**Contend For The Faith, The Church**

Reading from John's Revelation it seems that of churches Jesus speaks of in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 each church took on the attributes of the city in which it was located. In many cases, these cities were capitalistic mega metropolises, almost like a country within themselves. These cities were filled with all the lust of the flesh and the pride of life that man directed by the devil could muster up.

Tragically, many of the evil attributes Jesus speaks of as He rebukes the churches can be seen in our country today. Even more tragic is that many religions and some churches of Christ have adapted to accepting the evil attributes Jesus condemns rather than denouncing them. God has long warned His people of the dangers of the world and having an accepting or adaptive attitude toward what He has declared sinful. The Prophet Isaiah records, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). Isaiah wrote these words long before America existed and long before we became a great, powerful, advanced in knowledge and ability society. How is it that the same sinful problems Isaiah sums up appear to be the same issues Jesus later rebukes in Revelation chapters 2 and 3? Could it be because man has always chased after and/or accepted sin rather than running from and standing in opposition to it?

We as God's people need to remember that we are involved in a battle. We need to be ready and willing to fight. While fighting for what is spiritually right, we must also fight against that which God tells us is wrong. Paul issues an edict to the church at Ephesus, thus also to you and me today. "Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you

may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:10-12). As it did during the time John writes Revelation, the wickedness of society is adversely affecting the church. If we as Christians do not contend for the faith, the church, who will (Jude 3, Ephesians 4:4-6)? Paul instructs Timothy to,"...endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Paul continues, using himself as an example stating, "I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:9-10).

Let us not become twisted unto our own destruction (2 Peter 3:14-18). Rather, let us each purpose to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3) knowing fully that our steadfastness and labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).