



Old Testament Reading – Jeremiah 23:1-40
New Testament Reading Acts 20:28-38

Earnestly Contending for the Faith
“How To Identify a False Teacher”
Jude 1-25

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The greatest question facing the Church today is not Calvinism versus Arminianism, contemporary versus traditional, or the King James versus the New International translation of the Bible. The main question facing the Church today is whether it can survive without truth.

- God established the Church as the Pillar and Ground of truth, but today's church has adapted the truth of God's Word to maintain its relevance and friendship with the world.
- In 2 Timothy 4:3-5, Paul said the day would come when pseudo-Christians **“will not endure sound doctrine, but will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned to fables.”**
- In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, Paul defined this as **“the falling away.”** The rejection of God's Word as absolute truth, and the embracing of Satan's

lie, and that such apostasy would be followed by the revealing of the Antichrist, the seven years of tribulation, and the return of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The History of Biblical Truth:

- The Expectation of Truth – Genesis 3:15
- The Incarnation of Truth – John 1:1-14
- The Proclamation of Truth – Matthew 28:18-20, Ephesians 2:20
- The Preservation of Truth – 1 Timothy 4:1, Jude 1-24
- The Revelation of Truth – Revelation 19:11-13

While it is not within our purview to stop the apostasy, for God has ordained it to take place at the end of the church age, as Jude said, it is our responsibility to ***“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”***

- To “contend” means to defend the doctrines of the Christian Faith, to protect them and preserve them for generations behind us.

According to the latest survey, the Church of the 21st century is shrinking rapidly.

- On average, across all denominations, nine churches close their doors each day, and even though new churches are started, an average of 3,500 people leave the Church every day.
- Only 47% of American adults are members of a local church, and over 30% of adults have no religious preference, and that number has doubled since 2007.
- Overall, church attendance has declined about 20% since the Covid scare.
- Therefore, the greatest issue facing the church today is not how to attract the next generation to a dying denomination but how to defend, protect, and proclaim the essential doctrines of the true gospel so as to preserve it for the next generation.

Jude, one of the four half-brothers of Jesus, lived in a time when Christianity was under attack politically from the Roman government and

doctrinally from false teachers who had infiltrated the churches to nullify the work of Christ.

- The date for this writing is 68-70 A.D., which connects it with Peter's second epistle.
- Jude is the only New Testament Book devoted to the subject of apostasy – the deliberate defection from the gospel; that body of truth that was taught by Jesus Christ, passed on to the Apostles, and then taught to the Church leaders.
- Jude challenged the leaders of the Church to exercise serious discernment regarding those they allowed to teach biblical doctrine, for the eternal salvation of the next generation was hanging in the balance.

From verses 4-16, Jude lists 18 characteristics of an apostate. He divided them into three major categories:

1. ***“Ungodly men” – Ungodly in their Character – Vs. 4***

- These men deliberately and defiantly defected from God, with the purpose of opposing God's plan of redemption by corrupting the truth of God's Word.
- In Matthew 7, Jesus said they ***“dress in sheep's clothing,”*** but they are ***“ravenous wolves,”*** ready to devour the spiritually weak with their devious desires.
- ***“The way of Cain”*** – open rebellion regarding giving.
- ***“The error of Balaam”*** – love of money more than the love of God.
- ***“The way of Korah”*** – rejected God's appointed leaders.

2. ***“Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness” – Ungodly in their conduct – Vs. 4***

- **Lasciviousness** – means “wantonness” or “filthy” – a lewd lifestyle that has abandoned all boundaries – a state of being past the feeling of shame.
- They ***“defile the flesh”*** – they take that which God designed as a reflection of His image and pervert it to glorify themselves or to pervert it for their lusts.
- They ***“despise dominion”*** – they defy any kind of restraint or restriction to their illicit behavior – they refer to it as “judging.”

- They **“speak evil of dignities”** – even mocking Satan.
 - Jude reminded his readers that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their desire for **“strange flesh,”**e., homosexuality.
 - Jude referred to these men as **“clouds without water, late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”**
3. **“Denying the Lord God, and our Lord, Jesus Christ” – Ungodly in their creed – Vs. 4**

- Jude makes it clear while these people are “involved” in the Church, they are not “true believers,” for they have **“denied the Lord God, and they have not the Spirit!”**
- When a person hears the truth, embraces that truth, and then rejects that truth, they render that truth powerless to save them.
- They think they are free from God’s Law and can live according to their own rules, when, in fact, they are captive to Satan laws, and destined to eternal destruction when Jesus returns.

The Bible says apostasy will increase and become widespread just before the end of the Church age. (Matt. 24:11, 2 Peter 3:3-4, 1 Timothy 4:1-2, 2 Thess. 2:3)

- Apostasy is the basis of today’s postmodern Church, as they are “growing the church” through a very seductive religion based upon cheap grace and easy-believe-ism.
- While our age is not the first to see such a cultural shift, our age is the **FIRST** to see the denial of God’s Word as the absolute standard of true saving faith.
- Apostasy is the root sin behind the recent satanic attacks upon:
- **The sanctity of marriage** – apostates want no boundaries to their lascivious behavior.
- **The security of family** – apostates want to destroy the channel of truth to the next generation.
- **The seriousness of our faith** – apostates do not believe a loving God will allow anyone to suffer.

- **The sovereignty of God** – apostates deny that God often employs what appears to us as “evil” to carry out what He has determined to be “holy” and “for our good.”

How can the church “contend” for the faith today? Where should we focus our energies and our resources?

- Rather than fight against the rising apostasy, believers must “contend for the truth” by holding fast to that faith that was handed down to us.
- If the uncompromised truth of God’s Word is to be communicated to the next generation, parents must assume their God-given role as the spiritual equippers of their children. (Psalm 78)
- If our children are to learn how to stand firm in their faith in the midst of apostasy, parents must plant their spiritual roots down deep in the eternal truths of God’s Word and then reveal the fruit of their convictions into the lives of their children.
- It matters not what men say about God’s Word, for one word from God is more powerful than all the words of men combined into one.
- Therefore, as we face these crucial days ahead, we must realize how we live our lives today will set the pattern for the way our children will live tomorrow.
- No matter what others may say, government leaders, teachers, and false preachers; let’s assure our children that the Word of God is absolute truth with no mixture of error, for it is our only weapon against the apostasy of our day.