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JUDE 1-19

The little epistle of Jude was written by the half-brother of Jesus. He doesn't identify himself as the half-brother of Jesus nor even as the brother of James because he considered the fact that he was the bond-servant of the Lord Jesus Christ much more important. He considered his spiritual relationship with Jesus as His Savior more significant than with Jesus as his physical half brother.

Well, when you really study this letter, you see that it's an **unusual letter with unusual phrases**...but it contains a tremendous message for you and me today. To say that this epistle is relevant and timely for us today is a real understatement.

Verses 1-4...

Now, let me point out a couple of things from **verses 3 and 4**. Jude **wanted** to write them a joyful letter. He **wanted** to write to them about their salvation...the salvation they all had in the Lord Jesus Christ, but instead Jude says, **"I felt compelled to write a letter of warning."**

Let me just say to that I sort of feel the same way...We have looked at false teachers and apostates over and over it seems like in the little epistles of John, but you know, there must be a very good reason God repeats this teaching over and over and I believe it's because we desperately need it!!

See, Satan is always trying to knock the Christian off his feet! He comes against us regularly, and because of this, one of the most difficult things for us in living the Christian life is to keep spiritually balanced.

We live in a world that is not a friend to God and because it is not a friend to God, it is not a friend to us. This world doesn't help us grow. In fact, it does all it can to keep us from growing in the Lord Jesus.

The pastor made a profound statement about the world this past Wednesday night: "The world doesn't like us because we're different but when we cease to be different the world condemns us as hypocrites."

As a matter of fact, the world we live in appeals to our old nature, doesn't it? Think about it...everything that bombards us in the world in which we live doesn't appeal to the new nature God gave us...but to the old nature Adam gave us.

Example: Billboards, commercials, movies, TV programs, magazines, etc.

But, **not only is the world against us**...there are others who are as well and this is what we are going to see in this little epistle.

That's why Jude is writing...

Jude is saying, "I wanted to write you about a **happy subject**... about a **pleasant subject**. I wanted to write to you about the salvation we both have...**about its wonders and its glories**...about what it really means to be saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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But there was an urgency laid upon me to set that aside and write to you about another matter.”

Jude begins by appealing that we **“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”**

Now, it will help us to know that this “faith” is not the faith as exercised by the individual, but rather it is **Christianity itself in its historic doctrines and life-giving salvation.** The doctrines of Christianity are distinct from other doctrines and this is what Jude is talking about.

We already have this faith...this doctrine. We’re not waiting for another inspired book to be written. It’s already been written. We’re not waiting for another way to be saved or something to be tacked on...we already have the only way to God and that’s through the blood of Jesus. We don’t need another gospel or something else added to Scripture...**all this has been delivered to once and for all.**

So, Jude says, “Since you **already have it...then contend earnestly for it.**”

Now, what does it mean to contend earnestly for the faith that we already have? The word “contend” speaks of a vigorous, intense, determined struggle to defeat the opposition. It was used of an athlete striving to win. Jude says we should use this same vigorous, intense and determined effort in defending the doctrines of Christianity. Peter says it this way, **“be ready always to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”**

One commentary I read says this struggle should be to the point of martyrdom...so we should contend for the faith even if it kills us!!

In other words, Jude is saying, “We have been given Christian beliefs and doctrines...certain truths that are **uniquely yours** because of your relationship with the Lord Jesus...now **do everything in your power to know** these doctrines, to **defend** them and to **live** by them.”

Jude can be broken down into four parts...

- 1) **The Dangers We Face as Christians**
- 2) **The Defenses We Have as Christians**
- 3) **The Disciplines We Practice as Christians**
- 4) **The Doxology We Live By as Christians**

I hope we can cover the first two this week and the last two next week.

1) **The Dangers We Face As Christians**

verse 4...Do you see the danger? Certain persons have crept in unnoticed. Where have they crept in? They have crept into the church. In fact, this expression means these folks have crept in the **side door.**

We’ve seen what Jude says about these men in **verse 4**, let’s look at what he says about them in **verses 10 and 12 and 13.** Jude also compares them to Cain and to Balaam and also to Korah.

The bottom line is this...Jude paints a very, very dark picture of these folks.

