

Contending For The Faith
Lesson #1 January 8, 2020 Introduction & Background

Question: How much do I value God's Word, the fellowship of believers and obedience to Jesus Christ?

Consider: Many false teachers are waiting to **DESTROY** my Christ-centered life, the credibility of God's Word and the unity of the body of Christ.

Author: Jude 1:1a Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,...Written 65-69 AD

Interesting: The epistles of Jude and James parallel one another.

- James: Good works are evidence of true faith.
- Jude: Evil works are evidence of apostasy.

Consider: Before the crucifixion and resurrection, Jude [and James] had denied Jesus as Messiah, but afterward, he humbly acknowledges himself as His slave or bondservant, having submitted to Christ's Lordship.

Bondservant: #1401 = doulos = one who is solely committed to another; be under someone's total control; without ownership rights of their own. It is used with the highest dignity in the NT. Believers who willingly live under Christ's authority as His devoted followers.

- Jude is under the total control of the Christ as opposed to the apostates he will speak of who assert their own authority and desires and deny the master they give lip-service to.

Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy [bond] servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

Rom. 1:1 Paul, a [bond] servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

Gal.1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the [bond] servant of Christ.

II Tim. 2:24 And the [bond] servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

Rev. 19:5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his [bond] servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

Bondservant of Jesus Christ: To call Him Jesus Christ, makes a theological claim that He was indeed the long-expected Messiah of the Jews.

Why study the book of Jude? It is written for the end times, for the end of the Church Age.

- The beginning of the Church: Acts of the Apostles
- The end of the Church Age: Acts of the Apostates

The true Church will escape God's wrath upon the world. [I Thess. 1:10; 4:16-17; Rev. 3:10]

The apostate church will enter the Tribulation period. [Rev. 2:22; 17:1-5]

Jude is the "vestibule" to the book of Revelation. It prepares us for the startling things that occur in Revelation. It is a book tragically neglected by students yet filled with fascinating Old Testament references and allusions.

Outline of Jude

A. Greetings	v. 1-2
B. Occasion For The Letter	v. 3-4
➤ Change of Subject	v. 3
➤ Reason For Change: Presence of godless apostates	v. 4
C. Warning Against False Teachers	v. 5-16
➤ Historical Examples of the Judgment of Apostates	v. 5-7
➤ Unbelieving Israel	v. 5
➤ Angels who fell	v. 6
➤ Sodom & Gomorrah	v. 7
D. Heed Warnings of the Apostles	v. 17-19
➤ Build up your faith through prayer	v. 20
➤ Keep Close to Jesus Christ; strong in the Lord	v. 21
➤ Help others; protect the vulnerable	v. 22-23
➤ Hate sin	v. 23

A chiasm is a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated *in reverse order*. The result is a "mirror" effect as the ideas are "reflected" back in a passage. Each idea is connected to its "reflection" by a repeated word, often in a related form. Chiasmic patterns in the Bible are just one more example of the richness and complexity of God's inspired Word.

Structural Outline of Jude

Assurance for the Christian	A	1-2
The Believer & The Faith	B	3
Apostates Described	C	4
Apostasy in OT History	D	5
Apostasy in the Supernatural Realm	E	9-10
<i>An ancient Trio of Apostates</i>		11
Apostasy in the Natural Realm	E	12-13
Apostasy in OT Prophecy	D	14-16
Apostasy Described	C	17-19
The Believer & The Faith	B	20-23
Assurance for the Christian	A	24-25

Note: Jude had a severe message to deliver to believers.

He begins and ends his book with ASSURANCE for the believer.

- ❖ Be attentive to the warnings
- ❖ Notice the promises and encouragement to live genuine Christian lives.
- ❖ Jude feels the urgency of contending against so much false teaching, yet he is not discouraged.

- ❖ He is very impressed with God's capacity to keep us in his ways than with the enemy's attempts to divert us.
- ❖ His final song of praise exudes great joy and confidence!

