

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Enemy Within

Scripture: Jude 1

Code: 65-1

Well, as I said this morning, I'm always sort of battling in my own mind all of the excellencies of the Word of God from which to choose and to pick. And I had some ideas about what we might do in the weeks ahead and the months ahead, didn't initially think I would go into the book of Jude, but realizing that it's been 25 years plus since I've done an exposition of this book, and realizing how critical it is and how important it is and how beautifully it ties in with 1, 2 and 3 John, that's why the Holy Spirit lined them up this way, I found myself unable to escape this wonderful opportunity and responsibility to open this book.

As you know, and as we've been saying in our study of 1 John and 2 John and 3 John, I'm very passionate about the truth, very passionate about divine truth, God's truth. My whole life is devoted to the truth. My whole ministry is devoted to the truth. It's driven by the truth revealed in the Scripture. Really I live and breathe for the truth. I realize that God has exalted His truth as high as His name. I know that He is the God of truth, that's how He identifies Himself. I know that Jesus Christ, the glory of God in human flesh, according to John, is full of truth. He is the way, the truth and the life. I know that Jesus said that the truth would set the sinner free from sin and death. The Bible is called the Word of Truth. Jesus said to His Father, "Your Word is truth." And in the Scriptures we are commanded to worship God in truth. We're commanded to obey the truth, to love the truth, to judge by the truth, to speak the truth in love, to walk in the truth and as we learned in John's epistle, to love in the truth. Literally, we are engulfed in the truth. That's why the church is called by the Apostle Paul "the pillar and support of the truth." We are responsible to hold up the truth, to wield the truth against all the speculations raised up against the knowledge of God. The church is to proclaim the truth, to bring deceived souls to the knowledge of the truth that saves and frees.

In our recent studies of the epistles of John, we saw in each of these three epistles the centrality of the truth. In 1 John chapter 5, for example, verse 20, at the very end of that letter, John writes, "We know that the Son of God has come and given us understanding in order that we might know Him who is true and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal life." And he mentions what is true three times in one verse. John in his first letter was concerned with the truth, the true gospel, the true believer.

And again in the second letter, as we remember how it opened, "The elder to the chosen lady and her children whom I love in truth, and not only I but also who know the truth for the sake of the truth which

abides in us and will be with us forever." In verse 4, "I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth."

And when we come to the third of the letters, it's the same emphasis. Verse 1, "The elder to the beloved Gaius whom I love in truth." And verse 3, "I was very glad when brethren came and bore witness to your truth, that is how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in truth."

All three of those marvelous letters centered on the truth, the truth that is essential to justification and sanctification and the hope of glorification. In fact, the whole relationship that we have to God in all its fullness is based on truth. We hear the truth, we understand the truth, we believe the truth, we assent to the truth, we live the truth, we learn the truth, we proclaim the truth. Jesus said, "Thy Word is truth." And it is the Word that saves and sanctifies and gives the hope of glory. Truth then is more precious to us than anything, than everything.

As a result of the importance of the truth, the truth is always under attack. We've said that many times in our studies of those epistles and other studies as well. All through the millennia since the fall of Adam and Eve, God has been revealing His truth, His saving truth starting with the revelation that a true one would come and crush the serpent's head and provide true salvation from sin, death and hell. And the unfolding of the message of the truth is the real story of Scripture. Of course, all the way along Satan has done everything he could to obliterate the truth, to cover the truth, to hide the truth, to twist the truth to bring about lies and deceptions. One way or another the truth has always been under attack and there are sad, sad realities throughout the history of God's redeemed people, both Israel and the church, great sweeping eras of time when the people of God, so-called, abandoned the truth, lost heart for the truth, lost interest in the truth and failed to contend or fight for the truth.

It has been a long war against God and against His truth in which the devil has engaged and he has employed demons and he has employed men and women. Most effectively he has employed those people who are associated with the truth in some way. The deadliest assaults against the truth come from the inside. This is what we call apostasy. It is a defection..it is a defection. The most effective attacks against the truth come from those people who purport to know the truth and even to believe the truth. The greatest assaults against the truth don't come from the outside, they come from the inside, from apostates, defectors who name the name of Christ, or once named the name of Christ, and now are the enemies of Christ, who once affirmed their trust in God, belief in God, and affirmed the Scripture and have become the enemies of the Scripture. They're on the inside.

