

“The Truth War” THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

INTRODUCTION

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was a Russian novelist and writer who died in August 2008. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for literature and the Templeton Prize in 1983. The Templeton Prize is an award given every year to someone who has contributed to the spiritual realm of their time (very ecumenical). In his 1983 acceptance speech for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, Solzhenitsyn recalled the words he heard as a child, when his parents sought to explain the ruinous upheavals in communist Russia. His parents explained the change in Russian policy this way: “Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened.”

Solzhenitsyn added in his 1983 speech, “If I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait of the entire twentieth century, here too I would be unable to find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat once again: 'men have forgotten God.'”

There is a tremendous level of truth that “rings true” not only in 1983 but in 2008. There is evidence all around us: men have forgotten God and dismissed His truth as relevant to their lives. Consider some of the following examples of the absence of truth.

- The growth of relativism (e.g., Oprah Winfrey, the Emerging Church)
- Subjective hermeneutics – “What does it mean to me?” (e.g., arguing for divorce based on poor Bible study)
- Blurring of the Gospel message (e.g., removal of sin or anything that offends in witnessing)
- Decline of morals and rise of atheism

Face it: we live in a relativistic society where truth is under attack.

In 1776, the classic work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was written and the 5 conclusions for why it fell were the following

1. The rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace.
3. The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within, the decadence of the people.
5. The decay of religion -- faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people.

Sound a little like our own American society? Face it: we live in a relativistic society where truth is under attack.

The Truth War exists because of the continual onslaught and claims that truth is obscure and can't be known or found or discovered. Truth is not hazy or uncertain (e.g., the claim of the recent Emerging Church or other forms of relativism). Truth is known and can be known (e.g., the Bible). And if it can be known and it is under attack from those who want to remove it or obscure it, someone needs to stand up in the face of culture and defend it.

The question is “Who? Whose responsibility is that? Who should fight this truth war?” Paul answers that question in I Timothy 3 – look there. He writes to his young disciple, *“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”* (I Tim 3:14-15). Paul was saying this with the background of the temple in Ephesus dedicated to the goddess Diana which has some 127 golden pillars. Paul was saying those foundations are obsolete; the real *“pillar and ground”* of things that matter – *“truth”* – is *“the church of the living God.”* It is the church’s responsibility, joy and obligation to uphold the truth of God’s word.

And when you look around our world today, it is easy to point fingers at the world and the evil system of Satan, but I think if we are going to be humble about this whole subject of the Truth War, we have to determine whether the church has been doing its job. It is as Peter wrote – “***For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God;***” (I Pet 4:17a). Start with the sanctuary (Ezek 9:6). The losing of the Truth War has to fall upon our shoulders first. ***Question: Are we upholding the truth of God as His bride?***

Answer: no. We are not engaging in the battle as we should. Every little compromise in our own lives, every allowance or toleration of error in the church and every celebration of evil promotes Satan’s plan and ceases the goal of truth to penetrate the hearts of men. A.W. Tozer once said, “The unattended garden will soon be overrun with weeds; the heart that fails to cultivate truth and root out error will shortly be a theological wilderness.” I fear that the church is becoming just this – a theological wilderness (e.g., reading *The Truth War* for the 1st time).

One of the reasons I am burdened for young people and continue to serve them in a ministerial context is because I feel the generation that can “turn the tide” in this Truth War are the young people (e.g., the conversation about “re-interpreting” the Constitution at Mingo). And yet, that is where the War is being lost at this moment. John MacArthur writes in his book *The Truth War*, “The idea that the Christian message should be kept public and ambiguous seems especially attractive to young people who are in tune with the culture and in love with the spirit of the age and can’t stand to have authoritative biblical truth applied with precision as a corrective to worldly lifestyles, unholy minds, and ungodly behavior. And the poison of this perspective is being increasingly injected into the evangelical church body.

“But that is not authentic Christianity. Not knowing what you believe is by definition a kind of unbelief. Refusing to acknowledge and defend the revealed truth of God is a particularly stubborn and pernicious kind of unbelief. Advocating ambiguity,

exalting uncertainty, or otherwise deliberately clouding the truth is a sinful way of nurturing unbelief.”¹

Since it is the truth that has set us free (John 8:32), we are obligated to defend it at all costs. Turn to Proverbs 23. Remember the advice of Solomon in Proverbs 23:23 – **“Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.”** Obtain the truth at all costs; never relinquish it at any price. Once you have found the truth or discover it, don’t allow it to get out of your grasp. Never compromise it.

I want to deal with 3 introductory questions this morning:

1. What is truth?
2. Can it really survive in a postmodern world?
3. What can we really do about it?

This is more of a topical introduction to the Epistle of Jude, which we will begin looking at next week.

I. What is truth?

Truth is truth if God said it. Truth is derived from God – His person, His nature and His words. Truth is never determined by your own intuition or experience or desire (e.g., “What does it mean to me?”). Let me fill in our definition and understanding of truth and where it comes from.

- **God is the source of everything that exists.** Paul explains, **“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever”** (Rom 11:36). He defines and limits what is true and is the ultimate revealer of truth. He is the source and sustainer of everything that exists.
- **God gives us the ability to comprehend and perceive the truth.** Remember those words from Paul? Look at Romans 2. **“For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law** (In other words, all men will be held accountable

¹ John MacArthur, *The Truth War* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), xi.

towards God.), *and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)*” (Rom 2:12-15). Every man has an instinctive “right and wrong” barometer, courtesy of God (e.g., slapping someone in the face as proof). It is man’s warning system, Paul is saying. That is the purpose for having this law written on our hearts – so we can understand the truth.

- **God’s Word is truth.** If God is the source of everything that exists and He gives us the ability to comprehend and perceive the truth, then we also must conclude that God’s Word is truth (II Tim 3:15-17). Remember Jesus’ proclamation in John 17:17 – *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”* It doesn’t say the Word has some truth in it; it says the *“word is truth.”* It doesn’t just contain it, you don’t have to look for it in there, just open it anywhere, it’s truth - absolute, inerrant, accurate, total revelation of God.

Therefore as we see from Romans 2 & 11 and John 17, all truth originates with God. And truth does not change or evolve. We never have to re-define it. What is it’s definition then? **Truth is whatever “is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God.”**²

Therefore, if you say that truth cannot be known or understand or think that it is obscure, than you are ultimately saying, “God is unknown; He cannot be understood; He is obscure. So don’t waste your time seeking Him.” Well, as we have already established, the world doesn’t agree with the Bible’s principles or “truths.” And our world is a relativistic post-modern world. So the question must be asked...

II. Can truth survive in a postmodern world?

Unfortunately, many Christians are not fighting the Truth War; they are playing around. Why? Why don’t people engage? They are afraid of the consequences. People are fearful of being labeled “divisive” or “uncool” or “lacking tolerance.” And when Christians buy into that mindset, what suffers? Doctrine and truth becomes the sacrificial

² *The Truth War*, 2.

lamb that fades away. And that is troubling – considering the current attack on the truth is coming from this worldview called postmodernism.

Postmodernism is a worldview that dismissing any possibility of surety or settled understanding of the truth. Postmodernists teach that truth is knowable; so to pursue it is a vain endeavor. It is the removal of certainty and the celebration of obscurity.

Brian McLaren, who has risen to the top of the leadership of the Emerging Church movement wrote a book called *A Generous Orthodoxy*. The subtitle reads “Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian.” That is quite revealing if you think about it. He opens with this admission – “I have gone out of my way to be provocative, mischievous, and unclear, reflecting my believe that clarity is sometimes overrated, and that shock, obscurity, playfulness, and intrigue often stimulate more thought than clarity.”³ He even calls it is danger to “be right.”

Can truth survive if such a worldview is embraced? Can truth survive in a postmodern world? Yes and no. Yes, in that God can preserve truth and will never be thwarted by the purposes of the Evil One. But also the answer is “no.” Obscurity roots out truth (e.g., a theological wilderness).

III. Is there anything we can really do about it?

Unfortunately, many Christians are not fighting the Truth War; they are playing around. Thankfully, the N.T. has an answer. Towards the end of the New Testament, there are 3 books that talk about the Truth War: II John, III John and Jude. Another time, we can consider the Epistles written by John but for our time now and the weeks to come, Jude is our focus. Turn there.

³ Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 23.

Did you know that Jude’s original purpose was not to write about dealing with apostasy and false teaching? Read with me vs. 3 – “***Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, ...***” It would seem Jude’s original intent was to write the Gospel but instead the Holy led him to write about something concerning – the attack of the Gospel and truth. Read further in this verse – “***I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed*** (These were men who came into the church proclaiming to preach the truth but who were wolves in sheep’s clothing; they were apostates.), ***who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ***” (vs. 3-4). They were in it for themselves.

Those 2 verses are what prompted MacArthur to write *The Truth War* – “My heart resonates with Jude’s concern for the church, his love for the gospel, and his passion for the truth. I too would prefer to write about something positive concerning such things as the riches of salvation and all the joy and blessings that belong to all who are truly in Christ, our love for the Lord; and especially his grace and glory. In fact, this book is ultimately about all these things and how to safeguard them, because they are precisely the points of truth that are ultimately at stake in the Truth War.

“Yet rather than deal with those things in a completely positive and nonpolemical way, I find myself compelled to echo the inspired words of Jude and exhort my readers who truly love Christ: you need to contend earnestly for the faith. Truth is under heavy attack, and there are too few courageous warriors who are willing to fight. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, believers from this generation will not be able to justify their apathy by complaining that the strife of conflict over truth just seemed ‘too negative’ for the kind of culture we lived in – or that the issues were ‘merely doctrinal’ and therefore not worth the effort.”⁴

⁴ *The Truth War*, xxvi.

Those are great words inspiring us to consider the Epistle to Jude and engage in the Truth War. That is why Jude was written. Jude is a survival manual for living in times of apostasy or falling away from the truth. It is a book that gives Christians a clear picture of how God wants His children to love during the Truth War.

We are not and should not be pacifists when it comes to the truth. We are all soldiers and warriors. We are expected to fight in this war that began in the Garden of Eden with the serpent's question, "***Did God really say...***?" (Gen 3:1). Jude understood this and wrote his Epistle. Let me close with these inspiring words from Martin Luther – "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil at that moment attacking. I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."⁵

⁵ *The Truth War*, 26.

INTRODUCTION – 2

General William Sherman was one of America’s most tenacious warriors. He served as General during the Civil War and was highly criticized for his brutal techniques he pursued in order to pursue victory. One of the most known contributions he made was coining the phrase “war is hell.”

He was by no means an ideal model of character or even war ethics, but one thing is certain – he won battles. There are few soldiers who were more determined or tenacious on the battlefield. Sometimes he even pushed the line of war ethics and rules of engagement in order to win a battle. On the other hand, what was commendable about Sherman was his courage in the midst of battle and his unwillingness to wait around and watch the bullets fly without engaging. He fought and was always “at his post.”

TRANSITION

In his book *The Truth War*, John MacArthur writes, “We ought to despise warfare with every fiber of our souls. War is one of the most calamitous consequences of evil. It is catastrophic. It is always ugly. It should never be glamorized, and no sane person should ever desire the conflict or savor the strife of war. There are times, however, when evil makes warfare absolutely necessary. And when we have a moral obligation to fight, we should never shirk that duty, compromise with the enemy or enter the battle halfheartedly. As detestable as warfare of any kind might be, there are causes for which not fighting is a far greater evil.”⁶

Which causes? Turn to the Epistle of Jude and we will find one such cause.

The Epistle of Jude deals with the warfare of all warfares – the Truth War. MacArthur explains, “The Truth War is not a carnal war. It is not about territory and nations. It is not a battle for lands and cities. It is not a clan war or a personality conflict between individuals. It is not a fight for clout between religious denominations. It is not a

⁶ *The Truth War*, pg. 28.

skirmish over material possessions. It is a battle for the truth. It is about ideas. It is a fight for the mind. It is a battle against false doctrines, evil ideologies, and wrong beliefs. It is a war for truth.”⁷ That is what we are up against; that is what Jude was up against.

This epistle is probably one of the most neglected in the entire Bible (e.g., Esther, Song of Solomon, etc.). Why? It centers around 3 primary areas:

- **AREA #1 – It is a brief book.** Only II & II John are shorter of the 64 books.
- **AREA #2 – Jude quotes or refers to the Apocrypha (vs. 9, 14-15), which is non-canonical.** Some even brand it heretical. But a major argument against this – other than it was widely accepted in the first few centuries – is his relationship to the apostle James and Jesus, as we will discuss in a few minutes.
- **AREA #3 – It is very repetitive of the Second Epistle of Peter.** In fact, some speculate and wonder if Jude copied much of Peter’s second letter. This was Martin Luther’s argument against the Epistle of Jude. He wrote, “In it is nothing special except it refers to the Second Epistle of Peter from which it has taken nearly all its words...On the whole it is nothing else than an epistle against our bishops, priest and monks.”⁸ For example,
 - Both books tell of godless men denying the Lord (II Pet 2:1; Jude 4).
 - Both books articulate of angels held in darkness awaiting judgment (II Pet 2:4; Jude 6).
 - Both books refer to Sodom and Gomorrah (II Pet 2:6; Jude 7).
 - Both books speak of arrogant slander of celestial beings (II Pet 2:10; Jude 8).
 - Both books celebrate Michael not bringing a slanderous accusation (II Pet 2:11; Jude 9).
 - Both liken the talk of blasphemers to true beasts (II Pet 2:12; Jude 10).
 - Both books record the following after Balaam (II Pet 2:15; Jude 11).
 - Both books forecast clouds without rain that are driven by a storm (II Pet 2:17; Jude 12).
 - Both books talk of black darkness (II Pet 2:17; Jude 13).
 - Both spooks characterize men as lustful, boating and flattering (II Pet 2:18; Jude 16).
 - Both books foretell of the Apostles of Jesus (II Pet 3:2; Jude 17).
 - Both books prophesy scoffers in the last days (II Pet 3:3; Jude 18).Even if it is repetitive, so what? We obviously need this reminder as often as we can get it.

