**CONTEND FOR THE FAITH: AN EXPOSITION OF JUDE**

A brief outline:

Person of the letter (Authority, Audience, Affection) vs 1, 2

Purpose of the letter – Contend for the Faith vs 3, 4

Prophesy of the letter – Judgment is coming on Apostates vs 5 - 19

Prescription of the letter – (Walk, Witness, Worship) vs 20 -25

After the gospels is the writing of the Acts of the Apostles. Jude is about the Acts of the Apostates. Jude saw the destructive nature of those who professed Christ but did not possess Christ nor were possessed by Christ. Jude called upon believers to “contend for the faith”. This is the key verse of the book. I have divided our study into three sections: What we are to contend for, (**vs. 1-3**), who we are to contend against, (**vs. 4-19**), and how we are to contend for the faith, (**vs. 20-25**).

**Person of the letter** **vs 1, 2**

*Authority* - Jude was the half-brother of James. James, one of the twelve disciples, was the pastor of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 12:2). The other James was the half-brother of Jesus, Galatians 1:19. Mark 6:3 gives us the names of four of Jesus’ half-brothers. Jude called himself a “doulos”, a slave to Jesus. Jude was the author.

*Audience* - He is evidently addressing believers in Christ. Jude reassures the saved of their security. The recipient of this letter was possibly one church Jude had in mind, but it could have been to many churches. The admonitions found in this letter are for all believers.

*Affection* - He starts his letter with a common but joyful salutation. He expresses a prayer of blessing for the recipients of his letter. The greeting included a spiritual blessing in **verse 2**.

**Purpose of the letter** **vs 3**

Now Jude begins to explain the purpose of the letter. He wanted to write about the common salvation. Jude said he “found it necessary” to change his topic. He was “compressed” or “pressured by the Holy Spirit. The word “appealing” (CSB) or “exhort” (NKJV) is the verb form of the noun “Paraclete” which is used as a name for the Holy Spirit. He is the one who “comes along side to help.”

Jude calls for believers to “contend” for the faith. This paints a picture of an intense effort or struggle much like a military action or athletic contest from the word that means “agony”. Some translations add the word “earnestly” to stress the added seriousness of the struggle.

The first question is, “**What are we to contend for?**” “The Faith” is the extensive body of Bible doctrine which makes up the perfect system of truth revealed by God. It is the body of objective truth, not the subjective experience of believing. **2 Corinthians 13:5**, **1 Timothy 3:9**, **4:1**, **5:8**, **Acts 16:5** and many other scriptures refer to the body of doctrine.

What are some of the doctrines of the faith?

1. Biblical Inerrancy – **Psalm 19:7**, **2 Timothy 3:16**, and **2 Peter 3:16**

2. God’s Person - Eternal (**Exodus 3:14**); Omnipotent (**Genesis 18:14**); Omnipresent (**Psalm 139**); Omniscient (**Isaiah 46:9, 10; Acts 15:18**); Holy (**1 Peter 1:16**); Love (**1 John 4:8**). All three Persons have all of the qualities.

3. Exclusivity of Salvation in Jesus Christ: **Acts 4:12; John 14:6**.

4. Salvation by grace through faith: **Ephesians 2:8, 9**

These are just some of the Cardinal Doctrines of the Christian Faith. These are primary doctrines that make us true followers of Jesus. There are secondary doctrines that are important such as baptism, the Lord’s Supper and the nature and order of the church. Tertiary or third level doctrines are less important yet affect aspects of a believer’s life.

Jude intended to write about the gospel. He changed to call believers to contend for the Faith against false teachers. The “Faith” is a system of doctrine & truth capsuled in God’s Word. There are times when we must defend the truth. We must do it kindly but without wavering.

**Who are we to contend against?**

**False Prophets and Prophesy in the letter** **vs 4 - 19**

Verses 5-19 is one paragraph in the Greek text. Second Peter Chapter 2 and Jude have much in common in addressing false teachers.

Jude used Old Testament accounts, extra-biblical examples and descriptions of ungodliness to illustrate false teachers. False teachers were subverting God’s Word, especially the gospel. Errant belief produces evil behavior. Jude said these unrepentant false teachers would eventually face judgment.

**5-11 *Examples from the past*: Israel, Angels, Sodom, Michael, Cain, Balaam, & Korah. Their characteristic actions are to (8) defile, defy, denigrate.**

Vs 5-7 - Old Testament Examples

Israel lost a generation in the wilderness due to unbelief. They did not enter into God’s promise. This could be a warning to Christians about a sin unto death, **1 John 5:16**. This could be an example of loss (death) for Christians who commit unbelief.

Angels who rebelled fell never to be reclaimed. They lost their position because they wanted a higher position. There is no redemption for the angels. Jesus came to save humankind not angels. The rebellious angels were expelled from the presence of God. The angels mentioned in this text are consigned to “Tartarus” another compartment of the underworld, (**2 Peter 2:4**).

The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Luke 17:28-30**) were an example of sexual immorality and perversions that were symptomatic of godlessness.

