

JUDE 1:1-4

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jude, as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Tragically, many Christians don't read Jude and many pastor's and teachers avoid Jude.

Yes, it is a short letter, only some 613 words, 25 verses and yet it is power packed with important information for us.

As we will see, Jude uses some eight Old Testament illustrations, and he does not give us much background on them.

Why is that?

Because I believe he expected his readers to know these stories and thus, he just made his point with each one.

We are told that Jude or Judas wrote this letter, but who is this man.

The Scriptures give us a few possibilities.

There was Judas who was the son of James, not Iscariot, one of the apostles according to Luke 6:16. But it is doubtful that he wrote this letter. We don't see anywhere in this letter that the writer of this letter was one of the apostles.

Then there was Judas, also named Barsabas, who accompanied Paul, Barnabas and Silas to Antioch according to Acts 15:22. Again, it is highly doubtful that this Judas wrote this letter. There is nothing that points to him writing it.

I believe that the Jude or Judas that wrote this letter is none other than the half-brother of Jesus Christ and the brother of James who wrote the epistle bearing his name. He even tells us that he is the "**brother of James.**" Jude 1:1.

I do realize that for some the idea of Jesus having brothers and sisters is hard for them to believe.

Why is it so hard for some to believe that?

Because some believe that Mary was a virgin all her life, but that is not what the Scriptures teach.

Yes, Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary, He was virgin born, but after the birth of Jesus, we see Joseph and Mary enjoy a normal marriage relationship, including sex!

In fact, we are told in Matthew 1:25 that Joseph “**. . . did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.**”

I think that is very clear.

In Matthew 13:54-56 we are told, “**Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, ‘Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?’**”

And in Mark 6:1-3 we are told of this also, **“Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?’ So they were offended at Him.”** So Jesus did have half-brothers and sisters!

Now, when did Jude get saved?

We need to keep in mind that prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, His brothers did not believe that He was the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

In John 7:5 we are told, **“For even His brothers did not believe in Him.”** You see, they thought He was nuts, that He lost His mind!

Then what changed them, what caused them to believe that Jesus is the Messiah?

They saw the risen Christ and because of that, they believed, at least James saw the risen Lord according to I Corinthians 15:7.

How do I know they became believers?

Because in Acts 1:14, as the apostles and other disciples were gathered in the upper room, we are told, **“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”**

So I believe that Jude is the half-brother of Jesus and the brother of James, and he wrote this letter or epistle to counter the apostasy that was coming into the church.

Not only that, but Paul tells us that the brothers of the Lord were well known in the early church. He wrote in I Corinthians 9:5, **“Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?”**

Now we have no way to know for sure the exact date of this letter, but most believe it was somewhere between 67 to 70 A. D. Some feel it may have been written as late as 80 A. D. but I don't think it was that late. The reason I say that is there is no mention of the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple that occurred in 70 A. D. If it was after that period of time, as big of a destruction as this was, I believe Jude would have mentioned it.

As I was reading over the introduction to this letter in my Bible, I felt it portrays what this letter is all about very clearly.

Let me share with you what this introduction has to say and then I will expound on it. We are told,

FIGHT! Contend! Do battle! When apostasy arises, when false teachers emerge, when the truth of God is attacked, it is time to fight for the faith. Only believers who are spiritually “in shape” can answer the summons.

At the beginning of his letter Jude focuses on the believers' common salvation, but then feels compelled to challenge them to contend for the faith. The danger is real.

False teachers have crept into the church, turning God's grace into unbound license to do as they please. Jude reminds such men of God's past dealings with unbelieving Israel, disobedient angels, and wicked Sodom and Gomorrah. In the face of such danger Christians should not be caught off guard. The challenge is great, but so is the God who is able to keep them from stumbling.

Think of it like this. Luke gave to us *The Acts of the Apostles* that laid down the beginnings of the church.

And now Jude comes along and gives to us what we might call *The Acts of the Apostates* as he shows us the falling away of the church from sound or healthy doctrine.

Now, as fitting as this letter was in Jude's day, it fits in perfectly with the days we are living in.

