

01. The Book of Jude—1:1a

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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From its inception, the Christian Church has been likened to an army with Jesus as its commanding Officer. We see this confirmed in the pages of the New Testament—

2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NKJV)

³You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

We see it commemorated in the old hymns—

*Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before!
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; Forward into battle, see his banner go!
Like a mighty army moves the church of God; Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod; We are not divided, all one body we, One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.*

From the very beginning of the Church's existence, it has always been understood that Christians were soldiers fighting in a battle.

We battle the world, we battle the flesh, we battle the devil, we battle sin, heresy, pride, materialism and every high thing ('lofty ideology') that exalts itself against the true knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:5).

In the New Testament, we're not only called soldiers—we're also called, wrestlers, contenders, and fighters. We are commanded to fight the "*good fight of faith*" (1 Timothy 6:12)—every single day of our Christian life (the Greek is commanding us to—"keep on continually, constantly fighting the good fight of faith."

The word for "fight" is *agonizomi* from which we get our English words agonize and agony implying this battle won't be 'fun' or enjoyable.

The New Testament uses military language in describing the fight we're in—

- It tells us that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)
- It commands us to put on the whole armor of God that we might stand in the day of battle. (Ephesians 6:11)

And yet many Christians don't live their faith as if they're in a battle—primarily because, the modern Church has been taught to look at their Christianity as a 'playground' instead of a battleground. Because of it many Christian soldiers are AWOL!

When we studied Ephesians 6, we said that, when we gave our lives to Jesus we entered into a war—a war that, although invisible, is still very much real.

We are at war with an extremely powerful, super intelligent, hyper-malevolent spirit-being known as the Devil who commands a very powerful army of demonic warriors. The Devil and his army are determined to destroy

people in hell by keeping them prisoners—and we are the army of God commanded to go into all the world with the gospel which alone can set them free.

Because of it, the enemy has placed a ‘bullseye’ on your back—in other words, he’s going to target your walk, your ministry, your marriage, your kids, your health—so as to defeat you and neutralize your effectiveness for God.

Again, we are in a war—and the Devil isn’t playing games! He will do whatever he can to accomplish his mission.

I think that Christians often take the enemy and the war too lightly. Many assume that victory is guaranteed simply because they *are* Christians and the devil is a defeated foe. It is true that ***Jesus defeated the devil and his demons on Calvary’s cross***—but the Lord didn’t mean to imply that that victory will be ours *automatically* without any effort or commitment on our part.

While it’s true that the Lord has supplied us with the finest armor and weaponry to use in our fight with the devil (Ephesians 6), without the heart and attitude of a soldier—they are useless! Now, when we talk about the war we’re fighting against the devil—it is important that we understand that, first and foremost, it is a battle for truth against Satan’s lies!

Satan’s lies take many different forms, rooted in many different belief systems and ideologies—but they all have the same effect—to imprison those who embrace them and turn them into captives of the devil.

If a person isn’t set free from the lies of the devil and dies in bondage to him—the result will be their eternal destruction in hell. The only thing powerful enough to set people free from the lies (prison) of the devil is the truth of God—as Jesus stated and the apostles (like Paul) affirmed:

John 8:32 (NKJV)

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

2 Timothy 2:24-26 (NKJV)

²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ For the weapons [the Word of God and prayer] of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

As we come to Jude’s epistle—understand that he is admonishing us, as the people of God, to fight against Satan’s lies—as faithful soldiers of Christ.

But instead of focusing his epistle on the attacks against “the faith” by the world from *outside* the Church—Jude focuses on the fight against God’s truth from *within* the Christian Church by those who are considered ‘apostates’.

What is an Apostate?

Biblically speaking, an apostate is someone who claimed to be a Christian at one time, who continued in the faith for a while (often weeks or months—sometimes years) but then renounced the Christian faith and walked away from Christianity. (Joshua Harris)

1 John 2:19 (NKJV)

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

Hebrews 10:37-39 (NKJV)

³⁷ "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. ³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back [an apostate], My soul has no pleasure in him." ³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

John 8:31 (NKJV)

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed [truly].

Don't misunderstand, abiding doesn't make you a true disciple of Christ—it just proves that you are one! Those that don't 'abide' (remain, continue in the faith) are what the Bible calls apostates.

One author said—

"It bears repeating that an apostate is not a true believer who has abandoned his salvation. He is a person who has professed to accept the truth and trust the Savior, and then turns from "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Jude would not contradict what Peter wrote, and Peter made it clear that the apostates were not God's sheep but were instead pigs and dogs (2 Peter 2:20-22)"

2 Peter 2:20-22 (NKJV)

²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

The reason a dog eats its own vomit and a pig, even though it's been washed and cleaned up, returns to wallow in the mud hole is because—it's the nature of dogs and pigs to act this way.

The reason people who come to church for a while and stop doing some of the sinful things they use to do eventually return to the filth of the world is because—that's their nature!

These people experienced some *reformation*, but it stopped short of genuine *regeneration* (salvation) which would have given them **a new nature with new desires**. When we accepted Jesus into our hearts we received a new nature ('the divine nature'-2 Peter 1:4) and as such—"old things passed away and all things became new". (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The evidence of this began immediately in that the things we used to love to do (sin) we no longer desired to do; and the things we didn't want to do (church, Bible study, prayer, worship) now we love to do! This is one of the most powerful evidences whereby we know that Jesus has moved in—a changed life!

Now even though these apostates walk away from the faith—they don't always walk away from the church but often remain as false teachers and shepherds. Please understand that an apostate is a false teacher—but a false teacher is not necessarily an apostate.

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 author and pastor rightly pointed out—

“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...”

One of the ways the Book of Jude can be outlined is:

Opening Salutation—verses 1-2

I. A Call to Action Against Apostasy—verses 3-19

II. A Command to Christians to Live Faithfully—verses 20-23

Closing Benediction—verses 24-25

Opening Salutation—verses 1-2

Jude 1:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James...

Jude (Judas) who wrote this epistle and James (who wrote the epistle of James) were brothers— and the half-brothers of Jesus. We read in Mark 6:3 that after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph went on to have at least 6 children (James, Joses, Judas, Simon—and “sisters”).

The New Testament records that during Jesus' earthly ministry his brothers and sisters didn't believe His claim that He was Messiah, and the Son of God (John 7:5).

But after Jesus rose from the dead, James was converted (see 1 Corinthians 15:7), and we have reason to believe that Jude was also saved at that time (and maybe all of Jesus' half-brothers and sisters as well).

In Acts 1:14 we read that "His brethren" were part of the praying group that was waiting for the Holy Spirit to be sent upon them—

Acts 1:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

James and Jude went on to write the epistles that bear their names—and James even became the leader of the church in Jerusalem, who presided over the Jerusalem Council as recorded in Acts 15.

From 1 Corinthians 9:5, we learn that the brothers of the Lord were well known in the early church. Yet, even though James and Jude never call themselves the 'brothers of Jesus', but simply refer to themselves as *"bondservants of Jesus Christ."*

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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