

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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Earnestly Contend for the Faith

How strong is our faith? As we run the “race that is set before us” to the finish line, could we be thrown off course by the burdens of life and by the sins from which we refuse to repent? As such obstacles are thrown into our path, the writer of Hebrews tells us to keep our eyes on Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) as the “author and finisher of our faith.” Unless we continue to believe that He died to free us from the burdens of our sin, we may become “wearied and faint” in our minds:

- 1 Therefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
- 2 Looking unto Yahshua the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. -Hebrews 12

Some of us may be like Peter and the other disciples as we confidently boast of the steadfastness of our faith:

- 35 Peter said to him, Though I should die with you, yet will I not deny you. Likewise also said all the disciples. -Matthew 26

Peter, the most vocal of the boastful disciples, was singled out for a clear test of his faith, which he tearfully failed:

- 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crowed.
- 75 And Peter remembered the word of Yahshua, which said to him, Before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times. And he went out, and wept bitterly. -Matthew 26

Unfortunately, faithful believers in the Gospel of Yahshua the Messiah have repeatedly been deceived into believing “another gospel.” Paul said that he “marvelled” at how quickly the believing Galatians were deceived:

- 6 I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of the Messiah unto another gospel:
- 7 Which is not another; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of the Messiah. -Galatians 1

Paul chastised the deceived Galatians for thinking that they had received the Spirit through the works of the law instead of by the “hearing of faith:”

- 1 O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Yahshua the Messiah has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?
- 2 This only would I learn of you, Received you the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
- 3 Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? -Galatians 3

Even though they once believed that the Gospel was received by faith, they had become convinced that they were made perfect by keeping the works of the law. They had fallen back into their old ways. They returned to trusting in the works of the law instead of believing in the grace of God through Yahshua for their salvation.

Paul warned the Romans that their freedom from the condemnation of sin was in the Messiah Yahshua through the Spirit of God and not by the righteousness of the law:

- 1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in the Messiah Yahshua, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in the Messiah Yahshua has made me free from the law of sin and death.
- 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
- 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. -Romans 8

Jude wrote the last epistle of the Bible to warn us not to be deceived away from the truth of the Gospel. He describes himself as being “the servant of Yahshua the Messiah, and the brother of James:”

- 1 Jude, the servant of Yahshua the Messiah, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Yahshua the Messiah, and called: -Jude 1

In reality, Jude, whose name is also written as Judah (from the Hebrew) or Judas (from the Greek), and James were among the half-brothers of Yahshua:

- 55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brothers, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? -Matthew 13

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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Jude wrote his epistle to the believers in the Gospel who were “sanctified,” “preserved,” and “called,” praying that they would increase in mercy, peace, and love:

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.
-Jude 1

He writes about the “common salvation,” stressing that we must “earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.”

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. -Jude 1

There are two different ways to understand the term, “common salvation.” Most interpreters of this verse believe that it means the salvation which is shared by many. Some, however, may interpret it to mean the salvation that is shared by all, meaning that all are saved, whether they believe that Yahshua died for their sins or not.

The word “common” is translated from the Greek word κοινος (koinos), which is used twelve times in the New Testament. Excluding Jude 1:3, it is used three times to mean that which is shared with others (see Acts 2:44, Acts 4:32, and Titus 1:4). However, in the other eight instances of its use, this word refers to something that is unclean, defiled, or unholy. For example, in Matthew 7:2 it means “defiled.” In Romans 14:14, it is used three times as “unclean.” In Acts 10:14, Acts 10:28, and Acts 11:8 it is used as “common” in the context of being something that is defiled. Finally, in Hebrews 10:29 it means an “unholy thing.”

The problem, Jude continues, is that there are some who have “crept in unnoticed” among believers who deny “the only Lord God and our Lord Yahshua the Messiah.”

4 For there are certain men crept in unnoticed, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Yahshua the Messiah. -Jude 1

Whether they come in through preaching, teaching, writing, or even as Bible revisionists, they are teaching a universal salvation that denies the need for the Savior.

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Peter also warns believers about the risks of “being led away with the error of the wicked” and then “fall from your own steadfastness.” The problem, Peter explains, is that some writings, such as those of Paul, are hard for some to understand. Therefore, others will enter in among believers and “twist” those Scriptures to convince them that they mean something besides their original meaning:

15 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given to him has written to you;

16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable twist, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17 You therefore, beloved, seeing you know *these things* before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. -2 Peter 3

The “error of the wicked” is denying that we need a Savior, either because we think we are already righteous or that we can make ourselves righteous by doing good things. John calls those who deny that Yahshua is the Messiah both liars and “antichrist.”

22 Who is a liar but he that denies that Yahshua is the Messiah? He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son. -1 John 2

Pauls says that sin is universal, meaning that we all need a Savior. While sin is universal, salvation is not. It is given freely by the righteousness of God to those who believe that their sins are forgiven through the sacrificial death of Yahshua the Messiah:

22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Yahshua the Messiah to all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in the Messiah Yahshua:

25 Whom God has set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Yahshua. -Romans 3

The Gospel of the Messiah is the power of God that saves us from our sins. It is available to all that believe:

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of the Messiah: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. -Romans 1

While salvation is available to everyone, it is only received by those who believe in Yahshua the Messiah as the Savior. Regardless of the subtle teachings of antichrists, this is the faith for which we must “earnestly contend.”