You see, false teachers and their destructive doctrines, their doctrines of demons, are leading the church down this slippery slope away from God!

Why this is so dangerous is that apostates claim to be Christians, and they are not! And thus, they are leading people away from the truth, there is a departure from the truths of God because these apostates may say they speak for Christ, but they deny His deity, they reject His Lordship.

Let me share this with you. We are told,

In the institutional church, composed of professing Christians who are in many cases not Christian, look for many things to happen:

With increasing frequency the leadership of the denominations will be captured by those who completely reject the historic truths of the Bible and deny doctrines which according to Christ Himself are crucial to believe in order to be a Christian. In some of the largest Protestant denominations this has already taken place. The few remaining institutions which are not yet dominated by the disbelievers will go downhill in the same manner.

There will be unprecedented mergers of denominations into "religious conglomerates." This will occur for two reasons:

First, most denominations were formed because of deep convictions about certain spiritual truths. As more of these truths are discarded as irrelevant because of unbelief in Biblical authority, there will be no reason to be divided.

Unity is certainly important to have, but never, according to the teachings of Christ, at the expense of crucial truths of Christianity.

Secondly, as ministers depart from the truths of the Bible, they lose the authority and power that it has to meet real human needs, and as many ministers are not truly born spiritually themselves and are consequently without the illumination of God's Spirit, they no longer will be able to hold their present congregations, much less attract others.

So they resort to "social action gimmicks," super-organization and elaborate programs as a substitute.

As Paul predicted concerning these ministers in the last days: "holding to a form of godliness [literally religion], although they have denied its power. . . ."

And again he says, ". . . they are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:5, 7 NASB).

- Hal Lindsay, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 181

This writer nailed it! That is exactly what we are seeing today in churches across America. All kinds of gimmicks, social programs, elaborate programs to draw people in and a move away from the truths of God found in the Word of God.

Do you know who wrote that?

It was Hal Lindsay from his book – *The Late Great Planet Earth* and it is over 50 years ago that he wrote that, back 1970! And what he saw in his day, has now emerged as the normal in churches!

Make no mistake about it, there is a departure from the truths of God because these apostates say they believe the Bible and yet they deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, they deny the authority of the Scriptures and they twist the Scriptures to fit their own ideas.

There is a departure from the truths of God because these apostates say they are serving God, they use the right language, but they are in fact serving themselves, looking to satisfy their own desires!

That is why we see Christian witches, we see Christian Tarot cards, we see grave sucking where you go to the grave of a departed Christian and lay on the ground and suck up their energy.

I can go on, but you get the idea and if you know the Word of God at all, you can easily see that this is demonic and not Christian, not even close and yet, why are so many following these destructive heresies?

And it is even worse as they deny the deity of Jesus, His virgin birth, His sinless life, the blood atonement, that Jesus is the only way and on and on the doctrines of demons go leading people away from God and not to God!

Make no mistake about it, they are pretenders of the faith and they have a huge following.

And even though Jude primarily had apostates in mind when he wrote his epistle, his comments could apply to anyone in the church that teaches false doctrine because all of them are dangerous and do irreparable damage to the local church, and to those in it.

One pastor put it like this. He wrote, “Without question, the greatest threat to the church has always been false teaching. Its subtlety and severity make it a spiritual poison unlike any other.

While external threats - such as religious persecution and the world’s animosity are certainly unpleasant, the wounds they inflict are only physical and the injuries they cause only temporary.

The deadliest false teaching, on the other hand, comes not from deceptive, non-Christian religions outside the church - but from spiritual pretenders inside the church. And the resulting damage is far greater than that caused by any external assault; the casualties are spiritual, and the consequences are eternal.

It’s no wonder, then, that Jesus warned His followers about the deadly dangers of apostasy:

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.” (Matt. 7:15–20)

In his exhortation to the Ephesian elders, the apostle Paul echoed the Lord's admonition:

“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves’ men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”

(Acts 20:29–31)

The rest of the New Testament records similar warnings, instructing believers to guard themselves against the deceptive nature of false teaching masquerading as Christian truth. . . .”

