**PROMISED TO ONE HUSBAND**

***2 Corinthians 11:2-4 (NIV)***

***“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. 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.”***

* **Lesson**: The purpose of this lesson is to equip believers with the essential doctrines of the faith and help them learn to identify false teachers, prophets and heretics.
* **Main Points:**
* How to contend for the true faith in a post-Christian culture
* Understanding the Biblical and historical roots of heresy and apostasy
* **Key Passages**: 2 Corinthians 11:1-3,13-14; Jude; Galatians 1:6-9

Additional reference passages: 2 John 7-11; 1 John 4:1-6, 5:1-20; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4, 13-14; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Peter 3:18; Titus 1:9-16; 1 Timothy 1:3-16, 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:15-19, 3:1-4:4; 2 Thess. 2:1-15

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**Introduction**

Throughout the Bible, God is portrayed as the Husband of His people. As a matter of fact, this is one of His self-descriptions in the book of Hosea. In the New Testament, Paul unveiled the divine mystery that the church is the bride of Christ. (Ephesians 5:22-32; Isaiah 54:5-10) No wonder he was so passionate about warning the saints about false gospels, false teaching and those who would propagate them. (Philippians 3:1-3; Acts 20:26-31) After all, as he said to the Corinthians, “I promised you to One Husband – Christ.” The Lord Jesus Christ will one day return for His Bride, one who is pure in devotion, as well as doctrine. If our doctrine is wrong, it will be reflected in a lack of devotion as well.

Why is this so essential? As we will see in this lesson, an enormous amount of Scriptures, no less than 18 specific passages of the New Testament, are devoted to exposing false teachers who peddle false doctrines. The Church is to be the pillar and foundation of Truth, and yet, the world around us seems to be crumbling under the weight of satanic deception. Even those who have some knowledge of God can easily be led astray. How can this be?

In John MacArthur’s book, The Truth War-Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception, he said, “Truth means nothing apart from God and His written Word.” And furthermore he said, “Truth is the self-expression of God, revealed in His Word, who became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” Saint Jerome said, “To be ignorant of the Bible is to be ignorant of Christ.” We can no longer afford to live in Biblical ignorance. We desperately need the unadulterated preaching and teaching of God’s Word. It’s time for the Church to be well informed and learn how to contend for the Faith. That’s what this lesson is all about.

**Digging Deeper**: Romans 12:1-2; John 8:30-31, 17:17-19; 1 Timothy 3:14-16; Ephesians 5:22-32; Hosea 2:1-23; Isaiah 54:5-10

**Defend the Faith**

***Jude 3-25 (NASB)***

***“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you (contend earnestly for the faith) which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.” But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. Woe to them! These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit save others, snatching them from out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”***

This section of Scripture bears a special significance to our study. Jude was the half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ. His letter to the saints was to equip them to defend the Faith. As a good shepherd caring for the flock under his care, the church in Jerusalem, he admonished them to contend for the Truth, and identify those who belonged to the deceiver. This is war, and if we don’t learn to stand on the Truth of God’s Word, precious souls will be the casualties of this cosmic battle. People matter to God - even those who are deceived! So if we truly love God, then we will warn them. As we take our stand on God’s unchanging Word, and speak it in love, we’ll be snatching people from the fires of hell!

**Digging Deeper:** Isaiah 65:16; Deut. 32:4; Psalm 31:5; John 1:1-14, 6:63, 8:30-31, 40-58, 10:35, 14:6-17, John 17:17-19, 18:37-38; **1 John 4:1-6; James 5:19-20;** Acts 20:20-32; Romans 12:1-2; John 8:30-31, 17:17-1; 1 Timothy 3:14-16

**What is an Apologist?**

***2 Timothy 2:1-4 (ESV)***

***You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.***

When I was a child we sang an old hymn titled “Onward Christian Soldiers.” I’m sure the writer was inspired by Paul’s words to his beloved disciple Timothy. (2 Timothy 2:3-4) But, honestly, I was clueless about what a Christian Soldier was, much less what or who he would be fighting against. That is until the day when the adversary came to my door propagating his lies through people who have fallen prey to his deception. That is when I realized just how ill-equipped I really was. So I began a five- month journey to educate myself so that I could fight the good fight of the faith and enlist others to do the same. So a soldier is one description of an apologist. And, as any soldier will tell you, if you’re going into battle, you must be well prepared. In the following examples, you will see two skillful apologists.

