

# Contending against Apostasy

15 July 2018 AM – Jude 1:3-4 – Jude18 – Scott Childs

- a) They *turned*. This word speaks of changing or exchanging one thing for another.
- b) The *grace of our God* indicates that God was not their God. Grace is divine enabling on our behalf. Here it may refer to God's forgiveness, His longsuffering, His mercifulness or His love.
- c) The apostates changed this grace into *lasciviousness* or uncontrolled lust. They claimed that *because God's grace is sufficient to forgive any sin, it is fine to enjoy any lust and God will forgive all*. Such reasoning overlooks repentance (the change of mind that must accompany confession). Confession without repentance is mockery. (Romans 6:1-2) "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" Similarly, many changes in contemporary churches today please the flesh (e.g., rock music, immodest dress, entertainment, no preaching on sin, irreverence, etc.).
- d) God expects the opposite of lasciviousness from His children. Read Romans 13:11-14.

## c. Know that false teachers reject God's authority.

- 1) They deny (reject) *the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*.
  - a) The first word translated Lord is not the common word for Lord but one that means Master or Sovereign. Their sin was rejecting Jesus Christ as their Master either by word or by sinful lifestyle.
  - b) If we say we know the Lord but we do things that disgrace him, we are denying that He is our Master.
- 2) The grammar of verse teaches that God and Jesus Christ are the same Being. (*The Granville Sharp Rule*)

**Conclusion:** God wants every Christian to contend for the faith. We must contend defensively, observantly, and intelligently. The better you know the truth, the easier it will be to spot error. Spend quality time in the Bible with the Lord each day.

**Song:** The Bible Stands, **178**

**Introduction:** The word "*contend*" means to compete against. In the first century, it described the fight an athlete had against his opponent. He struggled with great zeal, straining every muscle. The Greek word used here has an intensive prefix. Thus, we read, "*earnestly contend*".  
**Transition:** God commands us to contend for the faith against apostasy. To be effective, we must contend in three specific ways.

*The 1<sup>st</sup> specific way we must contend is to ...*

## 1. Contend Defensively (v.3)

### a. We are to contend for **the** faith

- 1) The word "*faith*" as used in this verse is not ones faith or trust in Christ. It rather **describes all the doctrines of Christianity set out for Christians in the New Testament**.
- 2) Jude identifies "*the faith*" as the one once delivered to the saints.
  - a) The word "*once*" means once for all. The doctrines of Christianity are not evolving. New Testament prophets received doctrine "in part" until the Bible was completed. (1 Corinthians 13:9-10) "*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*" We now have a complete Bible and a complete set of Christian doctrine.
  - b) God is no longer sending men new revelations of Christian doctrine.
- 3) As believers, we must contend against any attempt to soften, twist or change the Christian doctrines of the faith in the Bible.

### b. We must contend for **our** faith

- 1) Jude said this faith was delivered to the saints. In other words, the faith is ours to defend.
- 2) If you know Christ as your Saviour, it is your faith. Therefore, you have a personal responsibility to contend for the faith. You must know the Bible well enough that you can defend its truth. The Bible must be in your heart

and mind so that when you hear error, you will spot it immediately.

- 3) Cults and false teachers prey on ignorant Christians who are not wise enough to spot the hidden errors included in their message.
- 4) A key verse is 2 Timothy 2:15, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> specific way we must contend is to ...*

## 2. Contend Observantly (v.4)

### a. False teachers creep in unawares

- 1) These false teachers or apostates sneak into churches. The word "*crept*" means to enter secretly. Vincent adds that it is, to slip in by a side-door.
- 2) They initially hide their identity by acting like true Christians and Christians begin to trust them. They have slick, convincing arguments for all their doctrinal differences. (2 Peter 2:1) "*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*"
- 3) It is true, not every troublemaker in a church is an apostate. Some may be carnal Christians. They too can be very destructive.
- 4) We must be very discerning. Pointing out a false teacher is not unloving or harsh. It is necessary and right.
  - a) False teachers question sound doctrine.
  - b) False teachers gossip their opposition.
  - c) False teachers encourage harmful change. E.g., change the church name, change doctrine, change standards, change music, change Bible versions, or change the service structure.
- 5) What should you do? Immediately report any subtle doctrinal questioning or opposition by church attendees to your pastor. Do not listen to their arguments. The devil is deceitful.

### b. Their subtle ways are not new

- 1) They were ordained of old to this condemnation. The word translated "*ordained of old*" means to write before. The word does **not** mean that God planned their deeds and doom, it simply means that God wrote in times past of their deeds and their doom. We find the same word in (Romans 15:4) "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*"
- 2) The Bible describes many such troublemakers.
  - a) Satan was the first when he said to Eve, "Yea, hath God said?" Eve and Adam sinned and plunged the human race into sin.
  - b) Korah, Dathan, and Abiram opposed Moses and died in an earthquake.
  - c) Moses' sister Miriam opposed him and she contracted leprosy.
- 3) As Christians, we must contend **observingly**. We must know the Scriptures well, listen carefully for any contrary ideas, and stand ready to defend truth.

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> specific way we must contend is to ...*

## 3. Contend Intelligently (v.4)

Here, Jude deals with the specific type of apostates that were troubling the first Century churches. We see similarities today.

### a. Know that false teachers are ungodly

- 1) On the surface troublemakers try to appear respectable, but do not forget that they crept in secretly.
- 2) They may use spiritual language, carry a Bible, dress smart, and be polite, but this is only on the outside.
- 3) In their hearts, these troublemakers are ungodly.
- 4) The word "*ungodly*" literally refers to impious men, in whom there is no spirit of reverence. <sup>(Pulpit)</sup> They do not truly reverence the LORD. True apostates are not saved.
- 5) A troublemaker may deceive us, but no one can deceive God.

### b. Know that false teachers twist God's grace

- 1) They turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness.