

# Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

## An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

### Chapter 5- Loving the Truth **Jude 3**

#### 29. Loving the Truth- Part 4

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WOSM Thursday 12/13/07; WPAS Thursday 05/29/08

Welcome again my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **Jude** and today I want to continue in our new section of study which will deal with Loving the Truth. So, let's read **Jude 3** together:

**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 handed down to the saints.**

In the last broadcast, we saw the two groups of people in the Church and we saw the comparison between the battle that we face today in our nation over the Supreme Court and the battle that is raging in the Church over the Truth of Scripture. And through the last several broadcasts, we are having an opportunity to examine our own hearts to see whether or not we love or value the Truth enough to defend it.

Around the year A.D. 50- nearly 20 years before Jude wrote his epistle, the Holy Spirit moved upon Paul to write an inspired letter to the Church in Thessalonica concerning what was going to happen in the last days. Let us read from the letter in **2Thessalonians 2:7-12**:

**7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.**

**8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;**

**9 *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,**

**10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because**

they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

**11** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

**12** in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

The Bible says two things about the people that he is talking about here. First of all in verse 10, Paul tells us that these people did what they did because they never received the “love” of the Truth. It isn’t that they didn’t receive the Truth- it is that they didn’t *love* the Truth- they didn’t value that which God said enough to submit to it and obey it and protect it from being altered. The second thing that Paul tells us about these people in the same verse is that they were not saved.

So Paul is telling us that in the last days- because that is the time that this Epistle of **2Thessalonians** covers- that in the last days, unsaved people who do not love the Truth will come into the Church to teach false Doctrine and to subvert those in the Church. This is just another Scriptural text that should cause us to understand the seriousness of playing around with God’s Truth.

It is very clear from an examination of the New Testament Books that all of those whom God used to pen down inspired Scripture held to the view that Truth mattered and that keeping, preserving, or maintaining the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints was of the utmost importance.

So hopefully, you have been encouraged over these last broadcasts to examine your own heart to see whether you really love or value the Truth enough to obey the command of Scripture here in **Jude 3** to earnestly contend for it. So we have addressed the argument about valuing the Truth.

Now there is a second argument that is brought about today concerning defending the Faith. This argument goes something like this. We do not need to defend or to earnestly contend for the Faith, because God is building His Church and Christ said in **Matthew 16** that the gates of hells will not prevail against the Church- so since God is going to Sovereignly protect His Church- we don’t need to worry about it.

I would like to address that argument head on using two different approaches- a Biblical response and an historical response. First a Biblical response.

For anyone to say that Sovereignty in any way removes Man's responsibility- shows that they simply don't understand the correct teaching about God's Sovereignty.

It is true that God is completely and totally Sovereign. The God that made the heavens and the earth is Almighty, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient and Effectual. There is no one like unto our God. God is unique from anyone else and from everything else that He has made. The Bible says that God stands alone as being all holy and exclusively different from His Creation. In fact, that is what the word, "holy" means. God is holy- meaning God is separated and different from anything else in all of Creation. That is why false teachings such as those found in the Book of Mormon and New Age documents and some Latter Rain teachings are so wrong. These heresies teach that Man can become a god and that God was once a Man- and that is not enlightenment, beloved- that is blasphemy. The only place in Scripture that you can find this horrible teaching is when satan tempted Eve with the words, **"you shall be like God"**.

Yes, God is Sovereign. But God's Sovereignty in no way removes Man's responsibility. We are commanded over and over in the Bible to repent and to believe and to cease from sin and to build up our most holy faith and to pray and seek God and to study to show ourselves approved unto God and to put on the whole armor of God and to love and to forgive and to show mercy and to flee immorality.

We are told to do certain things and we are held responsible to God for what we do and what we do not do.

**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

While it is true that our modern understanding of Man's so called "Free Will" has been way over blown- especially in the area of Salvation- it must be said that Man still bears responsibility for his actions and God will rightly judge all men for what men do in this life- whether it is good or bad.