Notice verse 4 of Jude, "Certain persons have crept in unnoticed." Notice verse 12, "These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts, when they feast with you without fear." They're on the

inside and they are deadly dangerous because they bring such devastating corruption from their position and their posture inside the church.

Jude is concerned about this issue. He is concerned about the most dangerous corruption that can occur against the truth, and that is on the inside. The long war against God certainly comes from the outside, comes from every false religious system on the planet. Second Corinthians chapter 10 verses 3 to 5 talk about every speculation, every idea, every ideology, every theology, every religion, every philosophy, every viewpoint raised up against the knowledge of God, being a damning speculation. The spiritual war certainly has to be fought against those who attack from the outside. And the long war against God has not just been from the inside, believe me, it's been from the outside, but the most formidable blows against the truth come from the inside. Anybody will tell you that. The greatest danger to an army is from the inside, traitors, defectors, spies really working for the enemy who are trusted. Jude is concerned about this and he wants us to be concerned as well. He wants to engage us all in the battle for the truth, the long war for the truth. He wants us to be the defenders against the defectors.

And so, the call to us comes in verse 3 in this epistle. "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation..." This apparently indicates that he started to write a letter in which he wanted to talk about salvation, a positive letter, an upbeat letter, a celebratory letter in the sense that he was going to celebrate with them the wonders of their common salvation. However, while he was making an effort to do that, it was interrupted and he said, "I felt the necessity to write to you..." and that necessity was a Spirit-inspired necessity, we would all agree, since the epistle is inspired by the Holy Spirit. "I felt it necessary to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith, that you contend earnestly for the faith." That is a strong verb, contend earnestly, *epagonizomai*, *agonizomai*-to agonize, to fight, to struggle, to battle, to give great effort, to give great exertion. You add the prefix preposition and it intensifies it and it's a good translation "to contend earnestly," or to battle mightily, or to struggle powerfully for the faith. Faith being the body of truth, the word is objective, it's not subjective faith, objective faith. "I had some other things I want to talk about, I wanted to write you a positive letter, but I felt the necessity to write a letter under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit to engage you in the battle, in the fight, in the struggle, in the war against the faith, against the body of truth we know is the Christian faith."

And as I said, after finishing three letters of John so strong on truth, I kept getting pulled back to Jude, unable to move away from this particular section at the end of the New Testament at the end of the Bible, because here is this one little book tucked right in between John's three letters and the Revelation. In fact, John is the author of the Revelation, the human author. And so you had three epistles of John and then you have the Revelation that God gave to John in the series of visions that we know as the book of Revelation, and tucked in between the epistles of John and the Revelation given to John is the fourth shortest book in the New Testament. Second John, Third John and Philemon are shorter. It appears almost like an intruder into John's section, doesn't it? Why did God

drop Jude in here?

It isn't an intrusion. By the providence of God who oversaw the organization of the books of the Bible, as well as the inspiration of them, it is dropped in the perfect place. It is the final of the eight general epistles written by Peter, John and James, as well. It is critically placed in the New Testament, critically.

Now we all know that Revelation is the finale, right? We all know that. Revelation is the end. Everything wraps up in Revelation. And the main feature of Revelation is the *apokalupsis*, the *apokalupsis* being the appearing of Jesus Christ, the Second Coming. In fact, the book of Revelation is called the Revelation to John here, but underneath that in the NAS it says it's the Revelation of Jesus Christ, so it's the Revelation to John about the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It's the *apokalupsis* to John about the *apokalupsis* of Jesus Christ. So we all know that there's nothing to add to Revelation. When Revelation is done, all that God wanted to say has been said because that takes you right out into eternity, right? It ends with the return of Jesus Christ, His Millennial Kingdom, at the end of which He defeats a final rebellion, Satan and the sinners on the earth, and the earth and its environs, the created universe as we know it, is uncreated, goes out of existence. The new heaven and the new earth which is the eternal state are created and we go on to eternal heaven and the ungodly, along with Satan and all those who were associated with him in demonic or human realms, go into the Lake of Fire forever, and that's the end. We know Revelation then focuses on the Second Coming.

