

A FAITH WORTH FIGHTING FOR
JUDE 1-3
DR. ROGER BARRIER
S-1466

I got in my share of fights as a child: Jim Tausch; Tommy Austin, Scott Hammit

James Breckenridge in High School: the punch in the stomach in front of Laura Reich. My self respect was at stake. I am not recommending that you emulate my behavior. I did not turn the other cheek. Today you'll probably get sued. But, there are some things worth fighting for.

Walnut Hill 5th grade bully when I was in 3rd grade: "I hear that you think you are pretty tough." Strange that thought never crossed my mind: "No. Let's just say you win." Turned to his friends: "This is a pretty smart kid." Some things aren't worth fighting for.

You can say what you want to about American foreign policy in the Balkins, or about President Clinton's war record or lack thereof, but it is about time unbenevolent dictators are told, you cannot indiscriminately use an army to murder, pillage, rape, steal and eradicate people you don't want to get along with. Some things are worth fighting for.

Open your Bibles to the little, one page New Testament book of Jude. Located in front of Revelation, It is a fitting follow up to our study of Daniel.

SLIDE #5: The book of Jude is often called the Acts of the Apostates. It is different from the Acts of the Apostles which described the deeds and teachings of men and women who laid the foundation for the church in the first century. The Bible predicts that there will be a great departing from the faith around the time of the return of Christ. This book, Jude, the Acts of the Apostates, describes that large-scale falling away (apostasy).

Today we will focus on the first four verses.

SLIDE #1: Jude 1:1: Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

SLIDE #2: Jude 1:2: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

SLIDE #3: Jude 1:3: Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

Look, turn your head, get your attention. Jude did not write the Bible book he intended to write. He wanted to write concerning the gospel of salvation,

but a crisis changed his mind.

SLIDE #4: Jude 1:4: For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Godless men have crept in to pillage and destroy. The essence of Christianity is under attack!

SLIDE #6: “Apostasy” means “falling away”.

An apostate is one who receives the word, believes it for a while, and falls away from Jesus Christ and from Christian teachings.

Judas, pictured here kissing Jesus, was the first apostate. He was the first to stand by Jesus Christ and then to step away—but he is by no means the last.

While the end of the age will be characterized by a general, world-wide apostasy, apostasy can afflict any nation, society, age, culture or person who or which has ever been Christian. It is always a threat.

BUILD SLIDE #11A: Look at America. This was once a Christian nation. It was founded upon the Judeo-Christian ethic. Not everyone was a Christian, but everyone knew what was in the Bible and who Jesus Christ was and the story of the cross. Less than 40 years ago this entire nation stopped moving on Sunday and went to church.

BUILD SLIDE #11B: During the last 50 years, the Lord’s day, Sunday, has become just another day of the week.

Countless people neither know or understand the basic teachings of Christ.

Violence and hatred fill the land.

Good morals are devastated. Officers this week broke up a middle school oral sex ring. Parents and officials were astounded at the blasé attitude of the children. One commentator said, “What do you expect when the President of the US has gone on record as teaching us the moral value that oral sex is not sex.”

America has drifted away from Jesus Christ. Our nation is apostate.

BUILD SLIDE #12A: We Christians led this nation for years—and we lost it. Why?

BUILD SLIDE #12B: Because the American church fell insidiously away from Christ.

We are to be the salt of the earth. Purpose of salt is to keep a nation or a culture from putrefying. When the salt loses its effectiveness, culture begins to decay and there will be a large-scale turning from God and Christ.

The church of the 40s and 50s did not keep up with the wickedness of the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Instead of a living, dynamic, Christianity, churches became stagnant, irrelevant, compromised and filled with sin. We circled our wagons and isolated ourselves preserved our traditions and called people names. America is no longer a Christian nation.

We are locked in battle for the soul of our land.

I want to personalize the battle in the first four verses today. HOW DO WE CONTEND FOR THE FAITH?

SLIDE #13: 1. UNDERSTAND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST (JUDE 1-2)

SLIDE #14: Jude 1:1: Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

Well, let's get the author's name straight. Get out your Greek Bible and discover that

SLIDE #15: his name is Judas

First word in Greek is Judas. "It says Jude to me!" Well, who would want a Bible book named Judas! So they abbreviated it. It does make sense, does it not that a book about apostasy would be authored by a man named Judas!

But which Judas? Certainly not the one who betrayed Jesus. Certainly not! This is the half brother of Jesus Christ!

When Jesus began teaching, people began trying to figure out who He was:

SLIDE #17: Matthew 13:53-56 records that they asked: "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"

There they are: brothers and sisters. James was oldest brother. He wrote the book of James.

What would it be like to have Jesus as your older brother? Could you imagine getting into a fight with Jesus? Mary comes in, "Break it up." "Well, Jesus started it." She knew that was not true. He never started any one. "Well, what do you think he is, perfect?"

