**“*Earnestly Contending for the Faith” (Pt. 2)***

(Biblical Faith vs. Apostasy)

***“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3)***

***Apostasy:*** the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief. The term **apostasy** comes from the Greek word ***apostasia*** ("ἀποστασία") **meaning** "defection", "departure", "revolt" or "rebellion". An act of refusing to continue to follow, obey, or recognize a religious faith. The abandonment of a previous loyalty; defection. The falling away, withdrawal, or abandonment of a previously held belief.

Last week we discussed points 1 & 2 of this 4-point study in apostasy. Today, we will examine the latter 2 points.

1. ***The Initial Act of Apostasy (Genesis 3 & I John2 – Last Sunday)***
2. ***The Illicit Act of Apostasy (Numbers 16) – Last Sunday)***
3. ***The Internal Acts of Apostasy (Acts 20:28-32)***
4. ***The Intimate Acts of Apostasy (Matthew 26)***

A quick review…

1. ***The Initial Acts of Apostasy*** (Genesis 3:1-7 & I John 2:15-17)

The initial questioning of God’s **Word** by the Serpent in the Garden of Eden. This appeal was to the first couple’s newly fallen nature of

* Lust of the flesh – ***“you shall not surely die”***
  + ***“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,”***
* Lust of the eye - ***“eyes will be opened”***
  + ***“and that is was pleasant to the eyes,”***
* Pride of life ***– “you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”***
  + ***“and a tree to be desired to make one wise,”***

***“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides forever.” (I John 2:15-17)***

1. ***The Illicit Acts of Apostasy*** (Numbers 16)

As well as this challenge of apostasy came from within, the mode of Korah’s display was extremely forceful and obstinate.

Apostasy can be manifested in a number of ways. But, basically, it will be manifested within the confines of the following, by misrepresenting or perverting 4 areas of God’s program. Dathan and his “***band of merry men***” (as I call them) sorely misrepresented Moses in these 4 areas where Moses clearly…

1. … had a ***Mandate*** from God
2. … delivered the ***Message*** from God
3. ***…***had the ***Motives*** of a Man of God ***-***
4. … employed ***Methods*** of the Man of God
5. **The Internal Act of Apostasy** (***Acts 20:28-32: No. III in this 4-part series*)**

***Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 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. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Acts 20:28-32; NKJV)***

***I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.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.***

***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; NKJV)***

***“…as also in all his (Paul’s) epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.” (II Peter 3:16; NKJV)***

* “unlearned” and “unstable” wrest – **KJV**
* “untaught” and “unstable” distort - **NASB**
* “ignorant” and “unstable” distort- **NIV**

***“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do NOT acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.” (II John 1:7-8; NASB)***

**Biblical Examples**

* **Aaron’s** 2 eldest sons: Nadab & Abihu (Leviticus 10 – offered strange fire)
* **Eli’s** 2 sons: Hophni & Phinehas (I Samuel 2 )
* **Samuel’s** 2 sons: Joel & Abijah (I Samuel 8)

***The of Agenda of False Teachers (II Peter 2:1-22)***

1. **Destructive Doctrines (vss. 1-3)**

***But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.***

1. **Doom of False Teachers (vss. 4-11)**

***For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)— then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.***

1. **Depravity of False Teachers (vss. 12-17)**

***But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.***

***They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.***

1. **Deception of False Teachers (vss. 18-22)**

***For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.***

***For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”***

1. **The Intimate Act of Apostasy (No. IV in this 2-part series)** (Matthew 26:14-25 & selected scriptures)

***Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So, from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.*** ***Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?” And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples. So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me. And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?” He answered and said, “He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I? He said to him, “You have said it.” (Matthew 26:14-25; NKJV)***

One of the most unfortunate ramifications of apostasy is that of forfeiting an intimate relationship between an individual and the Lord Himself. Our Heavenly Father is a God of intimacy, love, and tenderness and desires an intimate relationship with His people!!!

* The rich young ruler
* The scribe in Mark 12:34
* Demons (James 2:19)
* Judas Iscariot - (Matt. 26)

***“Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. (Psalm 41:9)***

***Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, (II Thessalonians 2:1-3)***

***“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. (Matthew 24:9-11; NKJV)***

***This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. (I Timothy 1:18-20: NKJV)***

***Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, (I Tmothy 4:1)***

***And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. (II Timothy 2:17-18; NKJV)***

***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.  (II Timothy 4:3-4; NKJV)***

***Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. (II Timothy 4:9-10)***

***Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; (Hebrews 3:12)***

***They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. (I John 2:19).***

***Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits]as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,  that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (II Thessalonians 2:1-12: NKJV)***

***Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. (II Corinthians 13:5)***