* + The apostle Peter: 1 Peter2:1-22, 3:15; Acts 2:14-36, 10:36-43
  + The apostle Paul: Acts 17:1-13; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-35; 2 Corinthians 11:1-14

Along with the inspired writers of the Bible, here are some very important historical Christian apologists: Justin Martyr, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Saint Nicolas. You may find it interesting to know that the original “Saint Nick” was an apologist. As one of the bishops who signed the Nicene Creed, Saint Nicholas stood his ground in opposing Arius, in defense of the doctrine of the Trinity. In addition to his nontrinitarian belief, Arius propagated the lie that our Lord was created, not the Creator. Do you know what false religions today are pushing the same lie as Arius? Because we are fortunate to live in the information age, all these historical facts are readily available to anyone who will do their homework.

God continues to supply gifted men and women to equip His church. C.S. Lewis may be the most famous and prolific apologist of the twentieth century. But, today there are many highly respected Christians apologist like, Tim Keller, Hank Hanegraaff, Lee Strobel, Norm Geisler and Mary Jo Sharp, just to name a few. In addition to their websites, here are a few resources to aid in your study:

* Apologetics Press has a basic apologetic course for free.

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/homestudycourses.aspx>

* Ravi Zacharias: RZIM.org

**Word Search:**

* **Doctrine**: The Greek words are didache/didaskalia in Strong’s #1322, #1319: *information, instruction, learning, teaching, doctrine.* Acts 2:42, Titus 1: 9-16, 2:1-10, 1 Timothy 1:3-11, 2 Timothy 3:16, Ephesians 4:12-15, 2 John 9-10
* **Apostasy**: The Greek word is apostasia: *falling away, divorce, abandonment, separation, defection from the truth.* 2 Thess. 2:3, 1 John 2:19, 1 Timothy 4:1-7
* **Apologetics**: The Greek word is apologia in Strong’s Concordance #627. *speaking in defense*. See this word in the following verse as “Give an Answer.” (1 Peter 3:15)
* **Contend:** The Greek word is ep-agonizomai in Strong’s # 1864. *to struggle for, earnestly contend for, to compete for a prize, contend with an adversary.* (Jude 3)

**Digging Deeper**: 2 Peter 2:1-22; Galatians 5:20; Hebrews 13:9; Acts 8:9-24, (Gnostics) Acts 6:5, 20:29-31; Revelation2:2- 15 (Nicolatans)

**You Will Know Them by Their Fruits**

One of many signs that we are living in the last days, is that there will be a great falling away from the faith. Some will fall away because they never had true salvation in the first place. Others have never been taught the essential doctrines of the faith and so they become easy targets for deception. It is quite evident just how close we are to the return of Christ for His bride because of the numerous statistics across the board showing the steady decline of church attendance.

***Matthew 24:4-5, 23-25 (NASB)***

***And Jesus answered and said to them, “SEE to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and will mislead many. Then if any one says to you, Behold here is the Christ, or There He is, do not believe him, For false Christ’s and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold I have told you in advance.***

***2 Corinthians 2:11-15 (ESV)***

***And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.***

As you can see, there are an enormous amount of Bible passages address the issues of false doctrines, false gospels and false teachers. These phonies (a nicer name than God calls them) are pawns of Satan. Here are just a few names God’s Word uses to describe them: ravenous wolves; dogs; deceitful workers – masquerading as angels of light; wolves in sheep’s clothing; savage wolves; godless; evil; rebellious men; they teach the doctrines of demons; foolish; sons of the Devil; empty talkers; unreasoning animals; blemishes; clouds without rain; antichrist; liars; scoffers; trees without fruit; brute beasts and twice dead! After reading this list, how do you think God feels about these people?

We live in a world of knock-offs – products that are copies, but sold as genuine. Often it’s hard to tell the difference. Recently, while helping one of our sisters prepare for an estate sale, a few of us from our disciple group found ourselves digging through old jewelry boxes. To our untrained eyes we could not tell the difference between the real gold, gems and pearls and the costume jewelry. Some pieces where obviously fake, while with others we really struggled in determining if we had something valuable or a piece that would go in the $1.00 pile. It’s more than a little unsettling to realize that when it comes to Christian doctrine, if we buy into what is false, it could very well cost us eternal life! So how can you tell a fake from the real thing? The wise person will heed the apostle’s admonitions to test everything. (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1)

***Matthew 7:13-23 (HCSB)***

[***“Enter***](http://concordances.org/greek/1525.htm) [***through***](http://concordances.org/greek/1223.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***narrow***](http://concordances.org/greek/4728.htm) [***gate***](http://concordances.org/greek/4439.htm)***.***  [***For***](http://concordances.org/greek/3754.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***gate***](http://concordances.org/greek/4439.htm) [***is wide***](http://concordances.org/greek/4116.htm) [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***road***](http://concordances.org/greek/3598.htm) [***is broad***](http://concordances.org/greek/2149.htm) [***that leads***](http://concordances.org/greek/520.htm) [***to***](http://concordances.org/greek/1519.htm) [***destruction***](http://concordances.org/greek/684.htm)***,***  [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***there are***](http://concordances.org/greek/1526.htm) [***many***](http://concordances.org/greek/4183.htm) [***who go***](http://concordances.org/greek/1525.htm) [***through***](http://concordances.org/greek/1223.htm) [***it***](http://concordances.org/greek/846.htm)***.*** [***How***](http://concordances.org/greek/5101.htm) [***narrow***](http://concordances.org/greek/4728.htm) [***is the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***gate***](http://concordances.org/greek/4439.htm) [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***difficult***](http://concordances.org/greek/2346.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***road***](http://concordances.org/greek/3598.htm) [***that leads***](http://concordances.org/greek/520.htm) [***to***](http://concordances.org/greek/1519.htm) [***life***](http://concordances.org/greek/2222.htm)***,*** [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***few***](http://concordances.org/greek/3641.htm) [***find***](http://concordances.org/greek/2147.htm) [***it***](http://concordances.org/greek/848.htm)***.***

[***“Beware***](http://concordances.org/greek/4337.htm) [***of***](http://concordances.org/greek/575.htm) [***false prophet***](http://concordances.org/greek/5578.htm) [***who***](http://concordances.org/greek/3748.htm) [***come***](http://concordances.org/greek/2064.htm) [***to***](http://concordances.org/greek/4314.htm) [***you***](http://concordances.org/greek/5209.htm) [***in***](http://concordances.org/greek/1722.htm) [***sheep’s***](http://concordances.org/greek/4263.htm) [***clothing***](http://concordances.org/greek/1742.htm) [***but***](http://concordances.org/greek/1161.htm) [***inwardly***](http://concordances.org/greek/2081.htm) [***are***](http://concordances.org/greek/1526.htm) [***ravaging***](http://concordances.org/greek/727.htm) [***wolves***](http://concordances.org/greek/3074.htm)***.*** [***You’ll recognize***](http://concordances.org/greek/1921.htm) [***them***](http://concordances.org/greek/848.htm) [***by***](http://concordances.org/greek/575.htm) [***their***](http://concordances.org/greek/846.htm) [***fruit***](http://concordances.org/greek/2590.htm)***.***  [***Are grapes***](http://concordances.org/greek/4718.htm) [***gathered***](http://concordances.org/greek/4816.htm) [***from***](http://concordances.org/greek/575.htm) [***thorn bushes***](http://concordances.org/greek/173.htm) [***or***](http://concordances.org/greek/2228.htm) [***figs***](http://concordances.org/greek/4810.htm) [***from***](http://concordances.org/greek/575.htm) [***thistles***](http://concordances.org/greek/5146.htm)[***?***](http://concordances.org/greek/3385.htm)[***In the same way***](http://concordances.org/greek/3779.htm)***,*** [***every***](http://concordances.org/greek/3956.htm) [***good***](http://concordances.org/greek/18.htm) [***tree***](http://concordances.org/greek/1186.htm) [***produces***](http://concordances.org/greek/4160.htm) [***good***](http://concordances.org/greek/2570.htm) [***fruit***](http://concordances.org/greek/2590.htm)***,*** [***but***](http://concordances.org/greek/1161.htm) [***a bad***](http://concordances.org/greek/4550.htm) [***tree***](http://concordances.org/greek/1186.htm) [***produces***](http://concordances.org/greek/4160.htm) [***bad***](http://concordances.org/greek/4190.htm) [***fruit***](http://concordances.org/greek/2590.htm)***.*** [***A good***](http://concordances.org/greek/18.htm) [***tree***](http://concordances.org/greek/1186.htm) [***can’t***](http://concordances.org/greek/3756.htm) [***produce***](http://concordances.org/greek/4160.htm) [***bad***](http://concordances.org/greek/4190.htm) [***fruit***](http://concordances.org/greek/2590.htm)***;*** [***neither***](http://concordances.org/greek/3761.htm) [***can a bad***](http://concordances.org/greek/4550.htm) [***tree***](http://concordances.org/greek/1186.htm) [***produce***](http://concordances.org/greek/4160.htm) [***good***](http://concordances.org/greek/2570.htm) [***fruit***](http://concordances.org/greek/2590.htm)***.*** [***Every***](http://concordances.org/greek/3956.htm) [***tree***](http://concordances.org/greek/1186.htm) [***that doesn’t***](http://concordances.org/greek/3361.htm) [***produce***](http://concordances.org/greek/4160.htm) [***good***](http://concordances.org/greek/2570.htm) [***fruit***](http://concordances.org/greek/2590.htm) [***is cut down***](http://concordances.org/greek/1581.htm) [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***thrown***](http://concordances.org/greek/906.htm) [***into***](http://concordances.org/greek/1519.htm) [***the fire***](http://concordances.org/greek/4442.htm)***.*** [***So***](http://concordances.org/greek/686.htm) [***you’ll recognize***](http://concordances.org/greek/1921.htm) [***them***](http://concordances.org/greek/848.htm) [***by***](http://concordances.org/greek/575.htm) [***their***](http://concordances.org/greek/846.htm) [***fruit***](http://concordances.org/greek/2590.htm)***.***

