

03. The Book of Jude—1:3-4

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(2/26/20)

Find the Study Audio & Video [Here](#)

As we said last time, the book of Jude falls into 2 main sections—

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

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

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

A. Christians—Contend Earnestly For The Faith—verses 3-4

Jude 1:3 (NKJV)

³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

When Jude said that he had intended to write concerning **“our common salvation”**—I believe what he had in mind was the truths that all Christians commonly embrace (non-controversial truths) about Christ and salvation, about God’s love for His people and the grace that allowed us to be adopted into the family of God.

These are the truths that I would rather talk about—truths that bind all Christians together in sweet fellowship.

However, even though that was what Jude *wanted* to write to these believers about, that was what he *intended* to write to them about—he was instead compelled by the Holy Spirit to deal with a ‘spiritual cancer’ that had infiltrated into the local churches—a cancer called *apostasy*.

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.

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. (Explain)

Warren Wiersbe—

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

“I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (verse 3)

The Greek word translated **‘contend’** is a word we get our English words *‘agony’* and *‘agonize’* from.

The Greek form of this word that Jude uses is very strong, hence—“**earnestly contend**” or “*agonize greatly*” (the Greek is ‘*continually*’).

➤ What are Christians to earnestly contend or agonize for?—**the faith!**

When Jude uses the definite article in front of the word *faith*—he is using faith as a noun (something that is) and not as a verb (something we do—as in ‘exercising faith’).

‘**The Faith**’ is the body of God’s truth that we call New Testament doctrine.

One pastor explained how we, as believers in Christ, contend for the faith—

*“We contend for the faith in a **positive** sense when we give an unflinching witness, distribute tracts, make possible the training of faithful ambassadors for Jesus, or when we strengthen the hands of faithful pastors who honor the Word of God in their pulpits. These are a few among many ways that we can contend earnestly for the faith in a **positive** sense.*

*We contend for the faith in a **negative** way when we withhold support and encouragement from false teachers. (And also speak out against them)*

*We contend for the faith in a **practical** sense when we live uncompromising Christian lives and give credit to the Lord who changed us.*

Obviously, faithful missionaries and evangelists contend earnestly for the faith. But so does the Sunday School teacher or the home group leader, who is faithful to the Scriptures. People like this contend for the faith just as much as a front-line missionary does, and each one of us should contend for the gospel wherever God puts us.”

So again, ‘**The Faith**’ is the body of God’s truth that we call New Testament doctrine—rooted in the gospel but encompassing the entire body of New Testament truth the church in general and we in particular have built our faith (and by extension our eternity) upon.

Ephesians 2:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ [the Church] having been built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner *stone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Now we need to be careful not to misinterpret what Paul is saying here—he isn’t saying that the Apostles and prophets *themselves* were the *actual* foundation of the church.

That would contradict other passages that clearly teach that Jesus Himself is the foundation upon which the Church has been built—

1 Corinthians 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock [the declaration of Jesus’ divinity] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

So, then what did Paul mean when he said that the Church was built upon the “*foundation of the Apostles and prophets*”?

It means that the Apostles and New Testament prophets were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit and given God's revelation for the New Testament period—the doctrine that the Church is built upon.

Acts 2:42 (NKJV)

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine...

The word 'doctrine' simply means *teaching*; this teaching is called the "*Apostle's doctrine*" because it was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit which means it's God's doctrine—His Word given to the Apostles who then taught it to the Church.

The Apostles moved around in an itinerant ministry preaching the gospel, planting churches and teaching the saints the doctrine they received from God. The prophets, unlike the Apostles, remained in one place ministering to their local congregations.

They also received some direct revelation from God—but most of what they did was to explain and apply the doctrine the Apostles had received from the Holy Spirit and passed on to the churches (they acted like pastors in the local churches until pastors could be raised up).

This doctrine was eventually written down and became the New Testament Scriptures.

In Paul's analogy of the Church being the Temple of God built on the revelation that God gave to the Apostles and prophets—he quickly adds that Jesus Himself is the Chief Cornerstone. The cornerstone was the major structural part of ancient buildings (not the 'capstone' on a pyramid).

It had to be strong enough to support what was built on it, and it had to be precisely laid because every other part of the structure was lined up with it. If the cornerstone was weak or defective the entire structure would be in danger of collapsing—and if it was crooked every other part of the building would be off kilter and out of alignment.

We know that Jesus is strong enough for the Church to be built upon—He is God!

We even sing, *"On Christ the solid Rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand."*

Furthermore, we never need to worry about Jesus Christ, as the Chief Cornerstone, being off—as God incarnate, He is always faithful and true. As long as the Church is built on Jesus (not on some 'celebrity pastor') and correctly aligned with His Word—it will always be what God intended it to be—glorious and victorious!

Satan knows this only too well and he knows the quickest way to destroy the local church is to destroy the foundation upon which it is built. (Psalm 11:3)

Which means the devil's main attack will be on the truth of God's Word—the doctrinal foundation that our faith and His Church have been built upon.

God's Word has been under attack from the very beginning ("*Did God really say...*" Gen.3:1) and the attacks continue to this day...

➤ "*Did God really say that He made the universe in 6 literal days?*" or

➤ "*Did God really say that Jesus was the only way to heaven?*"; or

➤ “Did God really say that homosexuality was a sin?” (etc.)

