



Earnestly Contending for the Faith ***“Holding to the Truth in the Midst of Apostasy”*** **Jude 1-25**

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The priority of Heritage Baptist Church is to ***“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”*** (Jude 3)

- To contend means “to defend”, in order to preserve something that is about to be lost.
- Our purpose is to contend with those who challenge the authenticity and authority of the historic Christian faith, and to defend that faith against the assaults of Satan and all of the false teachings that are raised up against it.
- If we are to perpetuate the Christian Faith to the next generation, we must know the true doctrines of our faith, be quick to protect them from those who are out to destroy them, and be willing to proclaim them to our children and grandchildren, so they can hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ and be saved.

BACKGROUND AND THEME OF JUDE

Jude, one of the four half-brothers of Jesus, lived in a time when Christianity was under attack politically from the Roman government and spiritually from false teachers who had infiltrated the churches to nullify the work of Christ.

- The date given for this writing is 68-70 A.D., which connects it with Peter's second epistle. Peter wrote in anticipation of the coming of false teachers, and Jude wrote of their arrival.
- Jude is the only New Testament Book devoted to the subject of apostasy – the deliberate defection from the true, biblical faith – that body of truth that was taught by Jesus Christ, passed on to the Apostles, and then taught to the Church leaders.
- The term “once delivered” means this body of doctrine was given to them as a “sacred trust.” (1 Cor. 15:1-3)
- 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.

THE APPLICATION OF THE BOOK OF JUDE

God established the Church to be the “Pillar and Ground of Truth.”

- For centuries, the Church withstood the attacks by evil forces from the outside – false religion, vain speculation, humanistic ideology, atheistic theology, and every concept of philosophy man could think of to defeat the knowledge of God.
- Jude is warning the Church of the corruption of truth from the inside – which is apostasy! The greatest issue facing the church today is not how to reach the next generation to maintain their attendance and loyalty to the organization and/or denomination.
- The greatest issue facing the church today is whether it survive without the preservation and proclamation of TRUTH!

In verses 4-16, Jude lists 18 characteristics of an apostate and then he divides them into three major categories. ***“For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.”***

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 would be **“dressed in sheep’s clothing”**, but they were **“ravenous wolves”**, ready to devour the weak with their devious desires.
 - **“The way of Cain”** – open rebellion regarding giving
 - **“The error of Balaam”** – enticing others into immorality
 - **“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 intended as beautiful and pervert it for their own lusts.
- They “despise dominion” – they defy any kind of restraint or restriction to their illicit behavior.
- They “speak evil of dignities” – they even mock Satan.
- Jude reminds his readers that such immoral behavior was the reason God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

3. “Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord, Jesus Christ” – Ungodly in their creed – Vs 4

- Jude makes it clear that these people are “involved” in the Church, but they are not “believers”, for they “have not the Spirit!”
- When a person hears the truth and, to some degree, embraces that truth, and then turns and rejects that truth, they render that truth powerless to save them.

The Bible is clear that apostasy will continue to 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, it is the **FIRST** to deny the Word of God as the absolute standard of what true saving faith is, and to define the essential evidence of genuine salvation.
- Apostasy is the root sin behind the satanic attacks upon:

- The sanctity of marriage – apostates want no boundaries to their lascivious behavior.
- The security of the 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 to stand firm in their faith in the midst of apostasy, parents must plant their OWN spiritual roots down deep in the eternal truths of God’s Word and exhibit the fruit of their convictions into the lives of their OWN children.