Why is Jude dropped right in here? As we get to the end of the New Testament, John tells us, "Folks, you've got to understand how important the truth is. Paul taught the truth, James taught the truth, Peter taught the truth, Jesus taught the truth, the truth goes through the New Testament." John says, "You've got to be aware of what this truth is. You've got to hold to the true doctrine about Jesus Christ. You've got to hold to the true standard of what a believer really is. You've got to live the truth, love the truth, walk in the truth." That's what John is saying. And you've got to do that faithfully until Jesus comes. And then Jude jumps in and, in effect, says, "And don't expect it to be easy. Do not expect it to be easy. Before Jesus comes the truth will suffer immense and relentless and escalating assaults."

Looking at the big picture further, the beginning of the church age is described in the Acts of the Apostles. The end of the church age is dealt with in Jude which might be called the Acts of the Apostates. Acts describes the deeds and teaching of men of God, through whom Christ began to build His church. Jude, the last epistle, relates the deeds and teachings of apostates who will do everything they can to destroy the truth until the end of the church. Jude is the only book in the Bible entirely devoted to discussing apostasy all the way out to the end of the church age. So these 25 verses are the vestibule to Revelation. Revelation tells us how Christ comes to bring it all to an end. Jude describes for us the battle for the truth that's going to go on until the very end. And the Apostle

Paul in 2 Thessalonians gives us the indication that this apostasy as it gets closer to the coming of Christ, of course, is going to escalate into a great apostasy. He even calls it "The *Apostasia*, THE apostasy.

Now this isn't like it's new to us. I mean, you can go back to the first book in the New Testament and the first great sermon that Jesus preached, The Sermon on the Mount, and in Matthew chapter 7 listen to what Jesus said in that sermon. "Beware of the false...what?...prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves, you will know them by their fruits." Beware of the false prophets. Jesus knew they were already around. They would come in the future against the truth of the gospel. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew Jesus said, "Watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, watch out, beware." He said it again in verse 11, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they appear to represent Me, they appear to be a part of the Kingdom of God, they appear to be the very spokesmen and teachers of divine truth, beware, their influence corrupts."

And, of course, in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, when Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse which looks at the future, Jesus said in verse 11, "Many false prophets will arise, mislead many." So Jesus warned again and again. He said, "There will come a time when false christs, false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance." And Jesus was saying, "They're around now. Beware of them, they're here. They're Pharisees and Sadducees. And they're very dangerous because they say they represent Me and they represent the truth and they believe My Word and they're going to get worse and they're going to get more effective." Jesus said that.

He warned in the other parallel passages in the gospels of the same thing. You come into the book of Acts and in the book of Acts there are tremendous warnings about this same thing. For example, take Paul's warning in Acts chapter 20. "I know...in verse 29...that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you." That's always where the great war is most deadly. If the enemy can get inside the camp, his devastation is greatest. So I'm warning you, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock...from among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. And your guardianship over the church means you've got to be aware of the savage wolves who want to infiltrate the church and destroy the truth.

You come in to the epistles, it's the same. You can hear it from the Apostle Paul, chapter 4 of 1 Timothy. The Spirit explicitly says, "In the latter times...that's now...since the Messiah has come, some will fall away from the faith. Pay attention, deceitful spirits, doctrines of demons by means of

the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own consciences with a branding iron, they come into the church." They are demonic in their doctrine. They are devilish in their intentions. They have departed from the faith. They espouse or they purport to believe. They are hypocrites. They have no conscience. They will use you and abuse you. Paul is telling Timothy, "Timothy, you've got to counter this. How are you going to counter this?" He says, "Until I come, give attention to the reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Take pains with these things, be absorbed in them. Pay attention to yourself and to your teaching, persevere in these things." He engages Timothy in the spiritual battle for the truth. And in 2 Timothy it's the same thing. He writes in 2 Timothy chapter 3, "Realize that in these last days difficult times will come, dangerous seasons, literally. Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable," and he goes on with the list. "They'll hold a form of godliness though they have denied its power." They have all kinds of degrees, they purport to be theologians and teachers, they purport to have the secret true knowledge of God, but these men oppose the truth, they have depraved minds and they reject the faith.

