

## **Earnestly Contend for the Faith**

### **The Trajectory of Error: Engaging with a False Teaching**

Jude 3, Selected Scriptures

#### **1. A Sincere Initial Motivation** (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 15:10)

Evangelism and discipleship are mandates given to us by God. Therefore, we must make it our intentional purpose and mission to follow in the footsteps of Jesus by seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). And we are grieved when we see the falling away of those who once professed faith (Luke 8:4ff; John 6:66; 1 John 2:19).

#### **2. A Seemingly Innocuous Compromise** (1 Cor. 9:22)

The following information about a problem and how to respond are representative of the teaching of a prominent pastor who is influential in the largest conservative denomination in the country.

A. A General Problem: The Persistence of Unbelief

B. A General Attitude: Be Creative and Change Your Method

C. A Specific Problem: “The Bible is Not Reliable or Trustworthy”

In a post-Christian and post-truth world unbelieving world, the Bible is not regarded as the source of authority. How can Christian expect someone to believe something that is based on a book that they do not believe to be true?

D. A Specific Solution: “Trust in the witnesses of the resurrection, not in the Bible”

Remove the obstacle of the Bible’s disputed authority while proclaiming the truths of Christianity. The apostles appealed directly to the Bible when preaching to people who believed the Bible (Acts 2:14-36), but not when speaking to people who did not (Acts 10:34-42), except maybe as an ambiguous afterthought (v.43). Paul even neglected to specifically identify Jesus in one of his most famous sermons (Acts 17:22-34).

#### **3. A Seriously Egregious Error**

Somehow disconnecting the Christian faith from the Christian Scriptures may seem like a clever way to avoid any unnecessary hinderances to faith in Christ, but it creates problems and solves none. If we do not readily appeal to the Scriptures as our authority for truth, we are undermining our own message and giving the individual the license to pick and choose what God may actually have said and done (cf. Gen. 3:1).

#### **4. A Sustained Convictional Response**

A. The Connection Between the Scriptures and Faith

I. The Scriptures are the Authority that We Have (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

II. The Scriptures are not the Problem, They Hold the Answer (Luke 16:30-31)

B. Jesus attested to the truthfulness of the Scriptures (Matt. 12:39-40; 19:4ff)

C. The Apostles attested to the truthfulness of ‘embarrassing’ doctrines

I. God Created the World (Acts 14:15)

Here Paul quotes Ex. 20:11 while stating that God created the entire world, not just the promised land, and the implication is that God did this in six days, not billions of years.

II. God Raised Jesus from the Dead (Acts 2:24)

Peter joyfully proclaims the truth of a miracle that counters all of what man knows and understands about life and death. If God raises the dead, what would be outside of His power to do?

III. God is an Exclusivist (Acts 17:30)

God’s message to Abraham, Moses, and to the world at the time of Christ was one of exclusivity in a time of plurality. Today that same idea is called intolerant or closed minded or privileged.

D. Jesus held men accountable to the Scriptures

I. Accountable to the meaning of the Scriptures (Matt. 5:21ff; 9:13)

II. Accountable to the language of the Scriptures (Matt. 22:31-32)

E. The New Testament Makes Sense Only in Light of the Old Testament (1 Tim. 1:15; Rom. 5:12ff).