

## “Contending For the Faith of Jesus”

### Jude 3-4

**Introduction:** 1) All of the Akin’s are big fans of the smash hit “24”. Do not call our house on Monday night from 9-10 because all you will get is voice mail! Kiefer Sutherland stars as Jack Bauer, a counter-terrorist agent who defends the USA against those who would harm her. Commentator Hugh Hewitt correctly observes that the work of Jack Bauer is messy and intense. He also notes it “is also very judgmental and almost entirely without moral ambiguity.”

“One fan, Melinda Penner, blogged this on the program’s appeal:  
“I love the show because it’s morally smart. Jack [Bauer] almost unfailingly makes the correct and necessary decision given the moral dilemmas he’s faced with. But it also shows the cost of having engaged evil and the horrible choices it presents.” – (*World*, 1-28-06; p. 7).

2) Such is the world of international terrorism. Such, in many ways, is the world of spiritual terrorism as well. Jude writes to warn the church about spiritual terrorists, spiritual subversives who stealthily crept inside the church with WSD’s (Weapons of Spiritual Destruction). These are Satan’s missionaries whose motto is, “If I can’t get them from without, I will get them from within.”

3) Theologically we refer to such persons as “apostates”, a word that means “to fall away”. Though they try to stay with us personally and corporately, theologically and spiritually they have left and followed after false and destructive teaching.

4) Adrian Rogers points out these are persons who:  
received the truth  
rejected the truth  
ridicule the truth, and then attempt to  
replace the truth.

5) You see this tragedy in schools like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Columbia, Brown, William & Mary, and the University of Chicago which were founded to train ministers to propagate the gospel.

6) This past Sunday, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, nearly 450 churches celebrated the 197<sup>th</sup> birthday of Charles Darwin! Al Mohler’s response was right on target, “It is exceedingly revealing that these liberal church persons would set aside a Sunday in order to celebrate Darwinism. Who next? Nietzsche? Marx? Freud? (2-13-06)

7) You see the demise and death of once great denominations that no longer send gospel missionaries, who deny the inerrancy of Scripture, reject the exclusive claims of Christ, ordain practicing homosexuals to the ministry, advocate same sex marriage, and turn a

deaf ear to the holocaust of abortion. Between 1965 and 2003 membership in the following denominations declined as follows:

- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shrank by a whopping 57.2 percent, to 770,793;
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), 43.5 percent to 2.4 million;
- United Church of Christ, 37.4 percent, to 1.3 million;
- Episcopal Church, 35.8 percent, to 2.3 million;
- United Methodist Church, 25.4 percent, to 8.25 million;
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 12.3 percent, to 4.98 million;
- American Baptist Churches, 6.9 percent, to 1.43 million (larger losses were staved off by growth in black and Hispanic churches).

On the plus side, the Assemblies of God registered a spectacular 377 percent increase, to 2.72 million; the Southern Baptist Convention, a 52.6 percent increase, to 16.43 million; and the U.S. Catholic Church, buoyed by Hispanics, 45.4 percent, to 67.25 million. (*World*, 12-3-05).

- However, this strategy of infiltration by the devil's deceivers is now in full swing within the camp of evangelicalism. You say what is the evidence?

- A major emerging church leader has called for a 5 year moratorium on the issue of homosexuality as sin because there is no clarity on the issue.
- Today 25% of self-described born again adults rely on means other than grace to get to heaven. (*Barna*, 11-29-05)
- And recently, the most popular T.V. preacher (I use the word loosely) in America said in a large rally at the RBC center in Raleigh, "You are the apple of God's eye. The Scripture says God has already approved you and accepted you." Then he used Mark 1:11 for support, a text where God says to Jesus, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (*NIV*) He then said, "God is saying to you, you are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased. If God approves of you, why don't you approve of yourself?" No wonder one attendee said he came because "I leave feeling better than when I came." (*Raleigh News & Observer*, 1-28-06). People came in feeling bad and lost but leave feeling better and lost! No gospel, no substitutionary atonement, no heaven, no hell, no sin, no Savior!
- And recently in his new book *Revolution*, George Barna prophetically opined, "Being in a right relationship with God and His people is what matters. Scripture teaches us that devoting your life to loving God with all you heart mind, strength, and soul is with honors Him. Being part of a local church may facilitate that. Or it might not."

