



Jesus told us that after His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, false teachers would rise up from within the Church to lead many people astray. Here is how St. Paul wrote about it:

I know that after my departure **fierce wolves** will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and **from among your own selves** will arise men speaking **twisted things**, to draw away the disciples after them. Acts 20:29-30

Already in the New Testament false teachers were at work. In **Galatians**, St. Paul battled those who taught that salvation was by works and not by faith (See Galatians 1:6-9). In the book of **1 John**, the Apostle was battling those who denied that the Son of God was a man (See 1 John 2:22). The entire book of **Jude** is a 25 verse **warning siren** about false teachers! In fact, 26 of the 27 New Testament books all warn us about false doctrine and false teachers.

Of all the false teachers, none caused greater damage than a man named Arius in the Fourth Century. Arius was a priest in the northern African part of the Roman Empire; and **he was teaching that Jesus was not fully God**; he taught that the Son of God was **not** equal to God the Father¹.

¹ Modern day Arianism is alive and well in the Jehovah's Witnesses cult. Their website directly quotes the false teaching of Arius: in a section called "Who is Jesus Christ", they write ". . . He was God's first creation . . ." In the Nicene Creed of 325 AD, the Holy Christian Church specifically condemns that statement with a strong 'anathema' (=condemned): "But those who say . . . 'The Son of God is created' . . . are condemned by the Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church."

His false teaching is known as **Arianism**², and it swept throughout the Roman Empire like wildfire.

Arianism was a dangerous doctrine that robbed men of salvation. If Jesus was not God, then you do not have a Savior. If Jesus is not God, then the Bible is a lie and it's untrustworthy. If Jesus is not God, then you are still in your sins and you will die in your guilt. *False teaching is always an attack on Christ, His Word, and His work of salvation for us.*

The Christian Church at the time realized the danger that Arianism posed; and a council was called to deal with the issue. In 325AD, the Council of Nicaea³ was called by the Church to address the Arian heresy; and the Roman Emperor Constantine hosted the event. This Council was a meeting of 318 leaders of the Church. As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit led the Church into the truth, based on Holy Scripture. The Holy Christian church condemned Arianism, and confessed that Jesus truly was the eternal, divine, Son of God and Savior of the World. You know the Confession of Faith that came out of that Council as the **Nicene Creed**. Some of that Confession says:

*We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made.*

It has been 1,700 years since the Council of Nicaea met and produced the Nicene Creed. Today it remains the most common Creed used in the Holy

² Note: Arianism is not to be confused with Aryanism: the latter formed the core of 20th century Nazi racial ideology. Arianism is a theological term to describe the false teachings of Arius in the 4th Century AD.

³ In dealing with Church-wide false teachings, the Christian Church followed the example of the Apostles' in Acts 15:1-29 and held special meetings (i.e.: "Councils") to sort out the issues and defend/confess the truth of Scripture. The first 7 Councils in Church History are recognized as the "Ecumenical Councils." Unfortunately, because of men's sins, not everything to come from a Council aligned with Scripture. ☹ Yet, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, some incredibly great things did come from them, such as the "Nicene Creed." ("Nicaea" is the name of the town that the Council was held in; it is in modern day northern Turkey.)

Christian Church around the world. The Nicene Creed unites us with the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church of all times and all places.

With the Historic Christian Church, we believe, teach and confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit, who came into the world to live, suffer, and die for us and our salvation. On the Third Day He rose from the dead. Because of His work, we have the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.

False teachers deny, minimize, or warp these truths. When the truth of Holy Scripture is threatened by false teaching, we are to stand firm and to **contend for the faith**.

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. Jude 3

The word **contend** means *to wrestle for the faith*; it's a **continuous struggle** to hold to the truth of God's Holy Word. This applies to the Church-at-large; as well to each of us as individual believers in Christ. We are to *contend for the faith*, **not** *compromise the faith*. Jude goes on to tell us that we are to **build ourselves up in our most holy faith and keep ourselves in the love of God**.

The way that you *build yourself up* and *contend for the faith* is by continually learning the truths of God's Holy Word. You *contend for the faith* and *build yourself up* in that faith by being biblically literate and doctrinally sound. Jesus described it as building your house on the rock. The more you learn of Scripture the easier it is to identify false teachers. It is important to know the truth of God's Holy Word yourself. Reading, studying, and learning Scripture is a lifelong pursuit for God's holy people. **God's Word is a light unto our feet and a light to our path** that exposes the lies and deceptions of false teachers. If you intend to *contend for the faith* and *build yourself up* in that faith, then you need to be hearing, studying, and learning God's Holy Word.

As you hear, study, and learn God's Holy Word, you will also **learn and**

relearn the promises of God for daily living. Your conviction and confidence will grow as you trust God for all good things, and turned to Him in times of trouble.

As you hear, study, and learn God's Holy Word, you will **grow in your hope** of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. Your hope is an anchor for you as you live each day; it holds you fast to Christ and His Word. Hope gives you a stability in this ever changing world. It keeps you focused on Christ and His promises.

As you hear, study, and learn God's Holy Word, you will naturally **love other people** as Christ has loved you. You will obey the 10 commandments when it comes to others; and patience and kindness will be clearly seen in your life. We love our neighbors because Christ first loved us.

As you hear, study, and learn God's Holy Word, , you will be bold in **confessing the truth** of the gospel to the people in your life. God's Holy Word gives you a boldness to confess Christ in this world full of lies, deception, and danger.

1700 years ago God raised up men and women who boldly confessed Jesus Christ and the truth of His Word. They stood their ground against immense pressure.

And now it's our turn, in our generation, in our era, to stand our ground and boldly confess Jesus Christ and the truth of His Word.

And the irony is, that one of the ways that we do that is by using the same words and the same confession as they did 1700 years ago:

As we confess and defend
The Nicene Creed!

Amen!

Holy Spirit,

we thank You for working throughout church history to keep the truth of Your Holy Word For us and our children.

We thank You for the men and women You raised up who boldly stood for Christ and the Gospel.

We thank you for the Nicene Creed which we and millions of others confess on this day.

Help us to continue to believe, teach, and confess the truths of Your Holy Word, and draw people to us to hear and believe the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Jesus' Name

Amen

Jude 1-4, 20-25

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. 3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. 4 For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. . . . 20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. 22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. 24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Galatians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Matthew 7:13-29

Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. 15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' 24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." 28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.