⁷ *The Truth War*, pg. 32.

⁸ John Stott, *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude* (Downers Grove:Inter-varsity Press, 1993), 165.

I agree with John Calvin who wrote, “Though there was a dispute among the ancients concerning this Epistle as yet as the reading of it as useful, and as it contains nothing inconsistent with the purity of apostolic doctrine, and was received as authentic formerly, by some of the best, I willingly add it to others.”⁹

Like Calvin said, we are going to study this epistle despite those areas of neglect for this primary purpose: it teaches us how to fight the Truth War, which we desperately need a crash course reminder in how to do.

The theme of Jude centers on apostasy. In fact, some have entitled their study of the Epistle of Jude “the Acts of the Apostates” (e.g., play on words of Acts of the Apostles).

An apostate is someone who has fallen away from the faith or divorced themselves from the truth (e.g., date somewhat unknown – between A.D. 40-80). It is someone who has defected or is separated from the truth.

And the danger, as Jude addresses, is not that apostasy was a threat to the church; it was that apostates had already made their way into the church and were beginning to erode the foundation and cause others to blaspheme God by divorcing themselves from the truth. They were in the church laying the foundations for later heretics.

Even Paul knew this was inevitable. After 3 years of it being founded the church of Ephesus was being attacked from within from false teachers. Paul says to them in Acts 20:29-31, “***For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves*** (a word borrowed from Jesus as he described the hypocritical, destructive religious leaders) ***will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things*** (words were being twisted and distorted), ***to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.***” Paul warned them for 3 years this

⁹ John Calvin, 427.

was coming. In fact, he said “***I know this***” (vs. 29); it was certain to happen...unfortunately.

A Truth War was taking place within the walls of the bride of Christ and Jude had to equip, counsel and exhort the people of God to fight with vigor to be a pillar and ground for the truth and not a theological wasteland. Let’s consider the 1st two verses.

EXPOSITION

I. The Security of Christians (vs. 1-2)

JUDE 1 - Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:
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A. The Writer (vs. 1a) - “*Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James*”

There is some debate about the identity of our author. In total, I have found 7 suggestions for he might be. But only two, in my opinion, are worthy of any consideration.

FIRST VIEW – John Calvin and Matthew Henry suggest the author is the apostle named “Judas, not Iscariot” or also known as Thaddeus. He is numbered among the original 12 disciples in Luke 6:16 and in Acts 1:13. He is called “***brother of James***” in Acts 1:13, which is why this view has been held by some because he is called the same way in Jude 1. However, the primary reason for rejecting Calvin and Henry’s view is this translation of the verse. In Acts 1:13 – “***And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.***” – no word for brother is in the Greek. It would and should read “Judas of James,” which would lead us to conclude he was a “son of James.”

SECOND VIEW – The better identity is this one: the author of Jude was the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus. Remember half-brothers refers to having the same mother but not the same father; Jesus did not have an earthly father in Joseph like James and Jude.

Jude was James' brother, who was the pastor of the church in Jerusalem. And it is interesting and probably revealing to us about Jude's character that he didn't mention his half-brother Jesus and only his brother James. (e.g., Imagine that! Wouldn't you want the King of Kings to endorse your book?) Why didn't Jude say, "Jude, the half-brother and servant of Jesus." He didn't because he was likely a very humble man. Like Andrew took a back seat to his brother Peter, Jude is taking a back seat to his brother Jesus. Also, it could be that he was an itinerant preacher and wanted to write this epistle with that pastoral tone – by referring to his brother was a pastor in Jerusalem – because it was addressed to people in the church.

He calls himself a "*servant of Jesus Christ*" (Greek *doulos*), which is what Paul, Epaphras and Timothy all call themselves. It is a word that refers to someone who is indebted to another because of some transaction on their behalf. In this context, Jude is indebted to Christ because of being bought or redeemed from his sin. Sometimes it is a word used to describe someone called out for a specific task (e.g., like church leadership), which could also apply here. And this is really where his authority to address the congregation lies – not in his relationship to Jesus as brother but as His "*servant*."

B. The Readers (vs. 1b) – "*to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ*"

The Epistle to Jude is not addressed to a particular church or congregation but to all believers. Perhaps his specific audience is Jewish in nature since he does reference the O.T. but it could still be Gentiles. It is providentially and purpose obscure who his audience is because this is a message all churches need at all times. But he does not leave us without a description of those believers. First, he calls them...

1. ***“Those who are called”*** – This description appears last in the Greek sentence but first in the English because if a word in the Greek is last in the sentence – like this one appears – and does not carry with an article, greater emphasis is placed upon it. Therefore, translators put it first to emphasize the reality of believers being called.

Christians are called to many things.

- We are called to fellowship with the Son (I Cor 1:9).
- We are called to peace (I Cor 7:15).
- We are called to freedom (Gal 5:13).
- We are called to walk worthily (Eph 4:1).
- We are called to one hope (Eph 4:4).
- We are called to holiness (I Pet 1:15).
- We are called to inherit a blessing (I Pet 3:9).
- We are called to eternal glory (I Pet 5:10).

We are called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

2. ***Those who are “sanctified by God the Father”*** – This is translated from a present passive participle, which means it has continual results that will never be changed. Isn't that wonderfully encouraging? God brings us into His family to make us like Himself – to be made holy. John MacArthur comments, “One of the biggest problems with adoption in our society is that there are so many ‘unadoptable’ children that the agencies do not know what to do with them. When God adopted His children, He took plenty of ‘unadoptables’ into His family.”¹⁰
3. ***Those who are “preserved in Jesus Christ”*** – Not only are we called upon by God, redeemed from sin, made holy, but we are also secure in our salvation. Jude says we are “***preserved***” in the work of Christ. We are kept from our salvation being stolen from us. There is safety in Him. What a contrast this provides to the false teachers and apostates that characterize our age! They prove there was nothing to preserve because salvation was never present; a converted man is “***preserved***” in Him.

The Epistle begins with these encouraging words and ends with them in vs. 24-25: ***“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”***

¹⁰ *Beware the Pretenders*, 16.

I believe these statements in vs. 1 are so important, because Jude is essentially saying, “This Truth War is going to be hard work. It won’t be easy to defend truth against error. But this I can promise: it will be worth it. Why? Because throughout the battles and wars, God will preserve, keep, defend and sanctify us. The sacrifice will be worthwhile. So keep fighting.

So these are the recipients and the author. Finally, consider the blessing Jude pronounces upon those who have been preserved, called and sanctified.

JUDE 2 - Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

A better translation should be “may mercy and may peace and may love be multiplied to you.” The idea is this is Jude’s wish for his readers. It demonstrates God’s facets of grace to men. As one commentator has written, “Mercy is his compassion, peace is his gift of quiet confidence in the work of Jesus, and love the generosity in granting us his favors and meeting our needs.”¹¹

A. Wish #1 – Mercy

He wishes them mercy, which is what no one deserves. It is God’s compassion when judgment is deserved. Where judgment and sin abound, grace and mercy abounds much more (Rom 5:20). God is rich in this type of mercy to those who were children of wrath (Eph 2:3-4). God’s throne is called one of grace and mercy (Heb 4:16).

B. Wish #2 – Peace

He wishes them peace. In a turbulent, compromising world of apostasy, his desire is for the believer to have a quiet, tranquil satisfaction in what God is accomplishing in his life despite the falsity around him. John Stott observes, “He means that despite all the difficulties of trying to be a faithful and obedient Christian in a faithless and disobedient church, God has the power to bring us through. We do not need to follow the track taken

¹¹ Gaebelin, Frank E., ed. *Hebrews through Revelation*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Volume 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 387.

by so many others whom Jude describes. It is possible to hold firm to God’s promises, and on the last day to find ourselves among those who are at peace with him.”¹²

C. Wish #3 – Love

He wishes them love. And that is almost a climactic word in these opening two verses. His love is poured out on the hearts of His children (Rom 5:5). He loves us when we didn’t love Him (I John 4:10).

Now the way this verse ends is just so encouraging. Jude says may these 3 things be added to you and may they be multiplied. Here’s a quick math refresher. Jude saying may these things be added to you would have been encouraging enough. For example...

$$\begin{aligned}2+2 &= 4 \\4+4 &= 8 \\8+8 &= 16 \\16+16 &= 32\end{aligned}$$

But he didn’t say these; he asked for multiplication that is exponentially more impacting. It is far more significant to have things multiplied, as he is asking God for. For example...

$$\begin{aligned}2 \times 2 &= 4 \\4 \times 4 &= 16 \\16 \times 16 &= 256 \\256 \times 256 &= 65,536\end{aligned}$$

In conclusion, Jude is certainly not addressing the pretenders or double-minded or half-hearted. He is addressing those with true, authentic faith.

John MacArthur concludes in his little book *Beware the Pretenders*, “Apostasy is present in the world and in the church – and it will get worse. These are not easy times in which to live. Christians are surrounded by everything that opposes the lifestyle God desires us to follow. Pressures and temptations to apostatize are on every hand, but

¹² *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude*, 170.

Christians have no need to fear. We are secure in Jesus Christ, and He will not lose any of us.

“But Satan is clever and may even tempt us to feel that our security in Christ allows us to in without fear of serious consequences, This is false thinking...We are called, beloved, kept, and blessed by God – and our response should be to love in holiness and gratitude, for the One who has done so much for us deserves nothing less!”¹³

Is the church in trouble today? You better believe it. We are on a path not too different from the church in the pre-Reformation days. Think about it.

- In Luther’s day, Tetzal was running around Europe promising miracles to those who paid for them and then sending the money to the Pope so he could build lavish churches. We have the same thing on TBN and other stations where so-called evangelicals are begging for money. And as the money comes in, the lives look more and more lavish.
- The medieval church was superstitious. We have so-called evangelicals praying the Prayer of Jabez convinced that prayer will bring them good luck and fortune.
- In the medieval church, the church had pushed aside doctrine and added religious rite and tradition. We have the same thing as many churches are pushing outside doctrine and theology and replacing it with business seminars and cute plays.

The audience and not the message is the sovereign today. Felt needs and not God’s expectations take center-stage. We need a generation of Martin Luthers; this is why Jude is so important for our day.

There is a Truth War being waged and the church is losing the battle because some of it’s so called soldiers are fighting on the wrong side. And this is why we need the Epistle of Jude.

¹³ John MacArthur, *Beware the Pretenders* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983).

STORY OF HEARING JOSH MCDOWELL AT ASCI (69 years old). Consider some of the following examples of the Truth War.

- 70% of youth will leave the church permanently by the age of 22. 80% will be gone by the age of 29.
- 50% of professing Christians say they have lost their faith after 4 years in college.

In his book *The Last Christian Generation*, Josh McDowell explains the reason for the title this way, “I realize the title of this book may be shocking. But the decision to call this *The Last Christian Generation* was not made lightly, nor was it done for sensationalism. I sincerely believe unless something is done now to change the spiritual state of our young people - you will become the last Christian generation.”

This is just one example of the Truth War. And that is why the Epistle of Jude is so helpful for us as he wrote to Christians instructing them how to live in such a war.

II. The Description of Apostates (vs. 3-4)

Vs. 3-4 express the purpose: not just about salvation but contending for it.

JUDE 3 – Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

A. The Salvation We Share (vs. 3a)

“*Beloved* (“dear friends” – a term of intimacy), *while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation...*” Here, Jude is expressing a sudden change of agenda. He set out to write one thing and ending up writing something else. What he planned on writing about he did not record. He intended to write about their “*common salvation*” and the Greek tells us he didn’t just sit down, start writing about it, and then change his mind. The phrase “*I was very diligent*” is a present tense verb, which means he continually tried to do this. He might have began writing something about their “*common salvation*” and then crumpled up the paper. And he may have done this several

or many times. He wanted to write this encouraging letter, but could not as we will see in a few minutes. He made every effort to write about their “*common salvation*.”

What made him change his mind? Perhaps he received a letter or report or an eyewitness account of the attacks upon the church. Or perhaps it is as simple as the Lord supernaturally revealing something to him and inspiring him to write his Epistle.

Now, what does “*common salvation*” refer to? Well, 1st it probably tells us a little more about the intended audience of this Epistle. If “*salvation*” is “*common*,” it would include both Jew and Gentile. So it is likely, Jude’s audience was more than just the Jewish Christians. It is an audience that shares something in “*common*”: that being “*salvation*.” It speaks of oneness and sharing, as the early church is described (Acts 2:44; 4:32). Now, why does Jude refer to the people this way? Perhaps to contrast them with the apostates.

John Stott explains it this way: “Wonderfully, every Christian is qualified to share in this salvation. Quite possibly, the people Jude is trying to deal with had an elitist view of their spiritual standing and maturity, and saw themselves as being more free and confident in their morality than other, less mature, law-bound believers. But Jude emphasizes that the offer of salvation is wide open, for it is a ‘common faith’, and ironically it is open even to the very people who are so scornfully denying it to others.”¹⁴

So instead of writing this, what did he write about? Look at the 2nd half of vs. 3.

B. The Faith We Defend (vs. 3b)

“...I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

He felt compelled to write about a different subject other than their “*common salvation*.” He felt his responsibility as a watchman and pastor. Remember that one of the

¹⁴ *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude*, 172.

high callings of a pastor is his responsibility to warn his sheep of upcoming danger and that is what Jude is seeking to do. Look at these 2 passages.

- **Ezekiel 3:16-19** – *“Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, I have made you a watchman (analogous of the protector sitting on top of a city wall) for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”*
- **Acts 20:27-30** – *“For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”*

The pastor is a watchman. He is to promote well-being among his people. That is why Jude wrote *“I found it necessary to write to you.”* And he came to *“exhort”* them, which is like a war-like urging from one person to another in battle.

