

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

Compelled to Contend

Scripture: Jude 3

Code: 65-3

Well again we return now to the study of this little epistle of Jude. I've entitled this study, "The truth war, its defectors and defenders." It's about the truth war.

As we look at the epistle of Jude tonight, I want to take you in to verses 3 and 4. We read, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

This is one of the most interesting introductions to an epistle because Jude, the half brother of our Lord, tells us that he had one intention when he sat down to write and he actually wound up writing something other than he had intended. He wanted to write about our common salvation, but he felt the necessity to write about contending earnestly for the faith. I think he wanted to write an epistle that would celebrate the joys of salvation, but he received some information from somewhere. He received a report from someone. Or perhaps several reports, or perhaps he saw a trend and he realized that the very salvation which he wanted to celebrate, the very salvation which he wanted to write about was in danger of being severely compromised unless the church rose to the occasion of fighting for its survival. So what starts out perhaps as a friendly, encouraging, comforting letter, ends up as a call to arms, a war cry to believers to join the truth war, taking their side with the Lord. And behind the letter is a little bit of insight in verse 4, "Certain persons have crept in..." There has been in infiltration in the church of people who turn the grace of God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. We don't know the specifics of this. We don't know where or when, how the information came to Jude, but he became very alerted to it. And what we're talking about in this epistle is the grave danger of apostasy, the grave danger of apostasy which is knowing the truth to some degree and abandoning it, knowing the truth and rejecting it.

This is not new to Jude, although Jude is the only letter in the Scripture completely devoted to apostasy. Apostasy is familiar to any student of Scripture. In fact, there is a parable that Jesus gave, He gave it in Matthew 13, but you can look at the Luke 8 parallel to the parable and you'll find it familiar. It's a parable of the soils. You remember that? The sowing of the seed in the various soils? And verse 12 of Luke 8 says, "Those beside the road, or those who have heard, then the devil comes

and takes away the Word from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved. And those on the rocky soil are those who when they heard received the Word with joy and these have no firm root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And the Word fell among thorns and these are the ones who have heard and as they go on their way they're choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to maturity." And then He goes on to talk about the good soil, where the seed goes in and bears fruit.

Here are three different cases in which people hear the Word and turn away. This is essentially what apostasy is. It is hearing the truth, knowing what it is, and rejecting it. This is exactly what Jude is writing about. These people are the greatest danger to the church because they know something about the gospel. And they bring to bear against the church certain subtleties by their defection. An apostate is one who has received the truth of the gospel, maybe even one who believes it apparently or superficially for a time, but then turns away, falls away, goes away without ever bearing fruit. This would be like those people referred to in the sixth chapter of Hebrews. It says of them, verse 4, "In the case of those who have once been enlightened," that is they've come to understand or to know the facts, "they've tasted the heavenly gift, they have some taste of the great power of God manifest in Christ, they've even been made partakers of the Holy Spirit," that is to say the work of the Holy Spirit through Christ they have seen and many of them, of course, in the time that Christ was on earth had personal firsthand experience of that power. They tasted the good word of God. It's all about tasting, isn't it? It's not about eating. They tasted of the powers of the age to come, kingdom power was released through Jesus. All of His miracles were really previews of coming attraction, foretaste of what He would do in the Kingdom. So here were these people on earth who heard the message and understood it in their minds, who got a taste of the heavenly power of Christ, who experienced the wondrous working of the Spirit of God through Him, who tasted the good word of God that came out of His mouth, who saw the miracle powers that will characterize the age to come. And then verse 6 says, "Then have fallen away." It goes on to say it's impossible to renew them again to repentance since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. If having all that information they turn and go the other direction, it's impossible to be saved because they've rejected when they had full light.

Apostasy is to hear and understand, at least, and maybe to apparently believe but then to turn and defect. If you go back for a minute to Luke, there's just a little bit of a thought there that may expand your understanding of this helpfully. It talks about...verse 13...those on rocky soil are those who when they hear receive the Word with joy. They receive the Word with joy. But they have no firm root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. That is the verb form of the word apostasy, that is the verb form of the word apostasy. They receive and they fall away.