[***“Not***](http://concordances.org/greek/3756.htm) [***everyone***](http://concordances.org/greek/3956.htm) [***who says***](http://concordances.org/greek/3004.htm) [***to Me***](http://concordances.org/greek/3427.htm)***,*** [***‘Lord***](http://concordances.org/greek/2962.htm)***,*** [***Lord***](http://concordances.org/greek/2962.htm)[***! ’ will enter***](http://concordances.org/greek/1525.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***kingdom***](http://concordances.org/greek/932.htm) [***of heaven***](http://concordances.org/greek/3772.htm)***,***  [***but***](http://concordances.org/greek/235.htm) [***only the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***one who does***](http://concordances.org/greek/4160.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***will***](http://concordances.org/greek/2307.htm) [***of My***](http://concordances.org/greek/3450.htm) [***Father***](http://concordances.org/greek/3962.htm) [***in***](http://concordances.org/greek/1722.htm) [***heaven***](http://concordances.org/greek/3772.htm)***.*** [***On***](http://concordances.org/greek/1722.htm) [***that***](http://concordances.org/greek/1565.htm) [***day***](http://concordances.org/greek/2250.htm) [***many***](http://concordances.org/greek/4183.htm) [***will say***](http://concordances.org/greek/2046.htm) [***to Me***](http://concordances.org/greek/3427.htm)***,*** [***‘Lord***](http://concordances.org/greek/2962.htm)***,*** [***Lord***](http://concordances.org/greek/2962.htm)***,*** [***didn’t***](http://concordances.org/greek/3756.htm) [***we prophesy***](http://concordances.org/greek/4395.htm) [***in Your***](http://concordances.org/greek/4674.htm) [***name***](http://concordances.org/greek/3686.htm)***,*** [***drive out***](http://concordances.org/greek/1544.htm) [***demons***](http://concordances.org/greek/1140.htm) [***in Your***](http://concordances.org/greek/4674.htm) [***name***](http://concordances.org/greek/3686.htm)***,*** [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***do***](http://concordances.org/greek/4160.htm) [***many***](http://concordances.org/greek/4183.htm) [***miracles***](http://concordances.org/greek/1411.htm) [***in Your***](http://concordances.org/greek/4674.htm) [***name***](http://concordances.org/greek/3686.htm)***? ’*** [***Then***](http://concordances.org/greek/5119.htm) [***I will announce***](http://concordances.org/greek/3670.htm) [***to them***](http://concordances.org/greek/846.htm)***,*** [***‘I never***](http://concordances.org/greek/3763.htm) [***knew***](http://concordances.org/greek/1097.htm) [***you***](http://concordances.org/greek/5209.htm)***!*** [***Depart***](http://concordances.org/greek/672.htm) [***from***](http://concordances.org/greek/575.htm) [***Me***](http://concordances.org/greek/1473.htm)***,*** [***you lawbreakers***](http://concordances.org/greek/2038.htm)***!’***

**The Fruits of the Fakes:**

Now mind you, this is merely a *partial list*.