So what is the theme of this letter? What was so important that it took precedence over their *“common salvation?”* He wanted to write to them *“to contend earnestly for the faith.”* The words *“contend earnestly”* (Greek word *epagonizo*) mean “to struggle for or to exercise great effort and exertion for something.” It is where we get our English word “agonize” from. It describes an intense, drawn out fight. It is a 12-round, no-holds-barred contest. It gives no room for pacifism. It was a word used in athletic contests and struggles (like running the race to win in I Corinthians 9:24-27). *“To contend earnestly”* is to fight for truth unto death...if necessary. This infinitive (“to _____”) implies that it is continual. Simon Kistemaker explains, “In brief, it means to enter oneself without

distraction to attain a goal. It means self-denial to overcome obstacles, to avoid perils, and if need be to accept martyrdom.”¹⁵ This type of language is not new to the church.

- **Contending earnestly to pray.** *“Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me”* (Rom 15:30). Paul was asking for a fervent prayer so that he could complete and fulfill his ministry with intensity and rigor.
- **Contending earnestly for suffering for Christ.** *“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (strength in numbers), and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me”* (Phil 1:27-30).
- **Contending earnestly to serve God.** *“To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily”* (Col 1:29). Working to the point of exhaustion is his point and desire expressed here.
- **Contending earnestly like Epaphras.** *“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis”* (Col 4:12-13).
- **Contending earnestly for the faith.** *“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses”* (I Tim 6:11-12).
- **Contending earnestly for the faith again.** *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”* (II Tim 4:6-7).

¹⁵ Simon Kistemaker, *James, Epistles of John, Peter, and Jude*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 372.

This type of language is biblical language. It is Christianity. It is what we sign up for when we call upon Him for salvation. The Gospel is a fight and Jude understood that. That is why he calling upon them to “*contend earnestly for the faith.*”

Now what is this “*faith*” they are fighting for? Is it only the Gospel or more? This is a tough question because there is certainly an attack on the Gospel taking place by these apostates. However, it seems to be more than just the Gospel. It would seem to include all Christian teaching and doctrine. It would be the same as the apostles’ teaching in Acts 2:42. In fact, peek down at vs. 17-18 and you will see Jude hint at this reality – “*But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.*” This is more than just a salvation message; it is other Christian doctrine.

And an important argument for this is the phrase that modifies “*faith.*” Jude says “*which was once for all delivered to the saints.*” It is something that had been delivered, handed down, entrusted and deposited. This would include more than the simple Gospel message. It would include Christian doctrine and teaching, which would include the Gospel. It indicates a body of truth, which was authoritative and handed down in the Church as an integral to Christianity from the start. Paul says in Romans 6:17, “*But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine* (The word “*form*” means they were molded into truth.) *to which you were delivered.*” The church is cast into the truth.

John MacArthur explains in his book *The Truth War*, “That is what the Truth War is ultimately all about. It is not mere wrangling between competing earthly ideologies. It is not simply a campaign to refine someone’s religious creed or win a denominational spitting contest. It is not a battle of wits over arcane theological fine points. It is not an argument for sport. It is not like a school debate, stages to see who is more skilled or more clever in the art of argumentation. It is not merely academic in any sense. And it is certainly not a game. It is a very serious struggle to safeguard the heart and soul of truth

itself and to unleash that truth against the powers of darkness – in hopes of resurrection the eternal souls of men and women who have been unwittingly ensnared by the trap of devilish deception.”¹⁶

In vs. 3, Jude is concerned. He wanted to write them a letter about their “*common salvation*,” but he could not. So he wrote to them to warn them of apostasy in the church and to not let up in their calling: “*to contend earnestly*” for the truth.

Now, vs. 4 describes for us the character of the apostates. Who are the enemies of the truth? Sun Tzu wrote in his famous work *The Art of War* that one of the most important strategies in battle is “to know thy enemy.” That is what vs. 4 is about. What are these apostate enemies of the truth like?

JUDE 4 - For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

C. The Opposition We Expect – What are apostates like? (vs. 4)

1. They are stealth.

“*For certain men have crept in unnoticed...*” They crept in unawares. The Greek word (*paraisduo*) means “to slip in alongside secretly.” Some translate this “they wormed their way in.” How did this happen? They were probably itinerant preachers going around damaging local churches, which was not uncommon in N.T. times.

- **Jesus warned about these teachers pretending to be something they are not.** “*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits*” (Matt 7:15-16a). These false teachers impersonate true and godly teachers.
- **Paul warned about these teachers who would come in pretending to be something they are not.** “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light*” (II Cor 11:13-14).
- **John warned about these teachers who would come in pretending to be something they are not.** “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the*

¹⁶ *The Truth War*, 75-76.

spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

In extra-biblical literature the word “apostate” sometimes described someone who was exiled from their country and kept finding ways to sneak back in or someone who pled a case very cleverly and with guile. That is what Jude is describing. He is warning about those who are creeping into the church without warning. These apostates are in the church but are not of the church (e.g., in the world and of the world). These are stealth apostates. The idea is that they come into the church without warning or come as instruments of righteousness when they are really instruments of evil.

False teachers are not easy to spot; you can’t always look at how they dress or behave (e.g. Gene Scott). They know the truth enough to be dangerous and interpret it for selfish reasons. They know Scripture well enough to know how to gain from it. These are the most dangerous kind of false teachers (e.g., like Satan disguising himself as a snake).

Look at vs. 12 in this Epistle as it elaborates on this characteristic – “*These are spots in your love feasts* (hidden rocks or reefs hard to see under the ocean water), *while they feast* (or take the Lord’s Supper) *with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water* (They look to bring rain but bring nothing.), *carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit* (They promise sustenance and only give famine.), *twice dead, pulled up by the roots.*” Look at the next characteristic.

2. They have been predicted

“...who long ago were marked out for this condemnation...”

These false teachers and apostates were “*marked out for this,*” which speaks of being ordained or written down beforehand. There is some debate about what and when this refers to. When were they “*marked out*” and what can that mean?

- **VIEW 1 – Some say Jude is just referring to II Peter.** They say he is simply saying, “Peter warned about it and so am I.”

- **PRO #1** - Where? II Peter 3:3 – “*Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts.*”
- **CON #1** – Not everyone is convinced Jude borrowed from II Peter. That is not an orthodox position.
- **CON #2** – One verse in II Peter doesn’t seem like it is enough to persuade us of this 1st view.
- **VIEW 2 – Others say Jude was referring to I Enoch 1:9.** This is where Enoch predicts the coming of the Lord and the condemnation of the ungodly.
 - **CON** – This places too much emphasis on the Apocrypha in the Epistle.
- **VIEW 3 – Jude is referring to “a list” made in heaven – like a heavenly book.** This is a very popular view that teaches a level of determinism and predestination where God doesn’t just preach these apostates in Jude’s day will come but the promise that there will always be apostates.
 - **PRO** – Apostasy is promised all throughout the Bible. And it always has been and always will be...this side of heaven. Israel was warned not to apostatize and apostates are found in every period of O.T. history.
 - 1) Numbers 14:9 is a command to the Israelites not to depart or apostatize from the Lord when they enter the Promised Land.
 - 2) Joshua 22:22 spoke of those who were rebelling against the God of gods.
 - 3) The 1st generation of Israel continually walked away from the faith and were not permitted to go into the Promised Land because of their apostasy.
 - 4) The revival in Nehemiah 8 following the Captivity was short-lived.
 - 5) In Elijah’s day, there were 7,000 godly people (I Kings 19:18) out of millions. Elijah even wondered if he was the only genuine believer alive.
 - 6) In Jeremiah’s day, the faithful was even a small amount. Most of the people in Israel were hostile towards Jeremiah’s 4-decade long preaching.
 - 7) People missed the coming of the Messiah – despite the clear prophesying in the O.T. – because people had grown so dark in their thinking. 3 years later they would crucify the Way and the Truth.
 - 8) And if you looked at every author of the N.T. you would find that all of them say something about false teachers.

“They were marked out” means they have always been and will continue to be.

The Puritan pastor Thomas Manton wrote in his commentary, “When the Christian church began first to look forth in the world, there were adverse powers without ready to crush it ... like worms bred within the body, sought to devour the entrails and eat the very bowels of it. The first ringleader was Simon Magus, and there followed Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Cerinthus, Ebion, Cerdo, Marcion, Tatianus, Valentinus, and many other first and second century Gnostics, who, being once turned aside from the truth and the fellowship of the faithful, lost all awe of God, and were given up to a judgment to believe all kinds of fables and fancies....In succeeding ages the devil hath often played over the old game, sometimes oppressing the church by the tyranny of pseudo-Christians...at other times corrupting the truth by error, or rendering it suspicious by the divisions about it. Heresies revolve as fashions, and in the course of a few years antiquated errors revive again, and that by their means who did not so much as know them by name.”¹⁷ In other words, people keep regurgitating the same false doctrine. Apostasy in the church will continue to sneak in until Jesus comes.

FOOTNOTE – Because these evil men were prophesied to come, we can take comfort in the truth that false teachers cannot thwart God’s sovereignty. If it was decreed in eternity past, God knew about it and as false and full of error these men may become, they cannot frustrate the plans of God.

3. They are godless.

“... ungodly men ...” This is an important word that appears 4x in vs. 15 alone – ***“To execute judgment on all, to convict all who are UNGODLY among them of all their UNGODLY deeds which they have committed in an UNGODLY way, and of all the harsh things which UNGODLY sinners have spoken against Him.”*** It is a word that is a general description of these men. It means they were without God. He is not on their side; they are His enemies. Even though they claim to be speaking for God and about God, they are the exact opposite of what they profess. They played the religious game.

¹⁷ Thomas Manton, *An Exposition on the Epistle of Jude* (Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1658), 6.

4. They are sensual.

“...who turn the grace of our God into lewdness ...” They change something holy and impure into the opposite. The word *“lewdness”* refers to living without boundaries and most agree this refers to some form of sexual or loose living. Peter uses this exact phrase to describe the shameful homosexual conduct of the Sodomites (II Pet 2:7). They are encouraging the people to live immorally.

They see God’s kindness as a license to sin. To them *“grace”* was a phony justification for lust-driven behavior (e.g., the corrupt priest in Catholicism). Jude 18 echoes this characteristic – *“How they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.”*

One of the key leaders of the Emerging Church movement, Brian McLaren, said this about homosexuality: “I am not sure what we should think about homosexuality.” He called for a 5-year moratorium to decide whether homosexuality was a sin or not. He continues, “In five years, if we have clarity, we’ll speak. If not, we’ll set another give years for ongoing reflection.”¹⁸ Are you serious! Does it need consideration or study?

Again, John MacArthur comments in his book *The Truth War*, “Disturbing evidence of this kind of ungodliness is becoming more prevalent across the spectrum of the visible church these days. In fact, it gets even worse. An Anglican committee commissioned to study the morality of extramarital sex suggested that the church should drop its opposition to cohabitation between unwed adults and regard the practice as ‘a new path from the single state to the married one.’”¹⁹ How about an old, evil path!

A false teacher is one who preaches against immorality but secretly practices it.

5. They are heretics.

¹⁸ Brian McLaren, “Brian McLaren on the Homosexual Question: Finding a Pastoral Response,” January 23, 2006. www.christianitytoday.com.

¹⁹ *The Truth War*, pg. 141.

“...and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” These men aren’t atheists; they acknowledge the existence of God. If they didn’t, they would not have an audience in the church. They do believe in God; they simply deny Christ in their hearts.

They wouldn’t have an audience if they were accepted in the church and said, “Jesus is not God or Lord.” So their denial of Christ was more subtle. At the very least, they denied Jesus for living and commanding a life in contrary to how they were living; it was both a moral and theological denial. They lived without acknowledging His Lordship in their hearts. They are the ones who cry “Lord, Lord” but are cast into the lake of fire. Titus gives this helpful description of the apostate who denies Him – **“They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work”** (Tit 1:16). They want to be kings of their own domain.

They are probably saying something like this: “If we are saved by grace, then it doesn’t matter what we do morally.” So they turned the grace of God against the commandments of Christ and in effect denied the lordship of Jesus.

In conclusion, the threat to the faith is coming from among some who are now inside. In his book *Beware the Pretenders*, John MacArthur writes, “An apostate is someone who receives the Word of the Gospel, who superficially believes it for a time, and then falls away. His is a head knowledge, accepting the facts intellectually without ever making them personal. He knows the truth without applying it. He ‘accepts’ God’s revelation as true, but never makes a genuine commitment to it.”²⁰ Those are the pretenders being described here.

III. The Destruction of Apostates (vs. 5-7)

CHUCK COLSON ARTICLE IN *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* (DEC. 2008)

One thing we haven’t spoken of specifically is what Jude was up against when he wrote this Epistle. Can we identify the false teachers Jude was describing? Do we know who they were? Many scholars say “yes.” And they state the two groups of heretical false

²⁰ *Beware the Pretenders*, 25.

teachers that Jude was facing and common in N.T. times were the Judaizers and the Gnostics.

- **The Judaizers** – This group taught to be justified, the Gentiles had to practice various O.T. rituals (e.g., circumcision). Paul was dealing with this group in Galatians and labeled them as preaching a false Gospel.

The church had grown to accept them as genuine believers and perhaps could have come from the church in Jerusalem, as Paul hints in Galatians 2:12.

- **The Gnostics** – This group is a little more confusing, because it allows for freedom of belief and thought amongst it's followers. Leaders in Gnosticism often had their own doctrinal distinctives separate from others.

The essential basis of Gnosticism is that truth is a secret known only by a few, elevated, enlightened people (Greek *gnosis* meaning “knowledge”). This is what led to some Gnostics writing their own gospel accounts (e.g., the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Judas, etc.), since the words of Jesus wouldn't be fit into their own truth system.

They professed faith in Christ and were often hard to detect in the church. This was a group of false teachers John wrote again in the 2nd Epistle of John. And the only way to deal with them in the Truth War was to expose them for who they are, as John and Jude write.

So this is what Jude is up against in the Truth War.

The Truth War, as we said last week, is not going well today. It seems like every day there are more and more examples of compromise and truth-compromising. And it would certainly seem as if this War is pointless to fight. So, why fight?

READ VS. 1-4.

The passage we will consider – vs. 5-7 – is meant to encourage the hearts of the saints with the reality that the enemies of God will not go unjudged or unpunished. God will intervene to hold them accountable to the destruction they have done in the world and to the church.