- There is today a great need to heed the words of Jude and "to contend earnestly for the faith" (v.3). There is a fight for the faith, a battle for the Bible, it is a time for truth!

## **I. Know What You Believe v. 3**

In his short epistle, Jude gives seven charges to believers:

1. Earnestly contend for the faith. v. 3
2. Remember the teaching and warning of the apostles. v. 17
3. Build yourselves up in the most holy faith. v. 20

4. Pray in the Holy Spirit. v. 20
5. Keep yourselves in the love of God. v. 21
6. Look for the mercy of the Lord to bring you to eternal life. v. 21
7. Show mercy to Christians who are doubting, snatch unbelievers from the fire, and cautiously show mercy to the corrupt. vs. 22-23

Jude's first challenge comes early in this 25 verse letter in verse 3. This begins the body of the letter. What does he tell us?

### 1) **The faith must be defended.**

- Beloved (*NIV*, "dear friends", *agapetoi*) appears 3 times in vs. 3, 17, 20. It is a term of tenderness as well as transition. Already we have been told we are loved by the Father (v. 1) and we have a prayer for love's multiplication in v. 2.
- Jude was eager to write about our common (*koines*) salvation. He actually desired to write a different kind of letter, one that expounded on our salvation. However, necessity was laid upon him by the Holy Spirit, and instead he writes an apologetic, a defense for the faith, exhorting (*parakalon*), encouraging, urging them "to contend for the once delivered to the saints faith." (literal reading).
- The word contend is *epagonizesthai*, from which we get our word "agonize." The word appears in both a military and an athletic context. It means to fight or struggle with intense effort. Jude calls on us to strive after and fight for the faith.
- No doubt the faith Jude had in mind is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and all that derives from His person and work. A brief survey of this letter informs us that he was concerned about:
  - 1) the security of the believer (vs. 1, 24)
  - 2) the grace of God (v.3)
  - 3) the Lordship of Christ and all that means (v.3)
  - 4) immoral living (vs. 4, 7, 8, 10, 13, 16, 18, 19, 23)
  - 5) unbelief (v. 5)
  - 6) a rebellious spirit (vs. 6, 8, 11)
  - 7) materialism (v.11)
  - 8) deception (vs. 12, 16)
  - 9) divisiveness (v. 19)
  - 10) ungodliness (vs. 4, 15 (4 times), 18).
- Jude understood the faith to be both theological and moral. He understood and understood clearly the rebellious nature of the human heart and the moral havoc that reigns from a rejection of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This is not a time for cowards or the weak hearted. This is not a time for the timid or thin-skinned. This is not a time for retreat, compromise or surrender.

**Transition:** The faith must be defended.

## 2) **The faith has been delivered.**

- The faith has come and it has come once and for all. It is not up for debate or discussion. Paul affirms in Ephesians 4 there is one faith. It is a signed, sealed and settled reality.
- Adrian Rogers says of this faith:
  - It is divine in its conception.
  - It is complete in its content.
  - It is unique in its character.
- It has been delivered (*NIV*, “entrusted”) once for all to the saints. Once for all – it is complete. No corrections and . . . not additions! To the saints. God has, as a sacred trust, passed on the precious soul saving faith to us. How dare we neglect it. How dare we change it. How dare we deny it.
- What is the faith that has been delivered?

I believe there are 12 non-negotiables to which Scripture and the history of the Church give eloquent witness.