I want to show you a comparison. If you want to make a comparison, the good hearers are also said to receive, they are also said to embrace the truth of the gospel. And I think it's in Mark 4:20, I'm

tapping my memory, yes, these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil and they hear the Word and receive it. And here the Holy Spirit uses a different word. *Dechomai* is the word receive as used by Luke referring to those that fall away. This is *paradechomai*. The good soil does more than a superficial reception, *paradechomai* is an intensified word, a stronger term indicating a deep reception. There's a superficial reception, there's a *dechomai*. And then there's a *paradechomai*, a much deeper heart acceptance on the part of the good soil. Those who apostatize may hear the truth, understand the truth, but they never produce fruit because they never have any root. Jude says, if you drop down in Jude to verse 12, they are without fruit, doubly dead and uprooted. Jude is building on the language of this parable from Matthew, Mark and Luke. They are fruitless, dead, and ruthless.

Now when we talk about apostasy, we're not talking about confusing that with mere indifference to the Word or ignorance of the Word, or error. There are people who have never heard the truth. There are people who are ignorant of the truth, indifferent to the truth, have not even exposed themselves to it and there are people who have heard erroneous presentations that purport to be the truth that are not. We're not talking about that. When you talk specifically about an apostate, you're talking about someone who has received the light but not the life, the seed but not the fruit, the perhaps the written Word but not the living Word. It is a willful and deliberate rejection of the truth after the truth has been heard.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10 I think it's well said. When the judgment falls, it falls on those who reject the gospel of whom it is said, "They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." They received the truth, they didn't receive the love of the truth.

There's another illustration of this and it's in the eighth chapter of Acts. Turn, if you will, to it and we can pick up the story here in chapter 8. Quite a fascinating story about a man named Simon, Simon back in verse 9 is identified for us as a magician, astonishing the people of Samaria claiming to be someone great. He was a deceiver, obviously. But the people thought, according to verse 10, that he had the great power of God. Well in verse 12 Philip preached the good news about the Kingdom of God. Now you can be sure that this was a very, very faithful gospel sermon. This was a faithful presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He preaches the Kingdom of God, that is the sphere over which God rules those who are redeemed by faith in the name of Jesus Christ. People were being baptized, men and women alike. He was having an evangelistic impact there. And verse 13 says this, "And even Simon himself believed." And how strong that faith appeared to be is indicated that he was after being baptized. And not only that, he continued on with Philip. And not only that, he was observing signs and great miracles taking place and was constantly being amazed. This looked like as good as it gets. But a little later on in the story, verse 18, "When Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give this

authority to me as well so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." The Apostles showed up, they laid hands on people, they received the Holy Spirit, obviously there was some visible manifestation of the coming of the Holy Spirit, no doubt in my mind that they spoke in languages which paralleled the occasion of Pentecost because this was in Samaria and they needed to know they received the same Holy Spirit on the same terms that the Jews did, lest there be a division in the church. And Simon saw this wondrous miracle.

Now he believed and he was baptized and he continued and he observed the signs and he was constantly amazed. But Peter said to him in verse 20, "May your silver perish with you." Peter just told him he was going to perish. Peter told him he wasn't a believer. "May your money, your silver perish with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money. You have no part, or portion, in this matter for your heart is not right before God. You're not a Christian, you're not a believer." I've always preferred the direct method. This is it. "Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours and pray the Lord that if possible the intention of your heart may be forgiven you, for I see that you are in the gall of bitterness, in the bondage of iniquity. Simon answered and said, 'Pray to the Lord for me yourselves so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.'" Believed, baptized, never delivered from the bond of sin.

Well that day he became an apostate. He became the most dangerous person to the Christian faith and the gospel. The rest of his life he would say, "I've been there, done that, it's not true, it doesn't work." Such apostasy is not just limited to the New Testament. Israel in the Old Testament was warned over and over again not to defect, not to become apostate. The Greek word *apostasia* appears numbers of times in the Greek Old Testament which is called the Septuagint. In Numbers, for example, 14:9 God says, "Do not apostatize," this is forbidden. And you hear the same cry in Joshua chapter 22 verse 16, verse 19 and verse 22. And they're just...you don't read the word apostasy in the English, but let me just read you a couple of those verses, if I can get there. "Thus, says the whole congregation of the Lord, what is this unfaithful act which you have committed against the God of Israel? Here's the word...apostatizing or apostatizing away from following the Lord this day by building yourselves an altar to rebel against the Lord this day." And that's repeated essentially in verse 19, then again in verse 22.