* All of them have some knowledge of the Bible. But they will claim to have some secret knowledge, revelation or their own divine interpretation. They drawing followers to themselves as the source of Truth. Contrast this with true prophets who always point others to Jesus and the Scriptures! (1 John 1:1-3; Jeremiah 23:9-40; Revelation 1:1-3, 2:2-15; 19:10-21)
* Their personal character is usually marked by sexual immorality, greed or both. Pastor David Lawrence said, “Wrong doctrine always leads to wrong morals.” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 21:8, 22:15; 1 Thess. 2:5; 2 Peter 2:2, 12; Ephesians 5:3-7)
* False teachers and prophets masquerade as angels of light but in reality, they are blind guides who lead people into hell. (Matthew 7:13-23, 13:36-43, 15:7-14; Jude 4-20; 2 Cor. 11:2-15.)
* False teachers teach destructive doctrines made up by men like: gospels of salvation that is based on works, not Christ. Or the other extreme such as licentiousness. Here are a few examples. (Jude 3-13; Matthew 15:7-9; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 1 Timothy 6:3-16)
* People without the Holy Spirit cannot understand the things taught by the Spirit in the Bible because they have been blinded by the Devil to the Gospel of Jesus - the Living Word. (Hebrew 11:1-6; Genesis 3:1-4) Being led by their father - Satan, they change the Bible to fit their lies, and they tamper with the Holy Scriptures, in direct defiance of the following specific passages. Those who do not love the truth, become targets of Satan’s master plan to kill, steal and destroy their eternal souls.
* They do not preach the true Christ who is revealed in the Bible as God. For example, the Book of Mormon is a plagiarism of the King James Bible printed in 1765. They take the true Gospel and substitute it with a different gospel that is nothing more than a lie. All false teaching has a common origin - Satan! From the start he twisted God’s Word, causing doubt. The Devil’s alternative to the truth is to take some of what God says out of context, dilute it, and blend it with falsehoods, contradictions, misrepresentations, distortions and all kinds of perversions of what God has said. By adulterating the Words of God, they lead many souls astray. By the way, ultimately the original sin is the sin of unbelief.

**Digging Deeper**: Deut. 18:19-22; Galatians 1:6-9, 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:15-22; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4, 13-15; Romans 10:1-3; 2 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:26-31; 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 1:18-20; 2:15-18; John 16:8-11

The following is a quote by John MacArthur: “*The false teacher’s absolute rejection of Christ’s authority was the root and the real motive for their apostasy in the first place. They resented the Lordship of Christ and disowned Him as their true master because they had rebellious hearts and wanted the authority for themselves.”*

**Two Examples**

If we desire to lead others to the Truth, we must obtain some knowledge of the lies they have believed. I encourage you to go on line and hear the testimonials of people who have escaped these false religions. The two following examples represent a long family tree, originating in the Garden of Eden with the fall. Each demonic distortion, deception and lie propagated by these false prophets and teachers has been recycled and repackaged from previous heretics.

* Charles Taze Russell founded what is today known as Jehovah’s Witnesses or The Watchtower Society in 1876. He committed adultery, and his wife was granted a divorce on these grounds. The man who took his place, J.F. Rutherford, was also known as a serial adulterer. The main fruit that identifies them as antichrists is this: *they do not believe Jesus is God.* So they, in direct violation, changed their “bible.” One example is this: in John 1:1-2 they took out, “He was God” and inserted “he was **a** god.” Do you see the difference?

***Revelation 22:18-20 (ESV)***

***I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!***

***Deut. 4:2 (NASB)***

***“YOU shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” 12:32 (NASB) “Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.”***

***Proverbs 30:5-6 (NASB)***

***“Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His Words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”***

* Joseph Smith founded Mormonism in 1830. His religious belief and practice of polygamy is rooted in adultery. He married 28 women, and several of them were as young as 14 years old. He was accused of sexual assault by nine women in four states. (See accounts published in 1994 by a man who was in Smith’s inner circle. His name is William Law.) Joseph Smith’s successor, Brigham Young, also had fifty - five wives. This group would fall under the category of teaching the doctrines of demons, since their leader claims to have been visited by an angel. No doubt he was. What are demons but fallen angels? By the way, the secret writings of their “bible” have never been seen or validated. They claim a person has the potential to become a god and populate their own planet. This is reminiscent of other lies told by the father of all liars, in Genesis 3:1-4: “Did God really say…”, “You will not surely die.”... and “You will be like God.”