Jude 1:24-25 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, ²⁵ To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

God's Character in Jude:

God is loving.	Verses 1-3, 21
God is gracious.	verse 4
God is Lord.	verse 4
God is judging.	verses 5, 6, 14, 15
God is glorious.	Verses 24-25
God is wise.	verse 25

Key Terms To Understand

A. Latter Times [the last time or last hour; last days]

- ❖ A new age has dawned on the world

I John 2:8 the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

- ❖ Since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God is doing a "new thing" in this world.
- ❖ All of OT history prepared the way of the work of Christ on the cross.
- ❖ All history since that time is merely preparation for "the end," when Jesus will come and establish His Kingdom.
- ❖ There is nothing more that God must do for the salvation for sinners.

The "last days" began in John's day and has been growing in intensity ever since.

- There were ungodly false teachers then and they have increased both in number and in influence.
- "Last days or times" describes a kind of time, not a duration of time.

B. Antichrist: "anti" has a dual meaning in the Greek: against Christ or instead of Christ

This term, used only by John, describes 3 things.

1. A spirit in the world that opposes or denies Christ.
2. False teachers who embody this spirit.
3. A person who will head up the final world rebellion against Christ.

I John 4:3 And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

The "spirit of antichrist"

- has been in the world since Satan declared war on God. [Gen. 3]
- is behind every false doctrine and every religious substitute for the realities Christians have in Christ

- will eventually lead to the appearance of a "satanic superman" whom the Bible calls "Antichrist." [man of sin or lawlessness]

Truth is working through the church by the Holy Spirit. Evil is working by the energy of Satan. The Holy Spirit, indwelling Christians, is holding back lawlessness. When the true church is removed at the rapture [I Thess. 4:13-18], Satan will be able to complete his temporary victory and take over the world.

Consider: You are living in the "last hour." The spirit of antichrist is working.

It is vitally important that you KNOW and BELIEVE the TRUTH. You must be able to detect LIES when they come your way.

Ideas Have Consequences

Every New Testament book except Philemon contains warnings about False Teaching. Why is this? Simply because ideas have consequences. Right thinking and its fruit produce goodness, whereas wrong thinking and its accompanying action result in undesired penalties.

Satan did not come to the first couple in the Garden with an external armament or visible weapon; instead, he came to them with an idea.

It was that IDEA, embraced by Eve, that CONDEMNED THEM and the rest of humankind, with the only remedy being the sacrificial death of God's Son.

C. Apostasy

Question: What is apostasy and how can I recognize it?

Apostasy, from the Greek word *apostasia*, means "a defiance of an established system or authority; a rebellion; an abandonment or breach of faith."

Bible sense: a departure from the faith; to stand away from

Consider: Men who at one time professed to believe the great basic truths of the Bible have now denied those things; they have departed from them.

Just like in the first century, spiritual apostasy threatens the Body of Christ today.

D. Apostate: Someone who abandons his religious faith.

- ❖ The Bible is clear that apostates are people who made professions of faith but never genuinely received Him as their Savior. [professor; not a possessor; pretend believer]
- ❖ Those who turn away from Christ never really trusted Him to begin with.
- ❖ The Bible uses the term apostate to describe one who has turned their back on Christ and the Gospel.
- Apostate was NEVER a true believer. He may sound like a believer for a time, but they will eventually depart from other believers.
- They deny the fundamentals of the faith. They were never saved in the first place.
- They demonstrated by erroneous teaching and ungodly living that they were following the spirit of antichrist.

I John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

- Those who apostatize are simply demonstrating that they are not true believers and never were.
- We are told to have NO DEALINGS with apostates.

II John 1:9-11 Whosoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹ For he that bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

E. Backslider

Question: Is there a difference between an apostate and a backslider?

- ❖ Backslider is not found in the NT, but the concept is taught.
- ❖ Backslider: Christian who has fallen into sin and out of fellowship with God.
- ❖ Going the wrong way spiritually; regressing rather than progressing

Note: Some people use the word backslide to mean a person has LOST his salvation, but a truly born-again believer cannot lose his salvation.

