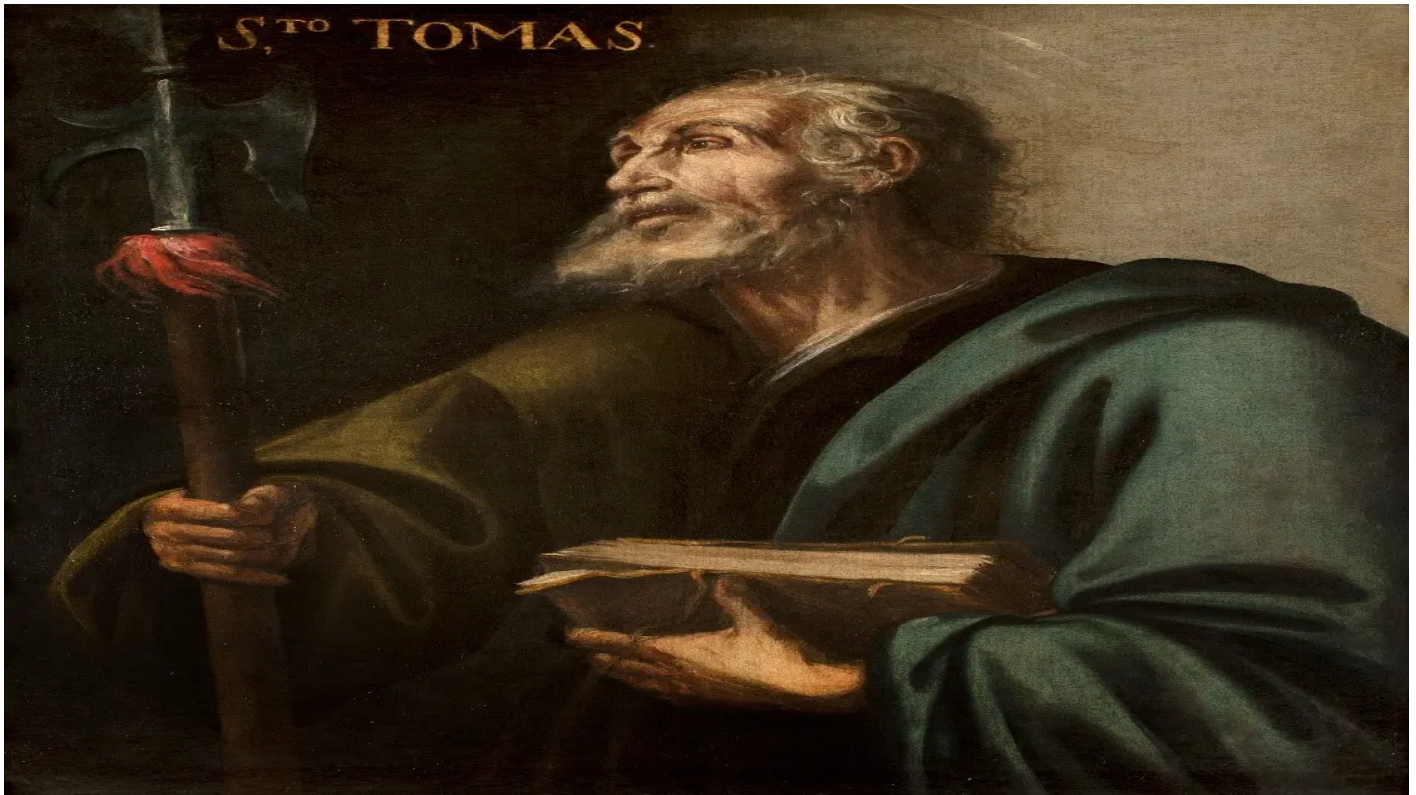




Old Testament Reading – Zephaniah 3:14-20
New Testament Reading –Romans 16:25-27

Earnestly Contending for the Faith

“Our Eternal Security”

Jude 1:24-25

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

The Epistle of Jude was written 70 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But because the Holy Spirit inspired it, this letter gives a perfect description of the spiritual condition of the church in the last days of the church age and, therefore, a perfect picture of the church today.

- An SBC leader wrote, **“God’s people are divided generationally, methodologically, and spiritually. As far as America and most of the Western world, we are in the midst of the great apostasy, and the disturbing decline of evangelicalism.”**

- To turn away from the true faith and embrace Satan's lies is called Apostasy, and while it has always been a problem in the church, it is the main problem in the church today, but it is not being addressed as the serious problem it is.
- An apostate is not just another unbeliever or a backslider living in disobedience. An apostate is a person who confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, lived like a believer for some time, and even observed the Lord's Supper as if they were believers but willfully and intentionally left the church and embraced a false fad of faith based upon the doctrine of demons.

Jesus warned His disciples about the rise of false teachers, as did the Apostles Paul, Peter, and John. Some 70 years after the resurrection of Christ, Jude said the false teachers were here, and they were leading the spiritually immature away from the true faith.