And not only does Paul warn about these things but Peter warns about them, I'm not going to read it, 2 Peter, the whole chapter, chapter 2, and most of chapter 3. And John...John warns about them as well. First John chapter 4, "Do not believe every spirit, test the spirits to see whether they're from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world." And 2 John, do you remember this? Second John, "Many deceivers...verse 7...have gone out into the world and do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist, watch yourselves...watch yourselves."

James even talks about false teachers. False teachers who go so far as to harm the true representatives of the faith. And, of course, the book of Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3 talks about false teachers that infiltrate the church. They literally get into the church, according to Revelation 2 and 3, and corrupt the church. They corrupted the church of Pergamos. They corrupted the church of Thyatira. They corrupted the church at Sardis. They corrupted the church as we all know of Laodicea. All the way to the end of the church age, churches are going to have to battle for the truth. And the most formidable war against that truth is going to come from the inside. All of this is prophesied, prophesied, prophesied, prophesied. And without Jude's letter, this whole development, I think, would be incomplete.

I could sum it up by quoting a text from Luke 18:8. In Luke 18:8 Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" When the Son of Man comes will He find faith on the earth? That's an amazing statement. The world has been waiting for millennia for the incarnate truth to arrive. The world has been waiting since the Fall for God to send the true One. The world has been waiting for the truth, and finally the truth comes and the living truth, the Lord Jesus Christ comes and He opens His mouth and out of His mouth comes gospel truth, saving truth, the long-awaited freeing truth.

Immediate reaction? Rejection. All those centuries of waiting, all those millennia of waiting, when the truth comes it's rejected. The truth comes and first there's an initial response, like in the synagogue at Nazareth when their initial reaction was, "Wow! We've never heard anybody like this say anything like this." But before the day was over, they tried to kill Him. In a microcosm, that's exactly what happened in the nation. At first they were wowed by what He said, they were drawn to His teaching. But before it was all over they screamed for His blood. All those millennia waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. And He comes full of grace and truth and Jesus Himself before His life ends can see the direction this is going and says, "Will I find any faith on the earth when I come back?" He anticipates what He says in the inspired text of John 1, "He came unto His own and His own...what?...received Him not." They turned on the truth as soon as He came. They rejected the truth as soon as they heard it. All the ministry of Jesus over three years and when the believers were gathered in Galilee after the resurrection, He had spent over a year in Galilee with incredible miracles and teaching and there were 500 who believed. At least there were 500 who gathered. And after all the ministry in Judea and His resurrection, there were 120 in the upper room. And as the churches were founded and planted, the churches begin to defect. And by the time John writes the book of Revelation, you're at the end of that first century. John is writing around 96 and already five out of the seven churches in Asia Minor which had been the hot bed of apostolic ministry through Paul where those churches were planted, those churches are beginning to defect and there's only two of them left...the church at Smyrna and the church at Philadelphia that were still faithful. But the battle for the truth has been a very, very difficult battle.

And Paul looks ahead down the road in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and sees THE Apostasy, THE falling away that occurs just before Antichrist steps onto the scene during the time of the Tribulation. Paul warned Timothy, "People will not endure sound doctrine." In 2 Timothy he said, "They will want to have itching ears, they want to have their ears tickled by teachers who say what they want to hear. And they will not endure sound doctrine." And Peter said, "False teachers are going to come and they're going to bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them." They're going to identify with Christ, they're going to identify with Him, they're going to identify outwardly with the gospel and with Christianity, but inwardly they will teach damning heresies. Jesus said it's coming. Paul said it's coming. Peter said it's coming. They all saw it coming.