Now, understand from the outset that these aren’t folks who

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are out in the world. I mean, we don't expect folks out in the world to be any different than they are, do we?

No, these men have crept into our churches...they claim to be Christians. They look like fine folks. They may even stand behind some **preaching pulpits** or **teaching lecterns**. they may **teach children** in Sunday School, or they may **lead the choir**.

Their goal is to change the faith that has been delivered to us. They would reach into our midst and they would twist this truth that is so precious and so vital to our Christian walk.

Have you ever thought about this? You and I would not have the Word today were it not for faithful believers down through the ages who guarded this precious truth and handed it down. The church is always one generation short of extinction. If our generation fails to guard the truth and entrust it to our children then this truth would disappear.

God said His Word would abide forever, and God said the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church and He has chosen to accomplish this by always having a faithful remnant who will earnestly contend for the faith.

Verses 5-7...

Jude gives three comparisons...he compares these folks who have crept into the church to three different instances of God's judgment.

- 1) He reminds them of the Israelites whom God judged because of their unbelief.
- 2) He reminds them of angels who rebelled against God and God is holding them in chains until the day of judgment.
- 3) He reminds them of Sodom and Gomorrah. God judged Sodom and Gomorrah because of their gross immorality...homosexuality.

Then, Jude goes on...

Verses 8-10...

Now we can only speculate about the scene between Michael and the devil. When Moses died, the Lord buried him and no one knows where the grave is located. (Deut. 34:5-6) God simply didn't want anyone to know...maybe the Jewish people would have made a shrine out of the grave..maybe they would have worshiped at the grave Moses...maybe they would have embalmed the body of Moses and carried it around with them during their 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

The point of this verse is not what happened to the body of Moses as much as it is the fact that Michael did not rebuke the devil. He left that to the Lord.

There was a time in my life when I believed believers could rebuke Satan, but as I learned more of God's Word, I don't believe we're to do that. This passage of Scripture is one of the main reasons I came to believe we must leave the rebuking up to God! Do you see what Jude is doing? Jude is drawing a contrast between Michael and these men who have crept in unnoticed.

It is not a wise thing for God's people to confront Satan directly and to argue with him, because he is much stronger than we are. If an archangel is careful about the way he deals with

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the devil, how much more cautious ought we to be! But these men who have crept in unnoticed have no caution. ***They are very proud, arrogant, presumptuous men who do not depend on the Lord for anything!!***

Next, Jude goes back to drawing a comparison.

He compares these men to **Cain**. Remember, Cain didn't bring a blood sacrifice like his brother, Abel. Cain said, "I will come to God my way rather than God's way."

He compares these men to **Balaam**. Remember, Balaam tried to curse the Israelites four times but was stopped by God, and finally he told the king of Moab the way to curse Israel was to get them to play the harlot with the heathen women of Moab.

Finally, he compares these men to Korah. Remember, Korah rebelled against God's servants. Korah questioned God's choice of servants.

What is the message of **Jude 11**? Those who follow the way of Cain and say "I will come to God my own way"; those who trade their souls for the things of this world as Balaam did; those who presume like Korah and question God's choices...those who do these things will one day be judged by God.

Look how Jude further describes these men...

Verses 12-13...

"hidden reefs in your lovefeasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves..."

The KJV is the word "spots" or "blemishes", but the Greek word means reefs that are hidden. What do hidden reefs do? They cause ships to wreck, don't they? And they will wreck our churches if we allow them to. In other words, Jude is saying, "These men have no qualms about coming to fellowship suppers of Christians and they eat without fear of being uncovered and exposed for what they are. They don't care for anyone else at the feasts...only themselves. They are like shepherd who feed themselves but let their flock starve.

Then Jude says they are ***"clouds without water..."***

Most of our nation, especially the South has been in a drought the last several years. Remember last summer when rain didn't come for weeks and we would get excited about a cloudy day? Then, remember the letdown when the clouds just passed us by without giving us any rain? That's what these men are like...lots of promises but no deliverance.

These men have no Living Water to give anyone. Folks need to hear from God when they come to church.

I've been using Dr. Gray Allison's notes on the **Book of Jude** in my study this week. He tells the story in his book about three different people who came to a certain church one morning.

