OVERVIEW OF JUDE –
CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

THE THREAT OF APOSTATE TEACHERS (WHO ARE DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION) CALLS BELIEVERS TO FRONT LINE BATTLE POSITIONS

INTRODUCTION:

Read **vv. 1-4** – We have another short epistle – this time written by Jude, the brother of James and half brother of Jesus. It is the only NT book devoted exclusively to **combating apostasy** – thus the theme of **contending earnestly for the faith**. We all know the definition of apostasy = a falling away from what is true. Here the context of apostasy will be the true Christian faith "*once for all handed down to the saints*" by the apostolic teaching. All false teaching does not represent apostasy. You have to have been in a situation that initially held to the truth and then fell away from that orthodox position. Examples are numerous. I grew up outside of Philadelphia in a United Presbyterian Church that taught the truth. But the denomination was already sinking into apostasy. We have earlier talked about colleges and seminaries that fell away. You could reference preachers you have known or individual churches you have known. The first half of the book of Jude deals with a description of apostate teachers (:**1-16**) – how to recognize them; the last half of the book deals with a defense against apostate teachers (:**17-25**) – How to contend against them.

But before we address the urgency of **contending for the faith**, I am going to talk briefly about the urgency this week of **contending for our country**. As you know, Tuesday is Election Day here in the United States. [I guess now it is more like Election Month with all of the early voting.] We are experiencing **national apostasy**. I know in this church we don't usually address political topics. But the choice as citizens when it comes to our responsibility to vote is no longer between who likes one set of economic policies vs. another or one set of foreign policies vs another or who is in favor of less government regulation or more. No, the choice has become much more fundamental and transformative and must be addressed by the church. It is a choice between those who love America and want to conserve its institutions (despite acknowledging our imperfections) vs. those who hate America and want to destroy our institutions and create an entirely different system of government.

I call this national apostasy because as we studied earlier in the Fall at our Legacy Conference, our country was founded on **Christian principles**. Our present course as a nation represents a radical departure from our origins. We don't have to be ashamed of our heritage. We should be proud to be Americans and to fly the American flag that our military heroes have died for as they have defended this country. People are trying to rewrite history and ascribe evil roots to our beginnings – as if we were founded on hatred and bigotry and slavery and white oppression. These are serious claims that are contradicted by the facts. We need to reestablish **patriotism** here in America.

So just stop for a moment and consider how **crazy** things have become in today's political climate. And I am speaking of the national scene more directly than Maryland state politics. The choice you face when you go to vote (and I urge you to vote) is a monumental one. It used to be

that we were concerned with such straightforward biblical stances like supporting life vs. aborting babies, or maintaining the separation of the two genders and not celebrating the LGBTQ+ agenda. But now just look at the shocking platform of the far left DSA – the Democratic Socialists of America:

- They are advocating for apostasy from capitalism to embrace **socialism** – How has that worked for countries like Venezuela and Cuba? They want government to start to seize control of some of the means of production.
- They have **burdensome tax proposals** that would unfairly target the rich – claiming that the rich are not presently paying their fair share -- look at how business leaders are already fleeing states like New York and California.
- They undermine **law and order** by wanting to eliminate ICE, to decrease funding for policing activities, to change the philosophy and structure of our prison system – look at the current riots and unrest in Europe – Is that how we follow the biblical mandate to support a peaceful environment as much as possible?
- They want to make radical changes to our **fundamental government institutions** like Congress, like the Supreme Court so that they would be unrecognizeable
- They want **free Medicare for all** – with no consideration of how to pay for the program
- They want **open borders** so that we can hardly be defined as a nation with voting rights extended to anyone inside of our borders
- They favor **Palestine** while hating Israel and fostering antisemitism
- They would allow **men to participate in women's sports** and be present in women's locker rooms

The list of horrors goes on … I just want to make the point that this is not some type of insidious infiltration of apostasy. This is blatant and in your face. They are not hiding their agenda. It is out on their official website. They want you to vote for such a platform. If this is their platform when they are trying to win your vote, just imagine how much more radical they will get when protected in office. We need to contend for our national identity before it is too late.
VOTE FOR AMERICA!