Where does Jude fit in? Jude says, "It's here....it's here." And Jude describes it and defines it and calls us to the battle that has to stretch all the way to the end of the church age. The church can never stop fighting this battle. Jude brings the biblical panorama to its necessary climax. Jude says it's going to be this way, it is this way. He says, notice it, verse 4, "Certain persons have crept in unnoticed." Jesus says, "False prophets will come." Paul says, "False prophets will come." Peter says, "False prophets will come." And Jude says, "They're here." John says, "You're going to have to love the truth, you're going to have to battle for the truth. You're going to have to test the spirits

because spirits are going to come that are deceiving spirits, they're going to lie." Jude says, "They're here. They've arrived and they're going to stretch all the way till the events of the book of Revelation, all the way." And that provokes the question on the mouth of the Lord, "Will He find faith when He comes? Will there be any true believers left?"

I mean, look at the world today. When I say Christianity, what do you see in the big name Christianity? The dominant individuals or the individuals that dominate Christianity in sheer numbers are non-Christians, true?

You take Christianity as a term defining a religion and most Christians are not Christians. And there is this small group of people willing to contend for the faith. We've been used to the fact that other evangelicals will join us in the battle, now they're abandoning the battle and embracing the non-Christians and calling them Christians. And so Jude is saying, "They're here, folks. They're not coming, they're here." They were here when he wrote and they're here now and worse than ever because evil men grow worse and worse, as Paul reminded Timothy. And the apostasy escalates and escalates and escalates. The longer Christianity exists in the world, the more corrupt it gets on the inside. It's not the true Christianity, but it's the people who say they're a part of it, whether you're talking about the sacramental sacerdotal kind of religions of works that call themselves Christians, whether you're talking about the ugly corrupting damning influence of liberal theology, the search for the historical Jesus, whatever aspect you want to look at, or whether you're talking about the TV con-men who do what they do for money, they're all a part of the corrupting apostasy inside Christianity. And Jude says it's here, and the truth is at stake and you need, verse 3, to join the force of those who would contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. That's the biblical faith.

This is a book about apostasy and I'm telling you, Jude has a big sweep, a really big sweep. Do you know that Jude mentions the fall of Satan? That's way back where the apostasy has its birth. Jude mentions Adam. Jude mentions Cain. And he mentions Enoch. And he mentions Sodom and Gomorrah. And he mentions Balaam and Korah. And he mentions Moses. I mean, he is sweeping across the history of this spiritual war. Now I don't know about you but I love big picture concepts that help me understand the sweeping saga of what God is doing in some condensed fashion. Jude is sort of Cliff notes on the long war against God, he just sweeps across all of it. It's really a monumental book and I think, sadly, it's a neglected book. The first commentary I ever wrote, some of you may have one stuck in a corner somewhere, many, many years ago, I don't even remember how many years ago, before I should have been writing commentaries, actually, the first commentary I ever wrote was on the book of Jude and the title of it was, *Beware of the Pretenders...Beware of the Pretenders*. And, folks, Christianity in our time is literally crammed full of pretenders who assault the truth. The waves of apostasy roll higher and higher and higher and higher as you get closer and

closer to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And obviously we're closer now than we've ever been. They're characterized in 2 Thessalonians 2:10, "By all deception of wickedness." And the reason they are so wicked and deceiving, listen to this, is they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. You can't be saved apart from the truth, right? An inadequate gospel doesn't save. Believing the wrong thing doesn't save. Believing the wrong thing about Jesus, or the wrong thing about the means of salvation will not save. These people not only did not believe the truth, they did not receive the love of the truth, in fact they hate the truth. They are haters of the truth who creep in unawares, who are like reefs hidden below the surface that create shipwreck in the Christian environment. They say they believe, they don't.

Now just some interesting notes. You can read the introduction to the book of Jude in the Study Bible and it will give you an awful lot of material. Let me just share a few things with you.

