

# Contending for the Faith

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Jude 1:1-25

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## Introduction

(1) The Epistle overviewed.

(a) Author: The author of the Book of Jude is the same as the author of the rest of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; John 16:13; Eph. 3:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:16,17).

(b) Penman: The penman of the book we are presently studying is named Jude. There are some nine different people who are thus designated (Matt. 10:3,4; Matt. 13:55; Luke 3:26,30,33; Luke 6:16; Acts 5:37; Acts 9:11; Acts 15:22). A number of serious students of the Bible believe that the Jude who wrote the Epistle is the Judas of Matthew 13:55, the Lord's brother.

(c) Date: The Book was penned about A.D. 68-75. The Epistle of 2 Peter had warned that false teachers would be coming (2 Pet. 2:1ff). The Epistle of Jude deals with their already having come (Jude 1:4,17,18). Thus, the Epistle of Jude was written sometime after 2 Peter to re-emphasize the reality and work of false teachers.

(d) Theme: We must stand for the faith in the midst of false teaching or false teachers.

(e) Key Word: The key word of the Epistle is "ungodly," appearing some six times in this one-chapter book.

(f) Key Verse: The key verse of the Epistle is verse 3, the text for our present study.

(g) An Outline: Salutation (Jude 1:1,2), the purpose for the Epistle (Jude 1:3,4), the destiny of false teachers (Jude 1:5-16), exhortations to be faithful (Jude 1:17-23), and the closing doxology (Jude 1:24,25).

(2) The text for study. Jude 1:3 is the primary text for our study. "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." Let us now make a study of this text line upon line, precept upon precept.

## I. The Faith -- Its Identity

(1) It is the gospel. Gal. 1:23 states that Paul preached the faith which he once destroyed, whereas Gal. 1:6-9 states that he preached the gospel. Thus, the faith is identified as the gospel. Furthermore, Eph. 4:7-15 speaks of "the unity of the faith;" that is, the complete revelation of God's will to man, the faith with all of its units. Phil. 1:27 speaks of "the faith of the gospel."

Titus was Paul's son "after the common faith;" that is, after the gospel. Gal. 3:26,27 teaches us that we are sons of God in Christ "through the [as the original suggests] faith;" that is, again, the gospel.

(2) Why is "the faith" thus designated?

(a) It produces faith (Rom. 10:17; John 17:20,21; John 20:30-31; Luke 8:11-14; Acts 15:7; 1 Cor. 3:5; Acts 17:11,12). Accordingly, the Word of God is spoken of as "the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8).

(b) It is to be believed (2 Thess. 2:13). Thayer states that the components of Biblical faith are conviction, trust, and obedience. Accordingly, faith in the Word of God involves and embraces conviction, based on indisputable evidence that it is the revelation of the infinite mind of almighty God; trust, consisting of an unreserved, unswerving, and unqualified confidence in the Word of God as saying exactly what is meant and meaning exactly what is said, accepting without reservation that the promises contained will be fulfilled and the threats will be carried out; and, obedience, consisting of doing exactly what the Word requires, exactly as the Word requires is, and for the purpose for which the Word states the matter is to be done.

(c) It requires faith; yea, requiring the very thing it produces (Heb. 11:6; Acts 10:43; Acts 16:31; John 8:21,24; John 3:16,36; Rom. 5:1; Mark 16:16; Rev. 21:8).

(3) Adjectives of the faith.

(a) Notice the modifier "the." Such suggests that the faith is singular in number.

(b) It is spoken of as the "common" faith. Hence, it is distinct in nature. See also Titus 1:4. It is common in that it is applicable to all, supplies a common need, and is adapted to the needs of all regardless of race or rank, class or clan, tribe or tongue.

(c) Additionally, it is spoken of as "my" faith in Rev. 2:13. Such suggests that it is divine in origin, the word "my" referring to the Lord.

## II. The Faith -- Its Singularity

(1) Yes, "the" faith. It is not "some faith," or "one of the faiths," or "just any and all faiths will do," etc. Yet, how often do we hear such statements as, "people of all faiths," and "one faith is as good as another faith," or "of which faith are you," etc.?