But back to Jude and **contending for the faith**. Our hope does not rest in human government but in the salvation provided to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes we are citizens of the United States and we want to be responsible citizens. But more importantly we have a higher calling as members of God's kingdom. We look forward to the triumphant return of Christ to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace here on this earth.

There are some important structural observations regarding this epistle right at the outset of our study.

Chiastic Structure suggested by Brian Baker:

A To you who are *kept* in Jesus Christ (1)
  B *Mercy* to you (2)
    C Common *salvation* (3a)
      D *Contend* earnestly *for the faith* (3b)
        E *Licentious* people (4)

F I *remind* you (5a)
G The Lord *destroyed unbelievers* (5b)
H Angels in *darkness* for rebelling (6)
I *Sodom and Gomorrah* an example (7)
J Defilement during *sleep* (8)
K Michael and Satan *argued about Moses* (9)
L Like *unreasoning animals* (10)
M Destruction for *ungodly actions* (10)
N *Woe to them!* (11)
M' Cain punished for *ungodly actions* (11)
L' Balaam's *unreasoning animal* (11)
K' Korah *disputed with Moses* (11)
J' Hidden reefs present *unseen* danger (12)
I' Open exhibition of *shame* (12-13)
H' Stars wander in *darkness* (13)
G' Enoch prophesied *judgment on the ungodly* (14-15)
F' *Remember* the apostles' warning (17)
E' *Mocking* people (18-19)
D' *Build yourselves* up *in the faith* (20)
C' Wait for *eternal life* (21)
B' Have *mercy* on some (22-23)
A' To Him who *keeps* you from falling (24).

L.D. Williams: Notes how the author is very fond of **triple arrangements**. In just a span of 25 verses, Judge presents **11 groups of triples**:

<u>vi -- The author:</u>
1. Jude
2. Servant of Jesus Christ
3. Brother of James

<u>vi -- Ones addressed:</u>
1. Called
2. Cherished -- Beloved in God
3. Kept for Jesus Christ

<u>v2 -- Salutations</u>
1. Mercy
2. Peace
3. Love

<u>vv. 5-7 -- Examples of Judgments</u>
1. Jewish unbelievers in the wilderness after the Exodus
2. Angels who sinned
3. Gentile sinners: Sodom and Gomorrah

vv. 8-10 -- The dreamers:

1. Defile the flesh
2. Rebel against authority
3. Rail at dignities

v 11 -- False teachers went:

1. In the way of Cain
2. Error of Balaam
3. Gainsaying of Korah

v. 16 -- False Teachers are:

1. Murmurers
2. Complainers
3. Walking after their own lust

v. 19 -- These are:

1. They who make separations
2. Sensual
3. Having not the spirit

v. 20 -- Christians are to:

1. Build up yourselves
2. Pray in the Holy Spirit
3. Keep yourselves in the love of God

vv. 22-23 -- How to deal with those in error:

1. On some have mercy
2. On some save, snatching them out of the fire
3. On some have mercy with fear

v. 25 -- Giving glory to God:

1. Before all time
2. Now
3. For evermore

OVERVIEW: The church has come under attack from within as apostate false teachers continue to deceive many people and lead them astray. Jude delivers a call to arms as he exposes these wolves in sheep's clothing and emphasizes their certain destruction. Believers must contend earnestly for the faith, guard their own spiritual lives, use all of the spiritual resources at their disposal and actively seek the restoration and protection of the vulnerable flock of God.
These false teachers have created a false dichotomy between the spiritual and the material, excusing their licentiousness which is a practical denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their daily lives. Their lives are marked by lust, rebellion and irreverence. They promise great things while all the time selfishly manipulating people for their own gain. Their eternal punishment is certain as pictured in a number of significant OT examples. But the believers have incredible

spiritual resources and the guarantee of the preserving work of the Triune God which will safely bring us to glory in a state of complete sanctification. We need to have a heart of mercy and compassion for those under attack and seek to rescue them while being sensitive to the dangers involved for both them and for ourselves.

