

SPIRITUAL TERRORISTS IN THE CHURCH

(THE BOOK OF JUDE)

Part 1

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We live in a very interesting day in the church. It appears that "Christianity" is at a high level of popularity in the United States, while the spiritual health of churches is declining. Bibles are selling at an amazing rate, yet discernment is a forgotten virtue in the church. Probably the most alarming "news" about the church today is that tolerance and compromise are replacing solid Bible truth and the authority of Holy Scripture.

To find a "Bible-based" church in most communities is getting extremely hard. Many talk about the Bible, yet are doing very little to stop the post-modern fads from infiltrating the very life of the local church. Many churches are either on the edge of apostasy or have already sold out to the enemy's plan. Many pastors are being used by the enemy to "dumb down" professing Christians so that they cannot discern between the true gospel and a counterfeit one. The result is churches that tolerate, embrace, and encourage unbelievers instead of building up and equipping believers.

But don't panic, believers, this is nothing new! It is just another wave of false teaching and apostasy that is sweeping through the church.

In about 70 AD, Jude was led by the Holy Spirit to write a short letter to believers. In this letter, he warns believers of the first century to be aware of the false teachers who were already infiltrating the churches with their destructive lies. And the battle for truth has been raging in the church for all of these years!

Let's study with an open heart and a desire for "the truth."

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Jude 1-3

The Introduction and Greeting

- The author, Jude, is the half-brother of the Lord Jesus and the **brother** of James.
- The recipients of this letter are believers in the **early** church.
- These believers are **called**, beloved and kept.
 - They were called **to** salvation.
 - They were deeply **loved** by the Father.
 - They are constantly being **guarded** by Jesus Christ for a permanent relationship.
- The author **desires** these three qualities: mercy, peace, and love be increasing in their lives to **settle** their hearts.

An Impassioned Appeal

- The author had a strong desire to **write** a letter about the salvation all believers have in common.
- The Holy Spirit **changed** the author's mind because of the intense war against the truth of Scripture.
- The early church was under **attack** by false teachers.
- Jude had divine "**pressure**" on him to change the content of his letter.
- As a result, he desires to **encourage** all believers to enter into the fight for truth.

The Battle for "the Faith"

- As believers, we are encouraged to be **fully** involved in this fight.
- We should be like an **athlete** and be "in training" continuously, not slacking off.

- The believer's salvation is not at stake, but the reputation and accuracy of **truth** is under assault.
- Believers must be **diligent** to guard and preserve "the faith." (*II Timothy 4:7*)
- As believers, we "contend earnestly" for the faith by...
 1. being approved **students** of the Word of God. (*II Timothy 2:15*)
 2. living out the principles of Scripture in **daily** life, even in the face of opposition.
 3. not compromising truth for the sake of **unity**, or so that we can avoid **conflict**.
 4. committing to this strategy: **know** the Word of God, have the courage to **defend** it, and continually be alert and discerning enough to **spot** false teaching.

The Faith

- "The Faith" here is not referring to one's **personal** faith.
- "The Faith" here refers to the **entire** body of doctrine, to be believed and practiced, as contained in the Word of God.
- "The Faith" does not refer to one's **personal** faith, but most specifically teachings to the church **passed** along by the apostles.
- This body of doctrine has been **delivered** over and is complete.
- As a result...
 - there is no **outside** "revelation" that is from God.
 - God only speaks to believers through His **Word**. (Revelation is not ongoing.)
 - Holy Scripture is **complete**, finished and sufficient.
 - false teachers will try to distort the **idea** that Holy Scripture is "once for all delivered."
 - the phrase, "**God told me**," will be used in error by professing believers to prove their lifestyle is O.K.
 - Holy Scripture then does not **need** any additions or subtractions.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Would you be considered a contender for the faith, or a "compromiser" of truth? Explain.
2. Are you guilty of thinking God speaks to you outside of Holy Scripture? On what authority do you base this?
3. Do you believe the Word of God is complete and sufficient for all we will ever face in life?
4. Why is there so much controversy over Scripture? Explain.