Vs. 5-7 communicates the certainty of God's judgment by looking at three examples. Peter does the same thing as II Peter, except that he inserts Noah (II Pet 2:5) and doesn't mention the Israelites in the wilderness (Jude 5). The point with these examples – disobedience and rebellion against God will lead to condemnation. Look at the 1st example.

JUDE 5 - But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

What Jude is going to say to his readers is supposed to be information they already had received. That is why he tells them “*I want to remind you.*” He says “*you once knew this,*” which means they had inherent knowledge.

To remember is a biblical expectation of God's people. John Stott has a lengthy but helpful word on remembering. He writes in his commentary, “The Bible is full of calls to us to remember things. The reason, of course, lies not in our own stupidity, but in the importance of memory in biblical terms. We are not told to remember something simply because we might temporarily have forgotten it or because the pressures of the day tempt us to adopt different positions. Remembering in the Bible is a duty, an act of will, and those who remind God's people [e.g., Jude] do so in a tone of solemnity and great moment.”²¹ Stott then goes on to explain how different men in the Bible called for remembrance – Jesus, Moses etc.

He then concludes, “Jude knows perfectly well that his readers already know the basic Bible stories he is going to tell them, but it is clear from their behavior that they have not understood them. Perhaps, like us, they treat Old Testament narratives as good stories for children, that have no message once we become adults. That is bad, and Jude wants to remedy the situation. His words here are not ‘an apology,’ for he is perfectly convinced that he needs to place firmly before us the truths we need so much but are unable to grasp for themselves.”²²

²¹ *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude*, 182.

²² *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude*, 183.

Well, what is this 1st example of remembering that Jude brings to his audience? Answer – the 1st generation of people of Israel in the wilderness. They had been delivered from Egyptian slavery but never made it into the Promised Land. Why did they never make it to the Land they had been given? Answer – their apostasy. They failed to believe in the truth and realities that God commanded them to obey. And along with that, they said on several occasions after receiving the Law that they would do all God said. And yet, they departed; they apostatized! The people of Israel had every reason to believe God and, yet, they turned their backs on him.

Look at Hebrews 3 and look at the indictment of these Israelites. The author begins by citing Psalm 95:7-11 – *“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”* (The “rest” he speaks of was the Promised Land.)

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily (In other words, challenge one another to remain in God and never fall away.), while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

“For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb 3:7-19).

Now look at Numbers 1:44-46. Here is the number of people who apostatized. Moses wrote, *“These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each one representing his father’s house. So all who were numbered of the children of Israel, by their fathers’ houses, from twenty years old and above, all who were able to go to war in Israel - all who were numbered were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty”* (Num 1:44-46). That number of 603,550 people that apostatized was a number of men, so the number could have been between 1-2 million people! These are the number of people who die in the wilderness and never enter the Promised Land. Why? Because of their lack of belief.

God certainly judged them for their departure from Him. That is just the 1st example. There is another one in the next verse.

JUDE 6 - And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

Which *“angels”* are these? Some say they are the angels in Genesis 6 who tried to co-inhabit with women and bring forth a race of half-man, half-angelic beings. But, I am not sure this is what Jude is referring to, because the *“angels”* in Genesis 6 are questionable whether they are supernatural beings or a reference to something else.

Jude seems to be referring to is the fall of Satan and his evil angels. Those who object to this view say Jude couldn’t be referring to them since he said they are *“reserved in everlasting chains”* and people wonder where their *“chains”* are right now. The question – are they currently being judged in *“chains”*? And, of course, the answer is “no” they are not in *“chains”* currently.

Jude is saying their judgment is certain to come. Why? Because that is the context. The context suggests certain judgment for those who teach and believe falsely. So these *“angels”* are already in a place of having their judgment *“reserved.”* Their powers and influence will be disarmed (Col 2:15). Being in *“chains”* is inevitable; this is what Jude is communicating.

Also, there is some needless debate about the “domain” of the angels and what their specific sin was (e.g., wanting to be like God?). It is not necessary to argue over where they came from and what they were giving up by their sinning, because Jude’s point was judgment was coming for their sin of rebellion and disbelief. No matter the sin, judgment will come. John MacArthur helpfully observes, “Jude warns his readers to remember these angels who were created with a dignity worthy of their high position, but who turned from their Creator and went their own way into gross immorality. They knew God and had experienced heaven, yet they turned away. And God did not take lightly their sin and wickedness, but brought on them a terrible judgment or blackness and bondage proclaimed by Christ who descended to their prison at his death a judgment which is only a prelude to an even greater judgment.”²³

And the point of bringing this example of God’s judgment is explained clearly by John Stott. He writes, “The application is clear: the people who infect the churches in the way Jude will describe must not think that they can get away with their rebellious behavior for ever. If even angels are subject to God’s judgment, despite their most strenuous attempts to rebel, what chance to human rebels have?” If angels are going to be judged for the rebellion and disobedience, so will every false teacher and apostate. That is Jude’s point.

Well, there is one more example given by Jude of certain judgment – Sodom and Gomorrah.

JUDE 7 - as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

This is the most vivid of all the illustrations in vs. 5-7. Now, when a biblical event or character makes it into secular vocabulary, it seems to make it even more significant. And that is the case with Sodom and Gomorrah. The Scriptures outside of Genesis refer

²³ *Beware the Pretenders*, 47.

to the wickedness of these cities quite often – Deuteronomy 29:22-23; Israel 1:9-10; 3:9; 13:19; Jeremiah 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Ezekiel 16:48-50; Zephaniah 2:9; I Corinthians 6:9; I Timothy 1:10). As one commentator wrote, “Sodom never occurs in the Bible as a living city, but the memory of its sin and consequent destruction was kept alive by Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the authors of the New Testament. Sodom and Gomorrah have become bywords and tokens of God’s wrath on sin.”²⁴ (e.g., IBEX visit to this area)

Sodom and Gomorrah’s sins were two-fold:

- **SIN #1** – “*Sexual immorality*” – Sometimes this word is translated “fornication.” It is not the Greek word *porneuo* (e.g., English word “pornography”). It is the Greek word *ekporneuo*, which is a more intense, perverse, extensive sexual sin. It refers to rampant promiscuity and zero faithfulness in marriage and extra-marital relationships. It is illustrated by the people of Sodom wanting to have sexual relations with angels...not humans! Even Lot demonstrated his being “caught up in the moment” when he offered his virgin daughters to have sexual relations with the townsmen!
- **SIN #2** – **Homosexuality** – This is the meaning of the phrase “*gone after strange flesh*.” It means they went after “*flesh*” that was not normal and not their own. In other words, God designed sex to be between a man and woman and to pursue one from one’s own gender is not normal; it is “*strange*.” It is called “*strange*” (not “weird”) but because it is not what God created or intended men or women for.

These are the examples of imminent and certain judgment Jude gives for those apostates and false teachers. They were made public examples to avoid following after. The 1st generation of Israel dies in the wilderness for their children to see; the fallen angels will not be able to experience redemption; Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed from the earth, never to be rebuilt again.

All three examples are a reminder that the triumph of evil is not final and God’s judgment will come. In conclusion, John Wesley once wrote, “When I was young I was sure of everything; in a few years, having been mistaken a thousand times, I was not half so sure of most things as I was before; at present, I am hardly sure of anything but what

²⁴ Alden, 466.

God has revealed to me.” Well, God has most certainly revealed that judgment will come upon those who fall away from Him and that is what Jude is both warning and exhorting his audience of believers with.

IV. The Conduct of Apostates (vs. 8-11)

Henry VIII (from the early 1500’s) was the 1st English monarch to be nicknamed “Defender of the Faith”; and the title has applied to every English monarch since and continues to appear with the abbreviation FD (Latin *fidei defensor*). Very few English monarchs have actually really deserved such a noble title – like Henry VIII, who fought to suppress the Reformation on more than one occasion. English monarchs haven’t exactly been defenders of the faith.

In fact, the contemporary Prince Charles said in 1994 he wanted to tweak the title a bit so Christianity would not be elevated above other religions. He said, “I personally would rather see it as Defender of Faith, not the Faith.” He continues, “I am a defender of the divine in existence, the pattern of the divine, which is, I think, in all of us but which, because we are human beings, can be expressed in so many different ways.”

That is what the church is unfortunately succumbed to in our place in history – refusing the duty of defending the faith. I have been very critical of the church in previous weeks about it’s involvement in the Truth War – and I make no apologies for that criticism. If God established the church to be the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim 3:15), than we need to be in constant re-evaluation of our faithful service to protect the truth. And, frankly, what I observe disturbs me.

In the church today, you are ridiculed for speaking out against error. Christians label other Christians as intolerant or mean-spirited for calling out truth (e.g., a frustration with MacArthur’s critics). People in the church are calling others in the church that ask the right questions and challenge anything “new” as “heresy hunters” or “whistle-blowers.”

Why is all this a concern? Not only is it another example of the Truth War taking place in the walls of the church, but it is a total disregard for what Scripture commands of us – “...*They received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*” (Acts 17:11).

Defending the faith is not popular anymore, and perhaps it has never been viewed as a popular thing to do. Just ask all the 11 disciples who are martyred for defending the faith; just ask Martin Luther who was branded a heretic for fighting the Truth War. Defending the faith has never been popular.

And this is why the Epistle of Jude is so important for us to consider. It equips us how to engage in the Truth War. READ JUDE 1-7.

- The Security of the Believer (vs. 1-2)
- The Description of the Apostate (vs. 3-4)
- The Destruction of the Apostate (vs. 5-7)

Today we consider the apostate’s conduct. What is he up to? How does he spend his time? What is important to Him? And remember why we are looking at his behavior (e.g., know thy enemy).

A. They defile the flesh (vs. 8a).

JUDE 8a - Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh ...

Before we look at this 1st description of their conduct, we have to deal with this word “*dreamers*”. The Greek word (*e-nup-ni-azo*) refers to a false teacher’s delusion and blindness; he takes the unreal for the real. Why did Jude call them that? What does it refer to? What were they dreaming about? There are basically 2 popular interpretations of this word.

- **VIEW 1 – It refers to those dreaming about their own sin – John Calvin’s view.**

- **PRO** – They are following after their own evil desires (vs. 16) and sexual immorality is certainly one of their characteristics (vs. 7). They love their own sin so much they dream about it and long to participate in it again. And they dream what new brand of immorality they can commit next.

They dream of defiling their flesh, which is a core characteristic of these apostates. They are immoral with their own bodies (vs. 7).

- **CON** – The Greek word used here for “dream” is not the common word for the dream state – *onar*. The other Greek word – *e-nup-ni-azo* – refers to the 2nd view.
- **VIEW 2** – It refers to those who say they have access to supernatural revelation. They are called “*dreamers*” sarcastically. They are dreaming if they think they have extra revelation.

- **PRO** – This was the Gnostic practice.

- **PRO** – The O.T. speaks of false prophets this way. They think they have something to add to what God has already said.

- **Deuteronomy 13:1-5** – *“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.”*

- **Jeremiah 23:16, 25-26** – *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD... I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.”*

To sum up, John Stott writes in his commentary, “These dreamers are laying claim to a position of inspired leadership with Jude’s church, and the members are too sleepy to notice what is being smuggled in under their noses.”²⁵ Now that we have dealt with this word “*dreamers*,” let’s begin looking more specifically at their conduct.

The 1st item describing their conduct is that they “*defile the flesh*.” This refers to immorality in their lives – possibly sexual immorality since the example given in near context is Sodom and Gomorrah. But it surely refers to more than just sexual immorality or evil. Defiling the flesh also must include despising God’s law and showing contempt for it. It is an outward and inward hatred or animosity for it.

Sooner or later, all false teachers are exposed morally. And the scary reality today isn’t that some are exposed morally and shown for who they are. What is a scary reality today is when a preacher or pastor is exposed morally and are quickly forgiven without real repentance or even tolerated for their sin (e.g. Ted Haggard restored to ministry after disqualifying Himself).

A confessed “deceiver and liar” and homosexual drug-user is looking for an audience again to preach to. Listen to this frightening statement released by Focus on the Family – “If Mr. Haggard and others like him feel like they have a call from God, they rationalize that their behavior does not change that call.”²⁶ That is when the Truth War gets scary!

B. They show contempt for authority (vs. 8b).

JUDE 8b - ... reject authority ...

The word “*reject*” (Greek *atheteo*) means “to do away with something already established.” In other words, they don’t like being told what to do. Anyone in authority or

²⁵ *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude*, 190.

²⁶ “Update: Ted Haggard, Disgraced Pastor Now Insurance Salesman”

<http://dekerivers.wordpress.com/2008/11/23/update-ted-haggard-disgraced-pastor-now-insurance-salesman/>

leadership over them does not receive an ear. They don't like civil authorities or ecclesiastical authority or angelic authority.

But more than that, Jude is not referring to human or angelic authority specifically, but probably something far greater – Christly authority. We already know they are rejecting the Lordship of Christ – “...**deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ**” (vs. 4). This means they scorn God's authority over them. They are denying His Lordship by living their own way.

This should not surprise us too much because apostates are instruments of Satan and Satan is always looking to undermine Christly authority and dominion (e.g., the cheap grace heresy). And they do this by watering down the Gospel, twisting the teachings of the Word to fit their own agendas, disregarding what the Bible has to say about certain subjects and just outright disobedience to God's Word.

C. They blaspheme (vs. 8c-10).

JUDE 8c - ... and speak evil of dignitaries (Greek <i>doxas</i> , which always refers to good angels).

When I first read this, I wondered, “Why would someone speak against angels? What would anyone have against such beautiful, innocent creatures?” Most people love angels (probably too much); you never hear of anyone saying they hate them. A commentator named Simon Kistemaker answers this question when he says, “In their desire for complete freedom, the infidels [referring to these apostates] slandered angels and refused to accept the authority of anyone connected with the law. ‘In other words, their slandering of the angels was a way of detaching the Law from God and interpreting it simply as an evil.’” In other words, because angels are related to God in godliness and mission, these false teachers even speak evil and blaspheme God's created messengers.

