

Fight for the Faith

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Jude 3-4, 17-22

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

...

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Written by Jude, brother of James (probably the half-brother of Jesus)

- I. What is "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints?"
 - a. This is the "orthodox" faith (lowercase O)
 - b. The faith as believed by all the church for all time
 - i. Creation, Fall, Redemption
 - ii. Need for a Savior
 - iii. Person and Work of Christ
- II. Why must Christians contend for this faith?
 - a. Christians contend for the faith to draw a distinction between true and false teaching. (v. 4)
 - i. Certain people have crept in that are not actually Christians.
 - ii. These charlatans twist and pervert the faith for their own gain and pleasure.
 1. They pervert grace for the sake of sensuality.
 2. They deny Christ.

- iii. These things were anticipated, and Christians should not be surprised (v. 17-18)
 - iv. These people bring division within the church, pulling people after their own teachings.
- b. Christians must contend for the faith to strengthen their own faith in Christ.
- i. Christians are to pray in the Holy Spirit to God (v. 20)
 - 1. The Spirit knows what we need (Rom. 8:26)
 - 2. God answers the prayers of his people. (1 John 5:14-15)
 - ii. Christians are to strengthen their faith. (v.20)
 - 1. Our faith is strengthened by obeying his commandments (John 15:10, 1 John 2:5)
 - 2. Our faith is tested by suffering (James 1:3-4)
 - 3. This is antithetical to those who believe they don't have to obey God's commandments, or that suffering is null and void in the life of the believer.
 - iii. Christians are to look forward to Christ's mercy, which leads to life.
 - 1. This is contrasted against the behavior of the ungodly.
 - 2. The Christian does not engage in sensuality or unrighteousness, but instead looks to Christ (Titus 2:11-14)
 - iv. In doing these things, Christians keep themselves in the love of God.
- c. Christians must contend for the faith to strengthen the faith of others.
- i. Christians are to have mercy on those who doubt.
 - 1. Doubt is not commendable in scripture.
 - 2. Doubt is a reality.
 - 3. Christians are to endure and encourage those who are doubting.
 - ii. Christians must engage with those falling prey to false teaching.
 - 1. This is not about intramurals.
 - a. Baptism
 - b. Ecclesiology
 - c. Eschatology
 - 2. These are people falling victim to blasphemous and heretical teaching.

- a. Rejecting creation-fall-redemption
- b. Rejecting person and work of Christ.
- c. Rejecting the need for a Savior.

3. This is not about polemics and social media fights.

- a. This is not about us challenging every follower of (insert false teacher here)
- b. This is about us encouraging those we know PERSONALLY not to follow the teachings of (insert false teacher here) and to persevere in the faith

iii. Christians must show mercy to all, with respect and reverence.

III. APPLYING THE WORD: How do we contend for the faith?

a. Do I hold to the faith once delivered to the saints?

i. If no, talk to someone about the faith once delivered to the saints!

ii. If yes, in what ways can I more robustly contend for the faith?

- 1. In what ways do I need a more robust strengthening of my own faith?
- 2. In what ways do I need to more robustly help others strengthen their faith?