

"Contend Earnestly For the Faith" Part 6

by Erik Olsen

"...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." – Jude 3

--INTRO:

--Tonight... continue theme of why N.T. portrait of Christ is reliable...

--The essence of the N.T. portrait of Jesus Christ and the essence of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died on the cross to make atonement for our sins.

--1 Corinthians 2:1-2: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus **Christ and Him crucified.**"

--1 Corinthians 1:21-24: "For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but **we preach Christ crucified**, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

--If Jesus didn't die on the cross then He didn't bear our sins... So one way to disprove Christianity is to try and prove that Christ never died on the cross... which is exactly what the 40 million copy blockbuster book *The Da Vinci Code* tries to do.

--Last week we looked at how the death of Christ is not only the central theme of the N.T. but it is also the central theme of O.T. prophecy written hundreds of years before Christ was born.

--Not only is the atoning death of Christ the central theme of the N.T. and O.T. prophecy, but the entire nation of Israel was built around the sacrificial system which pointed to Christ dying as a sacrifice to make atonement for our sins!

--the ancient nation of Israel and the sacrificial system it was built around isn't some long lost civilization that nobody can find any traces of, such as the ancient civilizations mormons base much of their religion on yet have not a shred of evidence they existed; **but God has ordained that the evidence of ancient Israel's existence and the sacrificial system never be lost!**

--today the temple foundation stands out like a sore thumb in the middle of Jerusalem... one of the hotspots on the political landscape of the world

--JESUS CHRIST FULFILLED AND BROUGHT TO AN END THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM OF ANCIENT ISRAEL:

--for over 1000 years animal sacrifices were offered every day in Israel... all of which pointed to Christ dying as a final sacrifice to make atonement for our sins! Without Christ dying as the ultimate fulfillment, the Old Testament animal sacrifices wouldn't have made any sense because the animal sacrifices in and of themselves were powerless, as the book of Hebrews explains...

--Hebrews 10:1-14: "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. 5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "**Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come — In the volume of the book it is written of Me — To do Your will, O God.'**" [reference to Psalms 40:6-8] 8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them"(which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

--John the Baptist understood this and therefore introduced Christ as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29) *allusion to Isaiah 53... classic O.T. Messianic prophecy*

--Isaiah 53: "... when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. ... But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ... He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. ... For He was cut off from the land of

the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ... For He shall bear their iniquities. ... He poured out His soul unto death. ... And He bore the sins of many. ... And made intercession for the transgressors. "

--shortly after Jesus Christ's fulfillment, the temple was destroyed, as He prophesied: Luke 19:41-44

--ONE DAY JESUS CHRIST WILL BE GLORIFIED THROUGH ISRAEL...

--Because Israel is a powerful testimony to the authenticity of the Bible and a central part of God's plan, Satan relentlessly tries to destroy Israel and rewrite history to erase their past...

--Islam insists that Arabs, not Israel, have occupied Palestine for thousands of years and that Jesus was an "Arab freedom fighter" trying to liberate Palestine from the Jews! Many Arab maps of the world today don't recognize Israel's existence.

--the Arabs presently control the temple mount in Jerusalem and placed one of their most sacred monuments where Israel's temple once stood!

--no ethnic group has endured as much persecution as the Jews... Hitler declared that World War II would "bring forth the final annihilation of the Jewish Race in Europe." Two out of every three Jews in Europe died during World War II.

--Satan's character clearly shines through his opposition to the Jews!

--Satan is the "father of lies" (John 8:44) who comes to "steal, and to kill, and to destroy." (John 10:10)

--In spite of the opposition, Israel continues to survive because God is supernaturally preserving them, and one day they will experience a great revival and once again God will be glorified through them

--Ezekiel 36:16-32: "... 22 Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.... 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God." **Ezekiel was a contemporary of Daniel during the Babylonian captivity... and therefore his prophecies clearly have not yet been fulfilled!

--Ezekiel's valley of dry bones vision: Ezekiel 37:1-14, 21-28

--Israel's miraculous rebirth in 1948 is but one step in God's master plan to restore Israel and glorify His name through them. Excerpt from theclockisticking.com:

In 960 B.C., when King Solomon completed the first temple in Jerusalem, Israel was a dominant world power. In 586 B.C. the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took captive the last king of Israel. For the next 2,535 years the people of Israel survived while scattered around the world amid unparalleled persecution. During the Holocaust over 6 million Jews were killed - 2 out of every 3 living in Europe. Many who survived were impoverished and nearly starved to death. By the end of World War II, the fulfillment of God's promise to reestablish Israel as a nation in their homeland seemed more unlikely than ever; yet the prophetic clock was ticking, and the minute hand would soon strike twelve. In 1947, UN resolution #1981 partitioned Palestine, giving 18% to the Jews and making Jerusalem an "international city" never to be under Jewish control. Six months later, on May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence and made Jerusalem its capitol. They were immediately attacked on all sides by six Arab nations. The Arab League Secretary, General Azzam Pasha declared "jihad" and said, "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre..." The Jews faced this just three years after the Holocaust! In spite of being outnumbered many times over and fighting with inferior weaponry, Israel was victorious and regained the sovereignty it lost in 586 B.C.

--Authenticity of N.T. proven by O.T. prophecy and the nation of Israel... **what is now the faint sound of archaeological evidence and Israel's rebirth as a secular nation will one day be like the sound of a whaling trumpet when Israel as a nation embraces Jesus Christ as their Messiah and He returns to deliver them from their enemies... At that time, nobody will be able to deny who Jesus Christ is!** "...and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes..." (Ezekiel 36:23)