Absolutely. Thus, the warning that Jude gives to us Christians is really a survival manual to live in these last days.

We are to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us. The problem is that many Christians do not see the reality that we are in a battle and thus, they think the Christian life is played out in a playground! It is not and we need to wake up and stand strong in the Lord and the power of His might because the Devil is trying to trip us up, destroy lives and we are to put on the armor of God and take a stand!

And we need to pay attention because the pretenders are here, these apostates and we need to stand strong in the Lord and upon His Word to expose their lies!

Now, before we get started this evening, let me give you a quick outline of this letter:

- 1. SALUTATION – JUDE 1-2***
- 2. THE APOSTATES ARE UNMASKED – JUDE 3-16***
- 3. HOW CAN BELIEVERS RESPOND TO THE APOSTASY – JUDE 17-23***
- 4. BENEDICTION – JUDE 24-25***

And so, with that as our background, let's begin reading in Jude, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening.

JUDE 1

VERSE 1

As we can see, Jude tells us that he is the writer of this letter and we have seen how this Jude is the half-brother of Jesus. And, as I have said, the name is literally "**Judas.**"

But to avoid connection with Judas Iscariot, the infamous man who betrayed Jesus, most English translators have used the name "**Jude.**"

Now, in knowing that Jude is the half-brother of Jesus, why didn't he just write, "**Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, you know, Almighty God! I am his brother!**"

Because he has now received Jesus as his Lord and Savior and thus, he is a bonds slave of Christ. He is not exalting himself or who he knows, even though he could have!

Now a **DOULOS** or bonds slave was a slave who was free to go but his love for his master was so great that he wants to serve him all the days of his life, not out of constraint or compulsion, but out of love!

Thus, Jude, like all of us, are bonds slaves of Christ, we don't exalt ourselves but the Lord and that is what Jude has done here.

We also see Jude mention his brother James, and as we have seen in our studies, James is the one who wrote the epistle of James and the head of the church in Jerusalem.

As Jude goes on, he tells us who he is writing to.

Jude is writing to Christians, believers, and he identifies them in three specific ways:

THEY WERE CALLED: Who is calling us or drawing us to Christ? It is the *Holy Spirit* and when He calls, we have the choice to listen and obey or not to listen to His drawing us to Christ.

If you do reject His call you are committing blasphemy of the Holy Spirit or you are rejecting the work that the Holy Spirit is doing in your life, bringing you to Christ.

And folks, you can do that over and over again and each time you do your heart will grow harder and harder until you can no longer be saved!

Thus, when the Holy Spirit calls you to Christ you need to respond!

If you have come to Christ, then this is a past event for us, we were called by the Holy Spirit and we received that calling into our lives, we are saved!

Then, after they responded to the *CALL!*

THEY WERE SANCTIFIED BY THE FATHER: This speaks of being set apart by God, set apart by the Father as the Master Potter is molding and shaping our lives to be all that He wants them to be.

Now this is a present work of the Father in our lives, and it will continue on until we go to be with Him! And, as Paul wrote in Philippians 1:6, “**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.**”

God began the work in us, and He will complete that work that He has begun in us!

But can we lose our salvation? James deals with that next, with the third point in regard to who he is writing to.

THEY WERE PRESERVED IN JESUS: Here we see Jesus as the protector and guardian over our lives.

He is the shepherd who leads us.

Now, where is he leading us? He is leading us to glory and one day we will be taken home to be with Him just as He has told us, just as He has promised us.

You see, Jesus is preparing a new home for our spirit and soul to dwell in, a mansion you might say or a permanent, eternal dwelling place as we are told in John chapter 14.

Thus, we see the future aspect of what Christ is doing – bringing us to glory!

In other words, once we come to Christ our salvation is secure in Him because it is God who is protecting us, keeping us.

Peter put it like this in I Peter 1:5, “**who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**”

I am so glad that it does not say, “*who are kept by the power of Joe . . .*” That would not give me assurance and if you put your name in there it would not give you assurance either. But when God is the One who is keeping us, He will see it through.

Or, as Peter goes on to say, “**receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls.**” I Peter 1:9.

What I also want you to see here in this first verse is that Jude does not use the word *Trinity* but as he gives to us the three-fold working of the Godhead, we see that he is clearly showing us this truth.

Look again how he shows us the Godhead: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in our lives!

The Holy Spirit *CALLS* us!

The Father *SANCTIFIES* us!

And Jesus *PRESERVES* us!

Yes, they do so much more in our lives, but this is what Jude is focusing on.

And now that we have come to saving faith, Jude tells us what we can enjoy.

VERSE 2

Jude greets them by saying, “**Mercy, peace, and love**” but not just that, he wants these things to be multiplied in their lives, not just added!

And if you think about it, as Christians, these are the things that our life should be filled with, but many times they are not because we are distracted by all that is happening around us instead of focusing on the Lord.

Let’s look at these three things, a little different than Paul’s opening salutations, but just as important.

First of all – ***MERCY!***

Mercy speaks of not getting what we deserve, which is death because of our sins before a holy and righteous God!

But why don’t we get what we deserve – ***DEATH?***

Jude speaks of that next as he writes about – ***PEACE!***

And when you look at this, this peace is two-fold.

First you must make peace *WITH* God and that is done through Jesus Christ. That is the key!

Paul, in Romans 5:1-2 puts it like this, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

It is only then, after we have made peace *WITH* God that we can enjoy the peace *OF* God in our lives.

It is as Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

You see, you can't have the peace *OF* God without first making peace *WITH* God and that can only be accomplished through Jesus Christ, as I have said!

That is where true peace, the peace of God is found, in a relationship with Jesus Christ!

And then, after we receive his mercy and peace through Jesus, Jude speaks of – *LOVE!*

You see, it is out of all of that, it is out of God pouring His love into our lives, that His love, *AGAPE* love will flow through our lives and touch the lives of others.

It is as Paul said in Romans 5:5, **“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”**

You see, the mercy, the peace, the love that God has given to us He wants us to give to others and Jude says may it be multiplied not only into your lives, but out of your lives touching the lives of others!

As we read on, we will see how heavy the heart of Jude is over what he is seeing happening in the lives of believers, what they are doing and not doing, and it is grieving him so much that he has to write about it, even though he really did not want to.

Look at what Jude has to say.

VERSE 3

Jude is telling us that he would rather speak about the truths that bind all Christians together in sweet fellowship. I would have to agree, that would be awesome if that is all we needed to focus on.

Even Warren Wiersbe struggled with this as he wrote, ***“I must confess that I sympathize with Jude. In my own ministry, I would much rather encourage the saints than declare war on the apostates. But when the enemy is in the field, the watchmen dare not go to sleep. The Christian life is a battleground, not a playground.”***

So yes, Jude started to write this letter with the purpose of sharing the common salvation that they enjoyed.

And when Jude speaks of our **“common salvation”** he is not saying that our salvation is cheap, it cost our Lord His life to save us.

Nor is he saying that our salvation is common in the sense that everyone has it or all roads lead to God.

No, he is saying that we are all saved in common or that our salvation is based upon Grace alone, through Faith alone in Christ alone.

You see, there is salvation in no other name, there is no salvation apart from Jesus! That means the rich and poor, the famous and common people, the educated and uneducated, all have the same accesses to God and that is through Jesus Christ!

But as Jude began to write about our common salvation, the Holy Spirit got his attention and directed him to write about something else, something that was also very important.

Now, if Jude refused to write, if he hindered what the Holy Spirit was doing, then this letter would not be included in the Bible, but Jude not only listened to the Spirit's leading, but he also obeyed!

Thus, Jude is going to speak on this difficult subject of apostasy, false doctrine and how we need to be prepared to fight against it.

Folks, as important as this letter was to first century Christians, it is just as important to twenty-first century Christians!

Let me deal with this first and we did talk about it a little already. But what is an apostate?

An apostate is someone who knows about God, knows about Jesus, receives what the Bible says but only superficially, he is not a believer but a pretender!

The problem is that they look like believers, but they are not and that is the danger. They speak with flashy words, they speak as if they have the truths of God, but they do not!

Apostates never make a genuine commitment to God; they only make a superficial one.

Yes, they know the truth, but they never apply the truth to their life! They are not saved!

Notice that James says, "**the faith**" and he uses a definite article in front of the word "**faith.**"

By doing that he is using faith as a noun. In other words, something that is. He is not using it as a verb or something that we do, like exercising our faith.

That means that “**the faith**” is the body of God’s truth, the Word of God!

And this faith that Jude speaks of we are to contend for, fight for. The problem today is we see many Christian’s who are living out their faith like it is play time when it is a battle! They don’t want to fight with anyone. They don’t want to contend with anyone. They just want to get along and in doing so, they have to compromise what they believe to make that happen and they compromise “**the faith**” that has been entrusted to them!

Thus, they go with the flow, they don’t want to cause trouble, and they allow the lies, the false doctrine to grow because they are not willing to fight the good fight of faith that God has entrusted to them!

But Jude is not telling them or us to go with the flow.

In fact, the Greek word for “**earnestly contend**” is EPAGONIZOMAI, (ep-ag-o-nid’-zom-ahee) is an action word, it is a fight!

This word was related to an athletic competition and it speaks of being diligent, to agonize earnestly, it speaks of hard work, not pacifism!

And this word is in the present infinitive, which means it is a continuous struggle for us Christians!

What am I saying? I am saying that this battle will continue until the Lord comes.

We are in a battle and like Paul exhorted Timothy in I Timothy 6:12, “**Fight the good fight of faith**” It is not time to give up or give in because lives are at stake!

Now let me expound a little more about this faith that Jude is exhorting us to fight for.

Jude is speaking of *“the essential truths of the Gospel that all true Christians hold in common.”*

Thus, we must earnestly contend for the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Now, do we see that happening in the church today, this departure from the truths of God found in the Word of God?

Yes, we do, and the reason is simple. Many are not contending earnestly for this faith; they are unwilling to fight this good fight of faith!

And please understand that it is not about what I believe or what you believe, but it is the Gospel message, the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Like with our Constitution and what some believe about it, that it has to change with the times, that is what some feel needs to happen with the Word of God!

But Jude says that this faith **“was once for all delivered to the saints.”** I think that is pretty clear!

And yet, have you ever heard someone say something like this, *“We are living in different and difficult times from when the Bible was written and thus, we must adapt the Bible to the way we are currently living, to fit in with the culture of our day!”*

Sorry, but what God has said is unchanging, it has been delivered and we don't need new revelations or a new Gospel for the days we are living in.

It is as Erdman put it, *“There is no other gospel, there will be none. Its content will be more fully understood, its implications will be developed, its predictions will be fulfilled; but it will never be supplemented or succeeded or supplanted.”*

Or, as Paul said in Romans 1:16, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”**

Thus, the enemy wants to take us away from the power of God in people’s lives, the Gospel message which is able to transform lives through the power of the Holy Spirit!

And, because of that, Jude is not saying we should be like Casper milk toast, just accepting whatever people say.

No, he is saying to us that we are to stand strong in the Lord’s army, the battle is intense and thus, we must earnestly contend for that faith that has been entrusted to us.

That unchanging faith, the truths of God!

Listen to the charge Paul gave to Timothy regarding the preaching of God’s Word no matter what the people want or don’t want, you do the work that God has called you to do – you earnestly contend for the faith.

Thus, we are told in II Timothy 4:1-5, **“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

Now some may feel that I am going overboard with this, is there really a problem with false teachers, apostates who are spreading their poison, their cancer that will destroy the body?

You bet there is. Look at how many churches accept abortion, the homosexual lifestyle, transgenderism, adultery, fornication, drugs, alcohol and so many other things that go against God's Word.

But it is even worse than that. Look at how many churches and teachers who are denying the deity of Jesus, the blood atonement, and-so-on. And we let them into our churches, and we receive their doctrines of demons!