(2) Some corroborating texts. Titus 1:4 speaks of "the common faith." Gal. 1:23 states that Paul preached "the faith" (who can believe that he preached one among many?). Eph. 4:13 speaks of the unity of "the faith." 1 Tim. 4:1 warns that some shall depart from "the faith." Incidentally, why this warning if one faith is as good as another, if all are equal in value? We learn in 1 Tim. 5:8 that if one does not provide for his own that he denies "the faith." Recalling his past life, Paul affirmed that he had kept "the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

(3) Some deductions, consequences and conclusions. Since the faith is singular, we can readily deduct that we must all believe (see) the Bible alike. In fact, if the gospel produced varying beliefs and faiths, its fruit would be inconsistent with its very self, its nature (since it is singular). See Matt. 7:15-20. Concerning this matter, does not 1 Cor. 1:10 exhort, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." God has had only one way at a time to save man. For example, any and all who were saved from the flood were saved as a result of getting in the ark (1 Pet. 3:18-21). If saved, they were saved alike. Rom. 11:26 affirms, "AND SO (emphasis mine, W.W.) all Israel shall be saved." Paul is affirming that both Jew and Gentile are saved alike, both through one and the selfsame Redeemer. After all, one man cannot teach four differing doctrines and be right; so, how can four different men teach four different doctrines and each of them be right? Do we not expect each pharmacist to fill the prescription alike? Do not we expect each teacher in our schools to teach the same thing relative to the location of New York City and the sum of 2 + 2? Why cannot we have the same expectation in religion?

### **III. The Faith -- Its Finality**

(1) Jude affirms that the faith was "once delivered" (King James Version) or "was once for all delivered" (American Standard Version). 1 Pet. 3:18 says "Christ also hath ONCE (emphasis mine, W.W.) suffered for sins." Peter is affirming the finality and all-sufficiency of the sacrifice on Calvary. Heb. 10:10 adds, "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Also, Heb. 9:12 affirms that "by his own blood he entered in ONCE (emphasis mine, W.W.) into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Then, we read in Heb. 9:26 of Christ, "but now ONCE (emphasis mine, W.W.) in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Finally, in Heb. 9:27 we learn that "it is appointed unto men ONCE (emphasis mine, W.W.) to die, but after this the judgment." In each of these verses just observed, the word "once" indicates finality. Such is the case in the text we are presently studying, Jude 1:3.

(2) The finality and completeness of the faith, the gospel, further studied. The Lord promised the apostles, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Also he promised, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13). Then, 2 Pet. 1:3 assures us that according to God's divine power he hath given unto us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Furthermore, Eph. 4:8-13 and 1 Cor. 13:8-13 deal with the cessation of miraculous spiritual gifts upon the completion of the gospel of Christ. Accordingly, if we do not have the complete, full, and final revelation of God's will today, then we are still in the miraculous age of the church which is also spoken of as its infant stage (Eph. 4:13,14).

(3) Some deductions. Since the Word of God is his complete, full, and final revelation unto man, we need not expect any latter day revelations, or any direct operation / leading of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of sinners, nor any miraculous-day demonstrations.

#### **IV. The Faith -- Its Origin or Source**

The word "delivered" in our text suggests that the faith was not discovered accidentally or intuitively. A package delivered implies a sender, or origin, as well as a receiver, with the sender or origin being distinct and separate from the receiver. Accordingly, "the faith" is an objective revelation!

(1) "The faith" did not originate in the fertile imaginations of man, but in the mind of God. Revelation plus inspiration equals the Word of God. Revelation has to do with the making known of the content of the document. Inspiration has to do with the accurate reception and transmission of the revelation. Accordingly, the Bible being the product of such, the Bible is the revelation of the omniscient mind of Almighty God unto man which was accurately received and equally accurately transmitted by the New Testament apostles and prophets. Thus, 1 Cor. 2:9-13 beautifully, and in a detailed fashion, sets forth the verbal inspiration of the Word of God. Indeed, the Bible did not originate in the mind of man; but, rather, in the mind of God. Such obtaining, 1 Cor. 11:23 reads, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." In like manner, 1 Cor. 15:1-4 reads, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand; ... for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received ... "Then, Gal. 1:11ff reads, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ ... " Eph. 3:3-7 affirms, "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of man, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Also, Peter affirms the same in writing, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (2 Pet. 1:9-11). In fact, over 2,000 times Biblical writers speak of the origin of their message as "Thus saith the Lord," or by an equivalent, which such appearing 1,300 times in the prophets alone. Accordingly, 2 Sam. 23:2 reads, "the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."

