

## Competing For The True Faith

Text : **Jude 3-21** ( 2<sup>nd</sup> )

### **INTRODUCTION :**

#### **A. Jude wanted to write a message about the “common salvation” BUT**

1. Current circumstances made him feel compelled to write a different message.
2. Men who had been innocently accepted into the church were teaching errors.
3. These errors would cause saved people to lose their salvation.

#### **B. These false teachers were teaching four (4) different heresies. ( Previous lesson )**

1. They were turning grace into license.
  - a. Remember the illustration of the driver abusing the speed limit’s grace.
  - b. Once God has forgiven us 50 times for the same thing, we think we can just keep on doing it.
2. They slander authority and the doctrine of Christ.
  - a. We don’t like it when people tell us not to do what we want to do.  
( **Especially if they are shaking their finger or being authoritarian** )
  - b. Authority is from God and it is necessary. ( **Rom. 13: 1-3** )
  - c. The scriptures clearly set forth truth which must be obeyed.
3. They were acting proud and grumbling.
  - a. Reflects a heart that is not devoted.
  - b. **One who loves serves cheerfully.**
  - c. All these listed by Jude are theological heresies, but also practical concerns.
4. They denied Christ as their only sovereign and Lord.
  - a. There is no other sovereign in the universe. ( **There can be only one.** )
    - 1) Sovereign means : One rules above all others.
    - 2) A “sovereign’s” power is absolute. ( **His power emanates from himself.** )
  - b. We can’t have any other sovereign in our personal lives.
    - 1) There is only one throne in our hearts. ( **Either God sets on it or, we do.** )
    - 2) The 1<sup>st</sup> commandment : “*You shall have no other gods before Me.*”
  - c. God’s sovereignty is our motivation for spiritual growth.

#### **C. Jude starts the book challenging each one of us to know who we are as God sees us.**

1. What do you call your brother ? Jude called his brother MASTER.

2. Jude refers to we Christians as :

a. “called” ( **separated out from the world** )

- 1) Our calling is the act of the sovereign God to get sinner into salvation.
- 2) It is not done miraculously, but by a message preached. ( **I Cor. 1: 21** )
- 3) The specific message preached is the gospel. ( **II Thes. 2:14, I Cor. 15:1-5** )

b. “beloved in God”

- 1) We know that God loves us. ( **I John 4:19** ) **Heavenly Father**
- 2) Our parents disciplined us. We may have resented it, but we knew they loved us.
- 3) We were secure in knowing, no matter what, we could go to them.

**The Christian’s relationship to his Heavenly Father gives the same confidence.**

c. “kept for Jesus the Christ”

- 1) The Christian can feel absolutely secure in Christ. ( **I Pet. 1: 5** )
- 2) God will never let us down.
- 3) Love the old song : “*I Know Whom I Have Believed*” ( **II Tim. 1:12** )

**D. Many who received Jude’s letter were slipping away from the Gospel of salvation.**

1. They were being influenced by the world and by these erring brethren. ( **both** )
2. They were “Slipping out the back door.”
  - a. Their faith was growing weak and they were quietly drifting away from God.
  - b. When your faith starts to weaken or be challenged, **let someone know !!**
    - 1) Help is available, but you have to let someone know you need it.
    - 2) God has not given any of us the gift of reading minds.

**TRANSITION :**

**What should we do to avoid slipping away ?**

**Jude gives us at least four ways to avoid slipping away or being lead astray.**

**I. Vs. 3 We must contend for our faith. ... put forth an effort in its behalf.**

**A. Remember the meaning of contend :**

1. It is not a military term referring to engaging in battle.
2. It’s an athletic term referring to one strongly competing in a contest or race.
3. It means to put forth one’s best effort, to give one’s self to a contest, to agonize over.

**B. This is the same root word that Paul used to describe Christian faithfulness.**

1. **I Tim. 6: 12** - Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, ... ( basically same command given by Jude )
2. **II Tim. 4: 7-** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; **8-** in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,
3. Faithfulness does not come without effort. **Agonize over it ... contend for it.**
4. When you hear something that doesn't sound right, ask questions. ( **Don't just accept.** )
  - 1) "Where did you get that ?"
  - 2) "Where can I read something about that in the bible ?"

**C. There is but one faith and it cannot be altered in any way.**

1. It was "once for all handed down to the saints."
2. No one has the right to alter it in any way. ( **accept or reject it, not negotiate** )
  - a. **Gal. 1: 6-** I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; **7-** which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **8-** But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! **9-** As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!
  - b. If even an angel cannot alter the message what man could do so ?
  - c. "Once for all" indicates that the faith is :
    - 1) Complete ... It does not need to be supplemented.
    - 2) Permanent ... It does not need to be updated.
    - 3) Final ... It will never be replaced or altered.

**D. Many "Christians" today are lead by things other than the faith.**

1. One religion claims to have found golden tablets containing additional revelation.
2. Another religion claims that their elected head is the "vicar" of God on earth, so he can make "ex-cathedral" statements that are revelation from God. ( **overrule / alter** )
3. More dangerous than these overt heresies are :
  - a. People who let their traditions rule their religious life.
  - b. People who blindly follow teachers who impress them with personal charisma.
  - c. People who follow their own opinions and/or desires ( **They personally usurp God.** )  
**"That's just your interpretation, I believe ..."**

**E. “The faith” which was once for all delivered to the saints is not about feelings, opinions, or personal preferences.**

1. There is only one faith. ( **Remember : Eph. 4: 4-5** )
  - a. There are as many opinions, personal preferences, etc. as there are people.
  - b. To enter the realm of opinion ( of interpretation ) is to leave the realm of faith.
2. Satan uses the desires of men to draw them away from God, from **the faith**.
  - a. Many have “**A Faith**” which is not “**THE faith.**”
  - b. Only the faith that was delivered by God will saved people.
  - c. Other faiths may be fulfilling, even rewarding, but they cannot save eternally.