God uses angels often in the Scripture to deliver His messages to man. They are in contrast to the apostate here who delivers a “so-called message” from God without God's authority or approval. So these apostates have every reason to speak against God's

messengers. And the Greek language suggests “they continually speak against them.” There is no “letting up” of this evil. They don’t want to have anything to do with conforming their lives to the Lordship of Christ and that means speaking against everything connected to Him...including His messengers, the angels.

Now, Jude gives an interesting and somewhat strange example of this truth in vs. 9-10.

JUDE 9 - Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Ok, here is the question – where is this in the Bible? Where do we read about this celestial wrestling match between Satan and Michael? Daniel? Genesis? Revelation? Where? Answer: no where. So where does Jude get this story? Answer: the Apocrypha.

“Uh, oh.” Jude is referring to a source outside of the Bible? What is this about? Can we even trust this Epistle as canonical (e.g., an argument against in the 1st century)? The answer to that objection – Jude never says the Apocryphal quotations or references are authoritative; he simply uses them as examples to illustrate his own teachings.

There is nothing unusual about Biblical authors quoting or referring to extra-biblical works (e.g., the Book of the Wars of the Lord, the records of Nathan the prophet and of Gad the seer, the annals of the kings of Israel, the annals of the kings of Judah, poets, etc. – Numbers 21:14; I Chronicles 29:29; I King 14:19, 29; Acts 17:28). It’s really no different than someone alive today quoting a Christian author. Plus, Jude is not quoting this as authoritative but simply an illustration of his greater point.

In vs. 9-10, Jude is referring to an apocryphal book called the Testament of Moses or the Assumption of Moses. The ending of this book has been lost even though scholars seem to have reconstructed it. So you have “*Michael the archangel*” disputing and arguing with Satan himself over “*the body of Moses.*”

A reconstructed story of this account of Moses' burial goes as follows: "Joshua accompanied Moses up Mount Nebo, where God showed Moses the land of promise. Moses then sent Joshua back to the people to inform them of Moses' death, and Moses died. God sent the archangel Michael to remove the body of Moses to another place and bury it there, but Samma'el, the devil, opposed him, disputing Moses' right to honorable burial...The devil brought against Moses a charge of murder [killing the Egyptian in Exodus 2], because he smote the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. But this accusation was not better than slander against Moses and Michael, not tolerating the slander, said to the devil, "May the Lord rebuke you, devil!" At that the devil took flight, and Michael removed the body to the place commanded by God, where he buried it with his own hands. Thus no one saw the burial of Moses."²⁷

Why would Satan want the body of Moses? He would probably have used it as an object of idolatrous worship – in the same way people use the cross symbol today or other religious relics. God wasn't about to let that happen so he sent Michael to bury Moses' body.

The point – even the mighty archangel doesn't dare to rebuke the devil; God is the judge. Michael did not dare pronounce a judgment of reproach against Satan. He never rebuked Satan on the basis of his own position or power (as the "*archangel*") but deferred to God's power and judgment on the situation.

And the application is this: if the mightiest archangel Michael refuses to rebuke Satan, so how much more should sinful man refrain from doing do. The moral of this example seems to be that no one can speak by their own authority, like the false teachers were doing. Read vs. 10.

JUDE 10 - But these speak evil (This present tense indicates a continual or repeated action that has become a habit of life.) **of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.**

²⁷ Bauckham, 72-73.

What Jude is saying is this: don't even try to make sense of what these apostates say. It is all foolishness (e.g., like talking to a person sleep walking or talking in their sleep). Jude is saying they are speaking about things "*they do not know.*" They lack discernment. Paul explains why this is the case – "*These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man* (the unconverted man – in this case, the apostate) *does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (I Cor 2:13-14).

The commentator Michael Green explains, "If a man is persistently blind to spiritual values, deaf to the call of God, and rates self-determination as the highest good, then a time will come when he cannot hear the call he has spurned, but is left to the mercy of the turbulent instincts to which he once turned in search of freedom. And those instincts, given free reign, are merciless. Lust, when indulged, became a killer."²⁸ That is why they are described as untamed animals – "*brute beasts.*" The word "*brute*" comes from the Greek word meaning "irrational, contrary to reason, without reason, without rationality." They are untrained and undomesticated.

The very things these apostates preach are the very things that will damn them. And that is why Jude says "*Woe to them!*" (vs. 11) This was a phrase used by prophets to condemn people; Jesus used it as a word of cursing (Matt 11:21; 23). Paul uses one for himself (I Cor 9:16). Jude is saying these false teachers are headed for destruction.

D. They keep the wrong company (vs. 11).

You can tell a lot about a person by the company he keeps – the people he spends his time with. Now, let's read vs. 11.

JUDE 11 - Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

²⁸ 2 Peter and Jude, page unknown.

In vs. 11, Jude gives 3 examples of O.T. apostates. A helpful comparison of these 3 might be as follows:

CAIN	BALAAM	KORAH
Shows the error of false religion. They were devoid of love.	Demonstrates the greed and seductiveness of apostates. They taught that sin doesn't matter.	Shows the apostates rebellion and open blasphemy against God. They were rebellious and insubordinate to leaders.
They go in the way of Cain.	They rush headlong into the error of Balaam.	They perish in the rebellion of Korah.
They reject the right way.	They reject the truth.	They reject life.

Interesting that the antithesis to Cain, Balaam and Korah is Jesus – “...*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*” (John 14:6). Instead of committing themselves to Christ, they have denied His Lordship, as illustrated in this passage and the one before. Simon Kistemaker observes, “These three examples are not merely interesting historical accounts. Jude employs the three references to show that in his day godless men are bent on destroying God’s people.”²⁹ Here are the 3 examples in more detail.

1. The Way of Cain (vs. 11a)

What was this “*way of Cain*”? Cain was the 1st murderer and 1st willful unbeliever. His way is one lacking faith, love, selflessness and generosity; his heart was filled with hatred.

Remember the story: both Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. Cain brought the wrong offering by not bringing a blood sacrifice as God expects. He did what he wanted to do and God found his offering unacceptable. As a result, Cain turned against God and the truth; he became apostate. And because evil, moral behavior usually accompanies a departure from the truth, Cain killed his brother Abel.

Like that story, Jude is saying that the company the apostates keep is that of other apostates who go their own way. That is what the apostate does. He does what He wants

²⁹ Kistemaker, 390.

and does not consider God's prescription or expectations (e.g., one of the tenets of pragmatism and the seeker sensitive movement).

John Stott explains, "As Jude looks at the sadly mistaken Christians in the church who have taken the way of Cain, then, he is saying that they understand very clearly the standards that God expects, but that they take it upon themselves to decide whether they are going to accept them or not. Of course, they would not say, 'Those are God's rules and I will reject them.' They are as subtle as the Jewish writer quoted above made Cain out to be, denying that there is such a thing as right and wrong, and that God will ever judge our muddled world by his absolute standards. That is the way of Cain."³⁰

2. The Error of Balaam (vs. 11b).

What was the "*error of Balaam*"? This question is answered clearly by following that phrase with the word "*profit*", as Jude does. Balaam was in the ministry for the wrong reasons. He was a prophet for hire mentioned in Numbers 22. Remember that the Israelites were to enter Canaan and the Moabite king Balak was not happy about losing his land to them. So he paid Balaam a large sum of money to curse Israel and masquerade himself as a prophet.

Balaam did one thing right: he feared the judgment of God for cursing Israel in this manner when God did not tell him to do so. Even Balaam's donkey knew this was foolish! So each time Balaam tried to curse Israel – as he was paid to do – he ended up blessing them!

So Balaam devised a plan to get God to curse Israel. He told the Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men and get them to worship false gods. Then God would punish the Israelites for their idolatry and immorality. And this plan worked – God judged the people by killing them...including Balaam.

³⁰ *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude*, 198.

Balaam's sin was one of trying to corrupt the Israelites by sexual immorality and idol worship. And he was available to the highest bidder, just like the apostate who is motivated by money and fame (e.g., TBN example, bigger and more expensive buildings at the expense of supporting missionaries). Remember Peter's warning – "*Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly*" (I Pet 5:2).

3. **The Rebellion of Korah (vs. 11c).**

What was "*the rebellion of Korah*"? Their sin is mentioned in Numbers 16. Remember this one: they refused to accept the godly leadership of Moses and Aaron. They led 250 others in a rebellion against their place of authority and mediation between them and God.

As a result, God brought terrible judgment on him, all of his family and everyone else involved. The ground opened up and swallowed him and his family. And the rest was destroyed by fire from heaven. No one was left alive.

Korah is an example of the person who believes he doesn't need a Savior; he didn't think he needed a mediator. He wanted to do things his own way and didn't think He needed Moses or Aaron to lead him to God. The rebellion of Korah was blasphemy against the holy character of God because he didn't think he needed anyone to guide Him into the holy presence of God. It was a denial of his own unworthiness and sinfulness; he didn't think he needed any kind of righteousness to get before His presence.

John MacArthur summarizes it this way: "These men represent three classic illustrations of apostasy: Cain, rejecting a redemptive blood sacrifice; Balaam, choosing what would pay the most and bring the greatest material rewards; and Korah, rejecting the need for a Mediator. And once again we see that there are fearful judgments awaiting those who know the truth and reject it. All three of these men knew the truth and chose to

move away from it – and their lives ended in fear, violent death, and divine judgment.”³¹
We are on the verge of seeing a nation in chaos when God’s judgment comes.

I was reading recently about the species of the African ant. There is a species of ant that lives in some parts of Africa that lives in these subterranean tunnels and they go way down into the earth and they go way up – sometimes 15 yards long and 20 feet high! They usually pile them up around some kind of a tree. The queen is in charge of these millions of little insects. Scientists say the worker ants hunt for the food, and to distant places and they come back with all the provisions the whole colony needs to eat.

Now there is some type of special connection between these workers and the queen ant. If the queen is molested, the workers, even though if they are far away from the nest will come immediately to the ant hill. And if she is killed it says they get become frantic and rush around aimlessly and die out in the field somewhere on their own. What they have concluded is that there is some kind of radar device that works between this one queen and every one of these ants. If she is killed they are instantly disoriented and frenzy takes place that ends in death.

What a parallel to the Truth War. When a country removes the truth from it’s foundation, as our world is today, the radar device that is lost (the way of salvation) will lead the world into a panic ending in certain death...eternal. In the words of our writer, ***“I exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith”*** (vs. 3)

V. Recognizing False Teachers (vs. 12-16)

Turn to Hebrews 5. One of the reasons the Truth War is taking place within the walls of the church and one of the reasons there are too many examples of the church compromising the truth is one major weakness we find in the lives of professing Christians: a lack of discernment (e.g., not enough time for a sermon on discernment).

³¹ *Beware the Pretenders*, 65-66.

People lack discernment because of what I call “the got milk?” syndrome. What’s that? – Look at Hebrews 5:12-14 - *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”* Too many people like their “milk and cookies” and are not ready for spiritual food. Therefore, building discernment becomes almost impossible.

Discernment comes to only those who thrive on the solid food of the Word. Think of these common somewhat-every-day examples of using discernment.

- **Eating healthy** – Most people who do it right will study the fine print on the back of food packages and count every single calorie they intake. They will calculate the percentages of daily food intake.
- **Investing in the stock market** – People are not wise to flip a coin and buy any stock. They study the companies and watch the ticker tape (perhaps it is just luck).
- **Contracts** – No one should sign a contract without reading the fine print and understanding every line and obligation.
- **Surgery** – People look for a surgeon with the finest skills or experience to perform the procedure. You don’t get a dentist to perform brain surgery!
- **Watching football** – Some people can read offenses and defenses and calculate which plays can and should be run to achieve success. Statistics and averages are carefully weighed and considered.

What is so different about some of those examples and spiritual discernment? Not much. They all require “careful thought, keen interest, thorough analysis, close observation – together with alertness, attentiveness, thoughtfulness, and above all, a love of truth.”³² Our problem is that we don’t use discernment in the areas that matter – the spiritual issues that affect the defense of the truth.

³² *The Truth War*, 215.

This is one of the many reasons the Epistle of Jude is so critical for us right now in this era of the Truth War. The church needs Jude because the church lacks discernment in knowing it's enemy. The battle will continue and the War will remain; there is no cease-fire. Let's read the first 11 verses that we have studied thus far and remind ourselves where we have come. READ JUDE 1-11.

- The Security of the Believer (vs. 1-2)
- The Description of the Apostate (vs. 3-4)
- The Destruction of the Apostate (vs. 5-7)
- The Conduct of the Apostate (vs. 8-11)

We now re-consider the theme of recognizing the apostate (vs. 12-16). How do we spot them? We have studied their conduct and description, but how can we be discerning enough to spot an enemy of the truth? We look at a 12-step identification of such enemies of truth. Here are 12 things to look for in seeking to identify an enemy of the truth.

A. They pervert the innocent (vs. 12a).

JUDE 12a - These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear...

The word “*spots*” comes from the Greek word *spilades* which means “hidden rocks or sea reefs.” Some debate it's exact translation – reefs or rocks – but the metaphor and meaning is the same. The metaphor is that of rocks or reefs in the sea close to shore and covered with water or reefs that become dangerous to vessels (e.g., explain dangers of reefs – Rich). It is a direct reference to those who mingle in the church unnoticed and have not yet been identified as dangerous; they are a hidden reef.

Now, look at where they are posing a danger. Look at this – “*in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear.*” These are the Agape Meals (including the Lord's Supper). The Agape Meal was a time for the rich to share their provisions of food with the poor; for the poor it might be the best meal they got all week. The rich would bring their tastiest delicacies and the poor would bring their blandest bread and everyone

would share in the commonness that is fellowship. By the way, these Agape Meals would often include prayer, singing and teaching.

These false teachers were feasting in the traditional Agape Meal with the church and promoting themselves as worthy of such Christian-like fellowship and intimacy. It is not that unbelievers were not permitted to eat with Christians, but just like the Lord's Supper it has no significance or spiritual meaning to them. For the believer to enjoy an Agape Meal was to share in the most intimate of settings. What these enemies of the truth were doing was taking these unique settings of fellowship and using them for immoral or selfish purposes – making themselves out to be a part of this precious fellowship.