OUTLINE:

(:1-2) SALUTATION – AUTHOR / RECIPIENTS / GREETING – THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR THE SECURITY OF BELIEVERS

I. (:3-4) OPPOSING APOSTATE TEACHERS

II. (:5-11) DESCRIBING APOSTATE TEACHERS

III. (:12-16) EXPOSING APOSTATE TEACHERS

IV. (:17-25) DEFENDING AGAINST APOSTATE TEACHERS

(:24-25) DOXOLOGY – GLORY TO GOD FOR THE SECURITY OF BELIEVERS

(:1-2) SALUTATION – AUTHOR / RECIPIENTS / GREETING THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR THE SECURITY OF BELIEVERS

A. (:1a) AUTHOR = JUDE

Jude wrote this letter in A.D. 68–70, shortly after Peter finished his second epistle. The two letters are closely related, containing several nearly identical descriptions of false teachers and apostasy.

1. Relationship to Christ – *a bondservant of Jesus Christ*
   Submitted to the Lordship of Christ and ministering by His authority

2. Relationship to the Church – *and brother of James*
   Leader of Jerusalem church who wrote NT book of James
   Both were half-brothers of Jesus

B. (:1b) RECIPIENTS -- 3 DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SECURITY OF BELIEVERS

who enjoy God's Sovereign Favor

1. Called to Holiness and Christlikeness
   "*To those who are the called*"
   Called to live a transformed life
   Rom. 8:28 -- "*to those who are called according to His purpose*"
   Never separate the calling from the purpose
   Effectual Calling – Precious doctrine of Election; how can believers despise this doctrine of love and security?

2. Cherished by the Love of our Heavenly Father
"*beloved in God the Father*"
Little children appreciate the **security** of the love of their parents;
[working up in my study and my little Callie girl comes up to give me a big hug]
We can't do anything that would separate us from the secure love of God –

Rom. 8:31-39

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? [32] He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? [33] Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; [34] who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [36] Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." [37] But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. [38] For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Kept for Fellowship with Jesus Christ for all eternity
"*and kept for Jesus Christ*"

All of these 3 verbs are in the passive tense – stressing the **action of God** – He sovereignly accomplishes all of this for our benefit and security
Jude will close this epistle in **vs. 21** to put the responsibility on believers to keep themselves in the love of Jesus

C. (:2) GREETING -- 3 BLESSINGS MULTIPLIED TO BELIEVERS

Mercy / Peace / Love be multiplied to you

S. Maxwell Coder: There is an upward look in the word *mercy*, an inward look in the word *peace*, an outward look in the word *love*. These three relate us properly to God, to our own inner being, to our brethren around us. When they are multiplied, and only then, will we be able to cope with the **great apostasy** of the last days.

I. (:3-4) OPPOSING APOSTATE TEACHERS

BIG IDEA: CONTEND FOR THE HISTORICAL FAITH THAT REQUIRES COMMITMENT TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

A. (:3) MAIN EXHORTATION – CONTEND FOR THE HISTORIC FAITH OF CHRISTIANITY --

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

It would be much more pleasant to meditate on the precious truths associated with our salvation – but contending for the faith must take priority here – this is an urgent responsibility
We are called to be Fighters – to be soldiers of Christ – not to shrink back from the battlefield but to engage the enemy and strong and courageous

The Greek word translated **"contend"** is related to the word from which we get our word *agonize*. It describes intense effort in an athletic contest.