Vs 8-10 - Characteristics of Apostates

They defile [to dye or stain] or pollute the body by fantasizing or committing sexual sins. They defy authority like the Fallen Angels did. They denigrate the glorious ones. This is probably reference to the Trinity.

V 11 - Three Apostates

Cain took the wrong approach to God. Balaam had the wrong affection wanting monetary reward. Korah had the wrong attitude toward God’s Word.

**12, 13 *Nature’s pictures of deception***

A hidden reef could sink a ship. Other translations use the word “Spot” in this verse. The false teachers were stains on the observance of the Lord’s Supper.

These false teachers were only concerned about self-gratification.

Clouds promising to provide life-giving rain produced nothing. It is typical of false teachers to have persuasive words without the truth.

They were trees without fruit because they were dead within. False teachers may draw huge crowds but ultimately it will be seen there is no spiritual fruit.

Wild waves foam depositing dirt on the beach. They leave undesirable results.

Shooting stars are a flash in the sky. False teachers have no staying power.

**14, 15 *Enoch’s prediction:***

Jude used the past tense in the prophesy “came” to announce the Lord Jesus’ return. Jesus is coming! Justice is coming! Judgment is coming!

“Ungodly” appears four times in **verse 15**. Different Greek words are used. One word that is used describes a disdain for the person of God. Another word used exemplifies a disregard for the standards of God.

16-19 *Apostates’ Practices*: lips, lives (16), lostness (19)

V. 16 Apostates can be identified by the marking found in this verse: They complain about everything that should be praise worthy. A unique Greek word found nowhere else in the New Testament is used to describe the false teachers as grumblers. It means they are “fault finders”. “Living according to their desires” is a self-centered life. False teachers use words that are even on the surface outrageous. Yet people believe them. Flattery is false praise.

Vs. 17, 18 Believers must rely on the Word of God to determine truth from error. Be on guard! Scoffers treat with contempt the things of God.

V. 19 The Apostates never had the indwelling Spirit of God, Acts 8:21. Apostates cause division. The sad end of the false teacher is an eternity away for God.

**How are we to contend for the faith?**

**Practicality of the letter** **vs 20 -25**

The letter ends with encouragement for believers capped with a doxology of praise. Jude turns to the practical application of living the truth.

***Walk* vs 20, 21 – build, pray, keep and expect**

Just before concluding the letter, Jude used 4 participles to encourage believers to live out their faith. Jude’s participles challenge us to action. People want to see that we are followers of Jesus. There are 4 actions in which we engage to contend for the faith. The 1st action is…

Building - This is a construction analogy. Any building must have a solid foundation. “The Faith” is a system of doctrines and truth. All of our faith is based on the Bible.

A “holy” faith is different from other beliefs. It is objective & experiential, **2 Timothy 2:15**, **3:15**.

Praying – Praying in the Holy Spirit is not a reference to speaking in tongues. Of the six words used in the New Testament for prayer this is the most common. It means regular communion with God. We place ourselves under the Spirit’s leadership in prayer. God’s Spirit will always direct us in accordance with His Word. This is different from the religious exercises of the false teachers. They try to manipulate God.

Keeping - Keeping in the love of God means we are where God can best bless us. Being in God’s love is more about His love for us than our love for Him. It is about being in God’s will. In **Luke 15** the father never stopped loving the prodigal son even when the son was outside of the father’s protection and provisions. The son was still loved.

Looking - [PROSDECHOMAI = to expect, look for. Translated “wait” in the CSB] this is not passively gazing into the sky. There should be an expectant longing for Jesus’ return.

***Witness* vs 22, 23 – compassion, confrontation, careful**

Winning others to Christ includes: Having compassion on those who doubt, taking extraordinary action to pull some away from spiritual destruction, and correcting them all the while being careful not to be drawn away ourselves, Titus 3:10.

***Worship* vs 24, 25 – security, sanctification, satisfaction, salvation, the Sovereign One**

As the letter from Jude began, so it ends. We have words of assurance for God’s people living in dark days. He provides…

SECURITY – God is able to “protect you from stumbling” (final apostasy) Psalm 23:3, He restores us, making us usable for His glory. We may fall but we can never be lost again.

SANCTIFICATION – “Make you stand…without blemish” before God is possible because of Jesus’ righteousness. We are without fault in Christ. God will complete His saving work on that last day. We go from the possibility of stumbling to being perfected in His presence.

SATISFACTION – What greater joy than to stand in God’s presence? John 15:11, true joy only comes from knowing Christ.

SALVATION – God our Savior

“Through Jesus Christ our Lord” is affirmation that Jesus makes salvation possible. There is no question the “God” spoken of is Jesus.

SOVEREIGNTY – Who alone is wise

There is no one like our God, **1 Chronicles 29:11**. The description contained in the crescendo of praise by David goes beyond our ability to comprehend. Many of God’s attributes are described.

Glory is the divine radiance of the One worthy of worship.

Majesty is God’s omniscience

Power shows His omnipotence.

Authority is His sovereignty

“Now and forever” points toward God’s eternality

“Amen” is the benediction of affirmation and praise.