**F. One cannot content for ( compete for ) “the faith” if he doesn’t know what it is.**

1. One must read and study in order to know what the gospel is. ( **We are not inspired.** )
  2. Reading and studying is one way we contend for our faith.
    - a. When a teaching is in error or not according to the faith, we must to recognize that.
    - b. The inspired scriptures are the **ONLY** source of knowledge and authority.
    - c. “I remember the elders said ...” “Our preacher said ...”
  3. One who does not study cannot grow spiritually. ( **I Pet. 2:2 .. desire milk = growth** )
- \* Your faith is under attack every day, are you contending for it ?**

**II. Vs. 5-7 In order to contend for his faith one must know what God is like.**

**A. God will not hesitate to destroy those whom He has saved IF they do not believe.**

1. God saved Israel from the Egyptians, but then destroyed all of them.
2. They would not trust him to give them the promised land. ( **grasshopper complex** )
3. Today, salvation is “**by grace through faith.**”
  - a. How can one without faith be saved ?
  - b. Without faith there is no way for salvation to get to him. ( **It comes THROUGH faith.** )

**B. Most people like the grace side of God, but many reject His discipline, His justice.**

1. Remember how God described Himself :
 

**Exod. 34: 6- The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7- who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, ... ( Don’t take God lightly. )**
2. If there is no punishment for sin, what was happening on the cross ?
3. It is not God’s desire that anyone should be punished, but HE WILL punish the guilty.

**C. In order to struggle, to agonize, to content in order to maintain our faith, we must keep in memory the nature of God. **HE IS HOLY !!****

1. You would not want to stand before an unjust judge.
  - a. Excuse his friends or people He likes
  - b. Respond to flattery
  - c. Take bribes
2. Justice demands punishment for the guilty or atonement. ( **equal treatment** )

**D. God is HOLY. He will always do right ... even if it breaks his heart to do so.**

**III. Vs. 17-19 In order to successfully contend for our faith, we must realize that there is a daily battle for our souls.**

**A. Using himself as an example, Paul warned us of the struggle we face. ( Rom 7:14f )**

1. Peter warned us not to become complacent and let our guard down. ( **I Pet. 5: 8** )
2. Paul warned us not to become over confident. ( **I Cor. 10: 12 - cf- I Cor. 9: 27** )
3. John instructed us to pray each other. ( **I John 5: 16 - cf- Gal. 6: 1-2** )

**B. The unbelievers are ever more aggressive. ( *representatives of Satan* )**

1. America was established by Christians upon Christian values.
  - a. Our ability to practice our faith is protected by law.
  - b. Christianity was ingrained in our culture. ( **Many have become apathetic.** )
2. The enemies of Christ are diligently trying to remove Christianity from our culture.
  - a. They are organized, well funded and aggressive. **We Christians MUST wake up.**
  - b. The “Christian” world remains fragmented and passive. ( “**Cultural Christians**” )

**C. Many professing Christianity are a part of the problem, not part of the solution.**

1. It’s not surprising that those in the world are turned off by Jesus, but some who claim faith also reject His Lordship and even His divinity.
  - a. They invoke the name of Jesus constantly, but w/o surrender to Him or even respect.
  - b. They hold scholarly seminars, but deny the resurrection of Christ. ( **His diety** )
2. They seek to customize Jesus into a Savior that will fit their lifestyle.
  - a. They don’t conform their lives to His standard.
  - b. They don’t want Jesus to inconvenience their lifestyle.

**D. We must pray as Jesus prayed : “Deliver us from evil.” ( **Make a choice to resist** )**

#### **IV. Vs. 20-21 Only YOU can take care of your own heart.**

- A. Jesus has provided the living water, but **YOU** must drink it. ( **Horse to water** )
- B. Each Christian must take responsibility for his own faith.  
 \* **We live in a society that wants to blame others for everything.** ( **law suits** )
1. Vs. 20- **But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith,**
  2. **Gal. 6: 5- For each one will bear his own load.** ( **Others can help, but it's on us.** )
- C. We are each what we are because of the decisions we make.
1. If you are bitter and negative person, ... you chose to become that way.
  2. If you are shallow and weak in faith, ... you have chosen to be so. ( **etc. ...** )
  3. If you obeyed the gospel and live faithful, it's because YOU decided to do so.
- D. **Strong faith doesn't just happen. It requires a consistent effort to develop, & keep.**
1. It's not developed in front of the **TV**, or at the beach, or playing with the grand kids, ...
  2. One must keep reminding himself how much Jesus means to him and work at faith.
  3. Many are so limited in faith that they aren't comfortable talking about their faith with ..

#### **CONCLUSION :**

- A. **Our faith requires maintenance and protection. We must contend for it.**
- B. **Four of the ways we compete to keep our faith strong and growing are :**
1. We must consistently put forth a strong effort in its behalf. **Compete**
  2. We must keep in our minds what God is like. **Holy / Just**
  3. We must realize there is a daily battle going on for our faith. **Keep active / Vigilant**
  4. We must realize that our faith is in our own hands. **We alone secure our faith.**
- C. Vs. 21 ... We must keep **ourselves** in the love of God. ( **judgment is individual** )
1. We establish ourselves in the love of God by obeying the gospel from the heart.
  2. We keep ourselves in the love of God by walking in His commands.
  3. We grow stronger in our faith by maintain a good spiritual diet and exercising our faith.

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