Jude was written probably a few years after 2 Peter. If you look at 2 Peter, just three chapters, you will see that most of 2 Peter is devoted to apostasy, not all of it, and to false teaching. Some scholars feel that 2 Peter was written to a group of Christians, we don't know to whom, and Jude was sort of the sequel written to the same group. The two books are very closely related. Peter says get ready it's coming. Get ready, the mockers, the scoffers, the false teachers will come. For example, in 2 Peter 3:3, "Know this first of all that in the last days mockers will come...they will come." Peter says they will come. He describes them in chapter 2 in this really graphic way. But again it's future. Chapter 2 verse 1, "False teachers also arose among the people just as there will also be false teachers among you." He looks back in the Old Testament, they had false teachers and false prophets and he says they're going to come among you. Now remember, Peter's writing probably 68 A.D. before the destruction of Jerusalem, most scholars feel or he would have mentioned it. And he is then in the early years of the church. The Lord has been gone about 30 years. The churches have been planted. And Peter is saying the false teachers are going to come. They came in the past, they're going to come and they're going to secretly introduce destructive heresies. That's what they always do, they infiltrate, they come in, they corrupt the seminaries, they corrupt the Christian institutions, they corrupt the literature. They get into the church. They get into the media of the church. They do whatever they can inside the church to destroy the truth. They'll do it, he says, and many will follow their sensuality and because of them...listen to this...the way of truth will be maligned...the way of truth, the gospel, the truth. And again, truth is the issue. They do it for greed and he goes on to describe something of their character. Well we'll see that as we interact between Jude and 2 Peter.

But the point is this, writing in about 68 or 69, Peter says they're going to come, they're going to come. Jude, very close to that same period, after 2 Peter, perhaps just before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., writes to say they are here...they are here. They have arrived. There will come mockers, Peter said. There will come false teachers. Jude says they're here.

The church needs to know that, folks. We need to be aware of that. You cannot just accept everybody who says they're a Christian, or a Christian teacher, or a Christian theologian. Jude is not redundant. It is not just a repetition of 2 Peter, it is a fulfillment of 2 Peter. The apostasy has begun and it's going to go and grow until the Lord returns.

When I contend for the truth, when I battle for the truth, when I fight for the truth, when I give my life for the sake of the truth, and you do the same, we're doing what we've been commanded to do in that verse, that third verse, right? To earnestly contend for the truth. It's hard to find contenders, it really is today, very hard, very, very hard. I find myself a part of a shrinking little army. It use to seem to me that there were many, many fighting for the truth and I watch even people who at one time I thought were fighting alongside of me begin to abandon that mentality. That's one of the reasons why we said, you know, we can't just have a shepherds conference with three or four hundred people here, we've got to start a movement because we've got to build the army. We have a responsibility in this generation to raise a generation who is going to take the truth into the next one as the apostasy grows.

Peter speaks of this in future tenses. Jude speaks of it in present tenses. But we're going to see parallels between Peter's prophetic words and Jude's words of fulfillment. And that's why I say the best insight would tell us that Jude was written right after 2 Peter and right before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Now this book has high value to us today and this is what kept drawing me back to it because the apostasy was so serious in Jude's day that he called for this kind of contending for the faith and it's certainly more serious in our day because it's accumulated through all the centuries since that time. It has grown to massive proportions. There was no massive Catholic system in Jude's day. There was no proliferation of quasi-Christian heretical cults as in Jude's day. There was no development of liberalism in Jude's day. There was no mass of fake, phony false teachers who had reached the proportions of influence that those have today in television and radio and literature. Today it's so far beyond you couldn't...Jude would never even have conceived that you would have an apostate Christianity sweeping the world...sweeping the world.

Now a couple of other things to keep in mind. Jude's description of these false teachers is not doctrinal. He doesn't waste any time on their lies...why bother, right? I mean, you've only got 25 verses, be economical. He doesn't say, "Here's what they believe and here's why it's wrong. Here's what they believe and here's why it's wrong," because you couldn't do it and cover all the ground, right? Because as soon as you think you've dealt with the last heresy, guess what? A new one shows up. My friend Jerry Vines who preached here at one of our conferences a couple of years ago called me one day in his slow southern drawl and he said, "Johhhn, I have a problem."

I said, "Well, Jerry, what's your problem?"

He said, "Johhhn, I am writing a book on the contemporary heresy that plagued the church."

And I said, "Well, that's great."

And he said, "But, I can't finish my book."

I said, "What do you mean you can't finish it?"

"Because as soon as I have dealt with the last one, a new one appears."

I still haven't seen his book and that was three years ago.

