

The Church Contra (Go To Meeting)

Lyall Johnston—January 22, 2022

We are in the last days, and we don't know how much time we have left. But God—through His prophets and apostles, and chiefly through Jesus Christ—gave us so much encouragement, that along with that encouragement *They never failed to warn us of many of the things that are going to take place, are taking place, have taken place in the past!*

We can see that! We can see that Satan has a target, and his target to day is the Church that Jesus Christ said that He will build.

Matthew 16: “And I say also to you that you are Peter; **but upon this Rock I will build My Church**, and the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it.”

Jesus was making a prophecy, a statement that is absolutely true, that no matter what Satan does, he will never be able to completely stamp out the Church of God.

We've been hearing recently, and I'm sure it has helped many people to understand, that God is going to keep this promise made to us through Jesus Christ that Satan will never be able to completely do to the Church, although many of us will face persecution and martyrdom. Jesus said that there's going to be a body of people that He will take and keep them in a safe place in order to make sure that Satan does not have the final strike against God the Father, Jesus Christ and the saints.

Jesus warned us in Matt. 24 that we begin to see some of the very hard works. It's always good to hear—and we need to hear constantly—that we have been growing in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, asking God to shed His love abroad in our hearts. To grant us wisdom because we lack wisdom that He only can give; the knowledge that only He can give.

They warn us because from God's Throne in heaven above, with the Father and Christ Himself, and myriad of angels looking down and see everything that is taking place before Them. Knowing what's going to take place, They give us warning; the apostles have given us warning. The prophets in the Old Testament warning after warning after warning!

So, should we, in the days that we are living in, just say it doesn't really matter, we don't have to worry, God is going to take care of us. That would be not a wise decision to make, because it says that

we're 'to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

Let's pick up the story to see how Jesus Christ, the prophets and the apostles told us that the Church is coming under attack. Satan is after us!

Matthew 24:3: “And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him alone, saying, ‘Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of Your coming, and of the completion of the age?’ Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘**Be on guard...**’” (vs 3-4).

That one statement is mentioned seven times! I think that God is trying to tell us something. The fact that Jesus—Who preached love, returned to release the oppression and call people and preach the Kingdom of God—also preached this message: “...**Be on guard...**” *seven times!* What are we to be on guard about?

“...so that **no one** deceives you” (v 4).

Paul picks those two words—**no one**—up in his Epistle to the Colossians when the Church was beginning to deal with the problem of Gnosticism and many different heresies, but Gnosticism in the Churches of Asia Minor it seemed to be one of the major issues.

“...Be on guard...” are the words written in Matthew's Gospel that he heard by Jesus Himself. Matthew was there listening when Jesus was speaking to His disciples and telling them. So, the message for us today is:

“...‘Be on guard so that **no one** deceives you For many shall come in My name saying, “I am the Christ”...’” (vs 4-5). *We can see that from two perspectives:*

1. They're going to come and say, ‘I learned from Jesus Christ, I'm an apostle. I'm an evangelist, I'm this minister that God has called and you need to listen to me.’

Then he starts giving you some soft words that begin to ‘ring a bell’ in your mind, and you say that's not what you understand from the Scriptures.

It is important that we do understand the doctrines of the Bible. There were a whole group of people who led the whole Worldwide Church of God astray, that confessed:

We really never really checked the doctrines. We went to Imperial Schools and Ambassador

College and we just took the doctrines for granted.

When the trials came, they went off to a 'religious seminaries' and they learned 'new truth,' and they brought that back to the Church! I have a disc of the three leaders of that organization or heretical movement and took the Church into oblivion! 'Called to be Free' was the message: *free from God's Law!* Yes, that happened! They brought this philosophies in from outside.

They were from a theological nature, from the Bible, and this all came from the Church fathers. One man who was one of the top ministers in the Church said on the subject of the Holy Spirit that now they had accepted the trinity, he said, 'I can't believe we were so wrong; that we didn't understand that God is a trinity.'