A false teacher takes the most intimate of settings and perverts them (e.g., transubstantiation). Remember in the church in Corinth they had come to experience orgies, the refusal to share food with others, cliques, and drunkenness. This was the type of perversion Jude was concerned about with this unique time of fellowship. There is a 2nd characteristic given.

B. They shepherd selfishly (vs. 12b).

JUDE 12b - ... serving only themselves. ...

This is a reference to the shepherd who cares only for himself; he takes all and gives nothing. Remember this was a major issue in Ezekiel's day. Turn to Ezekiel 34. Remember Ezekiel was exiled in Babylon and he wrote to Judah to warn them of their imminent destruction. In Chapter 34, he is warning the people of Judah about some leaders who would come falsely promising a speedy return to Israel; the problem of these so-called leaders was one of greed and self-service as Jude was concerned.

He wrote, *“And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: ‘Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! (Sound like false teachers in Jude 12? Instead of feeding, they were in it for personal gain. Here are some examples in vs. 3-4.) Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You*

eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.!

This is a description of a false teacher. He cares not for the people listening to him. He only cares for his life and well-being. Keep reading and see what the result of such selfish leadership attains. *“So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered!* (In other words, they would become prey for the evil nations; with no true spiritual leadership, they become easy prey. EXPLAIN THE CORRUPT SHEPHERD.). *My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.’* (Ezek 34:1-6).

This is a dangerous characteristic of false teachers. While every sheep is looking to benefit from his shepherd, little do the sheep know that they will get nothing. The false teachers are reckless. Look over at John 10. John gives a similar description of these types of false teachers – *“But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep”* (John 10:12-13). This type of person only does what is expected of him if he will benefit from it (e.g., a contrast to Jesus’ example).

So this 12-step identification begins with these 2: (1) they pervert the innocent and (2) they shepherd selfishly. Next...

C. They lack substance in their ministry (vs. 12c).

JUDE 12c - ... They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds ...

Generally speaking, clouds are a sign of rain (e.g., except in Oklahoma with it’s unpredictable weather). So these false teachers seem to bring something worthwhile to the church, but bring nothing. They claim to have answers and wisdom but have nothing

to offer. They are pretenders with no solutions. Solomon wrote of this even before Ezekiel – “*Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain*” (Prov 25:14). They lack direction and purpose.

The phrase “*without water*” is also used in Matthew 12:43 - “*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.*” It is used this way to describe a place where evil spirits abound. These teachers are verbose in their speech but fail to give anything substantial or refreshing. The ministers of such churches can be like clouds without rain: it may look like something good is going to come, but it never does. People may think they're getting something of value - but they're not! (e.g., story of teaching expositionally at Mingo)

The description of them being “*carried about by the winds*” means the clouds are blown and pass on without bringing long-hoped-for and refreshing rains. False teachers have no substance and have nothing to give to those who foolishly listen to them.

John MacArthur writes, “So many people follow after these false religions, false systems, false teachers, apostates. Think of all the people in the Catholic Church, all the people in the Mormon Church, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Science, Universal this and Universal that, all the rest of the world religions, whether it’s the Muslim religion or Buddhism or Hinduism or whatever it is, or follows these false teachers embedded in Christianity here and there and everywhere, and they’re all being promised blessing and they’re all being promised goodness and they’re all being promised peace and love and hope in the life to come. And they can’t deliver any of it.”³³

It is a constant reminder to us that we make sure we are benefiting others at all by our preaching and teaching. All of us must remain committed to substantial ministry (e.g., a challenge with the contemporary seeker-sensitive movement). Well, there is a 4th way to identify a false teacher.

³³ John MacArthur, “Apostates Illustrated,” <http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/65-9.htm>.

D. They produce no genuine fruit (vs. 12d).

JUDE 12d - ...late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead (In other words, most certainly dead), **pulled up by the roots.**

A false teacher has no real fruit in his ministry. Therefore, this type of tree is “*pulled up by the roots.*” When they have no real life in them, they are only deserving of being removed from the soil they are planted in.

This description is reminiscent of the parable told by Jesus in Luke 13:6-9. Turn there – “*He also spoke this parable: ‘A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’”*

Jude is underlining the gap between promise of fruit and reality. The reality: no fruit. These are the ones that deserve to be cut down and thrown into the fire (Matt 3:10; 15:13). This type of leader is cursed of God (Matt 21:19). Jesus also described false teachers this way in Matthew 7. Turn there – “*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them*” (Matt 7:16-20). Now when trees don’t produce fruit, 2 things usually happen.

- **These fruitless trees are uprooted.** That's what barren false teachers are destined for; their false claim to have fruit is unmasked as soon as they are examined.
- **These fruitless trees are cut down.** They never produce anything. They are plucked up and burned. The only thing to do is to get rid of them.

Thus, fruitless trees are judged. Their evil is removed in hopes for other fruit-bearing trees to replace them. Jude sees this lack of fruit in the false teachers and wanted his readers to be concerned. What a simple identification this 4th one is: just look for fruit! If you see no fruit being produced by an individual, then they are likely a false teacher.

So we have seen 4 steps of identifying these false leaders: (1) they pervert the innocent, (2) they shepherd selfishly, (3) they lack substance in their ministry and (4) they produce no genuine fruit. Fifth...

E. They continually produce evil (vs. 13a).

JUDE 13a - raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame ...

A stormy sea is often a symbol of the wicked. A good example of this is in Isaiah– *“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt”* (Isa 57:20). The wicked are brutal, unstable and unpredictable – like a stormy sea.

They rage up this kind of evil but they do so by *“foaming up their own shame.”* This probably refers to the seaweed and other refuse born on the crest of the waves and thrown up on the beach, which would be cause by a storm. Have you ever seen polluted water and the scum it leaves on the shore? John MacArthur explains, “They just make a lot of motion. They stir up a lot of foam and a lot of action and a lot of hoopla. And in the morning all you have is filth on the shore. The storm in the ocean causes the ocean to throw up its scum. It’s nothing but refuse, seaweed, the dead and the mangled bits and pieces of flotsam and jetsam and whatever else was churned up. And so it is with these apostates, they roll in wave after wave with all their action and all the froth and all the foam. And in the end, all they do is cast up scum. And what is the scum? It’s immorality, insubordination, and irreverence, false preaching, lies, deception, shameful deeds, seductions, all forms of religious prostitution and harlotry.”³⁴

³⁴ John MacArthur, “Apostates Illustrated,” <http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/65-9.htm>.

False teachers produce something, but it's only the scum of their conduct and teaching. Like a stormy, raging sea, nothing good comes from their lives and lips. And nothing continually comes. A 6th means of identification is this:

F. They will not last (vs. 13b).

<p>JUDE 13b - ... wandering stars for whom is reserved (or “guaranteed”) the blackness of darkness forever. (They will most certainly be judged.)</p>

A shooting or “*wandering*” star is brilliant but temporary (e.g., seeing shooting stars). Like a shooting star, these false teachers are erratic, promise much but don’t last or endure. They rise and fall. In a few brief moments of brightness, they attract many people to their false light, only to vanish suddenly into darkness.

False teachers appear for a little while, flashing erratically and cross man's sky just long enough to attract many who vanish with them into eternal darkness. Their destiny is the most intense, indescribable hell imaginable. It was said in ancient times that wandering planets or stars was due to their disobedience or their falling from heaven.

The point is this: their path is not straight; their devious life leads to darkness – or damnation. And since this appears in the passive voice, it means that God has most certainly placed these godless teachers and the fallen angels (vs. 6) into eternal darkness.

So we have our first 6 steps of identifying these false leaders: (1) they pervert the innocent, (2) they shepherd selfishly, (3) they lack substance in their ministry and (4) they produce no genuine fruit, (5) they continually produce evil and (6) they will not last. Let me share with you a few helpful quotes summarizing these 6 characteristics.

John MacArthur writes in his little pamphlet *Beware the Pretenders*, “Each of Jude’s word pictures from the natural realm points to a different aspect of these apostates or false teachers. Hidden rocks speak of the danger of apostasy. Waterless clouds refer to the false promises of false teachers. Autumn trees point to the apostates barrenness and lack of anything fruitful to offer. Wild waves show their frenetic and wasted effort. And

wandering stars picture their brief and aimless course, ending in blackness and darkness.”³⁵ Very helpful descriptions!

The commentator Maxwell Coder contrasts these same descriptions with the person of Christ. He writes, “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.”³⁶

We have to be continually on guard looking for these types of individuals in the church (e.g. taking Airborne before a plane ride or imminent sickness). Taking these warnings of Jude to heart can serve as preventative medicine. That is a lot better than trying to pick up the pieces after the damage is done.

AL MOHLER ARTICLE – “Atheists Play Their Hand – Probability”

We re-consider the theme of recognizing the apostate (vs. 12-16). How do we spot them? We have studied their conduct and description, but how can we be discerning enough to spot an enemy of the truth? Last week, we began looking at a 12-step identification of such enemies of truth. READ VS. 12-13. And we have had our first 6 steps of identifying these false leaders (vs. 12-13): (1) they pervert the innocent, (2) they shepherd selfishly, (3) they lack substance in their ministry (4) they produce no genuine fruit, (5) they continually produce evil and (6) they will not last. Here are the final 6.

G. They are judged universally (vs. 14-15a).

JUDE 14-15a – [14] Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, [15a]

³⁵ *Beware the Pretenders*, 72-73.

³⁶ Maxwell Coder, *Jude: The Acts of the Apostates* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 76.

to execute judgment on all, ...

These 2 verses – vs. 14-15 – quotes the pseudepigraphic book I Enoch, which was originally written in Aramaic and later translated into Greek. At this time I Enoch was a highly respected volume of religious writing. I Enoch was influenced by the O.T. and opens with the drama of judgment. It is a book that describes the fall of the Watchers, the angels who supposedly fathered the Nephilim (Gen 6 – “*sons of God*”). In I Enoch, the fallen angels go to Enoch to intercede on their behalf with God after he declared to them their doom. The remainder of the book describes Enoch's visit to Heaven in the form of a vision, and his revelations. It then gives a lengthy explanation of Genesis 1-6, parables of judgment, some eschatology, discourse on the sun and stars, and further visions about the end times.

Once again – as we have said before –Jude never cites this extra-biblical literature as authoritative or as equal to Scripture. He is simply using it to illustrate a spiritual principle (e.g., quoting from *Pilgrim's Progress*). As one commentator wrote, “Whether or not he regarded I Enoch as inspired is perhaps beside the point, for he is quoting a book both he and his readers will know and respect. He speaks to them in language which they will readily understand, and that remains one of the most important elements in the communication of Christian truth.”³⁷

Jude says that Enoch “*prophesied*” about these false teachers and foretold their universal “*judgment.*” Now, we have no record of that prophecy by Enoch but Jude says it happened. The Puritans believed Jude had access to an account of Enoch's prophecy unknown to us.

His point – the judgment for those who teach falsely is certain and thorough. And when Christ comes to earth to judge, He will be accompanied with “*thousands of his saints.*” This refers to myriads of angels who accompany God in judgment. How do we know that? The Scriptures speak of this angelic accompaniment with Christ as judgment.

³⁷ Green, 193.

- **Matthew 16:27** – “*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*” Here Jesus is speaking of a time in the future when Christians will be rewarded for their level of faithfulness. It is a time that is also described in Mark 8:38 and Luke 9:26.
- **Matthew 25:31-32** – “*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.*” This is probably a reference to what is called the judgment of the nations – not the Great White Throne Judgment. Once again, angels are present.
- **II Thessalonians 1:7-8** – “*And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Angels continually seem to accompany Christ at times of judgment.

Angels will be present at this judgment, as Jude is describing.

The original language says He comes “*to execute judgment on all*”; that is what we call infinitive of purpose; it means Jesus comes for the purpose of judging all. That is the specific reason for His coming. All rebels and false teachers will be judged; no one escapes. This is universal judgment. The Scripture tells us it will be an awful time when people will cry for rocks and mountains to fall on them so they can hide them from the wrath of God, but there will be no escape (Rev 6:15-17). What is the result of His coming? Well, one of the purposes for this judgment is mentioned in the latter half of vs. 15 and leads us to our next characteristic.

H. They are judged morally (vs. 15b).

JUDE 15b - ... to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

They will be judged morally. He will bring conviction upon those ungodly men and women. Their ungodliness is manifested in their “*deeds*” and “*harsh things...spoken*”; their words and actions show their ungodliness. He will “*convict*” them

because of their acts against the Lord; this Greek word (*elegcho*) is a type of conviction based upon proof of ungodliness. The proof, as we just said, is in their actions and words.

The coming of Christ results in tremendous conviction in the lives of ungodly people. They will all be convicted. The verdict will be: guilty. At the judgment, Jesus will say, “**Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels**” (Matt 25:41). Enoch's prophecy vividly indicts unbelievers for their ungodly character, attitudes, actions, and words. That includes apostates who have spoken against God and willfully rejected Him. Of course, unbelievers who aren't classified as apostates will experience the judgment of God as well.

So, Jude finishes his quotation of Enoch who, centuries ago, stated the terrible judgment on apostates and other ungodly people. It is something that God has been dealing with since before the flood. What else are these false teachers like?

H. They grumble (vs. 16a).

JUDE 16a - These are grumblers ...

This comes from the Greek word meaning “one who grumbles or murmurs or complains.” It is an onomatopoeia (e.g., meaning it sounds like it means) – *gongustes*. It is a word that refers to one’s dissatisfaction with someone’s words or deeds that leads them to condemning the speaker or doer (e.g., a word used in the Septuagint to describe the people complaining against Moses and God in the wilderness). False teachers continually grumble against the truth of God (e.g., probably in their heart mostly); they are discontent; and they are stubborn.

Charles Spurgeon’s illustration of a grumbler is humorous and helpful – “A heavy wagon was being dragged along a country lane by a team of oxen. The axles groaned and creaked terribly, when the oxen turning around thus addressed the wheels, ‘Hey there, why do you make so much noise? We bear all the labor, and we -- not you -- ought to cry out!’ Those complain first in our churches who have the least to do. The gift of grumbling is largely dispensed among those who have no other talents, or who keep what

they have wrapped up in a napkin.”³⁸ This is an apt description of the false teacher. He has no real giftedness; so all he can figure out is to grumble and complain.