Over in Jeremiah you find the same thing again. This is again not a new problem. Jeremiah chapter 2 and verse 19, "Your own wickedness will correct you and your apostasies will reprove you. Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God." You don't fear Me, He says, you don't dread Me. Chapter 5 verse 6, "Therefore a lion from the forest shall slay them, a wolf of the desert shall destroy them, a leopard is watching their cities. Everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces." This is God speaking metaphorically about Jerusalem's coming judgment. Why? "Because their transgressions are many and their apostasies are numerous." Knowing the truth and rejecting that truth.

In Hosea chapter 11:7, God says, "My people are bent on apostatizing, they are bent on turning from Me." And so this is something that's always gone on. People who knew the truth reject the truth. Even in the life of Jesus, if you'll look at John 6 verse 66, is a result of this. "Many of His disciples withdrew, were not walking with Him anymore." There was teaching that Jesus gave that drove them out and they literally apostatized, they vanished. They became apostate to the truth that they heard when they rejected it.

In the Olivet Discourse toward the end of our Lord's ministry, Matthew 24 records in verse 9, "Jesus said, 'Then they will deliver you to tribulation, they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations on account of My name and at that time many will fall away. Many will become apostate.'" Second Peter 2, just giving you a smattering of these, verse 20, it says, "For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first." If you know the truth, if you have come to the knowledge of the Lord and Savior in your mind and you go back and are entangled again in the defilements of the world, the last state is worse than the first, it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. They are like a dog returning to its own vomit or a sow after washing returning to wallow in the mire. The Bible does not have very commending language to bestow upon apostates.

And they are going to be everywhere. First Timothy chapter 4 tells us, the Spirit explicitly says that in the latter times some will fall away from the faith. There's the same term. They will defect. In the words of Paul to Timothy, "They will make shipwreck of the faith," back in chapter 1 verse 19. Or in the modern terminology, their...their faith will come to an end like a plane crash.

In 2 Timothy we find the same kind of thing. "The day is going to come," writes Paul to Timothy, "when they will not endure sound doctrine." Verse 4, "They will turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside to myths."

Now what's really serious, back to Jude, is that these people get inside Christianity and embed themselves unnoticed. They creep in unnoticed. And so we have to go to war in a civil war sense. That's hard to pull off nowadays, isn't it? Because the big deal now is let's love everybody, let's get along, let's not fight, let's be tolerant. We've got a war to fight and the war that we have to fight is right here inside...inside the church. We have demon-controlled preachers and demon doctrines and hypocritical liars and people who don't want the truth and they'll go to churches that don't preach it, not to ones that do. We have apostasy in the church. That's where it's dangerous. They've always infiltrated. They've always come in. That is the strategy. What does Paul say in Acts 20? This was

so definitive and determinative in my early ministry. The twentieth chapter of Acts, I basically lived in that chapter for years in the beginnings of my time here. And the Apostle Paul tells the people in Acts 20:28, "Be on guard for yourselves and all the flock." You've got to be on guard. Why? "Because after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock." And here's the danger. "From among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them and therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I didn't cease to admonish each one with tears."

How you going to deal with it? Well, he says, "I commend you to God and the Word of His grace which is able to build you up." The only way you're going to defend yourself against this is to know the Word so well that you can recognize the apostasy. Apostates go away from the truth, they don't necessarily go away from the church, right? They have a certain...many of them have a certain familiarity with the church and they can base their operation there and be very successful for the enemy and also make some money at the expense of people's ignorance. There always have been apostates and always be apostates, always those who defect from the truth. It's been everywhere. Do you know that the people in the generation of Noah heard the truth and rejected it? Walked away from it and drowned? It was apostasy from the truth that led to the Tower of Babel because the truth about the true and living God had been proclaimed. It was apostasy that made Israel fail to conquer the land under Joshua and ignore the warnings of Moses. It was apostasy that produced the immorality at the time of the Judges. It was apostasy that led Israel into Babylonian captivity. It was apostasy, the whole religion of Israel was apostate and that's why they didn't recognize the Messiah when He came.