Another man said, 'Oh, now I pray to the Holy Spirit.' ***NO! He's praying to a demon, not to God's Spirit!*** God is not a trinity; we know that, and we've been over it many, many times! It's so easy to prove.

Once people come along with this smooth talk and add some psychology, philosophy and philosophical theology, not just genuine Biblical studies.

I personally have come to the place where I detest the term 'theology' because I know what it leads to. The study of the Bible has been so misused and misrepresented. I've read theologies; it takes you away from the inner workings of God's Spirit. The doctrines that we need to know and understand are found right before us in the Word of God. We don't need any other books except lexicons that help us understand the language, dictionaries and books that will help us to understand the backgrounds of the ancient peoples of Israel. That help us to understand even today.

Back in 1945 there was a discovery of some texts that exposed a lot of what Gnosticism was all about. They have all of these spurious texts; for example, *The Secret Gospel of John*. What is in there is absolutely trite. People might eat trite, which is the stomach of an animal, particularly a cow.

2. "...saying, '**I am the Christ**'..." (v 5).

We know that's going to be true for 'the man of sin' (2-Thess. 2).

"...and **they shall deceive many**" (v 5).
People are going to believe them!

Verse 6: "And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars....." etc

Verse 8: "Now, all these *things are* the

beginning of sorrows."

Verse 11: "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many."

What we have to understand here is that Jesus not just referring to prophets in the world, outside the Church, He's also talking about false prophets will arise within His Body! Have we not seen that in the past decades within the Body of Christ itself, within the Churches of God. Even today within some of the Churches of God this is occurring. People are being deceived by doctrines that do not stand up to inspection.

Sometimes even casual inspection of plain, basic statements are taking us away from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus.

If you want to look at this whole subject of Gnosticism, which was coming into the Church not many years after it began, and Paul and Peter and others were worried about it. Unbelievable!

Verse 11: "**And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.**"

So, the reason that we're looking at this today is that we want to make sure that we listen to very sound teaching.

- What's going to happen in the future when some of the leaders either die or they're taken from us, cast into prison because they've been preaching the Truth of God, and we don't have that leadership?
- What if all the elders all the ministers were removed because of preaching the Truth?

That's when we'll have to be careful! Jesus was telling His own disciples:

Verse 9: "**Then shall they deliver you up to affliction, and shall kill you... [that's going to happen to those who are leaders and many others within the Church] ...and you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake.**"

In that we can rejoice because we know that we're doing what's pleasing God, we're standing up for the name of Jesus Christ!

Revelation 12:9: "And **the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan... [so there are 2 names for him] ...who is deceiving the whole world...**"

Look at what's taking place worldwide today, we're living in a time when everything is happening, not just in a small corner, and is in the news constantly. The news we're getting is mostly ***not*** the truth! It's not a true record of what's going on. What's really going on you've got to really hunt for and search for what's driving this whole program

that's affecting every nation today. ***Satan is truly doing his job in deceiving the whole world!***

"...he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (v 9).

When that happens, if it's not already in the process of happening now, we can't even begin to imagine what's going to take place except for what the Scriptures tell us.

Verse 10: "And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God.'"

We realize that Satan is there daily accusing you and me because we're not perfect. We're in the process of *being perfected!* Satan thinks he can get in there and 'make some hay' while we're a little off-color spiritually. We're not fully committed on a particular day and we have a real problem or struggle. Satan will be in there like a flash trying to accuse you. But we don't have to worry, because we overcome him!

Verse 11: "But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb..."

Daily we go before the Throne of God and say, 'Father, forgive us our trespasses as we have trespassed against You. Father, we also pray that we would forgive those who trespass against us.'

That's such an important part of the repentance process. But also by the testimony of Jesus Christ that we accept that He came bodily in the flesh. He was not just some spirit that connected itself to a body and that He didn't really die on the cross. That's part of the Gnostic theology, the Gnostic beliefs! The Gnostic tenets that were being brought into the Church!