Illustration:

Judges 6:30-32 Gideon contending for the faith – tearing down idol worship of Baal

> *Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it." [31] But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar." [32] Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he had torn down his altar.*

Ray Stedman:
Now some think that *contending for the faith* means to roll the Bible up into a bludgeon with which to beat people over the head. Such people feel that they need to be very contentious in contending for the faith. But this is not what Jude has in mind at all. He is simply talking about the need for **proclaiming the truth**. As Charles Spurgeon used to put it: "The truth is like a lion. Whoever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose and it will defend itself." This is the way the word of God is. If we begin to proclaim it, it will defend itself.

Our faith is not something that anybody has manufactured; it was **delivered to us**. It is not fabricated or worked up by a collection of individuals. It is one body of facts that is consistently delivered by authoritative persons, the apostles. It has come to us through them. Furthermore, Jude says that it was *once for all delivered*. It was only given at one time in the history of the world. It does not need any additions.

B. (:4a) 3 DESCRIPTIONS OF THE APOSTATE TEACHERS ATTACKING THE FAITH

1. Sneaky Tactics
   "*For certain persons have crept in unnoticed,*"
   Secret agenda – using the same vocabulary, but changing the meanings
   Pretending to subscribe to statements of faith – but actually imposters
   Requires leadership especially to exercise discernment

2. Sovereign Targeting for Judgment
   "*those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation*"

   You cannot fool God – No surprises with Him
   Their destiny is identified right up front as *condemnation* – no question that these are

apostates who are not actually saved

3. Sensual Practices – perverting the grace of God
"*ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness*"

Evaluate their moral behavior – one of the tests of **1 John**

Their reasoning was essentially:
"If grace forgives sin, then sin isn't a serious problem."
Grace actually should teach us to reject sin's dominion – **Rom. 6-8**

C. (:4b) MAIN ERROR = DENYING LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST
"*and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*."

We have plenty of so-called Christian teachers and leaders today who advocate that there can be some kind of disconnect between receiving Jesus as your Savior, your ticket to heaven, while having no transformed life and not even submitting to Jesus as Lord. Not a new heresy.

II. (:5-11) DESCRIBING APOSTATE TEACHERS -- DESERVED JUDGMENT FOR APOSTATE TEACHERS MARKED BY IRREVERENCE / REBELLION / SENSUALITY

A. (:5-7) 3 OT Reminders of God's Certain Judgment against Irreverence / Rebellion / Sensuality
[Note Chiastic structure when you compare with vvs. 5-7 to vs. 8]

1. (:5) Certain Judgment against Irreverence and Unbelief (No Fear of God) – Example of Israelites in Wilderness – THE JEWS
"*Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.*"

Punishment: destroyed

Thomas Schreiner: The **main point** Jude makes is clear. No person in the believing community can presume on God's grace, thinking that an initial decision to follow Christ or baptism ensures future salvation regardless of how one responds to false teachers. Israel's apostasy warns all those who think an initial commitment secures their future destiny without ongoing obedience. Those who are God's people demonstrate the genuineness of their salvation by persevering to the end. The warnings are one of the means by which God preserves his people until the end. Those who ignore such warnings neglect the means God has appointed for obtaining eschatological salvation. Nor should such a perspective be considered a form of works righteousness. Jude pinpoints the reason Israel was judged. They failed to "believe" in God. The call to perseverance is not a summons to something above and beyond faith. God summons his

people to believe in his promises to the end of their lives. Christians never get beyond the need to believe and trust, and all apostasy stems from a failure to trust in God's saving promises in Christ.

2. (:6) Certain Judgment against Rebellion – Example of Angels who Rebelled against Authority – THE ANGELS
"*And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.*"

Context: **Genesis 6** – the angels who cohabited with human women – another example of going after strange flesh – like we see in the next example of Sodom and Gomorrah

Punishment: Reserved in place of darkness in chains for the final judgment day

3. (:7) Certain Judgment against Sensuality and Immorality – Example of Sodom and Gomorrah – THE GENTILES
"*Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.*"

Punishment: Eternal fire

B. (:8) 3 Damning Characteristics of These Apostate Dreamers
"*Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming*"
These apostates tried to authenticate their teaching by referencing the divine revelation they had received in personal dreams – so they were claiming some type of prophetic authority that was experiential and therefore difficult to refute. But just look at their behavior.