We have a memorable illustration from the life of Christ in regards to how grumblers often become apostates. Remember in John 6, Jesus fed the multitudes and he discovers a group of them grumbling because He was claiming to be equal to the Father – *“The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven’”* (John 6:41) – interesting since the Israelites also complained about bread from heaven (or manna) when they were in the wilderness. Later in that same chapter, we find that same group falling away from God – *“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more”* (John 6:66). Their abandonment was decisive and final. False teachers are grumblers. Next...

I. They find fault in others (vs. 16b).

JUDE 16b - ... complainers ...

This characteristic goes right along with the previous one; they complain. Instead of being thankful or in a spirit of rejoicing they find reasons to criticize and whine. The Greek word means “to complain of one’s lot or to grumble about one’s conditions in life.” A synonym would be “faultfinder.” It means to find fault with one’s lot in life and criticize God for directing them into that location (e.g., not being content with being single before meeting Annie). In other words, God becomes responsible for their disappointments, losses and trials.

One commentator describes the word this way: “You’re satisfied by nothing that befalls you; you complain at everything. You don’t want what you’ve got, you long for what you haven’t got. In winter you wish it were summer, and in summer that it were winter. You are like the sick folk, hard to please.”³⁹ It is the person who always thinks the grass is greener somewhere else (e.g., like a cow eating grass on the other side of the fence). Next...

³⁸ Source unknown.

³⁹ Green, 193.

J. They live according to their way and not God's (vs. 16c).

JUDE 16c - ... walking according to their own lusts ...

This is a denial of Lordship as they walk their own way. Denying Jesus' lordship is more than just saying "He is not Lord;" the more subtle and frequent means of denying the Lordship of Christ is living according to your own way and not His. The word is a present tense verb, which means they continually live this way. They continually deny the Lordship of Christ in their lives.

One of my favorite defenders of this brand of Lordship is the Arminian A.W. Tozer. He wrote in his book *Man: The Dwelling Place of God*, "He is heir of all things, Lord of all worlds, head of the church and the first-born of the new creation. He is the way to God, the life of the believer, the hope of Israel and the high priest of every true worshiper. He holds the keys of death and hell and stands as advocate and surety for everyone who believes on Him in truth..."

"Salvation comes not by 'accepting the finished work' or 'deciding for Christ.' It comes by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole, living, victorious Lord who, as God and man, fought our fight and won it, accepted our debt as His own and paid it, took out sins and died under them and rose again to set us free. This is the true Christ, and nothing less will do.

"But something less is among us, nevertheless, and we do well to identify it so that we may repudiate it. That something is a poetic fiction, a product of the romantic imagination and maudlin religious fancy. It is a Jesus, gentle, dreamy, shy, sweet, almost effeminate, and marvelously adaptable to whatever society He may find Himself in. He is cooed over by women disappointed in love, patronized by pro tem celebrities and recommended by psychiatrists as a model of a well-integrated personality. He is used as a means to almost any carnal end, but He is never acknowledged as Lord. These quasi-Christians follow a quasi Christ. They want His help but not His interference. They will

flatter Him but never obey Him.”⁴⁰ That is the heart of believing in His Lordship: obedience. And this is what the enemies of the truth lack. Next...

K. They boast of themselves (vs. 16d).

JUDE 16d - ... they mouth great swelling words ...

This is very descriptive vocabulary. This description comes the Greek word meaning “excessive size or puffed up or swollen.” The word is generally used of great or even excessive size and or big words or arrogant speech with nothing to prove their worth. In other words, there is a lot of talk about how great they are with little or nothing to prove their boastful claims (e.g., a “sudden expert”). It is like Shakespeare once wrote, “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” Their speeches may sound like great oratory, but they consist of empty words that have the purpose of seducing people.

You know why boasting in self above God is such an evil? There are essentially 2 reasons for this.

- **It is not what we were created to do.** As image-bearers created in the image of God, we were not created to admire man. We were made to admire God, not man.
- **It communicates that man is more admirable than God.** Boasting belittles God. By man elevating himself he actually discredits the work of God and thus continue to deny the Lordship of Christ.

Boasting goes against what we were created for – boasting in God – and is a lie. And it is what false teachers do. They boast. Lastly...

L. They profit from others (vs. 16e).

JUDE 16e - ... flattering people to gain advantage.

They profit from others. They are in the ministry for gaining financial “*advantage*” over others. They flatter others – build them up falsely by making them believe something about themselves that is not true – and then profit from their living in

⁴⁰ A.W. Tozer, *Man: The Dwelling Place of God* (Camp Hill: Christian Publications, 1966), 142-143.

ignorance and deceit (e.g. example of Balaam). They show partiality for the sake of material benefits.

This is a sin forbidden in the Mosaic Law – *“You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor”* (Lev 19:15). Also we read, *“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe”* (Deut 10:17).

Why was this bribing forbidden? What is the real issue with showing partiality financially in this manner? It perverts someone from acting in fairness to a particular person or group. In other words, money jaundices their judgment. False teachers say what people want them to say in order to make a profit (e.g., wondering how many in the Health/Wealth movement are in it for profit).

So we have 12 more characteristics of these false teachers that instruct us how to know thy enemy.

- They pervert the innocent.
- They shepherd selfishly.
- They lack substance in their ministry.
- They produce no genuine fruit.
- They continually produce evil.
- They will not last.
- They will be judged universally.
- They will be judged morally.
- They grumble.
- They find fault in others.
- They live according to their own ways and not God’s.
- They boast in themselves.
- They profit from others in ministry.

In conclusion, there is no excuse for Christians not to recognize false teachers. Jude couldn’t be clearer. A DUTY OF THE SECRET SERVICE – COUNTERFEIT ENEMY. Know thy enemy!

VI. Survival in the Last Days (vs. 17-25)

GEORGE BARNA ARTICLE – “Christianity Is No Longer Americans’ Default Faith.”

Once again, in his book *The Truth War*, John MacArthur writes, “I am convinced that the greatest danger facing Christians today has infiltrated the church already. Countless false teachers already have prominent platforms in the evangelical movement, evangelicals themselves are loath [“unwilling”] to practice discernment or question or challenge anything taught within their movement; and many leading evangelicals have concluded no doctrine or point of theology is worth earnestly contending for. The evangelicalism movement as we speak of it today is already doomed. It stands roughly where the mainstream denominations were in the early part of the twentieth century when those denominations began formally excommunicating conservative voices of dissent from their midst – and sounder evangelicals began actively separating from those denominations en masse [“altogether”]...”

“When the movement as a whole remained committed to core biblical distinctives, it was not easy for false teachers to usurp that kind of influence. But the very doctrines that once defined the evangelical position are currently being challenged by people within the movement. The evangelical consensus is gradually being dismantled, all boundaries are being systematically erased, and everything is suddenly up for grabs.

“It is time for the faithful remnant to redraw clear lines and step up our energies in the Truth War – contending earnestly for the faith. In light of all the biblical commands to fight a good warfare, it is both naïve and disobedient for Christians in this postmodern generation to shirk that duty.”⁴¹

So the only remaining question left to answer is this: how do we step up those energies? What should we do? What lines need to be re-drawn? Answer: Jude 17-25.

⁴¹ *The Truth War*, 172-173.

There are 4 lines that need to be re-drawn. Here are our marching orders in the Truth War. There are 4 of them.

A. Remember the Gospel will continually be under attack (vs. 17-19)

JUDE 17 – But you, beloved (or “dear friends” – expressing his deep love, affection and concern for fellow believers), **remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:**

Believe it or not, this is the 1st imperative (or command) in the Epistle of Jude – “*remember the words.*” And, of course, that is significant. Anytime someone like Jude writes 16 verses of content warning about the attacks on the truth and paints this disturbing picture of blasphemy in the church, any mature believer would want to know, “What should I do? How can I fight?” So the 1st command out of his mouth would seem to be the most anticipated – if not the most important.

Jude wants his readers to “*remember*” something. Why? Because Jude feels, and he is correct, that Christians have a tendency all-too-often to forget – whether they just don’t recall it often enough or these false teachers drown the truth out with their pompous words. Christians forget the things they can’t afford to forget. This is appropriate since Jude has reminded them of some O.T. examples already and the lessons of falling away they failed to learn. Jude believes any neglect of this factual knowledge would be detrimental to their own salvation.

So what is it that Jude wants them to “*remember*?” Answer: “*the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Remember the Gospel will be continually under attack. Which “*words*” could he be referring to? Answer: the truth. Here are a few examples in the N.T.

- **Paul to the Ephesians elders** – “*For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves* (a phrase borrowed from Jesus expressing their extreme danger) *will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves* (In other words, like Jude says – the more fearful attack will not come from without but from within the “church.”) *men will rise up, speaking perverse* (or “twisted and distorted”) *things, to draw away the disciples after themselves*” (Acts 20:29-30).

- **Paul to his disciple Timothy** – *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith (or “leaving their original position” – another word for “apostate”), giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth”* (I Tim 4:1-3). These people will grow in acceptance in the church.
- **At another time to Timothy from Paul** – *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”* (II Tim 3:1-5). In other words, there will be some who appear to be godly but are not at all. These are the types of people to avoid.
- **One chapter later** – *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine (or “tolerate the truth”), but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables”* (II Tim 4:3-4). Everything but the Word will be elevated and the Word will be downgraded.
- **The Apostle John** – *“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us”* (I John 2:18-19). The way to detect a true believer is whether he remains. And there will always be those who don’t remain, leave the church and apostatize. This is a promise and warning to the church.
- **From Peter** – *“Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts”* (II Pet 3:1-3). Perhaps this was all he really had in mind as he seems to be borrowing or quoting from Peter’s 2nd Epistle.

Jude and the other apostles couldn’t have been clearer. We are really without excuse. John MacArthur writes, “Today’s evangelicals have no excuse for not being vigilant. We

have been warned – repeatedly. Jesus commanded us to be on guard against false christ and false prophets. The apostolic era was filled with examples of wolves in sheep’s clothing. Church history is strewn with more examples, one after another. Only sinful and willful unbelief can account for the refusal of so many in the church today to heed these warnings.”⁴² Look at vs. 18-19 to see what specifically Jude was calling his readers also to remember.

JUDE 18-19 - [18] how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. [19] These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Jude says there will be “*mockers*” who walk their own way. Thus, that is the ultimate way you blaspheme and mock God’s word – by denying it and walking your own path. “*Mockers*” only appears here and in II Peter 3:3. These are not people who are ignorant of God’s word but very informed. The idea is that of playing a trick on someone. This is not some light, humorous parody but a serious, blasphemous attack on God and His people. They play tricks on the Word of God by trying to pass themselves off as Bible teachers.

Like the Pharisees, they wanted to elevate themselves as spiritually elite. They probably formed a clique at the love feast whose only desire was to feed themselves (v. 12). They arrogantly associated with the rich and the educated, believing themselves to be the spiritual and intellectual upper crust of society. They were like the Pharisees (a name which could mean “separated”), so Jude deals with them like Jesus dealt with the Pharisees. Jesus told them they were separated in a different way than they had assumed; they were separated from God. An example of this religious mocking is in vs. 8 when they ridiculously make light of God’s angels (e.g., messengers of the truth). A mocker despises and ignores religion and morality.

They not only mock the truth but they are “*sensual*” and “*cause divisions*” and lack the Holy Spirit (vs. 19).

⁴² *The Truth War*, pg. 175.

- **They are “*sensual*.”** These men followed their natural lusts and appetites without control or restraint. Every time the flesh says, “Do this,” they do...without exception. This means they felt morally free or loose. Commentator William Barclay observes, “The spiritual and intellectual aristocracy believed that they were exempt from all the ordinary laws which govern a man's conduct. Ordinary people, the common herd, might have to observe the moral laws and accepted standards, but they were above that. For them, sin did not exist.”⁴³
- **They “*cause divisions*.”** This present participle in the Greek means they continually are this way. This is completely opposite to what Christ expects of the true church that seeks for unity; they don't unify but divide. They see themselves as religious elite, much like the Gnostics did; they saw themselves as spiritual aristocracy. They form religious cliques within the church.
- **They lack the Holy Spirit.** These do not have the Spirit of God and therefore live unrestrained lives. This is proof they are not saved. They do not possess the Spirit because the Spirit does not possess them. Paul said it as clear as can be in Romans 8:9 – “*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*” The Holy Spirit makes His home in the believer and apostates have never experienced that joy and privilege.

These are not the type of men you would want your child being around. It's as if Jude is saying this, “Remember, the Apostles told you that such people were coming. They said that they would mock the truth, denying the inspiration of Scripture. They would deny the deity Christ and His substitutional atoning death and subsequent resurrection. They pursue their own lusts, operating in the ministry for the purpose of self-aggrandizement. They separate themselves from the majority and create an elite group that condescendingly limits all others to the physical realm. The fact of the matter is, they are devoid of the Holy Spirit, and therefore without spiritual life.”⁴⁴

So the 1st marching order is to remember these truths. Remember the Gospel is going to continue to be under attack. I read a few years ago that since 3600 B.C. – for 5,610 years of history – there has only been 292 years of peace. That is roughly 5% of history has experienced peace! And that is nothing compared to how many years of peace the Truth War has experienced – 0 years, 0%!

⁴³ Barclay, 238.

⁴⁴ John MacArthur, www.biblebb.com, “How to Survive in the Last Days of Apostasy,” <http://www.biblebb.com/files/mac/sg2127.htm>

We cannot afford to put down our weapons, especially when our Creator promises there will be no cease fire. When people are shooting at you, you can never stand up in the cross-fire and not shoot back. You have to keep fighting. We have to remember what apostasy is and it will always attack the truth. That is the 1st marching order. The 2nd is this:

B. Remain (vs. 20-21).

JUDE 20-21 – [20] But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, [21] keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Remain where? 4 areas:

- **Remain in the faith** – “...*building yourselves up on you most holy faith...*” This is directly opposite of what the false leaders are doing by dividing the body of Christ. They depart from the faith and cause divisions within the congregation that leads to further departures.