  - 1) The inerrancy and infallibility of Holy Scripture.
  - 2) The full and eternal deity of Christ.
  - 3) The miraculous virgin birth and sinless life of Jesus the Messiah.
  - 4) The historic creation of man and woman made in God’s image.
  - 5) The sanctity of all life from conception to natural death.
  - 6) The sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman.
  - 7) The sinfulness of all human persons.
  - 8) The substitutionary death of Christ for sinners.
  - 9) The bodily resurrection of Christ from the grave.
  - 10) Salvation by grace alone thru faith alone in Christ alone.
  - 11) The exclusivity of the gospel of Jesus Christ for sinners.
  - 12) The return of Christ and the assignment of all people either to eternal blessedness in heaven or eternal condemnation in hell.

**Transition:** Yes my friends, there is a faith that has been delivered.

## II. **Know How To Live.** v. 4

Belief and Behavior go hand in hand. Theology matters, for what you believe will determine how you live. We live in a time when far too many preachers and theologians are not content to be delivery boys of the good news. No, they want to be editors of the good news. Unfortunately they do not always display their true colors. Like the wolves in sheeps clothing Jesus warned us about, they slip into our churches and distort the truth and destroy the unsuspecting and . . . ill prepared.

**Transition:** Jude trumpets a 3-fold warning we dare not neglect.

### 1) **Beware of those who deceive the Church.**

- “Crept in certain men” (note the word order for emp.) Sliding in thru a side door, sneaking across the border, worming their way in through the back door, these spiritual deceivers find their way into our Christian communities at all levels. They never walk proudly and honestly thru the front door. Rather they

covertly slip in the back because there is too often no rear guard.

- They look like, and for a while act like friends, but all the while they are an enemy dedicated to our destruction.
- Ill. The false prophet of Revelation 13:11! He looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon.

## 2) **Beware of those who distort God's grace.**

- These false teachers are destined (perfect tense) for judgment, for condemnation, "for the judgment of the great day" (v. 6). God was not surprised by their arrival and neither should we. Their end, their suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (v.7), was ordained by God and predicted as we see in vs. 5-16.
- The judgment of God is just for 2 reasons: 1) their character and 2) their conduct.  
Their character: "ungodly" (6 times in Jude). The word means without worship, reverence. Their conduct: "they turn the grace of God into lewdness" (NIV, "into a license for immorality"). They take the grace and goodness of God in the free gift of salvation and use it as an occasion for sin. Moo says the word, "connotes esp. sins of the flesh: sexual misconduct, drunkenness, gluttony (p. 230).
- They are antinomians who want no rules, no restraint, no one telling them what they should or should not do.
- \* Sadly we are seeing a revival of such thinking in our own day even among professing evangelicals. Claiming to revel in grace, they sneer at calls to holiness, purity and forsaking the ways of the world. What's the big deal about alcohol, tobacco, pornography, R-rated movies, and a little profanity. Did you think that will really compromise my witness? YES! And it is to distort the grace of God, a grace that saves and a grace that changes.
- Don't misunderstand me. We should flee such behavior not because we have to, but because we want to! Freedom in Jesus is to do not what I want, but what I should. Pure undiluted grace will make me fanatical not about rules, but about Christ!

## 3) **Beware of those who deny our Lord.**

- We are back to the Jesus question aren't we?! It is and will always be the great dividing line.
- "Deny" is the last word of v. 4. The one they deny is (NIV) "the only (*monon*) Sovereign (*despoten*) and Lord (*kurion*)."  
The one they deny is "Jesus Christ."
- In the context what they deny is not His deity, not His person, not His work. What they deny is His Lordship. They separate His being Savior from His being Lord. By their sinful life and exploitation of grace they deny His lordship in and over their lives. They are a law unto themselves, accountable to no one including the Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ.
- Deny Him as Lord and you forfeit Him as Savior! One goes with the other. They are a package deal not to be separated.

**Conclusion:** James Merritt has well said, “It is right to fight when you fight for what’s right. We must fight for the faith and we must be contend for the truth. But, we must contend for the faith without being contentious about the faith. We must fight because we must, not because we want to and enjoy it. How do we do this? Hear the wisdom of the apostle Paul in the last letter he ever wrote; 2 Timothy 2:23-26: 23) But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. 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.