1. Marked by Lust **--** "*defile the flesh*"

2. Marked by Rebellion **--** "*reject authority*"

3. Marked by Irreverence and Unbelief – No Fear of God **--** "*revile angelic majesties*"
Perhaps scoffing at the notion of the glorious angels returning with Christ in judgment to hold these apostate teachers accountable

Elaborating on this last concept:
(:9-10) UTTER PRESUMPTION AND FOLLY OF REJECTING ANY CONCEPT OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

- **(:9) Presumption of Assuming the Role of Executing Vengeance**
"*But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'*"

Ray Stedman: Jude's argument is, if archangels, who have so much power and knowledge of truth, are careful to respect the God-given dignity of a fallen angel, then why should we, mere

men, speak contemptuously of the principalities and the powers in high places? It is a thing to think about, isn't it, when certain people today just sneer at the idea that the scriptures present the existence of demons or Satan.

- **(:10) Folly of Rejecting any Concept of the Fear of the Lord**
  "*But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed*."

C. (:11) 3 OT EXAMPLES OF BIG-TIME REBELLION AND CERTAIN DOOM

Blast of Condemnation: "*Woe to them*!" – Highlighted at the heart of the book as we looked at earlier in the chiastic structure of the epistle – Severe pronouncement of judgment – they will not escape accountability; not only do they deserve extreme punishment because of their close association with the truth – but they not only rejected that truth but tried to seduce others to turn away from the faith

1. Example of Cain – False Worship -- Choosing Prideful Works over Faith . . . and Murder over Love
   "*For they have gone the way of Cain*"

Ray Stedman: He speaks of "*the way of Cain*," which was essentially selfishness. Cain stands forever as the man who thought only of himself, who had no concern or love for his brother, but put him to death. He looked out only for his own welfare, and Jude says that is the first step on the way to ultimate rebellion -- selfishness.

Warren Wiersbe: the way of religion without faith

2. Example of Balaam – Greedy Ministry -- Merchandising the Prophetic Gift
   "*and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam*"
   the willingness to corrupt others for personal gain.

Ray Stedman: In return for money, Balaam taught the children of Israel how to sin, (**Num 31:15**). He sent the pagan women among the camp to seduce the men of Israel sexually, as well as to introduce them to the worship of idols, which involved sexual rites. Thus, he became guilty of teaching others to sin. That is the error of Balaam.

3. Example of Korah – Rebelling Against God's Appointed Authorities
   "*and perished in the rebellion of Korah*"

III. (:12-16) EXPOSING APOSTATE TEACHERS --
DESPITE THEIR DECEPTIVE NATURE, THE APOSTATE TEACHERS ARE EXPOSED AND DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION FOR THEIR PURSUIT OF UNGODLINESS

A. (:12-13) DECEPTIVE NATURE EXPOSED

1. Trojan Horse Syndrome – Danger from Within – The Danger of Apostasy

a. Hidden Danger

"*These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts*"

b. Arrogant and Devoid of the Fear of God

"*when they feast with you without fear*"

c. Characterized by Selfishness rather than Love

"*caring for themselves*"

Peter Davids: Having made his series of three charges characterizing the teachers by comparing them to notorious sinners in the past (all of whom were people who in one way or another apostatized from the truth), Jude now turns to their effect on the local community of the Jesus movement. As teachers they promise benefit to the community, but in fact they have no benefit to offer.

