

Message #3

Jude 1:3-4

Just recently, the History Channel featured a woman who claimed that the word translated “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 was a mistranslation of the Hebrew word “almah.” I got so mad that I yelled at the TV set. What I said was “you don’t know what you are talking about and I wish someone was on there who would look you straight in the face and tell you that.” Unfortunately, these are the kinds of people who end up being put on TV to creep into people’s homes.

Back in the 1500’s, liberals were saying the same thing so Martin Luther offered a huge sum of money if any person could prove that the word “virgin” in Isaiah could ever refer to a woman who was not a virgin. It is true the word may contextually refer to a young lady or maiden who is not married (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Ps. 68:25; Song of Sol. 1:3; 6:8), but there is no place where you may conclude this word does not refer to a virgin.

In fact, when Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke, he was a medical doctor (Col. 4:14). He specifically uses a Greek word that means Mary was a virgin (Lk. 1:27, 34). The History Channel is presenting false information. Please do not get your theology from watching the History Channel because the History Channel puts religious people on there who do not tell the truth. Get your theology from the Word of God. Stick to the Scriptures and stand up and defend them. That is exactly what Jude was trying to get believers to do in this powerful epistle.

**JUDE WRITES THIS EPISTLE TO MOTIVATE BELIEVERS TO EARNESTLY
CONTEND FOR THE FAITH.**

Now what is clear from the first word of **verse 3**, before we even begin to expound these verses, is that the believer is the “beloved.” This is the second time Jude has used this term so it is clearly something he wants believers to understand. **What that means is that the believer in Jesus Christ is in a very peculiar relationship with God and is loved by God in a very special way.** God wants us to realize He loves us and when we realize this it should motivate us to contend for the faith. **When we contend for Him and His truth, He loves it.**

The second thing that is clear is that the beloved need the written Scriptures. Two times in verse 3, Jude refers to the fact that God’s inspired Word is written. The two infinitives “to write” refer to the sacred Scriptures that are in written form (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 95-96). So God has given us His inspired Word in written form. **The Scriptures have been written for the beloved of God. They have not been written to entertain the lost world.**

Now the first infinitive “to write” is present tense. The second infinitive “to write” is aorist tense. Here is what this grammatically means. Apparently Jude was continually writing a doctrinal work about our common salvation. His continual focus (present tense) was on that. Dr. Richard Lenski believes that Jude had not actually started writing yet, but he was making careful preparations to write on our common salvation. (*Jude*, p. 610).

However, there was a point of time (aorist tense) where he decided it was critical to take his inspired writing in another direction.

Now there are two main facts that Jude wanted believers to understand:

FACT #1 – Jude initially wanted to write to the beloved about our common salvation .
1:3a

Now as we have just said, Jude was making careful preparation to write on the subject of our common salvation. We must assume that he was preparing to write a doctrinal study concerning our salvation. In fact, he says he was making “every effort.” The Greek word used here (σπουδαιος) means that he was giving diligence and eagerness to this project (*Ibid.*, p. 415).

Jude was zealous about writing on the doctrinal subject of our common salvation. Now the word for “common” is the Greek word “koine” (κοινη). This word is specifically used here to refer to the specific salvation that is common to all believers. Every believer in Jesus Christ has certain doctrinal things in common. It is clear from **verse 4** that the common salvation experienced by every believer is a salvation that develops the doctrines of the grace of God.

So apparently the ambitious project that Jude wanted to tackle was a doctrinal treatise that really developed the doctrine of the grace of God. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said that there were 33 salvation things that every believer had in common in regard to the Grace of God (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, pp. 234-265). It will be interesting one day to see how many things Jude had listed compared to the list compiled by Dr. Chafer.

No one actually knows whether or not Jude ever did write what he planned to write, but what we do know is that God changed his plans and he ended up writing on the subject God wanted him to address.

If we think this through for a moment, we may make a couple of assumptions:

First, Jude, being a Jew, had really come to terms with the grace of God in the face of a rigid Jewish legal system of law and works. He would be in a good position to write on the subject.

Second, Paul had already done the foundational work. Paul wrote Galatians and Paul wrote Romans, which presents the key doctrines of the salvation Gospel and he develops the dispensation of grace in Ephesians. God did not apparently need Jude to doctrinally organize the data on the theme of the common salvation; He needed him to write on another subject.

Sometimes we may start moving in a direction we really believe is the will of God and then discover God changes our plans. God may use us for something we never even planned. Jude loved the Lord and Jude wanted to do a work for God and he really thought he has figured out exactly what God wanted him to do; but God changed things.

By the way, there is no reluctance on Jude's part to do what God wanted him to do. He is not upset he didn't get to write a thesis on the common salvation. In fact, he truly does come to terms with what God wanted him to address.

FACT #2 – Jude ultimately wrote to motivate the beloved to contend for the faith. **1:3b-4**

The words “I felt the necessity” (*αναγκη*) implies at least three things:

- 1) When God moved a writer to write His inspired Word, there was a compelling force that was laid on the writer (*Ibid.*, p. 28). That is what the word “necessity” means.
- 2) Jude viewed himself as being closely connected to his readers. What he was seeing happen to those in the church affected him personally.
- 3) Jude was the only one in a position to write at the time he wrote. Peter and Paul were already dead, having been executed by Nero. The Apostle John was still alive and was probably already in Ephesus, but Jude obviously felt he was the one who needed to write about the necessity of contending for the faith.

Now the specific purpose of this epistle of Jude was to appeal to the beloved of God to earnestly contend for the faith. The present tense participle “appeal” is one that means to continually come alongside of people and entreat them, admonish them and encourage them to do something (*Ibid.*, p. 340). What Jude is trying to encourage and to admonish people to do was “earnestly contend for the faith.”

Now the verb “contend” (*επαγωνιζομαι*) is a word from which we get our English word “agonize.” It was used for athletes who intensely struggle and compete with all of their effort to win. This is a word that emphasizes an all out effort. Dr. Thomas Constable said this word was commonly used in connection with a Greek stadium and a strenuous struggle to overcome an opponent (*Jude*, pp. 7-8).

So what Jude wants God's people to do is to give an all out focused effort to contend for the faith. We need to be willing to stand up and fight for the truth of God. As David Helm said in his commentary, Jude wants our minds on “red alert” to contend for the faith (*Jude*, p. 295). **The faith system is something that needs to be defended.**

Now this is a positive contention. What we must be prepared to do in the face of a religious world that is moving into all kinds of directions is to defend the faith system of salvation. That faith system is “grace alone, faith alone in Christ alone.”

In fact, Jude qualifies the faith as being “once delivered to the saints.” There are not multiple ways to be right with God; there is only one way to be right with God and that is by faith in Jesus Christ. **What this statement means is that this message is unchangeable.**

Now it is specifically stated that this faith system has been once given or delivered to the saints. Who gave it once to the saints? God! This faith message must be defended and contended for by we who are: the saints.

We are not to contend for law. We are not to contend for religion or denomination. We are not to contend for rules, traditions or legalism. We are to contend for the faith. This grace faith system is the only one God has given and it is our responsibility to defend it and contend for it. He will not ever give another way of salvation to this world. This is a one time, only way system.

The grace system of salvation is not open to change or debate. It is a settled, once for all final system of salvation. It exists in its final form and it is found by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now it was very important that the believers defend the grace/faith system because of what is stated in **verse 4**. There were certain “men” who were infiltrating the church. They were “men” (ανθρωποι) and not women and they were specific men. In our day we have to be on the lookout for both, but primarily we need to be on the lookout for men.

Jude describes them by revealing four qualities that exposed them.

Descriptive Quality #1 - They secretly and intentionally came into the church.

There were certain men who had “crept in unnoticed.” These men were probably traveling teachers who came into the church after it had been established. Most of the apostles were dead and so these guys came to the church claiming they were Biblical teachers.

