

## Contend Earnestly

### Jude 3-4

**Objective:** Ensure that people are aware of false teachings and distortions.

**Reading:** Jude 1:3-7

#### **Introduction:**

1. The Gospel is such a glorious thing that you might expect to only hear good and positive things in church. When people gather to speak of it and to share it, everything might be expected to be “upbeat”.
2. Some fellowships are that way, and as such, attract a lot of people! Who really wants to hear of dangers that still confront us? But, we really do need to be aware of the full situation, both the good and the bad, but the comfort and the struggles.

#### **We need to be aware of some vitally important things about religion.** (WHAT?)

While writing to relate to Christians, the wonderful positives about what we have in Christianity, Jude is compelled by an awareness of hazards to take the time, instead, to write to them about dangers and hazards they need to be on guard about. *We need to be aware of both the wonders and the hazards of our religious circumstances.*

*Unless folks realize the wonder of the Gospel, they may not be moved and motivated to trust in it, to give themselves to it, or to live it. It is vitally important that we realize -*

#### **I. The Gospel is a glorious blessing.**

##### A. A gift from God.

1. Amazing gift of love and grace. Of joy and peace. Of freedom and moral obligation.
2. Jude felt a need to write about it. Folks need to know it!
3. Folks ought to comprehend it, the nature of it, the essence of it so they can genuinely rejoice in it.
4. The nature of it, so we can have life to the full and live in a manner worthy of the calling.

##### B. Our common salvation.

1. There is only one way to obtain salvation.
2. John 14:6, **“Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”**
3. Acts 4:12, **“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”**
4. We share in it. If you are in Christ and I am in Christ, we share something in Common.
5. We are supposed to be in fellowship with each other, on the same team, in the same family, of the same spirit. Brothers and sisters with the Son of God, and with each other.

##### C. A body of doctrines we share in common.

1. Fundamental and essential truths. “Doctrines” are “teachings”.
2. Romans 6:17, **“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,”**
3. Ephesians 4:4-6, **“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”**
4. There is some latitude, but there are also unchangeable truths. Non-negotiables.
  - a. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt amongst us.
  - b. One cannot knowingly, willingly continue in sin. Anyone who has this hope purifies himself.
  - c. An expectation of resurrection.

*The “Gospel” is good news to be talked about, shared and rejoiced over. The other vitally important thing that we ought to understand is that it has enemies. Subtle, scheming enemies and that...*

#### **II. Error has “crept” in.**

##### A. Concept has a legitimately “insidious” feel to it.

1. Sneaky – yes. Under cover of darkness – yes. Like an enemy laying an ambush.
2. Like being betrayed with a kiss. An enemy appearing to be good is trying to destroy you.
3. These are part of the wicked schemes of Satan to entrap, ensnare you and your loved ones.

4. Should you “fear” something so “creepy”? Yes. Absolutely! That is why Scripture is warning you about it! Your very soul is at stake!
5. Jude is not focused on “once saved always saved” theology. He is warning Christians to NOT be led astray by insidious, deceitful error. We need to take heed also.
6. He reminds them of Biblical examples of those who were saved by God, from slavery in Egypt, only to be later destroyed if they did not believe (which entails a proper response of trust toward God and His Word). His message is that we can expect the same result.
7. The Apostle Peter warns; 1 Peter 5:8, **“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”** “prowling about” “looking for someone to devour”. These are intended to be scary concepts, and intended to be taken seriously!
8. Jesus refers to those who bring such error into the church as “wolves in sheep’s clothing”. This is serious and dangerous.

**B. This incoming error is elsewhere noted;**

1. It is known, expected, and written about long beforehand. Throughout the Scriptures.
2. Here is the on-going spiritual warfare of the ages. This continuing separation of Light from Darkness that began at Creation.
3. Galatians 1:6-9, **“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; <sup>7</sup> which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”**
4. When the gospel and associated body of faith doctrines are “distorted” it is no longer “good news”.
5. Truth does not change with culture – TRUTH transcends all time and all culture.
6. Truth does not become outdated.
7. 2 John 1:9, **“Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.”**
  - a. Some try to anticipate things that have not been revealed or assume changes God will make or accept. They do not have God!
  - b. Folks saying what God WILL do when God has not said.
  - c. Saying God has got to accept / will accept thing He has not said He will accept - they go too far!

