!"** (John 19:30)

--God became a man and died for our sins so that we can have a personal relationship with Him.

--"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

--In Luke 24:46-49 Jesus summed up the essence of faith: "repentance and remission of sins... the Promise of My Father [the Holy Spirit]..."

--by faith we live in relationship with Jesus Christ (repentance) and by faith we depend on His atoning death for the forgiveness of our sins (remission of sins)

--when we first place our faith in Jesus Christ we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance..." (Eph. 1:13-14)

--side note about faith: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.... 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household... 24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:1-27)

--the corrupted message...

--**salvation is not finished**...

--**Mormons**: God didn't become a man to finish salvation, but rather Jesus was a man who earned his way to godhood so that we could follow his steps and try to earn our way to godhood... a life of burden and fear!

--**Jehovah's Witnesses**: Jesus was Michael the Archangel (not God) who became a man. To become a JW is to pretty much resign yourself that you're not going to heaven... only 144,000 elite JWs will go to heaven while the other JWs will spend eternity on the new earth. During communion their communion services only those who think they are one of the 144,000 can partake in communion.

--**Roman Catholic Church**: you have to add to the work of Christ in order to be good enough to go to heaven; if you aren't good enough then you have to go to purgatory to gain more points to tip the scale, or if you have a wealthy relative after you die they can pay the church in order to release you from purgatory and you can pay the church to release your loved ones from purgatory... hence the saying, "when a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs."

--the truth sets you free from the fear of losing your salvation...

--we may have "**boldness in the day of judgement**" (1 John 4:17) because our entrance to heaven isn't based on our righteousness, but rather it is based on the righteousness of Christ which is "**credited**" (Romans 4:11) to our account.

--Romans 3:21-22: "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe."

--the apostle Paul's hope rested on "...**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.**" (Philippians 3:7-9)

--Colossians 2:12-15: "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He

has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 **having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us**, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. "

--the theme of the righteousness of Christ being credited to our account is repeated over and over again throughout the New Testament and is rooted in the Old Testament as Paul points out:

--Romans 4:4-8: "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. 6 **David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:** 7 'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.'" (Paul quotes from Psalms 32:1-2)

--a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is the key to overcoming the flesh, not the "self-imposed religion" of false teachers... (Colossians 2:23)

--the different Jesus and different gospel of false teachers changes this relationship...

...love-based -> fear based

...unconditional -> conditional

...can't be lost -> can be lost

--even Christians have to guard against "self-imposed religion" of the flesh, as Paul warned...

--Galatians 3:1-4: "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? **Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**"