Truth: A born-again believer is secure in Christ.

- ❖ Backslider: Remain a Christian; Has not lost his salvation; out of fellowship
- ❖ Salvation is a free gift from God and cannot be lost once the gift is received.

Truth: The Bible teaches: everyone who is born again by the power of the Holy Spirit is saved forever. We receive the gift of eternal life, not temporary life.

- ❖ John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
- ❖ John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
[A born-again person cannot be "unborn."]
- ❖ Rom. 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
[adopted and not "kicked out."]
- ❖ Phil. 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: [God starts a work; He finishes it.]
- ❖ Conclusion: Every child of God is eternally secure in his salvation.

Truth: When a person backslides or falls away from the Lord, he will lose his fellowship with God, but NOT his salvation.

Important Point: When I speak of backsliding [fall away], I mean a born-again believer who is growing cold in his spiritual growth and is out of fellowship with the Lord.

Consider: The Bible's warnings against apostasy exist because there are 2 types of "religious people": believers and unbelievers.

A lot of people profess to know and teach the truth but if it varies any at all from what the Bible teaches, then mark this; they are apostates.

- ❖ Churches are filled with those who truly know Christ and those who are going through the motions.
- ❖ Wearing the label "Christian" does not guarantee a change of heart.
- ❖ It is possible to hear the Word and even agree with its truth, without taking it to heart.
- ❖ It is possible to attend church, serve in a ministry, call yourself a Christian and STILL be unsaved. [Isa 29:13; Matt. 7:21-23]
- ❖ Eventually a pretender will apostatize: he will "fall away" from the faith he once professed ---IF he does not repent.
Like the tares among the wheat, his true nature will be made manifest.

Question: "If our salvation is eternally secure and we cannot lose our salvation, why does the Bible warn so strongly against apostasy?"

Bible's 2 purposes of WARNING against apostasy.

1. The Bible exhorts everyone to Be Sure Of Their Salvation. One's eternal destiny is NOT a trifling matter.

II Cor. 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Reprobate = counterfeit or discredited after a test

Consider the test:

- a. Do you have the witness of the Holy Spirit in your heart? [Rom. 8:9, 16]

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

- b. Do you have love for others?
- c. [I John 4:7-8]

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

- d. Do you practice righteousness? I John 2:29

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

I John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin [makes a practice of sinning], because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin [keep on sinning], because he is born of God.

Note: To practice sin is to sin consistently and as a way of life. God expects a true believer to sin less, not to sin habitually.

- e. Have you overcome the world so that you are living a life of godly separation?

I John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Note: True believers have the divine nature within and it is impossible for the divine nature to disobey God.

- ❖ If the old nature is in control of me, I will disobey God.
- ❖ If the new nature is in control of me, I will obey God.
- ❖ The world appeals to the old nature and tries to make God's commandments seem burdensome.
- f. True believers will bear fruit as the Holy Spirit produces it in them. [Gal. 5:22-23]

2. The Bible warns against apostasy to Equip The Church To Identify Apostates.

- ❖ They can be known by their rejection of Christ, acceptance of heresy and their carnal nature. [II Pet. 2:1-3]

Truth: Apostates had a profession of faith at one time but not the POSSESSION of faith. Their mouth spoke something other than what their heart believed.

Apostasy is not loss of salvation but evidence of past pretension. [Charles Stanley]

It did not take long for false teachers to arise in the early church. There was a mixture of Jewish legalism, man-made traditions and mysticism. Paul wrote to Titus:

Titus 1:13-14 to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of men who turn away from the truth" because Titus 1:16 "They profess to know God, but by *their deeds* they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Anyone can profess but not all possess true faith in Jesus Christ and certainly not all teach it.

Jude's Theme: Central theme: Warning Against The Dangers & Consequences Of Apostasy

1. False Teachers who reject the lordship of Jesus Christ in a believer's life, undermine the faith of others and lead them astray.
 - Avoid leaders who distort the Bible to suit their own purposes.
 - Genuine servants will faithfully portray Christ in their words and in their conduct.