The word means they secretly slipped into the church (*Ibid.*, p. 344). These men may be legitimately called “creeps” and they will give the church the “creeps” because they sneak in or creep into it with the goal of polluting it. In the spy world this is called infiltration and penetration.

Descriptive Quality #2 - They have been marked out by God for condemnation.

These men who creep into the church with motives other than learning God’s Word so they may apply it to life, are men marked out by God for condemnation.

Now the fact that they have been marked out for this condemnation may mean a couple of things:

- 1) It may mean that these specific men have been named and marked to receive condemnation from eternity past. This is their lot in life.
- 2) It may mean that Jude or other Biblical writers wrote about these kinds of men who would be condemned long before they showed up in the church (I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3:1).

Why would God even allow these guys to live long enough to do this? To show who is truly right with Him and who isn't.

Descriptive Quality #3 - They are ungodly men who turn God's grace into licentiousness.

Douglas Moo said we don't actually know who these men are, but we are sure about one thing: they were immoral ungodly men propagating a heretical view of grace (*Jude*, p. 227). The fact that they are "ungodly" is a key theme throughout this epistle (v. 4, 15, 18). These are men who do not know Jesus Christ and they are given over to ungodly lusts.

Now the word "turn" is one that means to change or altar or transfer (*Ibid.*, p. 288). **So these men were actually changing the grace Gospel into a gospel that promoted sexual immorality.** As Peter Davids said, they changed God's grace into a "license for immorality" (*Jude*, p. 44).

The word "licentiousness" (ασελγεια) is one that means they were promoting an immoral, sexual and sensual immorality as if it is actually part of the grace Gospel.

They were saying if you want some immoral fling, have it. If you want some same-sex relationship, go for it. If you want some sensual experience outside of marriage, enjoy it. God's grace is okay with that.

These are "ungodly" men who talk about grace, but they use the noun as a means of promoting their own evil agenda. By what Jude says later that they were promoting the grossest forms of sexual immorality. Apparently they were saying that since we are saved by grace, we can indulge in any immoral thing and it really doesn't matter. They were promoting that God's grace left you free to explore and indulge. **The true grace Gospel is salvation from sin, not a promotion for sin. The true grace Gospel does not promote a progressive sensuality, but a progressive sanctification.**

These ungodly men turned great grace Gospel and its Christian liberty into a promotion of immoral sin. These men were in the church promoting a distorted grace that permitted and flaunted immoral things as if they were sanctioned and blessed by God.

These were not sinful people who were just struggling with their own flesh trying to deal with things and work on areas so they could live their lives for the glory of God; these were men who were actually saying, preaching and teaching that God's grace promoted and tolerated immoral relationships.

Apparently they said there was nothing wrong with adultery or homosexuality or immoral behavior. These were ungodly men on their way to hell. Understand this point about religious men—if they present a grace gospel that promotes immorality or immoral behavior; it is a message from men on their way to hell. They are destined for it.

If a person wants to pursue immoral things, that is their world-right. If some man or woman wants to have a same-sex relationship, man's law gives you the right and will protect you. But don't you dare stand up in a pulpit and say God sanctions this. It is an abomination to God.

Descriptive Quality #4 - They deny the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Not only do these men present a changed gospel, they deny the Gospel because they deny the person and work of Jesus Christ.

These men denied who Jesus Christ was. They denied the fact that He was the only Savior—(Jesus); they denied the fact that He was the only Messiah (Christ). They denied the fact that He was our only sovereign owner and Master who bought us (Master) and they denied the fact that He is our only God (Lord).

So what was happening is that in the world of the church, different men were creeping into positions of authority and promoting their evil, distorted beliefs and no one was saying that is not right.

Jude says it is time for believers to contend for the faith in the face of religious people who are promoting lies.

It is time for us to know truth, get excited about truth and defend truth. If we do not contend for the truth of God, then who will?