

## Sunday Morning Message

July 4, 2021

### *Messages from Jude*

*Jude 1:1 – 4 – Some Things Are Worth Fighting For*

Text – Jude 1:1 - 4

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:1 - 4

### Introduction

The author to *The Epistle of Jude* is identified in the first verse as being the brother of James. Jude and James were both, in fact, the half-brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). He is referred to as Judas in Mark 6:3. Neither Jude nor James was a believer until after the resurrection. (John 7:1 – 5; Acts 1:14) The Epistle of Jude was probably written after Peter wrote his second recorded epistle (66 – 67 A.D.). As Peter mentions the coming of false teachers, Jude is dealing with the reality of them, as did John in his epistles. Jude quotes from 2 Peter 3:3 in this letter, and indicates that the statement was made by the apostles (vs. 17 – 18).

*"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts," (2 Peter 3:3)*

Like Peter, Jude is writing at a time of great persecution, but Jude's focus is not on the terrible persecution and suffering that believers were enduring, but rather on the apostasy that was creeping into the churches during this time.

Jude does not quote directly from the Old Testament but he alludes to it many times with frequent mentions of Old Testament characters, which we will point out as we see them in the letter. He quotes from two "pseudepigraphal" books, which were books attributed to certain authors, but were likely written by others much later: *The Book of Enoch* (v. 14 – 15); and *The Assumption of Moses* (v. 9). The fact that Jude refers to these sources does not mean that these writings were to be considered inspired. Paul had quoted from poets, but we do not consider them to be inspired either. (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12; 1 Corinthians 15:33 – Greek Proverb by Menander)

Jude's letter is a scathing condemnation of the false teachers that had crept into Christianity. Jude was fighting against the same Gnosticism that John was dealing with. The Gnostics felt that since their spirit was completely good, and their bodies completely evil, they could separate them and live licentiously, allowing the body to indulge in any

pleasure that it desired. This was, of course, completely contrary to the teachings of the Bible:

*"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:20)*

## Transition

In this letter, Jude will call all believers to fight for the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are some things that are worth fighting for.

### I. The Necessary Salutations (vs. 1 – 2)

Notice that Jude does not boast of his earthly relationship to Jesus but prefers to call himself the “servant of Jesus Christ.” The word for servant here is δοῦλος (*doulos*), which literally means a slave.

Jude was not an apostle. In fact, the Scriptures are fairly clear that Jude did not even become a believer until after the resurrection (See John 7:1 – 5).

Jude’s audience is not specifically indicated. This letter is known as a “general epistle,” meaning it was addressed to more than one individual or even one local church. The letter definitely has a Jewish flavor to it. Some have speculated that it was written to Jewish believers in and around Jerusalem, probably just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus in 70 A.D.

Notice that Jude refers to believers as not only being sanctified (ἡγιασμένοις from ἀγιάζω – *hagiazō*), or set apart, but also that they were being “preserved” (τετηρημένοις from τηρέω – *tēreō*), which means that these believers were being kept, guarded or watched over. This is the same word, translated “reserved” in vs. 6 and 13. Isn’t it awesome to know that the Lord is watching over us, protecting us, and preserving us. I am glad that my salvation is preserved by Him, and not by me.

McGee says this regarding the word, “preserved:”

There are several words I must deal with in this text because of their importance. The first word is *preserved*. It is this word that gives us the key to the Book of Jude which presents the apostasy as it is presented nowhere else in Scripture. How frightful it is! But Jude doesn’t write just to frighten the daylights out of us. Nor does he write just to draw a vivid picture for our information; he gives us this background in order that he might give *assurance* in days of apostasy. He uses the

word *keep* four times, which is what the word *preserve* means. They are kept in Jesus Christ—God is the one who keeps them. Notice verse 21 says “*keep yourselves in the love of God*” and verse 24 says “*now unto him that is able to keep you from falling.*” You may call it anything you want to, but it gives assurance of salvation to the believer even in the dark days of apostasy.<sup>1</sup>

Jude concludes his greeting by praying that God’s mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to these faithful and struggling believers. We serve a merciful and loving Saviour whom we are at peace with. The world is at war with Him, but we have made peace with Him through salvation ([see Romans 5:1 – 11](#)).

Again, quoting McGee: “Peace with God is to know that God is not difficult to get along with. He is not making it hard for me; He is not making it hard for you. He wants us to know that He hasn’t anything against us now that we know that we are sinners and have trusted Christ as our Savior. The world may point its finger at you and reject you, but God has accepted you. He loves you, and He wants to give you that peace so that at night you can pillow your head on God’s promises.”<sup>2</sup>

## II. The Need for Soldiers (v. 3)

It seems that Jude intended to write a treatise on the doctrine of salvation, but instead thought it was more necessary to write a letter exhorting his readers to earnestly contend (or fight) for the faith.