They are nothing more than wolves in sheep's clothing and they are moving people away from the truths of God.

In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues wrote about an interview with a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they described as representing many American's experience and views on religion.

Speaking about her own faith and how it operated in her life, she said: ***"I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It is 'Sheilism.' Just my own little voice."***

We might say that this highly individualistic faith is the most popular religion in the world, but the idea that we *can* or *should* put together our own faith is wrong.

Christianity is based on one faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints.

I hope you can clearly see it is not time to sit back and just accept whatever you hear but that you earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to you, a faith that was delivered once and for all and now needs to be shared.

Why is this so important?

Jude is going to tell us the reason as we read on. But we need to contend for the faith because there are dangerous men, apostates out there within the Christian churches that are spreading their doctrines of demons!

Listen to what Jude says in the next verse.

VERSE 4

Why are these people so dangerous to the church and Christians in general?

Because they came into the church, into people's lives and they are "**unnoticed**" because they "**crept in.**"

I think we need to understand that no one noticed that they were dangerous because they did not wear a name tag that said, "***DANGER: FALSE TEACHER!***"

If they did, it would be easy, but they don't and they make themselves sound more Biblical than anybody else!

In fact, "**crept in**" means "*To slip in secretly as if by a side door.*" (Robertson)

And Make no mistake about it, "*Satan knows right well that one devil in the church can do far more than a thousand devils outside her bounds.*" (Spurgeon)

And here's the thing, and I have seen it over and over again. They come in teaching the Bible, but they are not Christians, they are deceptive, they twist the Scriptures to make them say what they want, to fit their agenda, they are ***APOSTATES!***

And Peter even warned us about these deceivers in II Peter 3:16 as he spoke about Paul and sometimes his words were difficult to understand and what these apostates and false teachers do with these difficult teachings. He said that "**. . . untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.**"

In other words, they make the Scriptures say what they want them to say, to support what they want to believe, instead of what God has said!

And Peter has warned us that these men were coming and are here in II Peter 2:1, **“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.”**

And keep in mind that those **“destructive heresies”** literally means, *“teachings that will destroy a person in hell.”* That is how serious this is!

Let me give you an example to show you what I mean.

Some of you may remember Jim Jones, supposedly a Christian.

When you look at his life, it seems that he was saved. He became a pastor, he taught the Bible, but he was a wolf in sheep’s clothing, he was an ***APOSTATE!***

How can I be so sure?

Because he deviated from the Word of God, the truths of God. And over time it just got worse and worse, and he would *“‘heal’ parishioners by pretending to draw forth ‘cancers’ that actually were bloody chicken gizzards. And his megalomania soared. Said his old associate the Rev. Case: ‘Jim stopped calling himself the reincarnation of Jesus and started calling himself God. He said he was the actual God who made the heavens and earth.’ Jones ordered his followers to buy, and sell pictures of him to ward off evil. He demanded for the temple’s coffers all members’ savings and earnings, amassing a fortune that a former member estimates at \$15 million.*

Discipline gave way to brutal beatings. It was a progression perhaps foreshadowed way back in Indianapolis when the young preacher once threw his Bible to the floor and yelled at his associates, ‘Too many people are looking at this instead of looking at me!’” (Time, December 4, 1978, p.27)

As he continued on this downward trend, he took his congregation, *The People’s Temple*, to the jungles of Guyana on the northern coast of South America, and in 1978 he convinced or tricked some 900 people to commit suicide by drinking cyanide laced grape juice.

Jim Jones was found shot to death!

He was an **APOSTATE!**

Now what Jim Jones taught, his behavior is easy to see how wrong he was, that he was not of God, not even close and yet, some 900 people followed him to their death!

And when anyone esteems a pastor or leader like a god, that is a danger sign and nothing good will come from that, but usually what comes forth is death and destruction!

But what about those that are coming in unnoticed, that are slipping in secretly through the side door you might say?

What can we do about that?

We need to contend for the faith folks, plain and simple!