(2) There are only three possible sources / origins of the Bible. The Bible came from (a) bad men and/or devils; (b) good men and/or angels; or (c) God. First, the Bible did not come from bad men and/or devils. How could such have given us the Sermon on the Mount, the listing of the Christian virtues, etc.? Furthermore, the Bible condemns evil and consigns to an eternal hell bad men and devils. Then, the Bible did not originate with good men and/or angels. The Bible

claims to be from God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). And, good men do not lie. Thus, the Bible did not originate with good men and/or angels. Hence, there is but one alternative: the Bible originated in the mind of Almighty God!

(3) Since the Bible originated in the mind of God, it is spoken of as, "the word of God." It is thus spoken of in Rom. 10:17; Luke 8:11; 1 Pet. 1:23,25; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; John 17:8; and 1 Thess. 2:13. Alexander Campbell said that every time he opened his Bible to read it that he so did as if it had fallen from the hand of Almighty God. He was not far from wrong! May we thus conceive of the Bible when we read it. It is, indeed, "the Word of God."

(4) Some deductions.

(a) Since the Bible is the Word of God, it shares in the very nature of God; thus, it is sacred and holy. God is holy (1 Pet. 1:16); and 2 Tim. 3:15-17 speaks of the "holy scriptures." Such being the case, let us say with the Psalmist, "But my heart standeth in awe of thy word" (Ps. 119:161). Such obtaining, we will not longer hear a constant reference to the Word of God as the source of our preaching and authority being referred to as bibliolatry, paper popery, etc. Neither will we hear the Word of God spoken of as the mere word, or as a dead letter, or as just pen and ink.

(b) We cannot separate God and his Word. Jesus taught that if we love him, we will keep his commandments (John 14:15). He also taught that if we reject him and his word we will be judged by said Word (John 12:48). We cannot separate the Master from his mandates, Jesus from his judgments, the Lord from his law, and Christ from his commands. Hence, it is totally invalid to profess allegiance to the person of Christ while showing disrespect for the precepts of Christ! Thus, the question, "What shall I do with Jesus?" can be answered by observing what one does with the Word of Jesus. The question, "What think ye of Christ?" can be answered by observing what one thinks of the Words of Christ.

(c) Since the Bible shares the very nature of God, and God is faithful and true (Rev. 19:11; 1 Pet. 4:19), the Word of God is thus faithful and true. Such being the case, the accounts found in the Bible are true irrespective of how incredible they may seem. The commands given for us in the Bible are binding irrespective of how unusual they may seem. The promises found in the Bible will be kept regardless of how unlikely it seems that such will be the case. And, the threats of the Bible will be carried out regardless of how unjust they may be judged by man.

## **V. The Faith -- Its Trustees or Repository**

(1) The faith was delivered unto "the saints." Saints are identified, in 1 Cor. 1:2, as members of the church of God, having become such through their obedience to the Word, God's instrument of sanctification (John 17:17). Thus, members of the Lord's church are the trustees of the faith; they constitute the repository for the same. What trust! What confidence! Consequently, as stewards, we are to exercise unqualified faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:2).

(2) There are at least four reasons why the faith has been delivered unto the saints. First, for presentation. By this we mean that God used men of God, saints, through whom to reveal, both

orally and in written form, his sacred will. Concerning the Old Testament Scriptures, Peter said that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Then, concerning the New Testament, Paul writes in Eph. 3:5 that the scheme of redemption had now been "revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Notice the word "holy" in both of these passages. Such describes the man whom God used to present his will. Secondly, for proclamation. Did not Paul instruct Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2)? The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is not the support for the Scripture's authenticity and integrity. For, irrespective of what the church does, the Word of God is authentic and true. However, the church is God's exclusive age for the truth's proclamation. Accordingly, the church of our Lord must take the Great Commission seriously. Such still reads, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19,20). See also Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; Acts 8:1-4; Col. 1:23. Thirdly, for protection (defense). Like Paul, we must be constantly set for the defence of the gospel (Phil. 1:7,17). Sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, we are to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh ..." (1 Pet. 3:15). The words "give an answer" literally mean to make a defense. No false teacher should feel otherwise than to know his error will be challenged, thwarted, and annihilated! That is protection! As defenders of the faith, we must be against the encroachment of Catholicism, Calvinism, Neo-Pentecostalism, premillennialism, liberalism, modernism, hobbyism, humanism, subjectivism, denominationalism and any other ism that militates against the faith. After all, does not God present the Christ as a soldier in the army of the Lord (Eph. 6:10-20; 2 Tim. 2:3,4; 2 Tim. 4:7)? Though it is to be done in the spirit of Christ and of love (Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:24-26), the Christian is to be militant for right and against error. Fourthly, for practice and portrayal (living). "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). Women who have unbelieving husbands can win them to Christ through a proper portrayal of the sacred precepts of God's revealed will (1 Pet. 3:1-7). Yes, in these two passages we have the idea of living the gospel, portraying the principles of the gospel. We are to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your (our) own selves" (James 1:22).

(3) A question to ponder. What would you think of a trustee at your local bank not being faithful to the sums of money entrusted into his care, not being faithful as the repository of so many people's life savings? It is infinitely worse for a saint not to be faithful as a trustee or steward of the faith, the gospel of Christ. Paul was a faithful guardian or trustee of the gospel. Thus, toward the end of life, he could unreservedly write, "I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

## **VI. The Faith -- Its Demands and Obligations**

(1) We are to "earnestly contend for the faith." Such was emphasized in our discussion of the saints responsibility to protect the faith. However, for added emphasis, please study again Phil. 1:7,17 and 1 Pet. 3:15. Did not Paul earnestly contend for the faith when he met the Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31? A failure to "earnestly contend for the faith" can be precipitated by:

(a) thinking error is inconsequential, though such is not the case (2 Thess. 2:10,11; 1 Kings 13:1ff; 2 Pet. 2:1);

(b) an inability to identify the faith because of Biblical ignorance (Hos. 4:6; Isa. 1:3,4; Titus 1:9); and

(c) a misconception of love. Concerning the latter observation, Paul's marvelous chapter on love is found in 1 Cor. 13. However, two chapters later, in 1 Cor. 15, he clearly and unequivocally addressed himself to the errors existent in Corinth relative to the resurrection.

(2) Implications. The exhortation, "earnestly contend for the faith," implies a number of things. First, such implies the existence of the faith. Yes, there is such a body of truth existent; hence, there is to be no state of the judges (Judg. 21:25) existent wherein every man does "that which is right in his own eyes." There is an objective source of truth, a code of conduct, to which all men are amenable and to which they will one day answer (John 12:48). Secondly, such implies the recognition or knowability of truth. Jesus affirmed, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The truth is identified as the Word of God (John 17:17). Too, did not our Lord say in John 7:17, "If any man will to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine"? We are assured that if we hunger and thirst after righteousness we shall be filled (Matt. 5:6). After all, if we cannot know the truth, how could we ever "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine" (Rom. 16:17)? If we cannot know the truth, if we cannot be sure about the truth, then we may be the ones who need to be marked rather than the ones doing the marking. Thirdly, such implies the value of the faith. The faith is of such value that one should be willing to die in its interest or in its behalf. Thus, did Antipas. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Rev. 2:13).

(3) Concerning the faith, there are a number of things relative to it for which we are to contend.

(a) We should contend for the inspiration of the faith (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:20,21; 1 Cor. 2:9-16).

(b) We are to contend for the all-sufficiency of the faith (2 Pet. 1:3; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16,17).

(c) We are to contend for the power of the faith (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18; Heb. 4:12).

(d) We are to contend for the purity of the faith (Gal. 1:6-9).

(e) We are to contend for the authority of the faith (Col. 3:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17; John 17:8).

Yes, we are to "contend for the faith. "We are to "contend" for the truth and not be "contentious" over tradition (for example, whether we must have a dismissal song). Let us "contend" for the truth and not be "contentious" over a hobby (how the meeting house facilities can be used). Let

us "contend" for the faith and not be "contentious" over opinion (for example, the posture we must assume in praying). Let us, "contend" for what is binding and not be "contentious" over what has been loosed (for example, the "how" to take care of orphans).

**Conclusion:**

(1) A review. In this brief study of the Book of Jude, primarily of Jude 1:3, we have observed the identity of the faith, the singularity of the faith, the finality of the faith, the origin of the faith, the trustees and repository of the faith, and the demands of the faith. May we all be encouraged to adjust our concepts and practices in each of these areas according to "what saith the scriptures."

(2) A closing exhortation. We encourage the alien to become a child of God in Christ Jesus through obedience to the faith by being baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26,27). We exhort Christians to so bye that when they are approaching the valley of the shadow of death they may, like Paul, be able to reminisce back over a life well spent in loyalty to Christ and be able to say without qualification, "I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).