We are called to fight for the faith. We are soldiers in the Lord’s army.

Warren Wiersbe said this regarding this verse:

“I must confess that I sympathize with Jude. In my own ministry, I would much rather encourage the saints than declare war on the apostates. But when the enemy is in the field, the watchmen dare not go to sleep. The Christian life is a battleground, not a playground.”<sup>3</sup>

Illustrate - Isaac Watts once preached a sermon on 1 Corinthians 16:13: “*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you [act] like men, be strong.*” When he published the sermon, he added a poem to it; we sing it today as one of our spiritual songs.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 848.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 549.

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?<sup>4</sup>

Why did God need soldiers? Because apostasy was creeping in. It wasn't that bad in Jude's day. The early church was known for steadfast adherence to the truth:

*"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:41-42)*

However, as time progressed in the first century, apostasy, or false doctrine began to creep in. It will be worse when John writes to them later. It is even worse today. When the Lord Jesus comes for His saints in the Rapture, the world will be filled with total apostasy.

One of the characteristics of false doctrine is that is not based upon a literal interpretation of Scripture. We believe the Bible, and we believe the Bible is to interpreted literally. We do not spiritualize, or symbolically interpret what the Bible says.

Another characteristic of false doctrine is that is often based upon extrabiblical authority (from writings other than the Bible). In other words, it is rooted in the writings or teachings of men, not the Bible.

### **III. The Nuisance Caused by Satan (v. 4)**

These nuisances or enemies of the Truth are not saved men who have wandered from the Truth, but are lost men who never knew the Truth and never believed the Truth. Later on in this letter, we will learn that these men were motivated by greed. They perverted the Truth for money. Jesus spoke about these lost men within the church in His Parable of the Tares.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

*"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."* (Matthew 13:24-30)

These lost and false teachers were turning God's grace into "lasciviousness" or filthiness. Lasciviousness is when you allow your flesh to do whatever it desires. It has the idea of unbridled lust. If it feels good – do it.

McArthur defines this word as: **lewdness**. Lit. "unrestrained vice" or "gross immorality," which describes the shameless lifestyle of one who irreverently flaunts God's grace by indulging in unchecked and open immorality (cf. Rom. 6:15).<sup>5</sup>

Paul spoke against this false idea:

*"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?"* (Romans 6:1-2)

And these heretics were promoted this wickedness in the name of grace. Because we are saved, we can now do whatever our flesh desires. This is not what grace is supposed to be all about. Thank God, that as believers, we have liberty, but we do not have the freedom to sin willfully in order to satisfy our flesh. By doing so, we are actually denying the Lord who saved us.

We need to resist and stand against this type of false doctrine as well as all other forms of heresy that tries to creep into our church.

## Conclusion

There are a lot of things that are not worth fighting for, but there are also some things that are:

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Lit. literally

<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1985.

## **The Family is Worth Fighting For**

The family is under attack in our nation. The government is taking more and more control in areas that should be under the dominion of the family. God ordained only three institutions: the family was ordained first, then the government, and finally the church. The government needs to stay out of the areas that God has given to the family. It is my job as a dad to teach my children. It is my job as a dad to provide for my family. If we keep going the way we are going, the government will assume total control of the family, and that is something we must be willing fight for to ensure that it does not happen.

## **The Faith is Worth Fighting For**

We do not fight people. Our enemy is the Devil and all of the doctrines he spues into this world, and even attempts to bring into our churches.

*"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]." (Ephesians 6:12)*

In order to fight for the Truth, you will need to know the Truth. Jesus said:

*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)*

That is why you need to study the Bible.

## **The Freedom to Practice the Faith is Worth Fighting For**

That is one of the reasons our fathers fought for independence from Britain. We wanted the freedom to say, believe, and practice what we wanted, without having our consciences dictated to by government.

Much of our fighting should be done on our knees:

*"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:1-4)*

However, sometimes it becomes necessary to physically fight in order to defend our liberty:

The Declaration of Independence was a call to fight:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The Civil War was also necessary in order to secure the liberty of an entire race of people who had been denied liberty and were living for centuries in bondage to other men.

Abraham Lincoln reflected on this fight for freedom in his Gettysburg Address as he honored the men who died in that terrible battle, which took place, interestingly enough on the first week of July, in 1863. He said in that great speech:

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Again, let me emphasize that our fighting begins with us on our knees, and then we must plead with our sound doctrine the truths that we hold dear. We contend with our words and we stand steadfastly for the Truth, and when it becomes absolutely necessary; when all other means have been exhausted, we must be willing to lay down our lives for our faith.