Christ is the cornerstone and he laid the foundation of truth for us. Thus, we are responsible to continue building upon it. With what? With our “*most holy faith.*” It is “*most holy*” because it is “utterly different” and set apart from others; it is also “*most holy*” because it comes from God Himself (Stott, 220).

Remember this was a commitment of the early church – “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship ...*” (Acts 2:42). They prioritized the truth.

Peter says it well in II Peter 3:17-18 – “*You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever.*”

This is critical for the Christian. With the onslaught of the enemy coming from every direction, he has to have that commitment to God’s Word. He has to be a person of the Book. He has to remain in the faith.

- **Remain in prayer** – “...*praying in the Holy Spirit...*” This is the 2nd time the Holy Spirit is mentioned (“*not having the Spirit*” - vs. 19).

Now, some say this is tongues speaking, but nothing in the context suggests that. The contrast is still in play between the false teacher and genuine follower. The enemy of the truth doesn't have the Spirit; the genuine believer not only has the Spirit but has the Spirit leading him in his prayers.

Paul reminds us in Romans 8:26, "*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*"

We should never get to the point in our Christian life where we don't depend upon God in prayer and try to accomplish things with our own strength. Why? Because our warfare is not a physical one; it is a spiritual battle. Thus, we need the Spirit's guidance and counsel in fighting.

And when we pray in the Spirit, we are praying according to God's will. We have to remain in prayer.

- **Remain in God's love** – "*...keep yourselves in the love of God...*" In other words, stay in this sphere of God's love. This is God's basic attitude towards mankind.

How do we do this? How do we remain in God's love? The commentator Simon Kistemaker answers it this way: "God comes to man and surrounds him with divine love; in response man comes to God with human love."⁴⁵ In other words, since God loves us, we love Him and love others (Matt 22:37-39). It is a basic reminder to remain obedient to Him (e.g., opposite of the one who falls away). We prove we remain in God's love by loving others.

John reminds us in I John 2:5, "*But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*"

Elsewhere John writes, "*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love* (Why? Because He is the example of obedience.), *just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love*" (John 15:9-10).

- **Remain in God's mercy** – "*...looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*" This is a waiting in anticipation for the Day of Judgment in which Christ's mercy will acquit him. The believer is called to wait upon the ultimate mercy: where Jesus pardons Him from eternal death!

⁴⁵ Kistemaker, 406.

Those 4 areas of remaining are reminders to us to set our minds on things above and not below (Col 3:2). That is one of the secrets to fighting the Truth War. Those who remain are opposite of those who fall away (e.g., apostates).

I want to share with you 2 examples of the Truth War that I came across this week.

- The prayer of Gene Robinson at Pres. Obama's Inauguration (READ ON YOUR OWN TIME)
- Rev. Bacon's statement of "gay is a gift from God"
- The woman in Nevada selling her virginity

If you haven't understood the possible devastation of the church in regards to the attacks on the truth, then you need to wake up from the foolish dream you are living. God is in need of protectors of the truth in the worst way.

We have been answering the question, "What can we do about this Truth War? What would God have us do?" And we have dealt with 2 of the 4 marching orders: (1) Remember the Gospel is under attack and (2) remain in four areas: in the faith, in prayer, in God's love by obedience to Him and in God's mercy by awaiting His preservation from eternal judgment. Now we consider the last 2 marching orders.

C. Reach out (vs. 22-23).

The idea of reaching out is a call to evangelism – "*on some have compassion.*" Let me say this as clearly as possible: one of your secret and most powerful weapons in the Truth War is not a good understanding of evolution or a throughout comprehension of the worldviews in our society or training in quick thinking or speech; one of your secret and most powerful weapons in the Truth War is the Gospel. The enemies of the truth will not be defeated unless they surrender their foolish ideas of the world and embrace Christ as Savior (e.g., don't try to reform America without evangelizing it first). We are asked to reach out to 3 groups of people.

1. To the confused or the doubter (vs. 22a)

JUDE 22 - ... making a distinction; ...

Now where do we get “doubting” or “confusion” from this English phrase – “*making a distinction*?” The NIV and NASB got it right when it translated this Greek word *diakrino* “those who doubt” or “who are in a state of doubting.” The word refers to those who have doubts in their mind; they are divided about how to think about something. It could be translated “making doubts in their mind.” It is the word used to describe Peter’s confusion about being told to eat all these unclean animals (Acts 10:20) that he hadn’t ever eaten and then to begin fellowshiping with the Gentiles. Peter was being pulled 2 ways in his thinking: the Mosaic restrictions of eating certain types of meat and God lifting the ban on those dietary restrictions. He was confused (*diakrino*) for a time.

These people that need the Gospel are the type that aren’t necessarily hostile to the truth; they just aren’t sure (e.g., could be agnostic). They are open to the truth but also open to error or “untruth.” They are thinking about all possibilities openly. They could even be new believers who are young or immature. They are the most accessible and most vulnerable of the 3 groups.

John MacArthur writes in *The Truth War*, “Churches today are filled with people like that. They drift from church to church. They are often more concerned about whether they like the music than they are about whether they are hearing the truth. They are usually absorbed in religion for self-centered reasons. They want a better life. They are ‘recovering’ sinners looking for fellowship. They are therefore susceptible to anyone who promises to meet their ‘felt needs.’ They are the first-line victims of false religion. Don’t write them off or reject them. Show them mercy, Jude says.”⁴⁶

And this is where Peter’s counsel to the church of “...*Always be ready to give a defense* (where we get our English word “apologetics” – understanding why a believer is a Christian and able to articulate that clearly, humbly, thoughtfully and biblically) *to*

⁴⁶ *The Truth War*, pg. 178.

everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you (salvation), with meekness and fear” (I Pet 3:15) is so important. They need the mercy of the Gospel. Next, we are to reach out...

2. To the endangered disbelievers (vs. 22b)

JUDE 23a - But others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

This group is a little more antagonistic to truth. That is why Jude describes them as needing to be saved *“out of the fire.”* They are most certainly on their way to eternal judgment. So urgency is needed for their evangelism. The idea of *“pulling them out of the fire”* likely is O.T. imagery from the Minor Prophets Amos and Zechariah.

- **Judgment on Israel in Amos 4:1-11.** Turn there. – *“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan (a metaphorical name for Samaritan women who lived in luxury), who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring wine, let us drink!’ The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness: ‘Behold, the days shall come upon you when He will take you away with fishhooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. You will go out through broken walls, each one straight ahead of her, and you will be cast into Harmon,’ says the LORD.* (In other words, your captive or enemies will escape your city through breaches in the wall.)

“Come to Bethel and transgress, at Gilgal multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days. Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, proclaim and announce the freewill offerings; for this you love, you children of Israel!” says the Lord GOD.

“Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD.

“I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered. So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD.

“I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees, and your olive trees, the locust devoured them; yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD.

“I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; Your young men I killed with a sword, along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; yet you have not returned to Me,’ says the LORD.

“I overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning (There you go. In other words, despite your evil, I was merciful and spared judgment.); yet you have not returned to Me,’ says the LORD.

This refers to imminent destruction about to engulf them because of their sin. The point is that it is possible to escape the fire of God’s judgment if God intervenes. Judgment was spared.

- **Zechariah 3:1-2** – We won’t look at this passage, but it speaks of God’s favor resting upon Jerusalem by mercifully removing imminent judgment.

The point of all this – these types of endangered sinners are in need of rescue. They have already bought into the lie of error so they still need confronting but only God or the Gospel can save them.

With a sense of urgency, you must say to this type of person, “Get out of there!” When a person is engulfed in terrible evil, there is no time for tactful conversation. You need to be prepared to offend them – if necessary. Don’t be too concerned about offending that person. Just think how offensive that particular system is to God; He’s been offended long enough.

John MacArthur writes, “Snatching them from the fire means giving them the truth – but with accents of urgency benefiting the serious danger such people are facing. You come with force. You don’t toy with such error or invite the purveyors of it to a dispassionate discussion over tea and biscuits. You treat the situation with an urgency and sobriety that is commensurate with the evil of apostasy.”⁴⁷ So we have read of our responsibility to reach out to the doubter and now the one in danger of judgment. There is a 3rd and final group in need of rescue according to Jude.

3. To committed sinners (vs. 23)

⁴⁷ *The Truth War*, pgs. 179-180.

JUDE 23 - hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

This is graphic language if you read it carefully. The word “*garment*” comes from the Greek word meaning “underwear”; the word for “*defiled*” comes from the Greek word meaning “stained in a filthy manner” or “stained by bodily functions.” So put those 2 together: Jude is saying this group is defiled like dirty underwear.

Scripture does employ this unflattering description as sinners are referred to as filthy rags (Isa 64:6) – which means clothes stained from menstruation. And He uses the same description in Revelation 3:4 describing the defilement of the church of Sardis. Simon Kistemaker explains it this way: “Jude is saying to the readers, ‘Avoid all contact with sin so that it does not contaminate you. In fact, hate sin as you would loathe filthy undergarments stained by human excretions.’”⁴⁸

And if this group is defiled, we must stand clear of them so we are not too defiled (e.g., like a man who wants to minister to prostitutes). We shouldn’t get close, less we be corrupted. Paul speaks of this in Romans 16:17 – “*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.*” Friendships cannot and should not be forged with false teachers because they are stained. We cannot risk close proximity to them.

On the other hand, they do deserve the opportunity to respond to the truth. Like the other 2 groups, our defense of the truth in their midst is necessary...but with caution so that we too might not become defiled.

To summarize this 3rd marching order: the 1st group needs compassion and tenderness because sincere doubts trouble them. Their problem is not a violent reaction against Christianity; their problem is doubt.

⁴⁸ Kistemaker, 408.

The 2nd 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 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.

Reach out is the 3rd marching order. There is a 4th and final marching order for us in answering the question, “How we live in apostate times? What can we do in the Truth War?”

D. Rest in His majesty (vs. 24-25).

Jude now turns to God to attribute love and protection from Him in this memorable doxology in vs. 24-25. Many scholars suggest this was a doxology or hymn sung in the early church, which is very likely considering it’s contents. These closing words are the best known of Jude’s epistle.

JUDE 24a – Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
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Why end the letter this way? Why would Jude end with an anthem of praise and recognition of the majesty of God? Well, if you are engaged in the Truth War, things will likely seem dangerous and discouraging at times (e.g., a mindset of many believers right now). There could be fear; there could be anxiety. There could be the worry of becoming one of these enemies of the truth. The reminder in vs. 24-25 is this: “Don’t fear. Rest. Rest in His majesty.” Why?

Well, first of all Jude says He “*is able to keep you from stumbling.*” God has the power to do this. The imagery is that of a sure-footed horse who doesn’t stumble (e.g., like an ibex). The idea is that in the face of danger, God is able to protect and preserve. When the Truth War is in “high gear,” God promises to preserve His people and not allow them to be taken from the Evil One. God provides protection from external attack.

The word “**keep**” in verse 24 is *phulasso*, which means “to watch in the case of attack.” It stresses safe custody under attack. As a Christian, you may be attacked, but God is going to watch to make sure you are safe. God not only keeps us with watchful care, but He guards us as One who knows that we must be kept in safe custody when under attack. What security!

It is a stark contrast to those who have fallen away from God (e.g., the O.T. examples in this Epistle and the false leaders Jude is discussing). It reminds me of those encouraging words in Psalm 121:1-4 – “***I will lift up my eyes to the hills - from whence comes my help?*** (as if the pilgrim is looking towards the holy city of Jerusalem which sits on a hill – Mt. Zion) ***My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.***” He is alert and able to keep His people’s soul from perishing.

Psalm 140:4 says, “***Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from violent men, who have purposed to make my steps stumble.***” Psalm 141:9 says, “***Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, and from the traps of the workers of iniquity.***” God keeps the genuine believer from falling into apostasy. There may be times of great discouragement and loss of joy, but God will draw us back to Himself. Why? Look at the next verse. He wants to keep us for this purpose.

JUDE 24b - and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

He keeps us so that we can appear before Him as blameless in His “***presence of His glory.***” You might remember that in the tabernacle or Temple, the animal had to be presented before God as perfect (Lev 1:2-3; 18:24-28; Num 28-29; Ps 15:1-2) or “***faultless.***” Jesus is described as “***blameless and spotless***” (I Pet 1:19). That is the imagery here.

And Jude even adds “*with exceeding joy.*” This word seems to have eschatological undertones denoting the jubilation of God’s chosen people at His final manifestation. And what joy there will be when this Truth War is over and we are presented before God “*faultless*” before Him!

JUDE 25 - to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

God deserves praise. All glory is His; that is the sum of all of His attributes. All majesty is His; that speaks of His greatness, splendor, and dignity. All dominion is His; that speaks of His right to rule over the world. And all power is His; that designates His authority to rule and His ability to do anything. We should praise God for everything!

So, what does Jude say to the believer living in the age of apostasy?

- (1) **Remember.** Don't be surprised, God said apostasy would come.
- (2) **Remain.** Stay in the sphere of God's blessing by building yourselves in the Word, praying, and looking for Jesus' Second Coming.
- (3) **Reach out to people who are in danger of hell.**
- (4) **Rest.** Don't fear, for He is able to keep you from falling and is able to present you faultless.

CONCLUSION

John MacArthur’s summary is simplistic and helpful: “Jude’s letter is a survival manual for Christians living in the midst of apostasy. Christians living in such an age should not be surprised by increasing apostasy. Through diligent study of God’s Word, through praying in the Spirit, and through hopefully watching for the Lord’s coming, Christians can confidently reach out to unbelievers with loving concern that they too may be saved.”⁴⁹

⁴⁹ *Beware the Pretenders*, 96.

Jude is a book for our time. It is a book about how to survive in the last days of apostasy. We are confident and secure, but we are also concerned about those around us who don't know Christ. I trust that God will bring these truths to your understanding so that we can join together with Jude in praising God.

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