Let me give you an example and you see how deceptive this is. This article is from June of 2020 and we are told,

Andy Stanley, son of Charles Stanley, is the pastor of North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia, a Southern Baptist church. He is one of the most influential “evangelicals,” is considered a master of communication, and is a church growth guru who teaches pastors how to build megachurches.

He represents the rapidly growing “emerging” side of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 2016, he said, “If you don’t go to a large church, you are so stinking selfish . . . and don’t care about your kids” (“Andy Stanley’s Problem with the Bible,” *deliveredbygrace.com*, Mar. 31, 2016). . . .

Stanley holds a “tolerant” view of homosexuality. He says he has no intention of pushing a Christian agenda on other people (*The New Rules for Love, Sex and Dating*). He says that churches should not make people feel like they have to leave “because they’re gay” (“Dr. Charles Stanley and Son Andy,” *The Gospel Herald*, Apr. 23, 2015).

In a sermon entitled “When Gracie Met Truthy,” April 15, 2012, Stanley described a couple in his church who divorced when the wife discovered that her husband was in a sexual relationship with another man, and instead of disciplining the man, the church allowed the homosexual couple to move to another “campus” of North Point Church and work together as a “host” team. That’s not biblical grace; it is 2 Timothy 4:3-4 “after their own lusts” apostasy.

Stanley minimizes the importance of the virgin birth. “Stanley’s December 3, 2016, sermon may be the most controversial yet. In his sermon, Stanley minimized the importance - if not the reality - of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. ‘A lot of people don’t believe it, and I understand that,’ Stanley said.

He added, ‘Maybe the thought is they had to come up with some kind of myth about the birth of Jesus to give him street cred later on. Maybe that’s where that came from’ (*Baptist News Global*, ‘Virgin Birth Debate Interrupts Regular ‘War on Christmas’ Program,’ 12-21-16).

Stanley then noted that it is interesting that only two of the four gospels mention the virgin birth, and said ‘Christianity doesn’t hinge on the truth or even the stories around the birth of Jesus . . . It really hinges on the resurrection of Jesus.’

Earlier this year, Stanley minimized the importance of the role Scripture plays in the life of the believer, and minimizing the importance of the virgin birth of Christ is simply the next step in this downward trajectory. . . .

Stanley consistently disparages the Bible.

In 2009, he said that preaching through the Bible verse-by-verse “isn’t how you grow people. . . . No one in the Scripture modeled that. There’s not one example of that” (*The Exchange with Ed Stetzer*, Mar. 5, 2009). . . .

In 2014, Stanley said, “Don’t say the Bible says. Say the author’s name who wrote the Bible” (Stanley, *Deep and Wide*).

On Aug. 25, 2016, in a conversation with Russell Moore at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission conference held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual conference, Stanley said, “I would ask preachers and pastors and student pastors in their communications to get the spotlight off the Bible and back on the resurrection.” This is nutty, of course, because it is impossible to understand Christ’s resurrection apart from the Bible. . . .

In 2016, in a series “Who Needs God?” Stanley said, “If the Bible is the foundation of our faith, it’s all or nothing. Christianity becomes a ‘fragile house of cards’ religion. Christianity becomes a fragile house of cards that comes tumbling down when we discover that perhaps the walls of Jericho didn’t. . . . What your students have discovered, and if you read broadly you’ve discovered, it is next to impossible to defend the entire Bible. But if your Christianity hangs by the thread of proving that everything in the Bible is true, you may be able to hang onto it, but your kids and your grandkids and the next generation will not.”

The things he says are not supported by evidence include the young age of the earth, the global flood, the miraculous Exodus from Egypt, and the walls of Jericho falling down. Stanley's idea that it is next to impossible to defend the whole Bible is gross heresy. Jesus and the apostles certainly believed and defended all of it, every jot and tittle. . . .