Apostasy has plagued the church not only in individual situations, but in massive ways. Roman Catholicism is an apostate form of Christianity. Liberalism is an apostate form of Christianity. Neo-orthodoxy is an apostate form of Christianity. And every cult and ism and chism that's come along in the name of Christianity that deviates from the true gospel is an apostate form. Every preacher who doesn't preach the truth is an apostate preacher. Mysticism is an apostate attack on the church. Any denial of the singularity in authority that belongs only to the Scripture leads the church into a drift toward apostasy. That's why all those false religions always have "other" authorities, whether it's the Magisterium in the Catholic Church, or the Pope, or whether it's Mary Baker Eddy Patterson Glover Frye or Annie Besant or Judge Rutherford or Joseph Smith or you name it, there's always the Scripture and some other authority. But they hang around and stay within the framework. They creep in and they embed themselves. And the attack on the truth comes from the inside and so here we are facing this, having to deal with it from the inside and it doesn't make us very popular. I'll tell you it doesn't. And the way it's going today, it's really hard to take a stand against the outright apostasy that's easy to see and the drift toward apostasy that is coming so fast because of a lack of discernment and an unwillingness to be discerning.

Well all that's introductory. And, you know, Jude is like a good journalist. He's a good journalist. He would make a great newspaper writer because if you've ever taken courses on journalism and learned how to write newspaper articles or if you just are a little bit observant when you read the newspaper, you know that the first paragraph and maybe the second paragraph summarize everything and then paragraph 2, or 3, or 4 you start getting back into the details, you go back through everything and it gets expanded. Well that's what Jude does. Verses 3 and 4 lay out the whole story and then verse 5 to the end goes back right through and opens it all up. We meet the people in verses 3 and 4. We have an expanded perspective in the rest of the book. We see the danger for which we must fight in verse 3. And that's expanded greatly for us in the rest of the book, first the summary, then the details.

Well let's look at the summary. "Beloved," I like that. I always get stuck on that word. And I want to say this because this gives me a good opportunity to say it. So many times if you take a stand on something, if you draw the line where the Bible draws the line and if you do not compromise and you stand for the truth, live for the truth, proclaim the truth, don't waver, people call you unloving. Is that not true? I mean, that is so typical...so typical. This is the common designation for the preacher who is true to the faith. He's not loving. It's the common designation for somebody who's exposing the apostasy and exposing the apostates. But do you understand that what Jude is doing here is not because he doesn't love, it's because he does? It's because he cares so much. He started to write a letter about common salvation, but he loved his people too much to leave them exposed to what he saw as a great threat. "Beloved," he says. And then in verse 17, "But, beloved," and then in verse 20, "But you, beloved." This is not some kind of sentimentalism. This is not kind of...some kind of a shallow emotion. This is not some kind of tolerance. This is the real purposeful, powerful, loving concern of a man of God for the people of God to be protected from what could destroy them and their effectiveness and their ministry. It's not love born of sentiment that God's after, it's love born of conviction regarding the truth and you have to keep making that distinction all the time.

You love someone when you tell them the truth. And Jude was prepared to go all the way to the truth even if it was painful. And so he says, "While I was making every effort to write to you," what does that mean? That's an interesting statement. "While I was making every effort to write to you..." You say, "Well, wasn't he inspired by God?" Well, you know, it's kind of interesting to think about. You can imagine him taking out his little writing instrument, "Nah..." throw that one out. I'm trying to get this going, it's not going, it's not working. Well he wasn't writing what the Holy Spirit wanted him to write. He says, the actual language in the Greek is to hasten, make speed. That is to say, "I was in a hurry to write about our common salvation, I wanted to celebrate the union that we share in our salvation. I wanted to write about that. I just couldn't...I couldn't get it done." So he says, "I was just making every effort to do it and I couldn't...it just never would come together." Now whether that

means he was trying to get the time to do it, or when he got the time to do it he just couldn't figure out how to lay it out, it was all being restrained, of course, by the Holy Spirit. I love that little phrase, "Our common salvation, nobody has more salvation than anybody else, we share all the same and I wanted to write about it, I just couldn't get it out. As joyous as I am about our common salvation, as much as I love to talk about it and to write about it and to clarify it and to review it and to put it back in your remembrance, I couldn't do it."

And then, whether or not, a messenger came, or people came, or the Spirit of God just opened his mind, all of a sudden he realized, "I have to write something else." And he says, "I felt the necessity to write you." All of a sudden he tried and he tired and he couldn't pull it off and then he was just compelled. "I felt the necessity," that is a strong word. Paul used the same expression in 1 Corinthians 9:16, "Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." We think about Paul in that text and we think of him under some heavy weight and mandate and burden to preach this message. That's how Jude felt. "No wonder I couldn't get it started when I wanted to write about our common salvation and I was all of a sudden overwhelmed by the Spirit of God and I knew exactly what I needed to do, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." That sentence is a mouthful...mouthful.