Christ is indeed building His Church- but Christ is building His Church along the established Plan that He has chosen- and Man has been included in that Plan. Man has been given the high honor and the distinct privilege to labor along side of Christ in the building of Christ's Church. And there are many examples of what I am talking about. For example:

**The production of Sacred Scripture.** The sacred Scriptures that form all of Christian Doctrine didn't float down out of heaven- God used Man to pen down the words. Yes, those specially called men were indeed moved upon by the Holy Ghost to pen down what they wrote- but God could have used angels to produce His Book – but He chose to use Man. And while all of Scripture is inspired by God- these men whom God used didn't all write the same way. They had their own literary style; they had their own expressions; and they even used their own terminology- all under the supernatural guidance of God. So while it is true to say that God authored all of Holy Scripture- and it is true to say that all of Scripture is God breathed- we must also say that the method that God used to give us the Bible was through the agency of human writers.

**Leading people to Christ.** Angels do not lead anyone to the Lord. And since the Resurrection, Jesus Himself doesn't lead anyone to Himself. It is God's Will that men lead other men to Christ. We see over and over again in the New Testament that men may well have seen an angel or they may have had a visitation from the Lord Himself- but God still used another person to actually lead that person to Christ. When Christ appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus- Jesus told Ananias to go to Saul to bring him into full conversion. God told Cornelius to go see Peter and God gave Peter a vision three times in order to prepare Peter's heart to receive this Gentile. So while it is true to say that Salvation is a Sovereign supernatural work of God- it is also true to say that God uses men to lead other men to Christ.

**Preaching the Gospel.** God uses men to preach the Gospel. So because this is true- there are many other Scriptures that command

the man of God to prepare himself and to study to show himself approved unto God so that the Gospel can be rightly and fully preached. So while it is true to say that Salvation is a work of God- it is also true to say that God has blessed man to cooperate with God in the saving of souls through the preaching of the Gospel.

The point that I am making is that of course God is building His own Church and of course God will protect His Church and God will keep His Church- but God has chosen to use Man in all of these aspects to cooperate with God in accomplishing this glorious work in the earth. So to say that because God is building His own Church and to mean by that – that God doesn't want or need our cooperation in both the building of His Church and in the protection of it is simply not true.

Here is another way to look at this. If God doesn't want us to be watchmen on the wall of the Church to warn the people of the invasion of false doctrine and heresy- then why are there so many verses of Scripture that tell us to do precisely that? The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Colosse to be on guard about these things in **Colossians 1:25-29**

**25** *Of this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God,*

**26** *that is,* the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

**27** to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**28** We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

**29** For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

When Paul wrote to Timothy, a young pastor in the Church at Ephesus, he plainly told him about what would happen in the “latter times”, or in the day that we live in today in **1 Timothy 4:1-6:**

**1** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from

the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,  
2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

3 *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;

5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

Paul was telling Timothy that in the last days, there would be some in the Church who would depart from the faith because they had given themselves over to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. How would we know when this happens? How will we know when some in the Church would be given over to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils? Because these false teachers would begin to command or enforce what is called celibacy- forbidding to marry and to not eat meat on certain days of the week.

Paul then went on to tell Timothy how he could avoid these false teachings in **1 Timothy 4:7-16**

7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;

8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.

9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.

10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

11 Prescribe and teach these things.

12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

13 Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.

**14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.**

**15 Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.**

**16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.**

Paul told Timothy that if he would pay close attention to his own personal integrity and to correct doctrine- that Timothy could edify himself and those that were being taught by him so that they wouldn't fall into the traps set by those who desire to destroy the Truth. In verse 13, Paul told Timothy to do three things that would empower him to be able to keep the Church pure: give attendance to Reading the holy Scriptures; Exhorting or correcting those who get off base and to make sure that his Doctrine was sound and that it was the same Doctrine that the Apostle's taught.

In other words, Paul is telling Timothy that he must love the Truth enough to defend it and that he should view the attacks against Sound Doctrine to be a real and a serious threat. This is what Jude meant when he told us to earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Well, I have to stop right here- but please join me again on the next broadcast as we continue our Journey through the Epistle of Jude. May God help us all.

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