They had a reason for doing that. The reason the Gnostics came into the Church, which they were apparently never a complete religion, but it was a belief system going right back to Babylon and philosophies of the Egyptians and Greeks. Here's their purpose: ***It is the purpose or willful attempt to change things!***

In other words, the purpose of willful attempt to change the teachings and doctrines that Christ has placed in the Church, that He said that He would build. He established it on the Day of Pentecost in 30_{A.D.} and ***He continues to build it today!***

They're trying to purposely or willfully attempt to change things, the teachings and doctrines of Christ, the apostles and the prophets of the Old

Testament. They want to change everything. What they want is just a one-world religion. Even back then this was the aim; to water down the Christianity that Christ had established in the Church. Remember, the people back then didn't have the complete Bible like we have today. They water it down until you have this one great big hodgepodge of beliefs, everyone accepting the beliefs of everyone else.

- Sound like something that's going on today?
- Something that's going to be coming against the Church and attacking us?

Jesus said to Peter, 'Your name is Peter, you're a stone, but I'm going to build My Church on this Rock, referring to Himself. After that Jesus said to Peter, 'Satan has demanded to have you.' The word *you* is in the plural form and that's why it is translated (in the *Favorite Version*) 'Satan has desired to have all of you.'

Do you think that applies today; that Satan desires to have all of us? *Indeed, that's true!* He's trying to deceive us. Why? *Because we believe what Christ is telling us through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation! He's the Author!*

All his work, Paul said to Timothy, is 'God-breathed.' Peter says the same thing. God gave it to men to record it, write it down! It's not the words of men! Yet, the Gnostics are trying to say that the Old Testament and whatever letters written by the Biblical writers of that time claim that these letters are from Paul, James and Peter. *No it wasn't!* Letters like that were circulating.

That's why we need to stick with the Word of God, stay with the Word that we have.

Matthew 24:21: "For then shall there be Great Tribulation, such as has not been from *the* beginning of *the* world until this time, nor ever shall be *again*. And if those days were not limited, there would no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be limited. Then if anyone says to you..." (vs 21-23).

What did we read in v 4? "...Be on guard, so that no one deceives you." So, Jesus is picking up on the same thing here:

Verse 23: "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here *is* the Christ,' or, '*He is there*'..."

He's with this church over here or over there; that's probably going to be a ploy that we will have to face.

"...do not believe *it*. For there shall arise **false Christs and false prophets**... [He wants us to

get the point, the message] ...and **they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, if possible, even the elect**" (vs 23-24).

- Who are the elect?
- Are we not the elect?

Indeed, that's what the Scripture says! We received the call of God, He convicted us of the sin within. God convicted us of the evil that we had done. ***We repented, were baptized, had hands laid on us and we received the Spirit of God!***

Now we have that inner working of the Spirit of God within us. Even here, Jesus said to 'Be on guard,' because if it were possible, even the elect could be deceived. ***But not if our mind and heart is filled with the Word of God!***

So, when somebody comes to us with soft words, with a different teaching, a different doctrine that what is in the Scriptures, the bells start ringing and we get the message.

We reject the teaching and we need to reject the person, as well. To stand and listen could soften us up! That's why Jesus makes these shocking statements. That's why Peter, Paul and John also made some very powerful, strong statements.

Verse 26: "Therefore, if they say to you..." What did Jesus say?

- don't listen to them
- don't believe them
- don't believe it

"...'*Come and see!* He is in the wilderness'; **do not go forth**..." (v 26).

What we can say here is that anything that takes us into other teachings that are extra-Biblical, that are not in the Word of God, Jesus said, ***'Do not go that way!'***

"...'*Come and see!* He is in the secret chambers'; **do not believe it**" (v 26).

- How many times has Jesus said, 'Do not believe it'?
- Is He being serious?

or

- Is He making a flippant statement?

Jesus never was and never will be making flippant statements! When Jesus says it, He has a purpose, because ***He does not want us or any of the saints to be deceived!***

The reason that Jesus says this is, v 27: "For as the light of day, which comes forth from the east and shines as far as the west, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be."

Now, right after that there's another interesting statement:

Verse 28: "For wherever the carcass... [or body] ...may be, there will the eagles be gathered together."