2. Four Examples from Nature of Disappointing and Shameful Outcomes

a. Clouds that fail to deliver needed rainfall – empty
The Disappointing of Apostasy (Harmon)

"*clouds without water, carried along by winds*"

b. Trees that fail to yield fruit -- dead

"*autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted*"

The Deadness of Apostasy

c. Waves that wash up shame – wild and uncontrolled

"*wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam*"

The Disgracefulness of Apostasy

d. Stars doomed to darkness – aimless – **The Darkness of Apostasy**

"*wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever*"

Michael Green: In these two verses, then, Jude has evoked a swift, bold picture of the men he is castigating. They are as dangerous as sunken rocks, as selfish as perverted shepherds, as useless as rainless clouds, as dead as barren trees, as dirty as the foaming sea, and as certain of doom as the fallen angels.

S. Maxwell Coder: In reading this list, one is reminded by way of contrast with the Lord whom these men deny. He is the Rock of our salvation; they are hidden rocks threatening shipwreck to the faith. He comes with clouds to refresh His people forever; these are clouds which do not even bring temporary blessing. He is a tree of life; these are trees of death. He leads beside still waters; these are like the restless troubled sea. He is the bright and morning Star, heralding the coming day; these are wandering stars presaging a night of eternal darkness.

B. (:14-15) ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONDEMNATION GUARANTEED --- PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT AGAINST UNGODLY FALSE TEACHERS

1. Source of the Prophecy – extra-Biblical

"*And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying*"

book not inspired so not part of the canon, but still has some historical value;
Jude is quoting it under inspiration of the Holy Spirit

2. Execution of Judgment

"*Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all*"

Illustration (Harmon): Name Methuselah means *When he is dead, it shall be sent.*

Whenever that verb, *shalat*, is used in the Old Testament, it's used 60 times to talk about impending judgment, a judgment that is going to come. Every time it's used in the Old Testament, it's about imminent judgment that is to come. Enoch lived before what? Judgment before the flood. And I think what happened was this, God came to Enoch one day and God said, Enoch, I'm going to judge this world. I'm going to judge this sinful planet.

And Enoch said, God, when are you going to do that? And God said, Enoch, your wife, she's going to have a son. And when that son that your wife is going to have, when he is dead, It, the flood, shall be sent. And so therefore Methuselah, the name Methuselah, was a constant reminder of the judgment that was going to come.

He lived longer than anyone else -- 969 years. You know why? Because he is a symbol of the long suffering of God. God waited in the days of Noah for people to repent. And by the way, Methuselah had a grandson. Noah. And I imagine while Noah was building that ark, he went over to see how Grandpa Methuselah was feeling a lot of times. Because when Methuselah died, the judgment of God would come. According to Jewish tradition, Methuselah died just seven days before the flood. Judgment came, just like God said.

3. Accountability for Ungodliness – most ungodly verse in the Bible

"*and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.*" - Ungodly Deeds / Way / Speech

C. (:16) FOUR FATAL CHARACTER FLAWS EXPOSED

1. Unthankful -- "*These are grumblers*"

2. Judgmental -- "*finding fault* "

3. Immoral -- "*following after their own lusts*"

4. Manipulative

"*they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage*."

IV. (:17-25) DEFENDING AGAINST APOSTATE TEACHERS – HOW TO OPPOSE THEM --
THE UNGODLINESS OF RELIGIOUS IMPOSTERS ONLY SERVES TO INCREASE OUR SENSE OF URGENCY IN PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE FLOCK

Stephen Motyer: The final section of the letter counsels the readers what to do about this situation. It is here that Jude surprises the modern reader the most, for he does not instruct them to throw the others out.

A. (:17-19) NO SURPRISES

"*But you beloved*"

Richard Bauckham: The opening phrase, with the vocative, "*my dear friends,*" indicates a **major transition** in which Jude repeats the thought of the opening phrase in **v 5**. This formal transition indicates the transition from OT types and prophecies (**vv 5–16**) to an apostolic prophecy (**vv 17–19**). Jude is still recalling his readers to the teaching they received at the time of their conversion, but he now moves from the OT material in which they were instructed to the prophecies which the apostolic founders of their church(es) gave them on their own authority.