***1Timothy 4:1-2 (ESV)***

***Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.***

Lastly, yet not quite so obvious, are the teachers who tickle the ears of folks and teach only the portions of Scriptures that are non-confrontational. They are usually referred to as “prosperity gospels.” This is one example; take if you will, the book by Joel Osteen with the title: Your Best Life Now. Is this really the gospel that Jesus propagated? Quite the contrary! However, for the sake of the argument, I will concur with Osteen on one point. For the lost person, here and now *is* their best life. Truth is, for them, living in this sin cursed world is truly all the heaven they will ever experience.

Satan always give the best at first and saves the worst for last. For instance, *a moment* of indulging in sinful sexual gratification with a person with whom you are not married to, is as good as it’s going to get. Then comes the consequences that are not simply momentary. Like, sexually transmitted diseases, babies conceived that end up killed or raised by a single mother. And this is not to mention, broken marriages and homes and years of shame, guilt and regret.

***Ephesians 5:3-13 (ESV)***

***But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible.***

Not so for the saints in Christ, praise His Name, our temporary residence in this world is all the hell we are ever going to know, because, not only has He saved the best for last, but our best life will last forever! Amen!? Our hope and future home is a place where there is no sin, death, crying or pain. Furthermore, if we have been saved from this wicked and perverse generation, should we not become more and more uncomfortable with the darkness that is so prevalent in the here and now!

***Acts 20:25-31 (HCSB)***

***“***[***And***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***now***](http://concordances.org/greek/3568.htm) [***I***](http://concordances.org/greek/1473.htm) [***know***](http://concordances.org/greek/1492.htm) [***that***](http://concordances.org/greek/3754.htm) [***none of you***](http://concordances.org/greek/5210.htm) [***will ever see***](http://concordances.org/greek/3708.htm) [***my***](http://concordances.org/greek/3450.htm) [***face***](http://concordances.org/greek/4383.htm) [***again***](http://concordances.org/greek/3765.htm)[***— everyone***](http://concordances.org/greek/3739.htm) [***I went about***](http://concordances.org/greek/1330.htm) [***preaching***](http://concordances.org/greek/2784.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***kingdom***](http://concordances.org/greek/932.htm) [***to***](http://concordances.org/greek/1722.htm)***.*** [***Therefore***](http://concordances.org/greek/1360.htm) [***I testify***](http://concordances.org/greek/3143.htm) [***to you***](http://concordances.org/greek/5213.htm) [***this day***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***that***](http://concordances.org/greek/3754.htm) [***I am***](http://concordances.org/greek/1510.htm) [***innocent***](http://concordances.org/greek/2513.htm) [***of***](http://concordances.org/greek/575.htm) [***everyone’s***](http://concordances.org/greek/3956.htm) [***blood***](http://concordances.org/greek/129.htm)***,*** [***for***](http://concordances.org/greek/1063.htm) [***I did not***](http://concordances.org/greek/3756.htm) [***shrink back***](http://concordances.org/greek/5288.htm) [***from***](http://concordances.org/greek/3361.htm) [***declaring***](http://concordances.org/greek/312.htm) [***to you***](http://concordances.org/greek/5213.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***whole***](http://concordances.org/greek/3956.htm) [***plan***](http://concordances.org/greek/1012.htm) [***of God***](http://concordances.org/greek/2316.htm)***.*** [***Be on guard***](http://concordances.org/greek/4337.htm) [***for yourselves***](http://concordances.org/greek/1438.htm) [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***for all***](http://concordances.org/greek/3956.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***flock***](http://concordances.org/greek/4168.htm) [***that***](http://concordances.org/greek/3739.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***Holy***](http://concordances.org/greek/40.htm) [***Spirit***](http://concordances.org/greek/4151.htm) [***has appointed***](http://concordances.org/greek/5087.htm) [***you***](http://concordances.org/greek/5209.htm) [***to***](http://concordances.org/greek/1722.htm) [***as overseers***](http://concordances.org/greek/1985.htm)***,*** [***to shepherd***](http://concordances.org/greek/4165.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***church***](http://concordances.org/greek/1577.htm) [***of God***](http://concordances.org/greek/2316.htm)***,***  [***which***](http://concordances.org/greek/3739.htm) [***He purchased***](http://concordances.org/greek/4046.htm) [***with***](http://concordances.org/greek/1223.htm) [***His own***](http://concordances.org/greek/2398.htm) [***blood***](http://concordances.org/greek/129.htm)***.*** [***I***](http://concordances.org/greek/1473.htm) [***know***](http://concordances.org/greek/1492.htm) [***that***](http://concordances.org/greek/3754.htm) [***after***](http://concordances.org/greek/3326.htm) [***my***](http://concordances.org/greek/3450.htm) [***departure***](http://concordances.org/greek/867.htm) [***savage***](http://concordances.org/greek/926.htm) [***wolves***](http://concordances.org/greek/3074.htm) [***will come in***](http://concordances.org/greek/1525.htm) [***among***](http://concordances.org/greek/1519.htm) [***you***](http://concordances.org/greek/5209.htm)***,*** [***not***](http://concordances.org/greek/3361.htm) [***sparing***](http://concordances.org/greek/5339.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***flock***](http://concordances.org/greek/4168.htm)***.*** [***And***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***men***](http://concordances.org/greek/435.htm) [***will rise up***](http://concordances.org/greek/450.htm) [***from***](http://concordances.org/greek/1537.htm) [***your own***](http://concordances.org/greek/5216.htm) [***number with deviant***](http://concordances.org/greek/1294.htm) [***doctrines***](http://concordances.org/greek/2980.htm) [***to lure***](http://concordances.org/greek/645.htm) [***the***](http://concordances.org/greek/3588.htm) [***disciples***](http://concordances.org/greek/3101.htm) [***into following***](http://concordances.org/greek/3694.htm) [***them***](http://concordances.org/greek/846.htm)***.*** [***Therefore***](http://concordances.org/greek/1352.htm) [***be on the alert***](http://concordances.org/greek/1127.htm)***,*** [***remembering***](http://concordances.org/greek/3421.htm) [***that***](http://concordances.org/greek/3754.htm) [***night***](http://concordances.org/greek/3571.htm) [***and***](http://concordances.org/greek/2532.htm) [***day***](http://concordances.org/greek/2250.htm) [***for three years***](http://concordances.org/greek/5148.htm) [***I did not***](http://concordances.org/greek/3756.htm) [***stop***](http://concordances.org/greek/3973.htm) [***warning***](http://concordances.org/greek/3560.htm) [***each one***](http://concordances.org/greek/1520.htm) [***of you with***](http://concordances.org/greek/3326.htm) [***tears***](http://concordances.org/greek/1144.htm)***.***