Jude isn't going to get engulfed and Jude isn't going to get entangled in trying to sort out every heresy. You know what he does? He doesn't talk about their doctrine, he talks about their life...he talks about their life. He un.masks them. He says, for example, "They are...in verse 4...ungodly, who turn the grace of God into licentiousness." Hummm, they live lavish, sinful lives and say it's under grace. They deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. They will not live under the dominating Lordship of Christ. They are compared to angels that kept not their first estate. They're compared to the homosexuals of Sodom and Gomorrah. They are compared to those who went the way of Cain, those who can be bought to give their prophecies like Balaam. They're like clouds without water. They're like trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted. They're like wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam. They're wandering stars, verse 13, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. Verse 15 says that judgment is going to be executed on them because of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. They are grumblers finding fault, following after their own lusts, speaking arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of money. He never talks about their doctrine because you can tell them by these things. And that's what Jesus said, they're going to be...these false teachers are going to come like ravenous wolves, not sparing the flock. By their...what?...you shall know them. Not by their doctrine, well you can tell them by their doctrine, but they're too subtle for that. You're going to know them by their fruits. Jude's description of them has to do with life and conduct. It has to do with how they live. Bad doctrine, of course, is implied. It's just not described.

`To whom is Jude writing? We don't know. About whom is he writing? We don't know. But look at their lives, and this is what 2 Peter says in 2 Peter 2:10, "They indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires. They despise authority." Verse 12, "They're like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reveling in what they have no knowledge of." I mean, they're just corrupt. Verse 18, speaking arrogantly, words of vanity. They entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality. They're

slaves of corruption, verse 19. Whatever it is that can enslave a man enslaves them...sex, materialism, whatever. And so this is a very important epistle. It's important for you and it's important for me to engage in earnestly contending for the faith. And as we go through this epistle together, we're going to see an exposure of these defectors and we're going to hear a call to be a defender of the truth and we're going to engage ourselves in this war.

At least let's look at the first word of this epistle. "Jude." I remember years ago when I taught Romans, the first sermon in Romans, "Paul...let me stop there," and we did for a while. "Jude." In Hebrew that's Judah, in Greek it's Judas. Isn't it interesting that a book written on apostasy bears the same name as the all-time apostate? The writer's name is Judas, that very name is cursed. Do you know anybody named Judas? Personally I don't like the name Jude because it's a form of that. I should like it more because I should associate it with this guy. But the stigma that Judas has left with it is so strong. But this is Judas, Jude, Judah. And God in His wonderful grace, of course, has chosen a man who has the same name to write the epistle on apostasy illustrated by the greatest apostate of all time, Judas.

This is a very different man, he is a bondservant of Jesus Christ. I like that. He is a bondservant of Jesus Christ. You know what that means, he is a slave to the Lord. He is also a brother of James, brother of James. Just who is this man? Well there are several men named Jude or Judas or Judah in the New Testament, several of them. Two of them are apostles. There is Judas Iscariot and Judas not Iscariot, you remember? And there are others. In Acts 9:11 there was a Judas of Damascus. And then there is Judas Barsabas. According to Acts 15 Judas Barsabas was a leading man in the early church who with Silas carried the decision of the Jerusalem council to Antioch. So there is Judas of Damascus who helped Ananias find Saul after his conversion. Then there's Judas Barsabas who was involved in the Jerusalem council and giving the basic decision of the council of Antioch. Then you have Judas Iscariot, the apostate. Then you have Judas not Iscariot. You know, he had other names? If you read *Twelve Ordinary Men* his name was also Labbaeus and his name was also Thaddaeus. It's not any of those who are in view here, however. Here you see this Judas is the brother of James.

And who is James? James is the brother of our Lord. James is the Lord's half brother. That is to say, Joseph and Mary were mother and father of the half brothers, we call them that, of Jesus because Joseph was not the father of Jesus, so He was only a half brother being virgin born. But if you look at Matthew 13:55 it says there that Mary was the mother of Jesus and His brothers name were James and Joseph and Simon and Judas. James and Joseph and Simon and Judas...so we know this Judas who is the brother of James must then be the brother of the James who is the half brother of our Lord. Also in Mark chapter 6, I believe it's in the beginning of the chapter, yes in verse 3, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?"