The church's greatest mistakes occur when the people of God honor what a leader says without examining that instruction in the light of Scripture. [Bryan Chapell]

Guard against any false teaching that will distract you from the truth preached by the apostles written in God's word.

Purpose of Jude: The Adversary and his evil horde continue to present a relentless opposition. Persecution, false teaching and apathy are ever-present threats to our souls.

Jude's letter is a "call to arms."

- ❖ Address the apostasy that was creeping into the early church
- ❖ Hangs out a red lantern on the most dangerous curve along the highway the church of Christ is traveling.
- ❖ Jude describes in vivid terms and with awe-inspiring language the frightful conditions happening in the church. Apostates have broken into the church. They came in the side door while nobody was watching.
- ❖ Ungodly men who were leading people astray by denying the deity of Christ
- ❖ Promoting an immoral lifestyle that presumed on the grace of God

- ❖ Warn believers not to be led astray by false teachers
- ❖ Urge believers to rescue any who have been led astray [Jude 1:23]
- ❖ Remind believers: God will have His day. God will never be mocked.
- ❖ Remind believers: We are safe in Christ's complete atoning sacrifice.
- ❖ Offer us heightened skills in recognizing false teachers and their fruit.
- ❖ He makes it crystal clear: Take a stand for the truth and contend for the faith.

Jude is the only book devoted ENTIRELY to the Great Apostasy. [apostasia: falling away]
Luke 18:8 Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Consider: This suggests that when Jesus returns, the true faith will be very rare: as in the days of Noah, when only 8 souls were saved. The period before His 2nd coming will be marked by persecution, apostasy & unbelief. [Matt. 24:9-13; 24]

What were the days of Noah like?

Matt. 24:37-39 But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Consider: God chose to draw this specific comparison to Christ's 2nd coming because of the things that marked the days of Noah, leading God to take drastic action.

Gen 6:1-3a And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, ² That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. [disregarded God; their own way].
 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man,...

1. They were Days Of Apostasy
 - Mind of man went against the Spirit and will of God
 - The co-mingling of that which is Godly with that which is ungodly.
2. Days of Anarchy

Gen. 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

- They were mighty to serve wickedness.

Gen. 6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that Every Imagination Of The Thoughts Of His Heart Was Only Evil Continually.

Imagination: Hebrew = to fashion something as a potter would fashion a vessel

- It is scheming and philosophizing
- Heart and mind were set against God.
- Fashioned wicked philosophies
- Espoused filthy causes
- Tried to pour society and the culture into THEIR MOLD; reshape society

Gen. 6:6-7 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

- God is broken-hearted over the sins of this generation.

3. Days of Apathy

- Married & giving in marriage; buying; selling
- They knew not UNTIL the flood came!
- Rolling over and yawning in the face of God [Adrian Rogers]
- Pleasure palaces are filled

Truth: We are living on the threshold of a greater judgment than Noah's generation knew.

Jude's Exhortation: Stand firm in The Faith and defend God's truth at all costs.

Key Verse: Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and Exhort You That Ye Should Earnestly

Contend For The Faith Which Was Once Delivered Unto The Saints.

- Greek = "exhort" was used to describe a general giving orders to the army.
- The atmosphere of this letter is "military."
- Jude was led by the Spirit to sound the trumpet! Jude's letter is a "Call to Arms!"

Wiersbe: Jude is addressing the "spiritual army." God is not looking for volunteers for His army. You are already enlisted. The question is not, "Shall I become a soldier?"

Rather it is: "Will I Be A Loyal Soldier?"

Isaac Watts preached a sermon on I Cor. 16:13: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong." When he published the sermon, he added a poem which we now sing.

Am I a soldier of the Cross
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease?
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith's discerning eye.

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all Thy armies shine
In robes of vict'ry through the skies,
The glory shall be Thine.