And so, we can see why Jude is so concerned that we, as believers in Jesus (His soldiers), keep fighting against Satan’s lies as we earnestly contend for THE FAITH, which God committed to His Church for *preservation* and faithful *dissemination*—

2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Hold fast the pattern of sound words [N.T. doctrine] which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

1 Timothy 6:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge-- ²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith...

Mark 16:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

As we come to the main section of Jude’s epistle remember that even though he primarily had *apostates* in mind when he wrote his epistle—his comments could apply to anyone in the church that teaches false doctrine.

All false doctrine is dangerous and does damage to a person’s faith—sometimes irreparable damage that could lead them away from God for years and sometimes for the rest of their lives!

And so again, “**Christians—contend earnestly for the faith**”—a lot is at stake!

Jude 1:3 (NKJV)

³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all (‘all time’ and for ‘all generations’) **delivered to the saints**.

In other words, the same New Testament truth that God delivered to the Apostles never ‘expires’ or needs to be ‘revised’ or ‘updated’.

The bottom line—there is no ‘new revelation’ for a new generation!

One author put it well—

“‘Once’ means that ‘the faith’ was delivered one time and doesn’t need to be delivered again. Of course, we distribute this truth again and again. But it was delivered by God to the world through the Apostles and prophets once (Ephesians 2:20). God may speak today, but never in the authoritative way that He spoke through the first Apostles and prophets as recorded in the New Testament.” (The N.T. cannon is complete!)

Jude 1:4 (NKJV)

⁴ For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, **ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Jude wastes no time in identifying the enemy—he first of all says that they’re ‘**ungodly**’ (a favorite word of Jude—verse 15!).

The word ‘**godly**’ is short for ‘*God-like*’.

People in the church who teach false doctrine (lies) are not *God-like*—they are ‘*ungod-like*’ or ‘**ungodly**’ in that God is a God of truth and His Word is truth—those who are like God teach it faithfully and would never twist His Word into lies to deceive.

Peter warned us about these deceivers who—“*Twist the Scriptures to their own destruction, as they do with all of God’s Word.*” (2 Peter 3:16)

2 Timothy 3:1-5, 8-9 (NLT2)

¹ You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵ They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!...

⁸ These teachers oppose the truth just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. They have depraved minds and a counterfeit faith. ⁹ But they won’t get away with this for long. Someday everyone will recognize what fools they are, just as with Jannes and Jambres.

So first of all, these false teachers were ‘**ungodly**’ (verse 4b)—secondly: They’re ‘**deceitful**’ (verse 4c).

“**For certain men have crept in unnoticed**” (verse 4c)—the Greek word means “*to slip in secretly, to sneak in undercover.*”

Peter warned that these men were coming—

2 Peter 2:1 (NKJV)

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, **who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.**

“**Destructive heresies**” literally means ‘*teachings that will destroy a person in hell*’.

There are ‘*non-destructive*’ heresies—in other words, teachings that are wrong but will not damn a person to hell if believed. (Word of Faith Movement)

Again, Peter warned that these false teachers would infiltrate the Church under the guise of ‘*good shepherds*’ and “*secretly* bring in destructive heresies”.

This has always baffled me because—Jesus warned that false prophets were coming—Paul told us they were coming—Peter warned us they were coming—Jude said they’re here and that they “*crept into the church unnoticed*” (Jude 1:4)

How did these false teachers creep into the church *unnoticed* when Christians back then had been given so many clear warnings they were coming?

Because of gullible and undiscerning pastors and church leaders who were looking for what ‘works’ or what was ‘novel’ or simply who were taken in by the ‘cult of personality’ (they’re often charming, charismatic and *cool*) and were not discerning nor being vigilant.

One author put it this way—

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

Jesus warned us the enemy would sow ‘tares’ among the ‘wheat’—

Matthew 13:24-25, 38-39 (NKJV)

²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way...

³⁸ The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

“who long ago were marked out for this condemnation” (verse 4b)

Jude is telling us that these ungodly deceivers didn’t take God by surprise—He knew they would infiltrate the Church and had marked them for judgment in hell long ago (before the foundation of the world).

The question is: *“If God knew about them—why didn’t He stop them from infiltrating the Church and thereby keep them from doing their damage?”*

Because, in part, that was a responsibility He gave to *us* (all Christians—primarily church leaders) to be on guard against these wolves—

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Matthew 7:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

➤ *“Okay, but again, why does God allow these false teachers—in the first place—at all?”*

Well, the larger question is: *“Why does God allow Satan to continue—aren’t they working for him?”*

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (NLT2)

¹³ These people are false Apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as Apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

➤ So again, *“why does God allow Satan to continue doing his dirty work—he isn’t as strong as God is he?”*

Of course not—Satan is a created being—God is the Creator who made him.

Why does God let Satan continue to do his dirty work and deceive?—Because, he is serving the purposes of God—he (the devil) is providing us with a choice (for the exercising of our free-will).

He allows Satan and his servants (false prophets) to infiltrate churches—to keep us sharp and vigilant—but also because they act like ‘spiritual magnets’ that draw out of the church those who think like them.

In other words—these people are used by God to purify the church!

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](#).

Reach out to us [here](#).