And so he introduces himself in the first verse as the brother of James which makes him the brother of Jesus. Listen to Galatians 1:19, Paul says, "I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother." So here again this James is identified specifically in Galatians 1:19 as the Lord's brother. He's the head of the Jerusalem church. Now what is so fabulous about this, so wonderful about this is the fact that these brothers of Jesus didn't believe in Him, remember that? In John chapter 7 it says they didn't believe in Him, and, of course, we know later they believed in Him, after His resurrection, remember that? Two of them then were used by the Spirit of God to write New Testament books; James writing the book of James, Jude writing the book of Jude. And both of them critical to the revelation of God. James also became head of the Jerusalem Council, as we well know.

You say, "Well how do you know that this isn't Judas, one of the...well, it wouldn't be Judas Iscariot, but maybe Judas not Iscariot, how do you know that? Verse 17, he says, "But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." And when he says that, he distinguishes himself from the Apostles so he's not an Apostle, so he wouldn't be the Jude who is one of the Apostles, he is rather not an apostle and the brother of James who is not designated as an Apostle either, and therefore we conclude he is the brother of the James who is the half brother of the Lord Himself. And so again, the wonderful grace of God reaches down and the brothers of Jesus who didn't believe in Him come to faith and two of them are selected to write books in the New Testament. The death, resurrection, the ascension of Jesus produced a tremendous change with regard to the relationships that these men had.

Somebody might say, "Look, why doesn't he say, 'Jude, a brother of Jesus Christ.' Why does he say a bondservant?" Because Jesus Christ went from being whatever He was on a human level to being what He was on a divine level and that is the Lord and Master of these men. Remember Jesus said in Mark 3 when His brothers and His mother came to search for Him and the people said they are outside looking for you? He said, "No," He said, "you don't quite understand." He said, "It's not about human relationships," I think it's Mark 3:35 and I'll read you what it says, "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother." And even Mary at the birth of Jesus knew that this was her Savior. And so the relationships all changed and Jude views Jesus Christ not in some familial way but as his Lord and Master. From a human standpoint, he is the brother of James, but from a divine standpoint he doesn't say he's the brother or half brother of Jesus Christ, rather he's the bondservant of Christ. He who did not believe came to believe by the overwhelming testimony of the resurrection. And so the Lord chooses this remarkable man to write this account of apostasy.

Now sets the book up and our time is gone. Next time, next Sunday night, we're going to do verse 1 and 2. It's really important that you get the overview. And when you look at it, it all looks familiar but some of the most wonderful truth you will ever know is contained in verse 1 and 2, what we haven't

looked at. And it's critical to your dealing with the book. Let me tell you why. Do you notice in verse 1, those who are called beloved and kept? Those who are called beloved and kept. What do you think the emphasis of those words is? Well simply stated, we could sum that up in the word "security," couldn't we? We are protected. And what Jude does to begin this book is to tell us you can go into the war, you can go into the foray, you can go into the battle for truth because you never have to fear. That's how he starts the book. You are the called. You are the beloved and you are the kept. Get in the war and don't be afraid.

Do you want to see how he ends it? Verse 24, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, He will make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy." You know, any time anybody goes to war, there's always the fear that you might die, right? There's always the fear that you engage in war, you may be a casualty. So Jude begins and ends with the fact that you cannot be a casualty in this war, you are the called, you are the kept, and you are the beloved and the Lord has committed Himself to keep you from stumbling and make sure when the battle is over you'll be standing in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy. And we're to look at that next time, our secure position. We fight and we can't lose. We battle and we can't be a casualty to the conflict.

Lord, we thank You for this wonderful book and tonight has just kind of set it up, I hope, in our minds and whet our appetites for what yet awaits us as its glories unfold for us. You have armed us in every way, all that is left is for us to be faithful and diligent. And I thank You so much for these people in this church who love the truth, who line up to get another Bible to be exposed to more of it. Lord, You have indeed raised a great front, a great force here for the truth. Thank You for that. And may this wonderful epistle equip us to be more effective than ever we could be in engaging in this battle with the confidence that we have nothing to fear from the enemy. We are the called, the beloved, the kept and You will keep us from stumbling as we engage this enemy and bring us in the end into Your presence. May we be faithful to this battle and enjoy the triumph that You promise, in Christ's name. Amen.

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