To feel the necessity, actually the root of that verb is compress. I felt divine pressure to write this. This is not whimsical, this is critical. This is not a human document, this is hard pressure from God-the Spirit. So we could say that certainly what Peter said is true of Jude, no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God, 2 Peter 1:21. Jude takes his place with those who are being referred to there who wrote the Old Testament. And Jude is a shepherd and he feels this pressure from the Spirit of God but he also feels it in his own heart because shepherds are by nature protectors. They have to be or they won't survive as shepherds. They are fearful, in a healthy sense. Listen to Ezekiel 3:17, well 3:16, "Now it came about at the end of seven days, the Word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Son of man...Ezekiel's called son of man...I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.' You're My watchman. Verse 18, "When I say to the wicked you shall surely die and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he should live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity but his blood I'll require at your hand. Yet if you have warned the wicked and he doesn't turn from his wickedness or turn from his wicked ways, shall die in his iniquity, but you've delivered yourself." Wow! God says to Ezekiel, "You're My watchman and when I tell you to warn, you warn." No wonder Paul said he ceased not to warn with tears night and day. No wonder Paul said to the Colossians, "I strive, laboring...I labor, rather, striving according to His power which mightily works within me." What I do is impelled and compelled by the power of God.

So, Jude says I was just pressed as a faithful watchman, protecting God's church to write and to write to you appealing. That's really exhorting, counseling, calling alongside to help, coming alongside you that you contend earnestly for the faith. That is a powerful expression. At least I can get through that, that you contend earnestly for the faith. Contend earnestly, *epagonizo...epagonizo*. The root is *agonizo* from which we get agonize. *Ep*, again any time you see a preposition added to the front of a Greek verb it is intended to intensify it. This is to fight for, to fight strenuously for, to defend vigorously. I am calling on you to an extreme form of agony. It's a present infinitive which means it's continuous action. I am calling on you, I am appealing to you to an ongoing battle, continuous conflict. It's an all-time continuous problem, apostasy. The word again, *agonizomai*, *agonis* a very interesting word. The word actually mean, *agon* means a bowl, a stadium, they were built like a bowl. And it was in a bowl, a stadium that you came for a battle, struggle, gladiators, fights. It's a term that Paul uses when he talks about fight the good fight of faith, agonize. It's like playing in the ultimate Superbowl and it's an all-time struggle. It is a mighty battle, a fight to the death with the forces of apostasy. Paul is calling us to the same thing. Over and over again we hear these calls from the Apostle Paul, to Timothy, "Fight the good fight," to the Corinthians, you know, he says, "I don't shadowbox, I hit my opponent." To the Ephesians he writes about putting on your armor and going into battle. And the defense of the faith has to occur within the church, within the framework of Christianity. In fact, that is where the battle is, I think, most agonizing sometimes because you have to deal with not only the error that's there, but the resistance on the part of the people who are swept up by the error or unconcerned about it, or not discerning enough to know that it is error.

What is it that we're actually fighting for here? Look at it, we're fighting for "the faith...THE faith," not for faith in some nebulous way, THE faith, objective...THE faith, the Christian faith, the gospel faith, the content. If you go down to verse 17 you get a little bit of a better understanding, "You ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." The faith is constituted in the Apostles' doctrine, the objective faith. As Acts 2:42 says, "They continued in the Apostles' doctrine." This is where the battle must be fought, for the protection of the faith. "O Timothy," 1 Timothy 6:20, "Guard what has been entrusted to you." And what had been entrusted to him? Back one verse, "The treasure...the treasure." What treasure? The treasure of the truth. Over in 2 Timothy 1:14...1:13, "Retain the standard of sound teaching, sound words." Verse 14, "Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us the treasure which has been entrusted to you."

If you are a pastor, even a Christian, you have a guardianship. We are not only proclaimers of the truth, we are protectors of the truth. We protect the truth. And I...you know this because it's on my heart all the time and we've just gone through three epistles of John, I'm driven by the truth, not only