- To contend means to defend the essential doctrines of the Christian Faith, which are included in the Apostle's Creed.
- Jude said they were handed down to the Apostles by the voice of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit inspired them to write them down as we know them as the Holy Scriptures.
- They cannot be adapted or modified in the slightest way, for to do so would compromise the whole body of truth.
- Such apostasy is so rampant today, given the prophetic events falling into place; this could be the ***"falling away"*** that the Apostle Paul described in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4, that would precede the rapture of the church followed by the revealing of the Antichrist.

"With the spirit of the Antichrist so clear, the Antichrist himself must be near, which means the true Church of Jesus Christ will soon be out of here!"

In verse 2, Jude said those who truly receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord are ***"Called, Sanctified, and Preserved"*** by their faith alone, in Christ alone. However, he urged us to hold on to that true faith that was given to us by God's grace by:

- Verse 20 – ***"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith,"*** – In 2 Peter 1:5-7, the Apostle listed the seven qualities Christians are to add to our saving faith by our consistent study of the Word of God: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.
- Verse 20 – ***"Praying in the Holy Spirit,"*** – In Romans 8:26-29, the Apostle Paul assured us that the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, interprets the desires of our

heart and communicates those desires to God the Father, who will work all things together for our good and His glory.

- Verse 21 – ***“keep yourselves in the love of God,”*** – In John 15:9-10, Jesus said we should walk in His love and live in the expectation of being showered with a fresh outpouring of God’s love at any time. God’s showers of blessings are waiting on our full confession.
- Verse 21 – ***“Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,”*** to live in the expectation of the rapture of the church, for it could happen at any moment.

The most important doctrine of our salvation is our eternal security, which is called the Perseverance of the Saints, that biblical truth that says once we are saved, we are saved forever, or to put it negatively, once we have been born again, we cannot be unborn, or once we have received God’s gift of everlasting life, it cannot be taken away.

- Without the blessed assurance of the perseverance of the Saints, even as Christians, we would have no basis for real joy today or any hope for an eternal tomorrow.
 - Throughout the New Testament, we are told if we want to be a true believer in Jesus Christ, we must do three things: ***“Deny ourselves, take up our cross, daily, and follow Jesus.”*** (Matthew 16:24)
 - Then, to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, there are essential doctrines that we must believe and apply to our lives, so we will not be conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of our minds.
- However, what if there was no guarantee that if we did our best to surrender ourselves unto the Lordship of Christ, but we didn’t quite measure up in one area or the other, would we still be assured of our home in heaven?
 - The assurance of our salvation is not based on our memory of some religious experience we had many years ago.
 - The assurance of our salvation is based upon the finished work of Christ for our sins 2000 years ago and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives today.
- If our salvation is not by God’s grace alone, through our faith alone, and in Christ alone, we are not truly saved.

- Even if we do our best to become devoted disciples of Christ and faithful servants of God, if He doesn't hold us, keep us, preserve us, sanctify us, and prepare to glorify us, we will never be able to do all of those things for ourselves. Therefore, our eternal security is in question.
- However, the assurance of our eternal salvation is not up to us, but rather it is up to the One who called us to Himself, and as Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:24, ***"Faithful is the One who called us, and so shall He bring it to pass!"***
- So, look at Jude 24-25: ***"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. " Amen***

This passage is called a "doxology!"

- Logos means "word!"
- Doxa means "praise!"
- The Bible is full of explosive words of praise unto God – in the psalms, when the angels sang at the Lord's birth, and when the people praised Jesus when He rode into Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul either begins or ends his epistles with a great doxology.
- So, having written about those who fell victim to Satan's lies, Jude closed his letter by assuring his readers of two things:
 - ***"Now unto Him Who is able to keep us from stumbling,"*** – God is able to preserve us – He is able to keep us from being taken captive by Satan's lies.
 - Seeing what is and what isn't happening in the church and the world today, we are prone to wonder how long God will tarry.
 - The truth is, God will allow this world to go on even as it is until the last sinner is called, sanctified, and preserved, just as we are today.
 - John 6:37 – 39 ***"All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out...that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing."***
 - We may be living in the day of the great "falling away," and we are being exposed to the devil's deception today in ways we never thought possible.

- However, we are not in danger of the devil's lies, and therefore we are not in danger of eternal damnation, for our God is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that Day. (Philippians 1:6)
- ***“Now unto Him who is able to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,” – He is able to present us before His heavenly hosts as trophies of His grace.***
 - Today we are standing in God's grace. But very soon, we will be standing in God's glory, as He will put us on display as examples of what His grace has done, and He will do it with great joy.
 - Zephaniah 3:17 – ***“The Lord your God will rejoice over you with joy. He will joy over you with singing.”***
 - And the most excellent news is that nothing can ever separate us from this fellowship with Him forever.
 - John 10:27 – ***“My sheep hear My voice...I give unto the eternal life, and they shall never perish...and neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”***