

Mariah's daddy just called! Mariah is moving out of the hospital to Ronald McDonald's house. She'll be there for two months of monitoring, then Mariah will be coming home. We thank God, the doctors and the hospital staff for such great care.

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GOODNEWS LETTER  
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## TODAY'S # 1 PRIORITY FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

"But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ...'in the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts,'" Jude 17.

For the apostles writings, we cite but three passages.

Paul: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons," 1st Timothy 4:1.

Paul seems to combine worldly attitudes and religious error in his second letter to Timothy. "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come." (For men shall be)"...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Holding a form of godliness, although they have denied its power;" 2 Timothy 3:1, 3:4b and 3:5a.

Peter: "Knowing this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking...and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' ...," 2 Peter 3:3, 4a.

Then, we cite words of Jesus and see the exact same meaning.

In Matthew 24:4, Jesus clearly warned His disciples about the "falling away." "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many," Matthew 24:4.

Thus, God's word clearly shows that not every Christian or each church member has the Holy Spirit leading them. Today, with the exception of Missionary Baptists, the religious climate of Christianity is merging together; joining with and holding the hands of every Christian group, regardless of what they teach.

Despite what the apostles wrote - as cited above, or what Jesus taught in Matthew 24; today, Biblical warnings now sit on the back pew in most churches. Up

front, the pulpiteer speaks of the Second Coming as if every saved person will be just fine or, he scares members with threats of losing one's salvation from hell.

But, preachers seldom, if ever, speak on faithfulness; which, is what the apostles and Jesus Christ taught in the passages we cited, above. Yet, the "**unfaithful servant**" and "**unwise steward**" were warnings; not on staying saved but on how to serve faithfully in order to receive the reward of inheriting the kingdom.

Baptist fire and fury, during my church life, has been on the Second Coming and Israel's reconstruction of their Temple. That's what most Baptists studied and what most talked about. Some, set dates on "when" these two major prophetic events of the New Testament shall occur. So far, all dates were wrong.

The Second Coming and the rebuilding of the Temple are, certainly, extremely important Biblical teachings. Yet, although these two subjects are interesting and very marked in the Bible, the time of each occurrence is out of our hands.

We have to realize that prophetic events will take place in their own time. Thus, our most pressing doctrine and the highest priority of service is not prophecy, but keeping ourselves sound in the faith.

Today's Christian must stay away from the world and from groups that have no commissioned authority. Some are mockers and some have fallen away; with only a "form" of godliness. These are to be shunned.

As we focus on what the Bible says about false religions and false teachers, we are driven back to the Bible, more and more. There were false teachers in the apostles day and they have been increasing, since.

But, Baptists have stood for the truth throughout history. Read any Baptist work on **salvation**, the **church**, **baptism**, the **Lord's Supper** and **discipline** and you will see consistency. It is these **vital doctrines** that have provided a foundation for Baptist to stand.

Then, when we look a bit deeper or, study more diligently, we learn the important **Kingdom Truth; a time when Jesus reigns the earth with His Church** Bride during the thousand year reign on earth. Does you church teach a kingdom rule on earth with the faithful church inheriting with Her husband, Jesus? If not, look for one that does.

Because, as the church keeps the important church doctrine, She maintains Her Church authority. In these days, we don't need a form of godliness. The church must be the light of the world. Men must walk within the light, just as John wrote in I John 1:7-9.

Walking in the light keeps each member of the church pure; as well as the doctrinal order on salvation, baptism and the Lord's Supper, etc. Herein, members are saved from the end-time warnings that the apostles wrote about.

Further, Church doctrine is the believer's framework and foundation, making it clear that not all the saved compose the local body (See I Cor 3:11-15). Without the same doctrine once delivered, every congregation meets without church authority.

In Corinthians and other verses, we are taught that the saved church members - those following Jesus in faith, will rule with Christ when He sets up His Father's kingdom. Other saved ones, on the other hand, will miss the kingdom rule. This can be read in Revelation, the church chapters of 2 & 3).

As Revelation records, Baptists Churches hear the apostles words today and withdraw from **mockers** of authority. By following Biblical authority, discipline is maintained and Christ's words, in the power of the Holy Spirit, keep the Candlestick shining brightly within the churches.

Today, one **must** learn the order of the LORD'S Church body. But, if doctrine is relaxed, ignored or disavowed, then saved people - even church members, will come under discipline by the church. It is our understanding that those disciplined, without repenting, will not inherit the kingdom when Jesus returns (See Mt 7:21).

But, don't take my word, listen to what Paul teaches about the responsibility of being a church member. "**Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of our LORD, Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us**" (apostles), 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (KJV).

Today's #1 Priority is remaining faithful to the truth once delivered. And, if we have to place force on the seriousness of that statement, just take a survey of the buildings springing up on every corner, today. You will notice that nearly all edifices are protestant, having a universal title. Their signs on their bldgs read: "Abundant Life" or "Christian Center."

But, they all hold to the same universal teaching. According to these protestants, everyone that trusts Jesus as Savior will be fine, no matter what their church teaches them to believe.

So, its not Baptists that are occupying the majority of new church buildings. In fact, the Baptists removing the "Baptist" name from their buildings at an alarming rate. I can count three such buildings in our area, alone. Yes! The falling away is at its peak, today.

However, **Jude** warns us about the LAST TIME; about **standing for the truth** - the same truth, once (and for all) delivered to the saints.

Standing on what Baptists have practiced throughout church history is safe territory. You won't find Missionary Baptists are removing their name off their

buildings. Today, Missionary Baptists continue to be concerned with church order; which, has always had compatibility with the name of Missionary Baptist.

Since, we began with Jude, let's close with this great Apostle. Notice how careful **Jude** was on the subject of salvation; which, includes more than being saved from hell but carries us into the walk of faith, one that pleases the Lord of Glory and harmonizes with verse after verse within the Bible.

After much thought and prayer, Jude wrote that believers need to read; as well as, heed what they have been given. They need to take a stand on the truth.

"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 delivered to the saints,**" V 3 (NASB).

Therefore, the most pressing need, the greatest priority for today's Church members, is for believers to realize their calling and election within the local New Testament Church.

All the Apostles write with the same voice on this point; including James, the LORD's brother. He said that, "**Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows...and to keep himself unspotted from the world,**" James 1:27.