* **Digging Deeper:** Mark 9:42-47; John 8:31-46; Jude 3-11; 1 John 2:18-26; 2 John 7-11; 2 Thess. 2:1-15; 2 Timothy 3:1-4; Hebrew 13:4; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Peter 1:16-21, 2:1-22, 3:15-18; 1 Corinthians 2:10-15, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; Romans 1:18-32, 6:16; Galatians 1:6-9, 5:19-21; Revelation 2:6, 14-16, 20-24, 21:8, 22:14-15; Jeremiah 23:9-40; Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32

**Historical Christian Creeds**

Why do we believe what we believe? Did you know that all of our historical Christian creeds and confessions came out of the Biblical defense by the writers of the New Testament and early church fathers in response to false doctrines? Furthermore, the same false Gospels and doctrines are alive and thriving in our day as well. The Nicene Creed, drawn up in the fourth century, is emphatic in affirming the deity of Christ, since it is directed against Arius and his followers - the Arians, who denied that Christ was fully God. The Apostles’ Creed, drawn up in the first or second century, emphasizes Christ’s true humanity, including His material body, since that is the point that the heretics of the time (Gnostics, Marcionites, and later Manicheans) denied. (1 John 4:1-3)

**Nicene Creed vs. Arianism**

“***We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in ONE LORD, JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY SON of GOD, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, TRUE GOD from TRUE GOD, Begotten not made, OF ONE being with the Father. Through Him ALL things were made, for us and for our salvation. He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in the glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. We believed in the Holy Spirit, The Lord, The Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.”***

**Apostles Creed vs. Gnosticism**

**“*I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and Jesus Christ his only Son our LORD; who was conceived by the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the father almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of Sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.”***

**Essentials of the True Christian Faith**

1. **The deity of Christ Jesus:**

The One true Eternal God has revealed Himself to humanity through Scripture. And all of scripture is pointing us to the Lord Jesus Christ - the one and only Lord. He was, and is, as His Father. He is God incarnate, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, in the Virgin Mary. In fulfillment of Scripture, He is the Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary. Note: The God who identified Himself in the Old Testament as *I AM,* is Christ Jesus. (Exodus 3:14- John 8:58) In Greek, *I AM,* is translated ego eimi.