- <https://bit.ly/3mp2BTT>

I am not trying to offend anyone this evening, but there is Rick Warren. And this quote is from Rick Warren a few years back from the Pew Forum on Religion: ***“Who’s the man of peace in any village – or it might be a woman of peace – who has the most respect, they’re open and they’re influential? They don’t have to be a Christian. In fact, they could be a Muslim, but they’re open and they’re influential and you work with them to attack the five giants. And that’s going to bring the second Reformation.”*** Notice, not the Gospel! Not Jesus!

All I can say is that we need to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us by God!

And the reason I am making such a big deal with this, and I have not even scratched the surface, but Jude tells us that these apostates who have crept into the church turn the grace of God into lewdness or they teach these doctrines of demons without any concern, they will even deny the Lord, that He is the only way!

But as much as they may get away with this on earth, God is aware of everything because everything is open and naked before Him and they will be judged for their actions!

Folks, God's truth does not change and as we have seen in our study through the Word of God, we have the anointing from God, the Holy Spirit or the Spirit tester, the Spirit of truth who will guide us in all truth according to the Word of God!

But again, how are they getting into the churches, the seminaries, our lives?

One author put it like this, *“How could false brethren get into true assemblies of the saints? The soldiers had gone to sleep at the post! The spiritual leaders in the churches had grown complacent and careless. This explains why Jude had to ‘blow the trumpet’ to wake them up. Our Lord and His Apostles all warned that false teachers would arise, yet the churches did not heed the warnings. Sad to say, some churches are not heeding the warnings today.”*

Obviously, we will not finish up this letter tonight but we will continue next week in our study of this short and yet powerful letter.

I felt it was important to deal with this and we will continue to deal with this next time in this letter.

As we will see, Jude will pick-up next time giving us three examples that show us that God’s judgment upon these apostates is certain.

For us, our response needs to be as Jude said as he exhorts us, **“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“Beloved, my whole concern was to write to you in regard to our common salvation. [But] I found it necessary and was impelled to write you and urgently appeal to and exhort [you] to contend for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints [the faith which is that sum of Christian belief which was delivered verbally to the holy people of God].”**

May we do that, may we earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us because the pretenders are coming, the apostates, and they are here but as Paul, said, **“They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”** Titus 1:16.

Let me close with these words from Warren Wiersbe as he sums this up for us. He wrote, The church is always one generation short of extinction. If our generation fails; to guard the truth and entrust it to our children, then that will be the end! When you think of the saints and martyrs who suffered and died so that we might have God’s truth, it makes you want to take your place in God’s army and be faithful unto death.

What does it mean to “contend for the faith”? The Greek word is an athletic term that gives us our English word agonize. It is the picture of a devoted athlete, competing in the Greek games and stretching his nerves and muscles to do his very best to win.

You never fight the Lord’s battles from a rocking chair or a soft bed! Both the soldier and the athlete must concentrate on doing their best and giving their all. There must also be teamwork, believers working together to attack and defeat the enemy.

Sometimes you hear well-meaning people say, “Well, it’s fine to contend for the faith, but don’t be so contentious!”

While it is true that some of God’s soldiers have been the cause of quarrels and divisions, it is also true that some of them have paid a great price to defend the faith. As Christian soldiers, we must not fight each other or go around looking for trouble. But when the banner of Christ is in danger of being taken by the enemy, we cannot sit idly by, nor can we ever hope to win the victory by wearing kid gloves.

Charles Spurgeon once said that “the new views are not the old truth in a better dress, but deadly errors with which we can have no fellowship.”

False doctrine is a deadly poison that must be identified, labeled, and avoided, Spurgeon also said, “I cannot endure false doctrine, however neatly it may be put before me. Would you have me eat poisoned meat because the dish is of the choicest ware?”

We must always speak the truth in love, and the weapons we use must be spiritual. At the same time, we must dare to take our stand for “the faith” even if our stand offends some and upsets others.

We are not fighting personal enemies, but the enemies of the Lord. It is the honor and glory of Jesus Christ that is at stake. “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim 6:12).

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, p. 1024

By the grace of God, with His help we will know the truth and the truth will set us free from these lies! Stand strong in the faith for our victory is in Him! And may we earnestly contend for that faith that has been entrusted to us!