1. (:17-18a) Scenario Predicted by the Apostles

"*ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you*"

2. (:18b) Arrogance Motivated by Unrestrained Sensuality

- Time reference – *in the last time*
- Character reference – *mockers / scoffers* [cf. **2 Peter**]
- Lifestyle reference – *following after their own ungodly lusts*

3. (:19) Division Accomplished by Fleshly Orientation

"*These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit*"

Not the type of **division** that leads to people leaving the church [these bad actors were still present at their love feasts] – but creating some type of elitist group within the church that is loyal to the apostate teachers – cf. the cliques that formed within the church at Corinth.

B. (:20-21) NO COMPLACENCY – STAY UNITED TO CHRIST

"*But you beloved*"

"*keep yourselves in the love of God*"

Grammatically the only imperative in these verses is "*Keep yourself in God's love*" – the other verbs are participles – two participles explaining how to live out this primary command and then a temporal participle with an eschatological focus.

1. 2 Ways to Keep Oneself in the Love of God

a. Pursue Mutual Edification – by the Word of God

"*building yourselves up on your most holy faith*"

b. Practice Focused Prayer – by Dependence upon God

"*praying in the Holy Spirit*"

prayer shaped and empowered by the Holy Spirit and consistent with God's revealed will.

2. Future Expectancy -- Pant for Eternity – By Focusing on Eternity

"*waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life*"

S. Maxwell Coder: These wonderful verses begin with an inward look at the developing of Christian character; we are to be building. They continue with an outward look at everything and everyone for whom we should intercede; we are to be praying. Then they look upward at the One who loves us and who has made us His children; we are to keep ourselves in the love of God. They conclude with a forward look at the return of our Saviour and the dawn of eternal life in His presence; we are to be looking and waiting for the final great manifestation of His mercy.

C. (:22-23) NO ABANDONING OF THE FLOCK

1. Compassion Towards the Wavering

"*And have mercy on some, who are doubting*"

2. Deliverance Towards the Desperate

"*save others, snatching them out of the fire*"

3. Holy Trepidation Towards the Ensnared

"*and on some have mercy with fear,*
hating even the garment polluted by the flesh"

John MacArthur: The first group are those who need compassion and tenderness because sincere doubts trouble them. Their problem is not a violent reaction against Christianity; their problem is doubt. The second group includes those requiring a bold confrontation if they are to be snatched from an eternity in hell. They have gone past doubt and have committed themselves to a false system. The last group are those who must be dealt with very cautiously. They are so vile in their contamination by evil that the believer is in danger of being contaminated himself.

(:24-25) DOXOLOGY – GLORY TO GOD FOR THE SECURITY OF BELIEVERS

A. THE PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS

"*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy*"

The believer must **contend**, but ultimately **God keeps**.

B. THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRIUNE GOD OF REDEMPTION

"*to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord*"

C. THE POWER AND PRESTIGE FOR ALL ETERNITY

"*be glory, majesty, dominion and authority,*
before all time and now and forever. Amen."

CONCLUSION:

- **We contend for the faith because the truth matters.**
- **We rescue the deceived because people matter.**
- **We pursue holiness because Christ matters.**
- **And we remain secure because God is able.**

WHY STUDY THIS BOOK?

- To be aware of the dangers around us within professing Christendom so that we do not naively accept all spiritual leaders and all teaching as legitimate
- To learn the characteristics of apostate false teachers so that we can recognize and expose them and warn the vulnerable flock of God
- To reinforce our understanding of the severity of God's judgment and the reality of eternal punishment
- To deepen our heart of compassion and mercy for those under attack who may be wavering or susceptible to the influence of these deceptive teachers
- To heighten our own sense of spiritual alertness so that we avail ourselves of all of the spiritual resources at our disposal to build ourselves up in our faith and keep ourselves in the love of God
- To heighten our anticipation of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ who will put down every rebellion, judge every false teacher, and bring His own to glory in a state of complete sanctification