Is that not talking about the resurrection? *I personally believe that it is!* Until I'm shown otherwise. Because in v 27 it's talking about Christ's return with the imminent resurrection of the saints.

Verse 28: "For wherever the carcass may be, there will the eagles be gathered together."

Isn't that's what's going to happen. Isn't God going to gather the dead and those who remain alive after, to join the rest of the Body on the Sea of Glass? ***Absolutely!***

2-Peter 1 is very interesting because Peter has some very powerful words; very encouraging and uplifting. But all through 1-Peter he's actually laying the groundwork for the message of 2-Peter. 2-Peter and the book of Jude go hand-in-glove. I believe that 1-Peter was written first, Jude was written a little after that. Jude is a hard book to date, but we know that Peter was written in 64-66 A.D.

At this time there were problems in the Church. But what he begins with is absolutely beautiful reading through 2-Peter 1. Having done that, at the end of 2-Peter 1 here is what he says about the transfiguration that took place with James, Peter and John present.

2-Peter 1:17: "Because He received glory and honor from God *the* Father when *the* voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory..." ' "

I believe that God the Father said this, because this was a very important occasion for Christ and the Church, particularly for Peter, James and John who were going to be continuing to be taking the Gospel of the Kingdom to the rest of the world.

"...This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased."

Wouldn't you like to hear that from God the Father? *You are My Son/Daughter, and you are beloved by Me, and I'm well-pleased in you.*

Verse 18: "And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain. We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the* morning star arises in your hearts... [reference to the resurrection] ...knowing this first, that no prophecy... [Old Testament/New Testament] ...of Scripture originated as anyone's

own *private* interpretation” (vs 18-20).

So, anyone who comes to you, *believe no one when they come to you with this lies!*

“...no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone’s own private interpretation.”

- that is a warning
- that’s teaching
- that’s helping us to understand to prove all things

These men I knew, that I talked about earlier, didn’t do it! Along comes Satan with false teachings:

- trinity
- Christmas
- Easter
- Sunday
- clean and unclean meats

They all went out and had a feast!

- What happened to the Word of God?
- What happened to the prophecies that came from the very mouth of God?

Verse 21: “Because prophecy... [talking about the entire Bible] ...was not brought at any time by human will...”

Don’t let anyone ever tell you that the Bible cannot be trusted. I know that I’m speaking to the converted, believers! ***But:***

- What happens if all leaders are removed?
- What happens if you’re by yourself *and you’re bombarded day after day by these lies?*

This is the Word of God, the Word of Jesus. Are they richly dwelling within you?

Colossians 3:16: **“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...”**

If they are, the Holy Spirit, the inward working of God’s Spirit, is going to interacting with the Word of God in your mind and heart, so you will stand even if it mean, having your head chopped off!

We’re coming into those days, and I think most of us realize that, unless we have our heads buried in the sand. I don’t think the people of God are that way.

“...but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the Holy Spirit*” (v 16).

2-Peter 1:21: “Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will... [the Gnostics: human will, thinking and reasoning] ...but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the Holy*

Spirit.”

God created the whole universe, and we just cannot fathom that. When He created everything and He saw and made it was good. Gnostics say, *evil!* God says it’s good! Read the Scripture!

It’s interesting that with the new telescope—James Webb—why did they send it up?

- we want to find out what the origins of the universe are
- we what to find out what the purpose of man is
 - ✓ How did we get here?
 - ✓ What are we doing here?

They ignore the Bible! Instead of spending billions of dollars, which could be helped to feed the billions of starving people. *NO!* We have to ignore God! We have to look to our own knowledge we cannot trust this evil God! That what they call Him, the God of the Old Testament. They have this about Jesus, He is the good God, but then they say He never did come in the flesh. ***LIES!***

- that God did not come in the flesh
- that He did not have body beaten and bruised with the lashings that He received and blood pouring down from the crown of thorns that was laid on Him
- that He didn’t have his hands and feet nailed to a cross

If His blood had not been shed, if that spear had not been thrust up into His innards and the blood and water poured out, you may as well go into licentiousness, live and have your wine, women and song—whatever it is that is pleasure—because there is no salvation without the blood of Jesus Christ Who came in the body!

