

3 - Early Struggles: False Teaching

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.
~ Acts 20:29-30 ~

I. The Reality of False Teaching

A. Christianity has never been an uncontested religion

1. Texts

- a. Revelation 12:15 - So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.
- b. Matthew 24:24-25 - For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (25) See, I have told you beforehand.

2. Purposes

B. Christianity must never be an uncontesting religion

1. No Fear

“Almost all errors are imitations of truth, and superstition is man's substitute for true religion. The existence of a false coin is no evidence that there is no genuine coin, but, on the contrary, proves that it exists.” [John Owen]

2. No Retreat

3. No Concession

“For Christ's sake let us beware of trying to heal our breaches by lowering our standard of doctrine, and watering our statements of truth in order to avoid giving offence.”

- JC Ryle, from Iain Murray, *Prepared to Stand Alone*, 186

II. Early Enemies

A. Common Tactics

1. Deception, not outright denial

2. Mixing (syncretism) with worldly/earthly philosophies

“When purported Christian teachers take their primary cues from the surrounding culture instead of from God's Word, they corrupt the covenant community spiritually by encouraging it to live by norms and a faith that ultimately oppose the reign of God and Christ.” [Beale]

B. Judaizing Heresies

1. The Ebionites

2. The Elkesaites

C. Gnostic Heresies

1. General Themes

a. Dualism

b. Syncretism

c. Mysticism

2. Early Manifestations

a. Marcion

b. Montanus

III. Present Reiterations of Old Abominations

A. Judaizing

1. Seventh Day Adventism

2. Hebrew Roots

B. Gnosticism

1. Critical Theorists and Wokeness

2. Standpoint Epistemology

C. Scripture Reductionists

1. Liberalism

2. Unbelieving Textual Criticism

3. Dualism

D. Scripture Obstructionists

1. Charismatic Movement

2. New Apostolic Reformation

“Were all the praises of heathen philosophy, with which it has been adorned by its followers, collected into one heap, what is this in comparison of the dignity of this wisdom, which alone deserves to be called light and truth, and the instruction of life, and the way, and the kingdom of God?”

~ John Calvin, Comments on 1 Timothy 3:15 ~