You know none of His brothers believed in Him at first. Evidence that they disliked and resented Him. After the resurrection, they all received Him.

Learn much about our relationship to Christ from way he introduces himself.

SLIDE #19: Jude 1:1:Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,

He must have thought a lot about his relationship to Jesus. How does he attempt to describe that relationship? Brother? No. Friend? No. Savior? No. He calls himself a servant.

Doulos is really the word, "Slave." In other words, Jude regards himself as having only one distinction in life – to be forever at the disposal of Jesus, his Master.

You must be getting something great in return if you are willing to voluntarily submit your life as a slave.

SLIDE #20: Jude 1:1:Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

Beautiful description of what we have in Christ

SLIDE #21: Called

Called because we are wanted and picked out – choosing up teams to play, no shame and hanging head, you are wanted, walk into room at party and everyone wants to be with you.

Called because we are needed – mom calls, coach calls
Imagine that an infinite God needs a human, but He does.

SLIDE #22: Loved

Agapaw – God's sacrificial love of the cross.

SLIDE #23: Kept

"Kept in Jesus Christ" – refers to our security forever.

The beauty of our relationship with Christ is like the perfect marriage we all have in mind. Like this picture of Isadore and Sarah Rosenthal celebrating 75th anniversary. This is how it is supposed to be. Marriage vows with Christ. Cinderella, Snow White lived happily ever after.

Talked with persons who have endured multiple marriages. Hurt and bleeding. It is not supposed to be this way. Want one that thrives and works well for a lifetime.

Robert Redford on talk show several year ago was asked, "What makes a great lover? Everyone expected the standard mach-playboy response. To everyone's surprise, he gave an answer that raised eyebrows all over America:

“A great lover is someone who can satisfy one woman all her life long, and who can be satisfied by one woman all his life long. A great lover is not someone who goes from woman to woman to woman. Any dog can do that.”

This is the essence of our relationship with Christ—it is like a wonderful, fulfilling marriage where we settle down, wanted, loved and secure for a lifetime.

SLIDE #13: 1. UNDERSTAND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST (JUDE 1-2)

SLIDE #25: 2. GET A FIRM GRIP ON THE TENETS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (JUDE 3)

SLIDE #26: Jude 1:3: Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

We are instructed here to fight earnestly for the faith. The verb was used of athletes contending in contests. The word speaks of a vigorous, intense, determined struggle to defeat the opposition. Our word “agony” is the English spelling of this word.

Let’s talk about the faith we are to defend?

“The faith” here is not faith as exercised by the individual, but Christianity itself in its historic doctrines. “The faith” Jude admonishes us to contend for is the body of truth contained in the Scriptures.

Jude mentions most of the fundamental articles of The Faith which we are to defend. We will address them in subsequent sermons.

Let me cut to the bottom line essentials.

SLIDE #27: 1. The Bible is the ultimate truth and authority. It is the revelation that the other bottom line tenants are based on.

SLIDE #28: 2. Mankind is bent, marred, sinful and incapable of self-repair.

That’s not what most want to believe, but it is true.

Mark Twain: “We are all like the moon. We have a dark side we don’t want anyone to see.”

Most people understand this. Tornado or natural disaster and have to call out National Guard to keep the vultures from scavenging what is not theirs.

Man was created in God’s image. But, he sinned. He has fallen. He needs a savior. He

is bent and warped and separated from God.
Man is depraved. Not that he is as bad as he can be—but that he is as bad off as he can be.

SLIDE #29: 3. Jesus Christ is 100% divine God.
Mormons, Jehovah's Witness, Unity, New Age teaching all deny this in one form or other.

SLIDE #30: 4. Jesus Christ died a substitutionary death for mankind on the cross. The wages of sin is death. Jesus died in our place. That is what is happening on the cross. Christ was no misguided. All the sin of all the world was placed on His back.

SLIDE #31: 5. The resurrection validates the life and work of Jesus Christ.

SLIDE #32: 6. Jesus Christ must be personally received by every individual as the only way to be restored to fellowship with God the creator.

Appeal and explain how people can receive Christ.

SLIDE #25: 2. GET A FIRM GRIP ON THE TENETS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (JUDE 3)

SLIDE #33: 3. LET NOTHING COMPROMISE YOUR LIVING FOR CHRIST (JUDE 4)

SLIDE #34: Jude 1:4: For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Jude warns us to beware these persons. They are ungodly persons who “turn God's grace into loose living and ultimately “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” These people were once Christians who had fallen away from Christ.

“Secretly slipped in among you” is Parcsedusan. “It is used of the seductive words of a clever lawyer—a robber slipping secretly into a house—it indicates a subtle insinuation of evil into a society. It referred to slipping poison into someone's glass.