He learned obedience. Does that mean He wasn’t obedient before that? What Paul was saying is that ‘He learned obedience by the things that He suffered.’ He lived it in the body. He was already the One Who gave us the Law, and He was obedient to the Law of God the Father and His Law that They gave to mankind. But He had never before kept the laws of God in the flesh. He came in the flesh, kept every Law of God perfectly and because He was our Creator, His blood was shed and now we have a Savior.

Without that anyone who says that Christ did not come in the flesh is of a wrong spirit (1-John 4). In other words, you have a demon talking to you! Our fight is not against flesh and blood.

Paul says in the book of Ephesians that we do not battle against flesh and blood. Face to face we do, but we are wrestling against wicked spirits in

high places. What we see when we're wrestling are human beings. That's the fight against men/women. But who is behind that? *Wicked spirits in high places!*

2-Peter 2:1: "But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you..."

Is Peter reflecting the teaching that he and the other apostles received from Jesus? *Exactly!* Same message coming from God the Father as we read at the end of 2-Peter 1. That the Word of God to Holy men as God moved and spoke to them and through them by the Holy Spirit.

"...false teachers among you who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies..." (v 1)—*which are:*

- that Jesus as spirit never came as a human body
- He just came and possessed a human body
- because of that He didn't die
- He didn't shed His blood
- therefore, you have no Savior

"...personally denying the Lord..." (v 1). *When somebody comes to you with that, ask them:*

- Are you under the rulership of Jesus Christ?
 - Do you obey God's Law?
 - What do you think about the Passover?
 - Do you think the Passover is important?
 - What about the Sabbath Day?
 - What about the Holy Days?
1. they are denying the Lord; they deny the fact that He came in the flesh and possessed flesh, blood and bone as a man
 2. they're denying Him in their own lives in their way of living

They claim Christ, they claim to be converted, but they're walking after the flesh, according to the works of the flesh.

"...who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves" (v 1). *That's talking about the second death!*

Verse 2—*this is the shocker:* "And many people will follow as authoritative..."

Peter is not just talking about people outside, he's talking about people in the Church of God! Have we seen that happen in the past? *Many of you are those who actually fled from those lies, from those heresies, because you wanted to continue following the Word of God!* You are special to God! He loves you because you chose to follow Him, to keep His laws and commandment, because you

believe His promises! Not the promises of the liars who tried to perpetrate and spread lies amongst the whole body.

Remember who is behind that! Satan used those men with their psychologies and philosophies and false theologies; their lies and heresies. They were deceived, and they were the intellectuals!

Jesus said that it was 'difficult for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.' You can say the same for those who are intellectual and vain about *their* intellect, knowledge and wisdom. Everything we have, remember, comes from God:

- the ability to think
- the ability to reason'

Some people are more intelligent, or have greater capacity. Some of us have one talent, some two, some three or four. The more you have can be dangerous, because we can pump ourselves up and be filled with vanity and jealousy. We can become greedy, and that has happened as we have seen in the past, even through those who became ministers.

I was listening to a short segment from a minister from another organization, and he made the comment that 'there's money in sheering sheep.'

- Who are we?
- Are we the sheep of God?
- What did Jesus tell Peter? *Feed My sheep!*
 - He didn't say to fleece them!
 - He didn't say to sheer them!
 - He didn't say to take all the money from them and use it on yourself; your own lusts and cravings!

That's happened in the Church! Any who are guilty of that need to repent! These are hard words, but let's see them as God's insurance program for us, to warn us against going astray. To listening to strangers and not to true shepherds in that sense. The Master as we know is Jesus Christ.

Verse 2: "And many people will follow as authoritative..." *That's happened in the past; this is prophecy!* It's going to happen again! That's why we need to be close to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Col. 3 is a Scriptures to keep in mind and think about:

Colossians 3:16: Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly... [How do we do that? Do we not read it over and over again?] ...in all wisdom..."