One was a businessman who was failing at his business. He had decided he would just take his own life and get rid of all his troubles.

One was a young bank teller who had lost a lot of money gambling and he was contemplating robbing the bank where he worked and going to Mexico with the money.

One was a beautiful young woman who had been offered the job of running some houses down in the red-light district at a tremendous salary. She was seriously considering doing this.

But, they all came to church that morning. It was a beautiful church...stained glass windows, beautiful choir singing beautiful long-haired songs...and a preacher who preached a sermon entitled, "Is the Planet Mars Inhabited?"

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The tragedy is that the businessman went out and took his life.
And the bank teller did rob the bank and was caught and put in the penitentiary.
And the young woman sold herself for money.

See, the preacher was a cloud without water!! The preacher's message didn't contain any hope or direction for these three people.

Jude also calls them ***“autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted...”***

This is a picture of a tree which bears no fruit for the farmer who is depending on that fruit, so the farmer digs it up. It was dead for all intents and purposes when it was still in the ground and is dead again when it is taken up.

Jesus said, ***“I am the Vine and you are the branches.”*** And He went on to say that His branches would bear fruit, more fruit and much fruit. But these men have **never had a vital experience with Jesus. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.** They make a profession, they look as if they are going to bear fruit, but never is any fruit borne at all.

Jesus also said, ***“Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up...” (Matthew 15:13)***

“wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam”

What do the waves of the sea do? They are constantly moving...constantly in turmoil...no peace. These men never have any real **peace** or any real **joy**, or any real **happiness**, or any real **satisfaction**...just tossed to and fro as the raging waves of the sea.

“wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever”

When we're at our cabin in Arkansas the night sky is very, very black. There are no city lights to compete with the stars. Occasionally, we will go outside and look up at the sky and we have seen on rare occasions a shooting star. **It shows up above all the other stars in the sky for a moment, but then we don't see it anymore.**

These men are like that. They come and go. By contrast, fixed stars can be depended on for navigation...but wandering stars will only lead folks off course.

I believe we can safely say that these men are indeed dangerous to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will and do use any and all means to lead folks astray.

Verses 14-16...

Don't you sometimes wonder why God waits so long to judge the wicked?

Well, one day, He will! One day His judgment will be executed upon all the ungodly ones.

In the meantime, we're to be vigilant and contend earnestly for the faith!!

2) The Defenses We Have as Christians

Verses 17-19...

Up until now, this has been a negative little book. Jude has been merciless in his vivid description of these men and he has painted a dark and forboding picture of them.

In fact, if all you had to read were the first 13 verses of Jude,

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it would be a very depressing little book.

He does tell us in verse 15 that one day God will execute judgment,
But the bottom line is this...we have no idea when this day
will come and in the meantime we have to live in this world
and God wants us to live victoriously. So, let's see in the
few minutes that we have left just a few ways to do this.

a) We're to remember...

verse 17...

Beloved, the apostates would **have us question God's Word or add to God's Word or study something instead of God's Word, or water down God's Word...**

But Jude tells us to **remember** God's Word.

~ **Remember who gave the Word...**the apostles gave the Word under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and it's been delivered once and for all.

We're not to buy into any "new revelation". We're to go to the Word and contend earnestly for the faith!

~ Remember what they said...

They said in the last days scoffers and mockers would come. They said they would follow after their own ungodly lusts. They said that there would come a day when men would simply want their ears tickled...they would not endure sound teaching. They said one day there would be a famine in the land, not for food, but for the Word of God!

Jude is saying, "You already know all these things!"

b) We're to recognize...

It's useless to remind us of danger if we can't identify the danger! How can we recognize these men?

He gives three very brief descriptions in **verse 19...**

~ **They cause divisions...**they're troublemakers...

~ **They are worldly minded...**The natural man cannot understand spiritual things, can he?

~ **They are devoid of the Spirit...**They're not saved!

So, Jude is saying, "Remember all I've told you and remember all the apostles have said. Recognize these folks. They may come in by the side door and they may look good...but sooner or later they'll show themselves for what they are. You have the responsibility to contend earnestly for the faith. It's been given to you and God holds you accountable to guard it and defend it."

And, let me just say this in closing. It takes discipline to do this.