BUILD SLIDE #35A: Jude is concerned here that unwary Christians might be seduced into falling away from Christ.

He is warning us to beware the people around us who influence us. They may be misguided and have a powerful influence upon us.

BUILD SLIDE #35B: If we are not careful, we can slip quietly away from Christ.

Several years ago psychologist Ruth Berenda designed an experiment with teenagers to

study how they handled peer pressure.

Teens were brought into a room in groups of ten and instructed to raise their hand when the instructor pointed to the longest line on separate charts. What one person in the group did not know was that nine of the teens had been previously instructed to vote consistently for the second longest line.

The experiment began with 9 of the ten voting for the longest line. The tenth teen would in confusion typically, glance around, frown in confusion and slip his hand up with the rest of the group. Time after time the tenth teen would sit there saying that the short line is longer than the longer line, simply because he lacked the courage to challenge the group.

This remarkable conformity occurred over 75% of the time.

Berenda concluded, "Some people would rather be president than be right." So concerned with what the majority of the people think that they will compromise just to please the people around them.

The best way to avoid apostasy is to live a well intentioned vibrant, living, growing and maturing Christian life. The Bible teaches that anything less places us in peril of drifting away.

Summarize Hebrews, Melchizedek leading up to Hebrews 6. Let's chart what happened.

BUILD SLIDE #36A: Conversion of the Hebrew Christians begins here on the chart.

BUILD SLIDE #36B: This should have been the Hebrew Christian's experience: Health of a growing life on to maturity.

BUILD SLIDE #36C: Unfortunately, this has been their experience: the sickness of a static life.

BUILD SLIDE #36D: Time for a choice: Apostasy will be their experience if they persist in their sloth.

BUILD SLIDE #36E: Instead, he is encouraging them to rise up and press on to maturity.

Robert Robinson was converted from a godless, reprobate life to salvation in Christ during the preaching of George Whitefield in England. At the age of 23, he put his testimony in poetic form: "Come thou fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing thy grace; Streams of mercy never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above; Praise His name—I'm fixed upon it—name of God's redeeming love."

Robinson defected. He turned his back on Christ and fell away. He lived a godless carnal life until one day he boarded a stage coach occupied by a woman whose face was buried in a book of verse.

He asked her what she was reading. "Oh, it is a wonderful poem she said to the stranger. Listen to this: : "Come thou fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing thy grace; Streams of mercy never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise."

He sat quietly, surrounded with guilt as she read the words of his testimony from so long ago.

Then she looked up and said, “Recently, it has been made into the most lovely hymn. Listen to this . . .” At that point she began to sing the last stanza. Listen to this. You may recognize this:

“Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here’s my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for thy courts above.”

“Stop! Stop!” He cried. “I am the poor unhappy man who composed that verse many years ago. I would give a thousand worlds to get back to where I was back then.”

Jude picks out three characteristics of apostates in verse 4. We will study more characteristics next week. Here are three indictors that we are slipping away from Christ.

BUILD SLIDE #37A: 1. We are less Godly than we used to be.

BUILD SLIDE #37B: 2. We tolerate more sin in our lives than we used to.

BUILD SLIDE #37C: 3. We deny Christ by living more for us and less for Christ.

SLIDE #33: 3. LET NOTHING COMPROMISE YOUR LIVING FOR CHRIST (JUDE 4)

Anthony Campolo tells the true story of a Jewish boy living in Poland in 1939 when the Nazi SS troops rounded up all the Jews in the vicinity and sentenced them to death.

He joined his neighbors in digging a shallow ditch for their graves and then faced the firing squad with his parents. Machine guns blazed, bullets flew, bodies fell into the ditch. Miraculously, this boy was splattered with blood but was unscathed by bullets so he fell into the grave and pretended to be dead. The Nazi troops scattered dirt over the bodies but the shallow coving did not prevent air getting through so he could breath.

Several hours later, as darkness fell, he clawed his way out of the grave. Caked with blood and dirt he made his way to the nearest house and begged for help. Recognized as one of the Jewish boys marked for death by the SS troops, he wsa turned away from house after house as people feared getting into trouble with the SS.

Then something inside him stirred from deep within. As the people at the next house responded to his timid knocking in the still of night, he cried out, “Don’t you recognize me? I am the Jesus you say you love.”

After a poignant pause, the woman in the doorway swept him up in her arms and held him close. From that day on they cared for him as one of their own.

SLIDE #13: 1. UNDERSTAND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST (JUDE 1-2)

SLIDE #25: 2. GET A FIRM GRIP ON THE TENETS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (JUDE

3)

SLIDE #33: 3. LET NOTHING COMPROMISE YOUR LIVING FOR CHRIST (JUDE 4)

The battle is at hand.