In the Word of Christ there is the wisdom that comes from God down to us.

"...teaching and admonishing one another in

psalms...” (v 16).

When we go to meet with other brethren and we sing hymns, psalms and spiritual songs, we’re actually preaching the Word of God to our brothers and sisters in the Church. That’s one way that we can understand the Scripture.

“...and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (v 16).

If the Word of Christ is within us, and we’re filled with the Word of Christ, it’s just going to well up from within us from our heart. Our minds are now to the point where we just rejoice that God has brought us to have contact with Him person-to-person. In our mind’s eye we see Him face-to-face. We can’t see Him, but we know we have that access. That’s called *faith, because we believe!* We don’t just *believe* when we pray that God hears our prayers. We also *know* and we *know* that we *know* that God hears our prayers.

That when we’re on our death bed, or when we’re in some incredible pain through some illness or sickness, that we’re in the presence of God, that He’s there. Whether we live or die, we’re going to live or die in Christ, our Lord and Savior!

Verse 2:4: “For if God did not spare *the* angels who sinned, but, having cast *them* into Tartarus... [a place of restraint] ...delivered *them* into chains of darkness to be kept for *the* judgment.”

That day is coming! It’s closer today than it was when Peter wrote these words.

Verse 5: “And *if* God did not spare *the* ancient world, but saved Noah, *the* eighth, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought *the* Flood upon the world of *the* ungodly... [God is going to have similar event] ...and having reduced *the* cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, condemned *them* with a catastrophic *destruction*, making *them* an example for *those* who would be ungodly in the future” (vs 5-6). *A warning again!*

Verse 7: “And *if* He personally rescued righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the lawless ones *living* in licentious conduct. (For that righteous man, dwelling among them, through seeing and hearing *their* lawless activities, was tormented day-by-day *in his* righteous soul)” (vs 7-8).

He chose to live on those plains down in Zoar, but I don’t think when he went there that he was aware of what was taking place.

Verse 9: “*The* Lord knows *how* to rescue *the* Godly... [you and me, because we’ve repented and we strive to remain humble before God and each other] ...out of temptation, and to reserve *the* unrighteous to *the* day of judgment to be punished.

But particularly those who walk after *the* flesh in corrupting lust, and hold in utter contempt *the* lordship of *God*...” (vs 9-10).

They don’t care about Christ’s sacrifice, they’re just in the Church for their own particular reason. They’re unteachable and are following after themselves to make merchandise of the people.

“...*They* are audacious and self-willed. They are not afraid to blaspheme *the* Divine powers whereas angels, who are greater in strength and power, do not bring a railing condemnation against them before *the* Lord” (vs 10-11).

We have the case where of one of the archangels and Satan were in dispute over the body of Moses.

Verse 12: “But these... [men—and women undoubtedly] ...as irrational brute beasts...”

Did Jesus inspire these words, talking about these false prophets and teachers?

“...born to be caught and destroyed—blaspheme those things of which they are ignorant...” (v 12).

The things that you know they are ignorant of, and they’re trying convict and convince you to take on board what they have to say.

“...and shall be utterly destroyed in their own corruption.... [what they practice and do is going to bring punishment on their own heads] ...They are bringing upon themselves *the* reward of unrighteousness...” (vs 12-13).

Think about the evil that’s taking place in the world today by the leaders and those in control, bring damnation upon themselves, on their own heads.

“...while finding pleasure in satisfying *their* lustful desires day-by-day. *They* are stains and blemishes, reveling in their own deceptions, **while feasting together with you**” (v 13).

Verse 1: “But there were also false prophets among the people, **as indeed there will be false teachers among you**...”

That doesn’t mean we have to be suspicious of all the brethren. Definitely not! What we have to be careful of are those that are bringing in false teaching, false doctrines.

“...**who will stealthily**...” (v 1).

There were men whom if they had proved all the things from the Scriptures rather than just accepting them, perhaps they would still be in the Body of Christ today.

2-Peter 2:14: “Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin...”