**Digging Deeper:** Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 43:10-14; Acts 10:34-48; Matthew 1:23; Micah 5:2; John 8:24, 58, 10:30-33, 17:24, 20:28; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 2:2; Romans 9:5-6, 10:9; Hebrews 1:1-13; Revelation 1:7-16; 1 John 4:2-3; 1 Timothy 2:3-6

1. **The bodily death, burial and resurrection of Jesus:**

**Digging Deeper:** Hebrews 10:1-10; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22,40:6-7; Luke 24:37-39; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 4: 1-2; 2 John 7; Romans 10:9; Acts 13:33, 17:30-31; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-17

1. **The Doctrine of Grace:**

Salvation is by grace alone; through faith in Christ Jesus alone, it is *not of works*. No one can earn righteousness or reconciliation with a Holy God. **Salvation is a *gift of grace*.** However, works of righteousness will always follow true saving faith. But nevertheless, even then, it is Christ who is our righteousness, at work in and through us!

**Digging Deeper:** Ephesians 2:4-10; Titus 3:3-8; Romans 1:17, 3:20-28, 4:1-12, Galatians 2:15-16, 21, 3:15-16, 21, 5:4; John 6:28-29; James 2:14-26; Philippians 2:13, 3:9; Isaiah 64:6

1. **The Lord Jesus substitutionary atonement and justification of sinners:**

Sin is not merely what we do. It is what we are. By birth into the human race, by nature, we are in total depravity. Because of our sins, we are dead and separated spiritually from God our Creator. This fact necessitates a spiritual birth.

**Digging Deeper**: Ephesians 2:1-14; John 3:1-36; Acts 2:38, 16:31; Romans 3:22-26; 4:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; 1 Peter 1:22-25, 2:24

1. **The Holy Trinity:**

Some may argue that the word trinity is not found in the Bible. In this they are correct. However, from the first few words of the Bible to the last, the evidence of the Trinity is found throughout. The Trinity consists of three hypostases (singular hypostasis united in one-ousia); three Persons who co-exist as One.

**Digging Deeper:** Genesis 1:1-27, 11:7; Exodus 20:3-6; Isaiah 6:8, 43:10, 44:6-8, 45:5-22, -46:9, 47:8, 48:16-17; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:3; John 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:11

1. **His Second Coming:**

The Lord Jesus Christ will return to judge the world in righteousness, and He will ultimately reign over all. (James 4:12; Matthew 10:28; John 5:21-23, 27, 9:39)

**Digging Deeper:** Acts 1: 9-11; Philippians 2:9-11; Isaiah 45:23; Mark 16:19; Matthew 16:27; Revelation 1:7-18; Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-13; Psalms 2:1-12

We live in the information age; there are countless resources on the internet. One trusted source is: **www.GotQuestions?org.** I implore you to do some research. Better yet, take your time to work your way through all the passages in this lesson (this might take some time). Then, “You will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

While we will not all agree on every Biblical issue, the only hills we must live and die upon are the historical doctrines of our faith. Everything else, all our crooked theology, will be dealt with at the judgment seat of Christ. Having said that, we must not major on the minor issues, while forsaking the Law of Love. To do so, would be to lose our eternal rewards. (Roman 13:10)

When people are learning to distinguish between counterfeit money and true currency they do not study the counterfeit, they study the real thing. The only way to be equipped to protect yourself and those you love is to know the Truth. Examine your beliefs in light of Scripture and don’t check your mind at the door when you sit under preaching and teaching. Study what you are being taught. Make certain the Bible is not being distorted because correct doctrine is a matter of life and death. People’s eternal souls are at stake! (1Timothy 4:1-16; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:15-17)

**Think on These Things**

1. Did you have any one who helped you to grow in your love relationship with Jesus and apply the truth of His Word to your life?
2. Why does correct doctrine matter? Read: (1 Timothy 4:1-16; 6:20-21; 2 Corinthians 11:1-15)
3. What are some teachings that you once believed and that you now know were untrue?
4. Think about this statement: I will live what I believe, even if what I believe is a lie.
5. Do your beliefs line up with the Bible?

**Memory Passage**

***1 Peter 3:15 (NASB)***

***“But sanctify Christ as LORD in your hearts; always be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”***