**C. We are supposed to struggle with this!**

1. Christianity is NOT a spectator sport – it is full contact. There is a need to engage. To be involved. To ask questions. To think about such things. To seek truth.
2. Word “contend is “agonize”, as men do in a wrestling match. Picture straining effort.
3. Are you floating by, content with whatever has been done, whatever you are used to, whatever someone says is acceptable, whatever someone says is “Biblical”, or do you struggle (ἐπαγωνίζομαι agonize) with it to make sure it is truth, properly presented?
4. Examples;
  - a. Changes in the nature of church leadership? What are the Biblical qualifications for an “elder” or “pastor”?
  - b. How come what used to be sin is now accepted as something good? What happened?
  - c. Which things are handed to us as manmade traditions and which are really ordained of God?
  - d. Did God bind or loose such and such a matter, or is it a teaching that has “crept” in?
5. There is a difference between legalism and earnestness.
  - a. Legalism stems from fear that I might miss something and be condemned.
  - b. Earnest following stems from love and a desire to do what is right and pleasing.
  - c. Legalism tries to match a bunch of requirement.
  - d. Earnest discipleship seeks obedience of faith out of trust and love.
  - e. One is programmatical, the other is personal relational.
  - f. Difference between desire to obey out of love and gratitude, honoring His Lordship and “legalism” = being afraid to miss some small point. One is relational, other is fear.

**D. There are some general indicators that we might notice;**

1. Error changes “grace” into license for immorality.
  - a. Jude 1:4, **“For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”**
  - b. 2 Peter 2:1-3, **“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. <sup>2</sup> Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; <sup>3</sup> and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”**
  - c. A tendency to accept things as holy that God considers abominable and detestable. The nature of this error is that it often teaches tolerance of sin, saying that God can cover it, God will forgive it and overlook it.
  - d. A tendency to tolerate things God does not tolerate. Understand that “grace” is not the same as “tolerance” Grace provides a way out of sin, a way to be forgiven, a means of reconciliation. Grace does not say that sin is okay- it does not simply look the other way or ignore sin.
  - e. Romans 6:15-16, **“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”**
2. Such error comes from “godless” people who appear to fit the Christian mold.
  - a. They false teachers are not obvious! You need to look to discover them.
  - b. Even Satan can appear as an angel of light.
  - c. They stand condemned. They call themselves Christians. They are seen as and assumed to be Christian leaders. People accept their words and opinions as truth. But they are condemned.
3. They “deny” Christ.
  - a. By their lifestyle. They call Him “Lord”, but somehow do not do what He says. Somehow they do what they, themselves want to do.
  - b. By altering His Word. They call Him “Lord”, but make the Word say what they want, ignore some passages and enforce some others. Pick and choose.
  - c. Follow the dependable teachings of the Apostles! 2 Peter 1:16, **“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty”.**
4. Truth confesses Christ as Lord with obedience – WWJD.
5. Truth confesses Christ as Lord with TRUST, even during hard times.
6. Truth acknowledges Christ as Lord with personal transformation, striving to be like Him.
7. Truth acknowledges Christ as Lord by earnestly resisting sin and temptations.

#### So What?

The Scripture message here, the urgent warning and appeal is for each of us to engage in the struggle, inwardly and outwardly; to contend earnestly for the faith.

#### Closing Prayer:

**Contend Earnestly**  
**Jude 3-4**

**Reading:** Jude 1:3-7

**We need to be aware of some vitally important things about religion.**

The wonders and the hazards of our religious circumstances.

**I. The Gospel is a glorious blessing.**

A. A gift from God.

B. Our common salvation.

John 14:6 Acts 4:12

C. A body of doctrines we share in common.

Romans 6:17 Ephesians 4:4-6

**II. Error has “crept” in.**

A. Concept has a legitimately “insidious” feel to it.

1 Peter 5:8

B. This incoming error is elsewhere noted;

Galatians 1:6-9 2 John 1:9

C. We are supposed to struggle with this!

D. There are some general indicators that we might notice;

Jude 1:4 2 Peter 2:1-3 Romans 6:15-16 2 Peter 1:16

**So What?**

Contend earnestly for the faith.