We had people in the Church where this is so, men in top ranks, adulterers. ‘We’re above the Law! God will forgive us! We’re doing such an important job!

- *God is not fooled!*
- *God is not deceived!*
- *God doesn’t tolerate sin!*

God wants, respects and honors deep, heartfelt repentance that causes us to change!

“...*they are engaged in seducing unstable souls... [sexually, doctrinally, psychologically, in every way] ...having a heart trained in lustful cravings—cursed children who have abandoned... [those once in the Church] ...the straight way. They have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the reward of wickedness. But he received a rebuke for his own transgression; the dumb donkey, speaking in a man’s voice, restrained the madness of the prophet”* (vs 14-16).

But he still went on and worked against God’s people Israel. These are powerful words. Remember that these words are coming from Jesus Christ through His Apostle Peter.

Verse 17: “These *false prophets* are fountains without water, clouds driven by a storm, for whom is reserved the blackest of darkness forever.”

Because of the teachings, the doctrines of these men and women face the second death!

Verse 18: “For they speak bombastic *words* of vanity....”

We’re in control; you’ve got to do as we say!
You have to listen to us! You have to follow us! If you don’t we’ll throw you out!

Case in point: Diotrephes (Epistle of the Apostle John)

“...enticing *others* through *the* lusts of *the* flesh...” (v 18).

That’s why we have to remain close to God, repenting day-by-day so that we can stay refreshed and cleansed. God’s Spirit renewed within us. The inner working of God’s Spirit helping us to connect Scripture with Scripture, and to be constantly amazed at the wisdom and depth of God’s wisdom. At the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ.

One of the points of the Gnostics was that they didn’t really need Jesus, and tried to undermine His authority.

“...by granting indulgences to sin, *and ensnaring* those who had indeed escaped from those who live in deception. While promising them freedom, they themselves are actually slaves of corruption because by whatever anyone is overcome, he is also held in bondage. For if, after **escaping the moral defilements of the world...**” (vs 18-20).

Showing that these men and women had escaped the lust of the flesh, the pride and lust of the eyes, and the presumptuous pride of life. They escaped all that!

“...through *the* knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them, and are overcome, the final end is worse than the beginning” (v 20).

Inspired by Jesus Who loves the world and gave His life for the world. Who teaches love. Don’t forget, God is also a ‘consuming fire’ for those who reject His way!

Verse 21: “For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness... [identifying that these were part of the Body of Christ] ...than, after knowing *it*, to turn back from the Holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. But the *pronouncement found* in the true proverb has happened to them: *The dog has returned to eat his own vomit; and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing place in the filthy mire”* (vs 21-22).

Jude 20: “But you, beloved, *be* building up yourselves on your most Holy faith, praying in *the* Holy Spirit”—**not to the Holy Spirit!**

But because you have the Holy Spirit within you, you’re able to pray in the Spirit to God. That’s like using the Psalms, which were inspired by God’s Spirit.

Verse 21: “*So that* you keep yourselves in *the* love of God *while* you are personally awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Now on the one hand, show mercy to those individuals who are doubting; but on the other hand, save others with fear, snatching *them* out of the fire...” (vs 21-23).

If you know somebody going down the wrong path, pray and ask God to open the way to show them, to rescue them!

“...hating even the garment *that has been* defiled by the flesh. Now, to Him Who is able to keep them from falling, and to bring *them* into the presence of His own glory, blameless in exceeding joy, to *the* only wise God our Savior, *be the* glory and greatness, *the* might and authority, even now, and into all the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 23-25).

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 16:18
- 2) Matthew 24:3-6, 8, 11, 9
- 3) Revelation 12:9-11
- 4) Matthew 24:21-23, 4, 23-24, 26-28
- 5) 2 Peter 1:17-21
- 6) Colossians 3:16
- 7) 2 Peter 1:21
- 8) 2 Peter 2:1-2
- 9) Colossians 3:16
- 10) 2 Peter 2:4-13, 1, 14-22
- 11) Jude 20-25

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2 Thessalonians 2
- 1 John 4

LJ:bo

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