by the proclamation of the truth, but the protection of the truth or there won't be anything to proclaim. And sentimentality doesn't come into play. Conviction is all that comes into play. We love within the truth, John says that again and again, doesn't he? Whom..."Gaius whom I love in the truth." And Christian love must be confined to those in the truth. And so we fight for the faith, the true faith. "If anybody preaches another gospel," Paul tells the Galatians, "let him be accursed." John says, "If anybody comes to your door and wants to come into your house and have you show them hospitality and they have a wrong doctrine concerning Christ and extending that and the gospel, don't let them in your house, don't even bid him God speed or you become a partaker in his evil deed." This is that dangerous. We have to battle agonizingly all our lives for the preservation of the faith. And then he defines that faith in very succinct and very important terms, the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. Do you know what that says? It says the faith in fact was once given to the saints, once for all, *hapax*; delivered, *paradidomi*; entrusted. And this word, *hapax*, once for all, refers to something done for all time with lasting results, never needing repetition. The faith, dear friends, the Christian faith, the gospel truth in its entirety, in its completeness was in the past one time entrusted to the saints. There's no new faith and this is why there's no new revelation. The Christian faith was deposited through the Apostles and those who worked with them in the first century. The Canon was closed with John's writings at the end of that century. And the faith was then given once for all time and all people to the saints. That's why Revelation 22 says, "If you add anything to this, shall be added to you the plagues that are written in it." Revelation does not continue and God is not adding to the faith.

Listen to this, people didn't discover the faith, it was delivered to them. Nobody mystically discovered the meaning of Jesus. Nobody mystically discovered the meaning of salvation. Nobody mystically discovered how to get to God. Paul and the others who wrote the New Testament didn't have some transcendental religious insight by which they ascended intuitively into the upper echelons of religious thinking and somehow touched the garment of God and drew down some deep understandings. I sound like Depoc Chopar talking. Nobody went anywhere to get this, it was delivered...it was delivered. It was entrusted by God in fact the faith. To add to the Old Testament, the faith; the New Testament, Matthew through Revelation...the body of teaching complete, the only acceptable revelation. There are no new doctrines, there is no new revelation. This rules out all seers and all those who claim new revelation. This rules out hanging around waiting to hear the voice of God. This rules out every cult, every ism, every false system that claims any other revelation than the Bible, any other divine authority than the Bible. This is so wonderful. All that God wanted to say and all that He did say He put in one book. That keeps it simple, doesn't it? This book is all we need. Scripture is all we need. You don't need to be running around checking out every new revelation and you don't need to be listening as if God was going to tell you some secret that He hadn't revealed to anybody else. You're talking here about the once-for-all...literally the Greek....the once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints faith. Faith comes last in the Greek order. What faith? The once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints faith. You get the message? This isn't a trickle. We're not still getting it. It was once-for-all-delivered. And Jude realizes this is under assault, this is under attack by people who

have come in and they have found an opening. They're unnoticed, they're below the radar, under the surface. They're like reefs under the water, he says later, hidden in the love feasts. They get intimate in the church. Many of them become pastors, theologians, teachers and they bring in their lies and we have to fight them inside the church.

And I would say this, too, that we can never do that effectively, never do that effectively and come across to the world as a nice kind of compassionate, easy-going group of folks who is just having a lot of fun. This is a war here. And when a non-believer comes in, I trust that they'll see the love of Christ in the transformation that's occurred in our lives, but they also are going to realize that we're in a battle for the truth. People will say to me, "You know, I brought my old aunt and she's a Mormon and you happened to say something about Mormonism that night and she'll never come back." All I can tell you is, bring her again and she might hear something about Mormonism another time because we have to do what we have to do in the battle. People have to be warned and we will do that because it's critical.

So, because of the danger of apostasy, Jude says, "I have to write...I have to write." Well, the opening description of the apostates in verse 4 is too extensive for me to get into it. So you're going to have to hold on for a few weeks on this one. But next time, I'm going to introduce you to the apostates and you're going to be able to look at some criteria about how to recognize them.

I'll tell you this, folks. I...I'm thankful for many things in my life and ministry, but nothing more than being surrounded by elders, pastors, people like you who have the same love and passion for the truth. And I know you do because you're here and you're here and you're here and you're here week after week and month after month and year after year. And what encourages me is this church is getting younger and what that tells me is so wonderful because now we've brought into the army of contenders and defenders those that are going to be the leaders of the next generation. And they're not only going to be able to proclaim the truth, they're going to know how to protect it because they're going to be raised in a discerning environment. That is so encouraging.

Well, let me close in a word of prayer and the Rob is going to come for a brief time. You can't go anywhere. Rob is going to come and have a little annual meeting and then the right hand of fellowship.

Father, thank You again tonight for Your precious Word. I admit we get bogged down but what can we do, it's so rich, it's so rich and so much floods my heart and mind in contemplation of these matters. Just take it and use it and use us for Your glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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